In this short chapter I wish to highlight some of the causes and consequences that are at work in what I have called the Global Development War, and particularly those that relate to the global economic organizations (GEOs)—that is, the IMF, the World Bank and its regional counterparts, and the WTO. Let me take a moment to explain what I mean by “causes” and “consequences” in this context.

By “causes” of the Global Development War, I refer particularly to the extraordinarily widespread discontent, frustration, even disgust at the seeming inability of the GEOs to mount successful attacks against the crushing poverty that afflicts a sizeable portion of the world’s population. For many people, the underlying culprit is globalization—a sentiment that Joseph Stiglitz surely tied into by titling his 2002 book *Globalization and Its Discontents*, even though the book was essentially a diatribe, poorly delivered according to some, against the IMF. For other people, the underlying culprit is not globalization as such but “the globalizers” themselves—that is, the GEOs. It was this sentiment that Ngaire Woods reflects in titling her 2006 book *The Globalizers*. I shall have some comments to offer in this chapter and later chapters on Dr. Woods’ work, as well as on what I regard as a more likely underlying cause of the discontent and disgust that are at play in the Global Development War.

1 In reviewing Stiglitz’s book, Professor Kevin Kennedy explains that it amounts to “nothing less than a diatribe”, mainly against the IMF, in which the author, a Nobel laureate in economics and former chief economist at the World Bank, “makes no pretense of being balanced or of writing a scholarly work” but instead delivers only “rather rambling, uneven rhetoric” that includes “mean-spiritedness and ad hominem attacks”. Kevin Kennedy, *A Review of Globalization and Its Discontents*, 35 George Washington International Law Review 251, 252–53 (2003). Kennedy criticizes Stiglitz’s “wild hypothesizing, unsubstantiated accusations, and overheated rhetoric” and, perhaps more importantly, the glaring errors or omissions in Stiglitz’s analysis of the IMF’s role in the Asian financial crisis and Russia’s painful economic transformation. *Id.* at 255–257. An equally critical review of Stiglitz’ book came in the form of an open letter from an IMF official who noted numerous instances of Stiglitz being too short on facts and too long on ego. See *Rogoff's Discontent With Stiglitz*, 31 IMF Survey 209, 209–211 (July 8, 2002). I agree with these assessments of Stiglitz’s book.
By “consequences” of the Global Development War, I refer to the specific manifestation of the discontent and disgust, or at least the manifestation that is central to this book—the range of criticisms that have been directed at the GEOs. My aim in this respect is to identify, sort out, and evaluate the various criticisms that have been leveled at the IMF, the multilateral development banks (MDBs), and the WTO. In this chapter I shall undertake only the first two of these tasks—identifying those criticisms and sorting them out in a “bare-bones” manner. To do more than this would be impossible without an examination of the GEOs themselves—what they are, why they were created, how they operate, etc. We shall turn to those factual issues in Chapter Three. But by looking first at a “bare-bones” listing of the criticisms leveled at them, we shall know what to watch for in the descriptive accounts offered in Chapter Three. Then in Chapters Four and Five I shall undertake to bring the two tracks together—that is, evaluating the criticisms in light of the current reality of the GEOs.

I. A WORLD OF PROBLEMS

A. Growing Economic Distress

When I was growing up, my parents would take me to special cultural programs held in high school auditoriums in “cities” nearby our farming community, presumably with some thought of letting me see a little of the outside world. Ballet and opera performances were largely lost on me as a pre-teen, but travelogues caught my fancy. A “travelogue” in that context consisted of a filmstrip, shot by a well-spoken amateur, showing scenes of his or her travels to some distant, exotic, usually mysterious and slightly primitive place—California, for example, or somewhere in Europe with a suspicious excess of consonants in the place-names. Most such travelogues featured (perhaps this was a requirement of the genre?) a sequence of pictures that the travel-master had taken of himself or herself, with the movie camera placed on its side while the travel-master walked along a recently felled tree. Deftly aiming the camera to show only one side of the tree, our hero could include the sequence showing him or her striding nonchalantly straight up a tree. This delighted me. The high school gymnasium swelled with amazed laughter during these scenes.

Unfortunately, when one of these travelogues started showing us the people and culture of the faraway land, the show often took on a weird quality of smug voyeurism. As viewers, we were like visitors to a zoo watching the odd animals, seeing staged scenes of questionable authenticity. The travel-master was not a guide helping us to interpret the scenes but more of an amused confidant joining in our observations of how odd and curiously unfortunate was the foreign culture he or she was showing us. The travel-master did not succeed, and probably had little interest, in making