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# Globalization and Culture: The Three *H* Scenarios

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## 1. Introduction

Transnational flows of people, financial resources, goods, information and culture have recently been increasing in a drastic way and have profoundly transformed the world (Ritzer and Malone, 2001). This phenomenon has been labeled *globalization*. As a result, a great deal of debate and discussion, even controversy (Bird and Stevens, 2003) has taken place about globalization in various disciplines from different angles. In fact, there seems to be a controversy in regards to globalization and the contradictory meanings associated with it. This controversy refers, among others, to either “a dominant logic of globalization” which postulates that there is a single cause for globalization or to a “phenomenon with a complex set of causes” which argues that there are various causes for globalization (Beck, 2000). In corollary, research has not been successful in grasping the globalization phenomenon in its entirety.

Globalization is a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses not only economic components but also cultural, ideological, political and similar other facets (Prasad and Prasad, 2006). Consequently, globalization has been addressed from the points of view of economics, social sciences, politics and international relations and has been subject to endless debates in various disciplines. Nonetheless, globalization effects are rarely addressed as a determinant that impacts societies and their cultures. More precisely, the interaction between globalization and culture still remains under-researched (Prasad and Prasad, 2007) and the current globalization debate in this respect is relatively recent (Acosta and Gonzalez, 2010). Along the same lines, the literature has not been able to stress whether concepts such as Americanization and Macdonalization are synonymous with globalization (Latouche, 1996).

In an increasingly borderless world impacted by a globalization of economies, the preservation of cultural diversity feeds contrary and controversial reactions. For

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instance, Cowen (2002) contends that while changes and potential losses imposed by globalization on local and traditional cultures, including those extending to cultural differences, may be damaging and destructive, they may also lead towards new prospective opportunities.

Given the above context, it is argued that globalization brings about diverse trends, namely cultural differentiation, cultural convergence and cultural hybridization (Pieterse, 1996) and each trend does not preclude the other as cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity are complementary (Cowen, 2002).

The purpose of the following chapter is to provide a lens view of the interactions between globalization and culture as the latter positions itself on the spectrum of a theoretical perspective. To look into the interactions between globalization and culture, a literature review of relevant theoretical contributions has been conducted followed up with a discussion on their main insights. To do so, the key concepts of culture and globalization will be introduced. The following sections will present and discuss the three scenarios of the interaction between globalization and culture, namely heterogenization, homogenization and hybridization. We posit that these scenarios and theoretical perspectives associated with them are capturing the broad contours of the current debate on globalization and culture, despite some overlapping insights among the different viewpoints. We conclude that they are of use and interest for both researchers and practitioners as the subject still remains under-researched across disciplines.

## 2. Globalization

In the beginning of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, nation-states began opening their borders in efforts to be more globally competitive in international markets. Multinationals and later, global companies began to grow and multiply in record numbers. Due to the generalization of free trade, the market economy of the twentieth century has progressively spread at remarkable proportions around the world. And hence, the recent shift from the international economy to a world economy that supersedes nations, including their regulations. This shift has been labeled *globalization* with the latter's extended and evolving history yet to be traced to its origin (Acosta and Gonzalez, 2010). Despite its long history, globalization remains almost constant as its forces continually aim at transcending human differences around the world.

Globalization is one of the most discussed concepts across the disciplines but still remains elusive and confounded. In this respect, the debate taking place in the literature on globalization is two-pronged as the definition of the meaning of globalization is still not consensual and its impacts on local cultures are yet to be circumvented (Matei, 2006). One thing that is definite and sure is that globalization is multidimensional and has economic, cultural, social and political aspects which impact both individuals and societies. More specifically, globalization constitutes a policy and/or system that promotes global interaction interdependence and interconnection among nations through advanced technologies (Jaja,

2010). As is, globalization refers to both the aspiration and determination to make a way of life applicable throughout the world, hence contributing to uniformizing ideas and systems of ideas in every single part of the world (Jaja, 2010). Thus, some commentators contend that globalization emerged with the advent of globalism which is an ideological discourse that constitutes a political belief system (Steger, 2005). It seems that globalization has an ideological basis as it is founded on the capitalist economic tradition with its premises such as the development of free markets, private ownership, open and free decision making, the price mechanism and competition (Jaja, 2010).

In addition to an openness of diverse economic, political, cultural and social flows in both information and trade and its market-related dimension, globalization also has political features through the so-called notion of *global governance*. In fact, the involvement of various states and governments in promoting the internationalization of their companies contributes to globalization, particularly through *multilateral* agencies such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund (Drucker, 1997).

Finally, globalization is a natural and inevitable process as no country in the world can avoid or ignore it and failing to embrace it will lead to marginalization (Jaja, 2010). It is noteworthy to mention that globalization does not concern countries at the same level. World nations are not integrated to the same extent in international exchanges. Thus, the concept of world village characterized by the same values and concerns does not hold true. In fact, globalization has not eliminated immense disparities in the ways of life or standards of living between rich and poor nations.

### 3. Culture

Scholars and researchers do not agree on a general definition of culture with over 150 plausible definitions identified in the 1950s (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952). In fact, culture has been studied from various fields such as anthropology, sociology and psychology. Hofstede (1980:25) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or society or category or nation from another”. The ‘mind’ refers to thinking, feeling and acting, with consequences for beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. In this regard, values and systems of values constitute a core element of culture. While the concept of ‘culture’ can be applied to any human collectivity, it is often used in the case of societies which refer to nations, ethnic entities or regional groups within or across nations (Hofstede, 2001). As such, culture is concerned with a distinct environment of a community about which members share meaning and values (House *et al.*, 1999). As for Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952: 181):

*Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditioning elements of future action.*

In addition, Bennett and Bennett (2004) distinguish between an objective culture, which refers to the institutional aspects of a culture and a subjective culture that focuses on a worldview of a society's people.

On another note, Cowen (2002) contends that culture refers to art products and activities, as well as, other creative products that stimulate and entertain individuals such as music, literature, visual arts and cinema. In this regard, some populations use their culture to create new products making culture a commercial label.

A worthwhile observation is the fact that culture is not rigid. It is a process that gradually builds up through interaction. Culture allows individuals to create human societies by defining the conditions of how people live among each other and together, as well as, by abiding to social and cultural codes that distinguish them from other cultures.

In a nutshell, the concept of culture has two major definitions. On the one hand, culture is an integrated set of values, norms and behaviors acquired by human beings as members of a society. As such, culture constitutes an element of identification within a given group of individuals and an element of differentiation vis-à-vis other groups from an anthropological standpoint. On the other hand, from a sociological stance, culture refers to artistic and symbolic creations, heritage and cultural products. In relation to globalization, these two aspects have important implications with respect to how individuals express their cultural identities, in terms of the future of cultural traditions, and with cultural industries. Therefore, for purposes of the present chapter, the concept of culture refers to the two above-mentioned aspects.

#### **4. Globalization and culture**

For millions of years, human groups spanned over immense territories without means of communications other than reliance on their physical body parts such as their eyes, voices, hands and legs. With the advent of the urbanized metropolitan cities dating back to more than 5,000 years ago and the beginning of commercial activities, cultural exchanges have taken place between individuals living among various societies. However, in the past, means of communication and transportation were limited and cultural characteristics did not circulate as rapidly and easily as in modern times.

With the industrial revolutions, societies began to have access to machines which allowed them to create cultural products and export them across borders. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, thinkers had forecasted a non-reversible trend of cultural standardization. However, the predominance of the nation-state and national economic barriers had protected and insulated cultures from external influence. Cultural uniformization based on the European model at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century was prevalent, particularly due to the success of the rational capitalism that characterized Europe and which was the symbol of cultural modernity (Weber, 1905). Additionally, the enlightenment thinkers had forecasted a uniformized and borderless world in the sphere of values. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cultural

industries depended on technical innovations during the first and second industrial revolutions such as, printing in 1860, and electricity and cinema in 1890. Further, cultural miscegenation-related fear dates back to 1853 when Arthur de Gobineau wrote an influential essay on the inequality of human races in France. Marx and Engels noted an intellectual convergence in the literature which was a kind of intellectual globalization of ideas that preceded the materialistic globalization of goods and markets. As for the German intellectual Goethe, he pleaded for a world culture through world literature (Weltliteratur) where everybody would contribute. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cultural industries appeared as communication technology started to develop and flow seamlessly across borders.

Interactions between globalization and culture do not seem to be a recent phenomenon. In fact, they constitute, particularly with the influence of globalization on culture, a contention point in the literature as various theoretical standpoints have been developed to examine these interactions. These standpoints will be grouped under three different scenarios and presented in the subsequent sections.

## 5. Heterogenization scenario

While certain scholars (i.e. Appadurai, 1996; Featherstone, 1995) admit that globalization for the most part originates from Western cultures, they however reject the idea that this phenomenon constitutes a homogenization of world cultures resulting from one way exchanges among the latter. In fact, this “school of thought” argues that globalization generates rather a state of heterogeneity which refers to a network structure in which nodes tend to connect with each other in regard to certain cultural dimensions (Matei, 2006). Two distinct variants of heterogenization can be distinguished (Chan, 2011). The heterogenization at a local level refers to a situation where the practices of a sphere of life in a specific milieu or locale become more diverse over a period of time. The heterogenization at a trans-local or global level refers to a situation where the practices of a sphere of life in at least two locales become more distinct over a period of time. In short, heterogenization, which has also been labeled differentiation, relates fundamentally to barriers that prevent flows that would contribute to making cultures look alike (Ritzer, 2010). In this perspective, cultures remain different one from another.

Heterogenization represents a process which leads to a more inwardly appearing world due to the intensification of flows across cultures (Appadurai, 1996). Hence, local cultures experience continuous transformation and reinvention due to the influence of global factors and forces. It is important to keep sight of the fact that according to this perspective, cultures do not remain unaffected by global flows and globalization in general, but the actual crux of the culture remains intact and unaffected, as has always been (Ritzer, 2010) with only peripheral surfaces directly impacted.

The convergence thesis advancing that globalization favors homogenization of the world underestimates the global flows of goods, ideas and individuals. In this regard, Robertson



(2001), who is critical of the focus on processes stemming from the United States and its homogenizing impact on the world, advocates the notion of heterogeneity with a focus on diversity, multi-directional global flows and the existence of world processes that are independent and sovereign of other nation-states. These flows do not eradicate local cultures, they only change some of their traits and reinforce others. Along the same line, Wiley (2004) contends that national cultures, which are fluid constructs, have become part of a heterogeneous transnational field of culture.

Different cultural groups develop into heterogenous entities due to differences in demands necessitated by their environment in efforts to adapt to the requirements of the latter. And consequently over a period of time, these groups become diversified and very different due to environmental circumstances and pressures. For instance, although the spread of the colonization phenomena yielded a reduction of cultural differentiation, when the colonization movement receded, cultures sprung up and cultural differentiation was favored.

In sum, it has been documented in some instances that foreign cultural practices remain in the margins of local and national cultures resulting in a side-by-side coexistence of distinct and disparate global and local cultures (Prasad and Prasad, 2006). It seems that cultural differentiation will most likely remain strong despite globalization forces. What will probably change are the criteria used by different cultural groups to define their identity and differentiation vis-à-vis other cultures.

## **6. Homogenization scenario**

Are international exchanges and flows of goods, services, capitals, technology transfer and human movements creating a more standardized and unique world culture? Would acculturation, which yields from long and rich contacts between societies of different cultures, result in a universal culture?

The homogenization perspective seems to positively answer these questions as the increased interconnection between countries and cultures contributes to forming a more homogenous world adopting the Western Euro-American model of social organization and life style (Liebes, 2003). In the homogenization view, barriers that prevent flows that would contribute to making cultures look alike are weak and global flows are strong (Ritzer, 2010). In its extreme form, homogenization, which is also known as convergence, advances the possibility that local cultures can be shaped by other more powerful cultures or even a global culture (Ritzer, 2010). This perspective is reflected in several concepts and models such as the Global Culture, Americanization and more importantly the McDonaldisation theory.

Across different regions and countries in the world, more and more people seem to watch the same entertainment programs, listen to the same music, consume common global brand products and services, and wear the same or similar clothes (Prasad and Prasad, 2006).

These comparable developments in cultural practices are suggestive of the emergence of a “global culture” (Robertson, 1992) or “world culture” (Meyer, Boli, Thomas and Ramirez, 1997) based on the assumption of the demise of the nation-state as a major player on the global stage (Ritzer, 2010). In other terms, globalization contributes in creating a new and identifiable class of individuals who belong to an emergent global culture. According to this concept, the selfsame dynamics of globalization are weakening the connections between geographical places and cultural experiences (Held and McGrew, 2003), and eroding the feeling of spatial distance which tends to reinforce a sense of national separateness (Prasad and Prasad, 2006). Thus, globalization, which is a replication of the American and/or Western cultural tradition (Beck, 2000; Berger, 2002), is considered a destructive force, a recipe for cultural disaster (Jaja, 2010) and an assault on local cultures which the latter are not able to withstand or resist (Berger, 2002). This is presumably due to the fact that globalization contributes in atrophying identities and destroying local cultural traditions and practices, diluting, even eliminating the uniqueness of national cultures, and establishing a homogenized world culture.

However, some proponents of the concept of global culture argue that the latter is not cohesive in nature and refers to a set of cultural practices that only bear surface resemblance. Moreover, Smith (2003) completely rejects the existence of the notion of global culture whether as a cohesive or discordant concept. Along the same lines, Tomlinson (2003) maintains that globalization makes individuals aware of the diverse national cultures in the world which are multiple in numbers and distinct in nature. Hence, globalization strengthens national cultures rather than undermine them.

On another note, Jaja (2010) stresses that the world is presently experiencing Americanization, rather than globalization with the former referring to the global spread of America’s influential dominance and culture through drastic growth of mass communication and penetration of American companies in other countries. As a matter of fact, there seems to be an American hegemony reflected by a domination of the Internet as 85% of web pages originate from the United States and American companies control 75% of the world’s packaged software market (Jaja, 2010). In addition to the latter, there is an American monopoly of the media as seen with popular films, music, and satellite and television stations around the globe. It should be highlighted that the American conception of culture is open and far from the *erudite* notion of several European countries, for instance. Further, the American way of life does not appear to be elitist and aims at spreading cultural products to the masses which increase economic opportunities. This model is desired by other populations, developed and developing.

Nonetheless, it has been documented that only countries that share values similar to those of the United States are more inclined to adopt products which reflect the American culture and consider them as their own; conversely, cultures with values different than those of the United States are less likely to embrace products typical of the American culture (Craig, Douglas and Bennett, 2009). Therefore, the Americanization phenomena



seems to be contingent with the predisposition of local cultures to embrace artifacts reflective of the American culture, rather than with the simple availability of these artifacts.

There is little doubt if any that the McDonaldization theory constitutes an important symbol of the homogenization perspective. It is defined as “the process whereby the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society and the world” (Ritzer, 1993:19). McDonaldization is the idea of a worldwide homogenization of cultures through the effects of multinational corporations. The process involves a formal consistency and logic transferred through corporate rules and regulations. The McDonaldization model refers to the principles that the McDonald’s franchise system has been able to successfully spread across borders and into the global marketplace. These principles embedded within the system are efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. In fact, the McDonald formula is a success for the reason that it is efficient, quick and inexpensive, predictable and effective in controlling both labor and its customers.

Most important to the origins of McDonaldization is the interaction between culture and economics. Although Ritzer (1993), like Robertson (2001) recognize economic factor as forces of McDonaldization, the authors emphasize the importance to consider cultural factors. For instance, examining the fit between a culture that values efficiency and accepts a McDonaldized system is vital for companies planning to take their businesses global.

From a theoretical standpoint, McDonaldization is based on Weber’s (1927/1968) work on formal rationality. In this regard, Weber maintained that the West has been characterized by an increasing tendency towards the predominance of formally rational systems. McDonaldization represents the bureaucracy in Weber’s model of the modern development of rationalization. Further, McDonaldization refers to the far-reaching process of social change (Ritzer and Malone, 2000). It impacts social structures and institutions in its country of origin, as well as, in other developed and developing countries around the world. The McDonaldization thesis’ relevance to issues of globalization asserts that social systems in today’s society are becoming increasingly McDonaldized, and more significantly that the fundamental tenets of its principles have been successfully exported from the United States to the rest of the world. Ritzer and Malone (2000) contend that organizations in foreign markets that adopt the basic principles of the model are to an extent undergoing the process of McDonaldization. In other words, the latter is actively exporting the materialization and embodiment of that process.

It seems that the McDonaldization model has transformed the nature of consumer consumption by encouraging and compelling individuals to consume infinite amounts of goods and services. Due to the fact that McDonaldized systems are robust entities imposing themselves on local markets in other societies, these systems are drastically transforming economies and cultures along the process (Ritzer and Malone, 2000). The model’s blueprint has been put into operation in fields beyond the fast food eatery

business reaching out to the domain of higher education with the McUniversity (Parker and Jary, 1995), theme parks as Disneyworld (Bryman, 1999), politics (Turner, 1999; Beilharz, 1999) and the health care sectors. The phenomenon of being McDonaldized has transformed the many aspects of the cultures within those societies, particularly, the way people live in their environments.

Although cultural differences are unchangeable forces that breed conflict and rivalry, growing global interdependence and interconnectedness may lead toward cultural standardization and uniformization as seen with the phenomenon of "McDonaldization" (Pieterse, 1996). It should be noted that while businesses may slightly adapt to local realities, the fact is that the basic items available for customers are generally the same worldwide (Ritzer and Malone, 2000). Even more importantly is the fact that the core operating procedures remain similar in every outlet around the globe. Thus, the most important aspect of the McDonaldized systems is in how local and global businesses operate using their standardized principles. What is actually being sold is not as relevant as the activities related to how things are organized, delivered and sold to customers; it is these steps that must abide to similar sets of principles for the business to be successful in its new global context.

Despite the contribution of the McDonaldization theory in explaining implications of globalization, Pieterse (1996) stresses that fast food outlets like McDonalds and the sort are not at all culturally homogenized but rather characterized by differences that reflect culturally mixed social forms. In fact, McDonaldized systems have had to adapt in order to succeed overseas. Organizations once imported, serve different social, economic and cultural functions that all need to be custom-tailored to local conditions.

In an ethnographic study of the McDonaldization theory, Talbott (1995) examines the fast food technique at the McDonald's fast food restaurant in Moscow and discerns that the McDonaldization method is not precise and accurate. In fact, every point substantiated by the theory turned out to have different outcomes in Moscow. For instance, the fast food outlet appeared to function inefficiently with customers waiting for hours in extensive long line-ups to get their meals served. The prices of a typical McDonald's meal costs more than one thirds of a Russian worker's average daily income. Talbott (1995) observed that, in opposition to what the McDonaldization theory holds about predictability, the main attraction for the Russian customer is in the diversified and unique lines of products that the chain offers not the standard menu items that one thinks they may find in Russia. The latter are not even available for the Russian customer. Further, control of the labor force is not as standardized and unvarying as presented by the theory. McDonald's Moscow offers flexibility to their employees; for instance, the chain encourages competitions among colleagues and has special hours for workers and their families. This flexibility is also extended to Russian customers that spend hours on end socializing and chatting over teas and coffees. This would be unconceivable in a North American fast food outlet as these sorts of customer practices would be strongly discouraged by the business.

Similarly, American adaptations of the fast food principles have been observed in China, south-east Asia and India. In these areas McDonald's responds to diverse tastes as well as different customer wants and needs than their American counterparts. The *Big Mac* is most probably not a standard menu item in Delhi. Another important point to mention is the fact that these sorts of fast food outlets in these countries are not considered as junk food eateries but in fact cater to an upper middle class. The latter seek to explore new modern tastes of the fusion of food variations whether it is the mixed tastes of Chinese and American menu items or Japanese and American. These customers are far from adhering to the principle of uniformity. In Yan's (1997) work on McDonald's in Beijing, the author argues that the local will prevail over McDonaldization, Americanization, and globalization predicting that in the future, Chinese customers will not associate typical standard menu items with America but may in fact get to the point where they consider fries, nuggets and coke as local menu options (Yan 1997: 76).

The cases of McDonald in Russia and Asia evidently fall short of being considered as cultural homogenization but should rather be seen as global localization, *insiderization*, or *glocalization*, the latter term coined by Sony chairman Akio Morita to indicate the necessity for companies to look in both local and global directions when working in diverse business settings (Ohmae, 1992).

Lastly, Appadurai (1996) and Pieterse (2004) argue that cultural homogenization is too simplistic as several local cultures have demonstrated their ability to domesticate or resist foreign cultural influences. Therefore, interactions between cultures favor cultural hybridity rather than a monolithic cultural homogenization. In doing so, globalization leads to the creative amalgamations of global and local cultural traits.

## 7. Hybridization scenario

It is needless to mention that growing awareness of cultural differences and globalization are interdependent as awareness becomes a function of globalization (Pieterse, 1996). In fact, with the advent of international workforce mobility, cross-cultural communications, migration, international trade, tourism, and global investments, awareness of cultural differences is inevitable and of vital necessity in the current global context. In this regard, Featherstone (1990) contends that globalization defines the space in which the world's cultures merge together while generating innovative and valuable heterogeneous significance as well as culturally compelled global insights.

The process of translocal fusion and cultural mixing or hybridization is another model that touches on interactions between globalization and culture. According to the hybridization view, external and internal flows interact to create a unique cultural hybrid that encompasses components of the two (Ritzer, 2010). Barriers to external flows exist; however, although they are powerful enough to protect local cultures from being overwhelmed by external exchanges, they are not powerful enough to completely block external flows.

The main thesis of cultural hybridization is the continuous process of mixing or blending cultures. The latter resulting from the globalization of ends derived out of the integration of both the global and local (Cvetkovich and Kellner, 1997) and of new, distinctive and hybrid cultures which are fundamentally neither global nor local at their core (Ritzer, 2010). As for Robertson (2001), globalization is a complex blend or mixture of homogenization and heterogenization as opposed to a wide-ranging process of homogenization.

Pieterse (1996) argues that hybridization is in fact an offspring rooted in the breadth of racism with inferences shedding light on the existence of the *métis*, half-caste and mixed-breed. The latter standpoint opposes the doctrines of racial purity and integration of the 19<sup>th</sup> century because, according to the father of racial demography, de Gobineau, and other scholars, the idea of race-mixing with what they considered lower elements of society would eventually elevate the former in the dominant role. Based on the premise of de Gobineau's theory of the Aryan master race, it is believed that race created culture and that mixing the *white*, *black* and *yellow* races broke established barriers set in place to avoid states of chaos. Based on these premises, the regions of central Asia, south and Eastern Europe, and the Middle East and North African regions are mixed racial demographic areas.

Merging the races would inevitably cast doubt on pillars of the purity creeds, as for instance with those that relate purity with strength and sanctity. Hybridization takes the experiences that are marginalized and considered taboo and merges them with principles of nationalism, challenging the latter by taking matters beyond national borders. Merging cultural and national elements would undermine ethnicity because the very nature of the blending process would innately originate from the experiences spurred and acquired across territorial boundaries (Pieterse, 1996). In this respect, hybridization reflects a postmodern view which curtails boundaries adhering to the merging of diverse cultures. Proponents of the tenets of modernity stand for a culture of order rooted within an unambiguous separation of national boundaries. Modernists would not tolerate that hybridization vanguards effects and experiences of what Foucault (1977) termed *subjugated knowledge*.

On another note, humanity has not been inherently divided in cultural bands as those formed in the past; hence the need for an equidistant position which acknowledges the multifaceted and overwhelming nature of modern technologies while recognizing the contribution that distinctively diverse cultures bring to the new and inventive shared common space (Pieterse, 1996).

Moreover, regarding the mixing and blending of immigrants within their early settler societies, Pieterse (1996) alleges that the intermingling of this process engages both peripheral and deeply rooted cultural elements as observed with the case of North America. The author maintains that the appeal of American popular culture is defined by its mixed and nomadic characteristics, its light-hearted resilience, and its disconnection from its unequal and hostile past. Both marginal and peripheral cultural elements

intermingled with deeply rooted facets of diverse cultures blending and merging in newly varied intercultural landscapes. This eclectic blending may be the source of the subliminal and subconscious magnetism towards American pop music, film, television, and fashion. It is an effect of the intimate intermingling and collision of different ethnicities, cultures and histories (Pieterse, 1996).

Along the same lines, intercultural mingling is a deeply embedded process which is supported by Hamelink (1983:4) who remarks that: “the richest cultural traditions emerged at the meeting point of markedly different cultures, such as Sudan, Athens, the Indus Valley and Mexico”. This sheds a different light on the surface/inherent arguments for culture. It appears that some cultures have been fused and united for centuries. And thus, the mixture of cultures should be part of a *world* narrative.

Pieterse (1996) questions whether the distinction between what has been referred to as cultural grammars as a metaphor for inherent and deep-rooted cultural elements and cultural languages which are the peripheral or marginal elements of a culture can be looked at as divergences between surface and depth at all. The author infers that to address the issues raised by the hybridization theory requires a decolonization of the imagination and the need to reassess how we examined culture in terms of territory and space in the past and how we view culture in its varied global landscapes in the present and future.

Hybridization in cultural studies has also been associated with the notions of *creolization* and *glocalization* (Hannerz, 1987). The word “Creole” refers to people of mixed race but it has been extended, among each other, to the creolization of culture (Cohen, 2007). Further, glocalization, which is at the heart of hybridization, refers to the interpretation of the global and local producing unique outcomes in different geographic regions (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007). Glocalization is reflected by the fact that the world is growing pluralistic with individuals and communities becoming innovative agents that have a tremendous power to adapt and innovate within their newly glocalized world (Robertson, 2001).

On another note, in tune with the hybridization view, Appadurai (1990) argues that globalization represents a process of both differentiation and interconnection. Therefore, the world should not be labeled as a monolithic network spreading worldwide but, rather, as a collection of partially overlapping socio-techno-cultural landscapes (Appadurai, 1990). The latter can be global and regional in nature, and marked by a particular speed of growth and direction of movement. These landscapes, which serve to examine disjunctures between economy, culture and politics, constitute diverse layers of globalization or dimensions of cultural flows. *Mediascapes* are about the flows of image and communication. *Ethnoscapes* are concerned with the flows of individuals around the world. *Ideoscapes* deal with exchanges of ideas and ideologies. *Technoscapes* refer to flows of technology and skills to create linkages between organizations around the world. *Financescapes* relate to the interactions associated with money and capital. These landscapes are independent of any given nation-state and differently affect various territories (Ritzer, 2010).



The process of hybridization is distinguished from the McDonalization theory in part due to the fact that it is not derived from pre-established theorem but has ventured into a divergent unexplored and unmarked path. While homogenization in general and McDonalization in particular evoke a victorious Americanism, hybridization is indefinite and open-ended in reference to practical experience and from a theoretical perspective (Pieterse, 1996). The theory does not correspond to an established theoretical matrix or paradigm but it conjectures a shift by virtue of its nature. The hybridization thesis stands for cultural convergence and assimilation. The theory advances cultural mixing and integration without the need to give up one's identity with cohabitation expected in the new cross-cultural prototype of difference (Pieterse, 1996). The McDonalization thesis may be interpreted as a policy of closure and apartheid (Pieterse, 1996) as outsiders are encouraged to engage in the global arena but are kept at a peripheral distance by the most dominant force in the game.

In terms of limitations, the hybridization thesis may conceal the unevenness in the process of mixing and distinctions need to be made between the different types and styles of mixing as the latter may undergo different evaluation processes in diverse cultural settings (Pieterse, 1995).

As a final thought, it appears that only the superficial elements of a culture are what are actually being mixed together. Conversely, the deeply rooted and inherent aspects of a culture are not subject to the blending and fusion. In fact, only the peripheral elements of culture actually navigate and traverse beyond borders and across national cultures via external and marginal rudiments such as cuisine, fashion styles, shopping habits, crafts, arts and entertainment. Meanwhile deeply rooted underlying assumptions, values and beliefs remain adjacent to their original cultural context.

## 8. Conclusion

Interactions between globalization and culture, particularly the influence of the former on the latter, constitute a contention point in the literature as various theoretical scenarios have been developed to examine these interactions.

The heterogenization view, which is also labeled differentiation, relates fundamentally to barriers that prevent flows that would contribute to the sameness of cultures. In the homogenization perspective, which is also known as convergence, barriers that prevent flows that would contribute to making cultures look alike are weaker and the global flows are stronger. In its extreme form, there is a possibility that local cultures can be shaped and overwhelmed by other more powerful cultures or even a global culture. According to the hybridization view, external flows interact with internal flows to create a unique cultural hybrid that encompasses components of the two (Ritzer, 2010).

There is no doubt that cultures get influenced and shift through contact with other cultures. However, this influence and shift does not mean cultural standardization or convergence



towards a world cultural model based on the American or the European one. Some authors have rejected the simplistic idea of homogenization and convergence (see Garrett, 1998) as there is empirical evidence that supports the fact that globalization preserves national particularities (Guillén, 2001; Zelizer, 1999). In fact, nations will maintain their variety and complexity, and cultural diversity is not endangered as cultural differences between countries are maintained. Nations get involved in cultural integration processes on a regular basis without losing their cultural peculiarities. They interpret cultural elements in light of theirs in a way that they become compatible with their culture. The adoption of a Western way of life does not mean standardization. Human societies resort to their symbolic fences in order to express their particularity and difference as a set of customs, habits, practices and productions.

To benefit from opportunities, cultures do not shut themselves off from the rest of the world, but rather they open up to other cultures in efforts to improve their social and economic capabilities. Culture openness is a phenomenon that recognizes differences between cultures, does not necessarily standardize or blend cultures and allows cultures to benefit from richness of other cultures. In the old days, individuals were subject to cultural consequences as they had to live with what their environment transmitted to them in addition to their contribution. Culture was part of individuals' destiny as it shaped their identity and future. Nowadays, individuals have access to an immense ocean of data and information which influence their socialization through acquired behaviors and attitudes. However, these acquired elements do not constitute a source of destruction to the core components of their own native culture.

It is our contention that homogenization and hybridization are concerned with cultural artifacts rather than with cultural values and underlying philosophical assumptions of a given culture. It is noteworthy to mention that the former do not impact the latter. It seems that the superficial elements of cultures such as clothing, fashion, foods, arts, music, movies and crafts are what gets transferred whereas the deeply embedded components of cultures remain contextually bound and culturally specific. Every culture maintains its cultural particularities while absorbing and interpreting cultural characteristics of other societies with which they are in contact. In fact, cultural exchanges among nations are positive as seen with the influences that global trade transactions have exerted on cultural identities. These transactions are not purely and solely destructive and negative for local cultures, they also bring about more possibilities and opportunities. In this regard, cultures are dynamic rather than static and can incorporate foreign contributions into their components without being necessarily subject to cultural domination.

Interactions between globalization and culture hold considerable implications for both societies and organizations. In this respect, economic globalization may exert an influence in reinforcing the ideology of individualism worldwide (Herriot and Scott-Jackson, 2002). As globalization promotes the flow of cultural practices and norms along with cross-border

exchanges of products and goods, both societies and organizations need to understand cultural implications of these flows in hopes for better interaction with other cultures and more efficient management of international organizations. In addition, while resorting to standardized practices across cultures, organizations need to adapt these practices in light of local cultural specificities.

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