

Culture and globalisation

Linguistics, English



Review of Benjamin Barber and Tyler Cowan's "Globalization and Culture"

Debate notions that take place universally and affect the entire society tend to cause arguments. One of such notions is globalization, and as in every argument, there are both proponents and opponents of this notion. In this very paper, I plan to present two opposing points of view on globalization and include the two parties' argumentation on why they believe their vision of the issue is the correct one. For this purpose, I will be summarizing the arguments of the political theorist and the author of "Jihad vs McWorld" Benjamin Barber and economist, Cato adjunct scholar and the author of "Creative Destruction: How Globalization is Changing the World's Cultures" Tyler Cowan.

Benjamin Barber is one of the proponents of the idea that the notion of globalization is destructive for it threatens morals and religious values of people, the distinctiveness of cultures and can turn the world into one big market. There are four main points in Barber's argumentation. First of all, he presents the notion of "theme parking" which is "a kind of diversity but it is the diversity of a theme park" ("Globalization and Culture" 9). By this, he means that even though there is a diversity, it is simulated, artificial, and, in fact, is far from authenticity. Secondly, Barber argues that globalization is homogenization and standardization of culture that affects people's cultural and aesthetic values, such as eating fast food instead of spending time with family at a dinner table. Also, the opponent of globalization states that more powerful markets, such as the American one, tend to master and destroy the weaker markets and, consequently, influence other cultures. Finally, Barber says that globalization is a threat not only to aesthetic but to religious and

moral values of people, especially of the representatives of cultures that differ a lot from “ McWorld”, such as Islamic, Hindu, and Judaic cultures, and that to some extent this threat gives rise to terrorism.

Tyler Cowan, in his turn, believes that globalization is the positive trend in the development of the modern society and the entire world. He argues that “ markets support diversity and freedom of choice, and trade gives a greater opportunity for artists to express their creative inspiration (“ Glibalization and Culture” 8). In addition to this, Cowan claims that globalization does tend to increase difference between cultures, and at the same time it frees difference from geographical location. Tyler Cowan also refutes four arguments presented by Benjamin Barber. First of all, he claims there is no such notion as authenticity because “ everything is a blend” (“ Globalization and Culture” 10). Also, he addresses Barbers argument on the change of cultural and aesthetic values exemplified by the changes in peoples eating habits and states that people do want their food to be fast but do not want it to be “ fast food” and that there is still plenty of slow restaurants to enjoy a meal and company. For the first point, Cowan states that very often it is a creative spirit that conquers the market but not power. Finally, he says that terrorism originates from resistance to global trends and not vice-versa.

Work Cited:

" Globalization and Culture." Cato Policy Report. (2003): 8-10, 16. Print.