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Human

AS and A LEVEL

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OXFORD
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How to use this book

This is one of two books in this series, written for the Oxford AQA International AS & A Level in Geography. This particular book (Human Geography) has been written to meet the content requirements of the A Level course, but can equally well be used for the separate AS course.

Skills questions indicated by the $\text{S}$ icon are aimed at meeting the geographical and statistical skills requirements for both AS and A Level.

Practice questions have been included for both AS and A Level, with marks allocated. Please note that the practice questions used in this book allow students a genuine attempt at practising exam skills, but are not intended to replicate the exact nature of final exam questions.

At appropriate points, chapters focus on providing fieldwork opportunities. These, plus associated questions, will help to prepare you for the fieldwork requirements for both AS and A Level.
In April 2015, the residents of Numbi watched the erection of a mobile phone mast – the first in their region. Numbi is a remote and poor town in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), one of the world’s least-developed countries. How do you think being connected to the rest of the world could change things for Numbi and its people?

Specification key ideas

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Your exam
Global systems and governance is assessed in Section A of Human Geography Paper 1. You will also answer questions on Section B: Resource security. Paper 1 makes up 50% of your AS and 25% of your A Level qualification.

Your key skills in this chapter
In order to become a good geographer you need to develop key geographical skills. In this chapter, whenever you see the skills icon you will practise a range of quantitative and relevant qualitative skills, within the theme of ‘Global systems and governance’. Examples of these skills are:

- Using different types of data to develop critical perspectives on data categories and approaches
- Use and analysis of text and discursive/creative material
- Using atlases and other map sources
- Presenting quantitative data and interpreting graphs
- Analysing data, including applying statistical skills

Fieldwork opportunities
‘Global systems’ and ‘global governance’ might sound like far off, nebulous concepts that you might struggle to investigate in the real world. However, globalisation touches everyone’s life in some way today. Evidence for this is, in fact, everywhere – in your home, school and local high street, from food and fashion to the media you consume.

Finding out about the operation of a transnational corporation (TNC) in your local area and people’s views on its activities would be a good start for fieldwork on this topic.

1 Industrial change and local opinion
Companies are bought and sold every day. Some are taken over by a global player who might rebrand its operations in the TNC’s own image, and/or ‘rightsize’ the workforce. But what do local customers or employees think? What impact will this change of ownership have on their life and, in their opinion, is the development a good thing for the wider community? Design a range of interview questions and consider who you might like to interview and how you might get access to these people. Consider whether the approach of a vox pop or a quick question posed to a local social media group result in a greater response for you to analyse?

2 Investigating branding and ‘glocalisation’
To what extent do TNCs market their products to suit their customers in your country? Using online resources, find out about how far TNCs tailor the presentation of their operations, goods and services to suit an audience. Often you can access different versions of the same website by clicking on the appropriate flag in the top right-hand corner. In the case of some global brands there may be little difference, but this might prompt you to think about which national culture its ethos and imagery originally come from. And, if the same branding is used worldwide, might this be seen as ‘cultural imperialism’?

3 Production and consumption: workers’ rights and the environment
Find out about the impact of initiatives such as Fairtrade, #whomademyclothes or GreenPalm in your country. What effects have the activities of international governmental or non-governmental organisations, such as the United Nations, had on the homogenisation of production standards that protect (or reduce) the rights of workers and/or the environment (including animal rights)? Also, try to find out about the degree to which consumers’ choices are influenced by such issues where you live.
In this section you will learn about dimensions of, and factors in, globalisation

Some words or phrases are so commonly used that we rarely think about the complex processes that the term describes. For example, sustainability, climate change – even geography! While globalisation is not new, most geographers would argue it is a lot more than just ‘the world becoming global’.

Globalisation is a term used frequently within trade and economics and describes a process of opening up world trade and markets to transnational companies (TNCs) and an increasingly interconnected world (Figure 1). However, a definition of globalisation should also involve the associated effects of this process on people, culture, political systems, environment and the quality of life of every human on the planet!

**Figure 1** Globalisation describes the often complex processes associated with an increasingly interconnected world

### Dimensions of globalisation

Globalisation has many interconnected aspects. Some of these are outlined below, with some examples.

**Flows of information, technology and capital**
- Cheap, reliable and near instantaneous communication between virtually all parts of the world allows for information and capital to be shared at unprecedented levels.
- Money flows electronically around the world.
- Highly developed economies (HDEs) invest in less-developed economies (LDEs) to take advantage of cheaper production costs.
- Technology, for example the internet and associated mobile technologies, largely ignores political boundaries when connecting people and places (see 1.3).
- Countries such as India provide a range of financial and IT services for high-income countries (so-called outsourcing).

**Flows of products and labour**
- Global transport systems have never been cheaper or more efficient in moving both people and goods.
- High-speed rail networks (such as Beijing to Shanghai – 1250 km in just 4 hours and 30 minutes), international airport hubs (Dubai has now overtaken Heathrow as the world’s busiest airport) and containerisation, for example, have revolutionised travel.
- People move around the world for employment. This includes specialised workers, for example, who move between different units/companies of a TNC on a short-term basis and unskilled migrant workers using a range of transport modes.
- Tourists now travel increasing distances to more remote and exotic locations, encouraged by global marketing and low-cost flights.

**Flows of services and global marketing**
- Services, such as global marketing, follow the flows of capital, information, people and products.
- Marketing is now globalised and uses international strategies to deliver intercontinental imagery/messages.
- TNCs use the same adverts to advertise their products in different parts of the world.
- **Global products**, such as Coca-Cola or Nike, rely on a common global brand with the same identity the world over.

**Patterns of production, distribution and consumption**
- TNCs dictate where their products are made – generally in LDEs where labour costs are cheaper.
- Products are distributed around the world to meet the demands of consumers in HDEs.
Global systems and governance

Factors in globalisation

Globalisation is influenced by a number of factors. Some of these are outlined below.

**New technologies, communications and information systems**
- Information can now be shared easily and cheaply with an audience of billions at the click of a button.
- Mobile phones are one of the most important technologies for LDEs as they connect different people and markets, and so trade in ways that were previously not possible (see 1.2).

**Global financial systems**
- Banks and financial services operate across the world. They are linked together by vital transmission systems that allow lending and flows of money.
- The 2007 collapse of US house prices led to a credit squeeze (when banks no longer wished to lend money) and then a global banking crisis in 2008.

**Transport systems**
- The world has never been more accessible. A global transport network allows the movement of people and goods across vast distances.
- Without the friction of time and space, there are both new opportunities as well as new threats (such as the spread of disease).

**Security**
- As national boundaries have become less of a barrier to more mobile and better-informed populations, traditional security measures have reduced in relative significance.
- High-profile leaks of sensitive information have brought the issue of cybersecurity to greater prominence due to our reliance on information systems in all walks of life. For example, in 2016 the leak of 11.5 million financial and legal records exposed wrongdoing on a global scale.
- On average, the cost of an online security breach for a big corporation is US$4 million – and this figure is increasing annually.

**Trade agreements**
- Without a system of global trading rules, countries would resist some foreign imports while possibly favouring others.
- The World Trade Organization (WTO) (1994) oversees over 97 per cent of world trade. It provides a forum for negotiations and ensures that trade agreements are followed. The WTO agreement is over 26 000 pages, which hints at the complexity of world trade today.

Colonialism

In reality, Christopher Columbus followed the Russians, Chinese and even Vikings when he accidentally ‘discovered’ the Americas (somewhere near the Bahamas). But the half-truth persists and he set out a model for the 450 years of European colonialism that followed. Historians might argue as to the long-term effects of such globalisation, but most would agree that colonialism sought to extract as much wealth as possible from the land, and also the people. In the 1890s, Cecil Rhodes put the case for British colonialism as ‘We must find new lands from which we can easily obtain raw materials and at the same time exploit the cheap labour that is available from the natives of the colonies. The colonies (will) also provide a dumping ground for the surplus goods in our factories.’

ACTIVITIES

1. Why is the term ‘globalisation’ so widely used yet still so difficult to define?
2. Search the internet for a list of the top TNCs in the world. How many have you heard of? Evaluate the information you find (look at the sectors of industry and the countries of origin) and draw conclusions about why they have been so successful.

STRETCH YOURSELF

In groups or in pairs, discuss whether you think that globalisation is something that we should be worried about. Think of advantages and disadvantages and compare your findings with the other groups.
In this section you will learn about issues associated with unequal flows of people, money, ideas and technology in Uganda.

You may have played the game shown in Figure 1. It involves removing a brick from a tall stack and then placing it at the top of the pile. A wise move will allow the stack to grow taller while keeping solid foundations below. As the game continues and the stack of bricks grows taller, more risks have to be taken and eventually the blocks tumble. Global systems are certainly no game, but there are winners and losers. Look again at Figure 1, 1.1 – such is the interdependence of global systems that any ‘tumble’ might have an impact globally.

Think about

The British Empire
The origins of the British Empire can be traced as far back as the fifteenth century when English seamen sailed and traded all over the world. English colonies were subsequently formed in America (late 1500s), West Indies (1620s) and Canada (1760s). Between 1815 and 1914, 16 million square kilometres of territory and 400 million people were added to the British Empire, including India and colonies across Africa (Uganda was made a colony in 1894). The British way of life – government, laws and religion – was imposed, sometimes by force, and national economies ‘served’ the needs of the Empire. It was not until after the Second World War that the British Empire was dismantled and replaced by a voluntary organisation of former colonies called the Commonwealth.

Uganda and global systems
Uganda is a land-locked country in East Africa that lies within the Nile basin (Figure 2). Uganda shouldn’t be a poor country – it is green and fertile, and has plenty of resources such as copper and cobalt. However, civil war, corruption and HIV/AIDS have all acted as checks to development. Nearly one-third of the 35 million population live below the national poverty line and, of the many indicators of development, life expectancy stands out – it is only 59 years.

In this context, have global systems worked for or against the interests of Uganda and its people?
**Inequalities and injustices**

Poverty in Uganda is greatest in rural areas, particularly in the north and north-east where the majority of the population are smallholder subsistence farmers. When Uganda was part of the British Empire, the British East Africa Company strongly influenced the country’s exports. Low-valued primary products, such as the cash crops of coffee, tea and cotton, were exported around the Empire and they continue to dominate Ugandan exports.

However, fish is now a traditional food staple for Ugandans living on the shore of Lake Victoria, and is one of the country’s most profitable exports. This trade is unsustainable (Figure 3). Overfishing and the predatory Nile Perch (introduced by the British) have resulted in stocks of indigenous fish being reduced to extinction levels. This in turn has caused fish factories to close and an associated knock-on effect to the local economy.

**Stability, growth and development**

Shambas, the smallholdings owned by subsistence farmers, are an unlikely location to see the positive effects of global systems. Against a traditional backdrop of coffee bushes and banana and yam plants, occasional mobile phone antennae on the tops of farm buildings are evidence of recent technological changes.

The installation of fixed cables in Uganda is cost prohibitive, but cheap wireless technology now means that telephony and particularly access to the internet is possible even in remote rural areas. The so-called ‘Village Phone’ model offers loans to people wishing to start a mobile phone business (Figure 4). The loan allows the purchase of a mobile (and increasingly smart) phone, a car battery to charge it and a booster antenna that can pick up signals from 25 km away. There is a rapidly growing market of users who are willing to pay for this mobile phone service – for example, farmers pay to access the internet and to gain information about the price they might pay for seeds at market or information on new farming techniques.

**ACTIVITIES**

1. Evaluate the effects of unequal flows of people, money, ideas and technology on global systems on Uganda. (Hint: consider stability, growth, development, inequalities, conflicts and injustices.)

2. Making reference to a named country, focus on two aspects and assess whether there were benefits of being part of the British Empire for that country. (Aspects could be, for example, infrastructure, investment, public health.)

**STRETCH YOURSELF**

Uganda gained independence from Great Britain in 1962. Assess whether independence brought greater political stability. You could compare the three periods: 1962–71, 1971–79 and 1979 to the present day. You may find online resources to be useful (such as www.nationsencyclopedia.com).
‘When America sneezes we all catch a cold.’ This is a statement as much about our interconnectedness with America (and whether this is a positive) as it is about an unequal relationship. The USA is an example of a country, a world superpower, that uses global systems to drive home its advantages over the rest of the world. Other countries, where resources are more limited, are only able to respond to global events in a more limited way. Rather than being leaders, they are followers or recipients of change.

Another world superpower, China, has the largest number of internet users in the world – 650 million in 2015, nearly 25 per cent of the world total. Knowing this may provide some context for the number of Chinese websites in the global top 10.

In this section you will learn about:
◆ the use of the internet to influence geopolitical events
◆ the negative impacts of a single-product economy

Open sesame!

Alibaba.com is a highly successful, Chinese e-commerce company. Its web portals have helped boost the success of China’s manufacturing sector by connecting exporters to businesses in over 190 countries worldwide. Since the establishment of its first web marketplace in 1999, the Alibaba Group has grown to become a leading facilitator of international trade. It is also influential among domestic shoppers. The Alibaba Group’s websites include Taobao (an equivalent of eBay, see Figure 1), Alipay (an online payment service with 400 million users) and Tmall that enables Chinese consumers to buy branded products from international as well as Chinese companies, listing some 70000 brands.

Think about

The internet in numbers
Every 60 seconds, 204 million emails are sent, 75 hours of video uploaded, 4 million Google searches and 100 000 Facebook friend requests are made, and the big technology companies, the majority based in the US, earn US$142 000! Yet today only around 40 per cent of the world’s population have an internet connection – so these numbers are only set to increase.
Nigeria: negative impacts of a single-product economy

Look at Figure 2. Nigeria is a country that should have done well from globalisation. It has proven oil reserves of around 36 billion barrels and natural gas reserves of over 2800 billion cubic metres! It is an example of a single-product economy – oil and gas accounts for more than 80 per cent of its national income. Without the global trade in oil and Nigeria's membership of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the country's development would surely have been limited…or would it?

Global demand for oil has fuelled Nigeria's economy but at significant cost (Figure 3). The focus on oil alone has resulted in a dramatic decline in the traditional industries of agriculture and manufacturing. Rural–urban migration has increased, resulting in increased levels of rural poverty and overcrowding in cities such as Lagos and Abuja. As Nigeria had neither the technology nor the skills to exploit the oil, the world's major oil companies were encouraged to develop these reserves. These global giants have been criticised for having scant regard to the local environment and indigenous local people. For example, oil spills are commonplace in the Niger Delta and land rights of local people are reported to have been abused.

The high income that is usually generated from oil means that the Nigerian currency is significantly overvalued, making imported consumer goods cheap. However, this results in domestically manufactured goods being too expensive and unable to be exported – a process known as Dutch disease and common in other resource-rich emerging major economies (EMEs). Deindustrialisation is a consequence of this, which drives more people into the oil and gas industries, exacerbating the problems identified earlier. A greater emphasis on exports of oil and gas makes Nigeria less internationally competitive in manufactured goods and increases its reliance on foreign imports.

ACTIVITIES

1 Suggest how the internet is capable of influencing geopolitical events.

2 A country's Human Development Index (HDI) is a ranking of human development. Look at the data of the components of Nigeria's HDI in Figure 4 and present the data appropriately. Evaluate and interpret the trends in the data.

3 Research the current global market conditions for oil prices. What effect could they have on Nigeria's opportunities for long-term growth?

4 Research similar data for an emerging country in South-east Asia. What similarities and differences can you infer from your findings?

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
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<th>Mean years of schooling</th>
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</table>

Figure 2 Nigeria – an economy dominated by oil

Figure 3 Environmental costs of oil in Nigeria

Figure 4 Nigeria's component indices and HDI since 2005
In this section you will learn about international trade and investment

Anyone who uses an online auction site will understand the feeling of a ‘good deal’ (Figure 1). Either as a buyer or seller, there is much satisfaction to be had from selling an unwanted item or for purchasing an in-demand product that is cheaper than on the high street.

**Trends in international trade**

Most economists and geographers would agree that nations are better off when they buy and sell from one another. Indeed, since no single country has everything it needs and materials and resources are unevenly distributed, international trade is inevitable. So, the foreign producer is able to sell more and make increased profits; the consumer has access to products that might not be available domestically or better meet their specific needs. Yet international trade remains highly contentious — foreign products might be bought cheaply but the (more costly) domestic seller loses a sale. Countries exert their political and economic power globally to ensure that they gain from international trade while other countries lose out.

The value and volume of trade has increased dramatically since the Second World War (Figure 2). International trade (exports) is expanding faster than the world’s economic output (as measured by GDP). This trade is seen as one of the main ‘engines’ of economic growth. However, it is also clear that the ideal of free trade breaking down barriers between countries at different stages of development is not yet a reality (Figure 3).

**Figure 1** eBay was launched in 1995; if all international trade was free of barriers such as trade agreements, legal systems and corruption (as it is on eBay) then the world’s real income could be 30 per cent higher, according to the European Trade Study Group.

**Figure 2** Value of world merchandise exports (1948–2013)

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2013</td>
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**Another View**

Does international trade and investment make the world a safer place?

Deaths from war have fallen since the end of the Second World War while, over the same period, the volume of global trade has soared. Global systems may provide greater opportunities for international conflict (e.g. the global trade in arms sales or the increasing use of social media to influence others), but might also offer security and support the status quo. In a global war, increased risk and cost make international trade difficult. Components and raw materials may become short in supply — either because they are imported or because materials are diverted to make military hardware. Far more devastating would be the effects on the economies of individual countries. Such is the reliance of firms and businesses on international trade and investment that many would simply not survive. Would Chinese, Russian or American industries support a regional or international war and risk losing multi-billion or trillion dollars of investment? But then again, the causes of conflict do not always follow logic or reason.
The Umbrella City

Umbrellas have been around for more than 3000 years. It is likely that the Chinese were the first to create a ‘collapsible fabric dome’ to protect from rain. The umbrella was subsequently exported via the Silk Road to Asia and then across Europe, gaining particular popularity within the Roman Empire. Umbrellas are now recognised worldwide, a global product that comes in many shapes and sizes (a staggering 5000 models are on sale on Amazon). Today, around 70 per cent of the world’s umbrellas are still made in China. At the centre of this production phenomenon is Songxia, in the city of Shaoxing (Figures 4 and 5). Described as the umbrella capital of the world, around half a billion umbrellas are made here annually in more than 200 factories — a single worker makes 300 umbrellas a day. Songxia retains its prominent position as a result of comparative advantages:

◆ **Specialisation** — all kinds of umbrellas are manufactured, from traditional rain umbrellas to golf, mini, children’s, wedding, parasol and fashion umbrellas.

◆ **Access to domestic and international markets** — good road networks connect Songxia to the large population centres of Hangzhou city (70km) and Shanghai (260km), and also Ningbo Port (80km), from where umbrellas are exported.
International trade

Patterns of international trade and investment

Although the ratio of exports to GDP has risen for most countries, even in LDEs, the 49 poorest countries only account for 0.6 per cent of global trade (compared to 37 per cent of the top five exporting countries). Such differences are exaggerated further by the type and limited range of exports from LDEs, which tend to be dominated by a limited number of low-value primary products such as crops or raw materials. Such single product economies are vulnerable to market price fluctuations and may have limited options for generating other sources of foreign income should natural disaster strike (e.g. drought or flood) or even if tastes or fashions change.

Cheap production costs – as a labour-intensive industry, umbrella manufacture in China benefits significantly from low labour costs and a flexible, local and efficient 40 000-strong workforce (mainly female), prepared to work long and sometimes unsociable hours.

Government support – local government support for this single-product city includes tax incentives for producers, as well as preferential policies for all parts of the supply chain (such as fabric weaving, dyeing and printing, manufacturing of ribs, poles, handles).

Songxia Umbrella Industrial Park – established with local government support to strengthen the competitiveness of the many local manufacturers and to raise the brand awareness of Songxia Umbrellas in domestic and global markets.

Figure 5 Songxia Umbrella Industrial Park; if you have an umbrella there is a high probability it was manufactured here!

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Figure 6 World merchandise exports by region and selected economy, 1948–2013

CIS comprises Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Georgia (until 2008)
Six East Asian traders are: Hong Kong, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand
In contrast, world merchandise exports, particularly manufactured consumer goods, have traditionally been dominated by North America, Europe and East Asia (Figure 6). China overtook Japan as the leading Asian exporter in 2004, just three years after it joined the WTO. It then overtook the USA in 2007 and Germany in 2009 to become the world’s leading exporter. However, this pattern is beginning to change. Between 1993 and 2013, the share of developed economies’ merchandise declined significantly from over 70 per cent to just over 60 per cent. In the same period, exports from the so-called EME4 (Hong Kong China, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Chinese Taipei) also fell. In contrast, over the same period, the share of developing economies’ exports in world trade and that of the so-called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) increased markedly.

**Foreign direct investment (FDI).** The amount of capital invested in foreign countries, has largely mirrored the changes in world trade (Figure 7). For example, while China (perhaps unsurprisingly) was the world’s largest recipient of FDI in 2014, Singapore and Brazil were ranked fourth and fifth, respectively. FDI flows to developed countries as a whole dropped by 14 per cent compared to 2013, also mirroring the small but significant shift in world trade from HDEs to LDEs. (A transition economy is one that is changing from a centrally planned economy to one driven by market forces.)

> **Figure 7** FDI inflows (US$ billion) by major region, 2012–14 (data ©UNCTAD)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region/Economy</th>
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**ACTIVITIES**

1. Create a line graph using the data in Figure 2. Use the x-axis for the year and think carefully about the scale you use for the y-axis. What do you notice about the rate of the growth of global exports?

2. Study Figure 3. List factors that might influence the volume and patterns of international trade and investment.

3. Study Figure 6. With reference to specific figures and countries and/or regions, analyse changes in world exports. Write your answer as concise evidence-based bullet points.

4. You have designed a new wind-resistant umbrella and already have a large order book of international sales! In which country would you choose to manufacture your product? Explain your answer.

**STRETCH YOURSELF**

One viewpoint is that markets work most efficiently when the buyer and seller both receive a fair price. How does globalisation influence this position of equality?
1.5 Trading relationships

In this section you will learn about terms of trade and the impacts of metal extraction

What are terms of trade?

When players are picked for a team game, it is likely that the best players will be picked first. Those chosen last are likely to be given marginal roles where their influence on the game is slight. Many argue that world trade is a game played out between international powers who pick so-called *terms of trade* at the expense of developing countries.

The phrase ‘terms of trade’ refers to the cost of goods that a country has to import, compared with the price at which they can sell the goods they export. HDEs tend to import primary products from LDEs and subsequently turn these into manufactured goods for export to world markets — in other words, the value of the product increases as it passes through the hands of HDEs (Figure 1). In general, the prices of manufactured goods have continually increased over the last few decades, whereas the prices of primary products have fluctuated (Figure 2). This means that LDEs need to export increased volumes of primary products to purchase the manufactured goods that they require. So the terms of trade for LDEs are often uncertain and less favourable. The rapid industrialisation of China has offered opportunities for some regions, particularly Africa, to improve terms of trade but this is not an equal power relationship.

Impacts of metal extraction

In the last 20 years, there has been a dramatic increase in demand for metal from the emerging economies of East Asia, particularly China (Figure 3). To meet this growth in demand, metal supplies that were previously uneconomic to exploit have been developed. In short, the frontiers of metal exploitation have shifted from north to south — from the advanced markets and developed economies to those that are emerging and developing. This global shift, despite political risks, is particularly apparent in Africa.

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**Figure 1** Free trade, where goods are traded globally without barriers, does not necessarily mean that the trade is fair or the profits evenly distributed.

**Figure 2** Fluctuating commodity prices, 1973–2012 (index 1973 = 0); adjusted for inflation, energy prices have fallen since 2014 but are still well above 1973 levels.

**Figure 3** Percentage growth in China’s consumption of metals (2002–14)
New mines in Africa result in more investment and jobs and, in turn, increased government revenues. New trade routes have been established and the geopolitical implications of increased African–Asian cooperation are also significant. China in particular argues that its economic policies offer a ‘no strings attached’ route to development. However, critics point to unfulfilled Chinese promises of development assistance, flooding of cheap Chinese manufactured goods into African local markets.

**Tata Steel, UK**

In a globalised economy, the consequences of decision-making at continental level impacts at every other level. When leaders of the premier economic group, the G20, met in November 2015, many shared an economic concern – steel plant closures across Europe, the US and Mexico. The common cause was the competition from Chinese steel. As local demand for steel fell, Chinese steel producers looked to international markets to absorb the overproduction. Half of the 1.6 billion tonnes of steel made globally each year comes from China, where its production is state-subsidised, giving it huge pricing power.

‘Steel dumping’ is a practice where steel is sold at a rate even below the cost of production, creating an oversupply of steel. This can cause steelmakers to lose jobs or to close altogether.

Several different measures can be taken to counteract steel dumping. For example, in 2015, the EU, in order to protect its domestic steel producers, imposed anti-dumping duties on selected steel imports from Asia. Then, in 2016, when Tata Steel announced its intention to sell its UK business, risking the jobs of its thousands of employees, there was a call for the British Government to renationalise the steel industry (see 2.2). Instead the Government said it would work with Tata to find a buyer, to protect steel jobs.

Britain’s Brexit vote in 2016 raised questions among potential buyers of Tata Steel’s UK operations, about whether or not a UK outside the EU would have a freer hand to impose more protective import tariffs.

> **Figure 4** In 2015, following 18 months of decreases in the price of global steel, Britain’s steel industry was unable to compete and jobs were lost.

**ACTIVITIES**

1. Is free trade the same as fair trade (see 1.9)? Explain your answer with reference to trading relationships between large developed economies, emerging economies and less-developed economies. Does Figure 1 help to give the whole picture?

2. Who does ‘steel dumping’ really benefit? Consider the different groups of people who gain from cheaper steel being made available.
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