

An exploration of globalisation and its influence upon



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Globalisation refers to the process whereby the world is said to be transformed / transforming into a single global system. It became an issue of great significance in the 1990s. Aspects of what is now called globalisation were first seriously discussed by sociologists during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1960, McLuhan introduced into the analysis of culture and the mass media the phrase: " the global village. " In order to describe how in his view, the world was shrinking as a result of new technologies of communication.

In the same period, changes in the global economy, notably the growth of multinational companies, the expansion of international trade, the international division of labour, promoted the development of world system theory as a model of the global economy. In current discussions, globalisation has three dimensions of manifestations: economic, cultural and political. There has been a pessimistic light over the term globalisation. It has been looked upon as a threat to the masses as it suggests that the dividing lines of cultures, traditions, national and cultural identities are dissolving. Globalisation isn't a fact or fait accompli.

Both in reality and as a concept it is highly contested (Foster-Carter). Not everyone agrees " globalisation" is happening or that it is not the right word for defining what is happening. There is a view that globalisation is destroying identities. Tomlinson describes that before the era of globalisation, there existed local, distinct and well defined, robust and culturally sustaining connections between geographical place and cultural experience. These connections sustained ones community and cultural identity. This identity was something people possessed as an undisturbed existential possession, a tradition of long dwelling with the past.

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Identity was also discovered to be something fragile that needs protecting and preserving, that could be lost. Tomlinson describes this identity as bursting within the United Kingdom within the 1980s from the corrosive power of globalisation. He notes that globalisation has swept like a flood tide through the world's diverse cultures, destroying stable localities, displacing people, bringing market-driven, branded homogenization of cultural experience, thus "obliterating the differences between locality-defined cultures which had generated our identities.

Though globalisation has been judged as involving a general process of loss of diversity, he argues that some of course did better whilst others did worse out of the process. Whilst those cultures in the mainstream flow of capitalism (UK, Japan, and USA) saw a version of their cultures exported worldwide, it was the weaker cultures of the developing world that were threatened. "Within contemporary UK society there are numerous elements (language, clothing, proportions of ethnic groups) which create what we call our national identity.

It is quite obvious to see how elements from other cultures have become strong within British culture specifically this can be seen within the high levels of Caribbean Youth Culture (Hip-Hop and Fashion) and eastern media (kung fu films, Japanimation) have been dissolved within western media creating niche groups with an evolved identity. The uphill rise of numbers seen within western films containing eastern influences (kung fu) shows that there has been an impact on the west. However this is true many sociologists argue that watching many kung fu films doesn't give you elements of Chinese identity.

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Foster-Carter notes that a significant factor aiding the process of Globalisation is the internet. Globalisation itself is reflected within the nature of the internet whether people agree or disagree that globalisation is taking place, individuals are interacting on a larger scale via this internet. The internet unites cultures, perspectives, religions, ethnic groups and countries at the click of a button. He takes the example of the Hip-Hop culture and its affect world wide via the internet (1980-1990s). Hip-Hop being a Black American art form / culture evolving from the late 70s.

It then spread like a virus from Americas Black Communities to a world wide level via the aid of the Radio (hit songs) and Internet (television itself conflicted with Hip-Hop denying it much coverage). This backs up Tomlinson idea in the sense that this phenomena happened within the 1980s, what he called the main milestone for globalisation. In a time whereby in ones country/region there exists limited resources and material on a particular art form/culture as Hip-Hop, the internet provided access to what was once a niche field (with thousands of websites) through this there was a tidal wave effect.

Although globalisation is perceived by many as a significant force reshaping identities worldwide, there are many other perspectives: Since the 18th century, national identity has been the most successful mode in orchestrating belonging. The fact that virtually all of the world's population of six billion today whether enjoy or claim a national identity is itself a testament to the power of the globalisation of modernity. It is clear from this that the nation and national identity are not in danger of collapse.

But the very dynamism and complexity of globalisation is such that the stability of this form of identification is not guaranteed indefinitely. The very dynamic which established national identity as the most powerful culture-political binding force of modernity may now be unravelling some of the skeins that tie us in securely to our national home. The kernel of truth is the claim that globalisation is threatening national identity lies in the fact that proliferation of identity positions may be producing challenges to the dominance of national identity.

Garcia-Canclini looks at the affects of globalisation from a slightly different angle. Within his approach he sees the affects of globalisation as what he called deterritorialization: its property of diminishing the significance of social geographical location to the flow of cultural experience. What the idea implies is not that globalisation destroys localities as, for example, in the crude homogenization thesis, everywhere becoming blandly culturally uniform, but that in various ways cultural experience is lifted out of its traditional anchoring in particular localities.

Garcia-Canclini notes that we many live in an area which maintains high distinctiveness, but this particularity is no longer as it may have been in the past. The idea of deterritorialization, then, grasps, the way in which events outside of our immediate localities have an effect. Giddens defines globalisation as, " action(s) at a distance. " Modern culture and identity is less determined by location because location is increasingly penetrated by experience.

Again another quite contradictory story can be told about the destructive powers of globalisation: Lull notes that globalisation isn't in fact destroying these identities but in fact is a dominant force in creating cultural identities. This story however has a varied understanding of the term "identity." And it also involves a more complex understanding of the globalisation process: one at least, which allows for a degree of unpredictability in its consequences. Bernard argues that globalisation isn't the only force manipulating identities of localities. She takes the example of wind rush during the 1950s as well as general migration.

She noted that migration brought round foreign cultures and traditions from one region into another inviting the original inhabitants of the receiving land to explore these and experiment with these introduced cultures. This can be seen within the emerged music genre Ska which was a hybrid of reggae and UK mellow-rock which emerged during the wind rush period. She further explores the matter noting that from migration there is not a distortion or destruction of temporary identity but that in fact new identities are created out of the chaos within the whole-general overall identity (of its region).

She calls these identities niche identities: an example being the London-street culture in which a spectrum of ages and races take part in. The base of this identity like many of these niche identities is a music genre known as Ska (a branch of garage). As well as migration Bernard notes that Wars and conflicts between geographical regions have added to this effect of regional identities being blurred. Within Wars what we get is alliances as regions aid each other in a common goal.

These bonds transform themselves over to the regions inhabitants and over time can have a significant affect on the population's identity as regions see themselves as having a command destiny and fighting united for a command goal. And that is exactly what identity is... command ground between individuals. In conclusion I will state that if globalisation theories are correct, a spreading global culture (with heavy United States influence) may replace national culture. Instead of national identities, people may become " citizens of the world. " However globalisation theorists have been accused of exaggeration.

Nation states are still important, even if they are increasingly locked into larger units such as the European Union. Most people still have a national identity, even if there are a greater movement between countries. Eating Chinese food is not the same as being Chinese. Most experts recognise that globalisation is a complex process and it does not lead inevitably to a single world or culture or identity. Differences in national culture and identities are still clearly visible in the present day world. But globalisation theorists are right to point out that many of these have been shrinking.