

How Does Globalization Impact Small Cultures That Currently Exist in Asia?

“Tradzy, or a necklace of yellow stone beads that can no longer be found and can only be inherited” (Rymer). Tradzy is a word used for a special tradition unique to a cultural group in India called Aka. Aka, a small cultural group and a language spoken by about one to two thousand people, is just one example of a culture that is dying out because of globalization. People are having their identity ripped from them because of globalization. Their traditions are diminishing as larger and more popular cultural groups are pressuring new generations into abandoning their own culture for theirs. It is spread through the media and popular culture. Although some people argue that globalization improves trade, globalization limits small cultural groups in Asia by destroying religious practices, language, and art proving that conformity eradicates identity.

Globalization limits small cultural groups in Asia by destroying religious practices, stripping them of their identity. According to *Vanishing Voices* by Russ Rymer, who has been awarded 2013 Ed Cunningham Award for Best Magazine Reporting from Abroad by the Overseas Press Club in addition to other prestigious awards for his nonfiction writing, “‘My father was a priest,’ Nimasow said, ‘and his father was a priest.’... He had the kit, but he didn’t know the chants; his father had died before passing them on.” (Rymer). The people in this small Indian cultural group are called the Aka. Nimasow’s father was a priest, and because of the push to convert to a different religion Nimasow never learned the religious practices of his people. The practices most likely have died with Nimasow’s father. These are very important traditions treasured by the people of cultural groups like the Aka. People rely on religious practices to be

passed on, so they can practice their religion in the future. When tradition fails to be passed on by older generations, they are no longer able to be active in their religion. Without the understanding of cultures, their traditions will die off. People in smaller cultural groups will morph into the general population and will lose who they are. People will no longer have a part of their culture that was treasured by their ancestors and passed down for generations.

Because of globalization, small cultures are being pressured into converting to larger religions. *Citizens of Planet Earth: The Intertwinement of Religion and Environmentalism in a Globalization Perspective* by Kristian Frisk, a worker for the Department of Environmental and Business Economics at the University of Southern Denmark, “Religious groups involved in international development have ‘become internally ‘secularized’ in their operations... in an attempt to create a more ‘holistic’ corporate culture’ (Thomas 2005: 225)” (Qtd. By Frisk). Large religious groups are pressuring smaller ones into converting to their religion in order to create a society that is completely identical. This takes away from the individuality of the people in society. More equality is supposed to come from this, but it takes away from one of the largest and most treasured part of culture. Globalization is not worth sacrificing all the individual cultures that will vanish. People will lose a sense of self when they have to trade in their unique culture with one that the majority of the world has.

Some say that the new generation does not care about their culture’s tradition; however, they are just being led away from their culture. According to *Globilisation and Islam in Bosnia: Foreign Influences and their Effects* by Harun Karčić, a journalist focusing on the Muslim world who was based in Bosnia during the time that Muslims were being killed in Bosnia, “In the chaotic atmosphere and uncertainty pertaining to life and death, many Bosnian Muslims sought

tranquility in Islam, the faith that most of them had not practiced for nearly a half of century” (Karčić). When Bosnia was in the midst of turmoil, they turned to the religion that their culture had practiced. People need to be able to practice their religion without the pressure of converting to another, more popular practice because it helps them get through times of chaos. Many cultures turn to religion in order to feel more connected with each other. If these religions are taken from them, they will have nothing to keep them connected to each other. This would weaken the bonds between people who are going through cultural turmoil. Children should be exposed to other cultures early in life to help create a better understanding of the importance of preserving traditions other than their own.

Although some say that art is unique to each culture, influences of other cultures are starting to appear in many aspects of art. In a painting shown on the left by Frida Kahlo, a famous Mexican artist, *Self Portrait Between the Borderline of Mexico and the United States*,



1932 aspects of the United States’ culture can be seen influencing art. This painting shows Frida Kahlo standing on the border between the United States and Mexico. On the Mexican side, different symbols of their culture can be seen. For example, the statues in the mid-ground represent

religious figures. On the United States side, there are no cultural images because they have industrialized (Kahlo). Frida Kahlo’s art was heavily influenced by the politics behind the United

States' industrialization. Instead of painting parts of Kahlo's culture that inspire her, she painted parts of the United State's culture. This takes away from Mexico's more traditional art.

Because of globalization, art has been corrupted and made similar globally. According to *Gobalisation* by Marcus Verhagen, a specialist in nineteenth-century and contemporary art who has taught at universities in both Britain and the United States, "Globalisation has a homogenizing and hence impoverishing effect on artistic production" (Verhagen). Verhagen believes that globalization is toxic to art. Globalization is making all contemporary art similar through popular culture, which limits the creativity of people coming from different cultural backgrounds. Art is a way to truly understand the attitudes towards a multitude of topics that their culture has. Art captures many different aspects of culture that people feel like are most important to them, but with globalization those ideas are being taken away. The meaning behind art is blurred when everyone is trying to create the same things. If children are taught the importance of individuality and art, then artistic traditions will continue to live on.

Some people believe that globalization has little effect on art; however, globalized ideas can be seen in music. *Vanishing Voices* by Russ Rymer, who has received many prestigious awards for his nonfiction writing, states, "Palizi is far removed from pervasive U.S. culture, so it was something of a surprise to the two linguist when the teenagers launched into a full-bore, L.A.-style rap song complete with gang hand gestures and head bobbing and attitude" (Rymer). Rymer describes an event with Akan teenagers while he was living with them. Even places that are separated from American culture still seemed to be influenced by things like rap music. Slowly, other cultures' music will be lost in the midst of popular music. Music that was unique to small cultures will soon begin to die out along with the last people to play it. The loss of the

fine arts is something that can easily be prevented through the education of children. This might make schooling more expensive, but entire cultures will be saved.

Because of the temptation to learn widely spoken languages, people are not learning their mother language. Globalization forces small cultural groups in Asia to lose their language.

According to *Vanishing Voices* by Russ Rymer, “Even in this remote region, young people are seduced away from their mother tongue by Hindi on the television and English in the schools.”

(Rymer). Russ A small cultural group in India, called Aka, are pulled away from their practices by Hindi and English. They are required to know English for school and need to know Hindi to understand television programs. They are rarely in situations where they need to know their mother language. Because of this, they see very little importance in their own language, which creates a gap between them and their culture. It’s extremely important for people to be taught in their mother language to have a strong tie with their culture. This might make it harder for others to learn languages like English, however these languages can be taught in school along with their other classes. Education would improve respect and trade among different countries by creating an understanding of them.

Even larger cultural groups are being pressured into abandoning their language.

According to *Academics in Puerto Rico Debate Future of Spanish Language* by the Associated Press, one of the largest and most trusted source of independent news gathering that is not funded by the government or privately owned, “The use of Spanish has grown by 800 percent in the past decade, and King Felipe VI noted that it is the most studied foreign language” (The Associated Press). Major languages are taking over. Even the United States is estimated to be a Spanish speaking country in a few years (The Associated Press). People everywhere are losing

their language to others that are thought to be more popular. Small languages can't be expected to survive under all the pressure from other larger language when even a language as widely spoken as English is falling victim to globalization. Language is unique to individual cultures. Certain words exist for different religious practices, objects, and ideas that are unique to that cultural group. When these words are lost they will never be regained. They will be forever lost in translation. Children should be taught in their mother language and should be encouraged to speak it so those words will continue to be spoken, and their culture will continue to thrive. Children should also be taught about different cultural groups in order to be more accepting of them which would lessen the pressure put on smaller cultures to abandon their traditions and help preserve these small groups.

Because of globalization spreading, many languages are being lost. Although having a common language would be beneficial to trade, the identity of cultural groups will be destroyed. A lot can be inferred about a culture by looking at their language because people assign specific words to certain objects and ideas that mean a lot to them. Certain ideas and feelings might mean a lot more to one culture than it does another. Also, certain practices and rituals will be given specific names; since not every other culture practices the same things, many of these words will be disregarded and eventually forgotten. It can also allow for people to see how the population thinks. For example, Germans tend to be very logical by culture, so they speak that way. Instead of saying "My head hurts" they would say "Der Kopf tut mir weh" which roughly translates to "The head is causing me pain". They assume if someone is complaining about a head hurting it would be their own; therefore, they wouldn't need to specify that it is their head that is causing them pain. In cultures that are not as logical, for example the United States, the people there

would be confused because “the head” is not specific enough. Differences in taboos are often reflected in language. Language is an extremely important aspect of culture and, for many small cultural groups, it is rapidly dying out because of globalization.

Although some people argue that globalization improves trade, globalization limits small cultural groups in Asia by destroying art, language, and religious practices that proving that conformity eradicates identity. Many people are losing their identity because of globalization. Globalization might be able to improve trade between countries because of similar beliefs systems and easier communication, but people are losing priceless traditions for a better economy. Children should be taught about different cultural groups, so they have more of an understanding about different cultures. Schools might have to spend more educating children about different cultural groups; however, in the end it will be more beneficial to have future generations respect and have a better understanding of cultures other than their own. This will also greatly improve international trade and the interdependency of countries around the world because of a better understanding and respect for other cultures. Children need to be taught about other cultures at a young age in order to insure the preservation of small cultural groups. Through the education of children, many cultures will be preserved and the interdependency of countries will be strengthened.

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Citations

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