

Spot on facts

Globalisation

Globalisation (or globalization) means the process by which the world is gradually becoming unified on an economic, technological and cultural level. The idea includes the increasing mobility of people (as business travellers, tourists, immigrants or

refugees) and the steady flow of money and goods between international markets and production sites. It also stands for the global spread (and clash) of ideas and values as well as the rapid distribution of information through the media.

Basic global trends

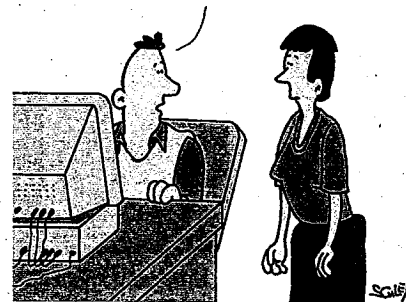
Economic globalisation is exemplified by the activities of the multinational companies, the global players, who produce wherever labour and overhead costs are cheapest and sell throughout the global market. With the constant pressure to cut costs, their clear priorities are efficiency, speed, flexibility and profits rather than their employees' welfare and job security.

Technological globalisation refers to the rapid advances in technology over the past decades, in particular to the microelectronics revolution, which has allowed people to communicate more easily and efficiently by computer or mobile phone.

Cultural globalisation means the spread of previously local or national cultural phenomena around the world, including sports, the arts, fashion,

food, religion and music. This process is furthered by the continuing increase in global economic activity and the advances in communication technologies.

GLOBALIZATION MEANS WHEN
YOUR EMAIL ACCOUNT IS FULL
WITH SPAM FROM COUNTRIES
YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF...



Hopes and fears

The developing countries hope that globalisation will bring them work and prosperity, whereas the industrial world expects increased business opportunities through international trade. In addition, it is hoped that the spread of freedom, democracy and human rights will reduce the number of wars and other conflicts worldwide. The increasing opportunities for exchange on a personal level may lead to a greater understanding among peoples around the world, which could bring about a peaceful, borderless world of shared universal values, general economic prosperity and ecological stability.

In the developing countries many people fear an increasing dependence on foreign support, investment and credit. Some see danger in increasingly corrupt governments, negative cultural

influences and even manipulation through the mass media.

In the industrial world experts predict both the erosion of national cultures in Europe and massive illegal immigration. The increasing power of multinational companies is problematic because they can often no longer be controlled by legal means such as elected governments.

For humankind as a whole there is the fear that largely uncontrolled economic activity will result in inequality and regional and ethnic tensions, as well as in pollution. The "survival of the fittest" could become the slogan of an inhumane, competitive global world. The so-called Westernisation of the world is predicted to widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

- 1 What conditions were necessary for globalisation to spread so quickly in the 20th century?
- 2 What are your personal hopes and fears regarding the current trends of globalisation?