

Modern Globalization and its Impacts on the Muslim World  
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Long before the coming of modern globalization from the West, Muslims had their version of globalization. The Muslim globalization happened during the peak of the Islamic civilization (750-1258). Interestingly, the golden era of the Muslim Civilization benefited the West in many ways. The scholastic works of Muslim scientists, scholars and philosophers enriched Western civilization immensely, particularly in the areas of science and technology. The fall of Muslim empires gave way to the flourishing of modern globalization which started during the era of Western colonization of the East and Africa. In modern times, the use of the Internet and other modern electronic media directly or indirectly has sped up the process of transporting modern globalization to every nook and cranny of the globe. Since modern globalization is mainly coming from the West, this chapter intends to explore and investigate in what ways Muslim globalization is different when compared to modern globalization, to look into some of the meanings attached to modern globalization, the shifting aims of education, the marginalization of local culture and languages, the brain drain phenomenon that happens due to globalization, how Muslims should react to globalization and finally on the question, as to whether Western globalization can be equated to re-colonization of the East and Africa.

### Introduction

Presently, globalization has become a buzzword on everyone's lips. In the last few decades, the topic of globalization has drawn the interest of many concerned people around the globe, namely; governments, scholars at the institutions of higher learning, business communities worldwide, economists, students, NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and others. The passion and enthusiasm for the topic of globalization have led many people to research the many intricate issues that are interwoven around globalization. Seminars, dialogues, conferences and other forms of meetings that are taking place at the governmental and university levels on the issues related to globalization all over the world are mainly concerned with its advantages and disadvantages. In addition, at the international forums, the most frequently asked and debated question concerning globalization is who are the real gainers and losers of globalization.<sup>1</sup> By identifying the winners and losers, governments and concerned parties can prepare themselves well to make strategic plans to meet the challenges they have to face with the coming tides of globalization. Many scholars have highlighted the fact that globalization is something devised by the West and directed towards the developing and underdeveloped countries of the world. Globalization ramifies itself into many areas of human lives; like economics, politics, culture, education, social life, etc.

Globalization which started a long time ago is an ongoing process. It is a multi-faceted phenomenon, which infiltrates into all areas of human life.<sup>2</sup> In realizing the fact that modern globalization comes from the rich and powerful countries of the West, countries that are categorized as developing and underdeveloped countries are doubtful as to whether they can

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<sup>1</sup> Abbas Mehdi (2006), *Globalization Who Benefit Anyway?* (pp.130-142). In Samir Dasgupta & Ray Kiely(eds.), *Globalization and After*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

<sup>2</sup> Larry Ray (2007), *Globalization and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge, pp.1-4.

benefit from it. Within this chapter of the book, the researchers would like to explore the nature and objectives of Muslim globalization when compared to the modern globalization. Besides that, the researchers would dwell upon the definitions that relate to modern globalization, how globalization has caused the marginalization of local culture and languages, and how it caused the shift in the aims of education in the East, particularly in Muslim countries. Also discussed within the chapter is the brain drain phenomenon that is related to globalization, and how Muslims should react to globalization. Finally, the researchers attempted to answer the crucial question as to whether globalization is identical to re-colonization or not.

### **Muslim Globalization in the Past**

Ever since Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was given the revelation in Mecca till to the time he migrated to Medina, there was not much of an expansion of Islam to other parts of Arabia. The history of the Prophet indicates that during the early days of Islam in Mecca, only a small band of Muslims went to live in Abyssinia for a short period as asylum seekers. Their mission there was more of protecting their lives from the dangers and oppression that came from the infidel of Mecca. Therefore, the real era of Muslim globalization started when the Prophet (pbuh) established the Islamic state in Medina in the year 622. Starting from that period, Islam as a religion and a mighty civilizational force started to develop and expand to other parts of the world, especially in the Arabian Peninsula. It was more obvious during the Umayyad dynasty (661-750).<sup>3</sup>

The end of the Umayyad dynasty gave way to the emergence of the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258). In contrast to the Umayyad rulers, the Abbasids were more interested in conquering new ideas, knowledge, philosophy and science. It was around the time of the Abbasid period, the Golden Age (750-1258) of the Muslims happened. Muslim rulers during the Golden Age supported scholars and scientists in their forward march in conquering technology and knowledge; natural and social sciences. The Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions were the driving force in asking Muslims to not only learn but to enlighten their souls through knowledge. That time of the Muslims was marked with a lot of scientific research, exploration and expeditions. In their endeavour to master the new disciplines of knowledge and technology, Muslims had an open mind in learning all that is positive and beneficial from others. With such an attitude they were prepared to borrow ideas from the Indians, Persians and Greeks as a way of enriching their civilization. Interesting to state here, that the Muslim leaders without any prejudice, employed Jewish and Christian scholars to conduct some translation works in the academia. Along their way of learning new knowledge, Muslim scholars got interested in philosophy, particularly ancient Greek philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

In realizing the fact that not all ideas of the Greek philosophers were acceptable to their Islamic worldview, early Muslim scholars used the approach of adopting, adapting and assimilating or

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<sup>3</sup> Mahayudin Hj. Yahaya (1998), *Tamadun Islam*, Shah Alam: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, pp.33-56.

<sup>4</sup> Majid Fakhry (1983), *A History of Islamic Philosophy*(2<sup>nd</sup>.edn). New York: Columbia University Press, pp.1-18; Majid Fakhry (2000), *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism: A Short Introduction*, England: Oneworld Publications, pp.6-10; C.A. Qadir (1988), *Philosophy and Science in the Muslim World*, London: Croom Helm.

integrating. Through this methodology, the early Muslim scholars took all those ideas which were non-contradictory to their religious values and faith. The scholars of the Golden Age of Islam not only borrowed ideas from others but they went on to further develop and come up with some new, original and innovative ideas. This was the spirit and culture of learning that was prevalent during the early Muslim era of knowledge expansion and exploration. Similarly, Western scholars too had borrowed ideas from Muslim scholars during the Golden Age of the Muslims. Europeans were introduced to the philosophical ideas of the Greeks when they read the translated and annotated works of Muslim scholars. Moreover, they also learnt from many pioneering works done by Muslim scholars and scientists in the fields of medicine, astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, algebra, trigonometry, etc. At the moment, only a few Western scholars duly acknowledge the great contribution made by the early Muslim scholars in the areas of science and scientific explorations.<sup>5</sup>

In assessing the Muslim era of globalization, one would come to realize that the expansion of Islam and its civilization to foreign territories happened due to its dynamic nature as a revealed religion from God. The message of the Qur'an was appealing to its new adherents because it called for a balanced lifestyle giving equal importance to the 'here and now' and to the life in the hereafter. The book of Islam, not only emphasized matters related to faith but also encouraged Muslims to acquire knowledge and science.<sup>6</sup> When Muslims took their religion to foreign lands, there was no compulsion on the people in those countries to follow Islam.<sup>7</sup> Besides that, the pages of Islamic history reveal the fact that Muslims were neither interested in plundering the wealth, nor in tyrannizing the people in those countries. As such, the claim made by a great multitude of Western scholars that Islam was spread at the point of the sword is unfounded. On the contrary, Islam was promulgated with beautiful preaching and good examples shown by the Prophet of Islam and early Muslims during their era of globalization.<sup>8</sup>

It can be safely stated here that any reader of Islamic history and civilization will understand that Muslim globalization was not interested in any atrocities and usurping of the wealth of others. It was not even interested in forcing others to accept Islam as their faith, and equally not interested in making others follow the Arab culture and in making the Arabic language the lingua franca for the territories that came under Islamic rule. If the Arabs were interested in propagating their language and culture, then the whole of the Muslim world should be only speaking Arabic and practising the Arab culture. So, what was Muslim globalization interested in? As a response to such a question, the researchers think that Muslim globalization was only interested in sharing the good news (Bushra) of the Qur'an and calling humanity to the path of justice and righteousness making this world a better place for all to live in peace and harmony.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Mohd Abbas (2011), *Contribution of Iqbal's Dynamic Personality Theory to Islamic Psychology: A Contrastive Analysis with Freud and Selected Mainstream Western Psychology*. Selangor: International Islamic University Malaysia, p.335

<sup>6</sup> Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1996), *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, pp.103-106

<sup>7</sup> "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error..." (Qur'an, 2:256)

<sup>8</sup> See (Al-Qur'an, 16:125)

<sup>9</sup> See Al-Qur'an, 3:104,3:110,3:112,16:25,4:58

### **The Features of Modern Globalization**

According to Kilminster, the word Globalization first appeared in Webster's English Dictionary in 1961.<sup>10</sup> Going back to history, the word Globalization was first coined by Roland Robertson. This scholar believes that globalization is a pre-modern phenomenon that has already started in the fifteenth century with the European colonial policy of expansionism, aimed at subjugating large areas of Asia and Africa. Through colonization, Western superpowers tried to increase their supremacy and influence on the underdeveloped countries in the world. The slogan behind the coming of Western powers was based on their three Gs; gold, glory and gospel. Concerning the last mentioned, the Europeans were driven by the zeal and passion for the propagation of Christianity (mainly the Catholic version of Christianity) to the Asians and Africans, whom they thought were steep in their animistic beliefs.<sup>11</sup>

Together with the arrival of the Western powers to Asia and other parts of the world, they brought along their culture, customs, language, system of administration, law and order as a means to strengthen their hegemony over the countries that came under their control. When they managed to establish themselves through all these means, that was the time they imposed their hegemony on the inhabitants of the countries they had colonized. As to the moral question of whether it was good to colonize another country, Westerners have always justified that the countries that they had gone to are either primitive or underdeveloped. As such, their presence there is to provide knowledge, education, culture, religion, progress and development. On the whole, by hiding their true motives, the Europeans justified their act of colonizing others as a process of civilizing the uncivilized people of the world.

Supplementary to the historical evidence on the topic of globalization, Jan Aart Scholte<sup>12</sup> gives various meanings to the word globalization. In his opinion, there are five broad definitions of the word globalization. The first one explains that globalization is another word for internationalization. This definition explains the growth in international exchange and interdependence among the countries in the world. Next, he explained globalization as liberalization. Through liberalization, countries remove restrictions on the movement of capital from one country to another by applying an 'open', 'borderless' economy. The third meaning of the word globalization is universalization. In this context, globalization is a process of spreading various objects and experiences to people living in the four corners of the world. The fourth, meaning of globalization is referred to as Westernization or modernization (to the Americans it is the Americanization of the world community). Through the Westernization process, the pre-existing culture in underdeveloped countries is replaced with the Western culture. The last definition given by Scholte explains globalization as deterritorialization. This concept explains that incidents and events that happen in one region of the world are not confined to a particular region but they are being transported and shared by other regions of the world through modern means of telecommunications.

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<sup>10</sup> Richard Kilminster (1997). Globalization as an Emergent Concept, (p. 257). In A. Scot (ed.). *The Limits of Globalization: Cases and Arguments*, London: Routledge.

<sup>11</sup> David Block & Deborah Cameron (2002), *Globalization and Language Teaching*, London: UK:Routledge,p.2

<sup>12</sup> Jan Aart Scholte (2000), *Globalization a Critical Introduction*, New York: Plagrave, pp.15-17.

Finally, the modern-day experts in the studies of globalization expound that globalization means the free flow of capital, people, news and information via electronic media from one country to another, without being subjected to any form of restriction imposed by governments in the world. Globalization explains the scenario whereby people of the world live in a borderless world without any geographical restrictions and the world will be transformed into a single global village.<sup>13</sup>

### **Globalization Redefines the Aims of Education**

Education long ago in the distant past which started as a private enterprise was at the beginning mainly concerned with producing man of knowledge and skills for his well-being and salvation in the hereafter. This was true during the Western medieval time and in the early Islamic era after the time of the holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). As political systems and boundaries and demarcation lines differentiating one country from the other were drawn, the government's involvement in education came to be seen clearly through the establishment of public schools.<sup>14</sup> The reason for such an involvement seen by the government to be important was to have a good grip on its citizens. By having a hold on its citizens, the government was able to have a common ideology inculcated and transferred into the minds of its citizens. As a result of this effort, a common patriotic feeling was expected on the part of the citizens towards the nation-state. With this aim, nations around the world carved out plans for their citizens to be imbued with the knowledge of citizenship. This was thought by the authorities to be a means to enhance the individual's cohesiveness with others in society. In turn, such an effort is expected to bring unity among its citizens for having common goals in the hearts and minds of its citizens.

Simply put, the idea of having public schools was to see education as a means of transmitting knowledge, skills, expertise, values, civilization, language, culture, customs and religion from one generation to the other. As to the question of what education is all about can be well understood by the following definition:

Any process, either formal or informal, that shapes the potential of a maturing organism. Informal education results from the constant effect of the environment, and its strength in shaping values and habits cannot be overestimated. Formal education is a conscious effort by human society to impart the skills and modes of thought considered essential for social functioning. Techniques of instruction often reflect the attitudes of society, i.e., authoritarian groups typically sponsor dogmatic methods, while democratic systems may emphasize freedom of thought.<sup>15</sup>

All these lofty ideals and ideas of education that started with the establishment of public schools are now being overshadowed or overridden by the relentless pounding waves of globalization. Though the old ideals of education are still there, much of today's perception of education and

<sup>13</sup> See Manfred B. Steger (2003), *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*, New York: Oxford Press.

<sup>14</sup> Nicholas C. Burbules & Carlos Alberto Torres (2000), *Globalization and Education*, New York: USA: Routledge, p.3.

<sup>15</sup> Online Encyclopedia, <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/encyclopedia/entry/education>, Retrieved: 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2011.

the reason why parents sent their children to school has somehow been forgotten due to globalization and modern-day lifestyle. Living in a modern and globalized world, education has been sought and seen as a passport for achieving a good life that promises material gains. Much of the emphasis on the values of education has been there all the while as the aims of education are slowly vanishing. Though it is not wrong altogether to seek knowledge for material gains to be solely motivated to seek material gains through education and learning makes the seeker of knowledge less concerned for the community and the well-being of the nation-state. People of a country become more individualized and egocentric if the true aims of education are missing. As for a nation, with the missing values and philosophy of education, the country will fail to create a common goal and national identity for its citizens.

### **Globalization's Impact on Education**

The explosion of knowledge and information in the era of information technology has somehow helped the globalization of education. The introduction of computers and the Internet and other technology-mediated learning through the use of VCD, CD-Rom, Email, E-Chat, databases, webpages, LMS, digital libraries, Google Meet, Zoom, Podcasts, etc. have helped in the dissemination of information and knowledge to millions around the world. The emergence of technology-mediated learning has revolutionized the teaching and learning process. For instance, through the digital library, a researcher can get access to books and research works done in other parts of the world without having to travel.<sup>16</sup> He has the opportunity to view articles, journals and other literary works with the help of his computer and the Internet. Through the use of the Internet, VCD, course wares and other electronic gadgets the learner can get access to knowledge and information twenty-four hours a day without having to go and attend lectures at the lecture halls. The development in information technology has also challenged Islamic scholars and experts in technology to employ the latest technology in teaching and learning Islamic Studies. At present, lessons on Islamic Studies have been made available on VCDs, DVDs CD-ROMs, Online presentations, etc. Modern means of Islamic propagation and knowledge have been made available through the Internet and web pages.

Although this scientific and innovative way of learning has made modern man get access to knowledge and information fast and efficiently, the downside of this means of getting knowledge has made people learn in a more personalized way which cuts off much of their interaction with the community/society and drive them more towards material gains. This idea has been heralded long ago, by a well-reputed psychologist:

Modern man is alienated from himself, from his fellow men, and from nature. He has been transformed into a commodity, experiences his life forces as an investment which must bring him the maximum profit obtainable under existing market conditions.<sup>17</sup>

Another aspect that is missing in the personalized form of learning is the interaction with the tutor or teacher. Those who advocate the importance of 'teacher and student' face-to-face

<sup>16</sup> Douglas Kellner(2000), "Globalization and New Social Movements: Lessons for Critical Theory and Pedagogy" in *Globalizaion and Education*(ed). Nicholas C. Burbules & Carlos Alberto Torres, New York: USA: Routledge, pp.299-321.

<sup>17</sup> Eric Fromm (1995), *The Art of Living*. London: Thorsons, p.67.

interaction believe that the learner must get acquainted with the teacher by physically being present in front of him. Besides that, raw information and data can be more meaningful when they are properly organized, presented and explained by the teacher.

We live in a human space where proximity between teachers and students makes tangible communication possible. Body language, tone of voice, personality and emotion are all indispensable elements in the formal activity of instruction. More than the facts, we need the elusive intimation of how they are being received, comprehended and evaluated. Teachers convey more than the subject matter under discussion. No matter what the topic they also embody something of what it means to be a human being.<sup>18</sup>

The above quote is pretty much in line with the teaching of Islam, especially in the learning of the holy Qur'an and other serious understanding of the faith and practical aspects of Islam when it comes to those who are new to the religion and those practising Muslims who are still at their basic level of understanding the religion.

Along with the wave of globalization, Western universities realized that a great opportunity was available in third-world countries, particularly in Asia and Africa, which were once the colonies of the West, to open campuses there. Many foreign universities and colleges came to sell their educational program degrees and diplomas to the local students in third-world countries which generates huge some of profit for their educational enterprise. Besides that, distance learning and twinning programs were also offered by foreign universities in developing countries. As a result of this, the cost of gaining access to higher education has risen tremendously. Due to the higher fee structure, local students from the lower-income group in third-world countries find it difficult to get a tertiary education. Many times, these universities are mainly driven by market forces. As such they offer courses to cater for the job market.

### **Sidelining of Local Languages**

Due to the establishment of foreign universities, and the use of software developed in English-speaking countries, the Internet and other technology-mediated learning have made the learning and mastering of English an inevitable thing for people in developing and underdeveloped countries. The greater usage of English in the underdeveloped and developing countries in the world has created a lucrative business for publishing houses in the United Kingdom and the United States. These publishing houses in those countries are the feeders and providers of the relevant books, software and other materials needed by those countries that want to use English as a medium for disseminating knowledge and information. Once again, in looking into who are the real gainers if English becomes the dominant language, surely without any doubt one would say that it is the West.

Not only the coming of globalization has made English a dominant language of the world but it has also marginalized many local languages in Asia and Africa.<sup>19</sup> Consciously or unconsciously,

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<sup>18</sup> David Walsh (1999), "Plato Meets Technology" in *Washington Post*, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1999, p. A29

<sup>19</sup> Op. cit., Larry Ray (2007), p.8.

the learning of the English language as an international language has brought foreign culture and way of living to most countries in the East and to other parts of the world in general.<sup>20</sup> This invasion of foreign culture and way of life can be seen in the way the young ones (the third generation of citizens) talk and dress in the countries that have attained independence from the West. This is also true with many youths in many Muslim countries. Muslim youths nowadays like to put on T-shirt which carries symbols and labels that are obscure in manner and wear jeans which are cut intentionally to expose parts of their body to be seen by others. Many Muslim scholars think that such a manner of dressing is immoral and un-Islamic. Besides the dress, the youngsters too like to eat fast food like KFC and McDonald's, drink Coca-Cola and entertain themselves by watching American movies. All these behaviours and preferences for American items and way of life are causing the local culture to slowly disappear substituting with foreign culture.<sup>21</sup> In the process of globalization, the changing lifestyle of the people of underdeveloped countries indirectly makes them adopt and apply foreign value systems. This in turn has caused the local and Islamic value system to slowly diminish as it comes under the onslaught of the Western culture and value system.

### **The Brain Drain Phenomenon**

Brain drain is a phenomenon that has been there in the history of mankind. It happens all over the world, particularly in developing and third-world countries. The developed countries in the world look for intelligent minds in poor countries and allure them to work for their nation-building and national agendas. Doing so will allow the rich countries to maintain their status quo as advanced nations of the world and at the same time make the poor countries in the world lag in terms of development and progress.<sup>22</sup>

It has been an accepted fact that globalization has helped the process of brain drain that is taking place in the world. Through brain drain, many countries in the East lose a great number of highly qualified professionals, academicians, researchers and scientists to developed countries in the West. Many foreign companies and institutions hunt for such professional people while they are still in the universities in the West. Sometimes the potential candidates for brain drain are handpicked and given scholarships while they are doing their specialization in their own countries. Many factors have been identified which contribute to this global phenomenon.<sup>23</sup> Going deep into the issue of brain drain reveals the reasons why it happens to people in the East, particularly in Muslim countries. With regard to the factors that cause brain drain: they can be divided into two categories; the pull factors and the push factors. Among the pull factors are; the host countries in the West offer professionals and scholars handsome salary packages, the host countries can provide hi-tech and sophisticated research centres that can be a factor to consider

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<sup>20</sup> Robyn Bateman Driskell (2006), *The Impact of Globalization on Local Communities* (pp.241-264). In Samir Dasgupta & Ray Kiely(eds.), New Delhi: Sage Publications.

<sup>21</sup> Annabelle Mooney & Betsy Evans (eds.) (2007), *Globalization: The Key Concepts*, New York: Routledge, p.4

<sup>22</sup> Zainal Arifin (2004). 'Let us gain and retain the best brain' in Main/Lifestyle: p.2, New Straits Times, 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Robert L. Barker. (2003). *The social work dictionary* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press, p.50.



for their personal development and progress in their area of specialization, good education for their children, interesting climate (four seasons), etc. The push factors are; poverty, poor living conditions in their own countries, lack of intellectual freedom, unhappy with the political system, political turmoil, and the threat of war looming on their homeland or due to sectarian wars that threaten their lives.<sup>24</sup>

Apart from professionals migrating to First-World countries, the other form of brain drain happens when foreign companies employ locals who are talented to work in the industries and labs established in the countries in the East, especially in the Muslim countries. Under such a situation, the research and findings of the Muslim professionals will either be benefited by the foreign companies or exported to the advanced countries. All research findings by the Muslim professionals will become the copyright of those who have employed them.

In realizing the rampant cases of brain drain in the Muslim world, it is about time that the oil-rich and other Muslim countries initiated the 'brain gain' program to bring back the lost intelligentsia. As an initiative to bring back Muslim professionals to work in their own or other Muslim countries, Muslim governments should provide laboratories, science and research centres, build good universities, provide good salaries, etc. Besides doing that, at the same time, Muslim countries must also practice a 'brain retention' program to stop local talents from going out of the country permanently to benefit the advanced countries. As a means of stopping the professionals from leaving, governments in the Muslim world can facilitate the 'brain retention' group by giving the same sort of benefit to the 'brain gain' group. Under such a program, top students at the university level should be identified and given scholarships and jobs should be readily available to such students upon graduating from the universities. Some even can be provided with financial assistance by the government to pursue their post-graduate studies before settling down on their professional career.

Since brain drain is happening at a fast rate, one of the most important issues that deserves due consideration on the part of Muslim professionals is, whether it is proper for professionals and scientists from Islamic countries to be involved in the war industry and nuclear projects which are meant other than for a good cause. The researchers feel that there is a great possibility that their talents and expertise can be employed for the cause of producing sophisticated weapons that could probably be used to wage war, to invade and destroy weaker nations, like the ones existing in the Muslim world. If this happens, then it should be deemed that such Muslim minds have been employed for a wrong purpose; causing pain and misery to innocent people on whom war has been imposed.

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<sup>24</sup> Johnson, A.G. (2000). *The Blackwell dictionary of sociology* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc. p.30

Contrary to the preceding form of brain drain, the researchers are in favour of the kind of brain drain that brings people from advanced countries to developing and underdeveloped countries in the world. If that happens, then this sort of scenario should be seen as a positive development as there will be a transfer of knowledge, technology and expertise from the developed countries to the poor and developing countries in the world. The expected result in that sort of brain drain is, that one can witness that the living standard in the underdeveloped and poor countries can improve and put them on par with the advanced countries in the world. Idealistically speaking, when there is loving, caring and sharing among the countries in the world, then humanity as a whole can create a better world for all to live in peace, harmony and prosperity.

### **Impact on Culture**

The proponents of globalization argue that it has brought rapid development to many parts of the world by bringing people in third-world countries out of their backwardness and old ideas and putting them on par with the people of the developed countries in the world. According to Chandra, the proponents of globalization highlight the following positive aspects of globalization:

1. Foreign direct investment (FDI) has helped to reduce poverty by creating jobs and improving incomes.
2. The expansion of trade and foreign investment has accelerated social mobility and strengthened the middle class.
3. New communication and information technology have helped disseminate knowledge in many fields of study and disciplines.
4. Communication is cheaper and easier. Costs of telephone calls as well as travel have fallen.
5. This makes it easier to understand one another. Communities, although heterogeneous, can be more cooperative now and there are more means of understanding each other.
6. Globalization makes it possible for humanity to have compassion for each other when calamities-natural or man-made-affect others.
7. Issues such as human rights, public accountability and problems faced by women are brought to the fore and addressed.
8. The rights of women are highlighted and the problems many women face are now addressed.
9. All of these are conducive to religious teachings.<sup>25</sup>

In the Muslim world, scholars can generally be classified into two main groups concerning the issue of globalization. The first group claims that globalization is not too bad an idea as it has some positive contributions in terms of trade and direct foreign investment creating plentiful job opportunities in underdeveloped and developing nations. The second group deems globalization as bad because it is a Western idea or ideology that works well to their benefit. According to this group, globalization is colonization in disguise. They further believe that the West has not changed in their mindset in their ambition like in the past which brought them ploughing through

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<sup>25</sup> Chandra Muzaffar (2002), “*Globalization and Religion: Some Reflection*”, <http://www.islamonline.net>, Retrieved: 19 October, 2004.

the waves to subjugate the East in greed of power, riches and dominance over the weak and downtrodden. Through their direct subjugation of the East and Africa, they have managed to plunder all the wealth of the underprivileged countries. Globalization as seen by these scholars is nothing new than the old colonization, except it is done subtly, from a distance by using sophisticated media like cable and satellite TV, the Internet and other modern means of communication. In describing the nature and contents of globalization designed by the West, Mohd Kamal has candidly explained in these words:

Facing the challenges of globalization with all the negative impacts of Americanization, secularization, materialism, neo-imperialism, debt-bondage to World Bank and IMF, unilateralism, militant liberal capitalism, global media conglomerates' manipulation and deception, impoverishment and homogenization of culture, bullying by the powerful, imposed liberalization, dominance of the global market, international and regional competition, commodification of education, environmental degradation, moral decadence, high tech crime, violence and war-all these and more at a time when the Muslim world is divided, weak and poor.<sup>26</sup>

Going deep into contemplation and analysis of what has been stated above will reveal that globalization has brought Western culture and way of life to the East and the rest of the world. Many times, these values are atheistic and do not regard the Supremacy of God Almighty. Through globalization, secularism practiced by the West is also transported to the homes and minds of the people in the East, disrupting their Islamic and Eastern family core values that are already there in existence. Secularism is a way of life that separates things and actions into all that belongs to God and all that belongs to the state. The two states of affairs cannot mix. The dichotomy prevalent in their everyday life gives people in the West to think of God only when they are in the places of worship and when they are elsewhere, they can behave and do anything and everything that suits their selfish desires. Such a philosophy of life is very opposed and contradictory to the Islamic and Eastern lifestyles where people live very much attached to their religious beliefs.<sup>27</sup>

Another important thing about globalization is that it is contradictory to the religion of Islam is the Western idea that promotes that education should be value-free. Under such a Western principle, knowledge and education are sought for economic purposes and there is no requirement for the two to link the learner with God Almighty. In Islam, knowledge is sought for self-improvement that humbles man in the presence of his Creator. Knowledge is sought for the enlightenment of the human soul that brings man closer to God. In contrast to the Islamic concept of seeking knowledge, most people in the West believe that knowledge is value-free. Other than this, the Western attitude of non-judgmental in the things they see, acquire, experience and assess is not applicable in the context of the Muslim society. Islam calls on

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<sup>26</sup> Mohd Kamal Hassan (2003), "*Setting the Muslim Mindset in Malaysia: Facing the Challenge of Globalization*", Keynote address delivered at the International Conference on Teaching and Teacher Education, Kuala Lumpur, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2003.

<sup>27</sup> Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1978), *Islam and secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia ,pp.1-5.

Muslims to take a stand by being judgmental. One has to be clear in his mind as to what are the things that have been approved and shunned by the Qur'an and the Sunnah concerning the human relationship. By referring to the religious guidelines, one can easily distinguish between what is good and permissible and what is bad and should be avoided. Simply put, in Islam, education and knowledge should be value-laden.<sup>28</sup>

Parents, teachers and religious leaders in many Muslim countries fear that the call by the proponents of globalization that advocates for free flow of information, can be detrimental to the family and social structure of the Islamic and Eastern society. They fear that globalization transported via the internet and other modern means of telecommunication will somehow transport the Western hedonistic lifestyle. Many of these ideas and ideologies that come along through the media and Internet bring along and promote a way of life that is contradictory to the Islamic belief system and Eastern culture. One particular area that is feared by parents, among the many things that come from the West, is sexual perversion. Under this category, homosexuality, lesbianism and other forms of sexual perversion are something that cannot be allowed and practiced in Muslim countries. In Islam, these forms of human relationships are not acceptable under the Islamic Syariah (Islamic Law).<sup>29</sup> In the West, the rights of the individual for his/her desires to be fulfilled which do not cause harm to another human being is allowed though this might go against their religious beliefs. Islam forbids homosexual and lesbian marriages and describes such relationships as an adulteration to the institution of family which is seen as a thing sacred and ordained by God Almighty.

Besides that, children if left unchecked to use the Internet, are exposed to the danger of entering into websites that display pornography and other unhealthy and unethical information. It is believed that such information can corrupt their innocent and tender hearts and minds. It is feared that children who gain access to such information on the Internet will be trapped in a vicious circle that might lead them into other social ills.

The exponents of globalization have also highlighted that globalization abolishes cultural differences among the diverse and multi-lingual societies of the world. Globalization promotes a homogenous society changing the world of its heterogeneous nature that has been created by God Almighty. The present scenario in the world clearly shows the process of homogenization is taking place and this is an ongoing thing. The dominance of the English language as an important international language, obsession with the American lifestyle in terms of fast food like KFC and McDonald's, and preference over American banded items like clothing, music and movies are all clear indicators of the homogenization of societies in the world is taking place.

### **Muslim Ummah's Response to Globalization**

Globalization has started without being realized by a large section of the Islamic Ummah. Since the tidal waves of globalization started to touch the shores of Muslim countries, efforts need to

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<sup>28</sup> Hassan Langgulung (1997), *Pengenalan Tamadun Islam Dalam Pendidikan*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, pp.1-10; Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1999), *The Concept of Education in Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, pp. 12-32

<sup>29</sup> See (Al-Qur'an, 17:32).

be taken to prevent them from causing damage to their faith and Islamic way of life. As it has been understood from the preceding discussion that globalization is irreversible and inevitable, the Muslim Ummah has no choice but to prepare and safeguard itself from the onslaughts of globalization that come from all directions.<sup>30</sup> In realizing that something needs to be done, Malaysia's former Prime Minister Tun Mahathir has said the following in one of his addresses to the Islamic Ummah on the issue of globalization:

Muslim countries and Muslim governments have a duty to ensure that globalization will not result in the marginalization of their countries as happened with the Industrial Revolution and Industrial Age. We cannot afford it this time. If once again we miss this opportunity to keep pace with the radical and rapid advances now being made with technology and the sciences, and the changes they cause to the world's perceptions of things, the new ideas and concepts in human and international relations; if we miss all these and fail to handle them, then we will not only be marginalized, but be dominated and hegemonised permanently.<sup>31</sup>

Tun Mahathir's call is a reminder for Muslims not to ignore and stay away from the events and progress that are taking place in the areas of information technology, multimedia, e-learning, e-commerce, etc. If the Muslims choose to stay isolated from others in this era of globalization, then the Muslims will be the ones who will be left alone and become the losers compared to the rest of the world. A wise thing the Muslims can do is to be active in mastering the new technology and use it for a good purpose that can bring progress, development and economic benefit to themselves and to the rest of humanity.

Another form of safeguarding the Ummah that can be undertaken by Islamic countries in this era of globalization is by cutting down on their dependency on the West in terms of technology, which also includes the area of multimedia and software development. Mental dependency on the West is a form of colonization. So long as the Muslim countries and leaders depend on the West for technology and expertise, they will be subjugated and put under their control. Islam as a way of life of the Muslims does not encourage them to be ruled by others and live under the hegemony and dictates of others who preach against their religion.<sup>32</sup>

Besides that, oil-rich Muslim countries should make attempts to re-channel their multi-billion investments from America and Europe to some of the developing and poor Muslim countries in the world. By doing that, it is hoped that the disparities between the rich and poor Muslim countries can be eradicated. This action also confirms what has been emphasized in the Qur'an, that we should help one another, and this is also deemed as a praiseworthy deed in the sight of Allah SWT.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 9, Amer Al-Roubaie (2002), *Globalization and the Muslim World*, Selangor, Shah Alam: Malita Jaya Publishing, pp.90-102.

<sup>31</sup> Mahathir Muhamad (2003), *Globalisation and the New Realities*, Subang Jaya, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications(M)Sdn. p.53.

<sup>32</sup> Op. cit. Amer Al-Roubaie (2002), *Globalization and the Muslim World*, pp.90-102.

<sup>33</sup> See (Al-Qur'an, 5:2).

On the question of the Internet as a powerful tool in disseminating knowledge and information and what should be the Muslims' stand on this matter. As there are good and bad Internet usage, Muslims should be smart to use this tool for getting knowledge and information. They should also use it to their advantage in the promulgation of Islam, although some outside the religion may want to use it for spreading profanity and sexual perversion. Besides that, the Internet can also be used to stay connected with the rest of the Ummah living in other parts of the world.

Another important effort that needs the attention of Muslim countries is their willingness to invest in the area of research and development. This ability to do research during the Golden Age of Islam brought them to the pinnacle of their success and made European scholars come to their centres of learning and research. After that period, due to complacency, Muslims lost all the good qualities as good researchers to the Europeans. As a result of this, the Ummah started to lag behind the Europeans. Apart from that, colonization which forced Muslims into poverty also in a way made the strength of the Ummah dwindle drastically. Even after attaining independence from the Western colonial powers, the Muslims have yet to reclaim the status they once had before the fall of Baghdad in 1258. In realizing this predicament, Muslims should exert themselves diligently in conducting research. This in turn will break their mental dependency on the West.

In the area of news broadcasts, Muslims cannot rely totally on the Western media like CNN, BBC, ABC and other international news agencies. At the moment, there has been a small breakthrough in the area of news media with the emergence of Al-Jazeera.<sup>34</sup> Before this, the Muslims like the rest of the other nations were all dependent on the Western media to know what was happening in the Islamic world and other regions of the world. Most of the time, these Western media provide biased reporting on what is happening to Muslims. Through the manipulation of the media, the West has portrayed the Ummah as one that is dangerous, backward and posing a threat to the world community. All these false reporting and prejudices can be contradicted by the Muslims having their news media broadcasting the truth on what is the actual and factual happening in the Muslim world.

All the strength and riches cannot help the Muslims fight the tides of globalization if the whole Muslim world does not come together as one united Ummah. The message of the Qur'an calling the Muslims to be united has yet to be materialized fully by the Muslims ever since that verse was revealed to the Prophet of Islam (pbuh).<sup>35</sup> Besides this, the Westerners have also taught us one of their mottos that says, "United we stand, divided we fall". It seems that the Muslims have not learnt from their bitter experiences of the past, living under subjugation and also their failures have not taught them lessons to mend their ways to attain the status Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an as the best Ummah (*Khaira Ummah*).<sup>36</sup> Being united under an organization like the OIC (Organization of Islamic Countries) gives the Ummah its lost dignity in the eyes of the other nations of the world. The state of being united makes the Ummah more vocal in sending a common message to the UN when making decisions on the problems faced by the Muslims, be it political or economic. People like Tun Mahathir, Chandra and Mohd Kamal believe that the UN,

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<sup>34</sup> See 'Al-Jazeera' in Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al\\_Jazeera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera), retrieved on 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2007

<sup>35</sup> See Al-Qur'an (3:102).

<sup>36</sup> See Al-Qur'an (3:110).

World Bank and IMF are all part of the forces of globalization, working to the advantage of the rich and powerful nations of the world. If the Islamic Ummah is weak and not alert of the forces that are at work to destroy it then it will suffer forever in the hands of the predators of globalization.

Another portent strategy to face globalization by the Muslim Ummah is to strike a balance between the physical development of the nation with the spiritual and moral development of its people. Without spiritual and moral development, all other developments are not guaranteed to bring real success and prosperity to Muslim countries.

### **Is Globalization a Re-Colonization**

The researchers think that the five definitions provided by Jan Aart Scholte are all true in one way or the other. All these definitions that explain globalization as Internationalization, Liberalization, Universalization, Westernization/Modernization and Deterritorialization when analyzed will reveal the true nature of globalization. If colonization is to suppress and oppress others to make one nation stay high and mighty, definitely globalization shares a lot in common with colonization. Globalization is an idea and ideology that comes from the West and is mainly intended to make them rich and to put them high above the Asians, Africans and others. Globalization is colonization in disguise. Using it as a tool and a means, the West intends to control the hearts and minds of the people in the underprivileged countries of the world. They control us with a press of a button using the Internet, international media and other modern and sophisticated ways of telecommunication. The manner of controlling the developing and poor nations of the world from far away was witnessed during the Asian economic downturn in 1997-1998<sup>37</sup>. Due to the manipulation of the stock market in the Asian region by Western currency traders and foreign fund managers, all the 'Tiger Economies' like Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, Philippines and others suffered a lot due to the devaluation of their currencies. All economic strength built by these countries after their independence within the period of 40-50 years fell drastically, making these countries impoverished overnight.<sup>38</sup>

### **Appraisal**

Muslim globalization has contributed in all good ways to promote knowledge, science and philosophy. It also avoided oppression and other forms of atrocity on the people it came in context with. Muslims did not impose their will on others. They respected the differences in people and even prepared to learn from others to enrich the Islamic civilization. Conversely, modern globalization that comes from the West has its hidden agendas. In analyzing modern globalization one can detect that it wants dominance over the developing and less developed countries in the world.

The researchers think that innovation in teaching and learning that comes along with globalization is a good development. But at the same time, education should not be separated from its lofty ideals that aim at producing good individuals as well as good citizens who will

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<sup>37</sup> Op. cit. Manfred B. Steger (2003), p.47.

<sup>38</sup> Mahathir Mohamad (1998), *The Challenges of Turmoil*, Subang Jaya, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications (M) Sdn., pp7-13.

have a good relationship with God Almighty, fellow human beings and the environment (flora and fauna). Since Muslim countries cannot be isolated from the rest of the world, they have to adapt to the new developments that the world is going through. Muslims must show an interested attitude towards learning new things without compromising their faith and principles laid down in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Affluent oil-rich countries in the Middle East should not waste large amounts of money on purchasing armaments. On the contrary, these countries should give greater priority to investing their money in education. Building scientific research centres will be a good idea whereby Muslim scientists and scholars can congregate and come up with some original ideas of their own. This in turn can cut down our dependency on others for everything. Through such investment, Muslims can narrow the prevalent knowledge and technology gap that exists between them and others. Brain drain among Muslim countries should not be a problem as the benefit goes back to the Ummah. As such, Muslim professionals and scientists from underprivileged countries should be allowed to work in other Muslim countries that can cater for their intellectual development.

On the cultural front, good and healthy culture that comes from the West via globalization should be imitated and followed, leaving the bad and immoral culture that is detrimental to the existence of Muslim society. The culture of doing research and development, reading and exploring and conquering new ideas are positive things that we can follow. Modern globalization should not work towards the marginalization of local culture, customs, language, etc. The West should understand that humanity as a whole exists so vibrantly like the colours of the rainbow. To homogenize the world community to speak one language, follow one culture, and eat and dress like Westerners will not be an interesting thing to see. Since God has created us with the differences, we should not see the differences in culture, ethnicity and language as our weaknesses.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, these differences that we see in the people in the East and West should be seen as our dynamism. The East and West should respect their strength and try to learn whatever things are positive from each other. The strength of the West lies in its science and technology, while of the East is its God-centered life. They say, "No man is an island". Likewise, no country can exist on its own. Rather than getting into dispute and war, people regardless in the West or East should be at the forefront in calling for peace, cooperation and mutual understanding.

## Conclusion

The researcher feels that people in the East, particularly those in third-world countries should not reject everything that comes from modern globalization. Muslims should have an open mind to examine all that comes from the West and should pick and choose whatever is relevant to their needs and discard all that is dangerous and harmful to their existence as a community and nation. Certainly, Muslims cannot live in total seclusion and isolation, running away from globalization. They must view globalization as a challenge and look for solutions to overcome the problems that come along with globalization.<sup>40</sup> The contribution of a Muslim towards looking for a solution for the betterment of the Islamic Ummah is deemed one form of *Jihad* in the path of Allah. The West on its part should cast away its past mentality of colonizing and intruding into

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<sup>39</sup> See (Al-Qur'an,30:22)

<sup>40</sup> See (Al-Qur'an,8:60)



the affairs of the East. It should not impose its hegemony on the East through colonization, neo-colonization or even through globalization. Instead of looking at war as a solution to overcome problems with the East, the West should give discussion, dialogue, conference and arbitration as its top priority in resolving conflicts.