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CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

AN OVERVIEW ON GLOBALIZATION DISCUSSIONS

THROUGH THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Küreselleşme Tartışmalarına Kültür Kavramı Üzerinden Bir Bakış

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ABSTRACT

The term *globalization*, which has been frequently heard in the agenda recently, has a quite sophisticated structure within its' economic, political, social, cultural aspects. In parallel especially with technological developments, globalization has found an area to spread quickly and exists in virtue of a lot of factors such as commercial activities, Western itinerants' journeys in pursuit of founding new and different continents. There has been a widespread opinion as "the world is shrunk and standardized" due to the effect of globalization in the process from past to present. One of the areas that have gone through a great change and transformation with the effect of globalization is, undoubtedly, culture. *Culture*, which consists of material and nonmaterial elements and tools for carrying them to the future, plays a crucial role in this process. According to some perspectives, in the context of globalization, culture has become homogenized, commodified, and transformed into a market product. In this process, American culture has become the dominant culture; new terms such as Americanization, McDonalization, and Starbucksization have been carried to the agenda. Another argument is that globalization produces heterogeneity and via the process called "glocalization", localities are presented to the world. Local identities' gaining recognition, being informed about the culture from the most remote part of the world via technology could be a positive effect of globalization on culture. Cultural assimilation in the context of the colonialist movements in world history and cultural imperialism spreading via media could be count against the negative effects of this relation. In this paper, by way of these examples and theoretical discussions, the effects of globalization on culture are handled, the back story of the relation between culture and globalization is questioned.

Key Words: Globalization, culture, the culture of sociology, homogenization, heterogenization.

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Öz

Son yıllarda sıkça duyulan *küreselleşme* terimi; ekonomik, siyasi, sosyal, kültürel boyutlarıyla hayli karmaşık bir yapı arz etmektedir. Özellikle teknolojik gelişmelere paralel olarak hızlı bir yayılma alanı bulan küreselleşme, varlığını ticari faaliyetlerden Batılı seyyahların başka anakaralar keşfetmek için başlattığı yolculuklara kadar pek çok etkene borçludur. Geçmişten günümüze uzanan süreçte küreselleşmenin tesiriyle “dünyanın küçüldüğü ve tek tipleştiği” yönünde yaygın bir kanaat oluşmuştur. Küreselleşmenin etkisiyle ciddi bir değişim ve dönüşüm yaşayan alanlardan biri, hiç şüphesiz kültürdür. Bir toplumun yarattığı maddi ve manevi unsurlar ile bunları geleceğe taşımak için kullanılan araçların tamamını kapsayan *kültür*, küreselleşme faaliyetleri açısından önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bazı görüşlere göre küreselleşme bağlamında kültür homojenleşmiş, metalaşmış ve pazar ürünü haline gelmiştir. Bu süreçte dünyada Amerikan kültürü baskın kültür olmuş; Amerikanlaşma, McDonalds’laşma ve Starbucks’laşma gibi yeni üretim terimler gündeme gelmiştir. Küreselleşmenin heterojenlik ürettiği, kü-yerleşme (glokalizasyon) olarak ifade edilen yereliklerin de artık dünyaya tanıtılabildeği ortaya atılan bir diğer argümandır. Yerel kimliklerin ulusal ölçekte tanınırılk kazanması, teknoloji sayesinde dünyanın en ücra köşelerindeki kültürlerden haberdar olunması küreselleşmenin kültür üzerindeki olumlu etkileri arasında gösterilmektedir. Dünya tarihinde sömürgeleşme hareketleri bağlamındaki kültürel asimilasyon, medya aracılığıyla yayılan kültürel emperyalizm ise bu ilişkinin olumsuz etkileri arasında sayılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, örnekler ve teorik tartışmalar aracılığıyla küreselleşmenin kültürel dokuya etkileri ele alınmış, kültür ve küreselleşme arasındaki ilişkinin arka planı sorgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Küreselleşme, kültür, kültür sosyolojisi, homojenleşme, heterojenleşme.

Introduction

Globalization, which can be described as assembling all humanity economically, politically, socially, and culturally, is a fact that exists for a long time. In particular with the technological developments, globalization has made fast improvements within cultural change and transformation. Islam spread by traders had given way to trade and cultural interactions. Europeans' colonialist movements in tribes gave also way to the cultural interaction and also assimilation. Constructing, spreading, and selling products, images etc. in the 21st century may also be evaluated as cultural and global movements. From earlier periods to today, these are some examples that can be analyzed with the concept of cultural globalization. All these time range and events illustrate that globalization has been related to culture throughout the world history. Today, it is possible to say that globalization has new and more aspects that can be related to culture. When it is accepted that today (the 21st century) there are many manufacturing styles exist together and the main capital has mostly been transformed from ‘industry and soil’ to ‘human capital’, ‘informational capital’ or ‘intellectual capital’, (Gorz 2011: 11-13), the importance of culture, which is the product of human, becomes clearer. In Gorz's interpretation (2011: 11), this (the 21st century) is a transitional period that modern capitalism focused on making use of huge mass of material constant capital has given its place with an increasing speed to a postmodern capital postmodern capital focused on benefiting from human as a non-material capital. Human, as the producer of culture, produces new aspects in her/his own culture and the world's culture

thanks to globalization, such as customs, traditions, languages, clothes, and food that has become an ethnic food industry today.

Discussions on globalization presented new concepts, theories, and subject areas for social scientists and theorists. One of them is as follows: The new period named as mass media and cultural industry, caused fundamental changes and this change has reflected social sciences with a new research area in Britain called “Cultural Studies”. This School has made a great contribution to globalization and culture discussions with new concepts and theories.

In order to analyze globalization that is a multi-dimensional concept, various elements must be evaluated. The relation between globalization and economy, culture, politics, and even religion, reveals the need for these sub-analyzes. For example, cultural globalization, the main issue of this study, could be stated with a sub-definition as “cultural interactions existing in global platforms between various countries” (Ritzer 2011: 64). Professor Ali A. Mazrui, who was a specialist on globalization states (2013: 189) that globalization has four driving forces and these forces sometimes act separately. These forces are religion, economy, technology, empire and all of these take part in globalization’s historical process in various forms. Some of them will be argued in this paper.

Social scientist Arif Dirlik, who has had his specialization on China, puts forward culture on discussions of globalization about countries, especially the ones called as third world countries. Culture, which Dirlik defines as (2010) a form of not only understanding the world but also *making and changing the world*, is a radical area of activity due to its’ ideological and hegemonic aspects. Localism discussions, social movements and various global actions, organizations could be evaluated in this radical area of acting.

According to Zygmunt Bauman (2012), modern understanding of (nation) state rising from economic, cultural and political basis in terms of sovereignty, has changed with globalization and gave its’ way to an indefinite and uncontrollable era. Because of this fact, it does not seem possible to say that discussion of globalization has a specific route and an absolute direction. However, current discussions of globalization contain homogeneity and heterogeneity, which brings *glocalization* to the mind. Concept of glocalization is generally defined as (Abercrombie et.al. 2006: 170), global forces carry local products and enjoyments to global area and transform them to global marketing products.

Looking back to known history in relation to globalization or thinking critically about its’ relation with culture makes possible to find out new perspectives to the issue. Assuming globalization mainly as an economic process resulting from increasing industry, technology and communication networks does not provide a new perspective. Here, the most important point is, globalization includes what and when it started. According to Chanda (2009), globalization, against general opinion, contains a process starting from B.C., not from recent centuries. Trade started in maritime countries and trading by camel train, provides a basis for globalization in the elementary level via cultural and economic ties. In this study, these aspects will be exemplified and alternative theoretical frameworks will be evaluated briefly.

Globalization and Sociology of Culture

Sociology of culture, that aims to observe social reality through concept of culture, is defined as, “a discipline of sociology evaluates layers, strata, relations, tendencies of

society” (Alver 2021: 208). According to this definition, sociology of culture deals with nearly all aspects of culture and society.

Understanding and analyzing globalization in terms of sociology of culture is mainly possible via school named “Cultural Studies” in Britain. Jonathan Friedman (1999), shows this School’s sociology of culture perspective as one of the two main perspectives to analyze globalization and culture. Cultural studies, according to Friedman (1999: 82), theorize culture in terms of focusing cultural images and goods produced by humans and society, and explains globalization via these goods and images in relation to culture. This perspective has given way to follow the process of commodification of culture.

Understanding of sociology of culture is important in the sense of both positive and negative aspects of globalization by way of culture. Globalization brings progress to world’s economy via improved technology and communication; however, it also causes various and new social problems due to commodification of cultural entities. When this situation is thought in terms of Western imperialism, globalization fits to a much more politic and problematic place. Just at this point, a brief expression on the cover page of Raimondo Luraghi’s book *History of Imperialism* (2000) is crucial: (from an African’s saying) “*When Whites came to Africa, we had lands, they had the Bible. They taught us praying our eyes closed. When we opened our eyes, we saw that they had lands and we had the Bible.*” This short statement, as a striking example, expresses the relation between imperialism, globalization and culture.

A significant cultural theorist, Marxist Terry Eagleton (2011), emphasizes that culture is a vital and political issue due to the fact that it has been transformed into an organized commercial mass culture. Especially in terms of consumption, lifestyle and fashion, commercializing of culture is stated by another Marxist theorist, David Harvey (2013). All these aspects reflect sociological imagination on the relation between culture and globalization. Yet, this relation is not limited to sociological point of view.

Anthropology as Relating Culture with Globalization

Anthropology, defined as “the science that studies human’s origin, evolution, biological, social and cultural features.” (TDK Turkish Dictionary 2021), has revealed many unknown things about humanity’s cultural improvement and diversity since it has emerged. Focusing on not the similarities but the differences of people, tribes, communities, cultures; anthropology is mainly developed via Western researchers’ search in non-Western and mostly underdeveloped regions. In other words, it started with the search of imperialist states for new colonies. For this purpose, these countries sent researchers (anthropologists) to different parts of world in the colonialist period. So, anthropology can be accepted as the product of imperialist era. This characteristic shows the connection between anthropology and our issue. However, thanks to anthropologist Levi Strauss (2012), anthropologic perspective has started to change; Western-centered worldview had been damaged and there were changes in perceiving other countries. Instead of ethnocentric perspective of the Western anthropologists, Levi Strauss and the ones following him stated that the Europe’s representing itself as the superior civilization and a model for the rest of the world is a fantastic case. They also opened the way to look at cultural globalization critically.

Accepting the Crusades as a milestone in various definitions and history about globalization (Özkul 2013: 124) and assuming the emergence of different humans/societies/clans via oversea trade (Chanda 2009: 21), are two examples to see the contribution of anthropology to globalization discussions. Religion and trade itself important aspects of human action, however; they are also a significant part of human culture, like in the examples.

Another aspect of anthropology related to globalization is the fiction of similarities and differences. Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2012: 469-470), states that anthropology uses unnatural ideal types to point studied societies' similarities and differences with the Western civilizations, but represents these types also as a role model and as they are real. These types are not natural and real but artificial in order to compare and construct societies and to understand the target society. There are not differences at every time and sometimes this is just a degree of difference. In reality, the world is a multi-cultured structure consists of interacting and communicating societies in general. In addition to this, all the societies are not in the same way with the West not in the situation of same political, social and cultural experience. Each culture has a unique character and the fact of globalization ties these unique cultures to each other in different ways. For example, China's local food culture becomes a popular market product in all around the world, the USA in the first place.

The main result of globalization in terms of anthropology, contrary to resembling all the culture, the awareness of the increase of culturally differentiated entities between global and local. Great improvements in areas such as immigration, communication, trade causes problematics in social and cultural level (Eriksen 2012: 474), new concepts such as "hybrid", "cultural mosaic", are produced via the effect of globalization over culture. Recognition of local identities is a positive outcome, on the other hand the assimilations of cultures are negative examples of this situation. Within the contributions of anthropology and also sociology, these aspects become more visible.

Cultural Homogeneity or Heterogeneity

Current discussions about globalization are not whether it exists or not, are on which effects it has. At this point, a significant issue of globalization related to culture is about the tension between cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity. On this subject, Arjun Appadurai (2013) stated that cultural homogeneity discussions are mostly about commodification or Americanization. Marshall McLuhan's perspective arguing that "the world will be a global village via media" (2020) is also a similar argument. George Ritzer's concept "McDonaldization of society" is another interpretation of this perspective. Ritzer, in his work (2021), states four principles for McDonaldization, which are namely efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. However, the idea that globalization will construct a universal value for the universe and via modernization every part of the world will conform to these values and one common culture will be conformed to is being questioned due to cultural disjunctions. What is more, Arif Dirlik, who uses the term "global modernity" to analyze the issue of globalization, puts forward the effects of globalization on not only economic but also political and cultural context in the contemporary world. He claims that (Dirlik 2012: 8), for example due to economic, social and cultural globalization, there are new power bases and new political mass who draw the political frame of globalization. However, it can also be thought that globalization helps to divide states and societies such as

developed, developing and under-developed according to their (mostly economic but also social) connection with the rest of the world. This can lead to the idea that declare globalization itself is disrupted by national political, ethnic and cultural divisions (Dirlik 2012: 8). According to Dirlik (2012: 8-9), globalization's broken multi-parts become visible via considering deep class divisions including the poorest and the richest ones. All these parts of globalization should be considered, especially in cultural basis. In the contemporary world (the 21th century) other than class divisions, there are still national, ethnic, cultural, religious divisions still exist in the world and affect global trends in the world. Samuel Huntington (1993) states that these divisions will come to an end as a *clash of civilizations*. According to Huntington, there are eight civilizations and Western civilization will surpass over other civilizations. This argument states that world cultures will continue to fight against each other.

Postcolonial theory, which carries criticisms of Western-oriented understanding of modernization and globalization, is crucial in the context of analyzing the effects of globalization. Postcolonialism refers to second part of nineteenth century when colonial countries gained their dependence (Abercrombie et.al. 2006: 300). Postcolonial theory has a transforming force in interpreting the world named as first, second and third world countries. Thanks to that force, it contributes to discussions on the globalization's structure of homogenization-heterogenization. Nevertheless, postcolonialism is criticized by many academicians, because whether it is any less exploitative than colonialism (Abercrombie et.al. 2006: 300) and Arif Dirlik is one of them. According to Dirlik (2010), post-colonial critiques ignore class divisions and sub-problems about sub-cultures, ethnicities that can be analyzed via this fragment, so post-colonialist theory is criticized.

In order to figure out these discussions, Appadurai's theory that ensures five levels of globalization is notable. According to him (Appadurai 2013: 175-176), ethnic, media, technology, finance and ideology are these five areas where global flows occur. Especially media and ideology areas are related to this paper and they are also related to each other. For example, current discussions on "partisan media-opponent media" discourses, show the connection with ideology and media. The idea that media is a global force connecting with government, opponent sides and international organizations is a specific example of this connection. Appadurai states that (2013) media bombards people intensively with images and constructs a world includes political area and other areas opposed to each other. In addition to this, the problem of cultural homogenization's generally understood as Americanization, yet; there is not just one kind of Americanization. Political, cultural, social, economic and communicational various Americanization process are noticed (Ritzer 2011: 108). What is more, within globalization, these aspects cause different situations. For example, USA's democratization policy of Iraq means one thing and irresistible, Americanization via soap operas, films, music holds a non-obligatory but an influential pop-culture. Americanization through mass media, McDonaldization or Starbucksization are examples of economic and cultural areas. Moreover, a popular TV channel of USA broadcasting in Turkey (namely TLC) shows classical, modern USA home styles and re-building techniques. This can also be accepted as an example of American lifestyle's advertising.

Those propose that globalization brings about a heterogenic, multicultural and multinational process, emphasize on new manufacturing types and China's growing

economy. For example, one of the new manufacturing types is that a consumption product is produced cheaper and marketing in Europe or USA (Eriksen 2012: 461). What is more, as glocalization has referred, commodification of cultures brings about heterogeneity in globalization in one sense. For instance; a famous and local Turkish food is commercialized and become popular in abroad. Cultural, scientific and sport organizations provide cultural interaction and a potential of glocalization.

Modernization and (Global) Culture Change

Type of social change created by the Western-centered modernization perspective causes a perception of a specific and apparent cultural Western hegemony. Modernization has emerged a cultural monism and homogeneity from 19th century. However, postmodernism and globalization demolish cultural monism and makes local apparent, known and acceptable.

Anton C. Zijderveld states in his book (2007: 227) that modernization means cultural generalization. System of norms, values, meaning and culture has structurally changed via modernization and emergence of industrial society. This change, according to Zijderveld, did not annihilate old ones but they have been changed functionally. Within secularization's deeper effects in daily world, this norm and value system will become invisible. This connection between changing society types and system of value change, is an illustration of sectoral change (from industry to information) and cultural area change. In other words, because driving force of 21th century transformed from industrial organization to informational organization, norms and values gain new meanings and functions; industry of culture is a specific area in this context. Area of culture, can be defined as both dependent and autonomous area of activity (Dirlik 2010: 51), transform to a key concept including political, economic and social areas in this context. At this point, cultural change as a social change emerges as a crucial fact.

Although it is said that USA is losing the global force of the world, in the sense of cultural globalization, USA has a great effect on entertainment market. Especially TV soap operas and films, which are an important part of society's entertaining activity, are in the effect of USA culture.

Mass Media Culture and Industry of Culture

Western Marxist interpretations on culture, presents significant discussions about cultural globalization. Western Marxist theorists are the opponents of capitalism and criticize commodification and transformation of culture to commodity. These theorists established a research institution known as *Frankfurt School* or *Critical Theory* and made great contribution to sociology¹. One of the sociology's main streams, Critical Theory's founders Frankfurt School's scholars theorize the relation of capitalism-globalization from a different perspective via considering media. Two members of Frankfurt School, Horkheimer and

¹ “*Frankfurt School or Critical Theory is a significant movement that has a special place in recent history of sociology. The school refers to Frankfurt Social Research Institute which was established in 1923 in Frankfurt/Germany affiliated with Frankfurt University, defines itself with European Marxism. Because general perspective of the School is critique of capitalism, it is also named as “Critical Theory”. Among famous agents are Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Karl Mannheim, Leo Lowenthal, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Eric Fromm, Friedrich Pollock, Jürgen Habermas.*” (Alver, 2021: 134).

Adorno advocate of the idea that the concept of cultural industry and the fact of capitalism strongly related to each other, thus; entertainment and media sector are main and observable areas of this (Smith 2007:70). USA's entertainment sector, film and soap opera industry, media companies are specific examples. One of the first names brings out this discussion is John Tomlinson (2013), who analyzed popular USA soap opera *Dallas* in this context in one of his studies. This soap opera was broadcasted in nearly all of the world, can be thought as a specific representation of cultural imperialism because it impressed upon American life style.

Developed countries, because they had big transformation periods such as rationalization, modernization and industrialization, they accomplished forming world's economy and industry according to their own interests. And then these countries formed their economies in accordance with industrialized manufacture and mass consumption (Murdock 1999). In this period, the media as a sector, becomes an instrument for developed countries.

Among current discussions about globalization, the idea that culture gradually becomes a more important circulation space in power struggle, outweigh. Hollywood film industry, Bollywood film industry emerging in India as a reaction to Hollywood, are examples of culture and life style's being manufactured as a commodity. A striking example of this, Turkish soap operas exported especially to Asian and Middle East countries and enormous earnings from them. According to a recent internet news (Sayin 2021), Turkey is in the top five over import TV broadcast, Turkish soap operas broadcast in more than one hundred and fifty countries and more than seven thousand million people watch them. Total income from this marketing reached five thousand million dollars by 2020.

Frankfurt School theorist Adorno asserts that industry of culture plays an important role on capitalist re-production. Mass society and popular culture are main agents ensuring this industry's survival (Smith 2007: 71). *Acun Media* is a specific example of this situation in Turkey. Famous TV announcer Acun Ilıcalı earns great income after he became a producer and imported TV shows and adapted them to Turkish culture. Popular culture produced by his TV programs, shows that media is not only an instrument of communication but also a fund of profit. Moreover, because these shows are watched by a great mass, similar programs are produced; so capitalist re-production occurs again.

When globalization is evaluated in context of the history, it is seen that emergence of global commodity is not specific to recent times. In throughout the history, in addition to material entities traded, there were also "sophist"² trades in camel train trades (Chanda 2009). Another example in relation to culture and globalization in ancient times is propaganda of religion. From the beginning of colonization of Africa and Asia, there was also a religious, linguistic and cultural propaganda, and even assimilation over these countries. In modern times, this propaganda has given its' way to cultural commodification via mass media and cultural commodification. Far Eastern's yoga movement and philosophy is commodified to the world also as a noncelestial beliefs and religion without God. Yoga is actually a part of local religion such as Hinduism and Buddhism. However, as an international meditation program, it becomes also an international marketing instrument. Its' education and teaching materials are sold, being a yoga expert or joining a yoga course is a growing sector. Besides

² Sophist: Traveling philosophers/teachers in ancient times.

its' original meaning and function, these formations create a re-production of yoga. A key point here is that, many entities marketed as part of yoga action, are actually not a necessity but a product of cultural marketing. A lot of films, soap operas, documentary programs, home designing programs, etc. promotes yoga as a new culture, not as a local religion. Popular self-development books imported from USA best-sellers are another example of current relation of culture and globalization. These books are usually named as "in ten lessons...." and promising teaching anything in a very practical way and reaches a lot of people in their tongue via quick translations.

Nevertheless, globalization and marketed-cultures are not limited to USA or Western European World. When tourism is considered as a crucial sector and an opportunity for advertisement, within natural areas, meals are great elements. Glocalization, as it is discussed above, mainly include these local meal promotions. Turkish baklava or kebab, Chinese food, Mexican taco are specific examples. Thanks to this cultural marketing of meals, it becomes possible to eat these local foods without the need of going that place. However, here arises another problem: "the issue of patent". Due to cultural mobility, similarity and even cultural globalization, it is not certain every time which meal originally belonged to which country. This also cause sometimes diplomatic crisis between countries. For example; Turkish *coffee* or Greek *coffee*, Turkish *raki* or Greek *uzo*, Turkish *baklava* or Greek *baklava*, Turkish *döner* Greek *gyro*, Turkish *zeytinyağlı dolma* and Greek *dolma dakia* are that kind of controversial meals³.

Conclusion

Discussions about globalization in the agenda, mostly concentrated on globalization's homogenizer commodifying/Americanization aspect. In contrast to this perspective, globalization is structurally multi-centered and glocalization process is in the agendum. Hence, globalization discussions include all of these perspectives.

Globalization's relation with culture draws attention of various theorists and Frankfurt School theorists' contributions are very effective and influential in this sense. Meta-culture world expressed via the concept of cultural industry, brings new perspectives to culture-globalization discussions. Especially by the invention of mass media instruments like radio, television, newspaper, etc., culture become a commodity that can be marketed easier to around to the world. Films, books, soap operas, advertisements exported to the world are specific examples. For instance, these elements produced in USA make propaganda of a specific American culture and influence many people. This is not a political dominating colonial action but as a part of entertainment sector via involving in people's daily life. This fact, expressed as cultural globalization, means cultural colonialism of the non-Western world by Western culture according to some theorists.

The discussions over the relation of culture and globalization presents new aspects to globalization issue. For example, colonialism is an old problem in history of sociology. However, evaluating this problem from the globalization or culture aspects promotes new perspectives. Globalizations positive and negative aspects are handled in this way, hence it's realized that globalization is a multi-directional fact. These contributions are crucial in the

³ <https://onedio.com/haber/yunanlarin-komsu-falan-demeyip-kendilerine-mal-ettikleri-14-kulturel-degerimiz-768702> (Date of Access: 19.07.2021)

sense of social science discussions and presenting new and different perspectives to issues of sociology.

In this paper, some of these discussions were summarized briefly and the relation between culture and globalization was presented shortly. This relation necessitates deeper discussions, and new and various examples of this relation are added. Within the limits of this paper, a general outlook is illustrated and it is hoped that a brief contribution is accomplished on culture and globalization.

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