

## Globalization Reading Group

### ENGAGING FACULTY AND STAFF

By Cinder Cooper Barnes, Associate Professor of English, TPSS

The Spring 2015 Globalization Reading Group again chose Manfred B. Steger’s seminal work, *Globalization: A Very Brief Introduction* for the second time. This text is particularly appropriate for Montgomery College because of our location near the capitol and because of our diverse student and employee body. Our students, even more so than other community college students, are diverse, coming from over 160 countries, the District of Columbia and surrounding counties. We work so hard to serve our students and community and awaken in them an appreciation of our discipline that we often take for granted our own growth. As such, the reading group was open to both faculty and staff from all three campuses.

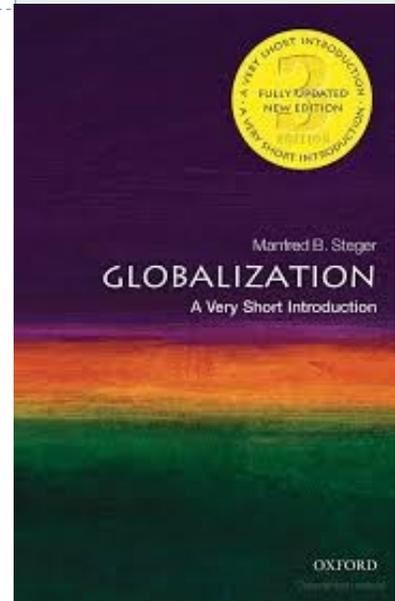
The Book Group offered Montgomery College employees the opportunity to perspective take and think critically and civically about our place in the world. The diversity of the group allowed for dynamic interactions and discussions along with the sharing of useful resources. We had three face-to-face meetings lasting two hours each, and one virtual meeting via Blackboard Community. During each of these meetings, we discussed two chapters of *Globalization: A Very Brief Introduction*. We began each face-to-face meeting with each participant sharing some thoughts, reactions, and questions about the chapters. For the virtual meeting, participants posted a response to a facilitator prompt in the designated Blackboard Community and at least one original reaction / question / presentation of materials with accompanying explanation, related to the chapters being discussed.

### Is Glocal the New Black?

Chapter One of *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* highlights the various, often conflicting and incomplete, definitions of Globalization. The author finally settles on this one "Globalization refers to the expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space" (Steger). In addition, he introduces or reintroduces terms such as glocal.

Steger offers up the 2010 World Cup games and Shakira as examples of the "global-local nexus." In a substantive post, participants examined other examples of glocalization and how it epitomizes the merging of national and international. They also discussed how their example fits into the historical context (as offered in Chapter 2) of globalization.

By Cinder Cooper Barnes



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# THE WORLD'S DAUGHTER

By Sharmila Pradham,  
*Environmental Safety Program*

The "intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space" is a very succinct way to summarize the complex relationships that are forming between individuals, families, communities and nations. I believe that Institutions that were the gate-keepers of information or, "The News", are struggling to control the flow of information and opinions. Growing up in India in the 70's-90's I was accustomed to watching a single, government run television channel "Doordarshan" (literally meaning "the ability to view from a distance"). It later increased to a few more channels, but they were all government controlled until "liberalisation" in the 90's. Then we got Star TV, MTV, and a whole host of Indian private channels like Sony and Zee TV.

During the days of Doordarshan, when a controversy occurred, the news on TV was the government version, and everyone knew it. So, they would turn to the BBC news (on the radio) for "the facts". Recently, when the Indian government banned the broadcasting of "India's Daughter," my Facebook friends in India as well as other parts of the world, posted YouTube links to the documentary on their Facebook pages.

"India's Daughter" is an example of the "global local nexus". Its a documentary made by British television, about a local incident in India, that examines Indian society and its attitudes towards women. It also shows that the Dec. 2012 incident sparked national outrage in India with men and women marching and having candlelight vigils, politicians speaking in Parliament and Lok Sabha about

the status of women, and the social attitudes towards women. There was a lot of national soul-searching that is reflected in the media articles about it.

The documentary takes the age-old issue of social status of women in an ancient culture like India's, and brings it to the attention of the World. In that sense, the documentary ties into the second chapter of Steger's book - it is the convergence of social relations and consciousness that have evolved over centuries to create a nation that has such stark disparity in its attitudes towards women. Back in the seventies, India elected a woman Prime Minister of international acclaim (Indira Gandhi). Indians are very proud of this fact, especially here in the US. Yet, social and family attitudes view women as less human, less deserving of respect than men - how is that possible? Poverty, lack of quality education, centuries of patriarchy have all been blamed, but it really boils down to how girls and boys are raised in India, and everywhere else in the World.

People who want to know the opposing viewpoints find ways to get the information. It is becoming easier to get information and more difficult to control it. Once people have the information, they are still free to form their opinion based on their experiences and attitudes, but at least, they have the information. .. Hence, "intensification of social consciousness" is truly a globalization phenomenon.



*"Institutions that were the gate-keepers of information or, "The News," are struggling to control the flow of information and opinions" (Pradham).*

## "GLOCAL" JUSTICE

By Cinder Cooper Barnes

On February 21, 2015, Russia's most infamous pop stars, Pussy Riot, responded to events in the United States of America by releasing the song "I Can't Breathe", which was accompanied by a music video of two members of the group being buried alive. The singers/activists are notorious for their very public anti-Putin protests and their eighteen-month prison sentence. Even though "I Can't Breathe" is Pussy Riot's first English Language song, they were a recognized name in the U.S as well as the rest of the world long before. Because of social media, the punk rock group has become as iconic as underground Russian artists can get. Their protests/performances have traveled around the world via Facebook, Youtube, and international news organization.

The same outlets that made Pussy Riot infamous, also carried news of 43 year-old African American father and husband Eric Garner's death on a sidewalk in Staten Island, over 5000 miles way. People throughout the world reacted and acted. Their despair, anger, and fear, were all accessible through Tweets, Instagram and Facebook posts, online newspapers and news services.

Still wounded from the deaths of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, internet users took to social media and organized protests and other acts of civil disobedience. Pussy Riot responded with art--imagery and music. They identified with the struggles of unarmed black men in America. The pain of other oppressed people resonated, so much so that the group used Eric Garner's last words, "I can't breathe" as the title of their protest song, and because of glocalization, I got to hear it.



© Placehunt, Angkor Wat

## SOUTH EAST ASIA

By Professor Ellen Olmstead, English and Reading Dept. Chair, TPSS

I don't want to write what reads like a history lesson or a scholarly monograph. I hope my sharing personal observations and recollections from 1998, when I spent 10 weeks studying and traveling in Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand via a Freeman Foundation fellowship, will illustrate the concepts in Chapters 1 and 2.

In all of these nations, there was evidence of empire old and new. The Chinese "had been there" about a thousand years earlier. These countries identified their national heritage sites as locations of indigenous/non-Chinese accomplishment, and some of their ancient/national treasures were the seat of their own empires--which themselves also fell, half a millennium ago. These empires were transcultural, though, and advances in technology (especially building, irrigation, and large-scale farming) made them possible. Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand trace with pride their history of resisting the Chinese and yet embracing the influences of India through the (kind of) Buddhism that emerged or evolved there--and Indonesia its Hindu (Bali) and Muslim roots. In the first half of the twentieth century, Japan in the name of empire invaded and tried to conquer these nations. Any one of these nations includes within its borders--established by British colonialism and imperialism --more than one former empire and many ethnic groups.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the United States, paranoid about the spread of Communism and eager to control strategic access to Asia, supported directly or indirectly dictatorships in most of these countries. So, there are many layers to the identity and history of these nations. It was amazing to see in any one historic site multiple waves of "empire" and cultural influences and, too, the insistence on the local, the uniqueness of the site. Many of the sites were hybrid Hindu-Buddhist temples, but they were unique, so much so that anyone could see an image of a temple and never confuse it with anyplace but, say, Angkor, or Bagan, or Borobodur, UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Globalization the way the book describes it--the premodern through modern periods--plays a big part in these countries' political struggles.

[Finally,] in Cambodia, I visited Angkor Wat, the world's largest religious complex, a major tourist destination. It's not overrun by tourists as it's difficult to get to and the accommodations are limited. It's in the middle of the jungle, with some walking paths and dirt roads leading to the nearby town. Tourists get there by small plane. One "street" had several hotels which were nicer than most of the hotels in which I've stayed when travelling in the US. The local people lived in squalor, and I passed many beggars as I walked from my hotel to Angkor. Many young children offered to give me a tour for a "tip" not a set fee, their English impressive, particularly considering there was no school nearby. They hawked cans of warm Coca-Cola while they had no drinking water. Some of these children had lost a limb to a land mine--the flags marking American land mines which have not been removed are visible everywhere. In a place where there was no market, the hotels offered sumptuous buffets. A Thai distributor bottled Angkor Beer. There was entertainment during the evening banquet. I heard endless renditions of the theme song from TITANIC. And it seemed as if every Asian person in the room joined the singer. Not sure if they understood what they were singing as some of the words were slurred. I didn't know the lyrics.

## NEW AGAIN

By Roberta Buckberg, *Job Opportunity Coordinator*, Student Development

The first two chapters of *Globalization: A Very Brief Introduction* were really quite eye-opening and made me realize how little early world history I know about. Truly nothing is new under the sun - from the moment we began food production, we built hierarchies and supported armies to protect our assets. Yet, poor political decisions can block a nation's development even if they have the best resources and innovations, by isolating themselves as happened with China (p26).

The Dutch and British East India Companies (maybe the first multinationals?), through wealth and political influence, "acquired the power to regulate most intercontinental economic transactions" (29). [Similarly to the days of old], large corporations now lobby and force legislation and policy that benefits them and the "European-dominated network of political and cultural exchange," [take it] upon themselves to, "assume the role of the world's guardians of civilization and morality"(31) [demonstrating] that with the idea of "American" Exceptionalism, is not unique nor 20th or 21st century phenomena.

Even the fact that, "fed by a steady stream of materials and resources that originated mostly in other regions of the World, Western capitalist enterprises gained stature" (31) - is not new. It has long been that European-based entities exploited other regions for raw materials. I came in thinking of globalization as mostly a contemporary phenomenon and clearly it isn't.



## CLASH OF IDEOLOGIES

By Professor Dan Wilson, Chair Soci. Anth./  
Criminal Justice, RV

On Monday night I was downloading a film to potentially show to my class. The download came from someone who “looked” Japanese with a Japanese name (at least, this was the profile that was put up). The film (which was a documentary on language) was in English and made by an American media outlet but it came with Russian subtitles. As I began to watch the film I noticed that the broadcast of the film was on Canadian television as evidenced by the small Canadian TV logo in the corner of the screen. A project which had originated in the U.S. went half-way around the world to get back to me – literally, a “global” movie.

At the same time I was downloading the film I was also reading an article (multitask!) by Akbar Shahid Ahmed who is a foreign affairs reporter in D.C. Ahmed grew up in Pakistan but attended school at Yale University and has worked extensively in the U.S. His article discussed the now infamous (?) letter sent by Tom Cotton, signed by Republican senators, to Iranian leaders with specific aim at foreign minister and chief nuclear negotiator Mohammad Javad Zarif. So you all probably know the jist of what happened by now. But I found some of the details of this event very interesting. First off the letter is a bit condescending: 1. It is translated into Farsi which was unnecessary – more on that later 2. It states that Iranian leaders do not understand the U.S. constitutional system (the letter, subsequently, goes on to “educate” the leadership).

Zarif’s background, according to Ahmed, is an interesting one: “He (Zarif) attended prep school in San Francisco, San Francisco State University, Columbia University, and the University of Denver’s School of International Studies.” This kind of

training/socialization is significant. This is someone who knows English fluently and is quite familiar with the U.S. constitution. In Steger fashion, this kind of deconstruction paints a very different picture than the one many Americans are used to hearing over and over: that relations between the east and the west represent a “clash of civilizations,” opposing ideologies/religions, old vs. new, etc.

When Steger deconstructs Bin Laden he demonstrates that globalization cannot be looked at as a simple binary process. Deconstructing Cotton’s letter reveals a similar pattern. A generic retelling of events from the typical media outlets reaffirms the dominant narrative of good and evil, that we stand for constitutional rights and freedom and “they” do not understand this. In reality we see something much more complicated and it could easily be argued that Zarif actually has a much better understanding of the constitution as it relates to international law.

What the letter also revealed was a very strange (unintentional?) coalition. The members of Congress who signed the letter criticize Zarif but, at the same time, align themselves with Iran’s hardliners. – in a way trying to affirm (or re-affirm) the simplistic jihad vs. mcworld narrative that has been so popular the past two decades.



## “ONE WORLD, ONE PAIN”

By Roberta Buckberg

When the unions - teachers, firefighters, police, took over the capitol building in Wisconsin in reaction to the union busting activities of Gov. Scott Walker, it felt to me like a very local story that I was happy went national. It was a moment to acknowledge that "government" that so many want to cut so badly, is, in fact, people - people who put out fires, whisk you to healthcare in emergencies, and teach your kids. And it was a moment when workers stood together in solidarity - but it felt like a local story that we were fortunate had gone national...and then I saw this photo. Someone in Tahrir Square, standing up for his own freedom, took time to give a thought to the well-being of workers halfway around the world in Wisconsin. I don't know if his information about Wisconsin came from international news sources or from social media, but I know that his photo became known because of social media - because in real time, someone protesting in Egypt could feel kinship and bond with someone protesting their condition in Wisconsin.

Social media is the conduit for all kinds of communication - whether it be this expression of solidarity and caring, or videos meant to chill - like the execution of Saddam Hussein or the recent beheadings. Social media is a tool like any other that might either bring us all together to see that we are facing similar problems of inequality in wealth distribution, unemployment, and economic depression, or it could be used to tear us further apart and set us at each other's throats. It's the conflict of what you see as the intrinsic nature of the human race - are we inherently violent, contentious, and competitive (capitalism) or are we collaborative, cooperative, and caring (socialism, or perhaps even earlier societies that were more egalitarian and collaborative - the hunter-gatherers before the hierarchical system that accompanied the means of producing their own food led them to). Ultimately, like globalization - it's a little bit of both.

Photo Source: [Muhammad Saladin Nusair's \(pictured\) Facebook page.](#)



*“Globalization makes the world a much smaller place in that regard—one does not have to go to Japan to experience their music/art, etc.—but ... one of the dangers is that people may get complacent or feel that they truly “know” other cultures without going to that country to experience it firsthand” (Babcock).*

## CONNECTING THE WORLD ONE SONG AT A TIME

By Ashley Babcock

Steger's definition of Globalization as “the expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space (15) is a very concise way to define Globalization as well as a way to differentiate between modernization. The way the definition is written shows that social consciousness and relations across the world have existed; however, Globalization is a more rapid advance of socialization and communication. Chapter 2 helps provide the framework of how nations have been socializing and influencing one another for years; yet it is easy to see how much Globalization has advanced since the Internet become more accessible to the layperson.

One example of glocalization that comes to mind for me is the influence of different cultures here in the U.S. For example, before I came to Montgomery College, I worked at the Art Institute of Washington. Many of the art students there were very immersed in Anime and Japanese culture. Because of Globalization, they had access to Japanese cartoons. I had a great discussion in my English 102 class with a group of students about Anime and Japanese culture one day. Students were assigned to bring in a poem or song that they wanted to share with the class. One of my students, who had lived in Maryland all of her life and had never visited Japan, brought in a J-Pop or Japanese Pop song. She played it in Japanese without subtitles; yet many of the students in class felt they understood the song and the emotion behind it. We discussed the song and how she became interested in this band. I found out that she started watching Anime by seeing Dragonball Z, which was a cartoon that started in Japan but became popular in the U.S. Since she liked that show, she began streaming other Anime shows online and watching them regularly. In the shows, she would hear music and she would research the bands behind the songs. She would then buy these songs on iTunes or just listen to them through YouTube. Soon, she found

that there were other people who also loved J-Pop and Anime and she found several groups online where she could talk about these interests. These groups online had members from all of the world—America, Ireland, Italy, Spain, and Japan. She also discovered that there were J-Pop meet-up groups in the area that she could go to in order to continue to discuss her interests. She was a part of a group that met a few times a month. In these meetings, they would watch Anime together, and they were even learning Japanese as a group. Many students in my class had similar experiences and were very knowledgeable about Japanese music, anime, and fashion through watching, researching, and discussing their interests in online and in-person communities. I believe this is a great example of glocalization because my students were able to access Japanese music and art without going to Japan, and they had the opportunity to meet up with others in their own area who also had these interests.

Globalization makes the world a much smaller place in that regard—one does not have to go to Japan to experience their music/art, etc.—but I think one of the dangers is that people may get complacent or feel that they truly “know” other cultures without going to that country to experience it firsthand. Being able to access a variety of movies, news, food, etc. from other cultures helps us expand our knowledge and try new things. However, I think we, as a whole, need to realize that sometimes these things are being “Westernized.” Going to a country and experiencing the culture firsthand gives you an authenticity that you cannot get just through viewing it from afar. This idea ties back to the Shakira “Waka Waka” video and the “African” outfit that was designed by an Italian. We need to be vigilant in looking at the messages that are being portrayed and try to see if there is a lens or bias that is being put on these messages.

KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
LISTEN TO  
J-POP

## Resources:

- ◆ Global Policy Forum,  
[www.globalpolicy.org/globalization.html](http://www.globalpolicy.org/globalization.html)
- ◆ International Forum on Globalization,  
[www.ifg.org/](http://www.ifg.org/)
- ◆ Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future,  
[www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/](http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/)
- ◆ Ted Talks,  
[www.tedtalks.com](http://www.tedtalks.com)

## About Us

### Who We Are

The GHI is a new entity at Montgomery College that is funded by a Bridging Cultures grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, an initiative that “engages the power of the humanities to promote understanding and mutual respect for people with diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives within the United States and abroad.” [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov)

To promote a global perspective in the humanities and to emphasize the role of the humanities in education and civic life. To create a model program for internationalizing the humanities at Montgomery College and to ensure that it is replicable. All our work is to benefit our students and our communities.

### Why Globalize the Humanities?

College students today are training not only for participation in the professions as we have known them, but also for a world that is increasingly complex—and cultural boundaries that are constantly shifting.

We need citizens and workers who understand other cultures, speak other languages, and move among cultural spaces with ease. We need global citizens whose ability to envision creative solutions to serious conflict is [will be] transformative.

In short, we need a model of teaching that moves from “knowing” to “deep understanding.” The humanities have taught these core skills for hundreds of years through philosophy, linguistics, literature, art theory, world languages, history, and other disciplines. We can now put them to use for global benefit.

Globalizing our program will leverage the power of the humanities to help our students gain content knowledge of world cultures and issues, and to develop critical thinking skills to become more analytical thinkers and creative problem solvers.

### Global Humanities Institute

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