



Otázka: American Cultural Imperialism

Jazyk: Angličtina

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What Are The Positives And The Negatives of American Cultural Imperialism

McDonald's, Starbucks, Coca-Cola, MTV, Disney, Apple, Hippies, Elvis... Sounds familiar doesn't it? Or better to say – sounds American? In this way we could say, we don't have to travel million miles away because... America is all around us!

The word imperialism is derived from the Latin verb imperare which means to command and from the Roman concept of imperium (expansion). TO COMMAND – exactly, USA became the main commander. Commander of what? Of anything – art, music, lifestyle. USA commands what is “in”

and what is “out”. If something does not relate to US – then probably this “something” does not exist.

Today, USA as a global economic and political superpower, the spread of American values in the entire world is at the leading edge of a wave of spread of Western goods and consumerist culture. Some people claim that the spread of American concepts of universal values are beneficial to most nations, they say that their propagations of ideas such as freedom, democracy, equality, and human rights are concepts that should be universal indeed.

On the contrary there're opinions which consider this American cultural hegemony as a threat. Maybe it seems to help countries, but these benefits also cause the damage to local markets and local cultures. This obviously leads to the extinction of cultures and make the world less culturally rich and diverse. Imperialism creates dictators and makes the cultural diversity lost in one country. The cultural diversity is important for a country, it is one of a country's richness and value because it makes available more ways of solving problems and responding to catastrophes (natural or otherwise).



And how about religion? Religion – a simple word of 8 letters. And because of this word die so many people everyday. In the name of religion America fights. Indeed because of religion Europeans came to America and so its bloody history has started. American people are taught to see “the other” (other cultures) as inferior, and this concept exists with every country America analyses. Imposing Christianity through missionary work in other countries seems to be popular among Americans. The idea that one religion is inferior to another is downright ridiculous. Americans believe that by converting a Buddhist man into a Christian man would make him a better person, but the truth is no religion is superior or inferior. This idea alone supports any accusation of America’s imperialistic nature.

One of the primary issued which has been discussing nowadays is McDonald’s and its impact on todays society and the enviroment. McDonald’s feeds more than 46millions people worldwide every day... Thats more than the entire population of Spain! I don’t have to list all the positives and negatives (mainly) to show you McDonalds’s effects. We all know about this. But we also know that we live in consumers society don’t we? Yes we do. What has actually caused this? What made us such the consumers? Who is to blame? Or maybe we should ask: What is to blame? Isn’t it media?

Media.

“The media is like the weather, only it’s man-made weather.” said Mickey Knox (in Natural born killers the movie)

“Whoever controls the media, controls the mind” a quote of Jim Morrison.

I think from these messages we can clearly see that media is the main character who builds American imperialism.

Americans have already created many negative problems in other nations especially in taking advantage in order to make profits, creating environmental problems and influencing others to follow “Americanism”. Many American corporations take advantage of other countries by paying low salaries and providing less benefits. However, I don’t like the ways American corporations are doing in other nations in order to make profits. They take the advantage of cheaper labors and avoid paying high tax and regulation fee.

As I were curious I've decided to make a little survey to know what do Americans themselves think about their huge cultural influence over the other nations. Here we go again - I'm using Facebook to get the answer. Yes, one of the most used social networks nowadays - Facebook - made in American Cambridge in Massachusetts by the American Mark Zuckerberg. Anyways, let's get back to the answers I was given from American friends about the positives and the negatives of the cultural imperialism of their country.

Emma says: "Positive:

- it made us a major world power (after WWI)
- we have pretty privileged lives
- it allows us to do a lot of research in technology, medicine, etc

Negative:

- pollution (i believe we cause 25% of the world's pollution)
- i think our government feels superior to other countries (invading iraq, for example)"

Pit: "Positive: we live a privileged lifestyle.

Negative: it was done with the blood of Native Americans and on the backs of Africans"

Bella: "Positive: none

Negative: Destroying other peoples lives and countries. Humiliating people, judgement, hatred, terrorism,etc..... "

Jim: "Positive: It gave us much of what has become the cornerstone of our culture

Negative: We committed genocide on the native peoples because the Christians of the time saw them as sub-human "

So if Americans have this opinions on the issue of imperialism... what kind of opinion should we make?