

Globalization and the Contemporary World

- I. Return to Debates on Modernization and Globalization**
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Current Debates Over Modernization and Globalization

Proponents

- **Modernization is inevitable.**
- **Advances in science, technology and trade benefit global peoples.**
- **Creates higher standard of living worldwide.**
- **Creates interconnected, interdependent world.**

Critics

- **Modernization is western ideology imposed on the world.**
- **Advances in science, technology and trade inherently unequal.**
- **Creates poverty and dependency among working poor worldwide.**
- **Creates world class system.**

Case Study: Wal-Mart

- **Wal-Mart is a model for new global company.**
- **Multi-billion dollar consumer business utilizing “outsourced” cheaper labor in Asia and Latin America.**
- **Global supply chain. Look for cheapest location to produce consumer goods**
- **Whole regions dependent on Wal-Mart production. Compete to produce for Wal-Mart.**
- **Wal-Mart determines specifications for production and location for production.**
- **U.S. stores can price lower for consumer goods. (Buyer-driven global economy)**



**U.S. consumers
at Wal-Mart**

**Wal-Mart
Protest**



Anti Wal-Mart Cartoon



A Flat World? Questions and Debates on Globalization

- Thomas Friedman's *The World is Flat (2005)* inspired national debate on globalization.
- He argues that global competition creates "flat world" where U.S. companies and workers compete on more level playing field with the rest of the world.
- Is the world flattened or even more rigidly hierarchical by wealth?
- Who benefits by this global flattening? Who is hurt?
- Are cultural differences also flattened and are we heading for one "McAmerica" worldwide?
- What are the implications for U.S. jobs and U.S. prosperity?