Introduction

As the saying goes: “Globalization has made the rich richer, and the poor poorer.” Globalization is defined as the process by which organizations, corporations, and businesses extend their influence and integrate themselves on an international scale, economically, politically, and culturally. This process was made possible with improved technologies, especially in the field of telecommunications and transportation. Because of globalization, regional cultures around the world are losing their unique identity, and it has gone to the extent of impacting the gastronomic habits of society. “McDonaldization” is an example of cultural degradation, where fast-food chains are making modern societies increasingly uniform, but in turn replacing the local cuisine. Another toll of globalization is an increase in the consumption pattern of the society which has led to mushrooming of factories in the developing world, stressing the ecological cycle. The commercial influence of globalization has erased the geographical and political borders and diluted the national sovereignty in a quest for seamless new markets.

Background

Globalization has an extensive history, dating back to the spread of Hellenism, the Silk Road trade network, European Colonization, and the globalization of Christianity. In the 19th century, the whole concept of Globalization was augmented by the Industrial Revolution with the exportation and importation of raw materials. For example, Madras cotton which originated from India was being
manufactured in England where there were developed factories and cotton mills, eventually, the cotton was being exported to India. Air travel mushroomed in the 20th century which led to the dramatic increase in Globalization. The dawn of the information age saw the world being interconnected through kilometers of fiber-optic cables underneath the shared water bodies. In addition, containerization saw the adoption of containers to transport goods at cheaper costs. All of these examples of improved transportation and communication have been identified as the cause of Globalization.

Although the negative aspects of globalization are abundant, an understanding of the positive aspects is crucial to grasp the argument. Globalization has encouraged free trade between nations. The signing of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 ended all tariffs on imports and exports and promoted the spread of ideas and increased communication. The World Trade Organization (WTO) promotes free trade while cutting down the barriers between countries. Globalization of trade not only has benefited countries economically but has also fostered political cooperation. This cooperation led to the establishment of the International Criminal Court, wherein countries work together to fight crime. Moreover, the increased interconnectedness between people has stimulated the urge to deal with issues not directly related to one’s political boundaries. Child labor regulations, climate change, and energy consumption are all related issues that have attracted international attention.

Problems Raised

Outsourcing

Outsourcing is defined as the process of moving factories or opportunities for blue-collar jobs to developing countries to lower costs of production and to work with fewer regulations. This process, to an extent, is beneficial to both the factory workers and the corporation owners. Local people from developing countries can find work prospects in these factories; meanwhile, the corporation can produce goods at cheaper costs. However, in developing countries, environmental restrictions are not as stringent, which leaves the environment and worker’s safety in a vulnerable position. Large corporations can exploit these conditions to their advantage. This is an example of economic globalization.
Environmental Degradation

Globalization has been fueled by transportation; however, the gasoline that is emitted from these heavy-duty aircrafts are depleting our ozone layer. Pollution levels have also been on the rise as a result. Another environmental concern is the industrial waste that is dumped into oceans. This waste is extremely hazardous for marine life which affects their genetic makeup. Oil spills are just another example of this threat. Lastly, plastics also contribute to this environmental threat. A myriad of the goods that are transported is packaged in plastic, which also plays a role in the increasing pollution levels.

Depletion of Natural Resources

South Africa and Nigeria are known as the “economic powerhouse.” Nigeria is one of the largest sources of crude oil and petroleum imports. Whereas, South Africa is a large mining sector. China plays a big role in resource extraction from Africa. 30% of minerals and hydrocarbons are found in the rich soils of the African continent. China put the continent on its top economic agenda and is looking forward to extracting such resources for their growing manufacturing capacity.

Cultural Homogenization

1. Denim jeans and t-shirts have become an international uniform as a result of globalization. Regional cultures have lost their traditional clothing styles. Perhaps, Hollywood has contributed to the erosion of traditional culture. People find their casual clothing more comfortable and trendy which has contributed to its popularity.

2. High meat content, processed sugars, and dairy products have become the 21st centuries daily diet. Anti-globalists especially show their disdain regarding the homogenization of our diets by pointing out the increased risk of obesity and diabetes associated with our gastronomical habits. The World Health Organization views this as a global health threat. To curb the effects, environmental activists have made attempts to reintroduce traditional and more nutritious dietary practices; however, McDonald’s, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Coca-Cola have just
become an inevitable part of our lives. Fast-food chains have even gone to the extent of altering the laws of etiquette. For example, in Japan eating with hands is considered an impolite gesture; however, with the popularization of hamburgers people have abandoned using chopsticks and spoons and opted to use their hands.

3. Anti-globalists have raised eyebrows on the adverse effects of American television shows on viewers around the world. These television shows are notorious for presenting slender women as an ideal beauty standard, which has caused many women to criticize their own bodies. Moreover, notions of sexuality and individualism have also been promoted through TV.

**Reduced National Sovereignty**

The erosion of national sovereignty is regarded with cultural imperialism. Where international business enterprises are capable of alternating the usual norms of society, while governments gradually lose control of the distribution of goods and services. In this case, governments act like consumers rather than producers. For example, China has set up numerous factories in Africa to extract natural and human resources.

**International Actions**

**International Forum on Globalization (IFG)**

The IFG was formed in 1994 with the motive to provide analysis of the impacts of economic globalization. The work that the IFG is committed to doing is related to environmental and social justice. The primary way the IFG raises awareness is through media interviews, press conferences, seminars, and public events.

**OECD Forum June 2017**

The ministers of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development had devoted their time to “bridging divides in our economies and societies and making globalization work for all” at the 2017 Ministerial Council Meeting. The meeting’s goal was to preserve transparency and multilateralism and to guarantee that globalism is equitable for all. To achieve these goals the OECD is looking towards
“inclusive globalization.” During this meeting, 76 countries signed the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) convention for fairer globalization, which allows dealing with the shortcomings of tax rules.

**General Assembly 2nd Committee 73rd session Meeting Coverage**

On 19th October 2018, the General Assembly discussed and expressed their concerns with the lack of progress in achieving the 2030 agenda of Sustainable Development Goals. The major concern was that the developing countries were still deprived of an equitable global trading system. The representative of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Cosmos Richardson, highlighted that “…globalization has resulted in disastrous consequences for many developing countries. The impact of the new era of global interconnectedness has been uneven and unpredictable, with benefits and costs shared unequally.” This belief was shared by many delegates of developing nations including India, Cuba, Thailand, Nepal, Iran, UAE, and countless more.

**World Economic Forum – Davos 2019**

An alpine German-speaking town in Switzerland, Davos, is home to the believers of individualism, democracy, and market economy. Davos is host to leaders of international businesses, civil society, and politics. The attendees of the conference are commonly associated with the term “Davos Culture,” which is translated into an aristocratic lifestyle. This year’s theme for Davos was Globalization 4.0. This year’s theme, introduced by the World Economic Forum, was referring to the next era of globalization. The era of “digitally-enabled services,” where the immense pace of technological advancement is all set to transform our lives. Globalization in the previous eras have threatened blue-collar jobs; however, the progress made in the field of robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) will now menace white-collar jobs.

**Key Players**

**United States of America – “the West”**

Whether Globalization is global westernization has always been a topic of debate. But some examples that address this question include the impact of McDonald’s in the eastern hemisphere. American sociologist, George Ritzer, developed the concept of McDonaldization. The downside of
McDonaldization is that it does not require a skilled workforce to accomplish its tasks. Therefore, these tasks are cheaply taught and easily replaceable. This condition not only lowers workers’ rights and wages but also devalues their working experience.

**EU, NAFTA, and, ASEAN**

The European Union is the largest free-trade bloc in the world followed by the NAFTA. Both of these free-trade blocs call for the ending of tariffs on imports and exports. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations also has a Free Trade Area. Globalization is regarded as opening up the global economy to increase imports and exports. Free trade promotes international economic growth.

**World Trade Organization (WTO)**

The World Trade Organizations, an intergovernmental organization (IGO), concerns itself with regulating trade by reducing tariffs and promoting economic development. Free trade agreements or reduced tariffs will augment global trade and make it more prosperous.

**Transnational Companies (TNCs)**

Many businesses originating from More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) make inward investments in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs). The motivation for such corporations to do so is cheap labor, inexpensive raw materials, open market to sell finished products, and limited government regulations. However, the downside of inward investment is that there is no guarantee that it will help the host nation’s economy. Eventually, such TNCs can out-compete locally established businesses. An example of a Transnational Company (TNC) or a Multinational Company (MNCs) is McDonald’s and Starbucks. McDonald’s has over 34,000 restaurants worldwide.

**Possible Solutions**

*Strict Regulation of Worker Wages and Working Conditions*
Outsourcing has caused many local workers to be exploited for dreams of employment. These workers make goods for cheaper costs; however, their working conditions are subservient. Even though large corporations significantly benefit from cheap labor; workers are nearly dehumanized. Governments of developing countries should set minimum working wages and are encouraged to strictly regulate it. As improving working conditions would be a long term goal, a better alternative would be to invest time into promoting safety regulations in factories and sweatshops. These conditions only hinder a developing countries government to become fully developed.

**Cultural Rejuvenation**

As mentioned above, loss of local culture is an effect of globalization. To overcome this effect it is only feasible to encourage natives to celebrate and spread local culture. This can be done alongside school curriculums, where students can have the opportunity to explore their culture through stimulus activities. School curriculums should also introduce health classes that highlight the dangers of eating at fast-food restaurants daily. Moreover, both youths and adults should take part in manners and etiquette classes to be informed about their particular cultures. For example, Chinese and Japanese cultures have various dining etiquettes, one being formal seating orders in round dining tables.

**Glossary**

**Globalization**

The process by which organizations, corporations, and businesses extend their influence and integrate themselves on an international scale, both economically and culturally.

**Sweatshops**

A sweatshop is a factory, especially for clothing manufactory, where workers work in hazardous conditions meanwhile being overworked and underpaid.
**Sources**


“IFG Programs & Activities.” INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON GLOBALIZATION, ifg.org/about/ifg-programs-and-activities/.


