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Role of social psychology in protecting native values in the process of globalization

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Abstract

This review intends to respond to a few questions about the expected influences of globalization on changing attitudes, values, and beliefs of developing communities, especially those from the East. Considering the goal of preserving social and personal values, various themes have been explained, including *changing attitudes*, *persuasion* and *propaganda* from social psychology. We have addressed McGuire and Papageorgis' (1961) *inoculation effect*. Taking the assumption that globalizing of information is inevitable, we discussed the importance of inoculation methods to resist unwanted cultural alienations. We also discussed the importance of teaching critical thinking via formal and informal educational systems; instead of passively accepting or aggressively rejecting all aspects of globalization.

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1. Introduction

“Globalization concept has been considered as an important discussion in scientific societies since 1990s, but...its central logic, i.e., modernization based on science, industry, and innovation has been introduced in the seventeenth century” (Mahmoodi Meimand, 2008). There is no doubt that globalization is a phenomenon that occurs with lots of changes in political, cultural, social, economical, and religious dimensions. It is natural that these changes occur in both directions (i.e., from West to East and vice versa), but it is predictable that the rate of these changes in the East will be more than the West; the reason for such impact is mainly because the origin and the process of contemporary globalization has been started from the West to the East. George S. Counts in "*Dare the School Build a New Social Order?*" (1932; cited in Gutek, 2009) challenged educators construct educational systems that emphasize on the development of a global society. He also proposed that there is an appropriate and specific education for every society.

The advocators of globalization claim that the aim of globalization is to increase cultural, political, economical, and similar exchanges; however, the fact is that the exchange of ideas, international trade, and political relations have been happening naturally for many centuries; specially they have rapidly increased during the Era of Communication and Information. Therefore, proposing and supporting the concept of globalization should also tell us what types of new global interactions are expected to happen. Moreover, how this concept is going to deal with the issues such as the polarization of the world and the domination of a hegemonic culture in relation to other cultures? N. Gingrich, the previous president of US Congress, has clearly (cited in Sani, 2009) responded to such critics. He claimed that, “only US could lead the world. US will remain the only global civilization and global

human history. If it was not for the vital and active role of American civilization, brutality, violence, and dictatorship would have been spread all over the world.” (pp. 89-90). Based on such contradictions, the present paper has tried to answer the following questions: (a) do the globalization processes have different effects in developed countries and developing countries? (b) Is it possible to counteract or reduce undesirable or unwanted negative outcomes of globalization? And (c) how can psychology help protect local values and beliefs and national identities?

Globalization definition

Globalization simply means the expansion, and increases in the size, as well as acceleration and deepening of intra-continental effects of processes and patterns related to social interactions (Held & McGrew, cited in Monadi 2005). Waters (cited in Afroogh, 2008) believes that, “globalization is a social process in which the geographical limitations dominating the social and cultural relations will be removed and people would know increasingly the elimination of these limitations” (p.16). “Globalization is an increasing compaction process of time and space through which people of the world, more or less and relatively consciously, integrate into *one* global society.” Examples of this process are: (a) Reduction of costs that *time*, *place* and *space* impose on communications and transportation; (b) Removal of borders and other limiting factors involved in social affairs; (c) Increases in human interdependence all over the world; and (d) Structural and institutional similarity of different societies (Golmohamadi, 2002).

Globalization can be considered in its common or its literal meaning. Its common meaning implies overcoming time and place limitations; fading of geographical borders and surpassing distance (far–near and here–there) (Afroogh, 2008). The concept of “Global Village” proposed by McLuhan in 1964 at Toronto refers to the collapse of geographical borders. But the literal meaning of globalization could be deeper than apparent similarities among the societies. In this view, there is a deep connection between globalization and attitudes about existence, extremity, God, man and knowledge. By such attitude, all divine and materialistic religions and all world's conquerors and imperials could have been claiming the idea of globalization.

Globalization Dimensions

Globalization is a pluralistic and multi-dimensional phenomenon. Its most common dimensions are economical, political, and cultural; but within its common meaning, it focuses on economy. Perhaps when introduced, it emphasized too much on the economical dimensions—now mostly manifested in “WTO”, “IMF,” and “WB”. The political dimension of globalization has been manifested in forms of agreements such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Association of Southeast Asian, and European Union. Cultural, military, social, environmental, and criminal aspects are the other dimensions of globalization. Today, the cultural dimension of globalization is one of the problematic and controversial dimensions (Afroogh, 2008; Golmohamadi, 2002). Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman (cited in Monadi, 2005) believe that, “most arguments, disputes and concerns about globalization are related to its cultural domain” (p.37). In this regards, the views of Fukuyama and Huntington (as the members of 58-people statement) are noteworthy. Based on their views, movement toward American-style liberal democracy human rights are among the inevitable destiny of humanity (Afroogh, 2008). Liberal democracy, secularism, rationalism, humanism and individualism, avanguardism, consumerism, materialism, rock and rap music, and the independence of youths from their families are feature samples that the West culture guarantees; features that will be transferred to other societies in the process of globalization. A logical question that results from such viewpoint is the extent to which globalization may adversely affect the nations' national, ethnic, cultural, religious, historical, political and linguistic identities.

Globalization and Culture

There are two meanings of globalization in cultural dimensions: first, conversion of one's own ideas to global ideas and the joining other societies (passive position of Third World countries); and second, dialectic acceptance among global dominant ideas and a readiness for the mutual influence of cultures (active position of all countries). Mahmoodi Meimand (2008) has presented these two approaches in the form of *globalization from the top* and

globalization from the bottom. In the first approach, it could refer to a kind of utopianism (Americanizing) in a global scale. The first position can be so called *globalizing* instead of globalization. *Globalizing* concentrates on a project [against something automatic and dialectic] that West's modern civilization attempts to exploit" (Kakoo Jooybari, 2004, p.9).

In the second approach, globalization is considered as an opportunity for a dynamic and active culture that actively represents its identity to the world (Kakoo Jooybari, 2004). In this approach, globalization is considered as a process or as a phenomenon rather than a project. The opposition of globalization and absolutism is one of the challenging subjects in this domain. Rousseau in 18th century disagreed with socialization in a society governed by inequality. His assured basis for resistance against the destructive effects of society was the divine nature of people. He believed in natural guidance of man; especially in morality domain; an idea that indicates Absolutism in the values. He believed that socialization would result in dissociation of one's own nature, in other words it leads to alienation. Bagheri (2003) believes that globalization is more compatible with *unitarianism* than with *radical pluralism*. In the *unitarianism* view, there is a common nature or essence human beings; therefore, it has to be taken into account when thinking of the human being. Consequently, it is believed that the differences among people are not so serious and basically can be ignored. Therefore, a current concern deals with peoples' losing their unique identities and national values during the process of globalization.

The aim of radicalism in pluralist view is that pluralistic and different systems are not comparable at all. In this view, the differences are more valued and genuine; therefore, they are not considered as trivial and ignorable issues or as exceptional conditions. Lyotard is one of the supporters of Radical Pluralism. Lyotard (cited in Bagheri, 2002) wrote, "Let us wage a war on totality; let us be witness to the unrepresentable; let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name" (p. 47). What follows this viewpoint is a kind of Radical Pluralism: "What we can do is to stare at the plurality of various types of dialogues." As it is understood from Lyotard's words, "plurality" can be just "accepted," it cannot be escaped from nor can it be solved. Radical Pluralism observes the plurality rooted in the nature of thinking systems and life styles; hence it believes that the elimination of plurality is not advantageous or even something possible to achieve.

Held (cited in Sani, 2009) "believes in globalization as the product of modernity, hence generalizes modernity-specific Unitarianism to the international system" (p. 100). Now, if we consider globalization a subordinate to the modernity tradition and its policy of "Rationalistic Unitarianism," it will certainly lead to a kind of consistency or uniformity among human beings and, in fact, it will lead to a kind of cultural domination (or in its weak form, cultural identification). This is because, the superior or more perfect man has been manifested in one or more certain cultures, and globalization requires the unity of this human plurality toward one desirable man. Sani (2009) believed that, "Post modernity in internal area follows the same aim as the globalization. The emergence of different ethnic-social movements is one of the achievements persuaded seriously by globalization and is followed by post modernity" (p.71). Therefore, globalization can be considered not only as the tendency to international unity, but also as an aim to create a kind of pluralism in the nations. Based on this view, it should be said that the aim of globalization is ultra-national unity and anintra-national pluralism. Therefore, modernity and post modernity follow the same aim (Sani, 2009).

Golmohamadi (2002) believes that by highlighting the cultural concept in globalization, cultural specialism becomes a basic issue. Cultural specialism seeks ideologies that emphasize the uniqueness and even superiority of the life style, group or definite community actions and beliefs. This phenomenon is apparent in all kinds of collective violent and non-violent behaviors such as ethnic conflicts and contests, national movements, fundamentalism, new racism and the like. An example of this attitude in Marxist ideas and the globalization claim is to find a way to lead all societies to a desirable, pre-designed extremity. Now, the problem is not that the cultural difference is desirable or undesirable; rather what matters is that cultural conflicts can challenge the globalization process. Moreover, globalization could consider some ancient cultures such as Chinese, Indian and Iranian cultures as subordinate or sub-cultures to Western culture (as developed culture). If globalized, public education attempts to homogenize various sub-cultures, which will naturally lead to the seclusion of some of them.

Supporters of globalization often criticize their opponents as being too conservative or regressive. They ascertain that globalization requires moving away from traditional values and a tendency toward modern and post-modern values. As Sani (2009) noted, "the basic principle for generalizing a culture is the existence of uncertainty

(relativism)¹ in target cultural beliefs; this is basically an implied in globalization philosophy” (p. 113). Social Reconstructionism Theory in education has also taken the same position, which opposes adhering or regressing to values from the past. Gutek (2009) believes that “human creativity has led to dynamic scientific and technological advancements that, in turn, can increasingly promote human civilization. Competing with the contemporary, dynamic forces of scientific advancements in the physical environment, an idealized attitude from the past seeks to keep the current status unchanged. Although reconstructionists study the past in order to discover permanent and effective cultural elements, they do not appreciate the theories that insist on ‘Happy Past Days’. In addition, reconstructionists believe that “modern society and the continuity of human life have close relationship with each other” (Gutek, 2009). It is clear that the latter viewpoint has been dominated by Modernism ideology.

In addition, Lorraine Ling and Joan Stephenson (1998) believe that by rising of multi-nationality companies and internalization of social, economical and political aspects of life, the value systems necessitate studying, criticizing and explaining the processes involved in internalization. At the same time, there are members of the society who resist against the intrusion of the dominant cultures in order to keep their own moral and behavioral codes. Currently, examples of such resistance can be seen in some multicultural societies such as United Kingdom. Assuming that globalization involves unitarianism and also *absolutism* and *perennialism* in the values, it can lead to uniformity; if uniformity cannot be achieved, it may result in kind of modern racism; and if it admits *relativism* and *pluralism* in values, it will imply kind of internal inconsistency. Therefore, it seems that globalization is more consistent with the idea of uniformity than plurality. One of the most predictable globalization results is the encounter of societies’ traditional values with the values which are brought by pervasive waves of globalization from beyond their geographical borders (by using *soft power*). This exposure can lead to either rejection of imported values, combination of the two cultures’ values, or the passivity of local values. As Giddens (cited in Sani, 2009) writes, “as much as the globalization is considered, as coordinator and integrator, it is a separator and disturber” (p. 72).

Psychology and Globalization

Globalization has faced various reactions. As mentioned, some accept it enthusiastically; some question it; and some oppose it from the very beginning. Each of these positions can be analyzed and examined from different aspects. Also, the study of such variation in reaction to globalization is doable from the psychological view. One of the possible reasons for eagerness about globalization (passive position) is that the result of globalization (identification with global values) can help reduce psychological insecurity (Identity Crisis). In other words, the invasion of western cultural ideas and trends may initially result in identity crisis in traditional societies and finally may lead to the attraction of such people and societies to the western culture (Cultural Alienation). Kakoo Jooybari (2004) believed that, “Modernist civilization prefers man to have global identity and ... finally give him a virtual identity though encouraging individualistic morale.” Because group-seeking and identity-seeking in early adolescence are influenced by stressful conditions of this period, any kind of sense of identity, even some deviated ones, can bring about relative calmness and increase their readiness and ability to fight stressful events. Therefore, such tendencies can provide a relevant ground to analyze openness to globalization in developing countries. In contrast, as far as globalization's impacts on culture are concerned (from a passive view), it seems that it is not welcomed by societies that enjoy a sense of cultural richness, especially when dealing with their own problems. Therefore, it doesn't seem that globalization is their serious concern and source of threat in the context of their cultural transformation. However, it seems worthwhile to mention that culture's transmission (familiar or alienated) among the societies' members is not prescriptive or inspirational. Therefore, even in such societies the influence of outsider cultural ideologies is not inevitable. Under such circumstances, it is reasonable to strive for the survival of one's own values, beliefs and cultural prides and heritage, without showing any bias about every familiar culture elements, or hostile rejection of all elements of imported cultural ideas. Ling and Stephenson (1998) believe that although religion maybe shared by some, a consensus about acceptable values may not necessarily result.

One of the most relevant branches of psychology which deals with the globalization issues is “social psychology.” Topics such as change of attitudes, persuasion of people and propaganda have close relationships with

1. Values' Certainty and Absolutism are features of traditional era.

globalization discussion. In regards with social influence, three concepts seem highly relevant: (a) *compliance* best describes individual behaviors that are aroused in order to gain reward or avoid punishment; compliance endures as long as the reward or punishment endures; (b) *identification* best describes one's desire to identify with an influential person. Although as with compliance, identification is not based on internal satisfaction, one believes in the values that have been accepted by the other people; but such beliefs may not endure for long and may change because of changes in the popular person's beliefs or because of getting attracted to another person. Moreover, such values do not have the necessary flexibility. Imam Sadiq (P.B.U.H) says (Mostadrak-al-vasayel, vol.17, p.307) "Everyone who accepts the religion because of being fascinated by people's character would refuse the religion by them and everyone who accepts the religion through Quran and Tradition will never change his mind under any circumstances" and (c) *internalization* which results when a person is convinced that an idea and or behavior is right. Internalization is the deepest response to social influences. Its endurance and flexibility is more than the other responses mainly because one's motivation for having the tact idea and behavior is a strong and permanent motivation (Aronson, 1988). Consequently, "power" is the important element in compliance. "Attractiveness" is the important element in identification. And "credibility" is the important element in internalization. Obviously, relationships and interactions of generations and cultures due to globalization can easily change social values that have been emanated through compliance or identification.

We believe that, societies have three choices when they come to deal with their traditional values: (a) some values should be kept in any cost; (b) some values should be modified and improved; but (c) there are values that should be ignored. The goal of this paper has been to discuss ways of keeping values that, by the members of a certain society, have been judged as acceptable and desirable, especially when such values at the risk of rejection and seclusion because of globalization waves.

Getting acquainted with the various values of different societies is not usually rejected by cultures; a process that may even lead to the acceptance of new values.. The main concern will rise when all cultural values of some societies tend to transfer to other ones rapidly and abruptly. Consequently, a dangerous pandemic may result, if the transmitted values are disproportional to the value systems of the other society and are judged as counterintuitive. Therefore, it seems that before accepting globalization, we need to create a kind of value resistance system against the entrance of alien values and beliefs. Gutek (2009, p 456) believed that, "change per se does not necessarily cause a crisis; rather crisis happens when people are not ready to face with the change and undergo necessary regulatory processes." It seems that psychologists and trainers, as educational statesman, should take some important actions in relation with other institutions. *Regional convergence* is another method that is taken by governments against threatening waves of globalization; especially, within economical arena. It seems that "the general tendency of regionalism is to introduce kind of vaccination against globalization" (Sani, 2009, p.87).

Inoculation effect

Evidence indicates that attitudes and their resistance against change can be influenced by some genetic. However, it doesn't seem that resistance against attitude change is only due to the genetic factors. During the war between the USA and Korea the concern was that American soldiers would be influenced by Communist propaganda. McGuire a new phenomenon called *inoculation effect* in order to protect American soldiers against Korean communist propaganda (Perloff, 1993). Inoculation effect explains a method that can protect one's beliefs against contradicting ideas and viewpoints. The method protects people against "brainwashing" via gradual familiarization of them with reasons that certifies the truthfulness of their ideas while rejecting opponent reasons (McGuire & Papageorgis, 1961). McGuire and Papageorgis in 1961 tested this theory in relation with some beliefs on teeth hygiene. They found out if a person has already been subjected to a short message that could refute it later; he or she could be immune to the next, but more complete form of the message; this is a processes similar to inoculation in medicine where a weakened virus causes the immunity of the person against the real attack of the virus in the future. Exposing to the weak dialogues that deny one's beliefs would immune him or her against opposing argumentations. Those beliefs that have never been criticized or challenged are intolerant to brainwashing. Weak attacks to one's beliefs and ideas (inoculation effect) would cause resistance in such a way that he would resist more vigorously against next challenging persuasions. First, the person will be aroused to defend his beliefs and then he will be somehow skilled and experienced for defending his beliefs. Meanwhile, the person will be aware of the vulnerability of his beliefs and will strengthen his self-defence mechanisms (Kenneth & Irwin, 2002). Additional factors that help the person

to defend himself against attacks against his beliefs are his argumentations, contradicting evidence and supporting evidence. Developing inoculation effect is effective especially when one wants to arouse an agreed listener and at the same time immune him against opposite propositions (Nitcavic, 2008).

2. Conclusion

Assuming that globalization means being active, it can be a unique opportunity for dynamic cultures that will lead to cultural benefits, but if globalization means being passive, it could be a threat and will lead to identification, cultural, religious, and political alienation. Native and non-native values can be categorized; but categorizing them in black or white is wrong. Some values are desirable; some of need to be modified and some are undesirable. An appropriate position should be taken for each category of values. Globalization, when is considered as a project (i.e., globalizing), regardless of the direction that it may take (East or West), cannot be acceptable because of its authoritative but not enlightening stand. Globalization, when considered as a process or phenomenon, is inevitable due to processes related to the Communications Era (Global Village), and every culture can potentially benefit from the opportunity, provided that they rely on their own intellectual and value resources.

There are two methods to neutralize the pandemic that may result from cultural globalization. The first method deals with protecting native values. We should firmly support the desirable native values and rituals. To this end, the durability of desirable native values can be prolonged through using inoculation effect, a method that can help protection against external, widespread and destructive propaganda. The second method deals with imported values. In this case, optimistic or sympathetic influences of non-native, undesirable values should be controlled. To do so, it is necessary to mobilize individuals to critically encounter with the imported values after strengthening their critical thinking; rather than forcing them to merely refrain from acceptance or rejection of the values that affect them inevitably through the current flow of globalization. Critical thinking as one of the life skills has a fundamental role in encountering with the phenomena which are not black or white. We should remember that fear of limitation (quarantined education) should not lead to restriction and indifference, and as a result, we should not join the globalization before evaluating it through the means of critical thinking. Finally, we should be obliged to take the opportunity of globalization and our chances for transmission of native values, and receiving non-native values that bear a global capacity. Other nations have the right to know how we think; we should not indifferently take this right away from them. We should honor honesty and value truthful information while putting our message across the board. Our message to the world can be summarized in three words: *compassion, justice, and wisdom*.

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