

## [Globalization drives cultural diversity](#) [1]

Written by [Sam Bowman](#) [2] | Tuesday 25 June 2013

Donald Boudreaux recently reposted [this 2010 essay on the impact of globalization on culture](#) [3].

Globalization is not about 'just stuff', he says, it's about increasing diversity by allowing different parts of different cultures to mix:

A century ago, there were no internationally franchised restaurants in Paris, France or, for that matter, in Paris, Texas. A century ago, residents of neither Omaha, Nebraska nor Birmingham, England could find sushi restaurants near their homes; today, sushi restaurants are all over the Western world. A century ago, blue jeans were not the international fashion that they are today. A century ago, the typical man's business suit worn by New York lawyers and London bankers was not widely worn in Africa and Asia, as it is today. In many ways, global commerce has indeed made the world more homogeneous.

But look more closely. While the differences between Paris, France and Paris, Texas are fewer than they were in the past, the cultural richness of each of these places today is far greater than it was just a few years ago. For a resident of Paris, Texas, circa 2010, the richness of the cultural smorgasbord available to him or her right at home is vast. A Texan can stay in town and dine on Vietnamese, Italian, or Greek food?or on barbeque. A Texan can listen to German symphonic music or medieval chants or Irish dance music or Edith Piaf?or country and western. A Texan can buy French neckties, English raincoats, and Italian scarves?and cowboy boots. Likewise a Parisian can choose croissants or New-York-style bagels. A mere century ago?even thirty years ago?the cultural diversity of both places was much less than it is today.

It's easy to be annoyed at the 'touristification' of a place like Thailand, but what that really means is more people get to experience somewhere they would only be able to imagine visiting fifty years ago. Perhaps it's no coincidence that this complaint usually comes from the people who can most easily afford foreign holidays and expensive exotic meals in their home cities. I'm tempted to say that they should [check their privilege](#) [4].

Boudreaux's piece is worth [reading in full](#) [3].

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