

Urban vs. Rural Lifestyles in terms of Theories of Cultural Globalization

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Introduction

Globalization has indubitably caused local, national, and international sections to meet and intertwine in ways that have historically been unimaginable. The discourse of globalization has become widespread around the world with ongoing discussions surrounding its economic, cultural, technological, and political aspects and implications (Roberts, 2008). As such, globalization has been viewed through the assortment lenses of finance and trade; communications and information technologies; international movements of people; the formation of global societies; linguistic, cultural, and ideological convergence; and world systems of signs and images (Monkman and Baird, 2002; Marginson, 1999). Another issue is about globalization and culture in local level; how global culture in the local level is defined? It is a way of life - an indigenous way of life - that includes clothing, media usage, religion, language, social activity, family behaviors, eating habits, and so on. There is authentic concern that globalization of culture, with its equally huge advertising and massive force, is able to affects almost anywhere of the world, even small villages, and exert strong influence on local character and lifestyles. Therefore, this paper is going to investigate effects of cultural globalization on lifestyles in Iran. The core issue will be a comparison of urban and rural settings that have differing exposure to technologies, agents and flows of globalization. Urban and rural lifestyles will be socially differentiated following the example of Pierre Bourdieu (1984). After this, the impact of different aspects of globalization will be defined and linked to changes in people's lifestyles. Finally, the investigation will focus on the relation of cultural globalization and socially differentiated lifestyles. The paper includes original empirical research choosing Isfahan and the surrounding rural areas as a case study. This region is a cultural zone in center of Iran.

Material & Methods

As Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2004) demonstrates on his book *Globalization and culture*, there are three different perspectives on cultural differentialism. In this paper these theories are examined and will find out which one can illustrate the study region, also other theories such as culture industry from Horkheimer and Adorno is used when it is necessary and combine them with this theoretical framework to get better

results for the explanation of case study region and its current situation. The combination of these theories is used to reach to the final point of the paper.

Cultural differentialism or lasting difference

In 1993 Samuel Huntington, as director of the institute for strategic studies at Harvard University, published a controversial article in which he argued that "a crucial, indeed a central,

aspect of what global politics is likely to be in the coming years...will be the clash of civilizations...With the end of cold war, international politics moves out of its Western phase, and its centerpiece becomes the interaction between the West and none-Western civilization and among none-Western civilization.” (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004, 44).

Later on Huntington (1996) expanded his thesis that the central theme of his thesis is that culture and cultural identities, which at the broadest level are civilization identities, are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world (Huntington, 1996, 20).

Cultural convergence or growing sameness

The thesis is a version of the recent idea of the world wide homogenization of societies through the influence of multinational corporations. According to the sociologist George Ritzer, McDonaldization is “the process whereby the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more of American society as well as the rest of the world”.

Ritzer discusses how McDonaldization and the broader process of globalization are spreading more massively and more intensely than before into assorted social institutions such as education, medicine, the criminal justice system and more.

While McDonaldization is, in itself, an important type of social change, he considers its relationship to what many observers consider to be the most important and far-reaching change of our time- globalization (Ritzer, 2004, 159).

These are variations on the theme of cultural imperialism, in the form of consumerist universalism or global media influence. This line of thinking has been well-known in media studies according to which effect of American media makes for global cultural synchronization (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004, 51).

Cultural hybridization or ongoing mixing

Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2004) argues that Mixing has been perennial as a process but new as an imaginary. As a perspective, it has differences basically from the preceding two paradigms. It does not build on an older theorem but it could theoretically open new windows. It is profoundly excluded from the other two paradigms.

Hybridization is a solution to the cultural differentialism of racial and nationalism thesis, because it takes as its point of departure precisely those experiences that have been evicted, marginalized, tabooed in cultural differentialism. It overthrows nationalism because its privileges border crossing. It overthrows identity politics such as ethnic or other claims to purity and authenticity because it starts from fuzziness of boundaries. If modernity stands from an ethos of order and neat separation by night boundaries, hybridization reflects a postmodern sensibility of cut „N“mix, transgression subversion (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004).

Research Method

Since method is a basic step for reaching objectives, suitable methods must be used in each case.

Because of vastness in culture and its ambiguity and as lifestyle is detectable, in this paper lifestyle instead of culture is used. Indeed, lifestyle indicates culture in an illustrative way. On the other hand, analysis of lifestyle is a way for examining globalization especially in cultural dimension (Fazeli, 2003, 154).

The project proposed here will draw on Bourdieu’s study of lifestyles in France. Bourdieu (1984) established certain indicators like food, music, film, cloth and house decoration that expressed class differences and active distinctions between people in a nation state. He explained the differences and distinctions on the basis of “habitus” – stable bundles of dispositions to act in a certain way – that are formed according to social origin and the life course. Bourdieu found that

people have rather clear class habitus that correspond to rather clear class positions which in turn rather clearly correspond to the social origin. These clear correspondences disintegrate with globalization. First, people can choose lifestyle elements that originate outside the nation state. Second, people's habitus is not only and always formed within a nation state. Third, not all elements of a lifestyle relate to the national arena and to distinction within the nation state.

For these reasons, the paper first has to establish indicators for lifestyles within the more traditional rural society, within the Iranian national context and within more globalized contexts. It also has to establish indicators for the impact of cultural globalization. These indicators will be established by a combination of observation and qualitative interviews.

After the establishment of indicators, a survey is carried out that serves as a test. After the evaluation of the test, a combination of survey, observation and short interviews is chosen closely following the example of Bourdieu (1984).

Data analysis in qualitative research methods is an ambiguous process and needs too much time. In this paper according to indices and responders, the following five steps method for analyzing has been used:

- 1- Arranging data: in this step data are noted continuously and for several time, events and quotations are surveyed to find a way for summarizing and compacting data.
- 2- Classifying the data to main subjects: according to the answers, we classify data to main subjects in a way that data which have same meaning place in same group. This group will be made from responders' points of view, urban and rural community will be categorized in separated groups. The answers and the groups will demonstrate their lifestyles.
- 3- Examine hypothesizes: in this step, pattern and relation will be examined and hypothesis will be confirmed or rejected.

4- Looking for justification of this data: after defining relation among data, they will be connected with main theory that gets from theoretical framework. In this step we look for the justification of the data and compatibility with the theories.

5- Writing the report: writing data is a part of analyzing process. In this process raw data will be analyzed until they have clarity and meaning in main subject. In this part we look for the main point of the thesis and try to justify and explain it.

Discussion of Results & Conclusions

As it stated in the introduction, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of cultural globalization in rural area and compare it with urban area, not only between these two regions but also amongst different social groups by following the example of Bourdieu (1984). The theoretical model of the paper was designed according to the cultural globalization theory from Nederveen Pieterse (2004) to find out that which theories can explain the region of study. Culture industry theory from Horkheimer and Adorno for the explanation and justification of the data analyzing is illustrated.

The paper has attempted to critically analyze several sites of discourse on the issues surrounding cultural globalization. By take a look to the analyzing part of the paper and the whole data which are included the interviews and also explaining the theories in cultural globalization theories and cultural differentialism; it could be understood that the third paradigm which is glocalization and hybridization could illustrate and be fit and explain the case study region.

The results also show the fact that the link between cultural globalization and local lifestyle cannot only be explained by glocalization and hybridization theories but also other theories are needed to explain the exact facts in the case study; these theories could be culture industry and media globalization. This means, for instance, in the one

hand the diversity of national or regional lifestyle and tradition in the region of study has still strong power, and on the other hand the power of globalization and media diversity is affecting people's lifestyle; the front line of this process are young people and specially students in both rural and urban areas.

Keywords: Globalization, Culture, Lifestyle, Isfahan, Rural Areas

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