

## Culture and Globalization

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## Culture and Globalization

### Preface

The Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter famously characterized capitalism as a process of "creative destruction." While this phenomenon may help propel economic development, many people around the world are coming to question the impact that the worldwide expansion of the capitalist model is having on the most precious aspects of their identity.

For many people, their own cultural values are too important to put a price tag on, and no destruction can be considered "creative." On the other hand, globalization can also be a profoundly enriching process, opening minds to new ideas and experiences, and strengthening the finest universal values of humanity.

Many policy makers have not yet considered how the protection of local or indigenous cultural values conflicts with the forces of globalization. Many of the questions raised pertaining to cultural issues are new—and, as you will see, some of the ways that cultural issues are approached may be of questionable merit. This Issue in Depth seeks to explore some of these especially sensitive and subtle issues involved in the globalization debate.

Readers of this Issue in Depth should try to think of cultural issues pertaining to globalization in terms of conflicting values, and decide for themselves what aspects of globalization may be positive, negative, or truly indifferent to cultures around the world.

### Introduction

Globalization101.org has defined the phenomenon of globalization as the "acceleration and intensification of economic interaction among the people, companies, and governments of different nations." Most studies of globalization tend to focus on changes occurring in the economic and political spheres. The details of those issues, such as tariff rates and international agreements, have fallen within the traditional province of government bureaucrats and political leaders.

However, the dramatic changes wrought by globalization have forced policymakers to respond to public pressures in many new areas. Observers of globalization are increasingly recognizing that globalization is having a significant impact on matters such as local cultures, matters which are less tangible and hard to quantify, but often fraught with intense emotion and controversy.

Jeremy Rifkin, a prominent critic of globalization, writes that:

"The powers that be have long believed that the world is divided into two spheres of influence: commerce and government. Now organizations representing the cultural sphere—the environment, species preservation, rural life, health, food and cuisine, religion, human rights, the family, women's issues, ethnic heritage, the arts and other quality-of-life issues—are pounding on the doors at world economic and political forums and demanding a place at the table. They represent the birth of a new "civil-society politics" and an antidote to the forces pushing for globalization."

Generally speaking, issues surrounding culture and globalization have received less attention than the debates, which have arisen over globalization and the environment or labor standards. In part this is because cultural issues are more subtle and sensitive, and often more confusing.

"The homogenizing influences of globalization that are most often condemned by the new nationalists and by cultural romanticists are actually positive; globalization promotes integration and the removal not only of cultural barriers but of many of the negative dimensions of culture. Globalization is a vital step toward both a more stable world and

"Many societies, particularly indigenous peoples, view culture as their richest heritage, without which they have no roots, history or soul. Its value is other than monetary. To commodify it is to destroy it."

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better lives for the people in it."

-- David Rothkopf, "In Praise of Cultural Imperialism," *Foreign Policy*  
June 22, 1997

-- Maude Barlow, "The Global Monoculture,"  
*Earth Island Journal*. Autumn 2001

## Globalization vs. Local Cultures

The globalization of the production and distribution of goods and services is a welcome development for many people in that it offers them access to products that they would not otherwise have. However, some are concerned that the changes brought about by globalization threaten the viability of locally made products and the people who produce them. For example, the new availability of foreign foods in a market—often at cheaper prices—can displace local farmers who have traditionally earned a living by working their small plots of family-owned land and selling their goods locally.

Globalization, of course, does more than simply increase the availability of foreign-made consumer products and disrupt traditional producers. It is also increasing international trade in cultural products and services, such as movies, music, and publications. The expansion of trade in cultural products is increasing the exposure of all societies to foreign cultures. And the exposure to foreign cultural goods frequently brings about changes in local cultures, values, and traditions. Although there is no consensus on the consequences of globalization on national cultures, many people believe that a people's exposure to foreign culture can undermine their own cultural identity.

## The Influence of U.S. Corporations on Local Mores

One of the principal concerns about the new globalization of culture that is supposedly taking place is that it not only leads to a homogenization of world culture, but also that it largely represents the "Americanization" of world cultures. The spread of American corporations abroad has various consequences on local cultures, some very visible, and others more subtle. For example, the influence of American companies on other countries' cultural identity can be seen with regard to food, which matters on two levels. First, food itself is in many countries an integral aspect of the culture. Second, restaurants can influence the mores and habits in societies where they operate. The French are proud of having a localized cuisine, including crepes and pastries, which reflects their unique culture. Because of their pride in their cuisine, some French people are concerned that U.S. restaurant chains crowd out their own products with fast food. Some French people would argue that fast food does not belong in French society and is of lower quality than their own.

Moreover, restaurant chains not only affect eating habits, but they also influence the traditions and habits in countries where they are located. Starbucks causes cultural concerns in Italy because of the association that Italians make between coffee and leisurely sidewalk cafes. Coffee in Italy is more than a drink; it is part of the way of life and Italian mores. While in the United States it is common for people to buy takeaway coffee for drinking in the street or office, in Italy people usually prefer to relax and chat with peers while drinking coffee. Coffee shops offer a personal, friendly atmosphere that many Italians believe a large chain could not provide. Similarly, many people would prefer to frequent coffee shops that are each unique, while Starbucks offers a standard formula.

Another example can be seen with the worldwide influence of McDonald's. Fittingly enough, the sociologist George Ritzer coined the term *McDonaldization*. In his book *The McDonaldization of Society*, Ritzer states that "the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world." Statistics show that within the last fifty years, McDonalds has expanded to over 31,000 restaurants worldwide.

Video: McDonaldization: Interview with George Ritzer

May191 (2007, October 24). McDonaldization theory of George Ritzer. Retrieved June 22, 2012, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fdy1AgO6Fp4>

McDonaldization, Ritzer argues, is a result of globalization and, ultimately, leads to global uniformity, influencing local habits and traditions. Take, for example, the previously mentioned example of Starbucks coffee disrupting the traditional coffee culture in Italy. This sometimes leads to negative reactions, such as in the case of the Starbucks coffeehouse in the

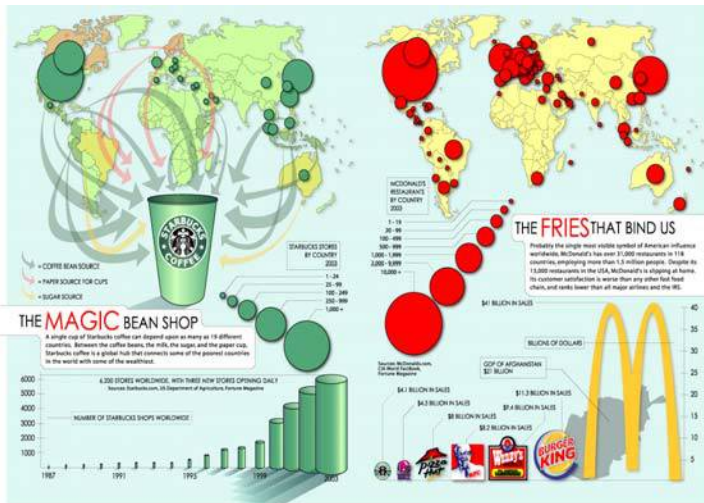
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Forbidden City in central Beijing. This particular Starbucks branch, which opened in 2000, was shut down in 2007 due to heavy protests. Critics called it a stain on China's historical legacy.

## Global Graph of Starbucks and McDonald Monopolies



Starbucks/McDonald's global dominion graph [Electronic image]. (2006). Retrieved June 22, 2012, from: <http://consumerist.com/2006/08/starbucks-mcdonalds-global-dominion-graph.html>

Concerns that globalization leads to a dominance of US customs and values are also present with regard to films and the entertainment industry more broadly. This is the case with French films in France, for example. As will be discussed later in the brief, governments from countries like France have attempted to intervene in the functioning of the market to try to protect their local cultural industries, by taking measures such as restricting the number of foreign films that can be shown.

But if a government imposes domestic films, TV shows, or books onto its people, it limits their choice to consume what they prefer. In other words, the government is effectively saying that it does not trust its people to make the choices that are right for them.

Throughout history, cultures have changed and evolved. Globalization may accelerate cultural change. However, because change is driven by the choice of consumers, the elements of a particular culture will inevitably reflect consumer choice.

## The Dominance of the American Market

Why is the American market so dominant within the force of globalization? The United States can be seen to play such a prominent role in cultural globalization for a number of reasons:

1. **The size of the U.S. market.** With nearly 300 million consumers, the United States is one of the largest markets in the world. When a company has access to the U.S. market and these 300 million people, it can take advantage of economies of scale.
2. **The wealth of the U.S. economy.** Although the United States contains only four percent of the world's population, it accounts for nearly 25 percent of global economic output. The combined effects of being one of the richest countries in the world and one of the largest in terms of population put the U.S. market in a dominant position. Only the European Union now exceeds the U.S. market in size and wealth.



The EU achieved unity of currency in 2002. Currently, the Euro has been adopted by 17 member states of the European Union and is shared by 500 million citizens, making it one of the world's most important currencies and one of the EU's greatest achievements (European Commission, 2013).

- 3. A comparatively homogenous culture.** When measured in terms of the numbers of languages and ethnicities present, the United States ranks as one of the most diverse countries in the world. However, when measured by the size of minority ethnic, linguistic or cultural groups, it can be

considered relatively homogenous. Consider that 97 percent of the U.S. population is considered fluent in the English language, and that the U.S. Census Bureau classifies 77.9 percent of the population within one major ethnic group (Caucasian, non-Hispanic) (US Census, 2012). This contrasts dramatically with countries such as Nigeria or India, where no language is spoken as a mother tongue by any segment that accounts for more than 30 percent of the population. The ability to speak English grants one access to almost the entire U.S. population, as well as hundreds of millions of other people around the world.

## The U.S. Market Versus the World

### *GDP per capita vs. population:*

In 2012, the United States had the world's 7th largest nominal GDP per capita, with a per capita GDP of \$49,965, superseded by various nations including, Qatar, Luxembourg, , and Norway.

*Population vs. GDP per capita:* The United States was the world's third-largest country by population in 2012. Of the world's 10 most populous nations, only one other country Japan, had a GDP per capita above \$11,000 (World Bank, 2013).

*Language:* Linguists estimate that more than half a billion people around the world speak English as a primary or secondary language, and that nearly one billion people understand some English. Only Mandarin Chinese has more primary and secondary speakers. It is important to note, however, that Mandarin Chinese is limited to South-East Asia, while English has virtually reached a global spread.

As a result of the size of its market, the US is the largest import destination in the world. According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), in 2012, US imports totaled \$2.3 trillion, which constituted 12.7 percent of the world share. This has greatly exacerbated the trade balance (exports – imports) in the country, which currently stands around – (\$600) billion ("U.S. international trade," 2012). Ironically, this access has allowed other markets around the world to grow considerably. Since the US market keeps buying foreign goods, foreign producers are becoming more prosperous. This is particularly visible in China, who exported \$425.5 billion worth of goods to the US in 2012. As a result, the Chinese economy has been growing at an astonishing rate, and is currently challenging the US dominance of the world market (US Census, 2013). For example, Chinese exports have recently taken a strong hold in the Latin American market, where China has become the #1 import market for Brazil, the largest economy in the region.

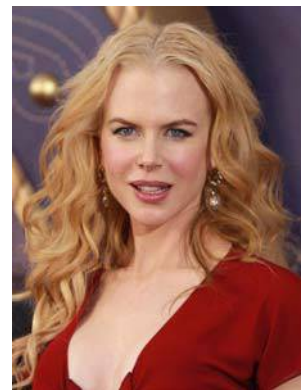
A recent book by Fareed Zakaria, entitled *The Post-American World: Release 2.0*, paints a vivid picture concerning how the hegemony of the United States has been declining in recent years. The recent economic crisis has only exacerbated the trend. The emerging economies were not only affected to a lesser extent, but they also blame the US and Europe for causing the Great Recession. Therefore, the dominance of the US market is coming into question, and as a result of globalization and the rise of the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), the world is looking for alternatives to the US. This is shown in Latin America by the rise of UNASUR and across the Pacific by the forecast future dominance of China. As a result, the hegemony of the US has been in steep decline, and the rise of the rest has undermined US dominance.

Another cited reason for the decline of U.S. hegemony is its dependence on foreign debtors, the U.S. has also outsourced much of its manufacturing and decreasing confidence in the dollar since Standard and Poor downgraded its credit rating, has forced them to rely on military prowess to maintain hegemony abroad (Todhunter, 2013).

## The Integration of Cultures

Although the United States may play a dominant role within the phenomenon of cultural globalization, it is important to keep in mind that this is not an entirely one-way street. Many other countries also contribute to global culture, including American culture itself. Just as American popular culture influences foreign countries, other national cultures are influential within the United States and also increase their presence worldwide.

Hollywood is a good example of an industry that integrates elements from more than one culture. Most people would think of Hollywood as something entirely American. However, while Hollywood dominates world cinema, American movies are subject to foreign influence. According to *The Economist*, "one reason for Hollywood's success is that from the earliest days it was open to foreign talent and foreign money." Many American movies are remakes of foreign films. For example, the 2007 Academy Award Winner for Best Picture, "The Departed", is a remake of the Chinese film, "Infernal Affairs."



Credit: PicApp

There has also been a recent explosion of American remakes of European films. A perfect example is "The Tourist" (originally the French film, "Anthony Zimmer") which raked in \$287 million at the box office. In 2011 the *Millennium Trilogy*, a Swedish series, was adapted to film in "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" which opened to critical acclaim and grossed over \$230 million at the box office (Box Office Mojo, 2011).

Also, many film-making companies, producers, and actors in Hollywood are not inherently American. The Columbia Tristar and Twentieth Century Fox companies are owned by Japan's Sony and Australia's News Corporation, respectively, two foreign media conglomerates. James Cameron, producer of the movie *Titanic*, is Canadian. Moreover, many of Hollywood's most famous actors are not Americans. Arnold Schwarzenegger is from Austria, and Nicole Kidman grew up in Australia. From this perspective, it can be argued Hollywood is a multicultural institution.

However, it is also true that actors such as Nicole Kidman and Mel Gibson, upon arriving in Hollywood, were given language lessons to help them lose their foreign accents. Hollywood producers ask actors to Americanize their accents largely over sensitivities that American audiences might perceive actors negatively if they appeared to be foreign. So, while Hollywood may incorporate many foreign elements into its craft—especially behind the scenes—its public face is distinctly American.

## Reaffirmation of Local Culture

Despite these homogenizing effects, some people would argue that globalization can also reinforce local cultures. In India, for example, satellite TV permits an increase in the number of regional channels, many of which can and do telecast Indian content. This gives an Indian individual new opportunity to identify with his regional ties. Similarly global companies have to take into account the culture of all the countries where they conduct operations or sell products. This can also enhance cultural awareness.

Many observers have speculated that the homogenizing effect of globalization on national cultures in fact tends to produce a reaction among indigenous peoples, which leads those whose cultures are threatened to want to reaffirm their own local traditions. Author Benjamin Barber, in particular, has made the case that the sometimes-violent reactions against the West by elements within Islamic society may be seen in this light. Barber argues that these rebellious movements may be seen as negative manifestations of a broader desire to reaffirm their traditional values, against the disruptive onslaught of Western beliefs.

For example, capitalism favors a more fast-paced environment and a consumer culture, which differ from the lifestyle that people in some countries are used to. This is particularly hard to accept for people who are afraid of change and want to preserve their traditions.

## A Clash of Civilizations?

Harvard University Professor Samuel Huntington has produced one of the seminal works on the concept that culture will be the principal factor that divides the world in the future. In the article entitled, "The Clash of Civilizations?," which was later expanded into a full book, Huntington writes:

"...The fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics." (Huntington, 1993)

Huntington defines a civilization as "the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have.... It is defined by both common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people." In doing so, he divides the world into major cultural groups including Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and African civilization.

At the core of his thesis is the notion that, with the end of global competition over economic ideology, the fault lines of world conflict now almost all lie along rifts between these great cultures of the world. Huntington sees these notions of cultural identity as so primal that he believes they ultimately will take precedence over the secular, unifying forces of economic globalization.

Author Benjamin Barber has written another of the most significant recent works on the way cultures clash, titled "Jihad vs. McWorld." However, unlike Huntington, who sees the world splitting along cultural lines, Barber defines the battle as one between traditional values, which is the source of what he terms Jihad, on the one hand (although the term originates in Islam, Barber applies it to any tradition-centered, anti-globalizing movement); and the forces of globalization, or McWorld, on the other.

According to Barber, McWorld is characterized by the "anti-politics of globalism." That is, it is "bureaucratic, technocratic, and meritocratic, focused on the administration of things—with people, however, among the chief things to be administered." But there are positive aspects to this rather sterile market approach. Markets do reinforce the "quest for international peace and stability.... Markets are enemies of parochialism, isolation, fractiousness, war."

In this world of supreme economic choice, however, traditions and cultural values are diminished as "shopping has little tolerance for blue laws, whether dictated by pub-closing British paternalism, Sabbath-observing Jewish Orthodox fundamentalism, or no-Sunday-liquor-sales Massachusetts Puritanism."

Jihad is Barber's antithesis of McWorld, emphasizing local identity, sense of community, and solidarity among neighbors and countrymen. The downside of Jihad is that it is intensely nationalist, parochial, and exclusionary.

Barber is deeply skeptical of reform efforts that merely tinker at the margins of globalization. Many governments and academics are inclined to try to ameliorate problems on a case-by-case basis. As an alternative, Barber speculates,

"The most attractive democratic ideal in the face of the brutal realities of Jihad and the dull realities of McWorld will be a confederal union of semi-autonomous communities smaller than nation-states, tied together into regional economic associations and markets larger than nation-states.... The Green movement adage "Think globally, act locally" would actually come to describe the conduct of politics."

Thomas Friedman in his book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* makes similar observations about the "anti-politics of globalism." He notes that globalization has the effect of a "golden straitjacket" on government, in which economic questions take precedence over all others. In this world, when a country puts on the golden straitjacket, "its economy expands and its politics shrink."

## Cultural Impacts of Globalization

### The Spread of the American Political and Economic Model

In addition to cataloging the influences of globalization on culture, students of this phenomenon should ask to what extent the effects on culture are negative or positive, and why they are happening. The mechanisms of cultural globalization are numerous and come from different sources.

Thinking about globalization in the broadest possible terms, there are three principal ways that globalization can be seen to have an impact on global culture. These occur through:

1. the development of a new culture of the globally connected professionals and especially business elites;
2. the proliferation of pop culture—which many critics complain is primarily American; and
3. the diffusion of beliefs and values about broader issues such as human rights and other social mores.

Debates over these cultural issues are not simply esoteric ones either. Cultural issues have in fact been prominent in the outcome of several trade negotiations and in other kinds of international disputes. Each of these three ways that culture is affected by globalization has implications for decisions made by government policymakers and political systems.

### Cultural Impact #1: New Global Professions

Many observers of globalization have come to recognize a new class of people who are generally well-educated, trained professionals in the business field, who have developed a kind of global common culture.

Harvard University Professor Samuel Huntington has characterized this group of global professionals as the "Davos culture," named after the Swiss luxury resort locale of an annual, informal meeting of very select and elite businessmen, financiers, and heads of states. Although the participants at these meetings do not represent governments, make policy decisions, or negotiate any agreements in any official capacity, they do share ideas and put forth proposals pertaining to global economic concerns. Huntington sees these individuals as drivers of global economic processes and as a force for pursuing the business agenda of further globalization.

The members of this group, hailing from various places around the world, are largely proficient in English. Also, from their offices in their native countries, they are immersed in a shared world of computers, cell phones, and flight schedules. Huntington is disdainful of this group for presuming that their predominantly Western ways of doing business and living will supersede traditional cultural values. He identifies this group of elites as being largely responsible for driving the global agenda on foreign affairs and trade talks.

Robert Reich, who served as Secretary of Labor under President Clinton and whose political views are very different from Huntington's, has also noted the existence of this group. However, Reich draws a broader definition of its membership, including a large number of professionals within the United States. Although much of Huntington's thesis focuses on the differences between various civilizations, Reich points out that this cultural globalization is also creating a division within American society (Reich, 1991).

For Reich, this new class of globalized professionals accounts for approximately 15 to 25 percent of the U.S. population. He observes that the members of this group:

- think in cosmopolitan rather than national terms;
- have high skill and education levels and, as such, benefit the most economically from globalization;
- speak foreign languages;
- travel internationally;



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- are much less likely to lose their jobs, or to work in industries with falling wages, due to globalizing economics; and,
- are unlikely to have served—or even have family members who have served—in the military.

Members of this group therefore may be more likely to think of themselves as "citizens of the world." They can feel as at home in Tokyo, Rome, or Hong Kong as they would in New York or Los Angeles. Reich asserts that they have been the biggest winners in the globalization game, and comprise most of the membership of those who are shaping the globalization agenda. However, as his essay also notes, this does not mean that members of this group are in agreement with each other on many, or any, of the decisions being made about globalization, or that they share an understanding of its implications.

In contrast, the rest of society - being more national or regional in its outlook—is not only more sensitive to the intrusions of global culture on their local norms, but is also more likely to bear the economic costs of the disruptions of globalization and serve in the military. The frustrations of these groups may explain the periodic resurgences across the world of anti-global nationalist figures like Pat Buchanan in the United States, Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, or Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in Russia.

Of course, there are positive arguments to be made on behalf of this globalizing professional class. Although many observers note the imprint of American culture on this group, it is also possible to look upon this culture as one that pays more homage to the market than any xenophobic national identity; it is internally meritocratic, and it could in fact be seen as the very vanguard of global multiculturalism.

Some suggest that the new American model is itself a multicultural one. Thomas Friedman suggests that one kind of leadership the United States has offered the world over the past several decades is the example it has set for multicultural diversity. In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, he quotes an executive from a biotech company in California describing his staff:

We have nineteen employees. Three were born in Vietnam, two scientists and one administrator; two were born in Canada, both scientists; one was born in Germany, a scientist; one was born in Peru, a scientist, one was born in Malaysia, a scientist; one was born in China, a scientist; one is from Iran, a scientist; and one is from India, a scientist. The rest of us are native-born Americans. I cannot think of another country in the world where you could so easily put such a team together.

Friedman notes that, due to the increased volumes of immigration and mobility brought about by globalization, almost every country in the world has had to come to terms with multiculturalism. In spite of the problems faced in dealing with the issues of race and ethnicity, many people around the world look to the United States as an example of how to promote diversity and tolerance among various cultures within one society.

## Cultural Impact #2: Pop Culture

Among the three effects of globalization on culture, the growth of global "pop culture" tends to get the most attention, and to strike people on a visceral level. Many complain that this form of globalization is actually Americanization, because the United States is by far the biggest producer of popular culture goods. Pop culture is manifested around the world through movies, music, television shows, newspapers, satellite broadcasts, fast food and clothing, among other entertainment and consumer goods.

Former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell observed that "images of America are so pervasive in this global village that it is almost as if instead of the world immigrating to America, America has emigrated to the world, allowing people to aspire to be Americans even in distant countries." (Barthin, 1998)

For the United States, the entertainment industry is one of the most important spheres of economic activity. In fact, the U.S. entertainment industry generates more revenue from overseas sales than any other industry other than the commercial aerospace industry. Many would say that this new juggernaut of American industry has propelled the American pop culture around the world at a frenetic pace.

Reality television is a popular medium for the broadcast of American culture. One of the most prominent examples is *Keeping up with the Kardashians* which follows the family life of the Kardashian family. The show has developed a dedicated following internationally and has contributed to an idea of a glamorous American lifestyle that is practiced by the family. This reality show and other like it have contributed to a rise of celebrities who are "famous for being famous" (O'Rourke, 2011).

The growth of the influence of American television has been mirrored within the film industry, as well. Viewed from the perspective of other countries, the dominance of the United States film industry in Europe has been a rapidly and recently growing concern. In 1987, U.S. films already held an imposing 56 percent of the European film market. Less than a decade later, that share had risen to over 90 percent. By 2009 though, US films had just 67.1 percent market share (Dager, n.d). Recently, countries in Europe such as France have passed protectionist measures, to facilitate the growth of the film industry domestically, which has damaged the share of American films overseas. The current share is 60-75 percent across Western Europe (Hopewell, 2013). American movies and television shows, which are commonly referred to in trade parlance as audio-visual services, are therefore an important commodity among U.S. exports. As is often the case with exports and imports, exporting nations rarely acknowledge problems when one of their industries is able to capture a large or steadily increasing share of export revenues. However, when any sector of a nation's industry is threatened by foreign imports, voluminous concerns are raised.

This is perhaps doubly the case with regard to inherently cultural products. Not only do foreign nations worry about their own domestic entertainment industries from an economic standpoint, but they also worry about the effects on their culture. For many citizens of other countries, American films and television shows are not just another commodity.

"Washington's crusade for free trade is often seen abroad as a Trojan horse for companies, such as Walt Disney Co. and Cable News Network that would dominate foreign lifestyles and values. Most Americans react to these fears with a shrug. That's a big mistake."

--Jeffrey Garten, former U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade (Garten, J.E. (1998, November 29) 'Cultural imperialism' is no joke. *Business Week*,)

## The Spread of American Popular Culture

Globalization enables foreign companies to distribute American cultural products, including music and books. The spread of American restaurant chains and consumer products worldwide is accompanied by the spread of American popular culture. In recent years, American movies, music, and TV shows have consistently gained more and more audiences worldwide.

The products of popular musicians are also likely to be distributed by non-U.S. companies such as Japan's Sony, Germany's Bertelsmann AG, France's Vivendi, or the United Kingdom's EMI Group. Similarly, American authors are increasingly published by foreign media conglomerates, such as Bertelsmann, which owns Random House and Ballantine, or Australia's News Corporation, which owns HarperCollins Publishing and the Hearst Book Group.

It is interesting to note that foreign media groups contribute to the spread of American popular culture as well. Foreign corporations earn profits by selling U.S. products, and U.S. products become more accessible worldwide.

Canada is one of the best examples of a country where U.S. cultural products dominate despite the Canadian government's efforts to preserve local culture. Canadian films account for just 2.1 percent of Canadian film ticket sales, and the vast majority of the remaining 98 percent are American. Moreover, three quarters of the television watched, four out of five magazines sold on newsstands, and 70 percent of the content on radio, are of foreign origin. The vast majority of foreign products in all of these categories are American.

In most other countries, however, American cultural products are not as widespread as they are in Canada, and they face more domestic competition. In most cases, two general trends can be observed. First, many American cultural products tend to be popular with people of very different societies. Second, despite the popularity of American cultural products, other countries still produce a substantial number of films, music, books, and TV shows.

### Television

American cultural products are influential in the television industry, as well. For example, American company CNN exemplifies the global news network. After starting as a cable news network for U.S. viewers only, CNN now reaches over 200 million households in over 212 countries and territories. However, television remains a more local cultural form than movies, music, or publications.

However, there was a time when television had a significant impact on Eastern European politics. Television series such as "Dallas" and "Dynasty" were viewed by individuals living behind the Iron Curtain and offered an unrealistic, but appealing alternative to the communist lifestyle. The hyper-consumerism and extreme wealth portrayed on these shows stood in stark contrast to the poorer, more constrained lifestyle in the East.

### Pop Culture Values

Almost by definition, popular culture has attained an immense global following precisely *because* it is popular. For many citizens of other countries, though, the near take-over of their own cultural industries, especially for younger audiences, is of great concern.

As sociologist Peter Berger points out, pop culture:

carries a significant freight of beliefs and values. Take the case of rock music. Its attraction is not just due to a particular preference for loud, rhythmic sound and dangerously athletic dancing. Rock music also symbolizes a whole cluster of cultural values—concerning self-expression, spontaneity, released sexuality, and perhaps most importantly, defiance of the alleged stodginess of tradition.

"In an era of global capitalism, cultural distinctiveness can become more important, not less important. Because it's sort of what people have left." - Theda Skocpol

## Cultural Impact #3: The Global Village

Critics of globalization charge that the phenomenon of globalization, especially seen through pop culture, is perpetrating a kind of cultural genocide on the world—that the largest, most dominant cultures are becoming larger and more dominant at the expense of many others. In this view, globalization is in fact another word for Americanization.

However, others argue that globalization offers the potential to enrich the world culturally. To these people, the notion that the opportunities for cultural exchange brought about by globalization can help promote tolerance and diversity is very attractive. Their vision is the multi-cultural "global village," where ideas and practices can be freely exchanged and appreciated.

The potential enlightenment of the global village can be contrasted with the way people tended to view other nations and cultures ages ago. In the 18th century, Adam Smith, widely recognized as the father of economic theory, noted the detachment of emotion caused by distance:

Let us suppose that the great empire of China, with all its myriads of inhabitants, was suddenly swallowed up by an earthquake, and let us consider how a man of humanity in Europe, who had no sort of connexion [sic] with that part of the world, would be affected upon receiving intelligence of this dreadful calamity.... If he was to lose his little finger tomorrow, he would not sleep to-night; but, provided he never saw [the Chinese people killed by an earthquake], he will snore with the most profound security over the ruin of a hundred millions of his brethren, and the destruction of that immense multitude seems plainly an object less interesting to him, than this paltry misfortune of his own (Smith, 1759).

Smith's point was that no matter how sympathetic this 18<sup>th</sup>- century European subject might be to the plight of others, a tragic event so far away could not affect a person on an emotional level unless they had a more real connection to the event.

Globalization has changed this dynamic, sometimes in quite powerful ways. In the contemporary world, foreign policy decisions are sometimes driven by television images, which are broadcasted around the world by satellites and display famine or fighting in other nations. In this context, globalization enables a newscaster to humanize an event overseas. As Smith might have observed, seeing images of starving children and other human suffering on television creates a much more powerful emotional reaction in an observer than reading in a newspaper that 100,000 people have died as a result of a natural disaster overseas.

### **The CNN Effect**

This indifference about people in foreign countries noted by Smith can be very different today, due in part to globalization (though this is clearly not always the case). Foreign policy decision-makers have discovered that press coverage on wars, famines, and other events overseas can have powerful impacts on popular opinion at home. Public outrage over atrocities or sympathy at suffering can generate significant public pressure to governments to respond.

In 1984, a British television documentary about the famine in Ethiopia led a group of pop artists in Britain to organize a charity event on behalf of the victims. Led by Bob Geldof, the singers and musicians recorded a song, "Do They Know It's Christmas?," and held a concert that raised nearly \$15 million for relief efforts.

In 1992, the U.S. government was induced to intervene militarily in Somalia to help avert a famine. Administration officials at the time cited one of the reasons they felt that action necessary was due to immense public pressure that had been

generated based on news coverage of the crisis. Similarly, the Clinton Administration, trying to resolve a very complex and bloody conflict in the Balkans, often noted that images on the news of killings there had a significant impact on their decisions.

The war in Darfur, which began in 2003 and has since displaced millions and killed hundreds of thousands, has garnered worldwide support through the media (Associated Press, 2010). More recently, the KONY2012 campaign, which was a viral phenomenon spreading information and campaigning for the arrest of Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony through on-line videos, social networking and television, received much attention due to the images it presented to the public (Grandoni, 2012).

## Globalizing Values

Other observers have suggested that globalization leads to effects beyond simply raising awareness and sympathy for people and events in other nations. There is also a diffusion of values on issues such as human rights, democracy, and even on very specific concerns such as health matters.

Sociology Professor Peter Berger has noted that a global network of foundations, academic networks, non-governmental organizations and some governmental, and multinational agencies (such as the UN system and development agencies), have become transmission agents for what they perceive to be positive cultural values (Berger, 1997).

This group spreads its ideas through mass communication, think tanks, educational systems, development projects, the legal system, and other mechanisms of international organizations.

For example, three non-governmental organizations, [Amnesty International](#), the [International Campaign to Ban Landmines](#) (ICBL), and the French organization [Medicines Sans Frontiers](#), all won the Nobel Peace Prize at different times for their efforts to extend values about human well-being onto a global level.

In particular, many policymakers noted that the decision to award the Nobel Prize to the ICBL in 1997 was partly in recognition of what was a new way of organizing politically on a global level. The Executive Director of the ICBL, a young activist named Jody Williams, relied heavily upon the relatively new medium of the Internet to help spread an idea about the benefits of banning landmines around the world.

With a skeletal staff and modest resources but very creative use of technology, Williams managed to build a global network of over 1,100 groups for human rights, de-mining, humanitarian, children's, veterans', medical, development, arms control, religious, environmental, and women's causes in over 60 countries. These organizations work locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally to ban antipersonnel landmines. Her organizing led to the creation of a significant international movement that produced a significant shift in government attitudes towards these very common weapons. The ICBL's campaign was one of the new products of globalization, which many people and governments are only beginning to fully understand.

Efforts to "globalize" reform efforts are as limitless as the domestic agendas of any individual nation. Peter Berger points out that one of the most successful public health movements in developed nations over the past 20 years has been an effort to discourage smoking. Berger notes that this movement, "clearly a product of Western intellectuals, was disseminated worldwide by an alliance of governmental and non-governmental organizations." He points out one particularly odd moment in this campaign—a kind of cultural clash of well-intentioned globalization—when a major international conference was sponsored by the Scandinavian countries in Stockholm.

The goal of the conference was to support an international campaign to reduce cigarette smoking. The detrimental health effects of smoking are well-documented, and the numbers of people in developing countries who smoke have been increasing at a rapid rate. Many individual countries have undertaken efforts to educate their citizens about the dangers of smoking, and the conference organizers wanted to take this effort to a global audience.

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Having paid the travel expenses of health ministry officials from developing countries around the world, the assembled ministers all made sympathetic remarks about the lofty goals of the campaign. Nonetheless, Berger notes, many of the developing country officials—whose nations are being ravaged by incurable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and very curable or preventable ones such as cholera, tuberculosis, or malaria—have felt that anti-smoking efforts must rank very low on their list of priorities.

Professor Samuel Huntington has similarly criticized Western groups for taking on such initiatives, however well-intentioned they may be. He argues that values are particular to the nations in which they originate, and he denounces the Western belief in the universality of culture as false, immoral, and dangerous. The West, he says, must abandon both these pretensions and all attempts to impose Western values on the rest of the world.

## Culture and Trade Disputes

In the following sections, we will look at some of the arguments that have actually been used—and perhaps abused—over the past few years in international forums to promote the protection of global cultural concerns.

Think back to the three impacts of globalization on culture: global professionals, pop culture, and the civil society ideals of the global village. As the following pages illuminate a number of actual disputes over trade and cultural issues, try to think about how each of them is influenced by these three factors.

It is also useful to think about these questions in terms of cause and effect. Which of the following cases are being driven by technological developments? Which are being driven by business imperatives or government policy decisions? And which are being instigated by values and social mores? Is globalization responsible for creating these dilemmas, or are globalizing processes being enlisted by people to respond to international concerns?

## The Canadian Magazine Dispute

One of the most prominent conflicts with implications for cultural concerns that turned into a trade dispute concerned the selling of magazines in Canada.

Today, 89 percent of magazines sold in Canada are foreign, a high percentage of which are American. In spite of the low proportion of domestically produced magazines in Canada, the Canadian government has nonetheless identified the production of magazines as an important touchstone of Canadian national identity. In 1970, a special Canadian governmental Committee on Mass Media concluded that "magazines constitute the only national press we possess in Canada. Magazines, in a different way from any other medium, can help foster in Canadians a sense of themselves."

Attempts to protect Canadian culture from domination by its much larger neighbor to the south are not new. As far back as the 1920s, the Canadian government imposed protective tariffs on foreign magazines. In 1965, Canada furthermore prohibited the importation of split-run editions of foreign-published magazines into their country. Many observers believed that these measures were quite effective in protecting the small remaining share of Canada's domestically produced magazines. (Davey et al, 1970)



Credit: [Canadian Flag and Moose]. Retrieved June 30, 2012, from <http://blogs.bootsnall.com/Guy-Courchesne/canadians-in-mexico.html>

### **What Is a Domestic Periodical?**

Up until a couple of decades ago it was a fairly simple matter to determine what was a foreign versus domestic periodical and to make policy decisions based on those determinations. In the case of the Canadian magazines, any magazine that was printed outside Canada's border and imported into their country was considered foreign. Therefore a tariff or absolute prohibition could easily be applied or enforced at the port of entry. Further decisions such as preferential tax deductions for advertising could also be made on those same determinations at the border.

However, globalization has recently changed much of this calculus. Advances in technology have blurred the line between what can be considered foreign or domestic, and trade agreements have limited the options that governments may choose in giving preferential treatment to domestic goods.

In 1993, this question of domestic versus foreign production surfaced when Time Warner, the world's largest communications company, started to produce a split-run version of one of its U.S. magazines, *Sports Illustrated*. Thanks to new technology, Time Warner was able to print a split-run *Sports Illustrated Canada* without it being stopped at the border. They produced the magazine in the United States and then transmitted the magazine's content electronically to a Canadian printer via satellite.

The old standard for determining whether a magazine was foreign or domestic revolved around where it had been printed. As a result of the change, Time-Warner could now argue that their split-run magazine could genuinely be considered Canadian: it contained some Canadian content (mostly in the form of advertisements), was managed by Time-Canada--a division of Time Warner--and was printed and distributed within Canada.

By declaring *Sports Illustrated Canada* to be a Canadian periodical, its publisher could offer a tax deduction to Canadian advertisers and attract valuable ad revenue that would otherwise have been directed to Canadian periodicals. Concerns grew immediately for the implications of this development for the Canadian magazine industry.

Looking into this new way of producing magazines, a parliamentary task force in 1999 estimated that more than 100 U.S. magazines might establish successful split-run editions in Canada. Because these American-originating magazines serve a much larger market, they are able to take advantage of the principle of economy of scale, and to offer lower advertising prices. It was predicted that the diversion of advertising revenue would force many Canadian periodicals out of business.

## Questions for Discussion: The Canadian Magazine Dispute

Put yourself in the place of a Canadian government official trying to protect the domestic magazine market. You want to allow a tax deduction for a business expense to advertisers who purchase space in "Canadian" magazines. What kind of criteria would you establish to distinguish between a split-run and a domestic magazine:

- Whether the magazine is printed in Canada?
- Whether the editorial staff is based in a Canadian city? Or whether the company is Canadian-owned?
- Whether the writers are Canadian? What if most of the articles contained in a magazine headquartered in Canada were written by freelance journalists living in the U.S.?
- Whether the subjects of the magazine are Canadian? How would you characterize a Canadian-based magazine on international relations that, by definition, mostly contained articles about foreign countries? What if that magazine were a subsidiary owned by a U.S. parent corporation?
- Should a writer who is Canadian citizen living in the U.S. be counted toward a magazines' domestic content requirement? To give an example of this problem in different context, one very prominent television journalist in the United States is ABC News' Peter Jennings, who is Canadian by birth and current citizenship. Even though he works for a major U.S. television network, should his work be classified within Canada as a domestic production?

Most magazines probably do fit neatly into one category of the other. But trade disputes typically erupt over issues that are on the margins of the categories.

And as you can see, the increasing integration of economic, political and cultural connections between countries is blurring the lines between definitions that used to be quite distinct.

The question of what constitutes a split-run magazine is apparently somewhat opaque within Canada. One set of researchers into the matter reported that they have never been able to locate within the Canadian government a list of what are deemed to be split-run magazines.

## A Trade Dispute Is Born

In 1995, the Canadian federal government tried to protect its domestic magazine producers—in the name of culture—by adding a significant new tax on all advertising revenue for what it considered to be a split-run publication. This raised yet again the question of how to define a split-run publication. To avoid the new tax, a publisher would have to produce a magazine that was comprised of at least 80 percent Canadian content.

However, imposing a tax on only the foreign producers of magazines quickly raised the charge by American magazine producers that this measure constituted a discriminatory practice. Foreign magazines producers would be put at a significant disadvantage selling their magazines in Canada because of the tax. And since the principle of non-discrimination between foreign and domestic producers ("national treatment") is one of the [core principles of the World Trade Organization](#), the United States instituted a WTO dispute settlement case against the tax.

The WTO ruled in favor of the United States in 1997, concluding that the tax was indeed discriminatory and unfair to foreign producers. Since the WTO ruling, additional measures and severe counter-measures have been contemplated by



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Canada and the United States as further attempts were made to protect the Canadian magazine industry. At one point, the United States threatened to impose retaliatory measures against Canadian steel, textiles and apparel, wood products, and plastics.

A dispute, essentially prompted by a desire to promote Canadian cultural uniqueness in magazine production, had escalated to the brink of inciting a wide-ranging trade war. Fortunately, as is often the case in these types of disputes, an agreement was finally reached that averted a trade crisis. Throughout the controversy, the Canadian ministers of trade and culture had taken opposing views on the matter. The trade minister's arguments eventually won out, leading to a settlement in which Canada removed most of its barriers to split-run magazines. The immediate reaction to settlement was that Canadian magazines would have an opportunity to "link up" with U.S. counterparts and form cooperative businesses. This can include Americans investing more in Canadian magazines or reaching deals that involve Canadians holding a majority stake while the U.S. brand was utilized to sell it (Geddes, 1999).

For now, it is too early to tell what effect this resolution has had on Canada's small domestic magazine industry.

As you can see from this example, the resolution of trade disputes is usually not like the resolution of a criminal dispute, where a judge and jury make a simple determination of guilt or innocence, and forces the perpetrator to pay the consequences. More often, trade disputes are settled by both sides coming to a compromise.

## Questions for Discussion

To what extent do you think the U.S.-Canadian magazine dispute was motivated by genuine desires to protect Canadian culture? To what extent do you think the government of Canada was pressured to seek to protect its market because of the financial interests of the Canadian magazine industry? Given that Canadian magazines constitute only 11 percent magazine sales in Canada, how important is this matter to Canadian culture?

And, if Canadians seem to prefer buying American magazines, shouldn't they be allowed to "vote" with their purchasing habits? Is it fair to levy extra taxes against foreign magazines, if it has the effect of forcing Canadian purchasers of foreign magazines to subsidize local publications?

## Protecting Family Farms

In many countries--especially those wealthy nations that have embraced globalization and most fully lowered trade barriers to agricultural products--small farmers have found it increasingly difficult to compete with food imports.

Farmers in both Europe and the United States have lobbied hard to maintain restrictions on imports of agricultural products. Agricultural products remain among the most protected and highly subsidized goods that are traded. Every day, nearly \$1 billion is spent (almost entirely by the world's wealthy countries) on agricultural export subsidies and domestic price supports. The most immediate effect of these barriers is a decrease in global economic efficiency.

However, farmers in countries that have imposed these measures have argued that what is at stake is not simply a matter of economic efficiency but the preservation of an entire way of life. Within the debate on agricultural subsidies, proponents have made the case that family farms are "multifunctional." This title of "multi-functionality" essentially means that they are not only producers of agricultural goods, but are also essential to the maintenance of the cultural traditions of their regions.

The term "multifunctional" also suggests that farms have value beyond the food and fiber they produce, which cannot be measured in economic terms alone. [The Land Stewardship Project](#) describes this value as follows: "contribution to the vitality of rural communities (through maintenance of family farming, rural employment and cultural heritage), biological diversity, recreation and tourism, soil and water health, bioenergy, landscape, food quality and safety, and animal welfare."

For certain agricultural communities within the U.S., these abstract debates have become harsh realities. Some rural counties in the northern plains states have lost nearly half their populations due to the closing of family farms and the loss of other jobs relating to agriculture (such as a tractor parts supplier). A significant part of the reason for these losses has been the availability of cheaper imported food.

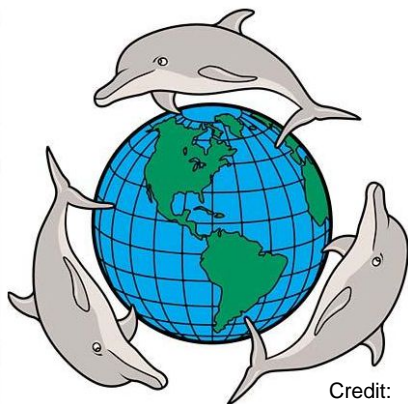
Of course, farmers in developing countries, who stand to gain the most by reduced subsidies and tariffs, counter that these supposed cultural protections come at the expense of their own economic development. Developing country farmers are eager to break into the rich country markets, and this is often one of their most strenuous demands at trade talks. Generally it is the wealthier countries that spend the most on these agriculture trade-restricting measures.

### **Useful Links:**

[www.landheritage.org.uk](http://www.landheritage.org.uk)

<http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/mba/MFAReview.pdf>

## Wildlife Protection and Cultural Rights



Credit:  
PicApp

In the early 1990s, the United States attempted to impose sanctions against Mexico for inadequately protecting dolphins in Mexican waters from Mexico's tuna fishing industry. The impetus for the sanctions was not due to the fact that the dolphins were an endangered or even threatened species (as they were not). The prohibition was simply because of American cultural ideals, namely an antipathy to the needless killing of these animals.

The ban on dolphin-harming tuna catching was the outcome of a political movement that brought the U.S. government into a heated trade confrontation with the

[Culture and Globalization  
http://www.globalization101.org](http://www.globalization101.org)

government of Mexico. Whether one agrees with the motives of the ban or not, this type of cross-border activism can also be considered a product of cultural globalization. In this case, one nation sought to impose its values about wildlife upon another nation.

In contrast to the dolphin protection measure that the U.S. has sought, the nations of Norway and Japan have attempted to obtain exemption from an international whaling ban based on cultural grounds. In the spring of 2000, at a UN conference on trade in endangered species, the governments of these two countries sought to claim that whaling constituted an integral part of their cultural heritage. Iceland, like Norway, continues to object to the moratorium and to hunt whale commercially. The whales that the two countries sought to hunt were not considered endangered so, from their perspectives, the prohibition on hunting them was not based on environmental reasons.

For hundreds of years, local fishermen have hunted whales and the food source was considered part of their tradition and culture. The Norwegian representatives claimed that their northern coastal villages depended on hunting and fishing for their livelihoods. Although whaling is not a big part of the Norwegian national budget, it is still considered a crucial source of income for those fishermen who need it.

They also argued that the global effort to prohibit the hunting of whales amounted to an imposition of other countries' cultural values that contradicted their own. Many international agreements--and especially trade agreements--contain exceptions for cultural activities, and the Norwegians believed that this activity should also qualify for an exemption.

In the same way that family farms and a whole way of life in the U.S. and other developed countries have been threatened by imports of agricultural products, the Norwegians—who have been noted for their exemplary record on environmental preservation—and the Japanese argued that their centuries-old fishing villages were being needlessly threatened by the ban. To these fishermen, the global whaling ban would devastate their village economies, simply adding them to the list of communities harmed by globalization.

The U.S. Department of Commerce has even suggested that trade restrictions be imposed upon Norway, because it was violating the International Whaling Commission's ban on these kinds of whaling activities. Norway has also claimed that this restriction constitutes a ban on its sovereign rights.

The collision between wildlife protection and cultural rights over whaling is an issue that has yet to be resolved. Recently, the Norwegian government was still refusing to adhere to the whaling ban, and the United States government, among others, was considering retaliatory action against Norwegian imports. In 2010, a number of anti-whaling countries, including the U.S., had proposed a deal that would essentially permit these nations to hunt whale commercially but with restrictions, as to lower the number of current whale deaths (which are around 1,700 a year) (Walsh, 2010).

In 2013 Australia took Japan to the International Court of Justice over the hunting of whales in the Antarctic. This region was declared a whale sanctuary in 1999 by Australia and is still used by Japanese for whaling purposes. This would also include a ban on the capture of whales for "scientific purposes" which is currently legal (Austin, 2013). Japan has stated that the ICJ has no jurisdiction to rule on the matter (Reuters, 2013). Iceland resumed its hunt of the fin whale in June 2013 after a two year suspension, with the first of an expected 180 whales killed over the next year. Critics say that the whaling industry is outdated and no longer necessary, only leading to unnecessary deaths of the animal (Vidal, 2013).

## Questions for Discussion

- Do you agree with the Norwegian and Japanese position on permitting the hunting of non-endangered species of whales as a cultural exemption?
- Do you think the whaling ban constitutes a violation of these nations' sovereignty?
- How should these kinds of questions about cultural exemptions be settled? Should an international panel (such as a committee at the WTO) be asked to weigh the validity of such claims? Who should serve on such a panel?

- How do you define a "cultural activity"? Does the economic impact of whaling on the small fishing villages weigh into your decision?
- How should these claims be balanced against world opinion - which is generally very supportive of the protection of whales?

### **Additional Question for Discussion**

A drive through the American mid-West, Mexico or Brazil lets one see many small, traditional farming towns and villages. With the changes occurring in global agricultural production, many of these small farmers are losing out to agribusiness at home and abroad.

How important are family farms from a cultural standpoint? How do you weigh the benefits to farmers against the benefits to all the other consumers, who are able to buy cheaper food when trade barriers are removed? How do you weigh the cultural concerns of developed country farmers against potential access to new markets for developing country farmers?

## Sanctions

The globalization of values is most explicitly expressed as a policy matter through political efforts to impose economic sanctions. Since 1993, the United States has enacted laws that establish the basis for imposing new unilateral economic sanctions on 60 different occasions against 35 countries that represent more than 40 percent of the world's population.

However, no sanctions have been imposed in many of these cases.

These laws were often enacted as expressions of U.S. revulsion against nations for their internal practices, such as human rights abuses or poor labor or environmental standards.

The United States has also imposed sanctions upon countries for failing to hold democratic elections, such as those applied against South Africa in the 1980s. Sanctions have been imposed for nuclear proliferation and for trading with a country against which we have an embargo, such as Iraq or Cuba.

Other nations targeted by sanctions measure have included Burma, which has one of the worst human rights records on earth, but also against traditional allies such as Mexico, for not sufficiently protecting dolphins from tuna fishing.

The nations at which these sanctions are directed frequently accuse the United States of wielding its power with arrogance or self-righteousness, and of meddling unnecessarily in their internal affairs when they are imposed.

## Other Cultural Challenges of Globalization

Apart from trade disputes there are many other facets to the cultural concerns that citizens and local activists around the world share. Although some of these concerns also rise to the level of government policy, many are of a much more esoteric and sensitive nature.

The following section looks at a few of these special concerns about culture that are interwoven with the globalization debate.

## Globalization vs. Asian Values

Some government officials in East Asian nations have boldly proclaimed an alternative to the Western cultural model by declaring an adherence to traditional "Asian values."

Asian values are typically described as embodying the Confucian ideals of respect for authority, hard work, thrift, and the belief that the community is more important than the individual. This is said to be coupled with a preference for economic, social, and cultural rights rather than political rights. The most frequent criticism of these values is that they run contrary to the universality of human rights and tend to condone undemocratic undercurrents in some countries, including the suppression of dissidents, and the excessive use of national security laws.

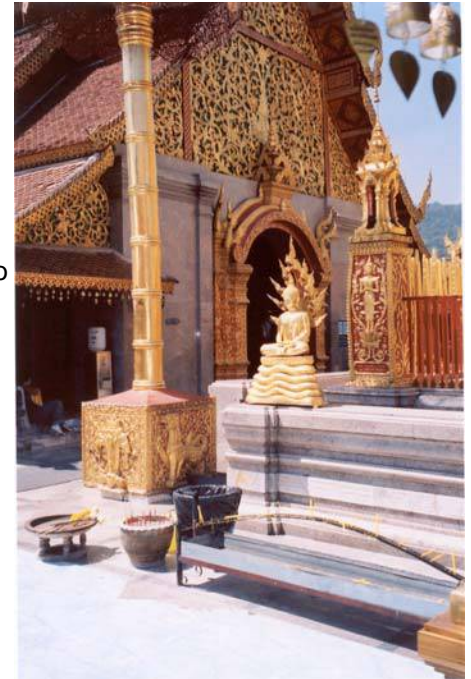
Some commentators have credited Asian values as contributing to the stunning economic rise of several countries in East Asia. It is also suggested that Asians have been able to protect and nurture their traditions in the face of utilitarian modernity, lax morals, and globalization. (Suh, 1997)

Neighboring Singapore's former leader Lee Kwan Yew has used the term to justify the extremely well-ordered society Singapore maintains, and its laissez-faire economic approach. His theories are often referred to as the "Lee Thesis," which claims that political freedoms and rights can actually hamper economic growth and development. According to this notion, order as well as personal and social discipline, rather than political liberty and freedom, are most appropriate for Asian societies. Adherents to this view claim that political freedoms, liberties, and democracy are Western concepts, foreign to their traditions.

But critics argue that the concept of Asian values is merely an excuse for autocratic governance and sometimes corruption. Martin Lee, the democratically elected leader of the opposition in Hong Kong, has been severely critical of the concept, calling it a "pernicious myth."

Lee proclaimed that the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 and ensuing economic collapse should mark the death knell of the Asian values argument, and the "related notion that economic progress can or should be made independent of the establishment of democratic political institutions and principles."

Other critics have leveled more strident criticisms against the use of the Asian values argument. They argue that these supposed values have stymied independent thinking and creativity and fostered authoritarian regimes. According to this view, Asian values were partly responsible for the corruption that affected so many nations in the region, making the press and people reluctant to criticize their governments.



"Those who wish to deny us certain political rights try to convince us that these are not Asian values. In our struggle for democracy and human rights, we would like greater support from our fellow Asians"

-Aung San Sui Kyi,  
Burmese democracy  
advocate and winner of the  
1991 Nobel Peace Prize

## Western Values and Islam

The controversy over westernization has had major historical implications in the Middle East over the past several decades. Globalization is accelerating some people's concerns about the infusions of Western values in Islamic countries.

In the 1960s and 70s, the Shah of Iran sought rapid modernization--regardless of conservative Muslim opinion. His plan called for land reform designed to aid the poor, the extension of voting rights to women, and the allowance of the formation of political parties. His plan, along with other social and economic changes, led to increased resentment and hostility toward the Shah. Rightly or wrongly, reform efforts became symbolic of what was wrong with Iranian society. Fundamentalist clerics began to rail against Iran's "westoxification," and brought about a radical revolutionary movement that sought to expel all western influence from their ancient civilization.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has likewise adopted an approach with the motto "modernization without westernization." Seeking in part to avoid the kind of outcome seen in Iran, the Saudi regime has strived carefully to limit the encroachment of many values that westerners consider fundamental. Consequently, Saudi Arabia guarantees no voting rights, and censorship of all things Western, including movies, alcohol, and Internet access, is deep and thorough.

One such example is a new Saudi police issue ban on pet dogs and cats.

As noted by foxnews.com (Thursday, July 31, 2008):

### Saudi Arabia Bans Sale of Dogs and Cats in Capital in Effort to Keep Sexes Apart

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Saudi Arabia's Islamic religious police, in their zeal to keep the sexes apart, want to make sure the technique doesn't catch on here. The solution: Ban selling dogs and cats as pets, as well as walking them in public.

The prohibition may be more of an attempt to curb the owning of pets, which conservative Saudis view as a sign of corrupting Western influence, like the fast food, shorts, jeans and pop music that have become more common in the kingdom.

Pet owning has never been common in the Arab world, though it is increasingly becoming fashionable among the upper class in Saudi Arabia and other countries such as Egypt.

The aforementioned clash between Western values and Islam culture reached an all-time high on September 11, 2001 with the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. The event widened the chasm between the cultures, exemplified by anti-America riots in several Islamic countries, or the post 9-11 'anti-Muslim backlash' in the United States. Since the attack, assaults on Arabs, Muslim, as well as South-Asian Americans have severely increased. President Obama's policy of heightened security has led to complaints by privacy groups that he has increased racial profiling. Defenders of the policy claim it is the easiest way to target potential threats, even if racial profiling is considered a "dirty word" (Fox News, 2010).



Video: Flying While Muslim: Racial Profiling Post 9/11:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ey1VtRdiMrs>

Politically, the attack on the World Trade Center has brought change as well. One example is the U.S. Patriot Act, which was passed by President George W. Bush. The act has often been criticized as an aid to invasion of privacy, as it expands the ability of law enforcement agencies to monitor conversations via phone and e-mail, as well as gain insight into financial, medical and other records. In June, 2013, it was revealed by NSA contractor Edward Snowden that the NSA had expanded on this program to obtain records from telecommunications companies, including private phone conversations (Savage, Wyatt & Baker, 2013).

More recently, however, during the recent Arab Spring, western cultural values were used to achieve popular political goals in the Middle East. Western cultural staples such as social networking tools like Facebook and Twitter were essential to the organization of recent uprisings in the Middle East. According to *The National*, "nearly 9 in 10 Egyptians and Tunisians surveyed in March [of 2011] said they were using Facebook to organise (sic.) protests or spread awareness about them" (Huang, 2011). And almost all of these protests came to fruition, inciting popular political action through westernized means.

The use of social media in political unstable regions can be seen in the years following the Arab Spring of 2011, Egypt's Supreme Military Council used Twitter to make official announcements until the deposition of Mohammed Morsi. Social media outlets have also been used to achieve short term political goals by some groups, making use of its anonymity and global reach to spread rumors and influence public opinion (Morrow & al-Omrani, 2013).

## Protecting Languages

Many governments around the world have attempted to protect their native cultures by imposing bans on what they declare to be foreign cultural intrusions.

France has attracted the most notoriety for attempting to protect its language from the immigration of foreign words. The French Academy routinely scours the land for invasive words from other languages, most notably English ones. Words such as "walkman," "talk show," and "prime time" have been declared unwelcome foreigners, and the government has attempted—with rather limited success—to replace them with French substitutes. In 2013 a debate was ignited online when the government decided to replace the word "hashtag" which is used frequently in Twitter and other social media, with the Gallic word "mot-dièse" (McPartland, 2013).

Similarly, in Canada's French speaking province of Quebec, provincial regulations stipulate that any sign containing English posted by a business must also post the same text in French in letters at least twice the size of the English text. Even more drastic measures to promote the French language have been considered, such as obliging immigrants to receive their college educations in French, and requirements that large-sized businesses conduct all their transactions in French.

The Chinese government has also attempted to protect the purity of its language by removing the use of foreign words. Authorities in China recently scrutinized the brands and names of over 20,000 western companies, forcing them to change 2,000 to more Chinese-sounding names. Chinese scholars have also called for the removal of English words from a prominent Chinese dictionary, which includes 239 such words ("Language purity row," 2012).

Of course, non-English speaking countries are not alone in trying to establish efforts to protect their local languages. Within the United States over the past several decades a significant political movement has sprung up, very similar to those seen in France or Quebec, aimed at preserving the use of English. The group U.S.-English, for example, was founded "to ensure that English continues to serve as an integrating force among our nation's many ethnic groups." Many

Americans have grown concerned over the proliferation of other languages, due largely to the rapidly influx of immigrants into the United States.

This movement demonstrates the extreme sensitivity of cultural issues, and the visceral reaction that many people have to what they perceive to be threats to their traditional ways of life.

Such efforts to protect the English language within the United States are a form of cultural protection. Any who doubt the depth of concern by people around the world about the effects that globalization is having on their local cultures, might keep in mind these kinds of reactions even within the United States. In the midst of the country that is often accused of "culturally colonizing" the rest of the world, the introduction of foreign cultural elements can generate significant political pressure to protect local traditions and values.

### Most Widely Spoken Languages in the World

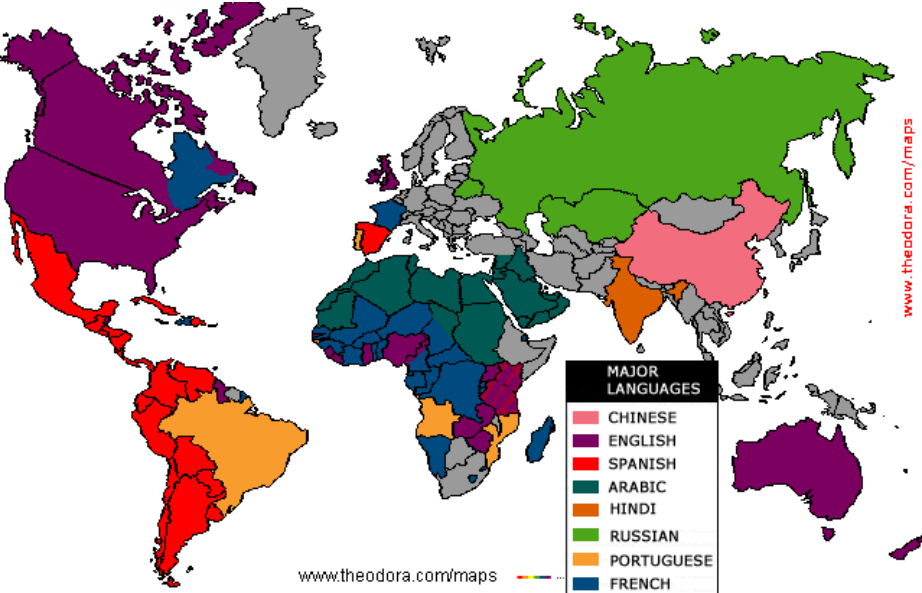
Language	Approx. number of speakers
1. Chinese (Mandarin)	1,917,000,000
2. Spanish	406,000,000
3. English	335,000,000
4. Hindi	260,000,000
5. Arabic	223,000,000
6. Portuguese	202,000,000
7. Bengali	193,000,000
8. Russian	162,000,000
9. Japanese	122,000,000
10. Javanese	84,300,000

(Infoplease, 2012))



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**Map:** Major languages spoken across the globe

[(2005). *Theodora*. (2005). Retrieved from [http://www.allcountries.org/maps/world\\_language\\_maps.html](http://www.allcountries.org/maps/world_language_maps.html)]

## Conclusion

Efforts to protect local culture from the homogenizing effects of globalization are often intertwined with other, sometimes questionable, motives, including economic protectionism and the political suppression of ideas. Because the topic of culture can, almost by definition, encompass almost every human endeavor, it is often difficult to draw lines around what are legitimate cultural activities, worthy of special protective measures.

Think back on some of the efforts discussed in this issue brief that were undertaken in the name of protecting local culture from globalization:

- the Canadian magazine dispute
- an exemption for whaling
- protecting the "multifunctionality" of family farms
- asserting "Asian values"

As you can see, these are not the subjects of traditional trade negotiations. Many of these disputes are likely to intensify in the future, and they are likely to become increasingly important political issues.

Consequently, many political leaders and community activists are increasingly seeing the need for the development of a more systematic way to address these sensitive issues. In the same way that many critics of globalization have called for increased attention to the link between labor standards and trade via the [International Labor Organization](#), or for the creation of a Global Environmental Organization (Esty) to address international environmental issues, some globalization critics have called for the creation of new institutions to deal with cultural issues.

Many organizations and groups have been formed at the local, national, and international level that aim to promote the protection of traditional cultures. Some aim to study the matter more deeply so that we may understand more clearly the implications of globalization on culture, and others are already taking on advocacy roles.

Globalization critic Jeremy Rifkin has suggested there may be a need to establish a World Cultural Organization to help represent diverse cultures and put cultural protection on an equal footing with the WTO (Rifkin, 2001). Another group, the [International Network for Cultural Diversity](#), has made a similar argument for an institution to ensure that culture is being protected. Their campaigns include protecting cultures in the Southern Hemisphere and using international legal instruments to protect culture (INCD, 2003). The INCD has proposed that:

1. Governments must not enter into any agreements that constrain local cultures and the policies that support them.
2. A new international agreement should be created, which can provide a permanent legal foundation for cultural diversity

An informal group of governments that has already been created to try to find solutions to cultural questions is the [International Network on Cultural Policy](#) (INCP). The INCP's goals include: developing an international approach to cultural issues, protecting cultures endangered by globalization, and raising awareness of the importance of culture (INCP, 2012). The INCP is an international forum through which representatives of member countries can exchange views on emerging cultural policy issues. One of the ways in which the INCP seeks to strengthen cultures is by advocating more cultural exceptions to the global trade rules of the WTO. Forty-five countries are members of the INCP, including Canada, France, China, and the United Kingdom, but not the United States.

In the coming years, efforts to protect traditional cultures are likely to play an increasingly prominent role in new trade agreements and within international cooperative ventures. Indeed, a "global" effort to protect local cultures from "globalization" would be a somewhat ironic development. But increasingly, local activists are trying to learn how to harness new worldwide forces to cope with the impact of international trends that have cultural effects.

## Story of Samir Moussa

Samir Moussa, 28, was born to a Lebanese father and a Columbian mother. He grew up in Washington, DC, and Columbia. He has traveled all over the world and has spent significant time in volunteering and learning about tribal medicines. He teaches elementary school students and plays in a band called Sandfly. Samir's life has been influenced by globalization on many levels. He looks forward to telling you his story.



### Questionnaire:

#### 1. How old are you?

I was born on March 1, 1977. I am 28 years old.

#### 2. Where did you grow up?

I was born in Washington DC to a Lebanese father and a Colombian mother. I studied at the Washington International School in D.C. from kindergarten through high-school graduation. During those years, I was extremely fortunate to spend a lot of my summer and winter holidays uniting with my extended families in their respective lands. So I grew up in DC while visiting my family in Lebanon and Columbia all the while. Also, by the last few years of high school, my closest friends had moved back to their home countries and...I would visit them, or they would visit me, and these relationships came to open up a lot of Europe for me and opened up the Middle East for some of them. It had become evident that we had already become international beings that really only had the world to call home. This was true for a lot of us and it served to strengthen our bonds.

Once I graduated from the Washington International School in 1995, I went on to the University of Toronto, in Canada....I have since continued my travels to visit my friends and family and am now living in San Francisco, California. So, where did I grow up? I am still trying to figure that one out.

#### 3. How has globalization affected your life?

Globalization has had a very strong effect on me. It has allowed me to live with my friends and extended families that live in very different cultures and settings. The extended exposure to these different cultures and languages has opened my eyes to the value and diversity we have as a human race on this planet. Different value systems were shared with me from a young age and it gave me a lot of food for thought....

While I was growing up, Lebanon had been going through a civil war. My family would still go to visit our family in Lebanon. I was exposed to the truths of what war can do to a country and a people. Seeing a war-torn Beirut and the people living there just as the war ended had a profound effect on me. Without a roof over their heads, families found ways to survive in a war-ravaged city. It was, truthfully, an awesome show of a determination to survive, and of the human spirit, and it was also a cold splash of reality for me. War and poverty are real.

Globalization has also allowed me to be exposed to several languages. I am fluent in English, Spanish, and French and can speak what I like to call 'taxi cab' Arabic. Exposure to these languages has given me a real appreciation for words and their meanings and has allowed me to draw a parallel line between most languages and religions. Although people speak using different sounds and alphabets, they generally speak of the same things and so who is to say that the French language is better than Persian...

Globalization was thus a source of inner strength for me. It also served, however, to be a source of outer frustration. It had taught me so much through worldly exposure, but had left my closest friends and families, whom I shared my globalization experiences with, spread out all over the world. So it was a source of isolation for me too. But as a responsible member of the global community, I chose to channel my joys and frustrations into my work.

#### 3. What do you do now for a living?

Currently, I am preparing for the release of my second record. I have spent the last few years supporting myself through two jobs; teaching children at different elementary schools and my music. Twelve years ago, I started working with children in DC and what started as a summer job at the International School grew into a Plan B career move for me. I figured that with my global experience there came a responsibility. And so I felt I had a responsibility of bridging cultural

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gaps and that there was no better place to start than with the children...

My music has always been my gift from the gods and so I have worked very hard on developing my craft and niche. I founded the musical band SANDFLY five years ago and in the past few years, my band has been featured on the front lines of the Peace Rallies in San Francisco. We have performed to the tens of thousands of people in the international call for peace and dialogue twice in 2004...We have toured and have been broadcast live on the air, broadcast on television and have made it into the concert halls of the legendary Fillmore in San Francisco, performing with acts such as The Roots, Eryka Badu, Femi Kuti, and more.

#### 4. How has globalization affected your work?

I am also involved in another project. In 1998, one of my self-motivated academic trips took me to Costa Rica to be a volunteer with the Costa Rican National Ministry of Natural Resources (MINAE) where I was to gather needed information from several of their national parks. Once my work was over, I spend five days traveling alone. It was during that time that I was introduced to Don Candido Morales Morales, one of the last medicine men of the Bribri tribe of Costa Rica, and his family.

This introduction would prove to be the beginning of a relationship that has continued to this day...In 1999, I had been put into contact with a film producer from Los Angeles, who had a growing relationship with Don Candido. Together, they had decided to pull their resources together in order to film a documentary that would tell the story of Don Candido's family as it was caught in the middle of two worlds: the traditional ways of their ancestors and the 'modern' world that was at their doorstep. They needed a translator for this work and they knew I was the man for the job. I spoke 4 languages, 3 fluently and I was inline with their vision of utmost respect for the indigenous culture. Don Candido was to share with us whatever he felt he wanted and needed to share. We were to provide him with a platform to discuss HIS story and struggle. We have made several trips back to Costa Rica and the documentary 'The Hidden People' is due to for completion by early 2006.

#### 5. How does your work contribute to making a better society? Are there any success stories of those you helped?

The name SANDFLY was born out of my second trip to Costa Rica and its story serves to highlight the significance of indigenous knowledge and how *it* can contribute to making a better society.

While we were filming the documentary 'The Hidden People' in the jungles of Costa Rica, a sandfly kindly laid two parasites into my arm. It was not until I had returned to D.C. that I learned that I had them and western scientists knew that what I had was 'Cutaneous Leishmaniasis'... [which] is spread by sandflies.

There are several kinds of Leishmaniasis, some of them deadly, like visceral leishmaniasis. Luckily, this one was not as serious. Of course, I researched my parasite and I found that 'the global burden lies primarily on the 'developing' world. An estimated 1.5 million people are currently infected with visceral leishmaniasis, also known as kala-azar, and approximately 500,000 new cases arise annually worldwide. As many as 200,000 people die every year from this disease. Over 90 percent of visceral leishmaniasis cases occur in India, Bangladesh, Sudan, Brazil and Nepal.' ("Leishmaniasis," 2011)

Luckily, I did not have visceral leishmaniasis, but I did have 'Cutaneous Leishmaniasis' which can develop into a potentially fatal situation if left untreated. So I underwent an 'experimental' treatment at the National Institute of Health (NIH) in Washington, D.C. . . . I was injected with a solution that went straight into my heart, everyday for 45 minutes for 3 and half weeks. The results were toxic. I felt as though I had been injected with zinc or mercury and my spirit was rendered lifeless, temporarily. But it did the job and for this I am grateful.

All the while, however, I was certain, after having seen the immense knowledge of the medicine man in Costa Rica, that there was another cure for these parasites...Don Candido has a cure for Cutaneous Leishmaniasis. It lasts three days

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and has zero physical and spiritual cost, but there is no working system in Costa Rica in place to honor his knowledge or to inform his community of his presence. And this condition is common in Costa Rica.

So I chose then to name my musical effort SANDFLY to speak of the indigenous science and knowledge that is losing credibility to western science and knowledge, to speak for the lack of opportunity in most indigenous communities. This is just one element of the current globalization phenomenon...

My studies at the University of Toronto were Environment and Sustainable Development and I firmly believe that indigenous knowledge needs to be a corner stone in our global effort to develop sustainable. Their knowledge of the land is profound and its value should be immensely incorporate into the global discourse of health and medicine...

With regards to whether my work has had success in contributing to making a better society, I defend that it has in many ways. I will first mention the power of the mind and the power of intention. Both my mind and intentions have been geared towards lifting consciousness. Those around me are exposed to the concentrated effort and can see the fruits of such labor. I will give a quote from Carl Jung that I just came across the other day that I think sums this up best "The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed."

Also, there are many children whom I have helped. Children need many different things and it is important to work with their personalities. I have tried to make them more responsible and steering them away from asking of the world 'What's in it for me?' but rather 'How can I help?' (Deepak Chopra!). These efforts I believe are seeds planted for a better society. Musically, I have sold records across the world and have gotten heart-warming emails and praise encouraging my voice and my message. This feedback has been encouraging and if my music can make a difference to one individual, than I have succeeded at contributing to making a better society. I have long since realized that my international heritage or my musical abilities were not to be taken lightly. I have put my heart and soul into trying to make better societies, using my musical talents as my muse. Music has got the unique ability to touch everyone, regardless of language or creed. I have taken it seriously and it has served and continues to inspire people the world over.

## **6. What is your message to young adults?**

I suppose my message to young adults is that 'WE ARE ONE'. The entire human race, the environment, everything in interconnected. That the key to harmony in inside of you. Learn to meditate! I can not stress this message enough. It is the greatest source of power, peace and joy. I encourage everyone to read Deepak Chopra's 'Instant Manifestation of Desire' and I encourage young adults to trust themselves. Know that 'only dead fish swim with the stream all of the time'. And, of course, listen to SANDFLY; )

To learn more about Samir, visit [www.sandflycentral.com](http://www.sandflycentral.com).

## Glossary of Terms

**Disbursement:** Money paid out.

**Economies of scale:** Economies of scale is an economic term that means that a company may produce goods or services at a cheaper cost per unit when these goods or services are produced in large quantities. In such a case, a company would want to maximize production so as to minimize cost.

**Market economy:** An economy that relies chiefly on market forces to allocate goods and resources and to determine prices; a capitalistic economy.

**Market failures:** Most economists agree that a market economy in which all parties engage in voluntary transactions usually benefits society as a whole. In some cases, however, the market may lead to an inefficient distribution of resources; this is what we call a market failure. Market failures are often used as a reason to allow for government intervention in the economy.

**Mergers and acquisitions:** Mergers and acquisitions occur when two companies become one. When the largest company buys the smallest, an acquisition occurs; when the two companies are of equivalent size, a merger takes place. Many reasons can prompt a company to undertake a merger or acquisition. In the global economy, mergers and acquisitions are a good way for a company to expand its market and its operations in foreign countries.

**Mores:** Moral attitudes or habits.

**Multinational corporation:** A corporation that operates in more than one country.

**Split-run edition:** An edition of a magazine is one in which a foreign publisher puts some domestic advertising and domestic content in a magazine originally targeted at a foreign readership. *Time Magazine* and *Sports Illustrated*, two American magazines, both have popular split-run editions in Canada. In their Canadian editions, *Time* and *Sports Illustrated* keep almost all of the content of the original edition but add advertisement, and occasionally articles, aimed at Canadian readers.

**The Interbrand valuation method:** Under the Interbrand model, brand value is a function of its earnings and its strength. The brand earnings are a measure of potential, expected profits, and the brand's strength is a measure of the reliability of its future earnings. The greater the brand's strength, the more future earnings are reliable and the lesser the risk.

Brand earnings are measured so that they do not to include unbranded profits, or profits that would have been incurred on a basic unbranded version of the products. A brand's strength comprises seven variables:

- **Leadership:** This is the ability of the brand to influence the market.
- **Stability:** This is the characteristic that has made the brand the inherent "fabric" of the market.
- **Market:** This is the structural attractiveness of the market, its projected growth, etc.
- **Geographic:** This is the brand's attractiveness and appeal in a multiplicity of markets with a view to distinguish between regional, national, and international brands.
- **Trend:** This is the brand's ability to remain contemporary and relevant to consumers.
- **Support:** This is the quantity and quality of investments made to support the brand.
- **Protection:** This is the protection received from the legal system, patents, trademarks, etc.

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