Does Globalization Threaten Cultural Diversity?

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At the end of summer in 2007, as the housing sector of the United States imploded, most unsuspecting Americans did not foresee the economic fallout that would soon descend internationally. As fiscal reverberations of the U.S. crisis propelled most other state economies into recession, with noted exceptions such as China, citizens worldwide watched helplessly as huge financial firms and banking institutions disintegrated along with their investments. The U.S. housing crisis served as a stark catalyst to expose the level of international interdependence currently in the world system, and consequently, a foretaste of the realities this expanding integration may engender. International economic integration as a primary cause of mass acculturation is one such reality of globalization gaining serious attention. Modern transportation is allowing for local products to move from country to country at a reasonably low cost. Instant communication is also enabling greater exchanges between nations through channels such as the internet, media, and entertainment. Increased international trade has presented new economic and cultural opportunities for many countries, while concurrently introducing new inequalities. Just as much of the world's wealth is disproportionally concentrated, so too is the exchange of culture. For this reason, an examination of globalization and its effect on cultural diversity will provide insight to better assess and manage the opportunity costs of increased international integration.

John T. Rourke's *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in World Politics* provides a platform to begin inquiry on this multifaceted subject. By presenting competing viewpoints on an issue, in this case whether or not globalization threatens cultural diversity, Rourke encourages critical thinking by shifting the role of analysis usually done by the author and placing it instead with the reader. This allows the readers to draw their own conclusions as they directly assess the merits and shortcomings of each argument. Julia Galeota's essay "Cultural Imperialism: An American Tradition" is presented alongside the essay "In Defense of Globalization" by Philippe Legrain. Both essays attempt to assess the role globalization has, if any, in propelling the domination of American culture throughout the rest of the world. Galeota outlines the different ways corporate America imposes American cultural values on numerous cultures around the world via globalization, and, as a result, endangers these cultures. She presents alterative measures to

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