Building Bridges Essay, Research Paper

Building Bridges: a summation

Globalization can be defined as an opportunity to generate more wealth and promote harmony between the peoples of the world. In the mid-1800s to the late 1900s the world experienced a similar era of globalization. If you compared the volumes of trade and capital flows across borders (relative to gross national product), and the flow of labour across borders (relative to populations) the period of globalization preceding World War I was quite similar to the one we are living through today. In those days countries did not require passports for travel, and with the inventions of the steamship, telegraph, railroad and eventually telephone, it is safe to say that this first era of globalization before World War I shrank the world from a size “large” to a size “medium.” This first era of globalization was broken apart by the blows of World War I, the Russian Revolution and the Great Depression, which combined to fracture the world both physically and ideologically. The divided world that emerged after World War II was frozen in place by the Cold War. When, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was replaced by another system; the new era of globalization we are now in. Call it “Globalization Round II.” It turns out that the roughly seventy-five-year period from the start of World War I to the end of the Cold War was just a long time-out between one era of globalization and another.

Today?s era of globalization is built around falling telecommunications costs; thanks to microchips, satellites, fiber optics and the Internet. These new technologies are able to weave the world together even tighter. These technologies mean that developing countries don’t just have to trade their raw materials to the West and get finished products in return; they mean that developing countries can become big-time producers as well. These technologies also allow companies to locate different parts of their production, research and marketing in different countries, but still tie them together through computers and teleconferencing as though they were in one place. Also, thanks to the combination of computers and cheap telecommunications, people can now offer and trade services globally that could never really be traded before. But what also makes this era of globalization unique is the fact that it is allowing individuals to do so. And that’s why today there is no more First World, Second World or Third World. There’s now just the Fast World and the Slow World.

For human beings to be worthy of the name, they must belong to the human species and experience that sense of belonging. We must multiply our bonds of allegiance, that is to say, build more bridges. Globalization is a period of optimism in the dismal timeline of humanity.