Global Governance, Global Culture, and Multiculturalism

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Abstract: A pivotal change has occurred: the great national cultures no longer govern the circulation of culture worldwide. True, the larger nation states still maintain their “cultural diplomacy” machinery (though continually reducing the related expenditures), but their influence on the circulation of culture is next to negligible. High-powered economic mechanisms actually dictate the rules of the game. Hierarchical, central culture–peripheral culture relationships have been replaced by global culture–local culture relationships, with local cultures here standing for any identity-based culture (national, regional, etc.). This paper points out five responses of local cultures to globalization, factoring in both internal and international concerns, and in conclusion addresses the fragility of culture-related issues and the long road ahead toward maturation of a global consciousness.

Résumé: Un changement clé a eu lieu: les grandes cultures nationales ne dominent plus la circulation de la culture dans le monde. Il est vrai que les plus grands états-nations maintiennent leur machinerie de « culture diplomatique » (en réduisant cependant les dépenses qui s’y rapportent), mais leur influence sur la circulation de la culture est devenue presque négligeable. De puissants mécanismes économiques fixent couramment les règles du jeu. Les rapports hiérarchiques entre culture centrale et culture périphérique se sont fait remplacer par des rapports entre culture mondiale et culture locale. Dans ce contexte, on entend par culture locale toute culture identitaire (nationale, régionale, etc.). Cet article indique cinq réponses à la mondialisation de la part de cultures locales tout en tenant compte autant de problèmes internes qu’internationaux et, pour conclure, commente sur la fragilité de questions culturelles et le long chemin à parcourir jusqu’à l’avènement d’une conscience globale.

Globalization
At the beginning of the 1990s, cross-border social processes appeared clear-cut: globalization, including—perhaps especially so—the globalization of culture, appeared a foregone conclusion. It looked like a megatrend that would swamp
everything else, as had been the case with modernization, a form of Westernization of the world that in the second half of the twentieth century swept the whole globe and, local setbacks notwithstanding, has burgeoned in all civilizations and cultures. This conviction lay at the heart of Francis Fukuyama’s (1992) end-of-history paradigm presaging the global triumph of liberal democracy and market economy, and the progressive disappearance of ethnic feuds, religious conflicts, and other cleavages growing out of the “bad history.” The end of history, however, must not be understood as the “halt of the history clock” and cease of the course of events, but as a resultant direction dominating over contradictory particularizing vectors—a tendency leading to a globalized world.

But belief in the one-way thrust of this process—the triumph of liberal democracy, economics, and culture—was dented by the writings of Samuel Huntington (1996), which created no less of an intellectual stir, prophesying not an end of history but a clash of civilizations from which the West as a civilization and culture was not necessarily destined to emerge victorious. At the time, the end-of-history vision was judged to be the most desirable outlook for America and the world (“What’s good for America is good for the world”) and Huntington’s prognoses and diagnoses were seen as the most sinister version of international processes since the end of East-West ideological conflict, as a *sui generis* writing on the wall.

Samuel Huntington’s writings put into question the universality of civilization. In his view, the conflict between civilizations is the key to understanding the world. A *modus vivendi* between them—a consensus rather than a common denominator of values—creates the only hope for world order. Huntington develops a postideological, as well as culturalist, vision of civilizations—a pluralistic, not universalistic, one. He presaged that the world would need policentrism rather than universalism.

The myth of an end of history and of “velvet revolutions” adhering to its spirit was shattered with the break-up of Yugoslavia and the outbreak of inter-ethnic conflicts in many parts of the world (Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi). The clash-of-civilizations formula proved a useful guide to interpretations of the sources of conflict, though as such it tended to be overworked. End of history has since lost its lustre even though the appeal of a world without ideology, militant ethnicity, nationalism, and particularism of all stripes was so strong that no effort was spared to give it the semblance of reality.

The Huntington paradigm ran into criticism as vigorous as Fukuyama’s, though, obviously, its sources were different. Huntington was accused of making a fetish of conflict and negating the historically self-evident fact that relations between “differing” societies have not been confined solely to rivalry and struggle, but have also been examples of diffusion, imitation, and interpenetration of values, in short, of co-operation and dialogue. Without these, there would be no cross-cultural communication. It is an aspect of international discourse to which attention has been drawn as far back as almost a century ago by the eminent sociologist Marcel Mauss. Thus, as an explanation of the world’s contours today and
the megatrends of the future, the formula proposed by Huntington is not enough, but neither is the simple formula of single-vector globalization à la the end-of-history thesis. There is no single dominant force unambiguously designating the direction of the resultant situation.

How do we operate in this situation?

**Global governance**

Globalization involves a grand restructuring of the world, a global postindustrial revolution. It is the first social process in history which—with the possible exception of any undiscovered tribes in the backwoods of Amazonia or Papua New Guinea—affects all people whether they know it or not. Its impact is greater than the buffers or breakwaters formed by the states which have hitherto mediated in many international processes. The question that remains to be answered is: What kind of order is needed to extend development and security to the whole planet, to ensure “global governance”; that is, maintenance of social order world-wide, in which there is no world government and responsibility rests on no actor alone? (Simai, 1994).

The problem is that in each particular sphere—economic, political, social, and cultural—we are dealing with differing epochs or, as it might be, differing velocities. The market is the most universal social institution, which accounts for this drive to globalization, whereas a universalism of perspectives on human rights, human security, liberty, etc. is still far down the road. Consequently, it is hard to visualize a democratic global government or global civil society coming into being and taking on the task of such global governance. Yet, sooner or later someone has to do this, someone has to create an order that guarantees a minimum of international justice. The system for managing global affairs that evolved during the reign of bipolarity has undergone partial erosion. One of the elements has been the United Nations, in scope and function the most universal organization of its kind in history, but for a host of reasons it has been incapable of discharging this task.

At present we see a new generation of human rights acquiring increasing significance. Hitherto, the order in place was founded primarily on a political rights regime, reinforced by social and economic rights, though these were not generally accepted as part of the canon. Now, with the advent of the “age of identity” there have been calls for an acknowledgment of the claims of collective, community rights. These are not rights that are popular with global business since they smack of “jihad.” The West, in particular the United States, opts to accord priority to individual rights as the cornerstone of human rights in general. This is also a matter of sanctifying individual property rights (which today mean, first and foremost, intellectual rights), the bedrock on which the edifice of capitalism rests. The state is needed for the purpose of ensuring respect, among other things, for these rights.

Human rights are one of the two regimes (i.e., systems of rules) on which the framework of a new order is being built. The Decalogue of human rights is grounded in the canon established in the West, from an American perspective, at
any rate: the individual is autonomous, universal human rights are the basis of social organization, violations of these are a threat to peace, and their implementation on a global scale is the obligation of the international community which is legitimated to exact compliance. The second regime is the trade regime presided over by the World Trade Organization. Its basic principles are: non-discrimination, reciprocity of privileges, open markets, privatization, and liberalization—the Western liberal trade model.

In addition, according to some scholars (e.g., Puchala, 1999), one can already speak of a third regime taking shape: it is a political regime based on conditional national sovereignty and the possibility of intervention in internal affairs, the will of a group of states to enforce observance of the rules manu forte (strong arm) and to uphold United Nations legitimacy, liberalism, democracy, and political-ideological forms of government consistent with these principles.

These regimes derive from the Western catalogue of values and institutions. Of these, the trade regime (the meaning application of free-market rules on a global scale) seems to possess the highest degree of legitimacy, although as a result of decentralization of the world economy it is becoming very hard to employ economic leverage as a means of coercing governments into not only compliance with rules of commerce but also respect for human rights (although the WTO and the World Bank are trying hard). The other two regimes enjoy a smaller range of powers, although the hierarchical nature of international politics (the role of the U.S. and NATO) means they exhibit a higher level of capacity to enforce observance of rules. Questions that need investigating are: how this order works, how stable it is, to what extent is it accepted, how does it manage the amplitude of universality and pluralism, and, perhaps most crucially, what are the institutions which bear the burden of its operation and what is the legitimacy of the international regimes on which it rests. Answers to these questions will have to reflect regional and national differences.

Will these regimes make it possible to cope with global problems? Can any assistance in this come from global culture which does not function in any formal regime, but instead is part of both the trade regime (commercialization of culture flows) and the human rights regime (cultural rights)? This is a subject still awaiting investigation but there are one or two points that can already be made in this context. They relate to the problem of the imposition of cultural models of consumption by the whole machinery of advertising and other media of mass persuasion, initiation into social roles, and the uses of these as a remedy for nationalism: in short, the “processing” of everyone into consumers, thereby obtaining expected behaviours and ensuring predictability of reactions by people for whom consumption becomes a common cultural code (Krzysztofek, 1999).

Briefly, the world media inundate our minds with symbols which are functional for the corporate world, persuading us that progress means consumption. David Rothkopf (1997) has actually argued that culture in this fashion is very necessary to the world because, as Thomas Friedman (1999) has written, countries in which there are McDonald’s do not wage wars against one another. In other words,
as Ignacio Ramonet (1999) observes ironically, the solution to war would be to buy everyone Big Macs and build them Disney Worlds. The problem is, however, more complex. A cultural regime could be said to exist only if there were a considered strategy for its implementation. But for the moment it is, as noted earlier, subsumed into the trade regime since culture is simply a business and the desired ideological effects are achieved as it were incidentally.

However, the lesson of history is that as well as political power (direct coercion) and economic power, the governing have always made use of symbolic power, of the power to impose collective representations (representational power), something that churches have long understood. Why should things be any different today? The rules of a cultural regime are, however, unwritten ones. According to Johann Galtung (1999), the overarching principle of a cultural regime’s operation is the capacity of the Western world for expansion. Implementation of this principle is pursued by a wide variety of institutions which, although their specific province is economics, operate in the symbolic, educational, informational, and cultural spheres: Hollywood, Disneyland, Madison Avenue, and so on. Consistent with such an approach, the blueprint for global governance could also include “consumerist infection,” China being a case in point, as its citizens have never in the past been colonized spiritually. The aim would be to overwhelm people (e.g., Islamic, Chinese) with consumerism. Even if it fails to penetrate the bedrock layers of culture, consumerism supplies them with a popular philosophy of life. This can prove to be strategically more important than military or economic warfare, which are, in any case, not very effective weapons against China.

Global culture

In attempting to explain more clearly what is meant by global culture, one finds there are a large number of far-from-clear-cut definitions to choose from. It can be defined as the synergetic effect of market forces, technology, and freedoms of movement, a contemporary variant on the well-known theme of cultural diffusion, which for centuries has been a subject of study. We cannot know for certain, since we cannot empirically determine, whether the expansion of global culture is an organized process or random diffusion. For that matter, this is true for globalization in general. The conventional wisdom is that globalization is primarily “a spontaneous civilization process, not a development strategy” (Szacki, 1998, p. 64). On the available evidence it appears, however, to be driven primarily by economic mechanisms, though political profits are usually also part of the equation. The creation and spread of global culture is governed by a Decalogue: commercialization, liberalization, deregulation, privatization, advertising, innovation, operation as a global actor, generation of new needs, translation of everything into imagery and spectacle, and combating of intellectual piracy. Global culture does not perform any mission of stimulating cultural development, solidifying identity, or developing cross-cultural communication, and it is not concerned with improving people; it aims at earning its keep and paying its way. Its patrons are the consuming public world-wide.
America has a large stake in promoting global culture since it is a prominent part of its own commerce. In fact, global culture actually serves to promote American economic interests: in U.S. exports, the audiovisual industry occupies second place behind aerospace and ahead of foodstuffs. This is a function of the structure of the American market, over half of which consists of non-material, symbolic goods (media, culture industries, entertainment, software, education, advertising, goods transferred via networks, etc.). Hence the enormous pressure exerted by all American agencies—from the federal government to the corporate world—for protection of intellectual property. It is a matter of protecting jobs, wealth, and power.

This, of course, forms only part of the picture. Global culture no less than any other culture, even when part of a global regime, performs certain ideological-cum-symbolic functions which, in my opinion, play a significant part in shaping world order and global governance. In light of the interrelationships between consumption, economics, and ideology, it is very clear that the demarcation of culture as an autonomous sphere vis-à-vis economics no longer makes any sense: it has, quite simply, become a thing of the past. Here we can see what a dead letter the Marxian paradigm of base and superstructure now is: base is becoming superstructure and vice versa. Hollywood’s products are a potent instrument of ideological persuasion but at the same time are excellent business. The only question is: which is subservient to which?

For what we are looking at here is not only the economization of culture (its subordination to the marketplace), something we have known about for a long time, but also a substantial element of reculturization of economics: there is, simply, a lot of money to be made from consumer culture. Seen by audiences all over the world, Titanic netted its producers close to two billion dollars (10% of this sum was consumed by its budget), assuring the thousands of people involved in making it a comfortable existence. Hundreds of thousands of ethnic cuisine restaurants make their money not only from processing culinary matter but also from selling a more or less authentic multiculturalism. Yet multiculturalism is surely more than a cuisine: it comprises the flavours, sounds, and smells of cultures exploited by the tourist industry, the most commercialized nomadism in world history. However, globalization in culture denotes something more than, in George Ritzer’s (1993) phrase, “the McDonaldization of society.” Global culture permeates local cultures, resulting in new configurations. The situation presents us with colonization and resistance, with homogenization as well as local hybrid forms and identities. Global culture “fabricates” both hybridism and multiplicity and so is a phenomenon occurring at a variety of levels and generating co-operation, tensions, conflicts, and all sorts of interflows (Kellner, 1998).

**Responses of local cultures to globalization**

The history of socio-cultural change provides many examples of ways in which established cultures respond to invasion by a new culture. A great deal of interesting empirical material can be found in the course of modernization processes in the underdeveloped world. In the case of global culture, we likewise have a large
number of scenarios to ponder, including the following five: complete acceptance of global culture; total rejection of global culture; selective adaptation; hybridization; and cultural dualism and pluralism. The kind of exemplars that eventually crystallize from these will in no small degree determine the contours of world order and global governance in this century.

1. **Complete acceptance of global culture**, meaning simple adaptation. Change will triumph over continuity. This applies, in particular, to young people receptive to change, ready to embrace new lifestyles, and fascinated by consumption, in short, susceptible to its demonstration of higher life standards psychologically coupled with the irresistible will to imitate. This is a powerful globalizing force. As studies of the contents of hypermarkets in various parts of the world have shown, half the products come from the same multinational corporations supplying the same name-brand symbols. An Indian film producer has described the adoption of outward forms of culture by young Indians watching American movies, not only in their manner of dress but also in their way of walking. Hence, a not unreasonable suspicion arises that along with these forms, ideas and elements of ideology are also absorbed (Jameson, 1998). Culture scholars see in this a generation factor: an overpowering drive by young people for emancipation from traditional repressive cultures, and a constant need to deconstruct and reconstruct one’s identity. In the multiple-freedom and multiple-choice environment provided by the world of consumption, change of identity exerts an enormous influence on the behaviour of individuals and, in consequence, on the behaviour of societies. If the Burundians or Rwandans were consumer societies, there might not have been any ethnic massacres, no eruptions of atavistic tribal hatreds. There is, however, a weak point in this argument: How do you make consumers out of young people condemned to poverty and the frustration bred by the demonstration effect of the consumer lifestyle and the imitation effect that goes with it?

2. **Total rejection of global culture**, or lack of adaptation, indicates that people view consumer culture as a threat. In this case, continuity prevails over change. The core of indigenous culture—what Edward Shils (1970) calls the central value system—determines all the bearings of people’s activities: normative (morality, moeurs), expressive (art), cognitive (education, knowledge), and instrumental (production). In this case, the generational factor also plays a role: older people are more resistant to change. By and large, this is the experience of cultures which are mentally furthest removed from and hostile towards the West. Generally, it involves rejection but it can also take the form of active opposition not far short of what Benjamin Barber (1995) has labelled “jihad,” or a “holy war” against the West waged on a cultural battleground.

3. **Selective adaptation**, or partial acceptance and partial rejection. This is one of the most psychologically interesting and complex cases. People are attached to their cultures, its values, norms, and institutions, but willingly
embrace the outward forms of consumer culture: dress, modes of entertainment, music, etc. The snipers in Sarajevo wore jeans of the same brand as their targets; the executioners in Bosnia tortured their victims while listening to rap and heavy metal. During the wars of the Middle Ages, from both enemy camps there resounded the same *Te Deum*. In the most general terms, it can be said that when selective adaptation occurs, consumer culture fails to penetrate the deepest layers of the identity-based culture and manifests itself only in outward guises. Huntington (1996) seems to be right when he argues that a Chinese or Iraqi eating a Big Mac or pizza does not cease to be Chinese or Iraqi. The impact of global culture here is only of a modifying, not transforming, nature. This is characteristic of the majority of changes which do not grow out of the soil of indigenous culture but rather are an effect of cultural diffusion.

4. **Hybridization**, or co-adaptation of cultures, meaning a compromise between the local, the national, the ethnic, etc. and the universalism of consumer culture. Some examples of such *metissage* are by no means uninteresting amalgams, others are more reminiscent of inter-species “bastardization” of cultures. According to the Mexican anthropologist Néstor García Canclini (1992), globalization promotes eclectic forms and borrowings which lead to the proliferation of a new species of cultures. Consequently, one of the complaints against global culture—that it is responsible for corrupting identity-based cultures—is misplaced since that has been the nature of cultural processes for thousands of years.

5. **Cultural dualism and pluralism**, or two or more levels of culture. This scenario depicts the most desirable impact of global culture in which identity-based cultures remain intact. People within the orbit of global culture are not deprived of participation in national, ethnic, or local cultures. Global culture creates a universal communications code, which is especially necessary for transacting business in a multicultural world. Such a positive dualism is characteristic of educated women and educated men who, on the one hand, are expert in decoding the symbols of global culture and, on the other hand, remain rooted in their own values and symbols. Since they have not renounced culture, they do not feel out of place among strangers because they entertain no prejudices towards them. Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote of such people with respect and fondness, describing them as “*grands spirits*” rising above the imaginary barriers dividing nations. What we have in this situation is not hybridization but two orders of values and models. Examples of this kind of dualism can be found in the cultural reality of America where people are not condemned to the alternative of either participation in a national culture or total commitment to their own identity-based cultures at the cost of exclusion from the wider universe. These two strands of culture are perfectly complementary. The United States, Canada, and a number of other immigrant nations enjoy a distinctive situation—they are home to a cross-section of almost all cultures, which makes them a kind of pluralistic “world in micro-
The situation in Europe and many non-European countries has been historically different: majority–minority relationships have created cultural unrest. Even if adherence to one’s own culture was not suppressed, it usually carried the risk of forfeiture of life-chances. The American model of multiculturalism is one of the dynamos of U.S. expansion: Americans simply have the capacity to accommodate diversity and, as a result, there is less distance separating them from the majority of our globe’s cultures.

**Multiculturalism**

Managing multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity is one of the most important factors of social order internally and internationally. It is estimated that the number of ethnic minorities in the world’s 200-odd states exceeds ten thousand (minorities account for several percent or more of the population in 90% of these states) and that some 5% of people do not live in the countries of their birth. This means that the turn-of-the-millennium world has, due to ever-denser communications networks, among other things, attained an unprecedented scale of diversity, paradoxically, in step with progressive globalization.

For many reasons, however, our experiences with political strategies of multiculturalism do not inspire optimism. And ethnic policy is becoming increasingly ineffectual because throughout the world the private sector is swallowing up ever more areas of our lives and thereby rolling back the public sector, for centuries the agora of societies. This is complicating implementation of political strategies of multiculturalism. So far, a variety of strategies, some relatively humanitarian, others less so, some positively inhumane, have been tried:

1. Ethnic cleansing, i.e., expulsion of a weaker, though not necessarily smaller, group from a commonly inhabited territory.

2. Assimilation, i.e., forcible integration combined with depriving a minority of three rights now recognized as standard: use of its mother tongue, cultivation of its culture, and use of its own spelling of personal names.

3. Sanctioned ethnic pluralism, i.e., observance of the liberal principle of “live and let live” embedded in the Anglo-Saxon tradition which ensures a certain range of freedoms but usually does not promote social integration; indeed, it often leads to the exclusion of ethnic communities from civil society or even to their ghettoization and reduction to Bantustan or underclass status, to de facto apartheid.

4. Civic integration paired with respect for the “right to be different.” This is what is advocated in almost all the formulated models of desired multiculturalism to be found in international documents (United Nations, UNESCO, Council of Europe, and European Union). The recommendations set out in them are presented as the highest and most “politically correct” standard for democracies which wish to make people civically equal while not making them culturally alike. It clearly follows that for this multiculturalism strategy the most desirable form the influence of global culture could take is one
which does not undermine identity-based cultures, the sense of belonging to a community, citizenship, and individual-community relationships. The question is: Is it realistic?

The experiences of the 1990s (Bosnia, Kosovo) demonstrate that some states are unwilling, or unable, to cope with these problems and that observance of the human rights regime has to be exacted by force, which often proves ineffective. So a question worth asking is: what instruments are there that can effectively ease or resolve the related and proliferating tensions and conflicts, and can this problem be solved by political means or is there perhaps some other way?

My hypothesis is as follows. The market by no means has to be dysfunctional for multiculturalism; indeed, it can even promote it. Such a hypothesis is sharply at variance with the prevailing one which is that the market, as the vehicle of globalization, destroys identity, regiment cultures, eliminates differences, imposes dominance, Americanizes, McDonaldizes, etc. More detailed analysis shows that the problem is more complex. Many arguments can be found to support a claim that differentiation is coming about precisely as a result of globalization. To reduce it to a homogenizing role is to oversimplify the essential nature not only of the contemporary market, or markets, but also of culture. Such an approach dates back to the days when, for many postwar years, modernization, that is, Westernization of the world, was indeed a mega-trend. However, the idea that the market tends towards regimentation of cultures has its roots in a period when it was busy “manufacturing” mass society and Western cultural imperialism. There are many indications that this diagnosis is no longer valid and the age of mass society is drawing to a close.

Just as the market and technology of the pre-industrial age produced mass society, so too is the synergetic effect of the market and technology plus freedom creating a post-mass society. To preserve mass society would now be pointless; it would go against the grain of the new technology and market for which freedom is more functional. The obsolescence of “McDonaldization” or “coca-colonization” of the world is therefore self-evident in the light of actual processes.

Global culture is not only a mass phenomenon but also a highly individualized one. Its newest aspect, associated with the changing nature of markets and the potential of technology, is essentially a post-mass phenomenon. Culture is capable of satisfying the most individualized tastes, among other things, thanks to the Internet. The late-capitalist market is not only about maximization of profit but also about differentiation (Firat, 1995). To use another oxymoron, we could label this fraglization or globalized fragmentation, that is, a combination of fragmentation and globalization. Global culture is “manufacturing” not only a “global village” but also “villages on the globe.”

Maximization of profit often also denotes maximization of differentiation. Post-mass culture is, to use a convenient piece of shorthand, “individualization of the consumer’s address,” or customization, since the contemporary market is primarily about consumption. Some scholars (Firat, 1995) argue that the boom in consumption of culture is at present attributable to the fact that people, especially
in the Western world, are tending less and less to belong to a culture and to an ever
greater degree becoming no more than its consumers. Belonging denotes a repres-
sive role of culture, as well as roots, attachment to norms, resistance to anomie,
while consumption is liberation not only from repressiveness but also from the
operation of culture-supplied norms. Multinational corporations produce diver-
sity and assisted in this by the ideology of the aforementioned “political correct-
ness” with its imperative of respecting diversity and paying court to otherness
(Gitlin, 1995). In America they now refer to “moral markets,” that is, the selling
and promotion of moral norms via advertising, marketing, public relations, and so
forth which try to avoid offending any minority, are environmentally friendly (nat-
ural and social), and are required to instill patterns of consumption consistent with
such an axiology, which is what the market wants today (Hoffman & Novak,
1996).

However, “production of multiculturalism” by the market has little in
common with what cultural policymakers would like to see as the desired multi-
culturalism that performs integrative functions. It is a fair guess that marketization
of culture is perceived by the ideologues of late capitalism as an essential compo-
nent of the cosmopolitanism needed by the multiethnic West: Its job is to serve up
values which insure against ethnocentrism and intolerance and can further the
process of adaptation to the market and an open society. Such a culture is thought
to possess therapeutic qualities. It is expected to teach open-mindedness and how
to live without blocks, to awaken the need to achieve, and to look forward into the
future, in short, to act as a “cure for history.” The alternative to such multicultural-
ism can only be a bellicose “jihad” waged in part as a response to McDonaldiza-
tion.

Consumption and multiculturalism strategies prompt the question: What is
the nation becoming? Is it still a community into which each person is born or
does every generation have to renegotiate the terms of being a nation and pro-
tecting national culture?

Multiculturalism requires a common symbolic code. Without such a code it is
more expensive because it becomes unpredictable. As Andrzej Walicki (1997) has
observed, “the big multinational corporations need people who are flexible, easy
to transplant, uninhibited by national loyalties” (p. 12). What are needed are
people with a global mentality—*homo mundialis*—who are achievement-ori-
ented, liberated from collective identity, individualized, depoliticized, cured of
ethnicity and collective identity, and reduced to the consumer dimension. For
these people, who would generally work at a professional, managerial, or execu-
tive level, this assumption of a global mentality would seem to work against the
maintenance of distinctive national cultures. However, the need to transcend
nationhood is less strong for people at semi-skilled or unskilled levels.

Global culture is in a sense the ideology of a uniform meta-network of inter-
ests linking national and transnational actors (Krzysztofek, 1999). This is a
network of power, money, information/knowledge, and culture, in other words,
integration of the socio-eco-info-techno-sphere. All of these factors correlate with
the human activities that are transforming the face of our planet, and they are interlocked. Power is a correlate of money, knowledge, information and culture; money is a correlate of power, information (money as meta-information), etc.; knowledge is a correlate of money, power, and culture; and culture is a correlate of power (symbolic power), money (the mighty entertainment market), etc. One could draw a whole map of such correlates. This network is the synergetic effect of two “forces of nature”: technology and the freedom of all kinds of material and intellectual transfers. Technology, communications (nothing, after all, takes place in a communications vacuum), and freedom are the parameters of the environment in which the global network operates. The major globalization players, and the nucleus of an emergent transnational class, are company CEOs and their local affiliates; some globally oriented government bureaucrats, politicians, and consumer elites; the media; and trade (Sklair, 1995). Globalization is the solution for the network, while provincialism, localness, specificity, and underdevelopment create problems.

Of the four multiculturalism strategies discussed above, the most desirable in terms of both internal and international order is social integration combined with respect for the right to be different. This means that a culture participating in the international marketplace can be of assistance in global governance if it allows people to function in two dimensions: the identity-based and the universal. A linguistic analogy will serve: English functions as a lingua franca without destroying ethnic languages, although it undoubtedly influences them.

It has to be realized, however, that the other, identity-based seam of culture is no longer and will no longer be the same, at least in the Western world, as it used to be, that is, as a regulator of individual and collective life. The cultural expressions which have blossomed in postmodern societies (in the developed West) largely promote consumption, rather than regulation of life and control; consider, for instance, Bavaria’s Beer Festival. There is no hint here of a “jihad” culture here.

The Janus face of global culture
Evaluations of global culture are and will be axiologically ambivalent, for global culture presents different aspects of itself on every spot on the globe. It is a bearer of threats, but it also creates opportunities. From a global governance point of view, its most functional element is the fact that, in contrast to ethnic cultures, it “eliminates the category of other from its discourse, its world being inhabited by persons having the same tastes, the same value systems, the same problems” (Szpociński, 1999, p. 68). In other words, this is a culture which is a stranger to the idea of enemy or even “foreigner,” someone who has to be kept at arm’s length; all its participants line up on one side. In the climate of such a culture, would the Holocaust or world wars have been possible? However, it does have a weakness in that it remains viable only as long as there appear no internal impulses (economic or political conflicts) which challenge the taken-for-granted nature of its belief in the existence of one human family. In such a situation, there is no body of common values, no cultural heritage, to which an appeal can be
made and which could whisper that something—culture and the values it embodies—links us with members of groups with which we have come into conflict (Szpocieński, 1999).

But, does globalization lead to the dominance of a global culture? On this question of the relationship between globalization and global culture, there are two conflicting views, each supported by persuasive arguments. The first postulates that it does not necessarily follow that the more globalization there is, the more global culture there is. Far from it. What we see now is a law of psychology according to which the larger the amount of globalization detaching industry, politics, culture, and values from native soil, the more people seek refuge within their own norms, and the greater the degree of relativism, not universality, unless we assume that relativism is, basically, universal, a contradiction in terms which is perfectly legitimate in a postmodernist setting.

Hopes of curing peoples of militant ethnocentrism may, however, prove futile. Globalization positively intensifies nationalism and ethnocentrism and does so, paradoxically, against a background of a simultaneous weakening of the primacy of nations and the erosion of local cultures and traditions through global culture. When some of the elements of specificity undergo destruction, the result is the unravelling of the social tissue, degradation of cultural systems, and detachment of industry from its own moorings and from the network of socio-cultural linkages. When national sovereignty declines and frontiers become symbolic lines on the map, culture signs and symbols come to the fore acting like fingerprints, something that people can call their own and which does not melt into a single global culture. Attention was drawn to this by Karl Polanyi (1957) and also by European authors from outside the Anglo-Saxon fold (e.g., Bernardi, 1998). This is the key to understanding the present globalization–particularization amplitude and the fact that globalization is not a single vector force. What is more, globalization does not have to be a Western response, as modernizers have seen it. Various “tribes,” the informaticized included, will have differing futures since they have had differing pasts. Consequently, global culture need not be and is not a Western culture; it will be a hybridized culture absorbing elements of various origins (García Canclini, 1992) (see, for example, current Japanese culture, which comprises elements of both Western and Eastern cultures).

According to the other side of the argument, time is working in favour of “disarmament,” not only of “jihad” but also of all anti-civilization rebellion. An important role in this is played by the Internet, thanks to which there is unlikely to be any serious upsurge of protest in the foreseeable future since the nature of late capitalist civilization is different. Over the past three decades, processes have asserted themselves which are still largely uncharted. The society of the Enlightenment Project—the industrial and intellectual revolution—is beginning to fade into history. The birth of a postindustrial age in the developed world has been proclaimed and with it hopes have been revived that computer civilization will inject new impulses into culture. The postindustrial age has its own logic and narrative,
Concluding remarks

The new civilization needs new forms of artistic creation, innovation, and adaptation, and the culture that is emerging is a new departure, perhaps even a kind of opium, “digital opium” so to speak. But there still remains a crucial problem: Can and should such a culture be left solely to the uncontrolled forces of the market or is it possible and worthwhile to bolster it with some kind of international cultural policy which would correct its defects and reinforce its virtues without imposing undesirable regulatory or coercive measures? This also applies to economic policy which is already regulated by the World Trade Organization, a body viewed by some as a World Ministry of Trade in the making.

Culture-related issues are a delicate and controversial topic: witness the breakdown of the OECD negotiations on the Multilateral Treaty on Investment. Culture was to be incorporated into the trade regime despite the objections of some countries, notably France, which pressed for a special status— *l’exception culturelle*— to be conferred on it. If culture remains part of this regime the international community will be deprived of the tools to influence it. Ultimately, much will depend on the principal “culture producers”— multinational corporations—and whether they are capable of rising above the profit motive and making culture carry the message of global ethics. The special status of cultural products in international trade is highly desirable and, following the tragic events of September 11th, 2001, there are some grounds to believe in the likelihood of this. For instance, it is conceivable that the principles on which some global culture businesses operate, and on which U.S. foreign policy in this area is based, might be “rethought” and altered in response to the trauma. The selling of popular culture is very profitable, however, which makes me think that the business-as-usual principle will, in the long run, overcome any traumatic feelings.

One of the sources of hostility towards the commercial culture marketplace and cultural consumption as a regulator of identity is the national elites’ loss of control, their inability to any longer control which values should be preserved and which elements altered. This is a key problem of cultural and educational policy. To an ever greater degree, the market, the universal locus of legitimacy, is taking over the power to impart meanings, to portray culture, to signpost space, to communicate. This is making the self-portraiture of one’s own culture, which is so desirable, so much more difficult.

Since the world will continue to be a world of diverse cultures and mentalities, because people want to preserve their own codes, globalization can be seen, in effect, as nothing other than construction of interfaces between cultures for comprehending codes without destroying them. Multiculturalism as implemented by the market is a “network,” not hierarchical, culture. The market promotes not so much the preservation of community-based cultures as their preservation in individuals. Construction of interfaces furthers consumption and is also a boost to international business since every business requires an agreed-upon code. Multi-
culturalism without a code is very costly because it is unpredictable. The code, it is expected, will expedite maturation of a global consciousness and ethics, a sense of commonality of destinies. This is a conclusion which might to some extent dispel the ubiquitous, pessimistic belief in the pernicious consequences of the globalization of culture.

Notes
1. Incidentally, it is felt by some students of international relations, including some in America (e.g., Tehranian, 1997) that the White House treated the works of both Fukuyama and Huntington with excessive reverence (almost equalling the response to George Kennan’s famous 1947 article in which he defined the basic principles of an American strategy for containment of Communism) and ignored many other worthwhile diagnoses and suggestions relating to the construction of world order.

2. The well-known financier Jacques Attali (1991) predicts the emergence in the world of a super-class of nomads numbering some tens of millions, equipped with the means of communication and production, including symbols, and a billion-strong underclass of nomads searching for chances of survival. The rest will be an increasingly depressed middle class, the mass culture audience and cannon fodder of pop culture. Entertainment will ease the pains of coming to terms with instability and upheaval, and games, vacations, holidays, sport, group religions, travel, and drugs will maintain some kind of order—but will this be effective insurance against anomie? Attali is undoubtedly close to the truth when he argues that the entertainment industry is not only a source of profit but also a farm of symbolic control and role initiation designed to be a shield against revolution.

References


