

*These papers were written as final projects for a unit on globalization by Alaina Critchlow and Alissa Sole, students in Aaron Kaio's Contemporary World Affairs course at Newport High School, Bellevue, Washington. Globalization101.org thanks Ms. Critchlow and Ms. Sole for their contributions.*

Alaina Critchlow  
October 30, 2003  
Cont. World, 4  
Globalization Final

Many of us can remember back to a time of turmoil in the great Emerald City. We can remember riots in Seattle over something called the WTO, but few of us knew what was really going on. We have since learned that the responsibility of the WTO is to facilitate trading between nations, generally designed to ensure balance of power between economically dominant countries and developing countries. It was during these riots, collectively known as the Battle of Seattle that the issue of globalization, epitomized by the WTO really caught fire.

Globalization is defined as the “process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations.”<sup>1</sup> This process is based upon international trade and is facilitated by technology. Essentially, globalization has been around since the beginning of time, with the combination of peoples and cultures, but did not become a significant part of the developing world until after 1948, when the Bretton Woods conference occurred, and an agreement was made to prevent and alleviate barriers on trade.<sup>2</sup> Since that time, the volume of world trade has increased by twenty times.<sup>1</sup> Though it may seem that globalization is in fact good, this process has many undesirable effects on the well-being of people, cultures, and political systems of developing countries around the world.

In Washington State, those of us who work earn an hourly wage of at least \$7.01. Our government established this standard as a livable wage, and our employers are mandated to pay each worker no less than this amount per hour. In this we are very fortunate, because around the world, specifically in developing countries, workers may not even earn \$7.01 a week. Because workers are earning so little, it is difficult to access food, fuel or shelter, and when also providing for a family, living on such low wages can be almost impossible. Lack of “the bare necessities in life go hand in hand with poverty and powerlessness leading to destitution, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy,”<sup>3</sup> thus, rather than increasing the quality of life by introducing factories into developing countries, these corporations are truly preventing their workers from leading a self-sufficient lifestyle, as they do not earn enough to support themselves or a family. In developing countries, work is hard to come by, and when a large, multinational corporation comes into a country and develops a ‘factory,’ it is difficult to pass the opportunity of employment. Knowing this, companies abuse the devotion of their workers by forcing

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.globalization.org](http://www.globalization.org)

<sup>2</sup> Components of Economic Globalization class notes

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International

them to work overtime, very possibly over twelve hours daily, four more hours than the average American. In these sweatshops, workers are essentially subjected to slave labor. They complete intense work for low wages and relatively no health coverage. The intent of corporations is simply to make money. Human and labor rights are hardly concerns of the MNC's.<sup>3</sup>

Not only does globalization jeopardize the well being of people in developing countries, it eradicates their existing culture. In the modern world, there is a phenomenon known as "Americanization," resulting in essentially one world culture, largely based on American principles and ideals. Many people believe that as one of the most economically powerful nation in the world (the United States accounts for almost 25 percent of global economic output, though it contains only 4 percent of the world's population),<sup>4</sup> it would be beneficial for other countries to become more like the United States, however, who is to decide that American culture is better than any other? Perhaps globalization would not be so detrimental to cultures if the incoming corporation would actually integrate the native culture with its own, however this does not occur. Large companies simply impose their beliefs and ideals, chiefly American, on people of the developing country in which they have settled. Instead of working with the people, it is as if they forcefully take them over. We find examples of this in France, where the French government has attempted to restrict the number of foreign films that can be shown, thus protecting its own culture and entertainment industry.<sup>4</sup> Such invasion of culture by corporations destroys individualism. A culture that once was definitive of a person longer distinguishes them as unique, but rather just like everyone else. Just like the Americans, and what kind of world is that, where we are truly all the same?

In the largely globalized world, we find that the well being of people is compromised, that cultures are destroyed, and finally, that governments play a smaller and smaller role in economic affairs. Governments compete in what is coined as "a race to the bottom,"<sup>5</sup> which means that the developing countries continue to lower their standards regarding minimum wage, environmental laws, union restrictions etc. until eventually, standards are minimal, and a sweatshop could easily be established. Because governments eliminate many basic standards, they have little control over corporate decisions in their country, thus they are not accountable for the suffering people affected by abuse of corporations. The duty of a government is to serve and protect its people, and those countries largely affected by globalization have lost that service and protection all people should be entitled to. Another reason governments have less and less power is previously public services are being privatized, including parts of the military and police service, thus, the government is distanced further from its people.<sup>3</sup>

Corporations not only diminish the power of governments, they can also set the agenda for development of any given country that buys into the race to the bottom. A significant part of globalization is technology. Anywhere a corporation establishes a stronghold, significant amounts of new technologies will be introduced. Whether or not a corporation decides to establish a factory in a given country can determine what new

---

<sup>4</sup> [Globalization 101 article](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Global Village or Global Pillage video](#)

technologies are introduced into that country, meaning countries designed which nations become modernized and capable of being introduced to the globalized world.

Globalization, the “acceleration and intensification of economic interaction among people, companies, and governments of different nations,”<sup>4</sup> continues to harmfully affect developing nations. The process of globalization sacrifices the well being of the people, destroys the native culture, and finally, globalization diminishes the responsibilities and controls of a developing countries government. Although it may not be realistic to end globalization, we can certainly do our part to ensure that people and cared for, cultures are preserved, and governments are empowered.

---

Alissa Sole  
10/25/03  
Contemp. Wrld. per 1  
Globalization Essay

The echo of a cry can be heard. It rings from the ice of the Rocky Mountains to the heat of the Arabian Desert. It rolls off of the crests of the Mediterranean Sea to the pyramids in Egypt. This low, rumbling echo is the voice of the people who speak out about globalization.

Thomas Friedman has defined globalization as “the integration of markets, finance, and technology in a way that shrinks the world from size medium to size small.” (Friedman). In a sense, it is the system that connects the people of the world. Globalization has been present for thousands of years, and can be seen in the Silk Road, a passage across Central Asia between China and Europe. This “vast network of trade routes” dates back to the first millennium B.C.E. (Silk Road). The affects of globalization today occur on a much broader scale and have been the most prominent in the last couple of decades. Since 1950, the “volume of world trade has increased by twenty times” (Green). From 1997 to 1999, foreign investment nearly doubled. This world occurrence has generated both a wave of hate and a wave of support for the phenomenon: a cry that can be heard around the world. Globalization, however, is neither completely good nor completely bad. Its affects lie somewhere in the middle of the spectrum. Not only does globalization help to provide for a technological transfer that boosts countries on an economic scale, but also promotes cultural transfer around the world. However, globalization lies in favor of developed nations, placing the people of underdeveloped nations at the mercy of giant corporations.

The spread of technology through globalization has resulted in an increased level of economic prosperity. One country that has recently seen benefits of this economic boom as a result of technology is Ireland. In 1987, Ireland was “one of Europe’s poorest countries” (Green). Incomes in Ireland were only 63% of Britain’s. In just ten years, however, Ireland experienced the “most remarkable economic transformation of recent times: from basket case to ‘emerald tiger’ ” (Green). This development was due largely to technology. After Ireland’s leader, Sean Lemass, opened its economy to the modern world in the late 1950s, Ireland began to “attract foreign investment in new enterprises” by promising a tax rate on profits of only 10% (Green). The large corporations that began this investment in Ireland were technologically based companies: IBM, Intel, Gateway, Dell, Fujitsu, and Motorola. These corporations were at the forefront of technological advance. By harboring themselves in Ireland, the companies were able to “supply each other with services and to create a pool of suitably skilled labour,” causing an influx of multinational corporations from around the world into Ireland (Green). As a result of the investment of the technological companies in Ireland, its economy has been boosted, and the country has received 40% of all American Investment in Europe electronics since 1980 (Green). This economic transition has planted Ireland in a financial position comparable to Britain. The ability for the extreme transformation that Ireland encountered was due to the technological companies. Ireland is an example of how globalization of technology helps increase economic standards.

Another positive effect of globalization is the cross-reference of culture that it promotes around the world. The spread of culture is evident in many aspects of life in many countries. Globalization allows for Americans to eat Italian food, for rural Vietnamese farmers to watch the daily news on television, for French to eat fast food, for Germans to watch American-made movies, and for Japanese to listen to Scottish music. A specific example of such cultural integration can be seen in the fast food chain McDonald's. This originally American restaurant has sprung up in countries around the world. Some people may call the spread of culture "Americanization." They might argue that culture is being lost to the American standard of life and is thus detrimental in the perseverance of those cultures. However, this is simply not the whole story. Because it is against the Hindi religion to eat red meat, the Indian McDonald's serves a certain kind of lamb patty instead of beef, called a maharaja burger. This unique menu item in India displays how culture is retained. Although Indians may eat at McDonald's, they are not forced to give up any of their traditional or religious values. This is a prime example of how globalization creates "new heterogeneity that...is likely to lead to new mixtures of cultures," spreading cultural influence to all corners of the globe (Globalization Website). The benefits of globalization on culture are therefore unmistakable.

Technology and culture are both aspects of globalization that show its positive face. There is, however, a negative facet to this worldwide trend. In underdeveloped countries, work is scarce and standards of living are low. Corporate industries from the West are able to take advantage of these low economies. Essentially, they bargain with the underdeveloped countries to "push down wages and living standards, job-security and terms and conditions of employment" (Amnesty).

The people who work these jobs are exploited at the expense of an increase in the corporate company's profit. One alliance of women's organizations commented on the severity of the working conditions: " 'While women who wear Nike shoes in the United States are encouraged to perform to their best, the Indonesian, Vietnamese and Chinese women making the shoes often suffer from inadequate wages, corporal punishment, forced overtime, and/or sexual harassment' " (Amnesty). The torment done to these workers is evident and their exploitation is visible. Some might deem this occurrence advantageous to the underdeveloped country because the people are given jobs and are making more money than they might be receiving at other jobs. But, the suffering and exploitation of these workers is evident and should be exposed to the world. Those supporting these actions are blind to the pain, to the suffering, and to the unjust treatment of these workers. Corporate companies do not consider the issue of human rights of the workers because "rights and justice come very low on [the corporations'] priority lists" (Amnesty). However, these people should not be denied their basic human rights. Globalization places the underdeveloped nations below multinational corporations, and thus submits them to the reign of those companies at the expense of their people and their peoples' rights.

From the aspect of worker exploitation, globalization is evil. From the aspects of technological and cultural transfer, globalization is beneficial. The two voices of globalization can be heard throughout the world. Both have an impact. Both create a tone that strengthens the voice of globalization from pole to pole.

Works Cited:

Amnesty International. "AI on Human Rights and Labour Rights."  
<http://www.amnesty.org> (30 Sep. 2003).

Economist.com. "Green is good."  
[http://www.economist.com/PrinterFriendly.cmf?Story\\_ID=149369](http://www.economist.com/PrinterFriendly.cmf?Story_ID=149369) (29 Sep. 2003).

Friedman, Thomas and Robert-Kaplan. "Is Globalization likely to create a Better World."  
Taking Sides: World Politics. Ed John T. Rourke. Conn: McGraw-Hill, 2004.1-13.

Globalization 101.org. "A student's guide to globalization."  
<http://www.globalization101.org/globalization/> (27 Sep. 2003).

The silk road project inc. "The silk road an historical overview."  
<http://www.silkroadproject.org/silkroad/overview.html> (26 Sep. 2003).

Lechner, Frank. "The Globalization  
Website."<http://www.emory.edu/SOC/globalization/debates.html#evaluation> (27 Sep.  
2003).

The silk road project inc. "The silk road an historical overview."  
<http://www.silkroadproject.org/silkroad/overview.html> (26 Sep. 2003).