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Article in *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences: Annual Review* · January 2008

DOI: 10.18848/1833-1882/CGP/v03i06/52625

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Volume 3, Number 6

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Abu Sadat Nurullah

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SOCIAL SCIENCES  
<http://www.SocialSciences-Journal.com>

First published in 2008 in Melbourne, Australia by Common Ground Publishing Pty Ltd  
[www.CommonGroundPublishing.com](http://www.CommonGroundPublishing.com).

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ISSN: 1833-1882  
Publisher Site: <http://www.SocialSciences-Journal.com>

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SOCIAL SCIENCES is a peer refereed journal. Full papers submitted for publication are refereed by Associate Editors through anonymous referee processes.

Typeset in Common Ground Markup Language using CGCreator multichannel typesetting system  
<http://www.CommonGroundSoftware.com>.

# Globalisation as a Challenge to Islamic Cultural Identity

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*Abstract: Globalisation is a dynamic process which impacts differentially on various cultures around the world. It permeates cultural boundaries and in the process results in the spread of western ideologies and values across the world. This article strongly argues that globalisation poses a challenge to Islamic cultural identity due to several reasons: (a) globalisation promotes media to propagate the hegemony of Western culture, (b) it regenerates local culture to replace it with the Americanised secular one, and (c) it challenges the collective Islamic ways of life, values, behavioural patterns, and principles. However, scholars have argued that globalisation promotes cultural integration by removing cultural barriers and stimulating a healthy cultural exchange. Such arguments have encouraged American cultural hegemony globally. Conversely, as a result of cultural exchange, the dominant American culture is being manipulated in the Muslim world, replacing Islamic culture. Thus, Islamic culture is being seriously challenged by globalisation. Therefore, Muslims around the world require awareness of the dreadful consequences of cultural globalisation, and the strength to retain the absolute Islamic cultural trait prescribed by God.*

Keywords: Globalisation, Islamic Culture, Westernisation, Americanisation, Islamic Solidarity

## Introduction

**G**LOBALISATION IS ONE of the most debated issues in the intellectual milieu. This article focuses on the cultural aspects of globalisation, its consequences on Islamic cultural identity. The pervasive impact of cultural globalisation is one of the key dimensions that Muslims around the world need to be concerned about. This article argues that cultural globalisation has brought detrimental consequences to the Muslims in particular and to the diverse culture around the world in general. In this globalised era, non-Islamic cultural elements are gradually being adapted and adopted by Muslims, resulting in a mixture of Western and Islamic culture. Hence, the features of Islamic culture are being compromised with the Western one, which further creates identity crisis among Muslims.

Globalisation has led to the rapid transformation of cultures around the world. Through the print and electronic media, Westernised cultural artefacts are being transmitted across cultures. In fact, global cultural industries are greatly influenced by Western values and traits, many of which are alien to Islam. By far the most visible manifestation of the emerging global culture is in the vehicle of popular culture, which penetrates broad masses of people all over the world (Berger & Huntington, 2003).

The multidimensional impacts of globalisation are reflected mostly in human behaviour and interactions. As Berger and Huntington (2003) have pointed out, we now have a picture of a cultural earthquake affecting virtually every part of the world, and different

people respond differently. Therefore, negotiation between local culture and the globalised one becomes intricate. Particularly, the challenge lies in the choice of what to accept or reject, or of blending indigenous culture with the global trend. Globalisation, when viewed from this vein, poses a debate whether it is injurious or beneficial to Islamic identity and culture.

This article strongly argues that globalisation poses a challenge to Islamic culture and identity because globalisation promotes the transmission of information through the media and this has resulted in the dominance and hegemony of Western culture over the rest of the world. This poses a challenge to Islamic ways of life, values, and principles. However, as globalisation is inevitable, Muslims should take the benefits and opportunities provided by globalisation in spreading and demonstrating the unique traits of Islamic cultural identity around the world through various means.

## Globalisation

The concept of globalisation is multidimensional, as there are several aspects of globalisation, namely economic, political, geographic, cultural, and the like. This article focuses on the cultural dimension of globalisation, because culture is an intrinsic aspect of the entire process of complex connectivity at globalisation's core (Hsiao, 2003). For instance, when economic globalisation takes place, it accompanies the cultural values associated with that particular economy (e.g., capitalism). Political globalisation escorts the cultural ideals of democracy. There-



fore, cultural globalisation is the vital focus in the scholarly discussion on globalisation.

To understand globalisation, we must first understand that it is a continuous process and not a static condition (Ibrahim, 2002). According to Giddens (1990) globalisation can be defined as the intensification of world wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. His definition indicates that globalisation is a phenomenon which makes blur the geographical boundaries of the states. Waters (2001: 5) defines globalisation as "a social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, social, and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly". In addition, Waters (2001: 5) asserts that "in a globalised world there will be a single society and culture occupying the planet. ... culture will be extremely abstract, expressing tolerance for diversity and individual choice. Importantly territoriality will disappear as an organising principle for social and cultural life". Moreover, due to the process of globalisation people of the world are incorporated into a single world society (Hsiao, 2003).

A more comprehensive meaning of globalisation has been provided by Mazrui (2000), who noted that globalisation is the force that results in flexing the world into a global village, reducing distance, homogenizing culture, enhancing mobility and shrinking the distance of geopolitical borders. He also noted that globalisation encompasses the processes which creates global interdependence and interconnectedness. Thus, globalisation is the cumulative processes whereby the cultural traits of the dominant group becomes the powerful one, and is being transmitted and assimilated by lesser groups. In today's world, the Western culture, particularly American culture is dominating the whole world.

One way to think of the consequentiality of culture for globalisation is to grasp how culturally informed 'local' actions can have globalising consequences (Tomlinson, 1999). The cultural products developed in the West and spread through the cultural industries have enormous impact on the rest of the world. Culture is thus intrinsically more globalising on account of the ease of the 'stretching' of the relations involved and the inherent mobility of cultural forms and products (Tomlinson, 1999). Therefore, due to globalisation, the dominant local culture turns into the global one. In this process the dominant American culture is being transmitted to other parts of the world. Thus, cultural globalisation involves changes in both the way routine life is handled and the meaning of life is interpreted, and offers alternate ways of managing everyday life (Hsiao, 2003).

## Islamic Cultural Identity

Culture is socially learned and shared behaviour and ideas which are found universally among human beings, and it also exists in a more specific way because all cultures are not the same (Miller, 2004). Culture embraces all aspects of social life, including both thought and behaviour (Harris, 1999). Hence, culture refers to the totality of the group's thought, experiences, and patterns of behaviour and its concepts, values, and assumptions about life that guide behaviour and how those evolve with contact with other cultures (Jandt, 2004).

Cultural identity can be defined as that part of an individual's psyche which identifies with his/her culture (Bhugra, 2004). It occurs in the process of cultural interaction among people. This identity is not static and the changes occur when an individual from one culture is placed in, or faced with, another culture for a significant period of time (Bhugra, 2004). Cultural identity consists of several important components, including religion, religious rituals, leisure activities, languages spoken, aspirations, functioning and importance of family, dietary habits, shopping, marriage, decision making in family, employment, and feelings regarding contact with others of the same ethnic groups (Bhugra, 2004).

Islam as a social religion (due to its focus on group life rather than individualistic one) has shaped its own cultural identity which is meant to be upheld by Muslims. Islamic culture is characterised by a dynamic sense of moderation. It harmonizes both the material and spiritual dimensions of human personality. It is not based on mere imitations. Islamic cultural identity is value-laden. Islamic cultural identity follows a dynamic pattern, and it is not static as it is often being misunderstood by both Muslims themselves and the secular Westerners. The major difference between the secular Western and Islamic culture is faith in one God. The Islamic faith controls the lives of its members (Muslims) in all areas of life. These areas include spiritual beliefs, lifestyle, law, and government.

It is obvious that Muslims around the world do not share the same cultural trait among themselves, but they are identical in their common cultural identity and practices in being Muslims. For instance, cultural traits of Muslims in Saudi Arabia are not similar to that of Muslims in Malaysia. However, they are guided by the similar principles and injunctions prescribed by Islam. Islamic culture is based on faith, humanism, and constructive work, which strengthens in the psyche the spirit of optimism, of confidence, to do righteous deeds, and to appreciate beauty; and is marked by its flexibility and openness to other cultures (Altwajiri, 1997).

## Globalisation and Islamic Cultural Identity

The process of globalisation stimulates Western cultural hegemony around the world (Vertigans & Sutton, 2002; Mazrui, 2006), as globalisation is the direct consequence of the expansion of Western culture across the planet via media, economic domination, colonisation, and cultural mimesis (Waters, 2001). In this process, a form of cultural hybridisation is taking place in the Muslim world, and the meaning and significance of Islamic culture is lost in the process. Therefore, the manifestation of globalisation is a serious challenge to the integrity and regeneration of local cultures, and cultural pressures of globalisation are keenly felt in the Muslim world (Akbarzadeh, 2006).

As a result of globalisation, Islamic culture has come into conflict with two alien cultures: one is the secularised pop culture distributed by globalised media, the other is the Western culture (particularly American) influenced by modernisation which integrates certain Western values into Islam (Stone, 2006). In this rapidly globalised world, the inclination of mass emulation of non-Islamic cultural substance has become apparent in the Muslim societies. A vast majority of Muslims are inclined to demean their golden era of accomplishment when they were at the pick of success and at the same time the Western societies were suffering from the evil of 'dark ages'. In fact, the secular Western culture is now regarded as a superior one, albeit in many cases devoid of morality and religious values.

On the other hand, Islam has an exclusive cultural feature which shapes the practices upheld by Muslims. Islamic culture is characterised by a dynamic sense of moderation. It harmonises material and spiritual dimensions of human personality. The Islamic faith controls the lives of its members (Muslims) in all areas of life. These areas include spiritual beliefs, lifestyle, law, and government. Islamic cultural identity is value-laden. Therefore, Islam has a lot to offer to everyone in this globalised world (Ibrahim, 2002).

The struggle between 'hybridity' and 'authenticity' represents perhaps the most important challenge of globalisation for the Muslim Ummah (Hassan, 2003). Unlike the Western perception of values in cultural identity which emerge from social relationships and surrounding environment, Islamic cultural values are universal and eternal as a result of its divine guidance. Western cultural process is motivated by mere rationality, whereas Islamic cultural process is inspired by both rational and religious principles. On the whole, Islamic cultural identity is governed by 'Tawhidic Paradigm'. Therefore, the cultural barrier between the West and the Muslim world is actually

necessary to differentiate the acceptable cultural traits from the discarded one.

Islamic cultural identity is being challenged by a form of secular Western cultural imperialism, where some Western values seek to replace traditional Islamic values and beliefs for the quest of material pleasure which have become the primary goal for human life. For example, we observe over-consumption and wastage of food in a luxurious party, while some nearby folks or people in other parts of the world do not have sufficient meals to eat. In such cases, Islamic culture requires the family that organises the party to ensure that the people in the neighbourhood have enough food to eat. There is a cultural crisis whenever society fails to implement its responsibility in supervising the behaviour of the individuals, which leads to the destruction of the entire social structure (Bennabi, 2003). In this globalised world, Islamic cultural identity is under crisis as a result of blind imitation of, and cultural imperialism by, the West. Cultural globalisation encourages the establishment of a religion-free secular society in which the role of Islam diminishes to the end, and leads to the destruction of Islamic culture (Tarabichi, 2000). As a result, globalisation poses a challenge to Islamic culture and identity.

Consequently, it has been observed that globalised 'cultural' industries are taking over traditional forms of creation and dissemination of culture (Akande, 2002). The global market is producing 'a cross-border civilisation' in which the 'convergence of consumer tastes and preferences' takes place; for example the global brands of blue jeans (Levis), colas (Coca-cola, Pepsi), and stylish athletic attires and shoes (Nike, Adidas) etc. (Tomlinson, 1999). These companies are rooted in the American-Western cultural experience, and their premise is based on a materialistic world culture that is striving for greater and greater wealth (Harf & Lombardi, 2004). Thus, the Western culture has a hegemonic power that is dominating the rest of the world that is being assimilated by individuals, and Muslims are no exception.

The Western value of a 'value-free culture' or 'open culture' invites all kinds of contents to enjoy on 'easy access' basis. Consequently, as there is no restriction on displaying pornographic objects, various Western television channels, movies, magazines and books, websites promote and commercialise pornographic materials; and young generations are easy prey for such obscene materials. The global media is controlled and dominated by the West, who directs what others can watch and learn. In case of BBC, Time-Warner's, Inc., CNN, and Newscorp, Inc. and other media giants, they determine what gets published and telecasted. However, Muslims do not have any powerful media of their own that can influence and compete with the world media indus-

tries. In this process, the Western media hegemony continues, resulting in the replacement of local and traditional culture in general, and Islamic culture in particular.

Media in this age of globalization shapes our lifestyle – from dressing chic, eating habit, styles of talking, patterns of behaviour to family matters, everything. The monopoly of the international media networks and popularity of Western popular culture have resulted in a global invasion of Western values and norms (Badawi, 2002). If we observe the current cultural trends, it will take us to the reasons for cultural identity crisis. As soon as America introduces a television program named ‘American Idol’, Malaysia (‘Malaysian Idol’) and other countries have adopted this concept. Also the Western greetings system or ‘*hi/hello culture*’ has been practiced by many Muslims, although it does not carry any emotional attachment or blessings to someone. On the other hand, Islam suggests the best greetings for all humanity – ‘*Assalamu Alaikum*’ (may peace be on you), which not only express emotional attachment, but also convey blessings of peace for the person being greeted. In addition, the concept of covering ‘*awrah*’ (particularly for females) is being seriously neglected, which is the serious violation of Islamic morality and culture.

Although globalisation brings benefits to some aspects of Islamic culture, in terms of culture, information, language and education, globalisation emerges as a challenge to, and is clearly incompatible with, collective Islamic ways of life, behavioural patterns, values, and principles; because through globalisation American values are spread in rest of the world (Azam, 2002). If we look into the information exchange pattern of the world, we can observe that the global information contents are controlled and dominated by the West. Hardly any Islamic cultural aspects are appreciated and presented in the media. Rather we find that Muslims and Islamic cultures are negatively portrayed in Movies, films, theatres, and news and entertainment channels. In Hollywood movies, for example, Muslims are portrayed as terrorists, war-wine-women-lovers, and backward people. Thus, Islamic culture is being challenged by the process of globalisation and people perceive the dreadful image of Muslims.

Some popular globalised television programs like – “Sex and the City”, where the heroine goes out with a man who video-records all of their sexual activities; “Baywatch” displays half-nude women jogging and scampering across the beaches of Santa Monica wearing bikinis; “Friends”, which is popular in many Muslim countries, portrays the life and companionship of a group of young male and female in a city, promoting free mingling among the sexes and eulogizing pre-marital, extra-marital and homo-

sexual lifestyle; and “Ellen” and “Sin City” exhibit lesbian and gay elements respectively (Power and Mazumder, 2000; Schleifer, 2002).

In terms of popularity, Bollywood is not far from Hollywood especially in most part of Muslim countries, which attracts audiences through song and dance sequences exposing their body and swirling their hips in tune with the Music (Yaappar, 2002). In fact, Western musical hegemony of ‘pop culture’ reaches and covers nearly all phases of our life. Thus, in line with the Hollywood culture and other media industries, American culture replaces the local cultural traits.

In today’s world, numerous Muslims have forgotten their real identity and found them influenced by heavy-metal Western hard-rock, punk, adult, and obscene music; even modern Arabic songs are full of sexual contents. The reason following the prohibition of heavy-instrumental music is that it detracts the mind away from the remembrance of Allah and eventually leads to lewdness (Jameelah, 1978). As the youth of the world are seduced into an American cultural form and way of life, other cultures are often eclipsed – they lose traction and fade with generational change (Harf & Lombardi, 2004).

Symbols of American culture abound in almost every corner of the world, which is largely associated with the presence of Western multinational corporations (Harf & Lombardi, 2004), for example, millions of young men and women from Cairo to Los Angeles listen to Michael Jackson’s pop songs, and wear Michael Jordan jerseys and Nike shoes. Thus we can observe that in reality, globalisation is the broadening of Western domination or hegemony around the world. In this process, the Westernisation of culture takes place, in which the American culture dominates the world. On the other hand the Islamic culture is being negatively affected and looked down upon. Muslims are gradually emulating the Western culture regarding that as the superior one. Hence, it can be clearly argued that globalisation is really a challenge to Islamic culture and identity.

Language is one of the key aspects of culture that is being challenged by globalisation of Western culture. At present, the global language or *lingua franca* is English (mostly in American form), which tries to replace other languages of the world. It is the language of global communication, information technology, print and electronic media industries, medium of education and instruction, and other major aspects by which people get to know the world affairs. However, in the Holy Qur’an Allah (swt.) mentions that Arabic is the language for people to understand the Qur’an and other matters. I argue that for Muslims in addition to adopting English as the language of instruction, Arabic should gain similar importance in this respect. Moreover, the educational

curriculum followed by majority of the people of the world is the Western (particularly American) one. This curriculum is somewhat alien to Islamic culture and identity. Through this, individuals learn the secular values and ideologies of the West, which does not support the spiritual and divine values of Muslims.

Scholars argue that McDonald's and other fast food industries have been serving as the agent of cultural imperialism (Watson, 1997). In addition, regular eating-out at fast food restaurants enhance individualistic tendency among people. Nowadays, as a result of speedy lifestyle, family members can seldom manage sufficient time to take their meals together in their homes. The increasing popularity of fast food restaurants even facilitates to coin such term as 'McDonaldization', which refers to the process by which a society takes on the characteristic of the fast food restaurant (Ritzer, 2002). The young generations of today are more inclined towards the fast-food culture, which disrupts family values of eating together. Although the consequence of it is apparently invisible, it has enormous impact on creating an individualistic society that lacks familial and social bonding.

On an overall basis, cultural globalisation appears to be a serious challenge to the collective Islamic ways of life, values, behavioural patterns, principles, and ideologies. As it has been discussed earlier, globalisation creates Western cultural hegemony, in which Islamic cultural traits are regarded as backward and hence, looked down upon. Furthermore, globalisation promotes a kind of value-free secular culture is spread to the world. This is clearly alien to and incompatible with the Islamic culture.

In spite of the damaging consequences that globalisation have, scholars argue that globalisation is actually beneficial for individuals and nations. They argue that the process of globalisation has positive effect on cultural identity of an individual, a group, or even a nation. In their view, the beneficial aspects of globalisation overshadow the minute negative aspects. They argue that the homogenising influences of globalisation are actually positive, as globalisation promotes integration and the removal of cultural barriers; and as such it brings about human brotherhood with worldwide prosperity and a healthy cultural exchange (Rothkopf, 2004; Yaapar, 2002).

They also suggest that globalisation promotes the integration of diverse cultural traits of the world. In that process, different cultures of the world can mix together and get modified with the superior one. For example, the indigenous cultures of the world, which are considered as uncivilised and primitive, can be modified with the postmodern culture as a result of globalisation. On the other hand, the civilised world can be benefited by the positive aspects of other

cultural traits. Therefore, globalisation can be seen as a mediating factor for integrating the diverse cultural elements and offering a refined culture for the world to adopt.

Likewise, in their view, globalisation removes the cultural barriers and encourages a healthy cultural exchange. Due to globalisation, different cultures can adjoin with each other without obstruction. In this way, people can learn the beneficial aspects of other cultures, and can adopt those in their lifestyle. In addition, no culture is regarded as inferior, but rather the overall elements of a particular culture are taken into consideration. Therefore, a healthy cultural exchange takes place in the social structure. Further, cultural exchange strengthens the diversity of cultural impulses, be it in the arts, film, world music or literature (Senghaas, 2004).

Scholars have also claimed that cultural globalisation is prompting a reformulation of the common Muslim belief that Islam is not only a religion but also a complete way of life, which in Islamic discourse is known as the 'one religion, one culture' paradigm (Hassan, 2003). In addition, globalisation not only increases individual freedom, but also revitalises cultures and cultural artifacts through foreign influences, technologies, and markets; and that it can free people from the tyranny of geography (Legrain, 2003).

Furthermore, they think that globalisation has filled up the life of mankind with lots of benefits in information and communication technologies. In the same way, many suggests that globalization of culture is essential because culture is dynamic as it brings new opportunities to mingle in creative ways. The global modernities are emulative and acculturative for people to discover. Therefore, globalisation is the ultimate opportunity for individuals to explore different cultural traits, to find out the better one and to adopt it as their lifestyle.

However, this article argues that although globalisation promotes healthy cultural exchange, in many cases those are harmful to Islamic culture. Globalisation is deemed as the process by which secularised American values and ideologies are spread in rest of the world. In fact, globalisation is 'globalising American culture and American cultural icons' (Friedman, 2000). In the mane of cultural exchange, thus, American cultural domination is strengthened and manipulated. In this way, the local cultural practices are actually replaced by the global American one, and that in turn is considered as the superior trait for people to follow. For example, women's wearing of headscarf is considered as the sign of backwardness and mingling freely with the opposite sexes is regarded as the superior cultural practice. Therefore, Islamic culture and identity is diluted and



compromised, and rather challenged by the process of cultural exchange.

In addition, cultural globalisation encourages the establishment of a religion-free secular society in which the role of Islam diminishes to the end, and leads to the destruction of Islamic culture (Tarabichi, 2000). As a result, globalisation poses a challenge to Islamic culture and identity. Therefore, Muslims across the world need to reassess the appalling Western culture, and should be contented with the Islamic cultural guidelines prescribed by Allah (swt.). In addition, they should filter out the negative aspects of a particular culture before adopting or practising it.

### Revitalisation of Islamic Cultural Identity

Given that Islamic cultural identity is under crisis in this age of globalisation, Muslims around the world need solutions to these problems. I therefore, would like to suggest the following strategies that would help to revive cultural identity in the Muslim world. Within the context of globalisation Muslims should strictly adhere to the teachings of Islam, which is the only way that would help to maintain cultural identity.

The culture of ‘acquiring knowledge’ needs to be implemented in order to gain success both in this world and the hereafter. Undoubtedly, this is the fundamental crisis that Muslims all over the world are facing today. Due to the moral and social implications of knowledge, the Prophet (pbuh) states that “the acquisition of knowledge is obligatory upon every single Muslim”. The sweeping development in the West can be traced back to the emphasis on and approach towards knowledge in an efficient manner in the Western culture. However, many Muslim countries are following age-old traditional methodology in their institutional curriculum and syllabi, and do not show much interest in research. Therefore it is an essential requirement to devise a new curriculum combining both revealed and rational knowledge which will encourage them towards the field of research and learning.

As we have perceived that it is partially lack of critical thinking which creates crisis in every dimension of life. Muslims in the present time tend to follow the Western way of life without contemplating the consequences in future. Further, it has been proved that most of the Western cultural traits are not appropriate for Muslims to emulate. They should follow the aspects which conform to their religious ideology. They should evaluate everything rationally and critically based on the guidance of the Qur’an and Sunnah. That would make them capable to control the tide of globalisation that influences the whole edifice of Islamic culture and channel it towards

proper direction. Globalisation then could bring about universal unity of humanity with worldwide prosperity and a healthy cultural exchange; but prior to that Muslims must always critically evaluate ideas and cultural products found in the ‘global supermarket’.

Globalisation is an obvious force in this modernised world, which has encompassed all aspects of our life – economic, political, social, moral, behavioural, cultural, and the like. Therefore, it would be a noble idea to utilise this opportunity in favour of the Muslim Ummah by transmitting Islamic culture throughout the world and by influencing the world to emulate Islamic culture. For this purpose, Muslims need to hold firmly to their exclusive cultural identity in all walks of life. They also need to be vigilant about ‘the culture of time management’.

Currently Muslims are divided into many groups and sects because of their selfishness and personal motives. They have to revive supreme Ummatic identity and brotherhood for the purpose of performing the responsibility as a ‘Khalifah’ on the earth. Their prime responsibility in this world is to attain the pleasure of Allah through devotion and dedication. As such, Individualism should be uprooted in all forms and by all means.

Since media is one of the major vehicles through which culture is being transmitted around the world, Muslims must have many influential and dominant Islamic media of their own, (especially television, movies, internet and newspaper) in order to compete the world culture. The example of Iran, who has gone a step further to produce movies that carry Islamic values and has earned universal acclamation, can be emulated. Through the development of strong media that can influence the world, Muslims not only would be able to “ride the tide” of globalisation, but also would be capable of deciding “the direction of the tide” (Ibrahim, 2002: 21). At the same time all the pornographic materials should be censored prior to being televised in and spread through the media.

Muslims should develop strong moral character which will guard them from all kinds of evil and immoral alien culture. It is morality and value-based structure that standardise both the inner and outer aspects of our life. If the morality of individuals is sturdy, then their inclination towards pornography and other malevolence will automatically diminish. In the same manner the ‘culture pollution’ by the Hollywood and Bollywood must be rejected.

The Muslim family is one of the most vital ingredients in promoting and upholding Islamic cultural identity, because it is the most potent agent of socialisation in all societies. This distinctive institution transmits Islamic cultural and social values, ideals, beliefs, attitudes, norms, and language to the young generation. However, the gradual tendency of family

breakdown in many Muslim countries is creating profound negative impact on young people. Therefore, Muslims should strengthen their family ties to boost cultural identity.

The proper etiquettes of dressing for females and also for males should firmly be followed in Islamic countries. Clothes must not be so close fitting as to invite undue attention to the curves of the body (Yusuf, 1961). The institutions of marriage and family have to be regulated according to the principles of Islamic culture. The epidemics of the breakdown of family ties must be stopped by all means. The sanctity of marriage should be protected, and same sex marriage needs to be prohibited by law. There is an urgent necessity to control the sexual liberalization of all forms. The principles of sexual regulation from Islamic viewpoint must strictly be observed. However, Muslims should not confine their women to the boundaries of family life only; they should also enjoy freedom of choice, study and work outside within the limits of *Shari'ah* and through preserving decency and modesty.

The celebration of different kinds of days (mother's day, father's day, teacher's day, Valentines Day etc.) needs to be critically evaluated. In Islamic culture every day is father's day, mother's day, teacher's day and the like. Also Muslims should give up the habit of 'Hi/hello' culture and must strictly practice the culture of conveying 'Salam' (blessing of peace) to others known and unknown.

*Ijtihad* or intellectual exertion is one of the sources of achieving knowledge in the framework of *Shari'ah*. Hence, Muslims around the world must revive this approach of exerting knowledge based on the problems arising in this globalised world. Secularisation of all forms, especially of knowledge and science, must be eliminated from the society. It is a kind of disease in the body of culture. Muslims should remember that in order to obtain peace of mind and to gain the pleasure of Allah they must reject it as a whole.

## Conclusion

In this article, I have analysed the consequences globalisation brings in the Muslim world. In doing

so, two dominant issues have been identified: a) cultural globalisation is beneficial as it promotes integration and a healthy cultural exchange; and b) cultural globalisation is harmful for Muslims since it contributes to the degradation of moral and ideological values of Islam. I have stood for the latter issue, and argued that globalisation poses a serious challenge to Islamic cultural identity. It has been illustrated that globalisation enhances the spread of Western culture, replaces the traditional culture with the Americanised post-modern culture, and finally it incorporates the secular values and ideologies into Islamic culture. All these have resulted in a mixed or diluted cultural trait which fails to portray the real essence of Islamic culture. In addition, the Western media propagates American cultural hegemony or domination across the Muslim world by means of both the print and electronic resources.

Cultural globalisation is not a unitary but a multi-dimensional process that generates different impacts and consequences, and makes possible the coexistence of modern values with Islamic traditional norms, symbols and discourses (Ozbudun & Keyman, 2003). In this process, Islamic cultural traits are being compromised with the Western culture. This results in the dilution of Islamic culture devoid of divine values and principles. Consequently, there is a serious need to revitalise the Islamic cultural elements in the way of life of every Muslim around the world.

Muslims need to realise that Islamic culture does not consist of merely a package of rituals identical with other religion, but rather it is the total way of life of an individual to act as the vicegerent of Allah on the universe. Islamic cultural identity is a supreme trait for the reason that it interlaces with the Islamic value system. It is not necessarily limited to race, ethnic, linguistic or geographical boundaries, but it represents the universal values, practices, attitude and behaviour, and ideology upheld by Muslims around the world. Therefore, Muslims around the world need to be aware of the dreadful consequences of cultural globalisation, and should retain the absolute Islamic cultural trait prescribed by the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, and *Sunnah* of the Prophet (pbuh).

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