GLOBALIZATION VERSUS CULTURAL IDENTITY

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Abstract
At the outset of the third millennium, the human world is changing at an unbelievable pace. Since the last decades of the twentieth century, a huge wave has risen and it has mounted to its crest with the realization of the information highways through the development of electronic media at the dawn of the millennium, what has been followed by a new orientation in the social changes from a local toward a global scale. The countries of the north holding such media have dramatically influenced the cultural territory of those in the south and have launched a cultural raid against the identities of such countries. This study is an applied research in terms of goal and an analytic, descriptive, and documentaries research as regards its nature. The results of this study indicate thatcultural invasion in the southern countries is inevitable, yet it tries to deal with the existing strategies to control and limit that and retain the nations' cultural identity.

Key words: *globalization, culture, identity, mass media, invasion*

Introduction

So far, humanity has passed behind two huge waves of change each of which has vastly demolished the cultures and civilizations of the past and replaced them with the ways of life all unimaginable to the predecessors. The first wave, that is agricultural revolution, lasted for thousands of years to accomplish its mission. The second wave, that is the emergence of the industrial civilization, lasted for three hundred years. Today, it seems that history is even more in rush and the third wave thatis the globalization is travelling the vastness of history at a high velocity. The third wave is accompanied with the disintegration of the families, shattering economies, paralyzing the political systems, and fragmentation of the emerging values and cultures. What is obvious is that globalization is accompanied with the global development of the economic markets (Giddens, 1990) and the economic market's being developed has been the outcome of the intense activities of the multi-national corporations which have had the pivotal role in the process of globalization (Sklair, 1994). According to the general understanding, the concept of globalization is suggestive of the meaning that the trend of the social shifts has changed from a local scale to a global one. In such a situation, the destiny of the whole corners of the planet Earth has interlaced together through the tight links and mutual economic, political, and cultural influences beyond the borderlines, and the identity has increasingly been determined by transnational forces (Holton, 1998). “Globalization” was at first a result of global blending of global free trade agreements, global network, and the integrity of financial markets, which has eliminated borders and distances and has presented the world as a whole economic unit, however, since the late 1960s the process of globalization has manifested in different economic, political, and cultural areas. This is further visible in economy and culture, and it is expanding more and more (Robertson, 1998). In the case of economy, it needs access to global markets and dominance in the market needs changes in the culture and beliefs of other nations. Here, the concept of exportation of added value in cultural products and exchanges develops, which was realized by the imposition of persuasive policies (Kazemi, 2010).

The phenomenon of globalization, its dimensions and range are so expansive which have influenced all aspects of human life in different areas of science, technology, culture, society, and economy, to the

extent that some experts consider it as the greatest event in human history. It is such that the concepts of distance and space have unbelievably changed in the two recent decades, in the light of revolutionary progress in electronic communications. With the appearance of a new face of capitalism and globalization, more attention is directed toward cultural aspects rather than economic colonization, and it is attempted to act toward creating global cultures (Johnston, 1985). Three main points are emphasized: power and exploitation, capitalism, and globalism and world order (Shokooiei, 2000). With the beginning of 21st century, it has also influenced the political economy of cultural realms, and even expanded the dimensions of public culture, through an increase in the integrated control of media in multi-national corporations having the world under control by over 500 satellites (Momeni, 2006). One of the characteristics of this era is the blending of economy and culture which can be seen in violent, action, pornographic movies produced under the postmodernist culture. The perspective of western scholars mainly justifies multinational policies. In this respect, Samuel Huntington writes in his controversial *clash of civilization*, "A civilization is a cultural entity." He continues that "A civilization is thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have [...] which is short of that which distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined both by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people." Huntington believes that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. To him, there are two options as regards with different civilizations: humankind should endeavor to achieve the unity and homogeneity of civilizations, or they let civilizations being demolished through conflicts (Huntington, 2001). He also makes a distinction between cultural and material dimensions of civilizations. In addition, giving more importance to power as a material dimension of civilization, he states that other civilizations try to achieve it in spite of the fact they want to maintain their own cultural values and traditions (Seifzade, 2002).

Discussion

A Chinese researcher categorized Cultural items as follows:

a)items which underlie human being and nature relationship including technology, crafts, conventional medicine, foods, divination, witchcraft, etc.

b) items which govern interrelationships between human beings including language, communications, educational system, ceremonies, arts, plays, wars, etc.

c) items which govern humankind relationship with nature and other human beings including social, economic institutions, relations of productions, family ties, etc.

d) Items which govern the humankind relationship with the supernatural including religious tenets, beliefs, values, deeds, etc.

Taking into account the abovementioned classification, culture is a set of items such as values, norms, symbols, language, beliefs, technology, which interact with each other and are in balance. In light of this definition, culture can be assumed as a system. As a system is a combination of different items, which are related to each other and have organized interactions (Sudeepta, 1992), so culture can be defined as follows:

a) It is a set of items.

b) The elements are related and balanced.

c) Working as a whole they form the cultural system.

d) They have structures.

e) They have not appeared abruptly and would not disappear abruptly.

f) The relationship between them is more of a coaction type.

g) They are transferred from one generation to another one.

h) They constitute the "should do" part of human being behavior.(Durasti 2000).

Therefore, cultural system is an open system; and consequently it should accept all the conditions and representations of such a system; i.e. it will not remain static and unchangeable from time to time but it transforms and/or its items are replaced by the newer ones through different phases. Accepting culture as a system convinces us to take into account system management to obtain thorough knowledge about the life issues particularly in less developed countries. It's necessary to adhere to the efficiency theory in applying systemic approach. This theory tells us that the best method of system analysis is the diagnosis of the problematic parts through which the main factors of system inefficiency may be unveiled and then removed (Shokoohi 2000). One of these parts is the influence of the communication technology as a potentially negative force on the prosperity of the southern countries. Another potential risk results from telecommunication lines that may be culminated in a deeper and broader gap in economic and social aspects and a more imbalance between southern countries and developed industrial countries. On the other hand, the connection among community networks through inappropriate values may jeopardize the ethical and moral basis of the societies subject to this technology. Also the dramatic growth of information technology and great power of satellite and internet media have wholly changed the cultural propagation and have made an indisputable power available to the giants of industry to broaden their cultural borders at the expense of the removal of crossing the cultural borders of other countries and passivizing them. Under such circumstances the connection between human being and his domestic culture becomes weaker and weaker (Nouri, 2002). Another point is the issue of autonomy of the southern countries that have a long suffering history. With the development of information technology, and the quick exchange of knowledge, the cultures are presented as some commercial goods in brand-new electronics packages; and different nations have progressively become closer and more dependent on each other.

Conclusion

The scope of the phenomenon of globalization is so wide that has influenced all the aspects of human life in different periods of time. This is why some scholars call it the greatest event in the history of human being. In the past two decades in the light of extraordinary development, the conception of time-space has been fundamentally distorted. In this epoch, culture and economy are merged into an integrated whole. Globalization is a process whereby the world and awareness of the world as an integrated whole in the 21st century are mutually dependent. In fact, globalization acts to transmit all which is valuable to Capitalism and can influence the formation of world culture.

Nowadays, political economy has come to affect cultural territories. This is made possible through integrated control over mass media. As information is a factor in social change and information technology deeply influences human behavior, the important role of public informing on the part of politicians and global policy-makers has been at the center of attentions. Appropriate solutions, therefore, seem to be necessary, because cultural systems are open systems and communication technology is exceedingly spreading worldwide, no matter whether countries are prepared or not; this is why communications among cultural systems are extraordinarily increasing. Accordingly, it would be neither possible nor proper for us to confine ourselves, since, on the one hand, we would be deprived from the merits of cultural communications and, on the other, our system would face positive entropy in the long term due to the open nature of cultural systems which should be admittedly in a constant exchange.

It should be kept in mind that resolving cultural conflicts by removing the question itself rather than by a plausible solution is a temporary and useless option. This entails that the cultural whole of a society be studied systematically. In so doing, we will be able to protect ourselves and creatively face the imported cultural items instead of a passive escape. Today, it is impossible to stand against cultural innovations and transformations and interaction with other cultures is inevitable. In such circumstances, the only way to prevent from or decrease the negative consequences of cultural diffusion is self-confidence and strong resistance. The most efficient measure to be taken is to use modern technology in order to strengthen our culture and promote it on a global scale. Central to the notion of Global Informing Volunteers is education and raising motivation among people. A stable awareness is necessary for people in all ages to act in a desirable manner. Information, motivation, and action are equally important. Everything begins with information and, in our world, these means are mass media. The purpose behind joining forces in information dissemination movement is to avail a larger body of the public of information in order to inform them of the problems the human beings have faced ever since the early times up to the early third millennium.

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