



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA
***GLOBALIZATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE OF IRANIAN
HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS***

NOUROLLAH PASHA

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**GLOBALIZATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE OF IRANIAN HIGH-SCHOOL
STUDENTS**

By

NOUROLLAH PASHA

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

June 2014

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**GLOBALIZATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE OF IRANIAN HIGH-SCHOOL
STUDENTS**

By

NOUROLLAH PASHA

June 2014

Chairperson: Professor. Zaid Ahmad, PhD

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This research attempts to explore the Iranian high school students' point of view about globalization and to explain influence of globalization in their daily life, and to interpret implications of alternation among the students. Indeed, knowing and exploring the challenges of students' everyday life in light of globalization is my academic interest as a teacher who works with the students about two decades. This research has conducted a qualitative method to collect data from the high school students in Tehran, capital of Iran. A total of 31 in-depth interviews are the sources of information. The facts were gathered and presented qualitatively, illustrating globalization in the daily life of Tehranian high school students based on the research questions. The findings show that the students perceive globalization in different ways and derive different meanings from it. They perceive globalization as development, open relationship, dissemination of a massive amount of information around the world, and also suppression and exploitation of developing countries by the West. The findings indicate that globalization has influenced the Tehranian high school students' daily life within two dimensions, namely, de-territorialization and pluralism. In fact, globalization has influenced the students' eating and clothing habits, their communication and concerning distant events as well as their perception about other cultures and religions. Their everyday life has been increasingly defined as a global level with global standards. Globalization in the students' everyday life has given birth to two types of students: globalized students and alternated students. Globalized students are those who mostly wear branded clothes, eat their meals in fast food restaurants, communicate with others, and using modern media. They are concerned about distant events, and have plural and tolerant perception about other cultures and religions. Alternated students are globalized students who have negative perceptions about their culture and being Iranian.

Abstrak tesis yang dekemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

GLOBALISASI DALAM KEHIDUPAN SEHARIAN PELAJAR SEKOLAH MENENGAH DI IRAN

Oleh

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June 2014

Pengerusi: Profesor. Zaid Ahmad, PhD

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Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneroka pandangan pelajar sekolah menengah di Iran berkaitan dengan globalisasi dan bertujuan untuk menjelaskan pengaruh globalisasi dalam kehidupan seharian mereka, dan untuk mentafsirkan kesan perubahan tersebut. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah analisis kualitatif untuk mendapatkan data daripada pelajar sekolah menengah di Tehran, Iran. Sebanyak 31 temu bual telah dijalankan untuk mendapatkan sumber maklumat. Data yang diperolehi dikumpulkan dan dibentangkan secara kualitatif untuk menggambarkan globalisasi dalam kehidupan harian mereka berdasarkan kepada persoalan kajian. Pelajar Sekolah Menengah di Iran melihat globalisasi dengan cara yang berbeza dan memberikan makna yang berbeza-beza terhadap globalisasi. Mereka melihat globalisasi adalah sebagai proses pembangunan, bersifat terbuka, sebagai alat penyebaran maklumat serata dunia, dan juga satu bentuk penindasan dan eksploitasi oleh negara-negara membangun di Barat. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa globalisasi mempengaruhi kehidupan seharian pelajar sekolah menengah di Tehran dalam dua dimensi, iaitu *de-territorialization* dan *pluralisme*. Malah, globalisasi juga mempengaruhi cara pemakanan dan cara pakaian pelajar, cara berkomunikasi dan yang berkaitan dengan persepsi mereka dengan budaya dan agama. Definisi kehidupan seharian mereka juga semakin meningkat dengan penilaian yang bersifat global. Globalisasi dalam kehidupan seharian pelajar telah melahirkan dua jenis pelajar iaitu pelajar global dan pelajar yang telah berubah. Pelajar global adalah mereka yang kebanyakannya memakai pakaian berjenama, makan di restoran makanan segera, berkomunikasi dengan orang lain, dan menggunakan media moden. Mereka sangat prihatin terhadap hal dan peristiwa yang penting, dan mempunyai persepsi yang dapat menerima budaya dan agama yang lain. Pelajar yang telah berubah pula adalah pelajar yang mempunyai persepsi yang negatif terhadap budaya yang dipegang oleh mereka.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Globalization

It appears that globalization is about everything (Beyer & Lori, 2007). This concept of globalization refers to the flow of interconnections and interactions of the people of the world. It refers to the decline of geographical and cultural boundaries between nations, to the flow of economic and cultural exchanges. It is characterized by "great flows of increasingly liquid phenomenon of all types, including people, objects, information, decisions, places and so on" (Ritzer, 2011, p.7). It also refers to decline of the local power in the face of new global organizations and institutions. "Globalization, on this account, lies on a spectrum with the local and national, at one end, and the regional and global, at the other" (Held, 2006, p. 160). But, a more common meaning of globalization, as Giddens (1991) implies, is 'an accelerating set of processes' which leads to the emergence of new 'ways of life and forms of social organizations' that are different from modernity (Giddens, 1991, pp. 47-52). The process influences the way of life. Therefore, our everyday life foreshadows many changes by more interdependence with the global phenomenon. Tomlinson (1999) refers to two main aspects of globalization include network of *interconnections* and *interdependences* and modern social life. In sum up, Globalization in this research refers to *developing network of interconnections and interdependences that influence individuals' perception and their practice of everyday life.*

1.1.1 Globalization in everyday life

Globalization in everyday life involves either "type of technological forms of life" (Lash, 2001, p. 107) or "intensification of consciousness of the world" (Robertson, 1992, p. 8). The reality of everyday life is the here and now of my presentation. It is my time-place implication. It is the reality in which I understand others with respect to my natural attitude, and others understand me in light of common sense knowledge. In fact, in everyday life, 'self' and 'other' construct and reconstruct each other in light of an inter-subjective, shared world (Berger & Luckman, 1976, pp. 33-40).

Globalization in everyday life is driven by an approach that focuses on the *forms* of globalization in daily affairs. "A form of life is a way of life, a mode of doing things" (Lash, 2001, p. 105). Technological forms of life depict interface of technology and human beings. Technology influences all aspects of our life as far as we seriously engage with our daily technologies. Different and diverse cultures beyond our cultural frame interconnect with each other in the global context. Our interdependencies with 'others' may change their perception against other cultures and values.

Tomlinson (1999) emphasizes that globalization "refers to the rapid development and ever-densening network of *interconnections* and *interdependences* that characterize modern social life" (Tomlinson,1999, p. 2). Globalization, in this sense,

takes into account the changes of everyday life and emergence of a new way of life by means of new technologies. This everyday life has been influenced by new way of life by using brands, new technologies, and distant events. Ritzer (2007) argues about the virtual spaces of the world life that are captured by T.V, internet, satellite, and so on. Therefore, there is an influence of globalization in a social context that causes the changes of everyday life of people within two levels: their lifestyle and their perception toward 'others'. Then, when we talk about globalization means interconnections and interdependencies between people of the world with respect of their new lifestyle by new technologies and their perception about 'others'.

Tomlinson (2007, 1999) implies the global forms of lifestyle in terms of de-territorialization that refers to integration of distant events and use of new technologies. De-territorialization is not limited to the boundaries of nations, communities and ethnicities, or classes but is essentially a serious approach to mixing and thus belonging to the fluid end of relations between cultures (Pieterse, 1995, p. 62; Tomlinson, 1999, p. 128). In the pre-modern condition, time-space's frame involves local territory. Life was limited to the frame of now and here, but in the modern situation, spaces and time have been stretched by the enormous advances of technology of transportation and communication among other things.

Another dimension of globalization in everyday life discussed as *proliferation and diversity of cultures* that expanded by influence of more interconnections and interactions of the people (Robertson, 1992; Beck and Sznaider, 2006, p.10). Robertson (1992) designated the global field as highly 'pluralistic', in which there is peaceful interaction between nations with huge differences.

1.1.2 Globalization in Iran

Globalization essentially consists of four main actors, namely nation-states, individual selves, the international system, and humanity (Robertson, 2007). Although the process of globalization encompasses all of these actors, this research focuses on the *individual selves*, defined as *globalization in everyday life*. Individual selves, in this research, imply to young people who involve with globalization in Iran. The history of globalization has started in Iran's society by modernization over the last century. Iranian scholars believe that Iran has been faced with a crisis of transition from traditional society to the modern by development, interaction and interconnection of Iran and forces of modernization in which can damage Iranian culture (Shayegan, 2008, p.16; 2007, p. 337-339; Azad, 1993; Soroush, 1999); for example, development of media from national T.V with 6 channels over two last decade to satellites with thousand channels today.

Globalization in Iran is the outcome of the modernity that depicts the challenges of Iranian culture and Western modernization. Globalization along with the transition has extended the challenges among Iranian youth. Although there is no complete rejection or affirmation of globalization, the challenges of globalization in Iranian culture is an academic fact. Moreover, there are two important challenges of globalization among Iranian youth: first, challenge of modern identity that places against traditional identity of 'being Iranian'. Manteghi (2007) implies that the identity crisis of transition to global world is "more threat to youth because they are internalizing social and cultural norms and values in this age" (Manteghi, 2007, p.

405). Secondly, challenge of Iranian youth to interact and interconnect to global world especially the West by globalization. Shayegan (2007) discusses the challenges of *being an Iranian* and *being a globalized*. Although the second challenge is great problem of Iran and the west, not limited to the youth, but youth are more influenced because of their more interactions and interdependencies by media. Both of these challenges generally reflect the influence of globalization in Iranian youth's everyday life. Indeed, knowing and exploring of the challenges is my academic interest as a teacher who works with the students about two decades and this has encouraged me to fulfill this research.

Globalization in everyday life in Iran can be defined by two aforementioned dimensions such as *de-territorialization* and *pluralism*. On the one hand, the Iranian interconnects and interacts with others by mass media and internet that stretches their everyday life beyond their territorial frame. On the other hand, they encounter other cultures and values that need more positive perception to communicate with "other" in peace. The most influence of globalization mostly is on the youth who generally use mass media specially computer and internet.

1.1.3 Alternation

This study discusses at length the influence of globalization on everyday life of Iranian high school students and its consequences on their perception and behavior. Influence of globalization on the students may change their perspectives about 'self' and 'others'. As the students grow up, the world continues to change, and consequently, they change. In the new world, the structure of the previous world is changed and a new 'plausibility structure' (Berger & Luckman, 1976, p. 178) is founded that gives legitimacy to modernism, liberalism and rationalism. New 'significant others' are introduced to children who are exposed to cinema, sports, TV and the whole irresistible web of contemporary society and its all-encompassing mass media. The everyday life of children is a scene in a cosmopolitan world. Their everyday life deals with new technologies, new interconnections and interdependencies with the outside world. They may, indeed, depend more on their outside than their community. Children come to recognize that the world is presented by their parents and their own community is not the only world and is not necessarily the best world. "Sometimes, they tend to be tempted to perceive their parents' world as low class, rural and traditional" (Berger & Luckman, 1976, p. 161). They may prefer the global world with modern relationships. Berger and Luckman refer to this transformation as *alternation*.

“Alternation is the type of radical transformation and modification in the field of identity” (Berger & Luckman, 1976, p. 176). Alternation is also a conceptualization which can be used for typification of the global phenomenon in the everyday life of youth. Alternation also is a conceptualization that refers to developing countries in which indigenous scholars have usually mentioned the threat to local culture by globalization. Alternation is a type of local perspective about globalization that is dominated by the global phenomenon. In this regard, *alternation* is equivalent to *total globality* in developing countries in which students may not believe in their local and national culture anymore and view their own culture with pessimism or even disdain. Indeed, Iranian government mostly uses this term. They usually talk

about cultural "alternation" of Iranian youth by globalization and modernity. This study tries to formulize this term as well.

1.1.4 Conclusion

Globalization in everyday life also embodies students' daily concern with respect to the global phenomenon. Their concerns touch distant events, human rights, media, eating, clothing, brands and so forth. To what extent they are concerned with these issues is the level of their globality. Their perceptions and orientations about other cultures, religions and beliefs designate their global perspective. When we respect other cultures, when we are concerned about transnational events, we are in fact, concerned about our global interaction and we want to represent ourselves on the global level with other people of the world.

Globalization in everyday life entails forms of globalized individuals as they present their experiences with others. In everyday life, everybody encounters a global phenomenon such as transportation, communication, lifestyle and so forth, which "have to take place somewhere" (Ray, 2007, p. 5). A global brand, for example, is a form of globalization in everyday life that is present in everyday life. Globalization, therefore, is "essentially about transnational flows of people, cultures and goods across borders" (Ray, 2007, p. 7). These forms of globalization in everyday life embodies the transnational flows in eating (e.g., McDonalds), clothing (e.g., brands), communicating with others, and so on.

This study spells out the potential contributions to globalization in everyday life stemming from different paradigms. The aim is to develop an understanding meaning of globalization with regard to students' points of view and the influence of globalization in their everyday life.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Globalization in everyday life regards the Iranian high school students' perception toward other cultures (specifically Western cultures). In fact, globalization influences their perception and behavior and effects changes in their everyday life. Meanwhile, globalization, in any way, is supposed to maintain particular dimension of local culture while extending the universal, world culture. Without this balance, globalization is a threat that can destroy particularly Iranian culture and value and cause *alternation*. Drawn to Western culture, Iranian youth may pay more attention to Western culture and values by their technological progress. Consequently, they may forget and discard their own social and cultural beliefs and roots.

There are some evidences about the threat to Iranian youth by globalization and modernity. The threat of globalization leads to reaction of scholars and the government. For example, Afrough (2000), Iranian sociologist and a member of the Iranian parliament, believes that Iranian youth is threatened by modernism. Other scholars also, more or less, recognize the cultural threat to Iranian youth by influence of modernity and globalization (e.g., Azad, 1993; Abdollahi, 1996; Rajai, 2003; Ashraf, 2000). The government views this problem as a *cultural invasion* of the West against Iran. For example, Mohamad Hossieni, Minister of Iranian Culture (2010) believes that it is the Western mission to "change the Iranian Identity" in the

direction of their values and aims. Actually, he implies to the Iranian students' closeness with Western culture in their everyday activities such as eating fast food, clothing, use of internet and perceptions.

It can therefore be summarized that Iranian high school students mostly deal with globalization in their everyday life. The problem specifically revolves around the students who connect to and depend on the global phenomenon as much as they ignore and discard their own culture and values. This research will therefore attempt to explore the gap by focus on the students' perception to globalization, influence of globalization on their everyday life, and finally implications of alternation among Iranian high school students. The findings of this study will explain the scope of this serious problem involving the encounter of Iranian high school students and globalization.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

1. What is the meaning of globalization to Iranian high school students?
2. How does globalization influence Iranian high school students' everyday life?
 - 2.1. How do Iranian high school students perceive pluralism in terms of other cultures and religions?
 - 2.2. How do Iranian high school students practice de-territorialization in their everyday life?
3. What is alternation among high school students in terms of globalization?

Objectives:

1. To elicit students' perceptions about the meaning of globalization;

Purpose of first objective revolves around the students' perception about globalization. How they understand the meaning of globalization is the focus of the objective.

2. To describe influences of globalization on Iranian high school students' everyday life;

Purpose of second objective revolves around influence of globalization on the students' everyday life in practice and theory. In fact, in subjective and objective level, how globalization influence them.

3. To interpret the implications of alternation among high school students in terms of globalization. Purpose of third objective revolves around threats of globalization on the Iranian high school students that I called it *alternation*.

1.4 Significance of the study

Particularly, globalization in the Iranian high school students has been emphasized and analyzed in this research. These analyses can inform both policymakers and

administrators about high school students' perceptions in regard to influence of globalization in their everyday life. Globalization is an inevitable force influencing the students. In this study, we can see in what areas these influences are actually a threat that is called alternation. This information can be utilized to further understanding of this phenomenon, as well as to benefit the policymakers to make a proper decision in regard to globalization in Iran.

One of the significance of this research relies on exploring of Tehranian high school students' orientation of globalization. In addition, it reveals that how they play their global role in their everyday life and how they interconnect with others in global level. This research contributes to an understanding of globalization in the everyday life of Iranian high school students in theory and practice. This study is important for three reasons:

- It extends the body of knowledge on globalization in everyday life;
- It provides a framework to study globalization in everyday life in developing countries;
- Findings of this study can help Iranian policy makers to consider the opportunity and threat of globalization in high school students' everyday life.

In theory, it contributes to *extend the body of knowledge on globalization in everyday life*. This study attempts to present the different approaches of globalization, especially with regard to globalization in everyday life in the literature review chapter. More precisely, it gives a new perspective to the theories of globalization for grasping influences of globalization in a developing country such as Iran among high school students. Such knowledge helps in the understanding of Iranian students' everyday life in the theoretical framework of this study. It is important to know how they behave in their everyday life by influence of globalization. Because by this knowledge decision makers can predict their orientation and make better plan of their education.

In practice, this study presents *a pattern to study globalization in the everyday life of youth in developing countries*, especially Muslim countries. Insofar as policy makers are concerned about influences of globalization among youth, this research may practically contribute to produce a pattern for studying globalization in everyday life. Typological implications highlight the differences and similarities of characteristics and properties of this social phenomenon.

In practice, finally, the findings *of this study can help Iranian policy makers to consider the opportunities and threats of globalization* that are discussed among Iranian high school students and utilize such knowledge to better deal with globalization among youth in Iran.

1.5 Scope and limitation of the study

This study is limited to three angles: geographical limitation, theoretical limitation, and methodological limitation. According to the *geographical limitation*, this study was conducted in Tehran city, capital of Iran.

Globalization, in nature, is a huge topic that encompasses both micro and macro levels of social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of social systems. Based on *theoretical limitation*, this study focuses on the '*forms*' of globalization in everyday life, which exclude the scope of the study from the social, political, cultural, and economic '*process*' of globalization. Indeed, this research also excludes the study of what may/will happen as a result of globalization within Iran, but focuses on what happened in the students' everyday life as a result of globalization. Also, the focus of this study on the *everyday life* excludes its scope from other forms of globalization such as organizations and institutions. This study revolves around the influences of globalization on the everyday life of high school students. In this research, globalization in everyday life is defined in two dimensions: *de-territorialization* and *pluralism*. Then, when globalization is discussed in everyday life, it merely refers to these two dimensions. *De-territorialization* applies to transnational forms of life in which are involved new forms of eating and clothing, concern about distant events, geographical displacement, and use of technologies which usually do not belong to native people essentially. The *pluralism* refers to the diversity of culture, uncommon ground to evaluate values in different cultures, and respect and toleration with other cultures. In fact, this research is limited to the study of pluralistic and transnational characteristics of students regarding their behavior and perception.

And finally, *methodological limitation* of this study refers to the sample of Iranian high school students limited in Tehran among high school students aged 17-18 years in the period of 2010.

1.6 Conceptual and operational definitions

Definition of main concepts present in two levels of conceptual and operational definitions. In conceptual definition, the researcher brings the main aspects of a concept to clarify different angles of the concept. In the operational definition, the author tries to clarify how a concept has been conducted and operated in this research.

Globalization: Globalization in this research refers to *developing network of interconnections and interdependences that influence individuals' perception and practice of everyday life*.

Globalization in this research refers to objective and subjective level of the students' interconnection and interdependences with others. Objective level of globalization has been defined by de-territorialization and subjective level of globalization has been defined by pluralism.

Everyday life: Everyday life, in the global area is an experience to live in 'technological forms of life' (Lash S. , 2001, p. 107). Everyday life is an inter-subjective world that I share with others (Berger & Luckman, 1976, pp.33-40).

In this research, everyday life of Iranian high school students refers to their everyday activities such as eating, clothing, communicating, and their perceptions of others (inter-subjective world). Everyday life of Iranian high school students, on the other hand, is a technological form of life that demonstrates in their everyday activities.

Globalization in everyday life: Globalization in everyday life, in this research is defined by the two dimensions as *pluralism* or proliferation of multiple culture and *de-territorialization* or transnational forms of life (Tomlinson, 1999, 2007; Beck & Sznaider, 2006; Robertson, 1992).

De-territorialization: refers to weakening or dissolution of the connection between everyday lived culture and territorial location (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 130).

De-territorialization, in this research, can be described by the following concepts:

- Dealing with new forms of feeding and clothing;
- To know and be concerned about distant events, news (global phenomenon);
- Types of geographical displacement (take trips to other countries);
- Use of computer, internet, television, journals, etc.

Pluralism: in this research means that the life that is good for us is one among many lives that are good for many people, but nevertheless different from us (Kekes, 1993).

Pluralism, in this research, is examined by:

- Belief in the diversity of values;
- Belief in the diversity of culture;
- Uncommon ground to evaluate values in different cultures;
- Respect and toleration of other cultures.

Alternation: Alternation is a type of radical transformation and modification in the field of identity (Berger & Luckman, 1976, p. 176). In this research it is equivalent to total globality in developing countries in which students do not believe in their local and national culture anymore, not happy be Iranian (in the case of this study) and they view their own culture pessimistically.

In this research, alternation has been defined by four themes: as Comparison of past and present Iran, weakness of Iranian culture, Quality of Western culture and finally, being an Iranian.

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