



Forum: Environmental & Cultural

Issue: Assessing the Negative and Positive Role of Pop Culture in the Society

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Introduction

Pop culture is a phenomenon that can be understood differently and plays both a positive and a negative role in our society. With the advent of social networks, it has become easier to spread culture around the world, turning the world into one society. It also led to the penetration of mass culture into various aspects of society. Popular culture is closely related to people's daily lives, education, mass communications, production, and other aspects. This aspect of globalization, like popular culture or, as it is commonly called, pop culture, attracts much more attention than any other. Pop culture has emerged due to globalization, and is also one of its driving forces. Globalization has both advantages and disadvantages; therefore, the role of pop culture is twofold. Awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of pop culture offers tremendous benefits, as it can be used in many areas and in many ways.

Definition of key terms

Pop Culture – the accumulation of cultural products such as music, art, literature, fashion, dance, film, cyberculture, television, and radio that are consumed by the majority of a society's population.

Globalization – an economic process of interaction and integration, which is associated with social and cultural aspects.

Society – a group of individuals involved in persistent social interaction, or a large social group sharing the same geographical or social territory, typically subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations.

Background Information

It is a popular belief that popular culture, or pop culture, is actually Americanization. The reason is that today the United States produces the largest amount of goods that are considered pop culture. The entertainment industry is one of the most important aspects of the US economy and economic activity. This new engine of American industry is driving American popular culture around the world at a frantic pace. With the advent of social media, it has become easier to disseminate culture across the globe transforming the world into one global society. This has also seen the penetration of pop culture into various aspects of society.

Pop culture can have a positive impact on society. It influences the modern lifestyle, a huge number of aspects of everyday life, music, movies and so on. Pop culture influences the daily life of every person. Popular culture is a means to start talking to people at work, at school or in everyday life. It forms a single framework that provides individual differences. A general assessment of a new TV show or a popular new film can create a context for mutual understanding and a basis for friendly relations. In addition, it is a social icebreaker that allows people to overcome their shyness and participate in group conversations. Popular culture allows people to ponder, express attitudes and assess problems that they can usually avoid. Considerations about sexuality, social and social motivation, revealed in pop culture, force those who look, face these problems and form their own opinions. The advantages are that people usually do not want to see how this depends on the screen of the TV or computer monitor.

Popular culture is also tightly connected to economy – it boosts sales of different mainstream merchandise products connected with the most well-known TV-shows, films, film series, comics etc: these can be clothes, cups and mugs, notebooks, posters, or any other logo with a well recognizable logo or character on it. We can even say that many popular clothing brands (like Adidas, Puma, Nike, etc.) have also become a part of global pop culture.

Yet, there are several flaws in pop culture that should be taken into account. One of the main problems associated with the concept of globalization is the existing inequality between thousands of cultures and traditions of the world. The development of intercultural contacts, the spread of multiculturalism and the birth of a new phenomenon called “world culture”. English is the most popular language in the world. About 75% of the mail, telexes and telegrams in the world in English. Approximately 60% of the world's radio programs are in English. About 90% of all Internet traffic uses English. Using a common language increases commonality and stimulates the process of globalization.

Pop culture unites but deprives of individuality. This refers to the individual. Speaking about nations, popular culture becomes a dangerous phenomenon for them, as it may lead to disappearance of many local cultures that just cannot withstand the pressure from global culture. Local cultures may also become a product that is sold as any other touristic attraction. On one hand, this may help to preserve at least some traditions of a particular culture, but, on other hand, these may be not real traditions – it is something artificial made specifically to attract attention of tourists. Thus, the culture of different nations themselves is forgotten, supplanted by popular trends.

There are other negative aspects of pop culture as well. For example, the depiction of violence, blood and gore can have serious psychological repercussions especially on young children. Some people can get so immersed into the fictional universes that it becomes difficult for them to distinguish between what is real and what is not. It can also be heavily distracting for people. There is also a potential threat of Internet or social networks addiction, and the spread of smartphones with unlimited access to Internet (which is also a global cultural trend) is one of the first reasons for this.

Pop culture also makes it easy to manage society. Promotion of ideas in society, having the same interests and similar opinions, becomes simple. This can be for both good and bad go. Popular culture not only contains political elements — in the form of criticism or satire — but is itself a necessary political factor in influencing such groups as the government. History shows that pop culture has often been subjected to valuable changes or unification by influential interests that are not such expressions of the opinions of others in society.

It is undeniable that pop culture has gone a long way in making the concept of “global society” a reality by giving people across the world a common subject to talk about. It keeps changing from generation to generation and has a pronounced effect on youth. Popular culture has both advantages and disadvantages and it is important to consider them all.

Major countries and organizations involved.

Globalization is often seen as Westernization or Americanization, since the United States is currently the only superpower with a dominant economic, cultural, and military position in the world order. Many of the most visible cultural manifestations of globalization are American - CocaCola, McDonald's. Most multinational companies are also based in the United States.

In the 1970s, the United States made significant efforts to liberalize world cultural markets, which was hindered not only by the USSR, but also by UNESCO (UNESCO), which perceived this policy as a manifestation of American "cultural imperialism." To this day, many countries are trying to protect themselves from foreign cultural influence, either by direct prohibitions or by other means, for example, by setting quotas on foreign films or broadcasting foreign pop music.

Relevant treaties and UN resolutions.

Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore

The document was adopted on the 25th session of the General Conference of UNESCO (15 November 1989). The document defines the nature of folklore and its forms: language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts. It underlines the fragility intangible heritage, particularly with regard to oral traditions, and recommends conservation strategies. The Recommendation also notes the negative impact of industrial culture and mass media on traditional culture and calls for support for folk traditions to counter these effects.

Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

The document was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on October 20, 2005. The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is a legally binding international agreement that ensures artists, cultural professionals, practitioners and citizens worldwide can create, produce, disseminate and enjoy a broad range of cultural goods, services and activities, including their own. Cultural expressions are conveyed by activities, goods and services, which results in an economic and cultural nature. Due to this dual sided nature, cultural expressions cannot be seen purely as objects of trade. The Convention's main objective is to provide a legally binding international agreement that reaffirms the sovereign right of States to adopt cultural policies that support their cultural industries. The Convention does not want to control and restrict cultural expressions, but to promote and protect them.

Useful links

American Pop Culture and its effects:

<https://www.csub.edu/~bruff/Pop%20Culture%20Articles.pdf>

<http://www.youthsource.com/2015/08/20/youth-and-popular-culture-its-all-about-influence-and-interaction/>

<https://careersinpsychology.org/impact-media/>

Culture and Globalization:

<https://www.globalization101.org/uploads/File/Culture/cultall.pdf>

http://etec.ctlt.ubc.ca/510wiki/Globalization_and_its_Effect_on_Cultural_Diversity