

Cultural Integration

2.4

Glossary of selected terms

deregulation removing government controls and supervision.

economic restructuring the significant and enduring changes in the nature and structure of the economy brought about, primarily, by the emergence of the global economy.

globalisation the integration of the world's economy through the mass consumption of mainly Western culture, technology and trade. Globalisation affects economic, political, social, cultural and environmental decision-making.

global village a term used to describe how the world appears to be getting smaller through the accessibility of technology—especially technologies that facilitate the transfer of information. Thus, the actions that occur in one corner of the globe can rapidly and significantly affect people elsewhere.

high culture incorporates elements of lasting value such as art, literature, theatre, ballet, opera and classical music. Some critics consider its content to be 'high brow' or 'intellectual' when compared with 'popular culture'.

homogenised a term used to describe when one culture becomes similar to another.

intellectual capital using ideas, knowledge or inventions as a means of gaining material wealth through a business

enterprise. Specialised knowledge of how a product works creates jobs in areas such as information technology (IT) support.

multiculturalism the official Australian Government policy of encouraging immigration from diverse, ethnic backgrounds. It also refers to the promotion and encouragement of the retention of ethnic languages and cultures within Australian society.

popular culture considered to be more mainstream than 'high culture'. It is associated with 'lighter' forms of entertainment such as sporting events, television programs, comic strips and rock concerts.

rationalisation to eliminate what is considered unnecessary, in order to make it more efficient.

secular a term meaning 'non-religious'.

sovereignty the supreme and unrestricted power to govern a state.

transnational corporations (TNCs) large international companies whose operations take place in both developed and less developed countries; their headquarters are usually located in developed countries.

World Bank an international organisation made up of three United Nations (UN) agencies. It provides less developed countries (LDCs) with technical assistance and reconstruction and development finance.

What is globalisation?

No culture is static. Ideas, technologies, products, and people move from one place to another. When cultures come into contact through migration, trade, or the latest telecommunications devices, they influence each other. Sometimes cultures cross-pollinate, exchange foods, music, sports. At other times, say critics of globalisation, a culture swamps another like an invasive, fast-reproducing weed.

Cultures have evolved in response to contact for thousands of years. But the pace has changed. In the past the influences of distant cultures came slowly, delayed by long journeys. Today, because of the telephone, the television, the Internet, telecommunications satellites, world trade, and long-distance travel, cultural influences can spread across the planet as fast as the click of a mouse.

National Geographic, August 1999



Figure 2.4.1 Paris Disneyland: an example of the spread of American popular culture.

GLOBALISATION: THE HUMAN DIMENSION

Globalisation is what happens when you lose your job in Brunswick, Bankstown or Elizabeth because the company for which you work has been bought out by the Australian subsidiary of a Dallas-based transnational company that has decided to relocate its production of T-shirts to Mexico because of cheaper wage costs and lower health and safety standards. It is what happens when you finally get a new job in Brisbane under a new employment contract that lowers your wages and conditions and your boss explains that this is essential to compete with Mexican, or Indonesian, or Chinese, workers.

It is what happens when your sister is sacked from her hospital job because of budget cuts by a State Government that defends its actions by saying it must meet the demands of international credit-rating agencies for balanced budgets and lower taxes. And it is what happens when you get skin cancer because of the hole in the ozone layer created by chemicals released by refrigerators and aerosol cans all over the world.

But globalisation is also what happens when you use the computer at your local library to connect to the Internet and find pages of information from unions and community organisations in

England, Mexico or Indonesia, which are trying to link up with workers around the world to stop the driving down of wages and the repression of trade-union activists. Globalisation is what happens when young London musicians of English, Caribbean and Indian descent begin to create new cross-rhythms of black reggae, white trance and Hindi rap ... And globalisation is also what happens when a child sees photographs of this planet taken from space and realises that the Earth is indeed finite.

John Wiseman, *Global Nation? Australia and the Politics of Globalisation*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1998, pp. 13–14



Figure 2.4.2 Ricky Martin and Pepsi make their mark on the streets of Beijing.

Defining cultural integration

Cultural integration is difficult to define because it is made up of many concepts. The idea of a **multicultural** society reflects cultural integration at work; so too does the idea of the '**global village**', where, through technology and trade, a seemingly borderless world is created. Cultural integration also concerns the adoption of a mass consumer culture where everything from fashion to sport, music to television, becomes integrated into the national culture, often without challenge. While this may be seen by some as a positive step towards unifying the world, to others, cultural integration is seen as a threat to **national sovereignty** and **cultural diversity**. Geographically, where a person lives in the world often determines what part, if any, he or she can play in this **globalisation** process.

What is culture?

Even experts struggle to define the word 'culture'. In a very general sense it can be defined as the 'way of life' of a group of people. More specifically culture can be described as the elements of human existence that are passed down from one generation to the next, the product of humanity's collective intellect and memory. These elements include the traditions, customs, languages, belief systems, art, architecture, music, food and institutions shared by a particular group of people. It includes the material goods the group creates and uses, and the skills it has developed. Culture is expressed in many ways: through the creative and performing arts and the ways people communicate, use resources and utilise space.

Some people fear that the earth's cultural diversity is under threat. They are concerned that cultures are being swamped by Western (mainly American) cultural influences. Others see this development as part of the ongoing process by which a particular culture evolves and is enriched by the cultures with which it interacts. Advanced communication technologies make it inevitable that cultures, of all types, will become more interrelated and interdependent.

There are many measures of cultural diversity but one of the best indicators is the state of the world's languages. Some languages are growing. English, for example, is now spoken by more than one-fifth of the world's people. It is an essential element of the new global culture—the language of science, commerce, diplomacy and popular culture. Other languages, however, are fading. More than half the 6000 or so languages currently spoken are unlikely to survive the twenty-first century. About half the world's languages have fewer than 10 000 speakers. A quarter have less than 1000. Many blame globalisation—a growing uniformity fuelled by technological advances in telecommunications and the emergence of the global economy.

Goods move. People move. Ideas move. And cultures change. The difference now is the speed and scope of these changes. It took television 13 years to acquire 50 million viewers; it took the Internet only five.

Not everyone is happy about this. Some Western social scientists and anthropologists believe that a sort of cultural cloning will result from what they regard as the 'cultural assault' of McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Disney, Nike, MTV and the English language itself ... critics are convinced that Western—often equated with American—influences will flatten every cultural crease, producing, as one observer terms it, one big 'McWorld'.

E. Zwingle, National Geographic, August 1999, pp. 12–13

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 What is meant by the term 'cultural integration'? Why do some people regard it as a threat? What positive benefits may it have?
- 2 What is culture? What are its main elements? How is it expressed?
- 3 Define 'popular culture'. Give examples of the type of popular culture you interact with.
- 4 Contrast the views concerning the impact of Western cultural influences.
- 5 Outline the impact that advanced communication technologies are having on culture.

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Working in groups, brainstorm the elements of Australian culture that have their origins in other parts of the world. Compare your group's list with other groups. Compile a class list. What conclusions can you draw from this activity?
- 2 Study figure 2.4.2. Write a paragraph outlining how this photograph illustrates the process of cultural integration.
- 3 Study the extracts on pages 269 and above. Explain in your own words the point being made in each extract.
- 4 Using the media, collect photographs that help to illustrate the process of cultural integration. Mount a wall display. Add to the display over the course of the year.
- 5 Study the box 'Globalisation: The Human Dimension'. Using your own examples, write a paragraph similar to those written by John Wiseman to illustrate the process of globalisation.

The diffusion, adoption and adaptation of mass consumer culture

Global culture doesn't mean just more TV sets and Nike shoes. Linking is humanity's natural impulse, its common destiny. But the ties that bind people around the world are not merely technological or commercial. They are the powerful cords of the heart.

E. Zwingle, National Geographic, August 1999, p. 33

Cultural integration is about accepting or rejecting the process of change described as 'globalisation'. At its simplest level, it is a process where the issues of class, gender, race and ethnicity are denoted simply by what brand of clothing we wear, by where we live, by what music we listen to and by what cultural events we attend. It is about keeping up with the latest trends and allowing them to define our identity, rather than preserving an identity that is uniquely our own.

The following examples of food, fashion, advertising, sport, music and religion demonstrate the nature and extent of cultural integration.

TERMINOLOGY: GETTING IT RIGHT

Cultural diffusion: the dispersion, or spread, of different cultural elements between countries.

Cultural adaptation: the modification of a culture to incorporate aspects of another culture.

Cultural adoption: the acceptance and integration of different cultural elements as if they were your own.

Fast-food going global

One of the most obvious examples of globalisation has been the proliferation of fast-food retailers such as McDonald's, Burger King, KFC, Pizza Hut and Starbucks. Today, these giants of the fast-food industry are a ubiquitous feature of streetscapes around the world. (See figures 2.4.4 a to c.) Their proliferation has helped to transform the dietary habits of people in many countries and helped shape (through advertising) the lifestyle aspirations of people—especially the young. Vendors of traditional foods have responded by adapting the fast-food industry's approach to the promotion, production and sale of food. In some cases the fast-food giants have adapted their products to the cultural context in which they operate.

THE GOLDEN ARCHES: SPANNING THE GLOBE

When we think of the process of cultural integration the first image that often comes to mind is the ubiquitous golden arches. No other firm so graphically demonstrates the diffusion, adoption and adaptation of mass consumer culture.

The McDonald's Corporation had its beginnings in 1955. Ray Kroc, a Multi-Mixer milkshake-maker salesman received an order for eight Multi-Mixer machines from the McDonald brothers, the owners of a takeaway food outlet.

Ray Kroc was fascinated by the way the McDonald brothers

operated their business. The menu was short, simple and cheap but the hamburgers were very popular. Ray convinced the brothers to allow him to open new McDonald's stores. In return, Ray agreed to pay the brothers 0.5% of the gross sales of the new stores. Ray opened the first of the new stores in Des Plaines, Illinois. He expanded his business by granting franchises to local entrepreneurs, all of whom had to adhere to the same principles that made the original McDonald's so successful. By 1960 Ray Kroc had opened 200 outlets across the United States. In 1961 he bought

out the McDonald brothers for \$3 million.

Today, McDonald's has more than 23 000 restaurants in over 110 countries on six continents. Every day, McDonald's serves 28 million people worldwide. It is one of the hundred biggest corporations in the United States. Its head office is located in Oak Brook, near Chicago.

McDonald's promotes its products via extensive worldwide marketing campaigns. In developing countries these campaigns target the young and the elite. It promotes Western-branded fast food as a fashionable

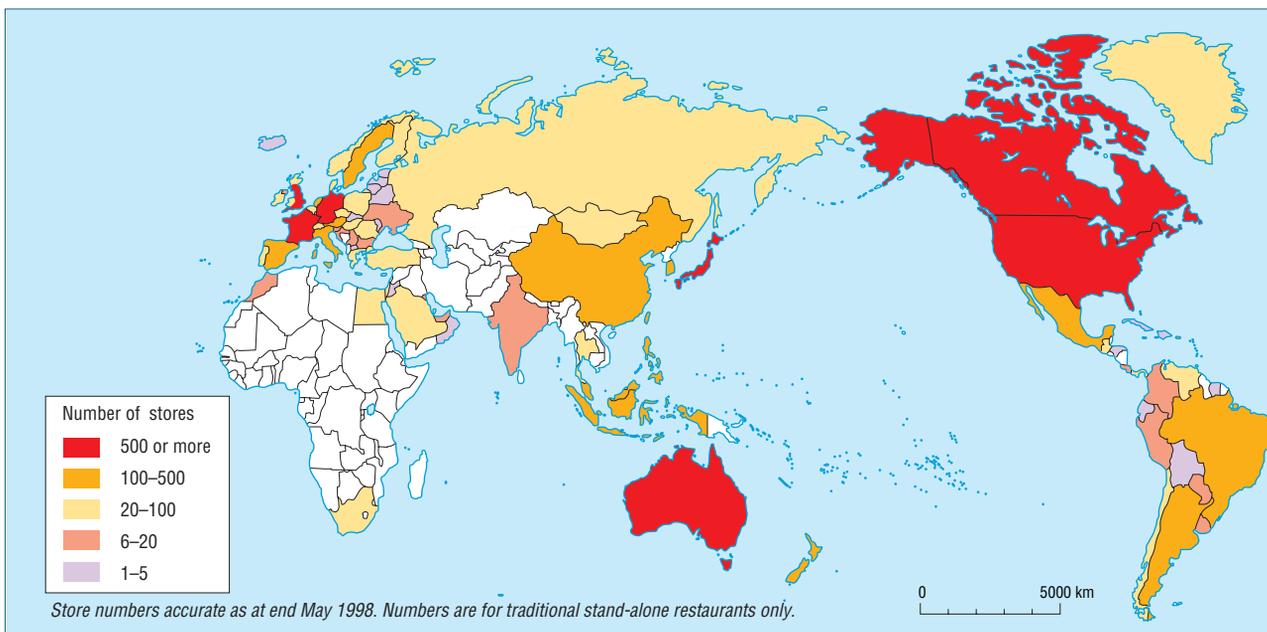


Figure 2.4.3 The worldwide distribution of McDonald's restaurants, 1998. Source: McDonald's

alternative to traditional foods. It also promotes the perception that their restaurants are more hygienic and appealing than the local alternative.

In some developing countries, governments have resisted the spread of Western-based fast-food retailers such as McDonald's. India, for example, imposes tough rules on foreign entrants to its markets. Nevertheless, McDonald's established its first two outlets in India in 1996: one in Delhi, the other in Mumbai (Bombay). To accommodate local religious

beliefs, vegetarian and lamb burgers are on the menu, and a special sauce has been mixed using an egg-free base. McDonald's also uses separate kitchen space and utensils to prepare vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals—a highly sensitive point with traditional Hindus.

Elsewhere, local entrepreneurs have responded by adopting and adapting the McDonald's approach to the promotion, production and sale of fast food. (See the newspaper article, 'Fast food a hot market in Thailand', page 274.)

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Study figure 2.4.3. Describe the global distribution of McDonald's restaurants.
- 2 Outline how McDonald's promotes fast-food in developing countries.
- 3 To what extent does McDonald's adapt its products to meet local cultural traditions?
- 4 Study the magazine article 'Globalisation: A hard pill to swallow?' and then answer the following questions:
 - a Why do demonstrators target fast-food franchises such as McDonald's and KFC?
 - b What does the attitude of the residents of Belgrade say about the nature of cultural integration?



a Venice, Italy.



b Zermatt, Switzerland.



c Beijing, China.

Figure 2.4.4 McDonald's outlets in different parts of the world.

Globalisation: A hard pill to swallow?

'Resist America beginning with Cola, Attack McDonald's, Storm KFC.'

This slogan is just one of the many posters and leaflets that were displayed recently at Beijing University, as students called for a boycott of American products. In China, dozens of fast-food restaurants had their windows smashed in response to NATO's accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia. In Belgrade, seven McDonald's restaurants were closed ... after protesters, also eager to lash out at America, smashed windows at those restaurants. Not surprisingly, their first targets were American franchises. McDonald's [and] KFC

... quintessential symbols of what is 'American'—have been singled out in the midst of these protests.

But what many of these reports of anti-American sentiments have often overlooked, and what is perhaps most notable, is the reaction to these protests by many of the local patrons of these American businesses. Consider, for example, the reaction of two women in Belgrade to the re-opening of McDonald's:

I am glad my grandson's favourite restaurant is open again. I don't care if it is an American one, all employees are our people.

I understand that [McDonald's] had to close at the start of the NATO air strikes, but now Belgrade citizens know that our people work here and this McDonald's is our restaurant.

These statements illustrate a very powerful point about the effect of globalisation on local economies: it has become increasingly difficult to identify what is 'American'. As the two Belgrade citizens keenly understand, while the McDonald's restaurants symbolise America, they have also become a part of the fabric of the local community.

P. Zeidman, *Franchising World*, Washington, July/August 1999

Fast food a hot market in Thailand

By TOM MINTIER
Bangkok Bureau Chief

BANGKOK, Thailand—Fried chicken and french fries become fashionable in the land of rice and noodles.

With the cutting of a gold ribbon, KFC—Kentucky Fried Chicken—has opened its 100th store in Thailand. The American fast-food giant has expanded rapidly over the past decade in Southeast Asia. Currently, there are nearly 2000 KFC outlets in the region.

What does this mean? Western restaurant officials say it is a very important step up the socio-economic ladder for the local people. They say Western fast-food fare is more than just dinner or lunch: It's a concept that people are beginning to embrace.

That concept may be powered by the fact that there's no time to cook and commute. Bangkok's rapid development and traffic jams have helped to popularise fast food. Every shopping mall seems to have a Dunkin' Donuts, Pizza Hut or

McDonald's. The list goes on—including just about every Western fast-food company in the world.

In Thailand, the fast-food industry is a billion-dollar-a-year industry, and it's growing at rate of 30% a year. But although Western fast food has dominated the marketplace for the past decade, local entrepreneurs now are entering the market with their own version of fast food, Thai style.

Small, individual food stands could always be found on the streets of Bangkok, offering fried noodles and other fare. Recently, air pollution from traffic jams have made street food experiences a little less pleasant. In response, Thai fast-food shops now feature in air-conditioned rooms with plenty of variety.

The latest entry is a company called Saebisan. It has opened 21 outlets in Bangkok to compete with Western fast food, hoping to replace hamburgers and pizza with broiled chicken and papaya salad in the diet of young Thais. 'It's my concept to try

to get students to know about their culture,' said businessman Aroon Sakarintr, 'to eat Thai food ... not Western fast food.'

Aroon's company has set up outlets on university campuses in an effort to capture the youth market. It puts food stalls where KFC and Pizza Hut can't compete. And many of the students seem to prefer their own cuisine, saying the spiciness suits their taste buds.

Still, students seem to like the variety in fast-food choices. Others consider Western fast-food cultural pollution, and wish it would stay in the West. And some parents feel fried foods are causing their youngsters to have weight problems.

But no matter which culture finally comes out on top in the world of Thai fast food, the local outlets may have one advantage. With Bangkok's traffic problems, getting to the Western fast-food outlets is difficult. Thai fast food offers home delivery.

Cable News Network Inc., 3 September 1995



Figure 2.4.5 A Vietnamese entrepreneur capitalises on the popularity of some familiar American cultural icons.

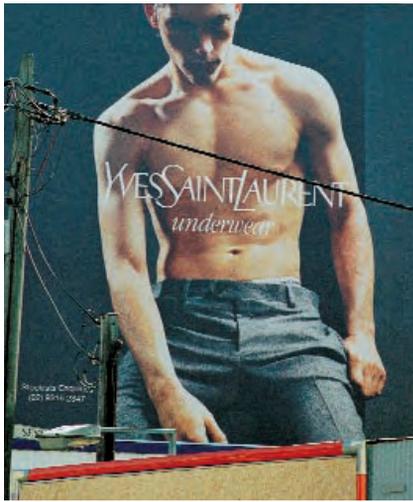


Figure 2.4.7 Fashion is an industry that thrives on constant change and the promotion of youthful images.

It's the middle of winter and I'm shopping with my daughter at Galeries Lafayette: Paris's most famous department store. The search for clothing acceptable to a fashion-conscious Australian teenager proves fruitless, until we come across racks of clothing bearing the logos of Rip Curl and Billabong.

My daughter is now the proud owner of an Australian-designed Rip Curl jacket, made in China and purchased in Paris. Globalisation at work!

Grant Kleeman

What's in a name? Influences on the fashion industry

The fashion industry is both dynamic and competitive. It is an industry that thrives on constant change and the promotion of youthful images. It dictates what is 'in' and what is not, and each season designers look to the traditional fashion capitals of London, New York, Paris and Milan for inspiration. Whether you are aware of it or not, globalisation of the fashion industry is everywhere and it is the United States that leads the way. Hanes, Calvin Klein, Guess? and Levi Strauss are all brand names owned by large **transnational corporations (TNCs)**, which target the youth market and subtly influence which brand of boxer shorts, chinos or designer jeans you buy. It is interesting to note, however, that very few of the garments that are marketed and sold as 'made in the USA' or 'made in Australia' are actually made locally. Most are made in developing countries where labour is relatively cheap and health and safety conditions are not considered an important issue.

Promoting global consumerism: Advertising and the media

The process of globalisation is responsible for both cultural and economic integration. As trade barriers around the world are lifted or altered, large corporations have been able to play an increasingly prominent role in the reshaping of society. Encouraged by the possibility of making huge profits, new industries in advertising, media, creative production, consumer research and marketing education have emerged to promote consumer consumption. When global corporations reach out and touch the four corners of the globe, they bring with them not only established products and brand names, but also their favoured media and sophisticated marketing methods.

The media, in all its forms, has become a central influence in shaping individual, community and national identities. It is also the preferred medium by which large corporations create a market for the products they sell. Global marketing campaigns, based around advertising and the sponsorship of major events, are used to promote products to vast audiences. By the end of the 1990s, just five TNCs (Time Warner, News Corp., Bertelsman, Viacom and the Walt Disney Company) controlled the vast majority of the media content available to audiences in most countries. Rupert Murdoch's News Corp., for example, has the capacity to reach two-thirds of the world's population through its ownership of BskyB (Europe), Fox (North America) and Star TV (Asia). These vast corporations have the power to determine what information is available to people and thereby influence public opinion, cultural identity and lifestyle expectations. (See the newspaper article 'Every step you take, Rupert will be there'.)

Advertising is one of the largest industries in the world. Tens of billions of dollars are spent annually creating demand for goods and services, all intended to improve one's 'self worth' or 'lifestyle'.

Advertisers are the major employers of persuasive language. They bombard audiences with jingles, trendy rhymes, rock songs and a variety of fast and fashionable images, which subtly take effect. Repetition and action are the key weapons used to reinforce the names and images of products in the audience's head. It is not uncommon during a sustained advertising campaign to see or hear the same advertisement broadcast numerous times throughout a television program, particularly if a program is sponsored by a particular corporation. Sponsorship is big business.

Two of the largest sponsors of community related events and activities are Coca-Cola and McDonald's. Their aim is to create a forum in which their brand names can appear in front of vast numbers of people and thereby increase their sales. It is no secret that McDonald's and Coca-Cola are major

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 What drives the fashion industry?
- 2 Where is an increasing amount of clothing made? Explain why.

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Study figure 2.4.7 and then complete the following tasks:
 - a What advertising techniques are used to promote the product advertised?
 - b Which market is being targeted?
 - c Find other examples of advertising that promotes youthful images. Share these with others in your class.
- 2 At home, look in your wardrobe at clothes you have recently purchased and make a list of the brand names. Identify which are foreign made. In class, compare these lists and research where these companies are based.

Every step you take, Rupert will be there

By MARK RILEY
New York Correspondent

It is a solid hour of Rupert vision. A priceless peek at Murdoch's millennium. A rare glimpse of the 21st Century fox.

And the audience is suitably captivated.

It is no mean feat, for this is no ordinary audience. Wedged into the ballroom of New York's Grand Hyatt Hotel, pin-striped shoulder to pin-striped shoulder, are 500 of the world's highest-powered media brokers, stock analysts and investment bankers.

They have brushed off the opening bells down on Wall Street for the chance to take in a rare sermon from the Count of Media, Rupert Murdoch. The Australian-born mogul has agreed to be key note speaker on the final day of Goldman Sachs' annual media conference and these seats in the bursting auditorium are New York's most valued investment commodities of the day.

It is the sort of audience that could add a lazy few million dollars to the value of a company with the single tap of a computer key. Or carve off a few million as easily as slicing through their morning bagels.

It is the first time Murdoch has agreed to speak to them in six years and his theme appears to be 'accretion'. Translated, that means growth—'sustainable', 'long-term', 'dependable'. It all means 'money'.

The brokers want to hear about the future of this accretion, about News Corp. 2000, what this enigmatic, adventurous, unorthodox tycoon sees beyond the dazzling dawn of the digital age. His vision is pure, unadulterated, wall-to-wall, 24-hour Murdochia.

'Our view is that the successful media company of the future is one that will touch consumers' lives throughout the day, in every phase of their lives,' he says. 'We have structured our company to meet those needs. We are reaching people from the moment they wake up until they fall asleep.

'We give them their morning weather and traffic reports through our television outlets around the world. We enlighten and entertain them with such newspapers as *The New York Post* and *The Times* in London over breakfast or as they take the train to work.

'We update their stock prices and give them the world's biggest news stories every day through such news channels as Fox or Sky News and their companion Internet sites ... When they get home in the evening, we entertain them with compelling, first-run entertainment on Fox or the day's biggest game on our broadcast, satellite and cable networks, or the best movies from 20th Century Fox Films, if they want to see a first-run movie.

'Before they go to bed, we give them the latest news. Then, hopefully, they can fall in to bed with one of our hundreds of new titles published every year through HarperCollins.'

And that's just the beginning. Murdoch sees the digital age, with its satellite services and cable services and broadband, interactive, multi-service services, as redefining the meaning of mass media. Diversity? Sure thing. How would you like your Rupert vision? Television? Newspaper? Film? Video? Internet? Telephone? Analog? Digital? Fox? Star? Sky? Soccer? Gridiron? Rugby League—oh, well, he's still working on that ...

Sydney Morning Herald, 8 October 1999

Global brands are the progeny of global media, those mostly US-based media conglomerates which ... have towered over the global market... [They are] the missionaries of our age, promoting the virtues of commercialism and the market loudly and incessantly through their profit-driven and advertising-supported enterprise and programming.

The Bulletin, 14 July 1998, p. 32

The spread of global communications technologies and global media empires has helped create a world of globalised culture. Barbie and the Lion King are as well known in Rio as they are in Perth or Hollywood. CNN brings us live coverage of the Superbowl and of missile strikes on Baghdad. Princess Diana's funeral becomes a globally televised ceremony of planetary grieving.

Wiseman, 1998, pp. 16–17

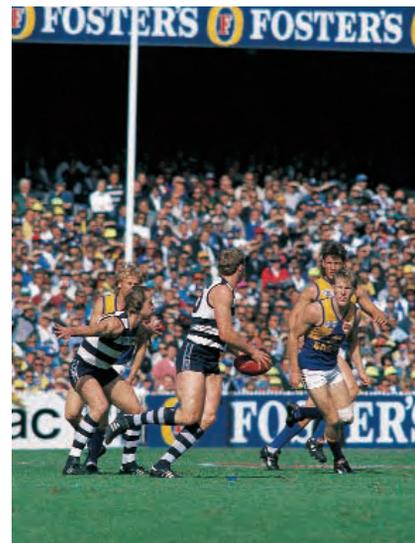


Figure 2.4.8 Corporate sponsorship plays an important role in a range of cultural and sporting activities.

The critical mass of teenagers—800 million in the world, the most there have ever been—with time and money to spend is one of the powerful engines of merging global cultures. Kids travel, they hang out, and above all they buy stuff.

E. Zwingle, *National Geographic*, August 1999, p. 17

sponsors of the Olympic Games. The exposure gained through such an event is enormous, as are the profits gained from this marketing opportunity.

Traditionally, advertisers tended to target two groups: children and what was referred to as the 'youth market' (11–19 year olds). There has, however, been a reclassification of 'youth' to include all those under 30. The reasons for this shift are many, but perhaps the most significant is the growing trend of this under-30s group not to leave home or marry until they are older. This, supposedly, leaves them with greater disposable income and savings available for the purchase of goods and services such as cars, travel, computers, sporting equipment, gym memberships and home furnishings. Also falling under this new 'youth market' category are Double-Income families with No KidS (DINKS).

Corporate executives dream of a global market made up of people with homogenised tastes and needs... Logos on bottles, boxes and labels are global banners, instantly recognisable by millions who could not tell you the colour of the UN flag.

Richard J. Barnet and John Cavanagh, in *D. C. Korten*, *When Corporations Rule the World*, *Earthscan*, London, 1995, p. 149

POKEMON: A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

The power of the media to create a global consumer market for a product is best illustrated by the way it promotes the merchandise developed for children. In the footsteps of Barbie, Power Rangers, Cabbage Patch dolls, Ninja Turtles, the Lion King and Toy Story comes Pokémon. No doubt, many others will follow.

The marketing of such merchandise represents a battle for children's hearts and parents' dollars. Increasingly, it involves a multimedia and interactive barrage



Figure 2.4.9 Pokémon mania: a global (media-induced) phenomena.

of promotion that seeks to capture the imagination of children. Because children now feel that they have to keep up with their peers, they have become increasingly fad-driven and consumer-oriented. Marketers are taking advantage of this trend. The children they are targeting are becoming younger and younger. Merchandising campaigns are usually, but not always, built around the release of a movie aimed at young children. The Pokémon phenomenon is an exception.

Pokémon started off in 1996 as Game Boy software. It has since exploded into a multimillion-dollar empire with a television cartoon series, movies, books, comics, music, videos, a huge range of toys and a card game that has children madly collecting and swapping. On the Internet there are well over 100 sites dedicated to Pokémon and at the height of its popularity it was the fourth most frequently used word in search engines.

By the end of 1999 Nintendo had sold well over \$50 million worth of Pokémon merchandise in Australia alone. So great was the demand that importers found it difficult to meet consumer demand. In an effort to placate frustrated consumers Nintendo switched from shipping in Pokémon cards to flying in 30-tonne batches monthly—but there was still a chronic shortage. Desperate kids were forced to put their names on waiting lists. Parents rushed from store to store in search of the merchandise that would fulfil their children's Christmas wishes.

ACTIVITIES

- 1 What role did the media and Internet play in the commercial success of Pokémon?
- 2 Select another example of fad-driven merchandise. Use the Internet to investigate its origin, the nature of the merchandise and how it is promoted.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 What allowed large corporations to play an increasingly prominent role in reshaping society?
- 2 What new industries emerged to promote the consumption of the goods and services produced by TNCs?
- 3 Outline the role played by the media in the integrated global economy.
- 4 Why are some people concerned by the concentration of media ownership and control?
- 5 What is the ethic underlying mass consumerism? Is such an opinion justified?
- 6 List some of the techniques that advertisers use to promote a product or service.
- 7 Explain why corporations such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's sponsor community related activities.
- 8
 - a Explain why advertisers have traditionally targeted the 'youth market'.
 - b How has this market been redefined in recent years?

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Most large retailers are TNCs. Use the Internet to find out about the operations of one TNC. Write a report outlining its business operations and its record on environmental and human rights issues.
- 2 Study the extract from the *Bulletin* on page 277. Explain why the media conglomerates are described as 'the missionaries of our age'.
- 3 Study the newspaper extract 'Every step you take, Rupert will be there' and then complete the following tasks:
 - a Outline Rupert Murdoch's vision for his global media network.
 - b As a class, discuss whether a media corporation should be allowed to exert such influence.
- 4 In your own words, explain the point that John Wiseman is making in the extract on page 277.
- 5 Take a class survey of the most memorable commercials. Consider what characteristics made them memorable. Also consider what image the commercial is trying to sell. As a consumer, would you be tempted to buy the product? Why or why not?

Sport

Sport is widely recognised as an important part of Australian culture. For many Australians, sport is tied up with the image we have of ourselves and the image we want the rest of the world to have of us. Sports stars often become popular heroes, sometimes placed on higher pedestals than film or rock stars. We watch and judge their performance keenly and share their triumphs and their failures, sometimes as if they were our own! For many, Australia's participation in international sporting events becomes an opportunity to express patriotism. Where sport is concerned, however, this appears to be an urge that is shared the world over; one only needs to look at international cricket or rugby matches to see evidence of this.

In Australia, sport was once considered to be the great 'leveller'. It symbolised equality between people by levelling differences and establishing what was once seen as a working class alternative to 'high culture'. Today, this is not so evident, particularly with the infiltration of sports from other countries and events such as the Olympic Games, which attract people from all classes in society.

What is apparent, however, is the subtle change in the variety of sports played in Australia. It is only within the past 10 years that certain sports, including baseball and basketball, have taken off. Today, players from the US National Basketball Association (NBA) are recognised worldwide because of a slick marketing campaign that has sold the game and their faces on everything from caps to bubble-gum packets. (See the box 'Sport: Just Another Fashion?'.) As a result, Australia has created its own Australian Basketball Federation (ABF) and has had some success in promoting players, such as Luke Longley and Andrew Gaze, to the US 'major league'. Like sponsorship deals, the 'buying' and 'selling' of players has become big business and not only in basketball. Once again, cultural integration through economic activity is at work here.

The merchandising associated with sport is also another readily identifiable indicator of cultural integration. Australian teenagers, in common with their peers around the world, wear clothing and caps emblazoned with the names, logos and colours of American basketball and football teams.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In 1995, when the 'Super League' war threatened to destroy the Australian Rugby League (ARL), the fight was not really about salaries or the **rationalisation** of clubs, but about who controlled the rights to televise the game via free-to-air and pay television.
- News Corp. now effectively controls Rugby League through its 50% stake in the ARL. It also has the exclusive rights to broadcast matches for the next 25 years. News Ltd used its influence to have the competition reduced to just 14 teams.
- The official National Rugby League web site can be found at www.nrl.com.au; the official Australian Football League web site can be found at www.afl.com.au; and the official Rugby Union web site is www.rugbyheaven.com.

SPORT: JUST ANOTHER FASHION?

During the 1990s a barrage of American sports marketing saw Australian teenagers adopt a new pantheon of sporting heroes with names like Shaq O'Neil, Dennis Rodman and Michael Jordan.

The American basketball, baseball and ice hockey leagues aggressively marketed their games through licensed sportswear ranges and trading card collections. At the height of the mania, the giant entertainment company Time Warner released *Space Jam*, a film based on Nike shoe commercials and starring Bugs Bunny and Michael Jordan—yet another demonstration of the

growing relationship between entertainment and advertising.

In Australia, backyard basketball hoops became as common as the Hills Hoist. Skateboards and in-line skates became popular recreational pursuits and helped determine the type of clothing that teenagers defined as fashionable. For many older Australians, the reversed baseball cap became a symbol of American cultural domination. Despite these trends, American sports have made little headway in securing commercial television coverage in Australia. This can be partly explained by the response of

Australian sporting organisations. They now aggressively promote their own teams and sporting heroes using techniques perfected in the United States.

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Working in groups, brainstorm the impact of American sports marketing on Australian teenagers. Share the key points of your group's discussion.
- 2 Discuss the reasons why American sports have made little headway in securing commercial television coverage in Australia.

AUSTRALIAN SPORT: IS NOTHING SACRED?

Australian sport is increasingly dominated by the three Ms: multi-nationals, marketers and managers. Tradition, loyalty and community heritage count for little. Sport is now a product to be sold like any other.

Players are bought and sold on the transfer market and have been transformed into human billboards. They carry advertising on their clothing and sporting equipment. Shane Warne wears a gold Nike swoosh in his ear. Sporting personalities often have a number of corporate sponsorships, and product-endorsement agreements are negotiated by their management team.

Naming rights to stadiums are for sale together with their playing surface, now decorated with corporate logos that appear in perfect perspective on television screens. Media companies have even experimented with 'virtual' advertising—the advertiser's

message being temporarily 'projected' onto any surface, including spectators.

Whole sporting events have been 'hijacked' by large corporations. Nothing is sacred. The Melbourne Cup is now the Fosters Melbourne Cup. In 2001 it will become the Lion Nathan Melbourne Cup. Cricket's historic Sheffield Shield has been replaced by the Pura Milk Cup. We also have the Ansett Cup (Australian Rules), The Louis Vuitton Cup (sailing), the Mercantile Mutual Cup (one-day cricket) and the Ford Australian Open Tennis, and so on.

One outcome of this process is a huge increase in what critics have labelled 'visual pollution'. Sporting teams have become advertising billboards and the players salespeople of everything from soft drinks to mobile phones. (See figure 2.4.10.) Sydney-to-Hobart yachts are floating billboards, with no name other than that of the

corporate sponsor—a strategy that ensures maximum exposure of the sponsor's name and product.

It is not only the sporting personalities that can be hired, bought and sold. Clubs too are now a product. They can be created to fit a corporate vision and they can be destroyed when they no longer fit into a marketing strategy (Rugby League's Perth Reds, Adelaide Rams and Hunter Mariners, for example). In Rugby League, many older, community based clubs have been compelled to merge. If they fail to comply with the new corporate vision they are forced from the competition.

Two important factors are at play in this process:

- 1 Demographic change.** Larger disposable incomes, shorter working weeks, earlier retirement, longer life expectancy and healthier lifestyles have boosted the global demand for sport.
- 2 The communications revolution.** The ever more sophisticated television coverage has made top sport—and the advertising, sponsorship and marketing that accompany it—available to a wider audience.

The future of sport is closely linked to that of the global media networks. (See pages 291–4.) Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. (an Australian listed company), which already owns the US Dodgers baseball team, recently tried to take over Manchester United, England's top soccer club.

The amount of money involved is huge. Australia's top sportspeople now command million-dollar contracts.



Figure 2.4.10 Sydney's Cronulla Sharks have over 150 corporate sponsors, including Pepsi, Toyota, Carlton and United and FOX8.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Outline the role of sport in defining the Australian image.
- 2 How has the role of sport changed in Australian society?
- 3 Explain how Australian sport has been influenced by the sport of other countries.