Jihad vs. McWorld [Review]

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Jihad vs. McWorld

by Benjamin R. Barber

Review by Drew Harrington <harrington@pacificu.edu>
University Librarian, Pacific University

Published in 1996, this book is not new, but it is timely. Political scientist Benjamin Barber is director of the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy at Rutgers University. Barber is an impassioned proponent of democracy as the world’s only real hope to “reconstruct a civil society.” In light of recent events, readers may interpret Barber’s title too narrowly. For the purposes of this study, “Jihad” goes far beyond al-Qaida or Middle Eastern boundaries to include all branches of fundamentalism and nationalism—neo-Nazis, Militia organizations, Hamas, Shas, the American fundamental Christian far-right, and others. In this camp the Internet is perceived as a serious threat to “tribal” structure and values, but also as a powerful tool available to the chosen few to support their fight against globalization. “McWorld” is a flippant name for a serious concept that is much bigger than fast food or marketing strategy. McWorld is Barber’s term for global consumer capitalism—the far-flung homogenization of culture and economics. In McWorld, the Internet is a strategic tool for dissemination of consumer values. The book is scholarly and demanding, but accessible and worth the effort it requires. Barber uses exhaustive sources and clear writing to explore the philosophies of both Jihad and McWorld, which he sees rapidly dividing the world into two camps that have no understanding of one another. Both, he explains, threaten the future of democracy, personal liberty, and erudite thinking. McWorld discourages meaningful discourse and appreciation of difference in the pursuit of spreading markets and the universalism of the profit motive. Jihad is reactive, repressive and intolerant, able to comprehend only one true way with a willingness to resort to barbarism. Clearly neither philosophy encourages the flourishing of freedom. When this book was written five years ago, reviewers urged serious consideration of its premise and noted that it was “portentous.” In an effort to better understand how the world has gone awry, this might be a good time to read it.

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5 THOUGHTS ON “JIHAD VS. MCWORLD”

naija social network  
on January 30, 2014 at 11:34 AM  said:

Adore your publish. Have you at any time imagined about generating far more about this matter?

nigeria  
on January 30, 2014 at 1:57 PM  said:

Thanks, I’ve just been looking for information about this subject in your lengthy time and yours may be the best I’ve came upon so far. But, what about the conclusion? Are you particular around the supply?

King Simmon  
on January 30, 2014 at 6:12 PM  said:

excellent submit, very informative. I ponder why the other experts of this sector do not understand this. You must continue your writing. I’m confident, you have a huge readers’ base already!

plotka  
on February 1, 2014 at 1:47 AM  said:

My husband and i ended up being fulfilled after Chris could conclude his look for from the ideas he was given in your site. It is now and once again perplexing to just probably be handing out secrets and ways that numerous some other folks may perhaps have been selling. So we recognize we have got the writer to enjoy due to that. Those people illustrations you’ve made, the basic internet site menu, the friendships you will help to
make it is everything about this content is wonderful, that is absolutely particularly essential. Thanks for ones whole thing!

rozrywka
on February 1, 2014 at 3:39 AM said:

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