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*Maria BAYNOVA,
Polina PALEKHOVA,
Alexander PETROV,
Ariadna PETROVA*

CULTURAL GLOBALISATION, CONSUMER SOCIETY AND FASHION INDUSTRY IN RUSSIA: NEW SOCIO-HISTORICAL TRENDS

Abstract

The article presents a philosophical and sociological analysis of processes of cultural globalisation, development of consumer society and the fashion industry in Russia. The authors analyse the social foundations of cultural globalisation. The article examines the influence of cultural globalisation on the process of distribution of symbols of new mass culture. The article analyses the peculiarities of the development of the fashion and entertainment industry in modern Russian society. The article also examines the specific impact of the processes of marketisation and the displacement of national cultures in the system of modern societies.

Keywords: cultural globalisation, consumer society, fashion industry, economic philosophy, economic sociology, social history of Western society, Russian society.

Introduction

The article aims to provide a philosophical understanding of the influence of cultural globalisation and consumer society on modern society and its structural transformation. These transformations are analysed on the example of the development of the fashion and entertainment industry in Russia. These transformations show the problems and prospects for the development of an “ethical economy” or “cultural economy” in the context of the economisation of culture and the prevalence of the social philosophy of economism. More than a hundred years ago, the possibility of forming such modern social utopia – the utopia of cultural globalisation – based on the synthetic ethics of econo-

mism could foresee the famous Russian philosopher and writer Sergei Bulgakov (Baynova, Evstratova, Petrov, Petrova & Volchenkova, 2016). This synthetic ethics of economism transforms globalisation from a social utopia into social dystopia. The synthetic ethics of economism opposes the traditional ethics of creative labour and active, genuine culture. This specific and artificial system of ideas and views deforms the spiritual basics of labour and activity of a person in the longer term. That is precisely the reason why the search for an alternative self-realisation of modern people is so important. These alternative ways to achieve self-realisation have deep philosophical and cultural roots. Modern globalised culture develops in these rigorous frameworks of the kingdom of

necessity, which is increasingly being transformed into the kingdom of stable dependence on the opportunity to consume more and more goods. The modern global kingdom of necessity shapes a particular aesthetics - the aesthetics of economic fear.

Moreover, people feel this fear despite their income level or their belonging to this or another social group. It is the fear of losing this opportunity to consume more and more faceless things created and promoted by the global industrial system; their possession gives an invariably false perception of a comfortable life. Modern people are more afraid of losing an opportunity to possess things than to lose themselves. The philosophy and synthetic ethics of economism create a barrier to the formation of “ethical economy” or “cultural economy” in modern society.

It is generally accepted, “cultural globalisation” is a process of the global distribution of the so-called “mass culture” or, rather, “mass-information culture” (the term used by J. Baudrillard (1998), since without the global development of mass media the existence of mass culture would be impossible). The growing impact of cultural globalisation is manifested in the suppression of the national cultures of “traditional” societies in the name of the triumph of the “global consumer society” - the “modern” society, thereby creating a problem of preserving sociocultural identity in various social systems. However, under the influence of “cultural globalisation” are both developed and developing countries. This fact to some extent “equalises” the consequences of radical global sociocultural transformations for the societies of these countries in various spheres.

Methodology of Analysis

Analysis of the influence of cultural globalisation on new trends in the development of the fashion industry can be carried out based on the methodology of economic sociology. Economic sociology is one of the most interesting and dynamic branches of contemporary sociological researches. This branch of sociology already has its own history. Perhaps the history of the institutionalisation of economic sociology as a university discipline is not very long in different countries of America, Europe, Asia, especially in Russia and China. However, economic sociology, as the scientific branch, has strong theoretical and methodological foundations. The scientific and learning structures of modern economic sociology are based on the classical works of Karl Marx’s (2005) political economy, Max Weber’s (2016) interpretive sociology, Émile Durkheim’s (1982) sociological functionalism, Georg Simmel’s (1950) sociology of exchange, Joseph Schumpeter’s (2001) socioeconomic institutionalism, Talcott Parsons’ (1961) structural functionalism and, of course, Karl Polanyi’s (2001) social criticism of economics. Thus, the methodology of economic sociology allows us to analyse complex processes, such as cultural globalisation. Since cultural globalisation is a relationship of changes in culture and economy. The methodology of economic sociology presupposes a comprehensive analysis of cultural and economic processes in modern society. This is a new approach to the study of personality and rational understanding of the meaning of life. A similar structural process is the global spread of consumer society. This complex analysis is based on the study of structural, historical pro-

cesses (Branskij, Oganyan K. M., & Oganyan K. K., 2018).

Furthermore, cultural values being the goals of life and the primary means of achieving thereof, are the most important factors for individual and behaviour motivation, the personal value orientations (Yudina & Leskova, 2018).

Philosophical and Sociological Analysis of Processes of Cultural Globalisation, Development of Consumer Society and the Fashion Industry in Russia

So recently, these social changes related to cultural globalisation have been interpreted exclusively as positive for all societies. Why? There are several reasons for such a point of view. The first reason is the “inevitability” of economic globalisation, and together with this process, of global (radical) sociocultural changes. The “inevitability of globalisation” has for many years been the object of both scientific researches and, primarily, successful political propaganda. Secondly, the processes of sociocultural globalisation are positively perceived by many people around the world, as these processes are viewed as a manifestation of the spread of a civilised way of life (associated with a general increase in the standard of living) to all traditional societies. Third, cultural globalisation is a process that should save humankind from interstate, inter-social, intercultural conflicts. Since cultural globalisation, based on the principles of multiculturalism and “mass culture”, creates the conditions for the progressive unhindered development of intercultural communications, intercultural and international economic exchange (even the production of goods and services is also part of the culture). Usually, all these manifestations are represented exclusively as a new era in the social

history of all humankind - the era of new mass culture. This era fundamentally changes the lives of people in all modern societies. The traditional life, at last, turns into “modern progressive lifestyle” (post-industrial, socially fair, conflict-free).

However, is mass culture a kind of new progressive cultural form? Is the globalisation of culture a new process that also represents a new era in history? “Cultural globalisation” is not a new process, as many hyper globalists try to assert, because intensive interethnic and intercivili-sational sociocultural exchange was carried out for millennia, and constitutes the essence of all social history. “Cultural globalisation” (first of all in the interpretation of the majority of supporters of the concept of neo-liberal modernisation) in reality is nothing more than a process of the global distribution of various types of cultural and entertainment industries (including the fashion industry) that undoubtedly influence national cultures and national socio-cultural identity. Since the system of social and economic communications about entertainment was turned into an industry in “traditional” industrial countries (the US and Western Europe), it would be more correct to talk about the global expansion of the Western culture and entertainment industry. The social consequences of this expansion for different countries will differ significantly.

In this regard, researchers have traditionally talked about two social processes: the erosion of national cultures and cultural globalisation as westernisation.

The erosion of national cultures under the influence of the Western culture and entertainment industry in various spheres of public life is observed and fixed by researchers. Primarily the problems are in everyday social and cultural communications, changes in the lifestyle and

styles of consumption of many social groups. However, these changes are not so radical as to significantly affect the cultural identity and ethics of the majority. The changes cover mainly those social groups that have the financial and economic opportunity for a sustainable, long-term imitation of the styles, symbols and patterns of the consumer society coming from rich countries. The rest of the social groups consume only what is available to them. The most popular areas of “cultural production” of these social groups are the Internet, television, music, cinema and fashion.

Of course, the identification of cultural globalisation with the process of spreading the material and symbolic influence of the West in the world has reasonable grounds. However, the cultural (as well as political) unity of the West is still a contentious issue. There are well-known examples of the struggle for cultural autonomy and political independence in Europe and North America. For example, according to J. Habermas, “the division of the West” is not so much socio-political as cultural and philosophical nature. “The division” manifests at the sociocultural level in the constant conflicts between town and country, between church and secular authorities, in the competition between faith and knowledge, in the struggle between political authorities and antagonistic social classes (Habermas, 2006). The division is also caused by profound structural contradictions connected with the constant and sharp struggle between different social groups in the social history of Western civilisation, between different societies and states for the opportunity to maintain a dominant position in the modern world economic system. For example, most Europeans still associate themselves with their states and national cultures, and only then with a united Europe. Obviously, glob-

al cultural unification is a myth. The substitution effect instead takes the form of the effect of marketisation and partial displacement of national cultures. These two processes form the essence of cultural globalisation.

The marketisation of local (national) cultures is the process of turning into commodities those values, symbols and artefacts that were not originally intended “for sale”. The transformation of these values and symbols into commodities by including in circulation on the “global cultural market” causes such fierce opposition from the “traditionalists” (in both developed and developing countries). The displacement is the process of transforming national cultures into countercultures. The countercultures oppose to the overwhelming influence of “mass culture” increasingly more rigidly and actively. These countercultures are the last opportunity for different social groups that are still trying to preserve its cultural identity and not turn into primitive extras of the “theatre” of global transformations.

Without the influence of countercultures on social communications, it is difficult to imagine a modern society in any country. One can designate examples of the stability of local (national) cultures that are affected by cultural globalisation. First, in the modern world, there are still many national languages and dialects. These languages do not disappear under the influence of “global or mass culture”, and these local cultures absorb all that has come from outside. The second good example is the sustainable reproduction of various local forms of traditional art and folklore. Certainly, folklore, the most conspicuous manifestation of the specifics of national cultures, has been one of the primary means of socio-cultural identification for millennia. Folklore remains the most important means and

channel of intracultural and intercultural communication. Today folklore is one of the most popular forms of culture for a mass audience. In any country (even the poorest), an enormous number of different events are held every year, devoted to the folklore of different nations and ethnoses. Besides, because of its uniqueness, it can be considered very well as a basis for resistance to global sociocultural unification.

Specialists in social anthropology and social history note the existence and sustained dissemination of various local traditional folk beliefs and religious rituals. These folk beliefs and religious rituals perfectly coexist with the values of mass culture. For several last decades, fashion has been forming in different countries for participation in traditional (ancient) and religious rituals (for example, the preservation of traditional wedding ceremonies against the background of the spread of unified, internationalised and secularised wedding ceremonies). Besides, specialists in the sociology of religion note the preservation and even a significant increase in the influence of traditional religions and churches.

The reaction to the global spread of fast food was the emergence of fast-food chains with national specifics - Chinese bars and restaurants, pancake restaurants in Russia, pizzerias in Italy, etc. On the quality of food and according to its national traditions in these restaurants, if these restaurants are abroad, we can discuss, of course. One could affirm: these bars, snack bars and restaurants already represent a real alternative to the global American networks of fast food. More importantly, this example demonstrates that the “traditional” national cuisine created by centuries and millennia turned out to be “too tough” for globalisation (unlike folklore). Also, as L. Feuerbach said: “man is what he eats”. Moreover, this is not only a beautiful phrase, and it is an

anthropological fact. The culture of nutrition of different nations is also an example of the modern counterculture.

The process of marketisation is manifested in the global spread of the Western culture and entertainment industry and the formation on its basis of several specific subcultures. In the socio-historical process of “cultural globalisation”, which increases the symbol mobility, a symbolic market is formed. On such a market, not only the modern “global” symbols of the consumer society are involved in trade turnover, but also various artefacts formed during the millennial formation of cultures of different nations. However, turning culture into a commodity is a complex process. This process changes many things in modern societies. This process forms the basis for new social contradictions and new mass culture.

It is assumed that the primary goal of the development and global spread of “mass culture” is the formation of a “new type” of identity that is characteristic of the Western consumer society. It is assumed that a “new type” of identity may appear based on the destruction, not so much of national cultures as of the habitual (“traditional”) way of life of billions of people. This “new type” of identity is designed to create conditions for expanding the “army of loyal consumers” of goods and services provided by transnational corporations. In this case, as a rule, the situation is presented in such a way that the choice of ordinary people and even entire peoples is not great: either to become “modern” by adopting the “psychology of striving for total comfort” and “ethics of anticipatory consumption”, or forever stay “on the sidelines of history” and disappear together with “traditional” societies. For more than one hundred years of developing a global industrial society, such an alternative engenders some social con-

traditions, of which the main one is the contradiction between the increasing number of goods and symbols of the global consumer society and the limited possibilities of the majority of people in the world for consumption. Because the inequality between countries is widening. The U.S., Western European countries are 100 times richer than Ethiopia, Haiti, Nepal and many other countries at the beginning of the 21st century. If we abandon preconceived approaches to the study of poverty, one finds that in reality, in the world live more than 4 billion poor people (Birdsall, 2006). The global economic crisis of the late-2000s and the Great Recession only exacerbated this global differentiation (at the same time, experts of international organisations do not forecast the growth of income of many social groups in different countries in the next decade).

Therefore, in reality, the alternative looks different. The formation of a “new type” of identity is to oblige as many people around the world as possible to engage consistently in the values and symbols of the consumer society. The goal is to make them, regardless of income, make the consumption of the whole “modern” way of life, an “active mode of attitude” to everything around them, including social communications based on national cultures too (symbols of which are constantly involved in the turnover of the constantly renewing and growing mass of goods and services).

However, as far as “mass culture” can form a specific “new” identity - still an open question. Unlike national cultures, consisting of values and symbols that include centuries of accumulated social experience, “mass culture” is based on phenomena, each subsequent of which denies already the existing – and thereby lives so way. Within the framework of “mass culture”, there

does not appear the socially symbolic basis of everyday life, which forms a social identity. Mass culture is primarily a fashion and entertainment industry. Mass culture changes the structure of social communications changes the ways of implementing social communications, but the mass culture cannot replace national cultures and cannot create its own type of social or cultural identity. New mass culture forms new subcultures, but these new consumer subcultures are not stable. The fashion and entertainment industry influence these subcultures.

Undoubtedly, Russia is under the influence of the socio-historical processes of cultural globalisation. Besides, the most striking example of this influence is the spread of symbols of the fashion industry that come to Russia from abroad. Perhaps the most interesting are modern sociological studies of the dynamics of electronic commerce, the new entertainment industry and the spread of fashion for ethical (or “green”) consumption.

The basis of the consumer society in Russia is clothing, equipment, gadgets and automobiles. However, fashion changes to the way of purchasing these goods and many services. More than 40% of Russians buy goods via the Internet. Such data were obtained based on a study conducted in 2016. These are young people, as well as representatives of the middle age group. As experts say, most of all, the fashion for electronic commerce is widespread in St. Petersburg. Over the past five years, the indicator of the popularity of electronic commerce has increased by as much as 15 percentage points and reached a level of 61%. The most popular Internet sites for shopping are Aliexpress, Yulmart, Ozon.ru and Lamoda (“Pokupki v Internet”, 2016). E-commerce and online mobile shopping have become part of the fashion industry in Russia. This

means that the fashion industry in Russia will receive a new impetus to development.

Today there is a growing interest in the consumption of intellectual products. Thus, the process of transformation of the consumer society in Russia consists in the transition from the demonstration of the consumption of material products to the demonstration of the consumption of intellectual products, such as music or other digital products on the Internet. The new entertainment industry is becoming a new fashion trend. 80% of respondents prefer leisure on the Internet. The top three most popular online entertainment included downloading music, watching movies, communicating through instant messengers and social networking.

Moreover, 74% of respondents do these using mobile devices (“Bol’shaya chast’”, 2017). The structure of social communications is changing. The fashion industry shapes these changes. Moreover, it should be noted that social communications are becoming an object of fashion.

More and more popular in Russia is a socially responsible business. In Russia, the social responsibility of business became the object of sociological researches recently, in the early 2000s. The social responsibility of business (or corporate social responsibility, as it is also called in the scientific literature) in this case, we consider as a set of ethical principles for the implementation of entrepreneurial activities, presupposing a specific system of social obligations that go beyond the limits established by law. These obligations are borne by business, and the implementation of these obligations affects the improvement of the quality of life in a particular society. This may be the obligations of a businessman to the workers. However, it can also be obligations to society. This is a new social trend in Russia. Also, this trend is increasingly associ-

ated with the development of the consumer society. It is not just about increasing the number of new goods and services and the availability of these goods. Citizens of Russia are now increasingly thinking about the quality of consumption, the safety of consumption and the social aspects of consumption. These parameters determine the quality of life.

Furthermore, with this conclusion, more people in Russia agree. Therefore, for example, Russians are paying increasing attention to the environmental reputation of companies that produce and sell various goods and services. At the same time, the gradual expansion of a group of environmentally responsible consumers in Russia should be noted. Moreover, this process is part of the global (through media advertising) fashion for a healthy or “green” lifestyle and “green” consumption. By the mid-2010s, already 30% of Russians in some way met ethical consumption (purchase of environmental goods, boycotting purchases of hazardous goods and services, waste disposal, etc.). Experts note that ethical consumers in Russia are multi-profile. Nevertheless, they show the highest “sensitivity” (more than 70%) to information about the harm to the environment in the place of residence of respondents (Shabanova, 2015).

Conclusion

The study of interaction, interconnection, mutual influence of the economy and culture is the traditional direction of research within sociology and economic sociology, anthropology and social history. This direction of sociology exists for more than 100 years. Modern studies of economy and culture within the framework of sociology are traditionally oriented toward studying the influence of ethics and aesthetics on the

motivation of economic activity in different societies. Interest in the study of ethics is significantly complemented by the problems associated with research so-called “cultural economy” or “ethical economy”, as well as arguments about the economic culture of modern societies. Studying the “cultural economy” is not possible without studying the fashion industry. Further studies of the aspects mentioned above of the mutual influence of global economic transformational processes and changes in the global and local socio-cultural communications taking place are one of the most promising areas of research in the economy and culture within the framework of modern sociology.

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