

Chapter 20: Culture and Community in the Global Age: 20-5 Conclusion
Book Title: The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History 7th Edition Update, AP® Edition
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20-5 Conclusion

Historians often use the term “long nineteenth century” to signify a strong continuity in world political, social, and economic patterns between the end of the nineteenth century and World War I. Whether the twenty-first century is better viewed as having its own distinctive character or as being a prolongation of tendencies rooted in the twentieth century depends on how one weighs the importance of certain events.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 established terrorism as a worldwide fear and suspicion, if not outright hatred, of Islam and Muslims as a growing popular attitude in some countries. ISIS, whose atrocities have been publicized around the globe by new means of communication, aroused significant consternation in the twentieth century.

The worldwide financial crisis that began in 2008 revealed global linkages between economic transactions that seemed fundamentally local, such as refinancing homes, and the survival of major financial institutions: banks, insurance companies, and accounting firms. The effects of this crisis resembled the Great Depression of the twentieth century, but the underlying causes had more to do with new patterns of investment and electronic communication between financial institutions than with basic matters of supply and demand.

Democracy advanced in some regions of the world as a preferred governing system in the post–Cold War environment, but the memories of colonial exploitation that had fueled so many independence movements became less acute. In many countries, controversies over national and personal identity involved religious debates that had been less important than social class or secular nationalism throughout most of the twentieth century.

At a cultural level, the electronic information age that had begun with the development of computers after World War II encouraged the growth of global cultural attitudes, both popular and elite. The roots of these cultural developments clearly lay in the twentieth century, but the internet and social media transformed them into something that seemed altogether new.

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