



The Negative Effects of Globalization on Cultural Security

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Abstract

There is connection between culture and security since culture, as the foundation of life, has come to be an important component of national and international security. Globalization is depicted as a threat to cultural security; it is a process of Americanization. In this regard, the present study sets itself the task of answering the following questions: (1) what is the essence of cultural security? (2) how can cultural security be achieved? (3) how does globalization affect cultural security? In concordance with the aim of answering these questions, the current study hypothesizes that (1) cultural security is the challenge of preserving cultural identity in the face of modernization and globalization, (2) cultural security can be achieved by entrenching cultural values and beliefs in the minds of people, crystallizing the abuses and bad effects of modernization, and curbing Western influences, (3) globalization negatively affects cultural security in all contexts because it is a strategy of US imperialism with the goals of getting weak countries, looting, and impoverishment; it is described as a catastrophe for Arab societies and is compared to the incursion of the western world into Arab land.

1. What is Cultural Security?

It is agreed upon by most authors that cultural security means freedom of thought, conscience, language, life style, ethnicity, religion, and customs. It is the ability of a society to last under changing conditions and possible or actual threats. Moreover, cultural security is connected with the protection of cultural values and cultural heritage (Zietek, 2013: 2). Cultural heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation. It includes customs, practices, places, artistic expressions, and values and traditions (Web source1).

Cultural security, hence, can be defined as a lack of threats to culture in a broad sense and as a set of actions whose goal is to create conditions amenable to the development and evolution of a culture. Culture, then, should possess the ability to protect itself against possible or real threats and to preserve its specific character even if it is adaptable to objective changes (Zietek, 2013: 3).

The phrase “cultural security” is used when speaking about the threats of modernization to change the way of life. In this vein, cultural security might be defined as the challenge of preserving cultural identity in the face of modernization and globalization. The definition of cultural security varies depending on the notions of culture and security. From the perspective of culture, the term suggests the preservation or protection of the heritage and values of a group, community, or nation. From the perspective of security, the term would indicate the significance of a culture to national, regional, or international security.

The phrase “cultural security” has newly appeared as a term in various contexts internationally. Its usage seems to fall into three categories: (1) preservation of an indigenous culture, (2) protection of a national culture, and (3) power of a national culture globally. In this regard, securitizing culture could involve safeguarding beliefs and traditions against corruption or even extinction.

From a psychological perspective, emotional connections to symbols of culture and the role of culture in identity represent significant links between culture and security for the individual. A feeling of security is a matter of perception. How secure individuals feel affects national security. For example, feelings of insecurity can cause distractions that may decrease productivity and potentially compromise economic security. Cultural insecurity may also cause animosity towards foreign cultures and thereby influence foreign policy or induce radicalization. The tie people feel to their national symbols and the pride they take in their cultural identity can be manipulated by those wishing to cause harm. Attacks on such symbols strike at the heart of a country/culture (Web source 1).

2. Globalization

Globalization refers to the free movement of technology and information. It is the action or procedure of international integration of countries arising from the convergence of world views, ideas, and other aspects of culture. In its simplistic sense, globalization refers to the widening, deepening, and spreading up of global interconnection (Web source 1). Globalization is conceived of as the process of westernization which is driven by communication technologies.

Globalization is a diverse phenomenon which relates to a multilateral political world. It tends to bring people into contact with foreign people and cultures and tend to lead to the spread of western-style democracy. It is viewed as purposeful and intentional because it corresponds to the political interests of the US and other powerful capitalist societies. Its effects are to reflect their attitudes and values and to homogenize the global culture. Accordingly, globalization is the spread of American culture and values so that the entire world is molded in the image of American culture (Schiller, 1992: 33). Globalization seems as a vehicle which aims at controlling, invading, or undermining other cultures (McQuail, 2000: 22).

The term globalization is used to refer to political, cultural, technological, social, and ideological globalization. Cultural globalization refers to the transmission of ideas, meanings, and values around

the world (Web resource 1). This process is marked by the common consumption of cultures that have been diffused by the internet, popular culture media, and international travel (ibid.). The circulation of cultures enables individuals to partake in extended social relations that cross national and regional borders (ibid.). Cultural globalization involves the formation of shared norms and knowledge with which people associate their individuals and collective cultural identities. It brings increasing interconnectedness among different populations and cultures (ibid.). In other words, it is the diffusion or spread of cultural items such as ideas, styles, religions, technologies, and languages. The globalization of culture is imputed to mass media which has a putatively strong influence on the diffusion of the above mentioned cultural items. Thus, media is referred to as the “magic bullet” or “hypodermic needle” due to its powerful effects over people.

Media globalization is the expansion of recreational opportunities by spreading pop culture, particularly via the internet and satellite television. This means that the term globalization implies transformation. Some critics argue that globalization harms the diversity of cultures as a dominating country’s culture is introduced through globalization. It can become a threat to the diversity of local cultures. Some argue that globalization may ultimately lead to Westernization or Americanization of culture where the dominating cultural concepts of economically and politically powerful western countries spread through media and cause harm to local cultures. Much globalized media content comes from the West, particularly from the US. Thus, American media (Disney, Time Warner, Viacom) play a prominent role in the global scene. This will contribute to a one-way transmission of ideas and values that result in the displacement of indigenous cultures. Media globalization opens up outside influence through the influx of foreign ideals. The outcome of this influx can be homogenization (the local culture becomes more like the culture of the US) or heterogenization (aspects of US culture come to exist alongside local culture causing the culture to become more diverse).

News agencies play an influential role in the process of globalization because they are closely tied to the modernization of the West and the expansion of communication media. International news agencies such as Reuters, United Press and the like have been and are still assigned a role by spreading a global agenda and creating perception of the South and Arab countries as being a place of “corruption and disaster” for Western people. Thus, media globalization tends to undermine national cultures. Many argue that the imported media culture may threaten and shrink the native culture of the receiving country.

One negative effect of media globalization on the receiving countries is changing people’s traditional values and undermining their cultural autonomy by imbalance in the flow of mass media content and therefore their national identities are in danger of being subverted through disseminating, via media, opinions and ideas from one place to another. Moreover, media globalization assists in reinforcing American cultural supremacy throughout the world through the dominance of Hollywood films and the export of US TV series.

Although some think that globalization is an opportunity for liberation, freedom, getting rid of tyranny, others think that globalization has a negative impact on the Arabic culture as well as Arab youths. This impact involves language, dressing style, identity, and heritage culture. Many Arab nationalists condemn the influences of globalization on their culture. They argue that this cultural invasion will lead to the disintegration of identity and the spirit of culture (Al-Rawashdeh, 2014: 81-2).

3. Causes of Globalization

1. Technological advances and policies that encourage international business relations are propelled by G. Business outsourcing also contributes to the social aspect of G.

2. Advances in the means of transport and in telecommunications infrastructure including the rise of the telegraph and its modern offspring, the internet and mobile phones have been major factors in G (Web resource 1). Similarly, facebook has its own role as a social networking service with its active users all over the world (ibid.).

3. Globalization can be spread by global journalism which provide massive information and rely on internet to interact (ibid.).

4. The media is perfect for globalization or the spread of information. It is a cultural product and the transfer of such a product is likely to have an influence on the recipient's culture.

4. Cons of Globalization

Although globalization brings along with it the integration of economies and a prosperous real estate business and industrial developments, as Silicon Valley (2010) puts it, and although it provides various benefits in terms of technology, it has various negatives:

1. The erase of the cultural identity of people and the cultural peculiarities of nations through contributing immensely to the evasion of a people's culture (Afifi, 1997).

2. The invasion in the age of communication through various types of cultural intrusion at homes, communities, schools, institutions, and individuals. The most obvious manifestations of this invasion, according to Kanuri (1996), are the following: (a) tearing a lot of tissues, social disruption besides the dissolution of the family and social ties and the rebellion controls on family and community values. (b) the deteriorating of the parenting relationship. (c) widening a wave of westernization that hits the broad parts of our Youths.

3. Plundering and encouraging working hands, scholars, and scientists to migrate through what is called economic openness,

which is associated with the needs of the exchange of minds, experiences, and information.

4. The blind imitation of American fashions and models. This invasion, Kanuri (1996) mentions, has entered from many doors including TV satellites, web sites, books, programs, series, and pornographic images; migration to foreign countries; the introduction of the Western model in many fields of life without taking into consideration the caveats reservations and privacy. Due to G, the traditional dressing mode of Arab Youths has been replaced by western dressing patterns

5. The spread of English and its use as a lingua franca at the expense of other languages like Arabic. Thus, English surpassed Arabic. In this respect, globalization is defined as the expansion of American imperialism which is in turn defined as a type of relationship whereby one society can dominate another. This domination often comes associated with the domination of the language of that imperialism (i.e., English) (Galtung, 1980). Phillipson (1992) calls English “linguistic imperialism” because of its dominance in the era of G. Mckay (2002) emphasizes that the number of people using English is vast and growing and this growing is fueled by the advantages that English offers to those speaking it and these advantages assist people who are familiar with the language. According to Crystal (2003: 29, 72), English is the language most widely taught as a foreign language over 100 countries. Cairncross (2001: 266) states “in countries other than US, people fear a future in which everybody speaks English and thinks like an American, with cultural diversity engulfed in a tidal wave of crass Hollywood values”.

6. Globalization affects Arab daily communication. Many young Arabs choose to speak Arabic mixed with English and write Arabic using English alphabets, for example, writing the religious Arabic phrase ما شاء الله (what Allah wills) like Masha'allah and الحمد لله (praise be to Allah) like Alhamdulillah because of G.

7. Western culture TV contributes to the disintegration of social and cultural fabric in Arab communities and to sowing the seeds of discord among Arab people on sectarian and nationalistic grounds.

8. The erosion of the identity of Arab individuals. Identity lies in their traditions and culture which includes values, beliefs, customs, rites, rituals, dress ups, language, food, arts and crafts. Globalization has led to the desertion of these features of the Arabian culture which leads to the destruction of the Arab culture as a whole. It leads to difficulty in identifying and discriminating Arab people on the basis of cultural aspects as they follow others' cultural values.

5. How to Stand in the Face of Globalization

1. Globalization should not be allowed to negatively infiltrate into our society by understanding its meaning and recognizing its principles, assumptions, and consequences correctly and by training our Youths on its techniques and mechanisms to deal with it and to know the provisions of its threats and chaos.

2. Satellite TV, radio, and news channels and sites should be used to carry Islamist ideologies. Biased channels should be prohibited from broadcasting because it has been employed to spread extremist doctrine and misrepresenting Islam. Instead, TV channels should emphasize Islamic values and Arab traditions through the presentation of programs on history, heritage, religious teachings, folkloric arts, and other practices that give the Arab nation its distinctive features. Moreover, programs should focus more on Islamic talk shows and interviews, Quranic recitals, live prayer transmissions, classical literature shows, history presentations, and programs on traditional art and culture.

3. Curricula should adopt criticisms and analyses of the manifestations of globalization, its signs and effects. They should play an active role in the construction of individuals to build self proficiency for the purpose of establishing the national culture and correct it in the hearts of individuals through the correct presentation of Islam and its validity for all mankind.

4. Arabic media should focus on the right meaning and principles of democracy, culture of tolerance, and acceptance of others for the sake of taking away the threat of extremism and bigotry among Youths in particular which are resulting from the negative attitudes of globalization.

5. Supporting ways and propositions of civilization among Youths especially those calling for the preservation of national identity through reconstructing it in the framework of globalization and the revolution of scientific, technical communications and information technology.

6. Bringing to the limelight the fact that showing foreign serials and films on Arab satellite TV is no more than a foreign cultural onslaught contributing to the erosion of local cultures and indigenous life patterns through the promotion of consumerist attitudes. Thus, TV here is a tool of cultural subversion that undermines Arabic-Islamic cultural principles.

6. Conclusions

1. The essence of cultural security is preserving cultural identity in the face of modernization and globalization. It can be achieved by entrenching our cultural values and beliefs in the minds of people and by crystallizing the bad effects of globalization and curbing Western influences.

2. Globalization has been heralded both as the savour and the damnation of the world. It refers to the spread throughout the world of ideas, customs, and attitudes originated in one part of the world. It is the latest manifestation of Western hegemony; a daunting and destructive political, cultural, and economic threat to the Arab World. Globalization disintegrates the nation-state system and dissolve national identities

3. Many elements of globalization contradict or conflict with Islam which is a religion with its own set of laws and a claim to provide the proper order for society. It imposes itself on contemporary life whether politically, economically, intellectually, scientifically, culturally, educationally, or in the media.

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Web sources

Web source 1: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/globalization>