

## Psychological Interpretation of the Process of Globalization

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### ABSTRACT

The psychological interpretation of globalization means how globalization impacts one's identity. The term identity is closely connected to culture. The culture is what we eat, wear, what is our language? what are our traditions? and what we are is also determined by culture. Homogenizing and Heterogenizing impact of globalization has resulted in contradictions in local and global identity in today's globalized world. So, the result is proliferation of indigenous cultures in the form of religious fundamentalism and religious protests.

**Keywords:** *Psychological Interpretation, Process of Globalization*

Globalization is increasingly omnipresent, reshaping how we have traditionally studied the social world and human culture. A field of globalization studies is now emerging across disciplines (Appelbaum and Robinson 2005). Today there is lot of scholarly literature about globalization on culture, gender, rural life, agriculture, migration, social institutions etc. Recently there has been done lot of research on different topic such as transnational corporations globalization and consumer culture, global media, global tourism and so on. As McLuhan says "today we are living in a global village". According to Manfred (2008) "It describes the process by which events decisions and activities in one part of the world can have significant consequences for individuals and community in quit distant parts of the globe". Theodore Levitt an American economist and Professor at the Harvard business school is credited for popularizing the term globalization in 1983. Sometimes globalization is reduced to Imperialism, Americanization and New liberal capitalist expansion, transnationalism etc.

Regarding history of globalization there has been always debate some scholars state that this phenomenon originated in modern era and some state that globalization has long history Thomas L. Friedman has divided the history of globalization into three periods - Globalization 1.0(1491-1800), Globalization 2.0 (1800-2000), Globalization 3.0(2000 to present). Robertson (1990) offers following set of epochs: Germinal phase in Europe (from early 15th century to mid-18th century), Incipient phase in Europe (from mid-1700 to 1870s), The take-off phase (from 1870s to mid-1920s), Struggle for hegemony phase (from 1920s to 1960s), Uncertainty phase (from 1960s to 1990s). Peter Vanhant, Head of communications, World Economic Forum presented brief history of globalization as: Period

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of silk roads (1st century BC to 5th century BC and 13-14th centuries AD), Age of Discovery (15th-18th century), First wave of globalization (19th century - 1914), Second and third wave of globalization, Globalization 4.0.

### *Homogenizing and Heterogenizing impact of Globalization*

The process of globalization has created a global system of interdependency between countries not economically but politically and socially also. This has resulted into free flow of capital, information, goods and people, increased social connections etc. When we speak of globalization's impact on culture it means global market processes (particularly the distribution of iconic consumer goods) are easy to understand as having a potential influence on people cultural experience. This indeed is at the core of the interpretation of cultural globalization "cultural imperialism" "Americanization" "or as the spread of the global capitalist- consumerist monoculture (Tomlinson 1991,1999). The interaction between globalization and culture has provided framework to scholars for inventing the concept of "global culture". Sometimes question arises "Has global culture arrived?". "Is this only speculation or reality?". However, we cannot escape the reality of "unifying effects" of connectivity in other spheres particularly in economic sphere where the tightly integrated system of global market provides the model. Globalization makes the world in many respects a single space (Robertson 1992). The idea of global culture can be found in definition of a "global village". Although there is debate among scholars whether global culture has arrived or not, yet presence of global culture can be felt. Also, this debate of global culture has given rise to two trends of homogenization and heterogenization. Homogenizing effect of globalization refers to the act of making something uniform in composition or the trend towards sameness and reduction in diversity of cultures around the world. As Lechner and Boli defined "if certain activities or institutions become more global, they displace existing local variable activities and institutions if there are more global institutions and global values presumably this means that more people will have more in common (Lechner and Boli ,2004: 2). As Steger (2002:36) cites Nike sneakers on Amazonian Indians, Texaco baseball caps on sub- Sahara youths and Chicago Bulls sweatshirts on Palestinians. Indian people consuming soft drink Coca - Cola, Pepsi and wearing Levi's jeans are examples of homogenization of culture. According to Joanne Eicher, at the start of the 21st century, young people of both sexes prefer to wear jeans, sweatshirts, T- shirts and sneakers. These clothes are also international icons of American culture.

In contrast to global homogeneity, many scholars believe that globalization is increasing cultural diversity especially within cultures. The central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization (Appadurai 1990). So, these two forces of globalization are shaping our cultural identities in different way.

### *Psychological Perspective*

The issue of identity in this globalized world comes under psychological functioning. Psychological theory and research on acculturation, identity and other topics have implications for the effects of globalization but these implications have not been thoroughly described (Arnett, 2002). So many questions are raised by research scholars: "are we living under global culture"?, or global culture is another term used in place of indigenous culture, "has globalization impacted traditional values?, has globalization totally replaced indigenous culture. The answer to these questions lies in debate of whether homogenization or heterogenization is taking place. So cultural identity is woven around these two forces.

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There is no doubt the main psychological consequence of globalization is transformation in identity resulting into bi-cultural identity. So bi-cultural identity includes both local identity and global identity. The local identity is rooted in local culture while global identity stems from an awareness of their relation to the global culture. Also, Identity confusion is the result of contradictions between local identity and global identity. It is well observed fact that children and adolescents have developed global consciousness, as they are well aware about global brands and global activities. As Robertson (1992) argues that children gradually develop “the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (p.8). The phenomenon of bi-cultural identity creates a psychological condition - Identity confusion, and this has been discussed in relation to Identity confusion of immigrants and ethnic minorities. The process of globalization has increased the rate of international migration which has intensified diversification of cultures in host countries. As Nsamenang (2002) observed “in sub-Saharan Africa indigenous cultures are increasingly linked to global culture “. The Cases of pre - marital sex and pregnancy without marriage are increasing because traditional systems of control are declining. As Nsamenang observed (2002) “the process of acculturation and globalization has bestowed on contemporary Africa a dual politico- economic and cultural system of old indigenous traditions and imported legacies .... This has produced a marginal population whose adults, teenagers and children are groping desperately to reconcile within individual and collective psyches the ambivalence and contradictions of a confusing cultural braid (p.63).

A study of changes in problems (from 1980 to 1991) among young people (age 16 to 20 years) by Delafosse, Fouraste & Gbobouo, it was observed that drug abuse, male and female prostitution and armed aggression has increased among youngsters. Identity confusion occurs in those regions which are experiencing rapid social change. The term used by Berry (1997) for expressing dissimilarity between cultures in their beliefs and practices. Under the process of globalization people are rapidly changing their life style, values, suffering confusion of identity in the region where there is greater cultural distance. Ethnic religious and national identities have become more salient in Russia (Stetsenko, 2002) Arab world (Booth, 2002) and Latin America (Welti, 2002). Also transition into adult roles such as marriage, work and parenthood are occurring at later stages in every part of the world, instability has become characteristics of the emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2002). One interesting interpretation of the impact of globalization is that - far from destroying one's indigenous culture globalization has been perhaps the most significant force in creating and proliferating cultural identity (Tomlinson 2003). Religious fundamentalism particularly Islamic fundamentalism, nationalism, ethnic mobilization and anti- globalization movements (such as Mexican Zapatistas) have become reality of today's world. In his book “The Power of Identity” Manuel Castells has analyzed “Information age” and he argues that “our world and our lives are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity “. According to Castell the primary opposition to the power of globalization lies in the widespread surge of powerful expressions of collective identity that challenge globalization ....on behalf of cultural singularity and people's control over their lives and environment, (1997;2).

## CONCLUSION

People constantly search for their cultural roots and defend them whenever necessary. If homogenizing impact of globalization brings uniformity to culture, then only material dimension of culture is getting homogenized not abstract part of culture. It means there exists equally attractive principles of respect for integrity of local context, cultural autonomy and cultural identity. In fact cultural identity answer the questions of “who am I?.” “Where

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are we going?”. ““What do we have?”. So, globalization impacts psychologically because the question of identity is deeply connected to “self”.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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