Globalization and Media Influence

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ABSTRACT: This article tries to define globalization and explore its positive and negative effects on the different societies through the media. In fact, the broad and uncontrolled access to different cultural products by a large and diverse public has led to stereotypes and misconceptions. At present we are witnessing the birth of a globalized culture, which can be defined as a set of practices or common cultural events acquired and shared by everyone. And because this is happening under the influence of the United States, and in a lesser degree Europe, critics speak of an Americanization / westernization of the world. On a more positive note, this article also tries to point out that culture remains an essential tool to contain the tidal wave of globalization.

KEY WORDS: globalization, culture, Americanization, the influence of the media, identity, development,

I. WHAT IS GLOBALIZATION? AND HOW IS IT PERCEIVED?

For many, globalization is concerned with a global integration of economic exchanges. Its cultural dimension, however, is too often ignored. In the XIX century, the industrial revolution in some European countries led to a first globalization. This process of globalization was interrupted with the First World War and was only resumed in 1945. Globalization is reflected by a standardization of leisure as well as consumption patterns and lifestyles. We have witnessed the emergence of a globalized culture, which can be defined as a set of practices or cultural aspects and events common to all the people of the world. *and, as this standardized culture is under the influence of the United* States, and to a lesser extent Europe, there is talk of an Americanization/ westernization of the world1. These terms, depending on the context where they are more often used, receive a rather negative connotation; they often bear the idea of acculturation and threat to traditional cultures because they are perceived as tending to standardize and impose life styles and values.

The American cinema, music as well as products such as the chewing gum, Coca Cola, McDonald have been exported internationally; thus, spreading a form of American mass culture. Today it is mostly teenagers who are affected by the adoption of "the American way of life".Multinational companies are the essence of the modern capitalist system; they are a major player in decision-making when it comes to the quality of production, size and method, distribution channels, and markets .These companies are responsible for the identification and creation of consumer needs and desires that are in constant renewal to persuade consumers, through advertising and marketing, to consume products and services which are presented in a non final way, always leaving new opportunities for companies to modify and upgrade existing products in ways that have been decided before and present or market them as essential needs in new and fascinating ways. From China to France to the Middle East, foreign leaders and activists have expressed fear that global culture may become too Americanized, destroying their own cultural, economic, and religious traditions.

The Media Influence: Major broadcasters of this culture are: the media being the main vectors of a globalized culture . There is no doubt that media and information technology now play a significant role in spreading news and helping people form opinions on social, economic ,cultural, and religious issues. Media can have an immediate but also long term impact depending on the media genre and form being used. Today, it is through them that many images and messages are conveyed, which affects many people around the globe without increasing human understanding and acceptance. The sphere of globalized media does not take away the territory, but it constitutes a virtual space to define and create the models, life-styles, the codes, the heroes, the dreams that are all based on and driven by consumerist values; these are often more deceivers and influential than the immediate entourage, that is the family or the community. This has led to the emergence of a new matrix of socialization, which we could call the globalized hyper culture 2 The media power comes from its effectiveness and implicit impact. It offers images and icons which are immediately recognized, accepted or rejected; thus, constituting norms and standards. It offers everyone the pictures and the stories of a friendly and accessible world when it seemed otherwise distant, unreal, incomprehensible and even threatening. It opens a new door of freedom to individuals looking for the elements of identification to build their personal stories and identity, to be distinguished while being recognized as members of virtual clubs (social media), often more valued and influential than their immediate social environment.

This has been proven with the emergence of the " Cultivation Theory 3" in the 1970s which confirms that the media " plant" by an imaginary world in the mind of the consumer ,who, in turn, accepts this world as a real expression of reality, being non-conscious of how this imaginary world is constructed; in fact his consciousness does not exceed the feeling being entertained while spending hours with his eyes glued to the screen. In this respect and in order to explain how this process operates, the Peruvian researcher Jorge Tabia 4 examined American t v programmes and came up with the following remarks about these them:

- 🔸 - Environment: consumer society free of contradictions.
- 🔸 Core values: individualism, selfishness and fierce competition.
- 🔸 Meaning of success: Physical superiority to others, life enjoyment
- 🔸 Reward: generally given to those who are successful, losers are punished and must accept destiny instead of attempting to change it.

For the American researcher Herbert Schiller 5 the TV programs are in fact forms of educational and ideological awareness ,which is supported by Melvin6 who outlines the dependence of the media on an entertainment system in regulating and imposing values and norms of behavior. Noam Chomsky7 argues that the United States, represented by and reflected in its huge multinational companies, dominates and shapes its future according to its design without any objection. The US exploits its huge media power and influence to serve its needs and spread its culture, bearing in mind that it owns today 56% data-banks in the world, while the EU has 27% and Japan 12%, while a tiny 1% goes to the rest of developing countries. Three questions can help us be aware of the media influence: What is today the instrument of primary socialization of a child: the family or the screen with its cartoons already containing a plethora of values and a distorted vision of the world? Do the cultures belonging to unpowerful societies and which cannot find their place on the screen and on the airwaves not risk being marginalized, just like the languages which do not succeed to express the new scientific and technological inventions? For an individual, does not turning on the radio, television or connecting to the net entail an instant change of social status?

The space globalized media constitutes is a strategic field - without doubt now not less important that the militarized space; Media power can be more efficient than sophisticated weapons; It is said that people in the Eastern Bloc rebelled against their oppressive regimes after being influenced by western tv programmes .The media, therefore, engages the battles for the power which lies in the capacity of production and manipulation of symbols that connect social actors. Its stakes are the cultural codes of society, its target recipients are the minds. In the era of globalization, and in a consumerist universe, values are more to do with the symbolic dimension than material goods; the most important battles are now cultural. They bring into play the considerable resources that few players can mobilize in this dynamic; and no actor can remain indifferent . A clear example of a biased information service is the distorted and oversimplified information disseminated by western media about Muslims and Islam,which spreads but also creates new stereotypes and prejudice .On a daily basis ,people in the west are bombarded with news in newspapers ,television, and the net presenting Muslims and Islam under poor light. Islam is presented as archaic and obsolete and even a threat to the western democracy; Muslims are always depicted as terrorists, irrational and unwilling to adapt to western

values. These stereotypes lead to misunderstandings of Islamic culture, to racism and rejection of all that Islam represents (see Said, 1981; Van Dijk, 1991; Noakes, 1998; Hafez,2000; Poole, 2000). Poole (2000: 162) The oversimplified and negative presentation of Muslims in the Western media, combined with ideas and images of classical Islamic culture fossilise the idea and assumptions of the impossibility of Muslims to live in the modern world. In this way, media wrongly propagate the assumption that every practicing Muslim endorses though individually radical views such as the inferiority of women and the lack of democracy in the Muslim World. Other social and economic factors to explain the ill practices and anomalies are seldom taken into consideration. Muños (1999: 13) states in relation to the position of women in Muslim countries that: "secular Western societies have been misinformed and become biased to such an extent that they cannot or will not understand that the problem of women in Islam is nor a religious but a social issue" The Western media contribute to the negative image of Islam and Muslims through careful preparation of the content and lay-out of their media vehicles and products through radio and TV programmes, especially when linking and affiliating those who commit terrorist attacks and crime to Islamic groups and nationalities. The recurrent images of angry and aggressive Muslim fanatics accentuates the stereotypes that western people have; while media reports facts ,they never show similar fanatical acts committed by other terrorists or other religious groups from other countries. Whether western media deliberately nurture the negative images of Islam and Muslims or whether this ill portrayal is related to structural and methodical reasons is an issue that needs analysis.

As members of western societies, reporters and journalist relay the same widespread negative images and prejudice to their different audiences, making news preparation and coverage biased from the start. The communication theory shows that leaders and media are more likely to present and defend theories that reflect and correspond to the dominant views and norms of their society; these reporters are not willing to make an effort to search for reality for fear of finding their prejudices and stereotypes unjustified or exaggerated, which will contradict with the prevailing assumptions and pre-conceived ideas about Islam and Muslims. These false and erroneous assumptions are recurrently broadcast and help reporters achieve what is called"news value" as they focus on the differences between the Islamic civilisation and that of the western world dominated by Christianity. Media represent negative and deviant behaviour of Muslims to explain the underdevelopment aspects within Muslim societies and the superiority of the western ones.

Most reporters lack the necessary training and specific knowledge and understanding to cover news related to Islamic communities; they "overlook "consulting the most qualified and credible people when preparing the news reports or documentaries on Islamic topics; time pressure and the desire to mirror the mainstream concepts and perceptions leads reporters to maintain the existing incorrect and negative views. However, these negative views can be rectified if media revised their coverage approach and adopted a systematic preventive strategy. They first of all need to realise that they are consciously or unconsciously contributing to the stigmatisation process that Muslims and Islam suffer from. Reporters must differentiate between Muslim's different and contradicting movements, their acts and the true Islam,its universal message and teachings; reporters on Islam and Islamic issues must receive the adequate training to ensure they are objective and are willing to spare no effort to search for and present well-balanced and prejudice free news and programs, totally different from the uncritical ,selective ,and generalising approaches that are dominant today. This will also rectify the hostile attitude Muslims have about the west; an attitude that should not be reduced to religious differences' he colonial past, cultural hegemony and arrogance, natural resources exploitation, double military and political standards when dealing with different Middle East issues are all causes for the negative and harsh sentiments Muslims have against Europe and the US Hippler & Lueg (1995: 154)

Showing Islam as a threat to the Western World has had negative effects in the intercultural relations between Muslims and other communities; the negative attitudes are the result mainly of stereotypes and prejudice that have accentuated and sharpened the gap and the differentiation between the two different communities, the Western and the Muslim World and between Muslims and non-Muslims in general. In this respect, generalised news on Islam and Muslims especially through negative messages, strengthens the presumed relationship between the reporters' deviant behaviour and the central characteristics of the group concerned. The consequence of selective information is strikingly phrased by Esposito (1992: 173). He argues that "A 'selective' presentation and analysis of Islam and events in the Muslim world by prominent scholars and political commentators too often inform articles and editorials on the Muslim world. While it sheds some light, it is a partial light that obscures or distorts the full picture. As a result, Islam and Islamic revivalism are easily reduced to stereotypes of Islam against the West, Islam's war with modernity, or Muslim rage, extremism, fanaticism, terrorism. Selective and therefore biased analysis adds to our ignorance rather than our knowledge, narrows our perspective rather than broadening our understanding, reinforces the problem rather than opening the way to new solutions.

Recently, the so-called Islamic threat to the western values can be related to the increasing number of immigrants in the EU. Waves of immigrants came to live in different European countries after the second world war as a result of the poor economic and political conditions of their respective countries. Out of all the immigrants, it is those of Islamic background that are feared and therefore stigmatised .Debates over whether their religious and cultural backgrounds are compatible with Western culture and values are still on; Mosques ,polygamy ,Islamic schools, headscarf, veil are some of the controversial and debated aspects in countries such as France,Belgium,and the Netherlands
Media needs to adopt and encourage an "acceptance policy" designed to convince the local population that a citizen of a different colour, ethnic group or religion can also be a loyal and good citizen. Media need to call for a multicultural, multi religious society and stop trying to preserve one   a mono-cultural nature based only on the Christian tradition and the western values.

II.   A GLOBALISED CULTURE OR THE GLOBALIZATION OF CULTURE:
The cultural dimension of globalization, however, must not be confused with a hypothetical globalization of culture which would   either   expand the distribution of cultural practices, increase

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The trade of cultural property or even a uniformity that would lead to a kind of global culture, leading itself to better cooperation and understanding. A world market does not create a world society. The cultural globalization changed the way of structuring the conditions in which the interactions between societies and their cultures operate.The current era of globalization, with its unprecedented acceleration and its intensification in global flows of capital, jobs and information, has an influence on the homogenization of local cultures. While the phenomenon promotes the integration of societies by offering new opportunities to millions of people, it can also result in a damage of local cultures, which may, in the long run, lead to a bigger loss of identity, exclusion and even conflict; some of these are a reality now. This is particularly true for the traditional societies and communities that are exposed to and are seeking a fast "modernization", through imported and readymade models that are inappropriate to their context.

This so called "globalized culture" is disseminated through the multiplication of exchanges, the development of new technologies, as well as the production and distribution of standardized /identical products by global companies. Thus, the number of subscribers to mobile telephony has increased from 91 million in 1995 to nearly 5 billion today! The major cities are the symbols of the dissemination of this globalized culture as evidenced by the standardization of urban landscapes: the business centers or CBD (Central Business District) and the shopping centers are similar. Fashion invades all worldwide cities almost instantly. In the sphere of globalized media, visions of the world are in fierce competition, so the different values, life styles become immediately apparent. Facing the cultural issues of international policies, we observe three political attitudes: The first is a passive attitude or negligent on the part of those who feel they cannot afford to play a significant role; the second shows a rather defensive approach thanks to its proponents' cultural policies that want to protect the conventions adopted under the auspices of **UNESCO**. Finally, there is the strategic approach of the United States which, since the call to "Americanize the world " launched in 1898 by Theodore Roosevelt which incorporated the "Monroe Doctrine" 8(1823) and that of the "Manifest Destiny" 9(1845), and, in a systematic way, since the Blum-Byrnes Conventions signed with France in 1946, have made the promotion of their values, their ideas and their vision of the world the spearhead of their foreign policies: the world bank, the UN…. .

The combination of a global vision and of powerful economic interests give this approach a systematic character, a capacity of pragmatic adaptation and, in spite of the undeniable errors and mixed or negative results in some respects. A timid voice, however, emerged, and it represents those who would like to preserve cultural diversity by an international convention; we are far from seeing a predisposition or a solid desire to tackle the dimension of ecocultural issues 10. But as the military doctrine has had to reinvent itself in response to the nuclear weapon, the cultural globalization accelerated by IT and mass communication creates the urgent need to come up with the means to tackle these new challenges.

Are we prepared?
The issue of cultural globalization raises a critical question: how are we prepared to understand the other? The influential practices of the dominant media which look at the world through their own perspective depending on their interests, and who want all the others to see it that way is undeniable .This increases the risk of radical misunderstanding fueled by those who are in a dominant economic position and who are tempted to assert the superiority of their culture, which turns ignorance into fear that would feed hatred and conflict. This is true for all societies! The debates on the enlargement of the European Union, some recourse to Islam in the face of globalization, clearly show that there is concern about the identity issue; cultural rights are situated in the heart of the global dynamic. However the solution is neither in ignoring the "other "nor in seeking refuge within the borders of the nation while considering, often implicitly, that culture and identity are frozen and rigid entities.

Despite the cultural uniformity of the world, the historical cultural divisions which bring together the populations to the modes of life and the common values are maintained. In fact, globalization does not call into question the cultural diversity or the existence of different cultures in the world. For example, the Islamic civilization and African civilization coexist in Africa, the term "civilization" can be defined as a set of religious, linguistic, artistic, and social behavior, common to a society or a group of societies. Today there are still 6 000 languages and 9,900 religions in the world. Globalization is neither a myth nor inevitable; it does not eliminate territory

What can culture serve?
Trying to define culture in a clear cut way is a very complex thing ,as we can come up with a collection of dozens of definitions of the term; The two American anthropologists Kluckhohn and Kroeber 11put forward

more than 150 definitions of culture, to admit then that they did not find any of these definitions comprehensive and universally accepted. One of these definitions which seems to reflect all the areas that culture includes and that this article tries to discuss was suggested by Professor Mohamed Ali Hawat12 ,who describes   culture as an integrated system, including   all the heritage , which has been passed down from generation to generation within a nation ,including all areas of creativity in arts, literature , religion ,economy, and human relations, and which shapes the physical and spiritual identity of the nation and determine its characteristics ,values and civilization, future aspirations and rank among other nation .

Thus culture represents the historical legacy and the distinctive character of each nation which cannot be globalized; in fact any attempt to globalize a culture is   in fact seeking to extend its hegemony on other cultures; Culture is what constitutes a society; it reflects and defines what we are as it shapes our identity. Culture can contribute to the reduction of poverty and allow a development centered on the human, a development that is integrative and equitable. No development can be sustainable without culture given the fact that it is a dynamic transmitter   of change, rather than a rigid set of formulas and norms to which we must adhere in a strict manner. As stressed by the World Commission on Culture and Development, the culture of a society is neither static, nor unchangeable, but rather made of a constant flow and exchange between states, influencing and influenced by the vision and the forms of expression of other nations.

To gain the benefits of integration in a globalized and volatile world while protecting   special characteristics of local cultures requires a delicate approach Placing culture at the heart of a development policy does not mean that it should be   confining and securing in a conservative way, but   on the contrary, it is necessary to invest in the potential of local resources, in the knowledge, skills and materials, in order to develop   creativity and ensure sustainable progress. Equally important is to recognize and respect   cultural diversities, which   contributes to develop the conditions for a mutual understanding, dialogue   and peace

Investing in culture constitutes an essential investment in the future of the world and a prerequisite to a fair, democratic, and successful process of globalization   which takes into account the principle of cultural diversity .In this respect ,and in order to act towards development, we need to rely on our own cultural roots to build confidence in ourselves. It is on the basis of its culture that a people will move to meet the foreign challenges it is facing and will face in this fast-moving world. Culture is the foundation on which are based the organization and operation of   society. It determines the path for economic and social development that a nation must follow. In today's intricate and interconnected world, it is vital   to see that   culture has the power to transform societies. Its various manifestations - which range from our precious historical monuments and museums to traditional practices and forms of contemporary art, music, clothing- enrich all aspects of our daily life in countless and unexpected ways. Any local heritage can be an ingredient of identity and cohesion for communities disrupted by the acceleration of change and economic instability. Because   each population seeks to preserve its cultural identity, the world, therefore, remains marked by a great cultural diversity based on the diffusion of religions outside their territory of origin and on the existence of many languages and forms of expression

Can globalization be contained?
Globalization has become a trendy and recurrent word to justify, explain, and summarize all the   problems that we seem unable to resolve. Globalization is not only linked to the increase of trade; it has deeply changed the conditions of interaction among societies and their cultures. How do we explain then that the countless writings on globalization have virtually ignored its cultural dimension except to mention, by denouncing it, the prospect of the shock of civilizations13? It has taken more than three decades for the world to recognize the growing dangers that human activity poses on the ecosystem of the planet, which resulted in decisions that are still far from being to the extent of the problems which we are facing and which, against all evidence, some still doubt   their severity. Should we give less importance to the issues of the new" human ecosystem" which is the result of globalization? That is a question of strategic importance that needs to be addressed. But before that, we need to go back to some basic political questions: what do we need? What can we and what do we want to do together at the local, national and international level? These questions presuppose new game rules, new roles and kinds of relations, new modes of management different from the present conflict-oriented ones, as well as new strategies. The urgent question posed by globalization is therefore not how to trade more, nor to seek to preserve the fact of cultural diversity in its current unchanging state; it is how to stop fearing the other, fear which leads to the logic of confrontation, but it is   rather to establish the conditions of interactions and openness among the cultures of the world   and   create the requirements of fair trade in order to bridge the existing wide gaps among nations.

In this respect, media has to rethink its role and responsibility. Culture is the hidden dimension of globalization; it encompasses opposites such as national/global aspects, merchant/identity, unity/diversity, autonomy/interdependence, forming a hybrid configuration that should be structured in a non-hierarchical way. If the most powerful multinationals, especially the American ones try to impose on us patterns and consumption habits, they also adapt their products to local tastes, the Mcarabia in the Arab world , the Rice Burger in the Philippines   may be described as hybrid products since they are enriched with different cultural influences. Increasingly the global culture has more and more varied   origins   as it is demonstrated by the success of Chinese and Mexican   cuisine or the presence African music worldwide. By facilitating the movement of people and ideas, globalization has enabled a real intermingling of cultures paving the way for the emergence of a culture that is more and more diversified.

Far from being limited to the cultural policies, the cultural diversity is at the very core of the   current world debates. As it is true, as Samuel Huntington14 (1996),   Manuel Castells15(1996)   have noted in different perspectives that the quest for identity also contributes as powerfully as the techno-economic advances in shaping history and building the future.. At a time when the international community is thinking about the future development objectives beyond 2015, culture must be placed at the top of the agenda.

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