

**Dialectics of the global and the national in the sphere of culture**

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### **1. Introduction: 3 separates stereotypes**

The majority of discourses on globalization are underpinned by certain stereotypes that I call the “global arguments”, because they permeate the global discourse as a whole. It is these types of arguments, like the one I call the “historic argument”, which relates to the history of globalization, and the nation centric argument, which relates to the future fate of the nation-state, that I explore in my forthcoming book: “Global Arguments: The History of Globalization and the Fate of the Nation-State”. These kinds of stereotypes also characterize what I call in another upcoming book “the national atmospheres on globalization”. Here “Atmosphere” refers to the feelings, political culture, scientific discourses, everyday consciousness and political strategies towards globalization.

Caught amongst these global arguments and the national atmospheres, are series of global stereotypes, set off by their national character, which make up certain intermediary discourses. The latter relates to the development of culture in the era of globalisation. The views are constructed upon a dualism which sees globalization either as pushing towards the homogenization of culture or towards the fragmentation and conflict betwixt and between cultures. Several theorists believe that today’s cultural interactions are constructed with reference to the “cultural homogenization and the cultural heterogenization” (Appadurai 1990).

Those who refer to the homogenization of culture often incorrectly, identify it with the tendency to create a single global culture, which will go on to constitute *the culture in the era of globalization*.

On the other hand, within the heterogenization rhetoric, Featherstone (1996) is correct in ascertaining that the supporters of the homogenization argument fail to take into account the fact that the supranational players operate in specific countries and use distinguished strategies. The heterogenization argument tends to recognize the tendency for heterogenization to be predominant and in most of its variations; particularly those theories that refer to a conflict of cultures, which holds out to any

reference to notions of a globalized culture as it rejects the existence of a single global culture<sup>1</sup>.

In this essay, we will try to distinguish between global and globalized culture and investigate their dialectic interrelation with cultures that develops within a national space.

The significance of our undertaking lies in the politics that underlie the discussions on the global and/ or the globalized culture. The homogenization thesis talks of the enforced installation, worldwide, of one particular culture, that of the United States thus, equating the advocacy of a nationally specific culture with the struggle against Americanisation and the extension of globalisation. The heterogenization thesis suggests that fragmentation causes culture to implode, causing confrontation, and it stresses the need for cultures to protect their “purity”.

Politically, both theses come to the same conclusion, the protection of ethnic cleanliness/purity (not just that of cultural uniqueness) against “foreign cultural influences”.

To begin, however, we should first introduce the notion of asymmetry in relation to globalization, as, apart from the already mentioned dualism, we consider that a number of such asymmetries create further grounds for confrontation.

## **2. Asymmetries**

### **2.1. The notion of asymmetry**

The notion of asymmetry is introduced in order to help better understand globalization as a complex phenomenon that stems from the compression of time / space and a change of the relationship between human being and nature which transcends societies, particularly the most advanced. This latter notion reflects the unequal development of the parts of a Hegelian totality in which different parts of the totality are subject to the agency of the central and secondary tendencies as well as that of the counterweight tendencies. The intensity with which this applies to an individual phenomenon or to a cluster of phenomena varies. Thus, both thematically

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<sup>1</sup> The rejection can be direct or indirect. Huntington, in his latest contribution, rejects it indirectly by referring to ‘many globalizations’ within the realm of culture ( Berger and Huntington, 2002)

and geographically, the tendency towards globalization is varied with regard to its intensity.

As will be shown elsewhere, in examining the historic argument, each period or phase of the development of human society is characterised by the existence of central tendencies, which are of pivotal significance to the given period. Such tendencies (like the tendency of globalization) coexist with peripheral tendencies (like the tendency of the internal marginalization of nation-states), which can move in the same but also in conflicting directions (like the tendency of segmentation). These tendencies coexist with past tendencies but also with new ones, which will displace the current ones by assuming significance (a matter for the future historian). The existence of such multiple tendencies creates asymmetries. Asymmetries of this kind also exist in the realm of culture, in the relations between the particular and the general, the national and the global.

## **2.2. Spatial Asymmetry**

The existence of asymmetries within a dominant tendency, like globalization, does not in any way disprove the existence of that tendency per se. It cannot be argued that if, say, capitalism or globalization, for that matter, are not prevalent throughout, they do not exist. Geographical asymmetry -that is, the fact that there exist countries that are more vigorous globalization players than others- cannot diminish its significance as the dominant tendency. Some countries have made significant contributions to the process of globalization, by shaping it and promoting it, others have come in later and sought to consciously influence the ideations of globalization; and there are still countries that are more placid towards it. This can also be argued across the different cultures.

The differences that underlie the distribution and the intensity of globalisation across the different geographical spaces do not mean it does not exist on the whole or that it is a secondary event. Such reasoning would suggest that since capitalism is not predominant everywhere, we are not currently living through an era of capitalism. Or even that since the tendency for globalization is more vibrant in the United States than in Somalia, globalization does not exist. Such reasoning would in Fact suggest that our era is not characterised by its most dominant sides but by its poorest and weakest.

In order to protect the dominance of a tendency, on the other hand, one should not refrain from recognising the negative sides, the conflicting elements or its 'vacuums'. One can argue that in the era of globalisation, both wealth and poverty are produced and alongside the tendency for globalization one comes across the counterbalancing tendencies of segmentation and fragmentation. Such phenomena, though, like poverty, segmentation, nationalism, racism and xenophobia, do not occur irrespectively of globalisation. On the contrary, they are created within this predominant tendency to counterbalance it. Thus a particular type of segmentation and fragmentation, of nationalism and of ill-perceived localism, are created as a result of the predomination of globalisation rather than as a result of its absence.

A further characteristic of globalisation is the disruption it causes to the internal structures of each country. This disruption takes place according to different kinds of asymmetries in each country. Globalization affects larger sections of the population, of the economy, of the social structures and relations in the most powerful and rich nations than in the poorer and less powerful. Even in the latter however, one finds sections of the predominant groups of the population as well as specific aspects of the economy that are emerged in the most vigorous sides of globalization.

On the other hand, fragmentation is very much an intrinsic characteristic of the socio-economic, political and everyday life of each nation-state and of each society. Therefore, the supranational asymmetries can also be intrinsically introduced.

This is also true with regard to culture. The more vibrant the cultural traditions and context of a national space, the more the globally predominant tendencies will be 'coated' in national colours. Accordingly, within each country, one can make out a variety of tendencies that originate from the country's own tradition (which has never, in its own right, been 100% pure), from external influences or from a combination of both.

### **2.3 The Social-Time Segmentation**

Globalization effects are not symmetrical for all nation-states, the social groups that make them up, the branches and sectors of society and economy, or for individuals themselves. There remains the fact, however, that the process of social segmentation is more substantial than that of economic segmentation. This is expressed in the dialectic of homogenization and heterogenization, which we will

look into in the chapter 3 on the development of culture. It is mainly expressed through the manifestation of certain tendencies, inclinations and attitudes against globalization, which are not opposing the forms it takes but have rather more to do with the worldwide birth of movements of disintegration (like religion fundamentalisms, xenophobia, regionalism, new nationalism). This is not simply a negation of globalization but rather a negation of anything different or foreign. A negation that stems from globalization and its processes: the mobility of capital, goods, services and people and the exchange of images, messages, perceptions and culture. The basic phenomena of a disintegration of this sort are expressed via a fanaticism, which is based on religion, nationalism or stereotypes. It can also be expressed via an idiosyncratic cultural nationalism, where one's national ideas, images, sounds and values are considered more important than those of the other.

Today, one comes across four currents towards globalization. The first one bows to globalization in its current form and aims to promote it, albeit with some transformations. Here, anything foreign is seen as worthy of one's attention. Culturally, this leads to provincialism. The second current wishes to alter globalization's form. This is the culture of "copying", characterised by the lack of originality. The third aims to change many of globalization's characteristics. It wants to promote elements of the national culture in supranational spaces. Finally, the fourth opposes any phenomenon, structure, relationship or essence that creates or reinforces the tendency for globalization. The struggle against it is neither aimed at acquiring a par share of cultural participation nor at influencing it but rather at returning to the national past. It is aimed at defending the nationally particular against anything foreign.

The tendency of today's world, towards disintegration, results from a multiplicity of factors. The most characteristic is the sense that globalisation creates new problems which become unsolvable for those involved; the sense that the existing differences are being lost; that there is a need for one to defend his cultural uniqueness, the culture, the traditions and the history of the space one reflects. This makes sense if one takes into account that one cannot prepare for change, for assessing the difficulties that occur and for turning change to his advantage, without using the past in order to be able to foresee the future. Without a sense of history, mankind becomes what I call a victim of leaping in the vacuum of ignorance. At the

same time, concentration on the past can sometimes be blamed for trapping one in its specificities, and thus confining one in history.

Today, there are people, social groups, movements and societies that find themselves trapped in this sort of attitude; that is, societies that are caught up in the past, which do not face the future and negotiate the issues that arise from globalization, the new problems it incurs, and the way it readdresses issues from the past. In fact, they tend to ignore globalisation as they strive to defend their cultural heritage, in an attempt to shield themselves from the unknown (that is what happens in many Arab countries and by the so called orthodox Jews). Societies need to accept that their cultural heritage can constitute a significant wealth for humanity as a whole; in order to do so, however, it needs to be supranationally exploited and turned to good account. The national spaces need to accept this dialectic, in order to avoid the creation of conditions that will leave them caught in a rift between the past and the future. This is a rift between cultures that look forward to developing and those which are trapped in the past; a past they try to glorify, defend and espouse to, as in the cases of religious fanaticism that one comes across both in the Muslim and the Christian world. And, vice versa, one also comes across fanatics who concentrate on discontinuity and promote the new, ignoring the unsolved problems that stem from the past, the social asymmetries and conflicts, as well as the wealth which is enclosed in tradition and can help in both solving future problems and in enriching the future itself.

In the centre of this struggle between the past and the future lies the issue of identity. There are those personalities, social groups, and nations who are afraid that they will be displaced and left without a role to play. They are the ones that seek to define their identity with relation to the past, in strict opposition to the novel, which may not be new to humanity but only to individual experiences. Fear and rivalry towards the foreign are born out of trying to ascertain and confirm one's identity along these lines, by concentrating on defending one's individuality no matter what (fundamentalism).

It is of course natural for nation-states and social groups, which see the decline of their economic and social power or their political clout (both internationally and nationally) and the demission of their cultural characteristics to react negatively towards globalization. We therefore see the emergence of the most distinct movements of opposition and resistance against either globalization per se (like the

Muslim fanatical movements or extreme fascistic nationalism) or particular processes of it (from certain movements and leftwing parties). This type of reaction is particularly common in the realm of culture: one often sees such animosity towards globalization expressed via direct attacks on symbols, images and ways of life (such as the eating habits – versus Macdonaldisation of the world).

### **3. Is there a global unified culture?**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Many of the societies that are opposed to globalization constantly invoke their cultural uniqueness as well as the belief that globalization is a Trojan horse for the Americanisation of the world.

According to this view, Americanisation takes place not only through the economy but also predominantly through the homogenization of global culture under the hegemony of the American culture. The underlying logic points to the equation of globalization with Americanisation. The latter is chiefly seen as a cultural phenomenon and thus the promotion of its domination points to the cultural homogenization of the world.

The literature of the most disparate views often refers to the homogenization of culture through Americanisation. This is so much in the writings of those who promote ‘total globalization’ (who believe the world is being homogenized at its optimum), as in the writings of those who oppose globalization per se (who believe they should fight its cultural implications). The most antagonistic views reach the same conclusion: Today’s world is undergoing a process of cultural homogenization as a result of globalization. Some support and encourage it, as homogenization is perceived to take place at the highest possible level of prosperity, while others are set on dissuading it when it is perceived to obliterate history and tradition, the national and the local spaces (U. Beck 1998, Barber 1996).

These two antithetical views effectively adopt a common rhetoric; that there exists a global culture of homogenization according to the American model. We consider both these views to be flawed, as both perceive global culture as something one-dimensional and not as a unity of antithetical and peripheral forms.

Our fundamental argument is that there exists dialectic of national and local cultures and globalizing tendencies with regard to culture. Thus global culture is not solely made up from the latter; on the contrary, it is the aggregate of these two factors.

It becomes obvious that if our culture were uniform and thus one-dimensional one would have difficulty in interpreting schemata like globalization- fundamentalism movements against globalization, globalization and fragmentation. On the other hand, if the different cultures evolve parallel<sup>2</sup> to one another without interacting, we would be faced with many separate and autonomous worlds and one could only speak of the processes of globalization and the notion of global culture merely as elements of this parallel evolution.

Thus, as far as culture is concerned one, should aim to define the dialectic of the global and the national, of the peripheral (national) and the central (globalizing) tendencies.

### **3.2 The perception of a one - dimensional culture**

The thesis of a single global culture that not only assimilates the existing national cultures, but rather disorganizes and destroys them, is widely popular in international literature.

Kondylis (1998) considers our era to be characterised by the transition from a mass to a global culture. According to him, this culture disintegrates the “preceding folk and national cultures” into their constituents, which are then used as ingredients of “a more or less uniform global culture”. It expands and enforces its uniformity. In this way, it becomes uniform and global. For this reason, Kondylis concludes, “western mass culture on a universal scale” (1998, b5) becomes “the only possible global culture”.

Like Spengler (1918-1922) before him, Kondylis discerns the dominance of Western culture over the others, and is this Western culture that he perceives as globalizing. This global culture is not perceived as a culture that is made up from a creative aggregate of the existing cultures nor is it seen as the dialectic development of the interactions, albeit asymmetrical, of national cultures. Rather, it is seen as a

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<sup>2</sup> This is Huntington’s argument in his writings on the conflict of cultures. Effectively, the thesis on the global conflict of cultures indirectly rejects the process of globalization and concentrates instead on that of a restraining and eccentric fragmentation.

global culture, which insures the suzerainty of one of the existing cultures over the rest, irrespective of the fact that the dominant culture is itself an aggregates of different expressions and may very well assimilate elements of others.

Both Spengler and Kondylis call this the process of imposition of western culture; the French call it the domination of the American culture, whereas in the Popular Republic Of China both the concepts of Westernization and Americanization are used at the same time in the same way and discourses.

The above view according to which the evolutionary future of contemporary culture lies in the one-dimensional spread of American globalization, dominates the French and the Greek atmosphere. It is even adopted (with certain variations) by those who have come out for neoliberal globalization. It is also espoused by those Left powers that object to globalisation, particularly those characterised by Eurocentrism. This view registers the bona fide tendency of the homogenization of global culture under the forms and the structures of the dominant one. This sort of argument lacks conceptual clarity and fails to distinguish between opposite tendencies.

### 3.2.1. The issue of definitions

Our view, one needs to begin by dissociating between a culture which holds only local clout and one with a wider, even supranational influence (like the Greek within the context of the Middle East and the Balkans)<sup>3</sup>. Yet again, this sort of influence is different to that of a culture, which tends to become globalized, i.e., has a ubiquitous presence<sup>4</sup>. Effectively, there is a clear distinction between globalized culture and global culture.

Global culture includes internationalised and globalized cultures, but also incorporates the local and national ones. Global culture is the dialectical synthesis and conjunction of globalized, local, and fragmented cultures. We consider there to be a great difference between a culture that is undergoing globalisation and a truly global

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<sup>3</sup> The term “glocal”, referring to the diffusion of the global and local elements in the context of a global culture that becomes increasingly fragmented, has been conjured up from the fusion of the terms Global and Local. On the term “glocal” see Beck (1998) and his references, as well as, Friedrichs (1994).

<sup>4</sup> For this reason, we consider the German thesis which substitutes the terms of globalization and internationalization with that of denationalization to be flawed. The effect of a national culture on another is a form of internationalized presence rather than one of denationalization.

culture, which would be the aggregate of all the various cultures that can be found in the most diverse stages of human presence.

Global culture therefore is the ensemble of the diachronic interspatial cultures of the world. Internationalised culture is that which transcends the national space where it was formulated (e.g. Western classical music has) and affects parts of other nation's societies; whereas globalized culture is one which supersedes other national or local cultures, becomes their component and expands acquiring a global presence (this could relate to languages, the framing and structures of the culture, the style and even the most simple everyday aspects such as fast food) while at the same time it is internalised by nation-local cultures; for example, when globalized genres of music like pop and disco are promoted via 'national' bands or through the use of the national language in the lyrics, etc.

It may be the case that Western culture is the most widely internationalized culture of all, and that it has globalized to a certain extent, but it is not the only culture available, nor is it the only one, which wields supranational influence. Today globalized culture still constitutes only a component, albeit the core, of global culture. In other words, even immiscible local cultures can be seen as lesser constituents of global culture. They are element from the global culture, but they are those Elements of the global culture, which haven't been globalized.

### 3.2.2 The lack of homogeneity and symmetry in global culture

One of the most orthodox views suggests that most countries are being today completely subordinated to the American way of life. The emergence of McDonald's, the predominance of Coca-Cola over the traditional Greek orange juice and the rapid diffusion of gin and whisky at the expense of Peron, ouzo or retsina certainly seem to corroborate this perception. This is the view, which suggests the extension of the American-led global culture and its influence. The development and the spread of this culture happens almost mechanistically in the same fashion that capitalism or the market economy constantly expands on a global scale.

This sort of argument draws to a large extent from the theory of modernity and Weberian rationalism. The constant spread of the presence of Western culture, as both an object and a subject of rationalism, is intensified in various sectors with the effect

of fragmentation though advocates of Weberian thinking do not suggest that the extension of rationalism will eradicate the contrasts and totally conquer irrationality.

On the contrary, according to Weberian orthodoxy the extension of rationalism entails the constant spread of contradictions between the rational and the irrational that affect an increasing number of realms (see Lash & Wimster, 1987; Sica, 1988; M. Albrow, 1990). In other words, the extension of globalization widely reproduces its internal conflicts.

Global culture differs conceptually from globalized culture and all the more so from Americanized culture. Americanized culture constitutes neither the global nor the globalized culture. It is neither 'pure' nor homogeneous in its own right, so it is unable to homogenize the rest. American culture, as will be shown in the next chapter, is not wholly predominant and hence it has and will continue to fail to homogenise the world and eradicate its cultural contrasts. The thesis that the world is already Americanized, seems, however, to dispose of the uncanny power and ability to assimilate various influences from its interactions with other cultures.

### 3.2.3 Local and National Culture Resistance

The homogenization thesis does not take into account the constant resistance put up by local cultures towards the big players of globalization. This resistance depends to a great extent on the quality of the characteristics of the given local culture. The more endowed it is, the stronger and more successful its resistance. In fact, strong local cultures tend to interact with the internationalized forms of culture and become their constituents.

Countries with longstanding cultural development and traditions have a different reaction from those with a fairly moderate cultural production. Countries, which have had long traditions of musical production like Latin music, the tango or the Greek *zeimbekiko*, for example, put up different kinds of resistance to the supranational (internationalized or globalized) forms of music. The same can be said for the response American film productions get in countries like India (which has the largest film production industry in the world – Bollywood) or France in comparison to, say, Norwegian or Iceland. This also applies to countries whose eating habits revolve around a strong "ethnic" element like Japan with sushi, Italy or Greece. The

way they incorporate fast food restaurants chains is different from the way they are incorporated in countries that do not have a vibrant traditional cuisine.

One cannot fail to notice how the film industries in France, India or Greece, for example, appear to be doing better and to be showing signs of recovery with the number of ticket sales going up from previous years. Some productions are successfully exported to the United States where the French have recently in fact bought into American media companies. Latin music with its Spanish-Language lyrics is greatly influential in the United States (even the country-music has now new forms with Latin-music elements), as are Hispanic television programmes in continental Europe where they outnumber the English-speaking ones. Greek music is still prevalent on the radio and the nightlife in Greece. Are all these reactions bound to the unique cultural characteristics of individual countries or do they perhaps form a wider phenomenon, which affects every country with a cultural tradition.

In many cities of the world, one finds much larger numbers of ethnic restaurants (e.g. Chinese, Greek, Italian) than chains of fast food restaurants. We take no issue with the existence of the fast food restaurants in their own right, but whereas the Chinese, Greek or Italian restaurants are long established, owned and managed by immigrants, McDonald's restaurants and their equivalent have been introduced as an extension of the influence of the American economy and identity (which they have in their turn fuelled) and are part of a large corporation. Thus they dispose and owned stronger financial foundations and are able to distribute the identity they carry with more ease. Notwithstanding, American eating habits are far from the only ones with a global presence; they just happen to be part of a historical younger culture, which has more dynamic and the advantage of being more in tune with the rules of the global market.

In analysing the globalization of the consumption of tuna in a way as it is in the Japanese tradition, the American professor of Anthropology, C. Bestor, showed that "the manic logic of global sushi" involves the way "a 500- pound tuna is caught off the coast of New England or Spain, flown thousands of miles to Tokyo, sold for tens of thousands of dollars to Japanese buyers... and shipped to chefs in New York and Hong Kong" (Bestor, 2000:54)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Tuna, of course, is by its nature internationalized as it crosses vast areas of the sea (Bestor 2000:57)

In the era of globalization, the Japanese, in tune with the ways international markets operate, with the developments in new technologies and the awareness of capital mobility, have managed, subsequent to the martial arts films and game consoles, the worldwide “diffusion of culinary culture as tastes for sushi, and bluefin tuna” The diffuse worldwide Japan’s most popular seafood” (Bestor 2000:55-6 and 61-2).

Nikita Michalkov, the influential ex-soviet director, has trenchantly signalled there are two kinds of cultures: one concentrating on ‘how one lives’ and the other on ‘why one lives’; cultures that are interested in the oceans and others which take into account the individual drops of rain. (Michalkov1996). It seems, that the wider the cultural oceans, the more one will come across lakes and rivers, seas and rains which will flow into the oceans and influence their currents.

#### 3.2.4 The Lack of homogeneity in the United States

The inability of any culture, including the United States to overpower other cultures and disseminate its characteristics is perpetuated by the internal structure and the contrasting logic, which characterises American and Western culture as a whole. The diversity and the variety of the music genres in Western culture are a living example<sup>6</sup>.

In truth, the United States does not possess a single, one-dimensional cultural identity. Its culture is the complex creation of the numerous communities, which make up American society. This is a culture, that is exposed to the hegemonic control and market exploitation of corporations, finds itself under their domination, and is being shaped by their underlying logic, which is the constant increase in profits. Even this kind of mass culture, which some consider as the American way of life, is constantly under the influence of external factors. Increasingly, Chinese and Mexican restaurants are cropping up next to the existing Greek and Italian ones (since the numbers of the Asian and the Hispanic population rises). Coca-Cola may be an internationally dominant product but so are the French bottled waters (Evian and

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<sup>6</sup> It is worth taking in account that certain American musical genres have not been influential outside the United States. One example is country, one of the purest forms of American music. In fact, only a fusion of it with rock sounds has appeared of interest to an international audience: country rock.

Pernier), which are also dominant, worldwide (even within the United States along with Canadian waters.)

The United States, as a multicultural society is subject to two continuously renewable and adaptable tendencies: on the one hand, the tendency towards unification and extroversion, through the assimilation of differences and on the other hand, a tendency towards segmentation and fission within its society and amongst its cultural characteristics. From Boston and Chicago Blues, to the Country music in Arizona and Texas. From the New York Theatres to the Los Angeles Film Industry.

The widening gap between the rich and the poor complements the tendencies towards globalization and spatial fragmentation that characterize both the U.S.-economy and culture. For the poor, several of the forms of internationalized 'high' culture remain unknown (like Opera), while the rich try, with limited success sometimes, to consume aspects of mass produced culture (ethnics-music).

As in the Weberian schema, the extension of rationality results in rationality and its contrasting notion, irrationality. So long as the wealth is internationalized and increasingly globalized, it produces internationalized poverty and it promotes the exclusion from the process of globalization itself.

#### **4. Forms of Cultural-influence**

##### **4.1. Agencies of influence in the United States**

American culture lies at the heart of the globalization processes; yet aspects of it remain unaffected by these processes, and this affects the overall ability of American culture to homogenize.

In order to understand this phenomenon, we need to look into American culture with regard to the complexities of the structure of its cultural forms and expressions. In the United States, as in many other cultures, the multinational Americanized way of life is expressed mainly via the most simple, everyday structures and forms, as well as those which are bound to the technological context. However, certain elements of traditional European culture (such as philosophy, traditional genres of theatre, classical music and ballet-dance) are still dominant in the most complex forms of the worlds (and US-) 'high' culture.

This contrast becomes apparent when we look into music. The more complex classical music tradition of continental Europe still dominates the genre of symphonic music. In contrast, in contemporary music, which is closely associated with the technological advancements of post-fordist production modes, the influences come more from the Anglo-Saxon world, mainly the United States (as pop, disco, rock and roll music).

It seems that that even within the United States, where the dominant cultural expressions are indisputably diffused on a global scale, its highly extrovert culture remains influenced by other agents and it has not been able to convert all its expressions of culture into a pure, homogenized product.

Edward. Said has shown that the literature of colonialism (whose main forms include the novel and the short story), which served and suited colonialism, has also had an effect on the colonies' society and writers like Camus, Kipling and Conrad have sometimes unconsciously left a mark on the countries they wrote about. The writings on colonialism have not only had an effect on the practice of colonialism but have also helped by the creation of movements and forces against it (like the anti-Algerian war movement in France).

This should go to disprove the existence of pure forms of culture and to confirm that the interaction between the dominant expression – usually perceived as the pure and the peripheral cultural expressions is more vigorous than many recognize.

American culture is full of contrasts, and constantly assimilates, reshapes and reproduces foreign elements. It is the leading culture worldwide and has already acquired a wide global presence, particularly where the latest technological addition to mass cultural production is concerned; yet aspects of it remain dominated by expressions of non-American cultures. For example, American culture is often made to reconcile with and accept the input of local/national cultures in the field of the arts. In the sphere of culture, to say the least, Americanization is not synonymous with globalization as neither have all the globalized forms of culture stemmed from the United States nor are all American cultural forms (like country music or gospel music singing in the churches) undergoing globalization.

The view that advocates the straightforward domination and installation of the American culture over the rest underestimates the reality of cultural interaction. In

addition, it does not consider the fact that cultures do not evolve in a vacuum and thus cannot be perceived as “pure”.

While the leading culture is today on the brink of becoming globalized, there is nothing to suggest that it will be automatically transformed to the only in existence culture: in the realm of culture, more than in others, globalization involves internal tendencies towards fragmentation and resistance. In any event, culture, a realm in its own right, has been in existence much longer than either capitalism or globalization and tends to include various dimensions and forms of expression.

Historically and geographically, cultures have always come in contact and been interchanging and incorporating foreign elements. Their ability to incorporate and to diffuse such elements mirrors their ability to dominate in the interactions with other cultures; otherwise, they are in danger of losing of their unique cultural identity, by allowing the foreign influences to dominate.

The inability of a given culture to reign over foreign influences may lead to the loss of cultural uniqueness and the subsequent “historical fall” of the culture (though this is not necessarily permanent). However, this is a common historical process by which new cultures take over from the old by assimilating cultural forms and practices and introducing them to the contemporary context. It further disproves any claims for the definite and complete installation of a single or pure cultural system.

American culture is currently fuelled by its economic prowess, technological advantages, and the rhythms of cultural reproduction assumed in the contemporary context. It also exhibits a formidable ability to incorporate, assimilate and reproduce foreign cultural elements. This allows for the effortless conscription of globalized cultural forms and commands America’s great influence in global culture.

However, in view of the counterbalancing tendencies that characterize the evolution of culture, it is difficult to sustain the argument for the existence of a homogenized and uniform globalized culture. Furthermore, global culture is subject to a variety of cultural influences from the various local or national cultures, which have in turn been exposed to the effective influence of the leading culture of the time. Therefore the globalization of cultural elements of the leading culture takes place within the more generalized tendency of cultural globalization, while assuming the role of global culture’s core tendency for evolution.

## **4.2. Culture as the aggregate of insusceptible cultures**

A neoorthodox viewpoint denies the existence of a single and univocally determinable global culture, and suggests that world culture consists of a system of closed automated systems (on automated systems, see Luhmann 1984, 1986, 1995, 1997). These systems are themselves made up by several independent cultures, which find themselves in strong contest when they come in contact; Islam, Hinduism, Western Catholic Christianity, and Eastern Orthodoxy are some of these cultures. (Huntington 1996, ch.2,3,6,10,11).

According to Huntington, a culture is characterized by the religious beliefs and traditions, which run through it. This thinking disengages the peripheral cultures from the historical framework of their evolution, their material basis, and the dominant production relationships, which have shaped them. They are perceived as static phenomena, which do not develop or differentiate and remain unaffected by external agents. The sole contact amongst these cultures, according to Huntington's approach, is one of conflict, which aims at the destruction of the other rather than the dialectic of interpenetration.

According to this second understanding, all the different cultures are the conflicting parts of a non-uniform global culture. This second interpretation is rather more absolutist, in that it considers that cultures remain impervious to outside influences through time and space. On the basis of our analysis, two theoretical abstractions become obvious.

The first considers different cultures closed systems that have been introduced in closed territories. Far from it, these cultures, apart from their historic interaction, have simultaneously coexisted within the same society and therefore within the same territories. Orthodox Christians, Buddhists, Hinduists and Calvinists are all coexistent in the United States. Catholics and polytheists cohabit in Brazil. One finds fans of Latin music in both California and Spain whereas; the youths of both Liverpool and Japan indulge in rock music.

The second one underestimates cultural interpellation. On the local sphere, the national culture is matched with the high internationalised one; thus the local culture becomes an amalgam of its own continuity, its own production and reproduction processes (with a certain element of discontinuity), as well a variety of old or the latest external influences which have already worked themselves into it, or will do so

in the future. As long as the processes of synthesis and reproduction from its own pool of traditional elements (as discontinuity) remain strong, the external factors are not a threat. Total Americanization would only be possible if a culture will lacking in its potential for reproduction and transformation. This does not appear to be the case with regard to the French or any other of continental Europe's cultures.

#### **4.3 On the dualism of cultures.**

This third understanding draws elements from the two previous stances. According to it, neither a globally dominant culture that is wiping out the local ones nor individually dominant cultures, which dominate specific geographical zones, exist.

On the one hand, it suggests the existence of individual cultures which forge their own development. Yet at the same time, it also suggests that in local societies one always comes across two different cultures, an imported one and one which has been locally reproduced.

The most powerful of these cultures prevail in the crossroads of the world and are able to expand their influence outside their national borders, without, at the same time, becoming fully dominant. In every country, one comes across two cultures, the local and the imported one<sup>7</sup>. In a few countries the local culture is still the dominant one, on even fewer countries this local culture may have a resolute influence on other countries. In most countries, the local culture finds itself under the forceful impressions of the imported one. This means, that in France, for example, the existing French culture is engaged in a struggle with the American one, the spaces that each will appropriate. This understanding implies that the sphere of culture is an unevolving realm, which is up for grabs.

This argument comes very close to older theories of the metropolis- periphery relationships which maintained the dualism of the economies of the periphery, in

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<sup>7</sup> Political analysts often come up with this sort of distinction. Turkey's political scene is often described as comprising two fractions: On the one hand, those who look towards Islam; on the other hand those who look towards the West. Even if there were just two fractions, though, there would still be intermediary tendencies and interaction would take place (see, Ozay 1994). Generally, the Muslim world is seen to consist of three tendencies. The first (influenced by Weberian thinking) suggests that the revival of Islam is due to the rejection of Western modernization. The second views it as an eccentric form of non-Western modernization, which needs to be addressed. The third considers it to be a form of uncompleted modernization – by having adopted Western instruments and some structures, without bearing a particular cultural rhetoric or aspiring to the Western cultural values.

which part of them is incorporated in the global mechanisms of exploitation of the periphery yet another part remains emerged in the context of the hindered development of the periphery.

This third view seems to underestimate the fact that even if a country's economy were exhibiting such a division, one would expect that the capitalist sector would increasingly overbear on the earlier forms of the production process.

In culture, there is a relative period for which the local elements can remain unswayed against the international tendencies. So long as a country's individual culture remains vibrant and its traditions are kept alive by constantly adapting to the contemporary context, a relative autonomy from the supranational tendencies will be sustained. Thus, a culture will be able to modulate the diffusion and increase the diversity of these tendencies.

#### **4.4. The dialectic of cultural creation**

Unlike this last perception, a more modern theory suggests the existence of a tendency (rather than just a phenomenon) towards a globalized culture. In this case the talk is of a globalized culture<sup>8</sup> that is not considered as a single culture with specific national characteristics, but rather as an amalgam of several different national cultures and supranational elements (of complex national descent). However their existence and contribution to the globalized culture is not balanced or of equal weight. Rather, it is plagued by asymmetries and imbalances then, the international social reality is distinguished by the constant struggle between the core tendency towards globalization (with cultural diversity) and that of rekindled localism. Furthermore, this thesis embodies the following arguments.

- a) The development of a cohesive global culture which, unevenly incorporates the peripheral cultures. Dominant are those forms of culture that are promoted by the multinationals and the prominent nations and which have thus become supranationalized. Yet, although they are interfering with the structures of other cultures, they are only parts of the globalized culture and can by no means be equated with it.

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<sup>8</sup> This is not a culture, which unites or abolishes disparities, as the Swiss Lobbe suggests (H. Lobbe 1977).

- b) This globalized culture (with all its complexities and diversity) and its internationalized and globalized elements coexist<sup>9</sup> with fragmented national and/or local cultures. It assimilates the latter's elements and characteristics so that it can become locally acceptable. On the other hand, the local culture turns to the appropriation of structures and means provided by globalization (e.g., new technologies, contemporary media, new forms of artistic expression) in order to ensure its survival, its reproduction, and its diffusion within a wider context.
- c) It becomes clear that the exchange between cultures cannot be seen as a one-way flow of cultural influence with the internationalized and globalized cultural tendencies installed in peripheral cultures but rather as a two-way process that leads to 'indigenisation'.
- d) There exists an ongoing struggle between the 'old' and the 'new' based on the way that the 'old' can be rejuvenated in its means and forms and the way that the 'new' is able to assimilate the best the past has to offer. Within the context of this struggle, the internationalized and globalized elements of culture are able to appear newer than those elements, which remain localized and unconnected<sup>10</sup>.

On this basis, one can argue that when local cultures, like the French or the Greek, instead of just being antagonistic, take the opportunity to put up a creative struggle, they are able to take advantage of their ability for revival and assimilation of global forms. Furthermore, they are given the opportunity to make an impression on certain secondary aspects of the constantly evolving global culture.

The expansion of commercialized forms of cultural production constitutes a powerful factor in the reinforcement of globalization<sup>11</sup>. One could argue, of course, that, worldwide culture evolves through local as much as through internationalized and/or globalized cultural expressions. Such expressions signify

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<sup>9</sup> The terms coexist irrespective of notions of consensus. On the contrary, there are clear indications of the ongoing struggle waged in the same territorial and temporal plane.

<sup>10</sup> This is true for France and also Greece, as it relates to specific cultural traditions, which impose on the social relations, like poetry and music. In other aspects of the cultural identity and way of life, the effect of internationalized and globalized tendencies is much stronger.

<sup>11</sup> On the globalized, internationalized and local culture see the reference to the introduction of the Greek translation of B. Barber's book (Kotzias 1998).

the tendency towards the integration of the supranational to the national/local in a way that converts the internationalized to the global. At times, they also signify the tendency towards the unfruitful confrontation with the internationalized and/or the global, the tendency towards fragmentation or even the tendency towards the creative development of local aspects with the incorporation of non-Local/non-National elements (such as the contributions of technology).

The supranational expansion of certain forms of culture causes the extension of the ability of the bearers of such expansion a greater influence on the receiving societies. Furthermore, it brings the subjects closer to one another and magnifies the scope for penetration of globalization's subjects to the ends of the earth<sup>12</sup>. In this, culture, undoubtedly represents a point of reference in the discussions on globalization and the definitions of instances both of similarity and uniqueness.

The fact that certain aspects in the lives of people and societies become culturally uniform, with certain forces pursuing the enforcement of this unification, creates counterbalancing forces. The existence of such forces affirms- the diffusion of specific forms of music, dance, dress and food and the resistance to their expansion (the resistance depending on the qualities of the equivalent national/local form and on the creative fusion of contemporary techniques and technologies)- are confirm the ongoing dialectic between globalization and fragmentation<sup>13</sup>.

## **5. Conclusion**

In this essay, our aim has been to show that global culture cannot be equated with cultures, which are undergoing globalization. A plethora of elements constitute global culture; the cultural aspects going through the process of globalization, are but one, albeit crucial, of its constituents.

Secondly, a 'pure' culture does not exist. Culture is born out of the influence and the agency of national and local cultures, as well as out of the constant

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<sup>12</sup> On culture's role within globalization, also see A.D. King (1991)

<sup>13</sup> Resembling certain economists who tend to equate the process of globalization with the specific behavior of financial indexes, certain analysts identify globalization as taking place exclusively within the realm of culture. This one-dimensional explanation of globalization is accompanied by the underestimation of the counterbalancing tendency of fragmentation. See Schwengel 1997, R. Robertson 1992).

internal fragmentation of several of their elements. Therefore, one cannot speak of the worldwide, installation of a single 'pure' culture. On the global scale, asymmetries govern the representation of the different national cultures, as well as their influences and effects. In short, there exists a different degree of globalization of each of the national amalgams of culture.

Lastly, a third point of great political significance is that national cultures that are able to ingeniously assimilate the globalized aspects of cultures and forms of other national cultures have the greatest prospects of survival within the national space, of renewal within the framework of globalization, and of guaranteed presence within global culture. On the other hand, those cultures, structures, and forms that pursue purity miss the chance of a timely renewal and tend to succumb to those, which have shown a greater knack at flexibility and creative productive development. Consequently, the cultures that aim for purity and attempt to avoid cross-fertilization with other cultures face the threat of a constantly diminishing representation in global culture and none at all in the globalized one.

Cambridge 14 August 2002