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From an American Dream to a Global Dream

By Anamika Twyman-Ghoshal and Danielle Rousseau

“If, as I have said, the things already listed were all we had to contribute, America would have made no distinctive and unique gift to mankind. But there has been also the American dream that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement.”¹

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The above quotation is the general definition of the concept of the ‘American Dream’ which appears in a 1931 history book authored by James Truslow Adams. Although the concept dates back to earlier times, this proves to be the most quoted definition. The above description of the American Dream manages to capture the ubiquitous notion of the existence of an opportunity of success for all. Over time the idea of the American Dream has spread around the world. Most are familiar with the American Dream as a promise for people in poverty stricken nations, one offering escape in the hopes of a better future. However, in this chapter we argue that there has been another propagation of the American Dream, namely an adoption of this concept internationally characterized specifically by a hope to achieve and succeed, irrespective of geography. We have called this translation of the American Dream a Global Dream.

In this chapter, we attempt to briefly analyze the effect of the adoption of the American Dream especially through the 20th century phenomenon of globalization. We first trace the development of the American Dream, explaining how this intrinsically virtuous idea has not had the desired effect but has instead been construed in an unexpected and deleterious way. We next look at how it has been exported and implemented around the world through media and the global market.

In our analysis we have utilized a popular criminological theory, strain/anomie theory. Anomie was an idea introduced by Emile Durkheim, and developed in light of American sociology by Robert King Merton and expanded on by later theorists. This theory is then combined with the phenomenon of globalization, as found in discussions by Nikos Passas in his conception of a Global Anomie Theory. The conclusion attempts to make some policy recommendations based on a universal deference for human rights, a respect for differences and good governance. Overall, such recommendations represent an attempt to reflect the core values of the American Dream, as contrasted with the subsequent development of a more materially and gain focused conception.

The American Promise

Throughout history America has been known as the land of opportunity. The sheer size of land available for settlement proved to be enough incentive to those who were brave enough to leave their native shores. This opportunity was unique and not available anywhere else at the time. Even the early settlers were driven by goals of reform, trying to leave behind political struggle and man-made doctrine. As the new nation matured from strict puritanical stoicism, transcendental thinkers such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson essayed principles of optimism, idealism and progress offering the prospect of freedom and equality. Thoreau echoed a simple idealism suggesting that all Americans had the capacity to pursue ideals, a conception which resonated in such statements as “This world is but canvas to our imaginations. . . Dreams are the touchstones of our characters.” (Thoreau, 1849).

The American promise came to represent the potential that upward social mobility would not be limited to those that were wealthy or of the upper classes. Through both boom and bust the American Dream continued to develop and strengthen. The post World War II period heralded nuclear family ideals in an era of progress, development and American optimism. David Brogan, a British historian, in his 1945 book *American Character* described the many facets of this optimism and his work stands as an example of international interest in the American model.

However, with the advent of the 20th century, things became a bit more complicated and taking a closer look at this ‘opportunity for each’ it could be seen that opportunity was not quite as universal as once believed. In reality, opportunity was neither statistically or substantively equivalent in its availability. A single example can be conceptualized in the plight of the African American population. It is estimated that between the 17th to the 19th century 12 million Africans were shipped to America under the system of chattel slavery. Despite the alleged universality of the American Dream, an entire populous of the nation was denied access to equal opportunities. African Americans were not granted the vote till 1870, yet, even after such point their access to opportunity was limited through institutions including Jim Crow, ghettoization, and disparate imprisonment practices

(Wacquant, 2002).

Economy and the American Dream

With the advent of modernity came division of labor. This created differentiation and specialization of tasks within the community. In a market where individuals are responsible for different services and tasks, there is an underlying assumption of mutual reciprocity. Reciprocity is a phenomenon that develops irrespective of any guiding norms. In general, economic equality grew out of the capitalistic notion that the market itself creates equality. From this perspective, the American Dream took on a specifically economic meaning. It is this economic focus on that comprises the foundation of the work of Merton.

In 1938 Robert King Merton wrote 'Social Structure and Anomie' which examined the diversity and opportunity of American society through a more critical lens. Having grown up in Philadelphia, Merton was able to observe the struggling society from within; himself becoming one of those who were able to fulfill the promise of the American Dream. Merton's work drew inspiration from Emile Durkheim's notion of anomie. Emile Durkheim used the word 'anomie' both in his 1893 work 'Division of Labor in Society' and in his 1897 work 'Suicide', to describe the condition of changing norms and increased division of labor.

Here, according to Durkheim, anomie represents change in guiding norms in society, which shift modes of control. Durkheim examined periods of transformation and upheaval in history, including economic upheavals, revolutions and times of increased prosperity. He explicated change, noticing that during such times there existed increased dissatisfaction, conflict and upheaval. Durkheim believed that humans needed social practices and collective obligations to sustain order.

Merton espoused the idea of anomie, but he did not see it as rooted in the waning of the rules created by society, as Durkheim had described it. Instead Merton proposed that the individual level effect of strain was created by the unlimited economic goals fostered by society. As mentioned, Merton's consideration was directed to the United States. He focused specifically on the ideal of the American Dream, an ideal that encouraged all persons to achieve and fostered the promise that the only limits to achievement were ones own abilities and potential. Merton was discussing the increasingly overbearing importance of the economic success aspect of the American Dream. In the socially constructed and collectively proposed conception of the American Dream people were induced to strive toward goals suggested to be obtainable by all, but which fundamentally were unrealistic. Moreover, what Merton explained was that these unlimited goals were not coupled with unlimited means, that is there were peripheral factors that did in fact limit achievement.

He noted that the stratification of social classes in American, as in most societies, did not create universal opportunities. Further, institutional means differed by race, class and gender. The effect of this imbalance was that people would be driven into a selection of adaptations to this situation of strain represented by the disjunction between goals and means. These adaptations often included the use of unsanctioned and/or unethical means to achieve goals. Further, the disjunction of delineated goals and acceptable means to such goals translates into a significantly limited emphasis on the guiding norms in the society in general. As individuals become more 'strained' they vary in their ways of adaptation depending on the level to which they have internalized the goals they aspire to and how attached they are to these ambitions. Simultaneously the level depends on the availability of the means to achieve these ambitions. The level of strain felt by the individuals in the society also reflects back on the society and the level of anomie within it. Although Merton's work primarily focused on lower classes his theory application was not restricted to the poor.

Merton explained that individuals utilize five types of adaptation. *Conformity* occurs when both cultural goals and institutional means are internalized, and an individual utilizes the legitimate means to attain the goals. Such adaptation is witnessed when an individual has ambitions and works through legitimate means to attain them. If the goals are internalized but the means are not the individual will resort to *innovation* to achieve. Example of this may be where the individuals reject legal means of attaining the goals and resorts to alternatives, such as crime. Such adaptation need not be illegal, innovation includes those that are able to tailor systems to their advantage, recognize loopholes or develop new methods. Those that have internalized the institutional means but not the goals may fall into a pattern of, what Merton called *ritualism*. An example of this would be a pen pusher or bureaucrat. There is no illegality here, just parrot fashion compliance.

In the case where neither the goals nor the means are internalized, the individual may retreat from society altogether, in an adaptation which Merton referred to as *retreatism*. This adaptation is witnessed in an individual who has given up and resorted to alcohol or drugs, perhaps has become homeless. Finally, those that refuse to internalize either the cultural goals or the institutional means will be those that incite *rebellion*. By this process, those individuals seek to set a new set of goals and means. With this classification of adaptation, Merton categorized radicals and revolutionaries, as the inspiration for their adaptation is based on a wish to change society as a whole, not just their own lives. This category includes those that are not instrumentally motivated.

Does the American Dream promote deviance?

In 1994 Steven F. Messner and Richard Rosenfeld published *Crime and the American Dream* which took Merton's strain/anomie theory and developed what is known as Institutional Anomie Theory. In this book, Messner and Rosenfeld examine why the crime rate is so high in the United States. Using the concept of an imbalance introduced by Merton and Durkheim before him, the authors here explain the historical circumstances that have fostered such disjunction in the United States. They expose the American Dream as "a broad cultural ethos that entails a commitment to the goal of material success, to be pursued by everyone in society, under conditions of open, individual competition. The American Dream has both an evaluative and a cognitive dimension associated with it. People to accept the desirability of pursuing the goal of material success and they are encouraged to believe that the chances of realizing the Dream are sufficiently high to justify a continued commitment to the cultural goal.

These beliefs and commitments in many respects define what it means to be an en-cultured member of our society. The ethos refers quite literally to the *American* [original italics] dream." (Messner & Rosenfeld, 2007:6) Messner and Rosenfeld build upon Merton's narrower perspective of the American Dream, focusing almost exclusively on the economic aspect. It is this unrealistic goal expectation that Messner and Rosenfeld blame for the high rate of crime in America, a country that is universally considered economically stable but has a crime rate that is much higher than in any other industrialized nation. "The thesis of this book is that the American Dream itself and the normal social conditions engendered by it are deeply implicated in the problem of crime." (Messner & Rosenfeld, 2007:6)

Messner and Rosenfeld explain how monetary rewards are dominant and have overshadowed the importance of non-economic roles, specifically family, school and polity. Not only are the non-economic functions devalued but they are subservient and built to accommodate the economic demands. Moreover they elucidate how economic standards have penetrated these institutional domains, including the educational system, employment, politics, and the family. Even the underlying idea of universalism, that makes the American Dream so attractive and even righteous, has ramifications. The American Dream encourages all, regardless of social origin or location, to strive for monetary success. However, the monetary success is not equally achievable in a society where there is social stratification. Moreover, noncompeting groups, including for example teachers or stay at home mothers, are considered unsuccessful and do not command the same respect as those that strive for financial betterment.

Specific examples of the intrusion of standards of the American Dream can be witnessed in the educational system's focus on job attainment versus enlightenment and education *per se*, employment standards that dictate child care and maternity/paternity leave, and the lack of a strong safety net or means for social welfare. Further, according to the American Dream, political agendas and businesses focus on the economy, which places pressures on corporate employees to prioritize work requirements over family values. As this development progresses ideals such as parenting or volunteer service are devalued in our society (Messner and Rosenfeld, 2007). Despite the honorable ambitions of the American Dream, in the American society the wealthiest one percent of Americans hold between 20 to 30 percent of all assets in the country. An Economist article put it very aptly stating "a long ladder if fine, but it must have rungs" (The Economist, 2006: 13).

What Messner and Rosenfeld have argued is that the American Dream, to be effective, needs winners and losers, without the loser there is no perspective for the winner. Intrinsic in such conceptualization is not an ambition of universal egalitarianism, just the aspiration towards it. Market economies rely on what the American Dream fosters, namely consumerism, an emphasis on that which is material. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this idea is the fact that that aspiration becomes so prominent that the means to achieving it are overshadowed, and as a result, distinctions between what is right and wrong are not at the heart of the concept. Therefore, the combination of the strain caused by the inability to achieve the monetary success goals dictated by the main stream society and the low emphasis on the means to achieve, have created an environment that fosters a variety of adaptations - legitimate or illegitimate.

Looking at the crime trend in the United States over time, we can examine if this theory is confirmed. After World War II and through the 1940s and the 1950s, the crime rate was low. However, in the 1960s, during a time when there was a low level of economic strain, the crime rate begun to surge. Gary LaFree analyzed this in light of Merton's theory in his book *Losing Legitimacy* (1998). He explained this phenomenon through differentiating between two types of economic stress, absolute and relative. LaFree draws on a concept that Merton himself introduced reference-group analysis. However, Merton himself did not relate it to his anomie theory (Passas, 1997:63), this was done by subsequent theorists including Nikos Passas and Gary LaFree. LaFree explains that absolute economic stress is defined as actual poverty. Comparatively, relative economic stress leads a person to "emphasize how one's individual or group of individuals is doing compared to other individuals or groups", referring instead to economic inequality (LaFree, 1998: 119).

With this LaFree explains the 1960s anomaly, namely that despite economic growth, trust in the institutions of the country had dropped. In the early post-war years the family was structured in a traditional manner, women were at home while men were the bread winners. Politically there was a sense of triumph; the United States had been involved in a war (World War II) which was seen as a victory of good over the evils of fascism. In the 1960s this had changed, the country was wrought with political activity such as the civil rights movement, anti-Vietnam war protests, and the assassinations of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King.

LaFree explained that the three key institutions; political (government, legal bodies, military, etc.), economical (physical and social needs) and familial (family and education) are key to instilling confidence and trust in the society. In order for individuals to believe in the lawfulness of the society the institutions need to have legitimacy. As legitimacy declines it has a distinctive effect on the ability of communities to control their members. Although legitimacy does not derive solely from economic influences (see Bellah et al., 1996), one can see how institutions do play a significant role in building trust.

In light of the preceding discussion we can see the importance of institutions has become increasingly apparent as white collar crimes have increasingly been featured in the news. However what is often overlooked is the crime that is perpetrated below the legal radar. An example can be witnessed in the Dalkon Shield case (Perry & Dawson, 1985). In this case, Chap Stick manufactured and sold a contraceptive device despite known evidence that such device could be harmful to the health of women. Concerns of profit and marketing issues such as male sensitivity problems reigned over the ignored issues of public health. Concerns were ignored and important testing went undone. Ultimately this illustrates how powerful corporations can dominate, and the public good becomes subservient to economic concerns.

Globalization - towards a unified world?

From the preceding discussion we can see how the American Dream has evolved into an economic scope, which in turn constitutes a deleterious disjunction of goals, and means for such goals, within American society. However, as society becomes far more international in scope, and the market more global in breath, one can begin to question the increasing attractiveness of the American Dream. As American culture, standards and principles are exported on a global scale, so too is the potential for the exportation of discrepancies between delineated goals and obtainable means but on a far greater scale. The proliferation of mass media, corporate advertisement, and the availability of the internet place the seemingly idealistic aspects of the American Dream on a global market, without providing the means or safety mechanisms for addressing the anomic disparity that can and will result.

The term globalization refers to the concept of the unification of the regions of the world in terms of polity, economy, culture, society and even religion. This unification is largely attributed to the advances in technology, such as information, communication and transportation. In 1983 Theodore Levitt wrote an article in the Harvard Business Review about "The globalization of markets" where he popularized the term 'globalization' in the context of the economy. Levitt specifically discouraged companies from conceptualizing the international market as being comprised of various regions, suggesting that production should not take account of regional variances or tailor products and solutions accordingly.

Instead he explained that "a powerful force drives the world toward a converging commonality, and -that force is technology. It has proletarianized communication, transport, and travel. It has made isolated places and impoverished peoples eager for modernity's allurements. Almost everyone everywhere wants all the things they have heard about, seen, or experienced via the new technologies." (Levitt, 1983:92) What Levitt was proposing is that companies need to focus on creating one universally attractive and standardized product that can be marketed to the world as a whole. He heralded the end of the multinational commercial world, and suggested the potential emergence of a global as opposed to a multinational corporation. A global corporation does not operate in a number of countries adjusting its products and practices to the culture and society of each individual nation but instead constitutes a single entity that spans the major regions of the world, producing a product that is sold universally and at the same relatively low cost. Levitt states "Nobody takes scarcity lying down; everybody wants more. . . The median is usually money." (Levitt, 1983:96)

Hand in hand with this economic trend of globalization, is the trend of libertarianism. Libertarianism is a political movement that stipulates that governments should not control economies and that the economy needs to be decentralized, as posited by economists such as Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek. Writing after the experience of centralized economies and tightly controlled nations run by dictators like Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini, they advocated for a free market. They believed that a free market would in turn sustain freedom and rational allocation of private goods, explaining that government controlled economies would be unable to successfully distribute resources. What we have witnessed more recently is a change from dependency to individualism. With this individualism, we have seen a push towards free markets. This includes privatization, free competition, and free enterprise all which required deregulation and a move of the state from center stage to

back stage role. Resultantly, blame for unemployment, poverty and inequality is placed with the individual.

Nikos Passas begun to analyze the sociology of globalization and the economics of neo-liberalization or what he terms 'global neo-liberalism' from the perspective of a criminologist (for the economic impact of global neo-liberalism, see Passas, 2000:23). He defines neo-liberalization as "an economic and political school of thought on the relations between the state on the one hand, and citizens and world of trade and commerce on the other.... Policies of deregulation, privatization of state assets, and removal of tariffs implemented the doctrine that the state should get out of the way of free enterprise" (Passas, 2000:21). Moreover Passas looks at global neo-liberalization in light of the two Mertonian concepts of anomie and reference group theory (Passas, 1999). He was concerned not with the American society but instead expanded the theory's application to a global level, creating his Global Anomie Theory.

Global Anomie Theory contributes to the development of previous works in two fundamental ways. First, through the incorporation of reference group theory, which explains that the application of anomie theory extends beyond application to those who are poor. People in all walks of life, whatever profession, class and level of wealth can succumb to deviance. Desires do not stop as people attain a certain level of wealth or achievement; they are extenuated to new goals which are strived for with equal vigor. The American Dream perpetuates. The second critical development is the existence of deviance due to anomie but without strain.

Here Passas explained that when a deviant adaptation to strain proves successful, that is resists control measures, others may begin to adopt the same behavior even without specific experience of the strain that induced the original individual or group to resort to such activity. The behavior becomes normalized. This effect can be seen in corporate crimes, where practices become enshrined in the corporate ethos, and resultantly, as new employees join the company, they adopt the same behaviors. Illustrations of such behaviors can be witnessed in examples ranging from stealing from the office supply closet to forgery.

The reality of the 'Global Dream'

The advent of the new technology, communication, information and transportation has made the world a smaller place, with some even professing that now "the earth is flat" (Levitt, 1983:100) by which Levitt implies a reduction of differences across the globe. The world is connected in ways that before were not thought possible. Information is dispersed around the globe at incredible speed, not only through global media conglomerates, but also through the World Wide Web. Goods, services and ideas cross borders with greater ease today than ever before, making for a global milieu that never sleeps. Accordingly, the concept of the American Dream with its unique promise of upward social mobility did not go unnoticed. It is exported daily with audiences around the world getting doses with each new American sitcom or the newest advert from a popular American chain publicized on local television channels. American ideals professing that one size fits all are distributed suggesting that the same economic model will work in each and every country and the world overall.

Through globalization, the concept of the American Dream has permeated to distant shores. Irrespective of wealth or poverty, this promise of prosperity has been adopted eagerly. Together with the neo-liberal movement, where especially the global and the cyber markets have evolved with little supervision, we have seen a move from enlightened self-interest to the reality of pure self-interest. Enlightened self interest is acting to further not just a myopic satisfaction but a group's interest, which ultimately will serve their own self-interest better, due to increased cooperation, efficiency and reciprocity, as well as decreased conflict.

What this has meant is that coupled with the determination for economic growth, there has been a lag or even a complete deficiency in the development of social safety nets, not only to control the activity of individuals, groups and corporation but also to catch those that fall through the cracks. Concepts such as the welfare state, education and pension schemes have not been as eagerly adopted as the resolve to achieve wealth. As the Global Dream becomes more entrenched in the collective psyche of the inhabitants of the world, the discrepancies and inequalities that exist become more prominent. Whereas the Global Dream is meant to unite the people, in effect what has happened is that it has polarized the world by class. Global anomie theory explains that from this asymmetry between goals and means in conjunction with the liberalization of the global market and the weakness of governing authorities, opportunities for exploitation and victimization become available. What this in effect creates is a localized and even generalized crisis of legitimacy in the institutions upon which the people rely. Quite simply put it is a question of good governance, or rather a lack thereof.

Concrete examples of Mertonian adaptations are witnessed on a global scale, with one such example observed in the worldwide business of pharmaceuticals. As Silverstein and Taylor (2004) suggest, the pharmaceutical industry constitutes a high-profit high-growth industry and is in fact the highest legally grossing industry currently in existence. However, the negative impacts of this economically and politically driven industry are felt on both a national and international scale. Examples of such impacts abound. Tax revenue is used to develop drugs without financial benefit to either the taxpayers or drug buyers. The United States pharmaceutical industry maintains world-wide monopolies in drugs that result in uncontrolled pricing, with such monopolies maintained through bribing and other strong-arm tactics. Neglect of focus on particular diseases renders needed drugs unobtainable.

Lobbying and political ties lead to pharmaceutical company interests being advocated by federal agencies with support enacted both nationally and internationally. Interactions with foreign markets are commonly characterized by either negligence or bullying. Profit overrides medical concerns and patient care and ultimately economic goals reign primary. The fundamental goal of patient health and well-being on a worldwide level is ignored. As suggested in the theoretical model of Messner and Rosenfeld, the cultural norms of the American Dream are realized in a commitment to economic success dictated to all and dominated by multinational corporations. In such manner, non-economic goals such as social well-being are devalued and as characterized by the Mertonian notion of innovation, even illegitimate means are employed to obtain profit at any cost.

While it may seem not be in a corporation's interest to increase drug availability and affordability in this nation and around the world, it can be argued that such actions would constitute not only a fundamental step in the reorganization of institutional focus from purely economic considerations but is also a good public relations tool. Companies such as CITGO have used their socially responsible program offering discounted heating oil for those in need, in their advertising campaign. Alternatively, there are organizations that evolve as cooperation amongst an industry and public interest groups, such as Partnership for Prescription Assistance (PPARx). PPARx is a collaboration of American pharmaceutical companies with patient advocacy organizations and doctors, which have created a way for those that do not have prescription coverage to get medicines for a fraction of the cost. Such a reform is a step in the right direction of what Messner and Rosenfeld suggest for an institutional reorganization, one that distributes focus to non-economic and socially based institutions.

Social responsibility needs to be fostered nationally but also on an international level, with at the lowest level recognizing that medication that is inadequate for the population of one nation is not adequate for any population. As Silverstein and Taylor suggest, "While the industry's political clout currently insures against any radical government action, even minor reforms could go a long way" (Silverstein & Taylor, 2004, p. 270). The authors suggest concrete examples including government stipulations of drug research, implementing reasonable pricing provisions, establishing shorter drug patents and eliminating patent extensions, and curbing drug maker's power in Washington. Ultimately, the pharmaceutical industry demonstrates an example of one market in which priorities need to shift focus, on both a national and an international level.

Disjuncture between goals and economically focused intentions can additionally be seen in the example of the regulation of toxic waste. Weak or non-existent regulation of waste disposal in many Third World countries has given rise to an illicit market for waste disposal providing means for profit hungry corporations to rid of waste in alternative ways. Legal and economic asymmetries allow corporations to take advantage of markets in need of financial support and sustenance (Passas, 2000). Here, moral and ethical concerns are overshadowed by economic objectives and aspirations. Accordingly, deregulation on a global scale and anomic states result in problems of social order on a mass scale.

Towards a real unity with respect for differences

As a result we see our world community in the new millennium not moving eagerly towards a cultured unity, but one that is dispirited and rife with conflict. What is needed is cooperation between the current venture of developing a global market and a healthy interference from governments in order to create safety nets and thresholds to protect individuals and deter them from exploitation. But what is a healthy interference? Cross border crime, not unlike street crime and national crime, can only be approached effectively when it is analyzed specifically examining the causes, structure, extent and effects of the problem. Without taking these first crucial steps decisions and policy determinations are haphazard and incomplete, resulting in the potential for laws that are draconian or lack legitimacy. What has to be avoided is a knee jerk reaction to crime, for such a reaction only creates a greater sense of anomie, as segments of the population become victimized, this time by the state itself, exactly the body to which the citizens are looking for protection. Lest we forget, a crime is only a crime once it is labeled as such by the society, and in effect the governing state.

So should countries be legislating more on a national level? From the above examples we have seen that globalization and the drive for new markets is a powerful force, it will resist attempts to regulate barriers through methods like lobbying. Moreover, national laws that do not look at the bigger picture just encourage asymmetries and business inevitably establishes novel ways to continue functioning and making money, legal or illegal, ethical or not by exploiting these disparities (Passas, 1999). But is there not a risk of going back to what Van Mises and Hayek were so keen to steer away from?

An alternative conception lies in regulations on an international level. As an example of such regulation, we can look at the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). In 1989 the FATF was created by the G-7 Summit in Paris, with the aim of synchronizing the legal systems around the world to curb the use of the financial system for crime. By 1990 (revised in 1996 and amended in 2001 & 2004) the FATF had drafted a series of recommendations in attempts to foster an supranational joint effort to combat the money laundering pandemic. The membership of the FATF grew, starting with the initial G-7 member countries, the European Commission

and eight other countries, increasing by 2000 to 31 members and to 34 by 2007. All member countries go through recurrent mutual evaluation processes which examines not only whether member states have implemented the recommendation but also continue to stay abreast of their responsibilities to curb the abuse of the financial markets.

Unlike many other international instruments, the FATF has a mechanism that compels nations to implement the recommendations. The teeth of the FATF are in the form of a yearly document that lists non-cooperative countries and territories. "The Non-Cooperative Countries and Territories (NCCTs) exercise began in 1998 at a time when many countries around the world did not have adequate anti-money laundering (AML) measures in place. The goal of the initiative has been to secure the adoption by all financial centers of international standards to prevent, detect and punish money laundering, and thereby effectively co-operate internationally in the global fight against money laundering" (FATF, 2007:2).

In 2000 fifteen countries were identified as NCCTs, eight in 2001. The effect of a country being placed on the NCCT list is damaging to its reputation to say the least, but as a repercussion this leads to further damage to often struggling economies. According to FATF literature, "Generally, countries recognized that adopting current AML standards was important for the protection and soundness of their own financial systems." (FATF, 2007:2)

No doubt the idea of universally applicable laws that would standardize the rules make sense and is something that international conventions have been doing for decades. However, there are some differences in the FATF phenomenon, compared to international conventions created by the United Nations and similar supranational organizations. It is always important to remember that rules and measures need to work in tandem with the society and culture within which they are to function. In order to implement a law adequately it cannot function in a vacuum, that is, there needs to exist an infrastructure for proper implementation.

A law remains ineffective if there are no funds for enforcement. Moreover, with the Forty Recommendations and the Nine Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing of the FATF are measures that are characterized as top down rules, and thus represents a system that does not account for the economic situation of countries placed on the NCCT list. It is hard to implement know-your-customer rules in a banking system that is based on trust and long standing relationships, in many countries the banker is an integral part of the community who knows his customers and bases decisions on informal knowledge of the individual. Similarly suspicious transaction reporting are a core element of money laundering regimes in the western world, have been ineffective where the main mode of money transfers is through informal means that have unconventional record keeping formats, such as hawala. (Passas, 2003)

Crime problems come in two guises, those that are ideologically motivated and those that are instrumentally motivated. The transformation and exportation of the American Dream into a Global Dream, has been a source for both types of crime. Those that have adopted the goal of the Global Dream but have been unable achieve the promise of prosperity may resort to other means in order to get what they believe is owed them. Others that have seen the Global Dream permeate within their society have rebuked, and have resorted to methods such as reverting to conservatism or fundamentalism in order to change the status quo.

Both motivations require an understanding of context. This means that initiatives both at a national and international level need to focus not just on legislation but also on fostering safety nets, building and supporting institutions such as family, education and welfare. With the domination of a global reference group and an economically based conceptualization of cultural ideals, aspects of communalism and non-economic social welfare are lost. In the wake of materially driven aspirations fostered by the American and resultant Global Dream lays the demise of goals fostering the social good.

Goodwin *et al.* (1997) have explained that the economy needs to develop from standard economics to contextual economics. Standard economics refers to the current ethos of maximizing consumption with the ultimate goal of achieving wealth and efficiency. Contextual economics however looks to people's differences and their needs, in an attempt to understand "the varied contexts within which economic activity occurs." (Goodwin *et al.*, 1997:4). In effect, rather than fostering consumerism which deals with instant gratification, they argue that the focus needs to shift to more long term requirements.

Contextual economics distinguishes between different types of capital: manufactured, human, social, natural and financial, all of which need to be fostered. Most critically Goodwin explains that public goods cannot be neglected. Public goods represent things that cannot be sold and exist for all the society, for example a social security system or a welfare state. The dominance of private goods, as cultivated by the American Dream, has to a large extent overshadowed the value of public goods. Having a safety net for the elderly while supporting motherhood through extended maternity leave, and creating a welfare state that cushions the blow for those most disadvantaged in society, are all measures that will not only foster greater harmony but also reduce the impetus for deviance.

Messner and Rosenfeld (1994) propose that the answer to crime resulting from materialistic goals and anomic conditions lies in social reorganization. Here, institutional reforms need to focus on family and school, the polity, and

the social stratification of the economy. Further, cultural reintegration becomes necessary. Messner and Rosenfeld suggest that the answer need not lie in the wholesale rejection of the American Dream but in the revitalization of noneconomic institutions. They state that “by moderating the excesses of the dominant cultural ethos and emphasizing its useful features, institutional reform can be stimulated and significant reductions in crime can be realized” (Messner and Rosenfeld, 1994:109). Although somewhat idealistic, it seems realistic that such a goal could be translated to the global level.

Bellah *et al.* (1996) in their analysis of the twentieth century American society, also explain that it is not all about the economy. They state “much of the thinking about our society and where it should be going is rather narrowly focused on our political economy. This focus makes sense in that government and the corporations are the most powerful structures in our society and affect everything else, including our culture and our character. But as an exclusive concern, such a focus is severely limited. Structures are not unchanging. Instead, they are frequently altered by social movements come from changes in consciousness, climates of opinion, and culture” (Bellah *et al.*, 1996:275). Accordingly, the perspective needs to be broadened, both nationally and on a global level.

Ultimately, the propagation of the American Dream to a mass market has resulted in the exportation of the deleterious anomic conditions inherent in such an economically driven cultural ethos. The proliferation of mass media and materially driven consumerism has shifted significant attention away from the affirmative characteristics of communalism and social good. The root intentions of the American Dream are in reality positive that is the desire to strive to better oneself. Ultimately, the problem lies in the materialistically driven pursuit of an unobtainable economic success. In such pursuit, there is no end. One can always strive for more, however, often without adequate or legitimate means for attainment.

Translated to a global level, such prospect lends the potential for an anomic state on a grand scale, which can lead to catastrophic consequences. Accordingly, thinking as well as policy, needs to focus on a much broader spectrum than simply economic reform. Social and cultural facets cannot and should not be ignored. The American Dream needs to be revitalized and the true idealism of the American character can only be witnessed in an integrated conceptualization identifying not solely economic goals, but social, cultural, and humanistic goals as well. The Global Dream suffers significantly when the American Dream is exported in a selectively incomplete manner. Further, adaptations, not only economic, but social and cultural as well, need to recognize the uniqueness of different localities. On a mass scale, one size fits all is not always appropriate.

Within globalization and the development of a Global Dream, individuality still need be considered, accounted for and respected. Global class strife and polarization may be lessened if individualized needs are taken into account. As we move further into the new millennium, in order to move away from a growing trend of over-simplification of the world, what needs to be fostered is a respect for differences balanced with a shared responsibility for the community by individuals and groups. Having entered into the era of the Global Dream, our neighborhood is no longer just a few blocks around your home, work and school, it is a global community. We have seen that we share similarities and differences, that fundamentally we all strive for happiness, but happiness is a relative term. The way forward is with enlightened self-interest, knowledge that fostering a common good will inevitably results in fulfilling also our individual self interests.

Note

James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America*, 1931 at p.404

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