

Investigating the Effects of Cultural Globalization on Reshaping the Algerian Society

دراسة أثر العولمة الثقافية على إعادة تشكيل المجتمع الجزائري

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Abstract:

The present study is an endeavor to examine the effects of cultural globalization on Algerian culture and society. Algeria, as almost all nations throughout the continents, is facing a radical change in its cultural structure. Undoubtedly, a set of new practices have emerged, on the one hand, and numerous others have been disappeared, on the other. The study aims fundamentally at investigating the remarkable changes that the Algerian society seen in the recent years, on the one hand, and to provide suggestions to co-exist with the global culture and maintain the Algerian heritage, on the other. In doing so, a comparative approach has been adopted. It has been noticed after exploring the common changes within the Algerian society, that a radical change has been taken place in the cultural practices. In such a case, Algerian citizens, have to wisely and cleverly react towards this situation in order to not only trying to coexist with this phenomenon but also and, most importantly, preserving their cultural heritage.

Key- words: culture; global culture; globalization; heritage; identity; modernity.

الملخص بالعربية: يهدف هذا البحث لدراسة آثار العولمة الثقافية على الثقافة والمجتمع الجزائري. وبالتالي ، فإنها تحدف أساسا لتحديد التغييرات الظاهرة التي شهدتها المجتمع الجزائري على مدار السنوات الماضية بسبب ظاهرة العولمة. تواجه الجزائر ، شأنها شأن جميع الدول تقريبا في جميع أنحاء العالم ، تغييراً جذرياً في بنيتها الثقافية. مما لا شك فيه، ظهرت مجموعة من الممارسات الجديدة، من ناحية، واختفت العديد من الممارسات الأخرى، من ناحية أخرى. تحدف هذه الدراسة أساسا إلى تسليط الضوء على أهم التغييرات

التي طرأت على المجتمع الجزائري حديثا ومن جهة أخرى تقدم مقترحات تهدف إلى محاولة الحفاظ على الموروث الثقافي في ظل العولمة. من أجل ذلك تمت دراسة مقارنة بين المجتمع الجزائري قبل وبعد ظاهرة العولمة. في مثل هذه الحالة ، يتعين على المواطنين الجزائريين أن يتصرفوا بحكمة وبذكاء تجاه هذا الوضع من أجل ليس فقط محاولة التعايش مع هذه الظاهرة ، ولكن أيضًا ، والأهم من ذلك ، الحفاظ على تراثهم الثقافي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العولمة ، الثقافة ، الهوية ، العولمة الثقافية ، الأصالة ، المعاصرة.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is once said that “We also have a cultural phenomenon: the emergence of a global culture, or cultural globalization” Peter L. Berger (1929-2017), Austrian-born American sociologist and Protestant theologian.

Nobody can deny the impact of globalization on nearly every area of our lives, since it contributes on transforming the world into a little town without borders. This led to reshaping the global cultural landscape by implementing a new heterogeneous “global culture”. Evidently, throughout the last few decades, new western trends have become widespread, such as Levis’ Strauss, MacDonald’s, Coca-Cola, to name a few.

Using the main research instrument, namely, the observation and making a comparison between the old and the new cultural practices, one can clearly notice the main changes that occur. In Algeria, despite the fact that the society is known with its traditions, a set of new strange practices have become part of peoples’ daily life. These practices affect almost all cultural elements, namely: religion, language, customs, arts and literature, music, clothes and cuisine. Admittedly, due to technological advance and, particularly, the internet, communication among people from different cultures becomes easier or simply what is known as “cross-cultural communication”. Henceforth, the main problematic that is discussed throughout this paper would be: to what extent has the Algerian culture been affected by globalization?

The focal goal of the present study is to shed light on the most common areas of impact. In other words, it aims at investigating the most vulnerable societal elements that has been affected by globalization.

Additionally, throughout the paper, some practical suggestions are proposed to be taken into consideration for the sake of protecting Algerian heritage from disappearance.

2. REVIEW of LITERATURE about CULTURE and GLOBALIZATION

2.1. Definition of Globalization:

Globalization has become the buzzword and at the forefront of the recent era. In fact, agreeing with one definition isn't an easy task. Evidently, there has been an ongoing debate in this regard. In this respect, (Beck, 2003, p.27) sees globalization as the "most used and abused, most defined and probably the most misunderstood, nebulous and politically spectacular over the past and future years". However, the first appearance of the word was in the Webster's Dictionary in 1961. This dictionary defined it as "to render global" or "the act of globalizing" as cited by (Malcolm Waters, 2001, p.2).

Subsequently, many other definitions were differently given to the term. For instance, (Luhmann, 1982, pp. 133,229) in his standpoint about globalization gives a big significance to communication. According to him the major reason that caused globalization is communication, so that he defines globalization as 'the transition from integration to differentiation, from territorial society to world society; from identity to difference; from 'stratified' differentiation to 'functional'. (Larsson, 2001, p.9) provides another definition when he considered globalization as 'a process that makes the world smaller and gives the opportunity for the individual from the west of the universe to get benefit with a person from the other side of the universe'.

From the definitions above, one can perceive that globalization is the process by which the world became smaller and without borders, and this has made communication easier and faster which allows westerners to communicate with people from the north. *In toto*, globalization means many things to many people as (Appadurai, 1996, p.4) noticed "globalization is a world of things that have different speeds, axes, and origins in different

nations and communities”.

2.2. Definition of Culture:

Epistemologically speaking, the word culture is derived from the Latin word *cultura* which means growing, cultivation as defined by oxford dictionary.

In his perspective about culture, (Hofstede, 1994, p.5) defines it as the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another”.

Another definition was given by (Matsumoto, 1996, p.16) where he sees culture as ‘the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next’.

More recently, (Spencer-Oatey, 2008) goes a step further when he believes that:

“culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member’s behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behavior”. (p.3)

It might be said, according to the aforementioned definitions, that culture is seen differently among scholars. However, all of them share the idea that culture is a set of principles and values that a group of people shares, and these values and principles are inherited from generation to generation. In this regard, there is certainly a cultural diversity, since each group of people has its own culture.

Accordingly, it can be noticed that culture in its broader sense refers to not only the moral features and principles but also to the physical characteristics shared by a group of people. Owing to this, culture has several varied elements.

2.3. The Elements of Culture

Culture has a set of components. Amongst them, one might distinguish

between the fundamental components of culture such as language and religion, and the remaining visual cultural elements such as customs, traditions, art, and literature.

2.3.1. Language

Language is considered as the most significant cultural element. In effect, various attempts to define language have been done. For instance, a definition was given by the American linguists Bernard Bloch and George L. Trager in which they perceive language as a system of arbitrary vocal codes by means of which a social community cooperates. Moreover, (Noam Chomsky, 1957) sees Language as the inherent ability of the native speakers to recognize and form grammatical phrases. Thus, it might be said that language is a system of communication shared by a specific group of people.

It is commonly conventional that language and culture are closely associated. As a matter of fact, language can be seen as the verbal expression of culture. It is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties. This idea is supported by (Brown, 1994, p.165) when he believes that ‘A language is a part of culture and culture is a part of language, the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture’.

2.3.2. Religion

Scholars provide a set of definitions to religion. To begin with, (Yinger, 1970, p.7) perceives that religion is “a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with the ultimate problems of human life”. By the same token, (Bruce, 1995, p. ix) argues that “religion, then, consists of beliefs, actions, and institutions which assume the existence of supernatural entities with powers of action, or impersonal powers or processes possessed of moral purpose”. Culturally speaking, religion gives codes of behaviour for society. By way of example, in Islamic societies, it is forbidden to drink alcohol and eat pork. By and large, it could be argued that society and culture are bound together by codes of behaviour, and by tacit agreements to live together in harmony. Some cultures identified themselves by their own religion; i.e., their

religion was the center that held the culture together. Home, farming, relationships, marriage, birth and death, these are all common events in cultures; often these events have a religious significance.

2.3.3. Customs and Traditions

Customs and traditions are very significant elements in any culture. These two concepts are very close in their meanings. Yet, there are some areas of dissimilarity. According to (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1987), customs are 'what people do' and tradition is 'the formalization of those actions with material things and artifacts'.

On the one side, as stated by (Green, 1997), a custom is an unwritten rule which is practiced for a long time and is inherited from our ancestors. In other words, it is anything which many people do, and have done for a long time. Generally, people who come from the same culture, country, time or religion behave the same way. If something is usually done the same way, you might say that is the "customary way" of doing things.

A tradition, on the other side, as defined by (Green, 1997) *ibid*, is a principle or belief passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance which originated in the past. Tradition, thus, refers to beliefs or customs that are prehistoric, with lost origins, existing from time immemorial.

In this paper, only the principle elements have been discussed. However, it remains other less important elements such as; art, literature, dress, cuisine, music, and cinema.

4. Cultural Globalization:

After the collapse of the Second World War, the United States of America became economically powerful. As a result, American products in all kinds became known worldwide. Years later, the 1980s in particular, witnessed the emergence of the internet as a potential means of communication. In fact, this phenomenal invention makes the interaction easier among people from different cultural backgrounds. As a consequence, the world witnessed the appearance of what is known as cultural globalization.

Under cultural globalization, a set of obvious likenesses and similarities in terms of cultural aspects are clearly seen all around the globe.

By way of instance, the famous TV program “American Got Talent” has been adopted by a lot of other countries keeping the same settings and principles.

5. Cultural Heritage vs Modernity

Heritage and modernity are two different cultural images in any given society. On the one side, by way of definition, cultural heritage refers to the ways of living developed by society and inherited from generation to generation, including practices, customs, traditions, values, and artistic expressions as well. Modernity, on the other side, is described by the historian (Charles Harisson et al., 1993) as the social and cultural condition of those objective changes: the character of life under changed circumstances. That is to say, modernity is the attempt to coexist with social and cultural conditions.

6. Features of Algerian Culture

Each area in the world has its own features. Evidently, as a historical region, the Maghreb as a whole and Algeria, in particular, is known by its cultural diversity. In Algeria, due to the various colonizers who settled the region, there exists a remarkable multicultural society.

6.1 Algerian Language and Dialects

According to 2016’s constitution, Algerian’s official languages are Arabic and Tamazight. Nonetheless, there exist plenty of local dialects. However, French, the language of the ex-colonial, is the major language used in business, affaires, government, and global relations. Evidently, educational systems give big importance to the teaching and learning of the French language in order to promote communication and interaction with the non-Arab world. More recently, English takes a part within the Algerian academia as the second foreign language.

6.2 Algerian Religion

Islam is the dominant religion in Algeria with 99 % of the population. Yet, some minorities transferred to other religious beliefs such as Christianity and Judaism. This dominance of Islam is due to the conquest of Arab Muslims in the region.

6.3 Algerian Art

Algeria is an artistic country. It is known for its richest and vivid artworks mostly found in famous Art Galleries. They contain symbols and references which can be found in pottery and textiles combination, graphics and wooden, leather works, jewelry, amulets and tattoos as well as handicrafts, paintings, antiques, and lively sculptures that reveal remarkable talent and skills of the Algerian artists.

6.4 Algerian Crafts

Algeria has a flourishing handicrafts industry. From carpets to ceramics and pottery, from leather to glasswork and silverwork, the country has an incredible variety of skills that produce goods that are sold in many other countries.

6.5 Algerian Folklore

Folklore is considered as an important part of cultural inheritance. Admittedly, Arthur Palmer Hudson supports this idea as the title of his book *Folklore Keeps the Past Alive* (1962) showcases.

The cultural traditions of the Berber and Arabs of North Africa are rich in this type of innovative oral literature. Despite the fact that oral literature is not as common as written works, storytelling remains one of the most common forms of education and entertainment in some of the Algerian regions. According to some historians, mothers had a huge contribution to storytelling and, as a result, the transmission of culture to the next generations.

6.6 Algerian Music and Music Festivals

Algeria is known by its diverse and specific music style, on the one side, and its landscape and historical monuments and status on the other side, which makes it a fertile land to organize several music festivals.

There are plenty of music styles in Algeria. To start with, an Arabo-Andalusian urban traditional music dated back to the 9th Century C.E originated from Baghdad and transplanted to Southern Spain, then it was brought to the Maghreb via Muslim and Jewish refugees in the period between 10th to the 15th centuries. Also, in the past few decades a popular vocal music in which many instruments are used called Rai has been emerged. Furthermore, Sub-Saharean culture has been brought to the region centuries ago by slaves, known as Gnawa. At last but not least, the Berber

people as the original inhabitants of the Middle Atlas region have their own language, Tamazight, and their own music style which is different from that of the Arabs and of the Gnawa. This music style is kept alive by traveling musicians who performed at weddings and other social and ceremonial occasions.

This diversity together with the suitable atmosphere and landscape led to the establishment of many local, national, and international music festivals. Many examples include Timgad Festival, The International Festival of Andalusian music, The Festival of the Rai in Oran, The Festival of Music Genawi, Djemila Festival , to name a few.

6.7 Algerian Cuisine

Algeria is known for its traditional variety of meals and dishes depending on the region and the season with different flavors. Throughout Algeria, a set of delicious recipes represent the daily meals of Algerians. The most well-known among the Algerian traditional dishes is couscous which is recognized as a national dish. Besides couscous, there exist plenty of dishes such as: Chakhchoukha, Shakchouka, Harira, Doubara, Dolma, and many others.

6.8 Algerian Clothing

Clothes are considered to be a part of the cultural legacy of any people around the globe. It is straightforwardly tied with the history, civilization, and tradition of a specific culture. Originally, Algerian clothing style is composed of many traditional dresses such as Hayek, Burnous, Djellaba Karku, Amama Chedda ...etc .

So far, a part of Algerian cultural images has been projected. Yet, this cultural map has been remarkably reshaped in the last few years due to cultural globalization.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By observing the current societal behavior and cultural practices, one can come up with a set of crystal clear findings. Globalization has certainly reshaped the world in all aspects. Culturally speaking, local cultures have been strongly affected whether positively or negatively.

To start with, due to the advance in terms of communication, Algerian people are starting to learn new foreign languages such as English, Turkish, and even Chinese, in order to interact with foreigners. This act led to the disappearance of many local dialects which are used nowadays by a minority of old people. Also, in Algerian daily conversations, a mixture of Arabic and foreign words, mostly French, are commonly used such as: ça y est, Allo, bye ..etc.

Moreover, in terms of clothing, Algerian people especially young ones tend to wear western fashion styles and rarely using the traditional ones except on some occasions. On the other hand, many Algerian traditional clothes have become internationally known and even used such as Chedda of Tlemcen which is classified as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO.

In the field of arts, globalization had an impact on the practice of artistic works throughout Algeria. Firstly, thanks to the modernization of infrastructures and the access to the global technological network that has allowed to a fertile exchange of knowledge and creative practices among artists worldwide, the architecture of some cities as well as governmental buildings have been transformed. As a result, a lot of new cities have been built with western similarities rather than local architecture. Besides, it could be noticed that a set of artists thanks to the internet and social media have succeeded in spreading their works and making advertisements and, as a result, Algerian art has become globally well-known.

Musically speaking, globalization has both positively and negatively affected the Algerian music ground. Accordingly, many traditional music genres and instruments have been vanished from the music arena such as Alaoui, Hawzi, Guesba, and Bendir, to name a few. Yet, many Algerian festivals and celebrations have become international ones and, thus, they are known by and have been visited and supported by thousands of guests from around the world yearly such as Timgad and the International Festival of Andalusian music.

In terms of cuisine, there has been a radical change within Algerian daily meals a recent couple of years, as a lot of western-origin ones have

become parts of it. Evidently, throughout the country, plenty of fast-food shops are increasingly widespread whose major menus are composed of pizza, Kebab, sandwiches, and drinks such as Coca-cola and Pepsi. This process is known as ‘McDonaldization of society’ as described by (Ritzer, 1996). On the other hand, many traditional dishes have been disappeared from Algerian daily cuisine such as Mekatefa, Mbesses, Chorba Frik ...etc. On the whole, cultural globalization has negatively affected Algerian cuisine and food by adopting that strange phenomenon.

All in all, it might be claimed that globalization has pros and cons. In this view, Algerian culture has been reshaped both positively and negatively which has a direct impact on Algerian society.

8. Challenges and Recommendations

Globalization is an ongoing process and, thus, it is unavoidable. Under this threat, the entire world and, particularly, the less developed countries, should not stand idly by and let Western cultures replace their own local cultures, but they must face this menace and make procedures and measures in order to confront the threat of globalization, on the one side, and promoting and developing their culture from disappearance on the other.

The refusal of cultural globalization by Algerian authorities as well as people does not mean that its dangerous side should be completely avoided, but it means that they should deal intelligently and wisely with these ideological changes. Practically, there are many ways to get rid of the dangerous side of globalization in various areas.

Religiously speaking, it is convenient to reinforce the Muslim identity by maintaining its powerful elements and defending its principles and, as a result, make the Muslim personality substantial and powerful. In doing so, Algerian people will become proud of their Muslim identity. Also, it seems beneficial if importance will be given to mosques and Quranic schools and centers as well as institutes of learning Islamic principles. Besides, it would be significant if Algerians follow the Islamic way of living in all aspects such as clothing.

In terms of language, under globalization, the dominance of English and French languages in Algeria mainly in schools and universities is

threatening the survival of the Arabic language which has been deteriorated. However, this does not mean to fight learning foreign languages but it means not to give them more importance vis-à-vis the native Arabic. In this regard, there is a big responsibility to protect our mother tongue and reestablish the Arabic language to the real stature by clarifying its importance using media such as TV programs and newspapers. In the same context, it would be very helpful to promote Arabic by supervising the linguistic side of all curricula, then controlling the translation of foreign books. Correspondingly, it sounds better to use the Arabic language in the interfaces of shops in order to promote it and use it everywhere. It is to be mentioned that the government has taken place a set of measures to promote Tamazight, as an Algerian native language, such as naming it together with Arabic as the two official languages in the constitution of 2016.

Traditions and customs are all that is inherited from our ancestors. Algerian society is suffering from globalization that threatens its customs and traditions as well. In the wake of these threats, Algerian people and authorities have to wake up and defend their history and future. In the first place, family is the primary educator and, thus, the ablest part to protect the system of traditions and customs in society by bequeathing it from a generation to another. Similarly, schools must have a main contribution in intensifying people's consciousness about their customs and traditions from their infancy, preserving all values, and teaching them their mother culture before the foreign ones. In the same stream, media such as TV, the internet, and journals are responsible for the deployment of our traditions and customs because of their direct influence on people's minds.

In *toto*, Algerian authorities in order to preserve the cultural heritage from disappearance and face the cultural globalization that has become a real threat, must take action plans and practical procedures for maintaining this important legacy, on the one side, and take advantage of the positive side, on the other.

9. Conclusion

To sum up what has been discussed, it might be mentioned that getting

entirely rid of cultural globalization, as an ongoing and unavoidable process, is practically unattainable. Nevertheless, wisely and intelligently coexisting with this double-edged sword is what Algerian officials and citizens should be aware of. Hence, for the sake of keeping their cultural heritage alive, Algerians should take advantage of the pros of this phenomenon, on the one hand, and properly facing its cons, on the other.

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