

# Globalization as a Generator of Cultural and Economic Hegemony:

## a Postmodern Perspective

### GLOBALISATION COMME UN GÉNÉRATEUR DE L'HÉGÉMONIE CULTURELLE ET ECONOMIQUE:

#### UNE PERSPECTIVE POSTMODERNE

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**Abstract:** 'Globalization' -a term that entered popular discourse in the late 1980s has certainly been become one of the most fashionable buzzwords of the new millennium. The nature and impact of globalization has been the subject matter of profound debates and concerns in economic, political, cultural studies and academic circles since the mid-1990s. However, mainstream economic thought promises that globalization would lift the poor above poverty, dissolve dictatorship, protect the environment, integrate cultures, and reverse the growing gap between rich and poor countries of the world. But in reality, globalization has brought about the devastating destruction of the traditions, the continued subordination of poorer nations and regions by richer countries of the west, environmental degradation, and posed a serious threat to indigenous and non-western cultures and economies. The globalization has resulted in the penetration and expansion of western food, film, clothing, music, sports, media, technologies and other forms of popular culture into all parts of the world. However, this paper argues that through the globalization processes, like colonization, modernization, the west is exploiting and exerting dominance over the others countries' economies, cultures, and traditional way of life with its capitalistic economic system and powerful communication media and information technologies. The west makes space of development by identifying, defining certain problem and prescribes remedy for the "Third World" countries. Through the United Nations, the IMF, the World Bank and these institutions' legal authority, the West along with its most advanced technologies and professional and institutional knowledge controls all major political and economic affairs of the globe. The paper argues this issue from postmodern perspective, especially from Michael Foucault's power/knowledge and the regime of 'truth' conceptions. In fact, those who advocate globalization today inherit from Enlightenment orientation. The Enlightenment offered a universal application of reason to human affairs and it embedded in a philosophy of history with a meta-narrative concerning the continued onward march of society due to the results of science and technology. And in this connection, globalization resurrects an imagined totality of human culture. Postmodernism, on the other hand, rejects any such overarching "meta narrative" and scheme of totalitarian human society that would pretend to erase the irreducible differences of human experiences.

**Keywords:** Globalization, Hegemony, Global Culture, Capitalistic Economy, Western Domination, Communication Media, Information Technologies, Transnational, IMF, World Bank, Consumer Culture, Modernization, Postmodernism, Power/Knowledge

**Résumé:** 'Globalisation' -un terme qui est entré dans le discours populaire à la fin des années 1980s, est certainement devenu un des plus grands mots à la mode dans ce nouveau millénaire. La nature et les impacts de la globalisation ont été fait l'objet des débats approfondis concernant le domaine économique, politique, recherche culturelle et cercles académiques depuis les mi-1990s.

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Pourtant, le courant dominant de la pensée économique promet que la globalisation rendront les pauvres plus pauvres, dissoudre la dictature, protéger l'environnement, intégrer des cultures, et reverser le fossé accru entre les pays riches et pauvres dans le monde. Mais en réalité, la globalisation a apporté une destruction désastreuse des traditions, la subordination continue des nations et régions pauvres par des pays riches occidentaux, la dégradation environnementale et a posé une menace grave aux cultures et économies indigènes et non-occidentales. La globalisation a résulté de la pénétration et l'expansion de la nourriture occidentale, des films, des habits, de la musique, des sports, des médias, des technologies et d'autres formes de cultures populaires dans tous les coins de la planète. Pourrait, ce document fait des arguments qu'à travers le processus de globalisation, comme la colonisation, la modernisation, l'occident est exploité et il exerce une dominance sur l'économie, les cultures, la modalité traditionnelle de vie des autres pays avec le système économique capitaliste et la puissance de la communication par média ainsi que les technologies d'information. L'occident explore l'espace de développement en identifiant, définissant certains problèmes et remèdes prescrits pour les pays du "Tiers monde". Par l'ONU, l'IMF, la banque mondiale et l'autorité des institutions légales, l'occident avec ses technologies les plus avancées et professionnelles ainsi que ses savoir-faires institutionnels contrôle toutes les affaires majeures de la politique et de l'économie du monde. Ce document présente cette issue de la perspective postmodernes, surtout de la puissance/ connaissance de Michael Foucault et le régime des conceptions de la 'vérité'. En fait, ceux qui sont pour la globalisation aujourd'hui hérite de l'orientation du Siècle des lumières. Le Siècle des lumières donne une application universelle de raisons pour les affaires humaines et il enfonce dans une philosophie d'histoire avec une méta-narrative concernant l'avancement continu de la société dû aux résultats de science et de technologie. Et sur ce point, la globalisation fait la renaissance d'une totalité imaginée de culture humaine. Le postmodernisme, d'autre part, rejette toutes les "méta-narrative" et des intrigues de la société totalitaire humaine qui prétend d'un effacement de différences irréductibles des expériences humaines.

**Mots-clés:** Globalisation, Hégémonie, Culture Globale, Economie Capitaliste, Domination occidentale, Communication par Média, Technologies d'Information, Transnational, IMF, banque mondiale, Consommation Culturelle, Modernisation, Postmodernisme, Puissance/connaissance

## INTRODUCTION

Human societies across the world have established progressively closer contacts over many centuries, but recently the pace has dramatically increased. In recent years there has been an emergence in the use of terms such as 'globalization', 'global interconnectedness', 'global world', 'global village', etc. Globalization certainly a term that generates great passion nearly everywhere of the present world. The term globalization was first coined and entered in popular discourse in the 1980s, but the concept stretches back centuries and beyond. The forces and events leading to globalization can be traced as far back as 1942 B.C.E., when people began to link disparate locations on the globe into extensive systems of communication, migration, and interconnections. Slavery, trade, colonization, establishments of churches in foreign lands, inventions in mass transportation, industrialization, development of interstate highways, electrical infrastructure, etc. are recognizable historical stages in the ongoing process of globalization. Historically, the process has created new cultures, such as Africans-Americans, whose family histories are often rooted in slavery. The process has

also resulted in great economic disparity between cultures in nations often called the "First World" and the "Third World", "Underdeveloped", "Developing". However, beginning in the fifteenth century, demographic catastrophes without known precedent (apart from those caused by natural disasters) struck peoples who became acquainted with European conquerors and traders. For America and Africa, contact with Renaissance Europe ushered in a deadly period whose consequences can still be felt today. For although, in Europe itself, the Renaissance was celebrated as the century of poets, artists and scholars, a moment of civilization mingling new thinking and new art in a sweet alchemy, that same Europe was turning the world it discovered into a desert and providing new theories for the old conception of might is right. It introduced the era of globalization: that is, the appropriation of the world by the Western Europe, and the independence of all its parts for the needs of domination. Territorial and commercial expansion without precedent in human history meant that unexplored lands-unexplored by Europeans, that is- occupied less and less space on the more and more accurate maps of the time (Bessis, 2003,pp.20-21).

Well, in popular discourse, globalization often functions as the little more than a synonym for one or more phenomena: the pursuit of classical liberal (or “free market”) policies in the world economy (“economic liberalization”), the growing dominance of the west (or even American) forms of political, economic, and cultural life (“westernization” or “Americanization”), the proliferation of new information technologies (the “Internet Revolution”), as well as the notion that humanity stands at the threshold of realizing one single unified community in which major sources of social conflict have vanished (“global integration”).<sup>2</sup>

Whatever the term globalization means it is not the issue of this paper but I am keenly concerned here with its adverse impact on the non-western economies and cultures. Through globalization, the west with its capitalistic models of consumption and desire threatens indigenous and non-western cultures and economies. One of the main diverse of globalization is technology. For the last two decades, globalization has been growing by leaps and bounds with the aid of technology. Global production of technology and international trade in high-tech have had an extra—ordinary growth between 1975 and 1986, multiplying six and nine times respectively (Ruinrok and Tulder 1991).

In fact, technology has now created the possibility and even the likelihood of a global culture by exerting pressure on local cultures. The “information super highway”, the internet, e-commerce, cable TV, and modern transportation sweeping away cultural boundaries and involves in the dissemination of new technologies that have tremendous impact on the polity, society, culture, and every-day lives of the people-living in the developing countries. Global entertainment companies are shaping the perceptions and dreams of ordinary people, wherever they live. Globalization also involves the dissemination of new technologies that have tremendous impact on the economy, polity, society, culture, and everyday life. Time-space compression produced by new media and communications technologies are overcoming previous boundaries of space and time, creating a global cultural village and dramatic penetration of global forces into every realm of life in every region of the world.<sup>3</sup>

However, this paper will try to clarify through the following discussion that globalization is nothing but a new label on old tool of exploitation and domination invented by the west. The west is generating cultural and economic hegemony in the pretext of economic development and cultural uniformity.

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<sup>2</sup>Globalization

(<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/globalization/>). P.1

<sup>3</sup> Douglas Kellner, ‘Globalization and the Postmodern Turn’, (<http://media.ankara.edu.tr/~erdogan/globpm:htm>). P.8

## GLOBALIZATION

Different people define globalization in different ways. It is certainly a complex phenomenon. To some people globalization is seen as the aim of a new world order promoted by means of an identifiable geo-political, imperial strategy which corresponds to a global design to cement the position of dominant countries and to increase the affluence and promote the interests of the privileged minority of the world’s population, relegating the rest to a structurally dependent and subordinate situation.

To others globalization is a natural historical progression involving the dismantling of artificial barriers to international commerce and investment and opening up unlimited opportunities and providing the means to resolving the old new problems facing humankind. Others passionately seek to promote and implement economic and social ideas and policies, which lead to the globalization of economic policies, activities, ideas and standards.

Some scholars of the present time equate globalization with *detritorialization*. To this point of view, globalization is increasing variety of social activities that takes place irrespective of the geographical location of the participants. In this context, Jan Aart Scholte mentions, “global events can –via telecommunication, digital computers, audiovisual media, rocketry and the like—occur almost simultaneously anywhere and everywhere in the world”(Scholte, 1996:45). Some theorists see globalization as linked to the growth of social *interconnectedness* across existing geographical and political boundaries.

According to this approach, distant events and forces of globalization (such as the Internet) affect local and regional endeavors (Tomlinson, 1999). Other some contemporary theorists believe that globalization has taken a particularly intense form in recent decades, as innovations in communication, transportation, and information technologies (for instance, computerization) have generated stunning new possibilities for simultaneity and instantaneousness (Harvey, 1989).

Many scholars envisage globalization in the context of the historical continuation and rise of modernity (Robertson 1992, 1995; Tomlinson 1991; Giddens 1991; Friedman 1994; Featherstone and Lash 1995). Tomlinson (1991) terms globalization as part of a broader global pattern of modernity and the accompanying spread and deepening of a world system of capitalism. Giddens (1991) sees globalization as part and parcel of the historical forces of modernization. He identifies the emergence of international consciousness with the rise of nation states and the modern era, relationships among states being a necessary concomitant of the formation of states as coherent entities. For him, globalization proceeds largely through

state-supported integration of multiple knowledge-based abstract systems (including media), which coordinate human activity across time and space. Therefore, the concept of globalization refers to the “stretching” of relations between “local and distance social forms,” as “modes of connection between different social contexts or regions become networked across the earth’s surface as a whole” (1991, p. 61 quoted from Griffin, 2000).

Giddens has described the influence of modernity in three different ways: (1) separation of time and space, the condition for articulation of social relations across wide spans of time-space, ignoring local-global dualities. (2) Disembedding mechanisms consist of symbolic tokens and expert systems. (3) Institutional reflexivity, which includes accumulation of knowledge through doubt and reason and thereby ignoring the authority of any dogma or ideologies. The transformation of self has occurred, said Giddens, due to the mediated influence of media. The transcendence of local vs. global has created a new identity and with this new identity modern society and modern people takes shape. In Giddens term “ It is in many ways a single world, having a unitary framework of experience (for instance in respect of basic changes of time and space), yet at the same time one which creates new forms of fragmentation and dispersal”(Giddens, 1991:15).

According to Douglas Kellner, the term ‘globalization’ is neither innocent nor neutral in many of its uses and often serves to replace older discourses like “imperialism” but also “modernization”. As a replacement for imperialism, it could displace focus on domination of developing countries by the overdeveloped ones, or of national and local economies by the transnational and could be part of a discourse of neo-imperialism that serves to obscure the continuing exploitation of much of the world by a few super power and giant transnational corporations, thus cloaking some of the more barbaric and destructive aspects of contemporary development. Yet as a replacement term for modernization it can also rob this previously legitimating ideology of the connotations that the processes (i.e. modernization which has a positive ring to it) are necessarily bringing progress and improvement, are part of an inexorable trajectory of progress and modernity.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the perspective or definition, the manifestations or processes of what is referred to as globalization are perceived to have major implications for society, culture and economy throughout the world. Now let me explore these manifestations of globalization with postmodern insight through the ongoing discussion:

## GLOBALIZATION AND BRETTON WOODS

For several centuries, globalization proceeded on an increasingly rising curve, bringing more and more areas of the world into the world market system. World War I and its aftermath produced a slowing down of this process; first, enmeshing much of the Western world in a highly destructive war, followed by a period of economic boom and bust, protectionism, growing nationalism, and the failure of intern lists economic and political policy. World War II once again engulfed much of the world in an even more destructive and global war. At the 1944 World War II economic conference in **Bretton Woods**, New Hampshire, representatives from forty-five nations established the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), both based in Washington, DC, which have served as primary engines of a globalized world order and certainly globalization. The World Bank and IMF, two major, economic institutions that would be at the basis of later arrangements such as GATT and NAFTA. With the end of the war, world trade exploded with a vengeance. National trade barriers were systematically dismantled and eroded, global economic forces penetrated local economies, and a global consumer and media culture traversed the globe. In fact, contemporary globalization is deeply rooted in the structures put into place by the **Bretton Woods** conference.

The **Bretton Woods** form of globalization has the largely unfettered flow of capital across continents and it has often entailed the dominance of giant transnational corporations. A large number of transnational organizations e.g. transnational corporations (e.g. Microsoft, Nike, Coca-Cola, Wal-Mart, Costco, Woolworth, McDonalds, Burger King, and Dominos’ Pizza fast-food chains, Walt Disney and Warner Bros, Time-Warner, News Corporation (FOX, Star TV, Sky TV), Sony, Disney (ABC), Viacom (CBS, MTV), Bertelsmann, and General Electric (NBC).), international organizations (United Nations, NATO, World Bank, IMF, World Trade Organization, NAFTA, etc), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g.Green Peace, Oxfam, DFID, Action Aid, USAID, Amenty International and so on).

## CAPITALISTIC ECONOMY AND GLOBAL CULTURE

Globalization has widely envisaged as a constructed sign of an inexorable triumph of market forces and the hegemony of capital over the non-western countries of the world. The expansion of the capitalist world market into areas previously closed off to it is accompanied by

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, P.3

the decline of the nation-state and its power to regulate and control the flow of goods, people, information, and various cultural forms. The emergence of global culture, side by side to the development of a new global market economy, is an especially salient feature of contemporary globalization. Accompanying the dramatic expansion of capitalism and new transnational political organizations a new global culture is emerging as a result of computer and communications technology, a consumer society with its panorama of goods and services, transnational forms of architecture and design, and a wide range of products and cultural forms that are traversing national boundaries and becoming part of a new world culture. Global culture involves promoting life-style, consumption, products, and identities. Transnational corporations deploy advertising to penetrate local markets, to sell global products, and to overcome local resistance. Expansion of private and satellite system have been aggressively promoting a commercial culture throughout the world.<sup>5</sup> The global spread of capitalism entails the spread of commodities that, while fine-tuned to local markets, carry message and advertising slogans that deliberately reach out to as wide a market as possible. One only has to see the global familiarity of MICKEY mouse, Levi jeans, Coco-Cola or Madonna's latest hit single/video to realize how successful global marketing has become (Bilton and Others, 1996:15)

The growth of consumerism has been heavily reliant on the growth of a transnational mass media dominated firms such as SONY, Sky TV, CBS and so on. A key feature of the globalization is that it requires the existence of globalized media corporations. Indeed, we can see a concentration of media ownership with major corporations including Time-Warner, News Corporations Ltd. and Reuters. While these TNCs might make us more informed about the world, the also structure and package 'the world' the present to us in certain ways, and most obviously in such a way that we are likely to go out and buy something whether merchandising attached to a programme, or other consumption goods more generally. These massive firms depend on new information systems and communications technologies (such as a fiber-optic cable) to condense, pack, transmit and unpack information around the world. The major corporations are very keen to control these new technologies centrally. More generally, attempts by developing countries to develop their own media agencies make little headway against corporations, like News Corp, that benefit from the renewal of the General Agreement on Tariffs and trade (GATT) in 1994/95, which allows media giants to flood local markets (Bilton and Others, 1996:66-67). Global media is increasingly in the hands of a few, large, power organizations, as in the production of music and film. For example, by 1997, the MTV television station was available to 280 million

households in over 70 countries. Fearing a loss of viewers, local television stations in many African countries have filled their transmission with cost effective Western produced shows, superficial news broadcasts, quiz shows and, of course, advertisements. Consequently, TV program all over the world resemble each other more and more and so do the products in the field of music, film and publishing companies.<sup>6</sup>

So plainly speaking, telecom and cable operations have undergone multiple mergers and takeovers that increasingly cross national boundaries (as in the purchase of MCI by British Telecom, or cable giant TCI by AT&T). Satellite and cable systems transformed the roles played by dominant news services such as Reuters, AP, UPI, Agence France-Press, Reuters TV (formerly Visnews) and Worldwide Television News, and led to the creation of new "global news services such as Cable News Network (CNN) and CNN International, and later CNBC, MSNBC, and the Fox News Channel. New entertainment services such as Music Television (MTV) and Entertainment and Sports Network (ESPN) were launched in the U.S. and eventually grew into transnational enterprises, with custom regional MTV production occurring in Europe, Asia and Latin America (one of the three Asian MTV channels is in Mandarin). Since the 1980s, global satellite and cable systems such as News Corporation's Asian Star TV, Indian Zee TV, Sky Broadcasting in Japan, India and Latin America, among others, have established global distribution networks for the programming and products of the entertainment media giants that finance and sponsor them (Griffin, 2000).

The strength of the globalized media firms is clearly central to any arguments about cultural hegemony or cultural imperialism, since these firms can be seen to swamp localized media forms and messages, and so construct set of values and meanings about what should be regarded as good, stylish, right, or wrong, just as they have long done in 'the west' (Bilton and Others, 1996:68).

### **VIEWING GLOBALIZATION FROM POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVE**

Postmodernism involves a different way of thinking, of considering discourses, cultural practices, power relations, of considering sites where new kinds of identities are constructed. Postmodernist thinkers (Lyotard 1984; Foucault 1965, 1971, 1977, 1980, 1988; Baudrillard 1998; Jameson 1991; Lash and Friedman 1992; Kellner 1995, and others) stand against the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, PP.6-8

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<sup>6</sup> Wole Akande. 'The Drawbacks of Cultural Globalization'. <http://globalpolicy.igc.org/globaliz/cultural/2002/1110cult.htm>. P.3.2002

West's continuous attempts in marginalizing cultural identity and diversity and destroying local markets economies, and consequently, they are critical of hegemonic discourses (colonization, modernization, globalization). Postmodernists stand against hegemonic schools and ideologies of the west and they reject any overarching 'grand narratives' that could be invoked to make sense of the world as a whole. They argue for the world as discontinuous and fragmented- a world of many, local, individual voices (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001:140).

However, tracing the etymology of 'postmodernism' from 1949-1980 in the Oxford English Dictionary shows that it was applied first to architecture, then in history, sociology, literature, and art where it is represent a new epoch or a new style that is a reaction against modernism (Peters, 1999). 'Modernism' has two senses: one refers to movements in the arts from around the end of the ninetieth century where the method, style, involved a deliberate break from classical and traditional methods of expression based on assumption of realism and naturalism, the other is historical and philosophical, referring to 'modernity' as the period of following the medieval age. However, in relation to modernism, postmodernism has also two general senses: aesthetically, it refers to development in the arts subsequent to or in reaction to modernism; and historically and philosophically, which is a transformation or a radical shift in the system of values and practices of modernity (Peters, 1999).

An influential definition of postmodernism comes from the poststructuralist thinker, Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984; 1992) who analyzed the status of knowledge in the most advanced societies. He maintains "...the term modern to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a Meta discourse... making explicit appeal to some grand narratives such as the dialectics of the Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth" (Lyotard, 1984 p. xxii). Lyotard indicates his concerns that grand narratives had grown out of the Enlightenment and had come to mark modernity and simply defines 'postmodernism' as 'incredulity towards meta narratives' (Lyotard, 1984, p.xxiv).

In fact, postmodernism offers a radical de-centering of knowledge of reason, logic, and white male thought. Postmodernists explicitly trace the relationship of dominant ideologies to the powerful interests, which sponsor them. They historicize and denaturalize word and "facts" to show that knowledge can only be understood in their spatial, temporal and political contexts. Leading theorist Michel Foucault showed the inseparability of power and knowledge. That is, knowledge or "truth" results from power; be it the Church, the State, or capitalism (Foucault 1971).

Foucault (1977,1980, 1988) examines regimes of truth about social and political practices. He

characterized social control and development in contemporary society having shifted from repressive practices to practices of normalization where population and problems were identified, defined, measured, compared and scientifically based norms were established. Foucault argues that power is an integral component in the production of truth: 'truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power... Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces the regular effect of power' (Foucault 1980:131). According to Foucault's arguments those who claim knowledge on certain issues also claim to power.

Foucault (1965) pointed out how over time, through discourse we continually devise categories, and norms that specify, position and define people in different way e.g. the insane, mad, fools, poor, underdeveloped, illiterate, landless, backward, traditional, etc. to understand globalization as a hegemonic discourse, we have to look at the system of relations established among them. It is this system that allows the systematic creation of objects, concepts, and strategies: it determines what can be thought and said. These relations established between institutions, socioeconomic processes, and forms of knowledge, technological factors, and so-define the conditions under which objects, concepts, theories, and strategies can be incorporated in the discourse.

The objects with which globalization began to deal after the **Bretton Woods** conference, in 1944 were numerous and varied. Some of them stood out clearly (poverty, insufficient technology and capital, rapid population growth, inadequate public services, archaic agricultural practices, and so), whereas others were introduced with ore caution or even in surreptitious ways (such as cultural attitudes and values and the existence of racial, religious, geographic, or ethnic factors believed to associated with backwardness). These elements emerged from a multiplicity of points: the newly formed international organizations (the World Bank, International Monetary fund), government offices in distant capitals, old and new institutions, universities and research centers in developed countries, and, increasingly with the passing of time, institutions in the Third World. Everything was subjected to the eye of the new experts: the poor dwellings of the rural masses, the vast agricultural fields, cities, households, factories, hospitals, schools, public offices, towns and regions, and, in the last instance, the world as a whole (Escobar, 1995:41).

Different institutions such as United Nations, World Bank, IMF had certain forms of moral, professional, and legal authority to name subjects and define strategies. Some of these institutions carried the symbols of capital and power. These principles of authority concerned the governments of poor countries, which commanded the legal political authority over the lives of their subjects, and the position of leadership of the rich countries, who had the power, knowledge, and experience to decide on

what was to be done (Escobar, 1995). The global financial system is circulated and maintained by different institutions including IMF, which set policies and regulate exchange rates, and the World Bank, which arranges and provides multilateral aid for development. It is facilitated by the development of multinational organizations such as the general Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the north American free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that seek to promote and influence trade. A few number of powerful banks that rank alongside transnational corporations as global institutions, such as, Industrial and Commercial bank of Switzerland, bank America and various joint venture insurances and banks largely dominate this financial system.

However, globalization must be seen as a historical construct that provides a space, in which poor countries are known, specified, intervened upon. Authority of these different institutions and their professional knowledge, in fact, bring the Third World into the politics of expert knowledge and Western science in general immediate the end of the World War II. This accomplished through a set of techniques, strategies, and disciplinary practices that organize the generation, validation, and diffusion of development knowledge, including the academic disciplines, methods of research and teaching, criteria of expertise, and manifold professional practices; in other words, those mechanisms through which a politic of truth is created and maintained, through which certain forms of knowledge are given the status of truth (Escobar, 1995:45).

So it clear that the west has made the rest of world as a field to produce knowledge, experiment and exercise power over the people of those countries. The West itself has appeared as an ideal model of development, cultural pattern and political system. Through globalization processes the rich countries of the west is ruling the whole world-economically, politically and culturally. Transnational corporations, News Corps, communication technologies and entertainment companies dominating the world economy, exploiting the developing countries, marginalizing local economy and cultures and shaping and constructing the identities of the local people. The Tran nationalization of production involves the manufacture of global products, with global brand names, which are assembled across the world from components made in Third World countries. Firms and industries, which organize production such a way, are able to take advantage of local conditions, especially the availability of large pools of very cheap labor, so as to reduce manufacturing costs and maximize worldwide profits. Aggressive exploitation of the resources by outside cultures contributes to the disparity.

## **GLOBALIZATION AS A GENERATOR OF CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC HEGEMONY**

Like older discourses (such as colonialization, modernization), globalization has turned into a tool of the western domination and hegemony. Western culture fuels globalization today and, as it during the age of imperialism and colonization, helps to reinforce the hegemony of the west. Information technology, as the driving force of economic globalization, has become a veritable instrument for propagating western culture. Global media and information systems and a world capitalist consumer culture circulate products, images, and ideas throughout the world. In fact, with the advance in electronic media, modern globalization is experienced through trends and the growth in sales of dominant name-brand products. Celebratory consumerism has emerged as a new kind of modernism, which claims to offer individuals and humanity freedom, happiness, and progress.

Jean Baudrillard (1998, orig.1970) pointed out that consumption is not simply what individuals do to find 'enjoyment, satisfaction and fulfillment', but is structurally linked to the overall economic system and is 'external to and coercive over individuals', such that [consumption]'is above all else a coded system of signs' [message, images] through which people communicate with each other (Ritzer, 1998:15). Baudrillard argues that anything-goods, services, the body, even culture can become objects of consumption or commodities. However, at this present stage of globalization, globalization of culture has also turned into the commercialization of culture. Production and consumption of cultural goods and services have become commodities, along with the essentials of social life (marriage and family life, religion, work and leisure) that are the crucibles of cultural creation. Culture-whether it is music, food, clothes, art, sport, images of age or youth, masculinity or femininity-has become a product, sold in the market place.

The commercialization of culture has a disturbing impact on people. What once was an element of their way of life becomes a product, rather than something unique they had made to suit their own specific needs and circumstances. At the same time, people are bombarded with new images, new music, new clothes and new values. Local culture's role as a spontaneous and integral part of people's life is eroded and it ceases to serve as the means of constructing social values, reproducing group identity and building social cohesion. The end result becomes global integration at the expense of local disintegration.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, P.3

Globalization claims to offer an equal and universal progress of human society and homogenization of human culture thanks to the result of science and technology and with the rapid pace of free market economy or economic liberalization. The globalists promises that free market and economic liberalization will bring economic prosperity, the stability and ensure due honor for human rights. Information super highway, the Internet, e-commerce, modern transportation and other new communication technologies will bring more wealth instead of dependence on capital only. Self-control of free market will bring balance between social and political system among nations. But the reality presents the other scenario. People across the planet are not equally blessed with the benefits of globalization. The rich countries of the west those are technologically most advanced becoming richer at the expense of the poor and consequently, the poor becoming poorer. Through the United Nations, the IMF, the World Bank, and now the G-8, the Western countries, especially the US controls all major political and economic affairs of the world. The west uses its political and economic power to exercise hegemonic control over most of the globe. The western interventions regretfully caused untold suffering to millions, entailed economic exploitation on a massive scale, and led to economic, political and cultural subjugation of many nations of the present world.

So, there is significant material inequality within states and nations. The gap between the rich and poor nations is continuing to widen. Not only that, globalization has brought a devastating destruction of local economies, traditions, environment, human rights, health and cultural diversity. As Nobel Peace Prize recipient **Rigoberta Menchu** specified, "Globalization-the concentration of capital and the exclusive concentration of communication systems-affects not only the lives of indigenous peoples, but also affects the lives of poor people of the world. When we speak of free trade, we are not talking about the small and middle commercial sectors of the world, but rather we are speaking of the great monopolies".<sup>8</sup>

## CONCLUSION

With globalization the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, with simultaneous pressures towards unity and diversity of human cultures. Globalization is destroying diversity and displacing the opportunity to sustain decent human life through an assortment of many different cultures. It is more a consequence of power concentration in the global media and

manufacturing companies than the people's own wish to abandon their cultural identity and diversity. Through the process of globalization the west is exploiting and even destroying the rest of the world's local economies, and has brought these countries under its subjugation. As Bessis argues, globalization means disturbance of the world, mingling of places, return to image of barbarism contained in poverty (Bessis, 2003"161).

Plainly speaking, a few powerful countries of the west have been exploiting the rest of the countries of the world and imposing their own ideas, thinking and development model in different labels in different times on other nations. This has possible because they have ability produce knowledge/power and to give a certain knowledge or ideas as a status of 'truth'. That is, it prescribes a particular development model as universally applicable. Once the bourgeoisie era brought revolution in industry and wealth creation for the sake of its own interest that changed appearance of the world. At present, the bourgeoisie capitalists are pleading for globalization for the sake of their own interest and inviting both poor and rich countries to participate in globalization process.

History shows us that though the west appeared in different times with the promise to give a benevolent, totalitarian human society, it has failed but succeeded in extending and exercising hegemonic powers and exploiting the others. Once they promised that those scientific methods, finance and industrial organization would rationalize and organize a new modern society and replace primordial cultures with communities of reason. But in real, modernity did not eliminate cultural differences, ethno-nationalists is not a relic of the past and, that state has not withered away. In the same way, it can be argued that globalization will not bring universalism in the present world, but merely will make more space for the west's domination and hegemony. Though globalization pretends to erase all differences and diversity of human cultures and way of thinking, believing and practicing that will never happen because human beings do not share common experiences, dreams and memories and they can construct and maintain separate worlds of emotion and meaning while sharing the same physical space.

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<sup>8</sup> HIFC Defining Globalization. p.2

[\(http://houstonculture.org/global/\)](http://houstonculture.org/global/)

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#### **OTHER INTERNET RESOURCES**

Defining Globalization (<http://globalpolicy.igc.org/globaliz/define/index.htm>).

The Two Faces of Globalization by Lucky O.Imade (2003)

([http://globalization.icap.org/content/v3.1/01\\_imade.html](http://globalization.icap.org/content/v3.1/01_imade.html)).

Hybridised world-kids: Youth cultures in the postmodern era by Dr. A.C. (Tina) Besley (2002). University of Glasgow. E-Mail: [C.Besley@educ.gla.ac.uk](mailto:C.Besley@educ.gla.ac.uk)(<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00002362.htm>).

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