

Free american culture and global cultural homogenization essay example

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However, many cultural critics, such as Pico Iyer, provide an opposing view point. According to Iyer, even though the American culture is dominant, its spread to other parts of the world is just an important part of globalization bringing various cultural influences together to create a multicultural world. Hence, the worldwide spread of American culture will not homogenize other cultures in the world. Therefore, keeping both the viewpoints in perspective, I will argue in this paper that the spread of the American culture around the world, in fact, has caused the global culture to become Americanized and is slowly contributing to the loss of the local cultural traditions.

The United States is a melting pot of cultures. It has a rich history of innovation leadership and has always been the world leader in technological advances, scientific research, space research, and global financial system. Ilan Alon, a visiting scholar at Harvard University, as well as an international consultant with experience in America, Asia, and Europe, states that “ it is quite clear that American culture has penetrated across many nations in the world and will eventually take over the rest of the world” (45).

Alon also states that “ it is evident to mention that America has become significant in expansion and transmission of culture” (95). This can be explained by the example of Facebook, the largest social networking site in the world. Facebook, which originated in America, has utilized internet and technology to provide a medium for freedom of speech in other parts of the world. For instance, Facebook helped blossom the Arab Spring, as “ over 5 million Egyptians were on Facebook at the start of the revolution, and the page “ We Are All Khaled Said” is credited with aiding youth movements in

organizing and facilitating messaging and outreach to other populations, including the 18-day occupation of Tahrir Square. Statistically, Facebook users in Egypt rose from 450, 000 to 3 million in the six months following the revolution, and now stand at 5 million” (Hall 10). Through Facebook, freedom of speech, an American value protected by the First Amendment, has reached those regions where freedom of any kind is suppressed by the authoritative governments. Thus, American culture challenged the traditional cultures by providing technology as a tool for organizing and implementing political mobilization.

Similarly, the United States has also made significant contributions to the global trends in arts and culture. American popular culture, including music, movies, sports, and fast food, have been exported to all corners of the globe. American musicians have given birth to unique musical developments, including jazz, rap, and hip hop, which are extremely popular in other parts of the world. American professional sports, including basketball and baseball have gained popularity in Europe, Africa, and Asia. The United States has always led the latest trends in fashion, for example, New York City is home to some of the biggest names in international fashion. Similarly, Hollywood, global pioneer in the field of entertainment, has influenced cinema and cinemas goes all over the world.

In the same way, American fast food has spread throughout the world, with McDonald's operating in “ 119 countries on six continents, with a total of over 33, 000 restaurants worldwide, employing more than 1. 7 million people” (“ McDonalds”). O’Connor, associate professor in American Politics at the University of Sydney, suggests that majority of the world’s countries

have imitated American culture. However, in some cases, the imitated culture has been modified according to the native culture's behavior and practices. For instance, the American fast food culture has spread worldwide and gained immense popularity. Fast foods have become popular because they are readily available everywhere. In this case, the idea of fast food trucks across the street has enabled quick access of fast food to pedestrians (Stephan 73). Even though fast food culture is foreign in many parts of the world and is against the local culinary traditions, it has started to replace the local cultural eating places because it provides an opportunity to hang out at a friendly, casual place and provides extremely cheap eating options. Furthermore, according to O'Connor, young people are the main drivers of global cultural homogenization through the American culture. The American traditions have been modified according to the regional traditions in order to create a new lifestyle. For instance, in the entertainment industry, new genres of music have been created according to listeners choices. Sometimes, there is collaboration between American artists and artists from other parts of the world. Such collaboration highlights the increasing homogenization of the global music scene. Also, American culture has also played a crucial part in influencing the global media culture, as according to Alexander Stephen, " strategies to broadcast news and information have been derived from American media corporations" (Stephan 48). For instance, American news organizations, especially CNN, MSNBC, and NBC constantly dominate global news and these media outlets are the pioneers in the global news industry.

Accordingly, it is often believed that exporting American culture to other

parts of the world has always been part of the American history. Verdú, a Spanish journalist and member of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, predicts that everyone in today's world will directly or indirectly be affected by the Americanization process. He further stipulates that, most of the practices exhibited in America are usually repeated in some other place in the world. Likewise, Rice-Oxley, international planning editor at The Guardian, states that the growth in the popularity of American culture is due to the recent technology, smartphones, internet, media, and films, which were not present about a hundred years ago. For instance, most Americas artists have become more popular since information about them is easily accessed from the internet (Stephan 63).

However, not everyone believes that American culture is responsible for global cultural homogenization. Many cultural critics, such as Iyer, argue that the world has not and will never be Americanized. According to Iyer, Americanization is happening due to diversifying cultural boundaries. Anyone can acquire the American culture, for instance, through marriage to an American. But Iyer fails to consider the fact that direct connection is not the only way to get assimilated in the American culture, as it is mostly the media, technology, and internet which have propagated American culture across the world. For example, Hollywood still remains the biggest source of projecting American culture to the outside world. Youth in many parts of the world idolize American movie stars, celebrities, singers, bands, and TV stars. Thus, American media personalities influence a large portion of the world population.

In the same way, American multinational companies have also played a

crucial role in spreading American culture in developing countries as “ over the recent years, American businesses and brands have penetrated the entire world” (Alon 75). Hence, many American corporations are responsible for introducing the American cultural business practices to the developing countries, such as India, China, and Vietnam, which are the largest trading partners of the United States and among the fastest growing economies in the developing world.

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In this book, Alon focuses on franchising as a global phenomenon that plays an imperative role in the spread of American civilization across the globe.

The increased globalization and expansion of multinational corporations into the global emerging economies has been the drive behind franchising. In this

book, Alon extensively provides an illustration of the economic, social and cultural impacts of franchising in the context of the global trade. A special

focus is given in chapter six of the text, which focuses on the foreign

environment of franchising in the American perspective. This chapter adopts

a macro-environmental model of international franchising delineating the

core social-economic factors. It focuses on the economic, demographic,

political dimensions and internationalization of the American franchising

systems.

In the analysis of franchising in a global perspective, Alon provides an

illustration of the impact of culture on the introduction of franchises in these

emerging markets. The establishment of franchises in the emerging markets especially in the perspective of American corporations has led to the spread American cultures. For example, McDonalds and other fast food corporations have established franchises in different parts of the globe leading to the spread of American civilization. His argument that the majority of the American corporations operating in the global market also establish the American cultures in their areas of operations explains the reason behind the spread of American cultures around the globe. Therefore, Alon brings to light that franchising has played an imperative in the spread of American civilization across the globe.