**Globalization and cultural leveling**

**Cultural leveling** is the process by which different cultures approach each other as a result of travel and communication.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_leveling#cite_note-1) It can also refer to "the process by which Western culture is being exported and diffused into other nations”.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_leveling#cite_note-2) Cultural leveling within the United States has been driven by mass market media such as [radio and television broadcasting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadcasting) and nationwide distribution of [magazines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magazine) and catalogs.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_leveling#cite_note-3) Some of these means and effects are considered artifacts of the [Machine Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machine_Age) of the 1920s and 1930s. Today the interactions between countries worldwide have allowed the opportunity for intercultural dialogue. Countries world wide have undergone a form of cultural leveling. Some countries being more open to it than others. Japan, for example, has assimilated Western styles of dress and music into a blend or Western and Eastern Cultures.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_leveling#cite_note-:0-4) Today, due to the crossing or travel and communication with time and space there is just about no “other side of the world” anymore, giving us the inevitable result of what is known as cultural leveling.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_leveling" \l "cite_note-:0-4) [Eclecticism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eclecticism) and cultural leveling both share a similar ideology in the separation of culture from human nature creating the potential risk or enslavement and manipulation.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_leveling#cite_note-5) Cultural leveling is notably present in minorities instead of large cultures driven to aspire wealth and there is more commonality present in minorities. At times countercultures and subcultures may pose as a resistance to cultural change within society. Local cultures did diffuse across each other in earlier times as material items hence influencing a change in the cultural atmosphere. These diffusions have been part of most significant cultural changes in recorded history. To convey how fundamental the loss of diversity and the subsequent leveling have been, many sociologists such as Daniel Lerner amplified the opinion through the phrase “the passing of traditional society.

**Cultural globalization** refers to the transmission of ideas, meanings, and [values](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Values) around the world in such a way as to extend and intensify [social relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_relation).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-1) This process is marked by the common consumption of [cultures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture) that have been diffused by the [Internet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet), [popular culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_culture) media, and [international travel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_travel). This has added to processes of [commodity exchange](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commodities_exchange) and [colonization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonization) which have a longer history of carrying cultural meaning around the globe. The circulation of cultures enables individuals to partake in extended social relations that cross national and regional borders. The creation and expansion of such social relations is not merely observed on a material level. Cultural [globalization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization) involves the formation of shared norms and knowledge with which people associate their individual and collective cultural identities. It brings increasing interconnectedness among different populations and cultures.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-2)

**Overview**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: Overview)]

* Diffusion of ideas and cultures amongst all of the civilizations of the world.
* Trend that will eventually make all of human experience and customs the same since all cultures are coming together into one
* Occurs in everyday life, through wireless communication, electronic commerce, popular culture, and international trade
* Attempt to promote a Western lifestyle and possibly Americanize the world.

**Contributing factors**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Contributing factors)]

* New technology and forms of communication around the world help to integrate different cultures into each other
* Transportation technologies and services along with mass migration and individual travel contribute to this form of globalization allowing for cross-cultural exchanges
* Infrastructures and institutionalization embedded change (e.g. teaching languages such as English across the world through educational systems and training of teachers)

**Benefits**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: Benefits)]

* Allows for profits to companies and nations
* Offers opportunities for development and advancement in economics, technology, and information and usually impacts developed countries
* Creates a more homogeneous world
* Generates interdependent companies amongst companies

Phases[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Phases)]

**Pre-modern phase: early civilizations to 1500**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=6)]

* Early human migration (facilitation of trade and creation of social networks amongst other nations)
* Emergence of world religions
* Development of trans-regional trade networks (long-distance trade, many centered in China and India. Early forms of globalization, especially with the Silk Road)

**Modern phase**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=7" \o "Edit section: Modern phase)]

* European imperialism (rise of the West. European expansionism, especially with Columbus’ encounter with the New World which allowed goods and people to cross the Atlantic)
* Emerging international economy
* International migration and developments outside of the West
* Spread of modernity
* Medical advancement that helped many
* Rise of the nation-state (a development of freedom of movement and cultural diffusion)
* Industrialization (demand for raw materials to supply industries. Science grew immensely with electronic shipping, railways, and new forms of communication, such as cable technology)

**Contemporary phase: 1945–present**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=8" \o "Edit section: Contemporary phase: 1945–present)]

* Struggle after the cold war led to a slow but steady increase in cultural flows with the immigration of peoples, ideas, goods, symbols, and images.
* Represented global cultural interconnectedness, which eventually led to developments in transport and transport infrastructures such as jet airlines, construction of road and rail networks. This allowed for more tourism and shifting patterns of global migration.
* Marshall McLuhan introduced the term “global village” in the 1960s stating that it was the ability to connect and trade ideas instantly amongst the nations of the world
* The term “globalization” became popular in the 1980s

Examples[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=9" \o "Edit section: Examples)]

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:McDonald's_in_Moscow,_2008.jpg)

McDonald's in [Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia)

Cultural globalization integrates scholars from several disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, communication, cultural studies, geography, political science and international relations. The field is notably broad as there are several concepts which may be perceived as cultural or transnational.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-:0-3)

A visible aspect of the cultural globalization is the diffusion of certain cuisines such as American [fast food chains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fast_food_chain). The two most successful global food and beverage outlets, [McDonald's](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonald%27s) and [Starbucks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Starbucks), are American companies often cited as examples of globalization, with over 36,000[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-4) and 24,000 locations operating worldwide respectively as of 2015.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-5) The [Big Mac Index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Mac_Index) is an informal measure of purchasing power parity among world currencies.

Cultural globalization is one of the three main dimensions of globalization commonly found in academic literature, with the two other being [economic globalization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_globalization) and [political globalization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_globalization).[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-Ritzer2008-146-6) However, unlike economic and political globalization, cultural globalization has not been the subject of extensive research.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-:0-3)

Measurement[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=10" \o "Edit section: Measurement)]

There have been numerous attempts to measure globalization, typically using indices that capture quantitative data for [trade flows](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_flows), [political integration](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Political_integration&action=edit&redlink=1), and other measures. The two most prominent are the AT Kearney/Foreign Policy Globalization index and the KOF Globalization Index. Cultural globalization, however, is much more difficult to capture using quantitative data, because it is difficult to find easily verifiable data of the flow of ideas, opinions, and [fashions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion). One attempt to do so was the Cultural Globalization Index, proposed by Randolph Kluver and Wayne Fu in 2004, and initially published by Foreign Policy Magazine.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-7) This effort measured cultural flow by using global trade in media products (books, periodicals, and newspapers) as a proxy for cultural flow. Kluver and Fu followed up with an extended analysis, using this method to measure cultural globalization in Southeast Asia.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-8)

Impacts[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=11" \o "Edit section: Impacts)]

The patterns of cultural globalization is a way of spreading theories and ideas from one place to another. Although globalization has affected us economically and politically, it has also affected us socially on a wider scale. With the inequalities issues, such as race, ethnic and class systems, social inequalities play a part within those categories.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-:1-9)

The past half-century has witnessed a trend towards globalization. Within the media and pop culture, it has shaped individuals to have certain attitudes that involve race issues thus leading to stereotypes.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-:1-9)

Technology is an impact that created a bridge that diffused the globalization of culture. It brings together [globalization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization), [urbanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urbanization) and [migration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_migration) and how it has affected today's trends. Before urban centers had developed, the idea of globalization after the second world war was that globalization took place due to the lifting of state restrictions by different nations. There were national boundaries for the flow of goods and services, concepts and ideas.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-:1-9)

Perspectives[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=12" \o "Edit section: Perspectives)]

**Hybridization**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=13" \o "Edit section: Hybridization)]

Many writers suggest that cultural globalization is a long-term historical process of bringing different cultures into interrelation. Jan Pieterse suggested that cultural globalization involves human integration and hybridization, arguing that it is possible to detect cultural mixing across continents and regions going back many centuries.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-10) They refer, for example, to the movement of religious practices, language and culture brought by [Spanish colonization of the Americas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_colonization_of_the_Americas). The Indian experience, to take another example, reveals both the pluralization of the impact of cultural globalization and its long-term history.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-11) The work of such cultural historians qualifies the lineage of writers—predominantly economists and sociologists—who trace the origins of globalization to recent [capitalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitalism), facilitated through technological advances.

**Homogenization**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=14" \o "Edit section: Homogenization)]

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:30224518_at_Hangtianqiao_(20180710175350).jpg)

Coca-Cola's [2018 FIFA World Cup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018_FIFA_World_Cup) promotional scheme in Beijing

An alternative perspective on cultural globalization emphasizes the transfiguration of worldwide diversity into a pandemic of Westernized [consumer culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumer_culture).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-Kraidy-12) Some critics argue that the dominance of American culture influencing the entire world will ultimately result in the end of [cultural diversity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_diversity). Such cultural globalization may lead to a human monoculture.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-Jaffe-13)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-Jansson-14) This process, understood as [cultural imperialism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_imperialism),[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-15)[[*page needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citing_sources)] is associated with the destruction of cultural identities, dominated by a homogenized and westernized, consumer culture. The global influence of American products, businesses and culture in other countries around the world has been referred to as [Americanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Americanization). This influence is represented through that of American-based television programs which are rebroadcast throughout the world. Major American companies such as [McDonald's](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonald%27s) and [Coca-Cola](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coca-Cola) have played a major role in the spread of American culture around the globe. Terms such as [Coca-colonization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coca-colonization) have been coined to refer to the dominance of American products in foreign countries, which some critics of globalization view as a threat to the cultural identity of these nations.

**Conflict intensification**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cultural_globalization&action=edit&section=15)]

Another alternative perspective argues that in reaction to the process of cultural globalization, a "[Clash of Civilizations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clash_of_Civilizations)" might appear. Indeed, [Samuel Huntington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_P._Huntington) emphasizes the fact that while the world is becoming smaller and interconnected, the interactions between peoples of different cultures enhance the civilization consciousness that in turn invigorate differences. Indeed, rather than reaching a global cultural community, the differences in culture sharpened by this very process of cultural globalization will be a source of conflict.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-16) While not many commentators agree that this should be characterized as a 'Clash of Civilizations', there is general concurrence that cultural globalization is an ambivalent process bringing an intense sense of local difference and ideological contestation.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-17)

Alternatively, [Benjamin Barber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Barber) in his book [*Jihad vs. McWorld*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad_vs._McWorld) argues for a different "cultural division" of the world. In his book the McWorld represents a world of globalization and global connectivity and [interdependence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interdependence), looking to create a "commercially homogeneous global network". This global network is divided into four imperatives; [Market](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market_(economics)), [Resource](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resource), [Information-Technology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_technology) and the [Ecological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological) imperative. On the other hand, "[Jihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad)" represents traditionalism and maintaining one's identity. Whereas "Clash of Civilizations" portrays a world with five coalitions of nation-states, "Jihad vs. McWorld" shows a world where struggles take place on a sub-national level. Although most of the western nations are capitalist and can be seen as "McWorld" countries, societies within these nations might be considered "Jihad" and vice versa.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization#cite_note-18)