INTRODUCTION

The present work deals with the subject around which social life of mankind is organized: culture to which International Relations as an autonomous discipline owes an apology. By the mid of 2006 it is a truism to assert that the ship of culture has arrived and floating freely into the perceivably estranged ocean of politics, though it will awaits its due recognition in the International Relations. This research in some ways is a celebration of the arrival of culture in I.R. and a modest attempt to analyze those concerns and fears, anxieties and emotions, furor and euphoria the arrival of culture’s ship has inevitably aroused. More specifically this doctorate seeks to examine the impact of global culture on the cultural autonomy of weak states. Emergence of global culture has generated serious concerns regarding the future of existing national identities and culture. Based on the assumptions of the globalist school of thought, a detailed theoretical analysis is undertaken to demonstrate the influence of global culture on the cultural sovereignty of the weak states.

Rationale for the Study: The concern for the subject is derived from the role, national identities and cultures play in the maintenance and sustenance of the state as an institution. Though culture has been given proper intellectual treatment in sociology, anthropology, cultural studies and ethnic studies, cultural foundations of state have remained largely unexplored in International Relations due to discipline’s obsessive concern for war and peace. But two sets of reasons, broadly speaking, highlighted the renewed interest in problems of culture and identity in International Relation Theory. The first is ontological. The end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, political, economic and cultural globalization of the world and the emergence of identity politics in its immediate aftermath instigated the prominence of culture on the agenda of international politics.

Cultural consequences of globalization have been widely acknowledged around the world. It is generally believed that emergence of global culture has rendered cultural diversity of the world vulnerable to the freely moving cultural artifacts. It is truer for weak states because most of these countries acquired independence from colonial rule after the Second World War through the process of decolonization. Being the late comers
in the international system these counties are undergoing the problem of nation and state building. Coupled with the unfinished agenda of economic development most of these countries find themselves in the position of an acute crisis. It is this already precarious position which is being further aggravated by global culture leading to situations ranging from the breakdown of law and order to civil war and complete collapse of the state to the cultural assertion by weak states. Avoiding extreme positions like clash of civilizations as suggested by Huntington it is reasonable to assume that cultural issues now acquire more prominent place on international plane than during the Cold War. Profound influence of these issues on international system necessitates more serious inquiry of things cultural than usually done due to the presumed epiphenomenality of culture as a factor in international relations.

The second set of reasons is epistemic and methodological. Under the influence of postpositive thinking, the classical understanding of the key themes of International Relations including national power and security has undergone serious disciplinary scrutiny. The theoretical reach of realist understanding of power and national security was increasingly seen as inadequate for the explication of the state’s external behavior. Once the threat of nuclear war was gone and the victory of liberal market economy was seemingly complete, the politics of survival was transformed into the politics of betterment.

As was to be expected, the politics of betterment also proved problematic for the simple reason that there is no single universally accepted notion of betterment in a culturally diverse world which is at the heart of the dilemma weak or developing countries face when they find themselves in the midst of increasingly culturally globalized world. This 'liberal-rational dilemma' has completely overshadowed the cultural identity of weak states. Implied in this riddle is the emulation of the models presented and standards of progress set by the developed countries of the west. Since these models and standards dominate the discourse of contemporary affairs and are caricatured as universal in their appeal they are seen by weak states as prerequisite for their national progress. This predicament further unfolds itself in the psychological necessity of weak states for the complete rejection of these standards if they are to retain their distinct national character. Inherent in this contradiction is the fact that the ancient
cultural heritage of weak states on the one hand, is considered as anachronistic for their development and at the same time the same legacy on the other hand is deemed necessary for the preservation of their national identity. This is essentially a paradoxical situation which has tormented their lives since the time of their independence and it is likely to continue in the near future.

Cultural globalization of the world in a way has posed a more subtle threat to weak states than superpower rivalry during the Cold War. Conventional stake of physical survival gave way to the more delicate vulnerability pertaining to the political and cultural identity of state on the basis of which states legitimize their existence. Since global culture undermines the cultural confidence of developing countries, intrinsic relation between cultural capital and soft power, and soft power and over all strength of the state, acquired new significance.

In other words, major ontological alteration in the political universe led to important changes in the conceptual parameters of power and national security. Theoretical underdevelopment of the concept of soft power of the state, with a direct and inevitable bearing upon the national security of weak states, became the central concern of International Relations scholarship. It demanded a fresh look at the whole notion of weak sates and cultural power. The intellectual roots of this doctorate and its explicitly theoretical and conceptual focus reflects my desire to understand how soft power impinges upon the cultural security of weak states and societies in which these states are embedded.

**Introduction:** Over the last few decades the phenomenon of globalization has generated intensive academic interest around the world. With the collapse of previous ideological alternative (communism) liberal market economy has witnessed an exponential growth throughout the planet particularly in the 1990s and onwards. Scholars have made serious attempt to define globalization in the ever-increasing literature on the subject. Most account of globalization boil down to either worldwide flow of ideas, commodities, people and finance or increasing connectivity among the otherwise sparse parts of the world. Useful as they are, these definitions however fail to locate the whole question of globalization in a wider theoretical context. Rather then seeking intellectual asylum in the
popular parlance a more theoretically grounded definition of globalization as presented by Keohane and Nye has been preferred. Keohane and Nye differentiate globalization with other interrelated concepts like globalism and interdependence. “Interdependence refers to situations characterised by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries” (Keohane and Nye, 2000: 105). Globalism is seen as “a state of the world involving network of interdependence at multi-continental distances. The linkages occur through flows and influences of capital and good, information and ideas, and people and forces, as well as environmentally and biologically relevant substances” (Ibid: 105). As the term tends to connote “globalism does not imply universality” (Ibid: 106). Nor does it necessarily mean homogenization or equity. This problematization of globalism is carried further by asking how thin or thick it is. Globalisation, in this scheme of things, is a process through which globalism thickens. Deglobalisation, contrarily, would denote decline in or thinning of globalism. Globalization, like interdependence is a multidimensional process. It pervades all aspects of social life, though for analytical purposes it is frequently and correctly classified in military, economic, environmental, social and cultural terms. The last dimension of globalism and its impact on weak states are the main focus of this doctoral research.

Political scientists and IR scholars have traditionally defined power in military and economic terms. More the military might and economic capacity of the state, stronger it is as a unit of international system and abler to influence the course of events within and outside its borders than those who have less power at their disposal. There is no denial to that. Problem arises when one moves beyond the tangible variables of power and enters into the realm of ideational dimension of power. Since this research deals with national identities and cultures it is the latter that has to be examined in depth in order to comprehend the principal characteristics of weak states.

Consequences of global culture have been complex and multidimensional. Its primary impact has been on weak states that have not been able to manage the influence of incoming cultural inputs vis-à-vis the requirements of the maintenance of their existing national identities. As a result these states have to undergo a variety of social and economic upheavals due to which their autonomy comes under serious threat.
Hypothesis: This research tests following hypothesis.

Emergence of global culture would lead to the erosion of existing national identities and cultures of weak states which would adversely affect their cultural autonomy.

Research Questions: Following questions are explored in this research.

1) What is the role of the world-wide flow of capital, people, ideas, information, images and other goods and commodities in the emergence of global culture?
2) What makes the state weak? What is the role of culture in making the state powerful or weak?
3) How do existing national cultures respond to the incoming cultural influences?
4) How does global culture impinge upon the autonomy of the weak states?

Statement on Variable: The proposed research is based on three variables. Independent variable of the research would be global culture because it is the impact of the global culture that has been intended to be demonstrated on the autonomy of the weak states. Since weak states are the principal targets of the global culture, their autonomy would constitute the dependent variable of the study. Global culture leaves its powerful imprint on the cultural autonomy of weak states through national cultures and identities. Therefore national cultures and identities operate as the intervening variable of the research design.

Methodology: Qualitative and to some extent quantitative methods have been used to conduct the research on this topic. Intensive study of International Relations Theory and emerging discipline of global sociology has been made. Assumptions of globalist school of thought are the basis for the exploration of the subject. Since the proposed research is a theoretical analysis, primarily deductive reasoning has been employed as the research proceeds from the premises of globalism and then try to show the impact of global culture on the weak states. Secondary sources like books and journals have been used to conduct the research on this topic.
Chapterisation: This research proceeds in the following sequence.

**The Global Culture: A Thematic:** Global culture is essentially a contested concept. Different shades of opinion exist on the emergence of global culture. David Held and Anthony McGrew identify three schools of thought: sceptics, transformationalists and globalists. A detailed theoretical investigation of the arguments of each school of thought is required to arrive at any plausible or definite conclusion regarding the emergence of global culture. It is the agenda of the second chapter of the research.

**The Anatomy of Weak States:** Weak states in international system are not the recent vintage. They are the outcome of many developments long underway. In order to demonstrate the influence of global culture on weak states an elaborate account of the structure and composition of weak states is required. Moreover cultural foundations of states are to be explored to establish the link between culture of state and its power. The third chapter of this research deals with the salient features of weak states.

**Resistance or Diffusion? Global Culture Meets National Identities:** Emergence of global culture has resulted in variety of responses from the existing national identities and cultures. Heated controversy has taken place between globalists and sceptics regarding the several modes in which national identities respond to incoming influences of global culture. Moreover intrinsic connection among the major related concepts has to be exposed in more or less determinate fashion. It is the agenda of the fourth chapter of this research.

**Conclusion:** Finally conclusion of this research project would summarize the major findings of the research.