Lesson Title: Introduction to Imperialism, Case Study: McDonald’s in India

Grade(s): 9  
Time Frame: 3 class periods

Planning and Preparation:
The intent of this lesson is to bridge a current issue/topic with one more historical and less likely on student radar. The more modern issue of “cultural imperialism” lends itself well as a high interest introduction to imperialism. Who doesn’t have some experience with McDonald’s? Ideally, students will see that the current world is in many ways similar to the past, and many of the discussions of today are no different than many of the past. Some attention will be needed for academic vocabulary (listed below) so that students can make sense of the articles and graphs. Also, this topic would lend itself well to either a Socratic Seminar or Philosophical Chairs. The articles would also lend themselves well to a review of the concept of Fact vs. Opinion.

Materials/Equipment Needed:
• Copies of readings for students

Learning Standards:
Common Core:
RH.9  Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary resources.
WHST.9  Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Social Science Content Standards:
HS.6  Analyze ideas critical to the understanding of history, including, but not limited to: populism, progressivism, isolationism, imperialism, communism, environmentalism, liberalism, fundamentalism, racism, ageism, classism, conservatism, cultural diversity, feminism, and sustainability.

HS.9  Identify historical and current events, issues, and problems when national interests and global interest have been in conflict, and analyze the values and arguments on both sides of the conflict.

Rationale:
Imperialism is a topic that is well suited for analysis in terms of benefits and harms, advantages and disadvantages. By comparing different perspectives students will come to understand that very rarely are issues completely black or white – there is often a great deal of gray.

Lesson Learning Target:
I can read informational text and analyze graphs to identify possible advantages and disadvantages of imperialism.

Academic Vocabulary:
Imperialism
Cultural imperialism
Import
Export
Franchise
Fact vs. Opinion

**Sequence of Lesson Activities:**

**Day 1**

1. Open by showing a McDonald’s commercial. One suggestion is: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iD-mGyReOJg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iD-mGyReOJg) although there are dozens to be found on youtube and other sights. Ask students what the purpose of the commercial is and whether they think it is effective. This would work well as a writing prompt with students sharing responses afterward.

2. Introduce the subject matter for the next two days: the expansion of McDonald’s and other fast food restaurants into other countries around the world, whether this should be considered imperialism, and what the possible benefits and/or damages might be.

3. Define the word imperialism – a simple definition is really all that’s needed at this time. Explain that cultural imperialism is a term some use to describe one culture having undue or maybe negative influence on another.

4. Distribute the first article: McDonald’s India franchisee to open . . . Have students read the article and make a list of all benefits of this expansion in India (for the US as well as for India).

5. If you are choosing to incorporate a discussion of fact and opinion as well, have them underline statements of fact and circle statements of opinion.

6. Discuss their lists of benefits. It would be helpful to generate a class list and leave it posted to refer to in future lessons.

7. Closure: ask students to respond to this prompt – From the perspective of the Indians, do you think expanding McDonald’s franchises is a good thing? Tell them they will explore this idea more tomorrow.

**Day 2**

1. Open by presenting the data from yesterday’s closure – how many said this would be good and how many said it would be bad.

2. Distribute the article titled McDonald’s Cultural Imperialism . . . Review definitions of imperialism and cultural imperialism. Explain that not everyone see “cultural imperialism” as a negative, although many do.

3. Ask them to read the article – this one is full of opinion (and you may want to draw attention to that), underline fact, and circle opinion.

4. As they read they should make a list of possible harm that could come about.
because more fast food restaurants are built in India (or any developing country).

5. Compare these lists to the class list from yesterday. This should generate quite a bit of discussion. Might want to thin about how best to facilitate this – maybe a fish bowl or small group.

6. Closure: Ask students to respond to this prompt – which article was most persuasive for you, the first or the second? Why?

### Day 3

1. Review the comments from yesterday’s closure. Explain that today they will be looking at the issue from a historical perspective. Distribute or in some way display the graphs showing the numbers for imports and exports of cloth during the 19th century.

2. Ask students to work in partners to make statements of fact based on what they see.

3. Then ask them what they can infer from these graphs. Ideally, they arrive at the idea that this relationship between Great Britain and India was of great economic benefit to Great Britain and caused economic harm to India.

4. Ask them to consider the questions at the end of the documents. To the extent time allows, discuss these as a class.

5. Present the following frame and ask students to use what they have learned to complete it:
   
   The expansion of McDonald’s and other fast food franchises in India should be encouraged/discouraged because: Reason 1, Reason 2, Reason 3.

6. If time permits, have them develop this into a full opinion paragraph or mini-essay. Collect these and assess to determine the level of student understanding.

7. If three class periods is too much to dedicate to this topic, the 2nd chunk could be omitted.

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**Questions for discussion:**

- See end of handouts for sample list

**Check for Understanding**

- Written responses to prompts
- Verbal responses to class discussion
- Class generated lists
- Student completion of frame and paragraph
McDonald's India franchisee to open 30 stores in 2011

By Sumeet Chatterjee and Neha Singh

MUMBAI (Reuters) February 16, 2011 – McDonald's Corporation plans to set up 30 new restaurants in the southern and western parts of India this year, as part of the restaurant chain's expansion plans in Asia's third-largest economy.

Speaking to Reuters in an interview, the company’s Vice Chairman for India, Amit Jatia, said the restaurant would invest $111 million in India over the next three to four years.

Global retail and restaurant chains have been looking to aggressively expand in India, where more than 60 percent of the population, or 700 million people, are under the age of 30 and make a prime target for fast-food chains.

McDonald's, like other fast-food chains, has adapted its menu to suit palates and dietary habits in a country where a significant portion of the population is vegetarian.

On an entirely beef-free menu, the Indian version of the Big Mac, called the "Maharaja Mac," uses chicken instead.

The chain also offers wraps stuffed with paneer -- the Indian version of cottage cheese, a "McVeggie" burger and a "McAloo Tikki" burger, which uses potato patties.

McDonald's, which competes with other U.S. rivals such as Yum Brands and Dominos Pizza in India, opened 33 new restaurants in the country in 2010.

McDonald’s will have 250 restaurants in three to four years in the two regions, up from 106 now, Jatia said, as it looks to tap growth in a country where the fast food industry is growing at about three times the rate of the overall economy.

In November, Yum Brands, which owns the KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell chains, said it expected to grow revenue in India by 35 to 40 percent in 2011 as it expanded into smaller cities.
Many cultures around the world are gradually disappearing due to the overwhelming influence of corporate and cultural America . . .

McDonald’s has become the icon of American cultural power and the epitome of the Americanization of the rest of the world. The message of globalized McDonald’s is "If you eat like us, you are going to be like us.” When in fact by eating like Americans, people around the world are only being inspired to look more like Americans in regards to obesity. But yet, McDonald’s, like many American corporations, has convinced themselves that despite its flaws, American culture is superior and therefore its influence is only beneficial to other, “lesser” cultures.

Food is an important element in defining culture and can be seen to be the oldest global carrier of culture. According to William Gould’s book McDonald’s: Business in Action, “before the introduction of McDonald’s overseas “fast food was almost unknown. McDonald’s was the first company to try to export America’s love of fast food and changes in eating habits of other nations.” When taking a look at food from a cultural perspective, it should be understood how drastic changes on beliefs and consumption of food could actually diminish some of the traditional beliefs of an entire culture. In fact, the replacement of non-traditional food over traditional food has the most detrimental effects on third-world culture traditions. For example in India, the cow is considered to be sacred as part of its religion but the traditionalized staple food of McDonald’s is the Big Mac.

McDonald’s media has been a driving force of this cultural imperialism. Media imperialism is a theory based upon an over-concentration of mass media from larger nations as a significant variable in negatively affecting smaller nations . . . In relation to McDonald’s media, the commercials and advertising promote the staple “fast food” way of living. However, for most cultures, this is promoting a movement away from family oriented dining to individual dining. While American culture focuses on eating as a necessity, most other cultures view dining as a social experience with religion playing an important role in its practice. McDonald’s advertising’s push of American
culture pushes individualism and independence upon cultures that traditionally favor harmony and family orientation.

Large American corporations, like McDonald’s, are aware of their impact on changing social conditions of other countries and cultures, yet still insist that these changes are only improving the culture. The trouble lies deeper than the fact that America thinks they are superior. Many may ask how does this happen? How does America convince so many other cultures that it is superior? The answer is simple, marketing. Whether attempting to sell an item, a brand, or an entire culture, marketers have always been able to successfully associate American products with modernity and necessity in the minds of consumers worldwide. American marketers unceasingly succeed in convincing the rest of the world that the American way of life is a superior life, the happy life, the life that you’ll love. For example, let’s take a look at McDonald’s “I’m Lovin It” campaign. Through the mind of McDonald’s chief marketer, “The ‘I’m lovin’ it’ campaign is a new way of connecting with our customers,” said Bill Lamar, senior vice president and chief marketing officer, McDonald's USA. "It will rekindle the emotional bond our customers have with McDonald's through a campaign that depicts how people live, what they love about life and what they love about McDonald's." However, the flaw in attempting to link McDonalds with other cultures is apparent. McDonald’s is not a byproduct of other cultures’ way of living; it is a byproduct of cultural imperialism. The emotional bond other cultures have with McDonalds is purely imperialized. What many of these cultures love about life has no relation to what they love about McDonald’s.

Exports of Indian cloth to Britain are measured in pieces

Exports of British cloth to India are measured in yards

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/empire/g2/cs4/g2cs4s2c.htm
What happened to the fabric industry in India over time? Who benefitted? Who probably did not benefit?

How might the expansion of fast food into India be a benefit to people there?

How might the expansion of fast food into India be a cost to people there?

Overall, do you think more fast food restaurants in India will do more to help or harm the people of India? Why?