

The Conscious Practitioner

Week 6 - Globalisation and Polycentrism

Globalisation

What is that

- Globalisation: the process of business or other organisations develop **international influence** or start **operating on an international scale**.
- Think about the shops/brands you see on the high street, how many of them are international brand?
- Think about the goods in the supermarket, how many of them are produced outside of UK?
- Did you have experience living aboard? If so, think about the brands of goods you use/eat/consume then, think about your life aboard, to what degree is it different from UK (or your home country?)

Globalisation

What is that

- Globalisation is “poorly defined” thus “difficult to research systematically” (Diana Crane, 2002, Culture and Globalisation: Theoretical Models and Emerging Trends).
- But it’s also an important and popular topic because we are living in a (**somehow**) globalised world.
- It’s something more complex than “global village” (Marshall McLuhan, i.e. people in the earth are interconnected with new media technology)

Globalisation

Key debates

- Features of contemporary globalisation
 - Based on market, exchange of capital, and networks (including the world wide web)
- Effects of globalisation
 - Maximise profit, inequalities for the global south, exclusion (passive/active)
- Relationship between globalisation and nation-states
- Globalisation verse localisation
- Global media in pre digital era and post digital era

Cultural globalisation

Different models and theory

- Below are some popular models use to analyse cultural globalisation, do you know any of them? (Process, principal actors, possible consequences)
 - Cultural Imperialism
 - Cultural Flows/Cultural Networks
 - Reception Theory
 - Cultural Policy Strategies

Cultural globalisation

Cultural Imperialism

- The global economic system is dominated by a core of advanced countries while Third World countries are marginalised with little control
- **Intentional** cultural domination by powerful nations over weaker nations
- Can you think of some examples of products of cultural imperialism?
- What are the benefits that advanced countries gain through cultural imperialism? (Hint: think about the role of global market in cultural imperialism)
- Can you analyse why cultural imperialism might lead to homogenisation of global culture?

Cultural globalisation

Cultural Flows / Networks

- Culture influences do not necessarily originate in the same place or flow in the same direction — receivers may also be originators.
- Cultural globalisation is a network with no clearly defined centre.
- Can you give some examples of cultural flows/networks?
- Try to analyse how cultural flows might lead to culture hybridisation instead of culture homogenisation.

Cultural globalisation

Reception Theory

- Audience respond actively rather than passively to mass mediated information.
- Same materials are interpreted differently by different national, ethnic and racial groups.
- Globally circulated culture is not a threat to local identities
- Can you compare the reception theory to the Encoding/Decoding model we learnt before?
- Is the theory convincing to you?

Cultural globalisation

Media Conglomerates

- Name some of the big media cooperations you know about.
- Where are they from (based)?

Cultural globalisation

Media Conglomerates

- Name some of the big media cooperations you know about.
- Where are they from (based)?
- Do you know some of the local media brands? Are they popular compared to the international giants? Why is that? Is it all about the content?

Cultural globalisation

Cultural Policy

- Cultural policy is a political instrument that countries use to control cultural content that **enter and leave** their territory, in responding to cultural globalisation.
- Can you try to give some examples of countries using cultural policy to limit the import/export of cultural products?
- What countries are more open to cultural globalisation? What countries are more concerned? Why?

Cultural globalisation

And national identity

- Do you think cultural globalisation is a threat to national identities? Explain your idea with examples to back it up.
- Do you think governments should control the dissemination of global cultures within their borders? Explain your idea with examples to back it up.

From Western Gaze to Global Gaze

Japanese Cultural Presence in Asia

- Cultural odor: “the **cultural presence** of a country of origin and **images or ideas** of its **way of life** are **positively** associated with a particular product in **the consumption process.**”
- One example of cultural odor mentioned by Iwabuchi is the “American way of life” in McDonald’s
- Can you think of other product with a cultural odor?

From Western Gaze to Global Gaze

Japanese Cultural Presence in Asia

- “The cultural odor of a product is also closely associated with racial and bodily images of a country of origin.”
- Can you analyse the examples of cultural odor we just discussed with this idea? What are the racial and bodily images associated with the examples?

From Western Gaze to Global Gaze

Japanese Cultural Presence in Asia

- “Cultural odorless products”: products which, in contrast to American export icons, such as Coca-cola or McDonald’s, do not **immediately** conjure images of the country of origin in the minds of consumers.
- Iwabuchi argues that in the 90s, Japan was mainly exporting those “Cultural odorless products” as “Japanese cultural industries still tend to be less concerned with the direct export of Japanese cultural products that with selling the know-how of ‘indigenizing’ the West”
- 無国籍(mukokuseki) — without nationality — a characteristic of the Japanese media or cultural products in the 90s (walkman, Astro Boy by Tezuka Osamu, Mario by Nintendo, ...) — as a global market **strategy**

From Western Gaze to Global Gaze

Japanese Cultural Presence in Asia

- Globalisation and 土着化 (dochakuka) — “glocalisation”
- 土着 means “put something into the local soil”; 土着化: make it 土着
- “Transcend vestigial national differences and to create a standardised global markets, while remaining sensitive to the peculiarities of local markets and differentiated consumer groups.”
- — cultural flows and hybridisation
- How is 土着化 related to the cultural odouless strategy that Japanese companies used?

From Western Gaze to Global Gaze

Japanese Cultural Presence in Asia

- Japan has a very successful experience of 土着化 foreign cultural influence in history, especially in modern and contemporary times — an assumption of local produced products (even with a foreign influence) tend to be more popular than imported ones.
- Historical obstacles Japanese colonialism in exporting Japanese culture, especially in east and southeast Asia.
- Japanese cultural industries believed that their products would suffer a high cultural discount overseas.

From Western Gaze to Global Gaze

Japanese Cultural Presence in Asia

- Culture Discount: the diminishing attractiveness of a particular product in other cultures due to cultural differences based on style, values, or beliefs.
- An famous example of product suffering from culture discount is 妖怪ウォッチ Yokai Watch, a franchise of games and animation from Japan. It's story and background setting is very similar to Pokemon. It's very popular in Japan and East Asia, but not so in the West (comparing to Pokemon)
- One of the main reason is 妖怪 (the Pokemon in this franchise) is a very common concept in East Asia. People from East Asia can easily relate the characters to the supernatural sprits or entity in their local beliefs and animism while the Westerners find it harder to make such a connection. On the other hand, Pokemon resemble pet, which is more universal across different culture.
- Similar example: Digimon

From Western Gaze to Global Gaze

Japanese Cultural Presence in Asia

- Iwabuchi's essay was written in 2002, now 23 years later we can see a lot of things changed already
- Japanese culture odor is now a selling point
 - UNIQLO t-shirt with 浮世絵 (ukiyo-e), the 北斎 (hokusai) collection
 - 歌舞伎 (kabuki) culture in Final Fantasy and Demon Slayer
 - 忍者(Ninja) and 武士(Samurai) in anime, games and other product
- Those Japanese bodily odours became one of the successful element in the products — is it a sign that the shift from Western Gaze (Western cultural superiority, domination and imperialism; eurocentrism) to Global Gaze (multiculturalism, polycentrism)? Think about other examples to support your opinions.

From Western Gaze to Global Gaze

Japanese Cultural Presence in Asia

- This week you were tasked to find a global media product or franchise. In groups discuss the followings:
 - Where is your example produced?
 - What culture is your example based on?
 - Who is the audience of your example?

From Western Gaze to Global Gaze

Japanese Cultural Presence in Asia

- This week you were tasked to find a global media product or franchise. In groups discuss the followings:
 - Do you think your example **can be** seen as a “culturally odorless product”? If not, what cultural odor is hidden in your example?
 - Do you think your example **should be** a “culturally odorless product”? Why or why not?