

# Protecting national cultures in the era of Globalization and Migration

**Forum:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Committee (Environmental and Cultural)

**Student Officer:** Malak Hassouneh



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## **Introduction**

Culture has been the representative of people's identity throughout the years, which is the base of building a society and the lifestyle of it. In addition, it has been a portal of knowledge about the history of our ancestors; therefore, it aids in the evolution and development of a community. Moreover, the cultural heritage provides the community with the feeling of belonging to a certain group, unity and acceptance which would result in encouraging the existence of support between the individuals of a society.

The human community has undergone a great evolution in different aspects of the world which has improved the lifestyle. This evolution can be seen in the history of migration and globalization, as both are not new terms and have existed for years; however, how these processes get carried out is what has changed for the purpose of facilitating the communication between the people and each person to meet their needs. In spite of the all the positive impacts of globalization and migration on the humanitarian community, they have been jeopardizing the existence of cultures as they call for the mixing of cultures, which would remove and delete the history of the social and ethnic, their heritage and uniqueness.

## **Definition of key terms**

- **Culture**: is the knowing, history and a feature of a certain group of people and it includes habitual behaviors, traditions, art, language and religion.
- **Heritage**: possession though inheritance.
- **Cultural diversity**: the presence of multiple cultures in a society.
- **Globalization**: the process of the influence that works, businesses or organizations have on international levels.
- **Migration**: is the act implemented by people who move from their native lands to another country to settle there either permanently or temporarily.

## **Background information**

### **1) The history of globalization**

Globalization is not new, though. For thousands of years, people—and, later, corporations—have been buying from and selling to each other in lands at great distances, such as through the famed Silk Road across Central Asia that connected China and Europe during the Middle Ages. Likewise, for centuries, people and corporations have invested in enterprises in other countries. In fact, many of the features of the current wave of globalization are similar to those prevailing before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

But policy and technological developments of the past few decades have spurred increases in cross-border trade, investment, and migration so large that many observers believe the world has entered a qualitatively new phase in its economic development. Since 1950, for example, the volume of world trade has increased by 20 times. This current wave of globalization has been driven by policies that have opened economies domestically and internationally. In the years since the Second World War, and especially during the past two decades, many governments have adopted free-market economic systems, vastly increasing their own productive potential and creating myriad new opportunities for international trade and investment.

### **2) “Americanization” and “Westernization”**

One of the principal concerns about the new globalization of culture that is supposedly taking place is that it not only leads to a homogenization of world culture, but also that it largely represents the “Americanization” of world cultures. Sometimes this situation is called “cultural colonization”.

The spread of American corporations abroad has various consequences on local cultures. The most visible result of this process may be observed in the food and entertainment industry, which are unequivocally dominated by the US market. The principles of the consumer society affect the daily ration of people as well as their leisure time, replacing the local traditions with standardized ways that the USA offers. This forces numerous governments to adopt special programs to protect their market. For instance, in France there is a restriction on the number of foreign films that can be shown. What is more, high interest to the Western culture leads to a noticeable decline in awareness of local

literature and art.

Talking about the political sphere of life, this is obvious that the liberal values that dominate the Western society are taking their roots all over the globe, resulting in the confrontation between the conservatives and the liberalist in different countries.

### **3) Revitalization of local cultures**

Despite these homogenizing effects, some people would argue that globalization can also reinforce local cultures. In India, for example, satellite TV permits an increase in the number of regional channels, many of which can and do telecast Indian content. This gives the Indians new opportunities to identify with their regional ties.

Many observers have speculated that the homogenizing effect of globalization on national cultures in fact tends to produce a reaction among indigenous peoples, which leads those whose cultures are threatened to want to reaffirm their own local traditions. Some argue that reactions against the West by elements within Islamic society may be seen as negative manifestations of a broader desire to reaffirm their traditional values, against the disruptive onslaught of Western beliefs.

### **4) Islamic culture in the globalizing world**

The controversy over westernization has had major historical implications in the Middle East over the past several decades. Globalization is accelerating concerns about the infusions of Western values in Islamic countries.

In the 1960s and 70s, the Shah of Iran sought rapid modernization of the economy regardless of conservative Muslim opinion. The country became a secular state and the culture was more and more resembling the western one. These changes, led to increased resentment and hostility toward the Shah. Fundamentalist clerics began to rail against Iran's "westoxification," and brought about a radical revolutionary movement that sought to expel all western influence from their civilization.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has likewise adopted an approach with the motto "modernization without westernization." Saudi Arabia guarantees no voting rights, and censorship of all things Western, including movies, alcohol, and Internet access.

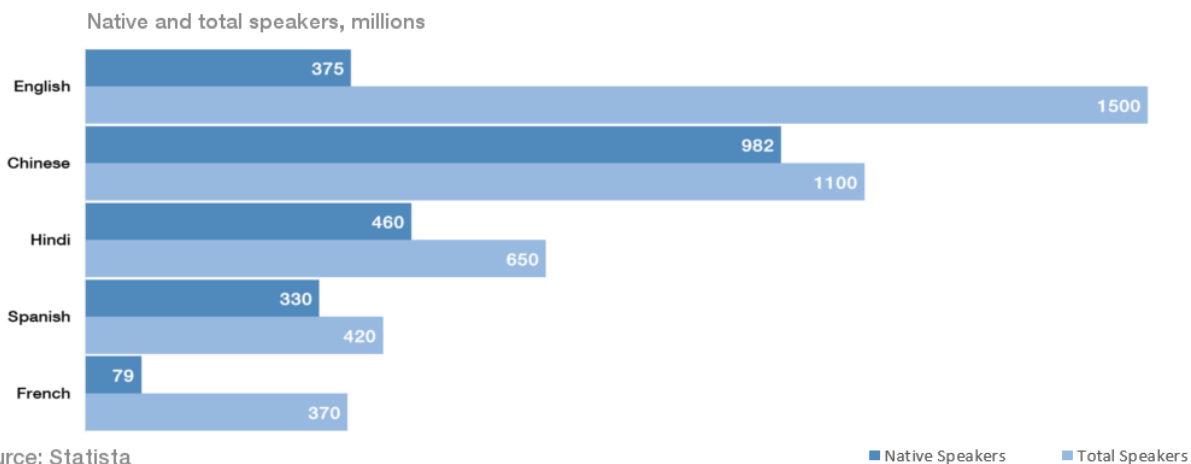
## 5) Protecting the linguistic diversity

Perhaps, the language is the most fragile aspect of globalization. According to researches, about 6,000 languages are the endangered languages, meaning that these languages are dramatically losing their speakers. Nevertheless, the world knows such stories. Modern Hebrew was revived as a mother tongue after centuries of being learned and studied only in its ancient written form. Moreover, In New Zealand, Maori communities established nursery schools staffed by elders and conducted entirely in Maori, called kohanga reo, 'language nests'. A growing number of conferences, workshops, and publications now offer support for individuals, schools, and communities trying to preserve languages.

One of the methods employed all over the world is to protect the purity of its language by removing the use of foreign words. This can be seen in China and France.

As for countries with a large number of immigrants coming in, another problem arises. For instance, many Americans have grown concerned over the proliferation of other languages, due largely to the rapid influx of immigrants into the United States.

## These languages have the most speakers



## 6) The negative impacts of globalization and migration on cultures:

- Works on abolishing certain languages or promoting the idea that some languages are not important nor needed,
- Forcing certain traditions and beliefs on a certain community,

- Emphasizes and encourages of the arise of stereotypes and misrepresentation of cultures,
- Forms a competition between global companies and the local ones, and with global companies having more advertisement, the local companies would lose their business,
- Fuels racism and discrimination against ethnic groups
- Inspires far-right and nationalistic movements among conservative members of the society

## **Major countries and organizations involved**

### **1) Countries involved:**

Some countries have cooperated together by holding conferences and such with the aim of protecting culture, such as countries of Central Asia. Also, 10 countries have been working together to protect ancient and historical sites from destruction which are Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Greece, Italy, China, India, Bolivia, Mexico and Peru.

Some tribes got endangered as a result of civilization and globalization which are distributed over different regions of the world, which are:

- San (in Kalahari Desert)
- Maasai (between Kenya and Tanzania)
- Guarani (in Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia and Argentina)
- Aboriginal Australians (in Australia)
- Innu (in Canada)
- Siberian Indigenous Groups ( in Russia)

### **2) Organizations involved:**

#### **a) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

It was founded on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1946, and it has 195 member states working with to fulfill the goals of this organization. It aims and seeks to promote security and peace through taking educational scientific and cultural measures. Also, it works on strengthening the relations between communities and to ensure the full access of the following to every civilian:

- Having access to education and benefiting from the scientific progress.
- Living a respectful varied community where heritage is appreciated and respected.
- Guaranteeing the right and freedom of expression for everyone.

UNESCO has been an active member in the process of preserving heritage and cultures, and that was shown in the international treaty “Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage” that it has adopted back in 1972. Furthermore, it assists states in need for help in preserving their culture and heritage through sending them technical assistance and training in order to secure their cultural belongings.

#### **b) International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICROM)**

It is an intergovernmental organization that works with countries to protect their heritage among their borders and beyond. Also, it doesn't limit its work only on governmental levels as it also operates on an international level. It is considered as one of the leading organizations in training, research and gathering information and cooperation.

**c) Other main organizations are:**

- ❖ World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD)
- ❖ EAC
- ❖ ICOMOS
- ❖ TICCH

#### **Relevant treaties and UN resolutions**

The UN has been making efforts to preserve the diversity of cultures that exist in our world, and those attempts can be seen in the different treaties and conventions that have been made for that purpose such as:

- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions which was adopted by UNESCO in October, 2005,
- Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972),
- Resolution 2374 on the protection of heritage.

## **Previous attempts to solve the issue**

Several attempts have been made throughout history to protect cultures by the UN and other organizations either protecting them from destruction or from the widespread of migration and the influence of globalization. The main event was the establishment of an organization such as the UNESCO which focuses on protecting and preserving cultures in 1945. Many contributions and suggestion shave been made by the Security Council such as the meeting that was held that aimed for the protection of all cultural properties. Not to mention, the World Heritage Convention that was created with the aim of preserving the properties of cultures from the way that people interact with nature. Many other resolutions were created that concerned different aspects of culture such as resolution A/HRC/RES/33/20 which was adopted by Human Rights Watch in 2016 and different Security Council resolutions like Resolution 2347. In addition, creation of body safeguards that work on preserving folklore, traditions and cultures.

## **Possible solutions**

There are different strategies that can be followed in order to preserve the cultures from getting lost either on national or international levels. Cultures can be protected by, but not limited to:

1. Raising awareness about the different cultures of the world which would be directed to everyone especially the youth through different methods,
2. Increasing and strengthening the security over museums and historical sites,
3. Eliminating hate crimes against ethnic groups and promote giving them their rights to practice their culture,
4. Encourage mutual tolerance between every community,
5. Maintaining native languages as languages are the base of the culture,
6. Raise awareness of the representatives of the various cultures,
7. Recognizing the migrants' cultures and supporting it to protect it from getting neglected,
8. Setting laws and legislations that would encourage people to practice their culture and tradition without getting attacked for it.



## Reliable and Useful Sources

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/>

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/cultural-diversity/>

<https://thinkingnomads.com/2014/01/six-endangered-indigenous-populations/>

<http://www.globalization101.org/what-is-globalization/>

<http://www.landheritage.org.uk/>