

# YOUTH CULTURE

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LECTURE- 3

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What do you understand by culture?

Do you prefer listening to classical music or hip hop music? Do you like watching horse racing or watch Netflix, YouTube? Do you read books of poetry or celebrity magazines?

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Youth culture refers to those processes and symbolic systems that young people share that are, to some degree, distinctive from those of their parents and the other adults in their community.

Youth culture can pertain to interests, styles, behaviors, music, beliefs, vocabulary, clothes, sports and dating. The concept behind youth culture is that adolescents are a subculture with norms, mores, behaviors, and values that differ from the main culture of older generations within society.

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For a number of years, theorists have suggested that the term 'youth culture' corresponds with particularized forms of youth cultural practice clustered around the more spectacular manifestation of the consumption of music, style, and associated objects, images, and texts. However, such a focus serves to close off any discussion of 'ordinary' youth, that is, those young people who are not obvious, card-carrying members of style-based youth cultures.

# Pop Culture and Society

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Allows large heterogeneous masses of people to identify collectively.

It serves an inclusionary role in society as it unites the masses on ideals of acceptable forms of behaviour.

Along with forging a sense of identity which binds individuals to the greater society, consuming pop culture items often enhances an individual's prestige in their peer group.

Provides individuals with a chance to change the prevailing sentiments and norms of behaviour. So popular culture appeals to people because it provides opportunities for both individual happiness and communal bonding.

# Sources of Pop culture

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A primary source is the **MASS MEDIA**. Advances in communication allows for the greater transmission of ideas by word of mouth, especially via cell phones to increase public interest. Shows like- *Indian Idol* and the *Great Indian Laughter Show*

Popular culture is also influenced by **PROFESSIONAL ENTITIES** that provide the public with information. These sources include the scientific and scholarly publications, and 'expert' opinion from people considered an authority in their field. For example, a news station reporting on a specific topic, say the effects of playing violent video games, will seek a noted psychologist or sociologist who has published in this area. This strategy is a useful way of influencing the public on a particular subject.

**INDIVIDUAL** as the unique path-finder: An individual may choose to participate in all that is 'popular' for popularity's sake; or they may choose a course of action off the beaten track. At times, these 'pathfinders' affect popular culture by their individuality.

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Youth cultures have not been part of all societies throughout history; they appear most frequently where significant realms of social autonomy for young people become regularized and expected features of the socialization process.

Youth culture refers to the cultural practice of members of this age group by which they express their identities and demonstrate their sense of belonging to a particular group of young people.

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- Youth cultures refer to the way in which young people's social experiences are expressed collectively through the construction of differentiating lifestyles, mainly in their leisure time, or in interstitial spaces in the institutional life. In a more restricted sense, the term defines the emergence of 'youth micro-societies', with significant degrees of independence from the 'adult institutions', that provide specific spaces and time for young people.



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Youth cultures can be regarded as a symbolically relevant field of agency, in which young people can invent themselves according to subjective relevance, individually appropriated life styles and collective trends. Shared interests in music and fashion ,a common language and similar social position are resources for coping and surviving in turbulent times.

However, by creating new symbolic systems they do more than just coping with their problems. Moreover, by developing their self-images they engage in identity work and simultaneously accumulate youth cultural capital. Although the field of youth cultures is also a powerful consumer market, its inventive forces always come from the bottom of (mostly urban) sub-cultures.

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Youth cultures can be analysed from two perspectives:

From the perspective of social conditions (generation, gender, class, ethnic and territorial identities)

From the perspective of cultural images, understood as the set of ideological and symbolic attributes (trends, music, language, cultural practice) assigned to young people or taken by them.

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Youth culture has been influenced by development of postmodern, theorizing the concepts of risk ,individualization and globalization .

The increasingly consumerist way of life of young people suggests that there exists a supermarket of style (Polhemus,1997) where one can pick and mix from variety of sub cultural traditions and move in and out of a myriad collection of different cultural forms.

The concept of scene and tribe have been used to denote how young people draw on global cultural flows such as Bhangra or Rave music yet rework such influence to create fluid, fragmentary and ephemeral friendship patterns and cultural affiliations.(Bennett:2000)

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Miles 2000, suggest emergence of individualized forms of leisure and consumption where youth are more involved in personal lifestyle projects than more traditional collective activities.

Studies have documented the persistence of collective sub cultural grouping such as Goth which was identified by earlier generations. Continuing popularity of these older forms of sub cultural activities across life course is appealing to the youth

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According to the sociologist, young culture – analysed as a homogeneous whole – was produced by a generation that consumed without producing, that by remaining in educational institutions was not only moving away from work, but also from the class structure. The nominal access to ‘leisure time’ seemed to cancel the social differences. A ‘new leisure class’ personalized in the young people then emerged. However, in Parsons’ analysis it was: the *college boys*. Parsons pointed out that when young people had their complaints, these came more from excessive expectations about the future than from any injustice lived: ‘The general orientation appears to be ... their readiness to work within the system, rather than in opposition to it’

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Coleman (1961) underlined the emergence of a real adolescent society ‘with their own language, symbols and, even more important, system of values ... different from those established in the wider society’ (Coleman, 1961: 9). However these authors did not take into account the unequal access to resources and the persisting differences in taste between young people from different social groups.

Paul Willis (1990), in his *Common Culture*, suggests that nightlife has become central in the construction of youth identities.

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The role that the internet has played, and is obviously playing in the configuration of new youth (sub)cultures According to Turkle (1995), the internet creates a ‘new social and cultural sensibility’, characterized by being able to navigate between an infinite number of potential online identities. Such fluidity of identity, which leads to liberate the ‘navigator’ from the boundaries associated with social life away from the internet (Poster, 1995), allows individuals to continually construct and reconstruct easier unique individual ‘portfolios of sociability’ (Castells, 2001).

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David Bell and Barbara M Kennedy (2000) explore the ways in which the internet is reshaping cultural forms and practices at the turn of the century. Subcultures in cyberspace allow to reinforce their boundaries to continue to differentiate youth groups among themselves, as in the case of the British *goth cyberscene* (Hodkinson, 2003; Romana and Smahel, 2011; Whittaker, 2007). Thus *cybergothic* music creates a gateway to the borderland between biological and virtual realities (Van Elferen, 2009).



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‘Youth cultures’ is becoming a flexible and extended concept, that *colonizes generational* and social territories beyond its original homeland (western and urban societies, teenagers and youth, leisure and consumption, the street-corner and the classroom). Today’s youth cultures *acculturate* preadolescence (*teens already feel attraction by youth culture products*), emerging adulthood (those in their forties still experience youth lifestyles and trends), non-western and rural young people (youth cultures as a global *esperanto*), *non-leisure spaces*.