



Research paper

Cultural Synthesis as a Strategy of Neocolonial Power: A Critical Middle Eastern Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the notion of cultural synthesis in the contemporary world system is critically interrogated and presented not as a process of intercultural exchange, but as an important mechanism and symbolic tool of neocolonial domination. Globalization narratives have so far tended to glorify culture as hybrid, fluid and interconnected but this study argues that such processes are intricately woven into asymmetrical power structures privileging Western epistemologies, institutions and cultural norms. Informed by postcolonial theory and soft power, the paper utilizes a qualitative interpretative approach supported by critical discourse analysis of academic literature, popular media representations and policy documents. Grounded in the Middle East as a historically fought-over battleground and geopolitically viable region, this research investigates how mechanisms of mediate imperialism, educational restructuring, NGO incursion, and linguistic dominance come to be engines of cultural hegemony. Hence, it explains, through various case studies in disciplines such as anthropology and religious studies, how cultural synthesis masks processes of ideological imposition, identity restructuring and epistemic marginalization to replicate rather than transcend global difference. However, the discussion of globalization recognizes that it is an ambivalent and contested process whereby local actors negotiate resist and transmutes hegemonic pressures into locally contextualized hybrid cultural forms. This study therefore re-evaluates the dual push and pulls forces of globalization in postcolonial societies, contributing to academia's larger contemporary discussions around neocolonial processes and power relations rather than simply an interchange of ideas.

1. Introduction

Globalization is often praised today in the twenty-first century as a transformational force that spreads cosmopolitan culture and encourages global interconnection. This process is inevitably conceived as progressive and characterized by new hybrid identities and the flow of culture transnationally (Appadurai, 1996; Tomlinson, 1999), which is considered dominant narratives around this phenomenon. But such depictions mask the continuing inequities of power that inform global relations. An expanding set of scholarship provides a tentative case that globalization works by reinvigorating historical hierarchies (as opposed to dismantling them) but through mechanisms of control too subtle to capture the rhetoric of imperialism, and often thus characterized under a neocolonial banner (Nkrumah 1965, Escobar 1995). In this regard, the concept of cultural syncretism has emerged as a major characteristic of contemporary cultural processes. Often depicted as a mutually-favorable, even festive act of cultural exchange, cultural synthesis is usually presumed to epitomize an equitable fusing of traditions and

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values. However, this assumption deserves a serious questioning. As has been shown by postcolonial theorists, cultural interaction is seldom neutral; it is situated within historically produced patterns of power that grant value to certain kinds of knowledge while devaluing others (Said 1978; Spivak, 1988). Some may say that cultural synthesis is not so much the process of give and take as a well-established channel for cultural imperialism from dominating cultures. The Middle East represents a particularly interesting case for consideration of these dynamics. The region has a long history of colonial intervention, geopolitical contestation, and continued outside interference (Al-Azm 1981), which both reflects global power asymmetries material and symbolic. In the postmodern era, these flows are increasingly routed through soft power modalities global media, education systems, developmental schemes and transnational NGOs that drive the change of cultural values, political imagination and social practice voluntaristically (Nye 2004; Thussu 2007). This research claims that cultural synthesis, when set in the context of globalization, acts as a form of neocolonial political tool. Instead of enabling balanced cultural discussions, it often conceals processes of ideological imposition, epistemic hegemony and identity reconfiguration. Equally, this paper recognises that globalization is not a straightforwardly linear process and the local actors constitute their agencies in these processes where they engage with, reinterpret and at times challenge external influences resulting in complex interplays of cultural constants to produce hybridities (Bhabha 1994; Appadurai 1996). This article offers a reading of cultural synthesis through the interpretative frame of a non-Western, Middle Eastern context in order to intervene in and advance contemporary discussions surrounding globalization, postcolonialism and cultural hegemony. This insists that we move beyond celebratory accounts of cultural exchange and foreground the structural inequalities that continue to command the global cultural order. The objectives of the study are:

- To critically examine cultural synthesis as a mechanism of neocolonial power within the context of globalization and unequal historical power relations.
- To analyze how soft power tools such as media, education, and NGOs shape cultural hegemony and influence identity, knowledge, and cultural practices in the Middle East.
- To explore how local societies negotiate, resist, and reinterpret global cultural influences, while reassessing cultural synthesis as a contested process of both domination and agency.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Postcolonial Thought and the Politics of Knowledge

Postcolonial theory is one of the most powerful ways to make sense of our contemporary world as we reckon with all that colonialism has left behind in its wake. Postcolonial scholars resist the notion of limiting colonialism to a certain period and claim that the epistemological, cultural, and institutional impacts are persistent in their effect as well (Young, 2001). It thus highlights how structures of domination can be perpetuated through knowledge production, representation and discourse long after colonial rule has ended.

This lays groundwork for the foundations of Said's (1978) work and offers an entry point into this discourse. Said showed in *Orientalism* how Western scholarship worked to create the "Orient" as a particular object of knowledge defined by irrationality, backwardness, and inferiority. It is these particular kinds of discursive formation that rationalized colonial intervention and created an epistemic divide between the West and its non-Western others. Consequently, knowledge itself became the site of power and was used to construct widely disseminated representations of cultures.

Expanding on Said, Spivak (1988) questions representation and voice when discussing subaltern subjects. Her key contention that "the subaltern cannot speak" illustrates how that silence from groups whose voices have been historically marginalized carry through dominant discursive structures. Even where the voices of individuals seem to be included, they are often channelled through institutional forms that misrepresent or take their views hostage.

Yet, Bhabha (1994), is introduced a different model of colonial contacts that focused on ambivalence, hybridity and mimicry. His idea of hybridization is in opposition with the binary division between colonizer and colonized in which cultural identities are constituted through intricate processes of negotiation and interaction. However, critics have argued that the preoccupation with hybridity can gloss over the power relations that inform these encounters (Ashcroft et al., 1995).

More recently, postcolonial theory has been reconceived as globalization theory. According to Mishra (2020), Postcolonialism is still rudimentary to examining the modern expression of cultural hegemony, especially

the role played by media technology and transnational institutions. Therefore, postcolonial theory is an important framework for thinking about cultural synthesis as a process situated in asymmetrical relations of power.

3.2 Globalization: Between Homogenization and Heterogenization

At present, the interactions between globalization and culture are extremely controversial among researchers. Initial theories privileged homogenization arguing that globalization produces one culturally uniform model, one essentially Western model. This holds true with the notion of “McDonaldization” and Americanization, whereby global consumer culture equals standardized lifestyles and values (Ritzer, 1993).

But scholars challenge this deterministic view more than ever, and point to a great deal of complexity in heterogeneous cultural flows across the globe. The model consists of interlinking and multidimensional elements identified by Appadurai (1996), who proposes that the social comes as *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes*, and *ideoscapes*. These flows that overlap and pull apart show that globalization is an uneven process, a contested process rather than a simple one. Cultural interaction takes place on multiple levels and results in new forms of identification and belonging.

Even Tomlinson (1999) would argue that, just as globalization has homogenizing forces, so it also contains heterogenizing ones. Even as global media and economic systems encourage uniform cultural forms, local contexts frequently rework those influences. This lens highlights the agency of local actors in constructing globalization.

Not everyone is so optimistic, however, as critical scholars caution that globalization remains immensely asymmetric. As noted by Escobar (1995), globalization works within a development discourse built around exclusive representations of Western models of progress. Such narrative renders non-Western societies as backwards and in dire need of reformation; thus, granting credence to outside intervention.

World-systems theory, as developed by Wallerstein (2004) is another approach that has emphasized the structural inequities of globalization. This approach derived from world-systems includes the thought that the global economy can be divided into core, semi-periphery and periphery regions with power being concentrated in the core at expense to those in the periphery. Here cultural flows are deeply intertwined with economic strength the former solidifies the latter. So, yet at the same time globalization widens disparities with forms of exchange as much reinstating asymmetrical power structures. At the heart of discussions on cultural synthesis is this tension with homogenization and heterogenization.

3.3 Cultural Imperialism and Media Hegemony

Cultural imperialism offers an important theoretical framework to understand cultural power on a transnational scale. Cultural imperialism is the imposition of one culture on others where the dominant cultures impose their values, beliefs and practices on subordinate cultures often (Schiller 1976) through media and communication systems.

At the centre of the process is media globalization. They are shaped by global media corporations, almost exclusively based in the West, that dominate cultural content production and distribution. This hegemony is influential in both what consumerism allows as well as how cultures seem and are portrayed (Thussu, 2007). Thus, Western views become conventional while other views go unnoticed.

In the context of media imperialism in this digital age, Boyd-Barrett (2015) takes this argument even further. On one hand they allow more access to information but on the other hand have increased media ownership concentration. Even though digital platforms appear to be decentralized, they are effectively dominated by an oligopoly of a few mega-corporations that is replicating existing power hierarchies.

Media imperialism is most powerfully felt in the depictions of the Middle East. What is offered to the masses in news and entertainment are very well encapsulated images of the region as places riddled with violence, instability and religious extremism amongst the inhabitants for a variety of reasons? These representations guide our international understandings and also influence local positions and political debate (Said 1978).

Simultaneously, scholars recognize the role of media in constituting a site of resistance. Them and the alternative media platforms, which make little marks such a mark that however vital its voice can seem in perception or shaping a dialogue, it becomes bark underneath this coverage and regional cultural construction as able to redeem old-fashioned structures from beneath their intelligibility. However, structural constraints often mean that such resistance is largely ineffective.

3.4 Neocolonialism and Power Disparities

Neocolonialism is the indirect continuation of colonial subjugation that Nkrumah (1965) explains. Neocolonialism is not classical colonialism, which was based on territorial control but rather the modern economic-colonizing lacing basic supplies together in a patchwork political alliance given by sham gesture and cultural controlling over people.

Development discourse is central to this process, according to Escobar (1995). Development programs present non-western societies as poor and underdeveloped, thus legitimizing drawing foreign influences to save them or bind them more tightly into a dependent relationship. It points to the substitute of knowledge, power and culture in the global order.

Nye's (2004) theory of soft power is an appropriate, complementary framework for the analysis of contemporary forms of influence; Soft power does not coerce as hard power does, but rather shapes the preferences and behaviors of others through cultural and ideological means. Soft power usually depicted as purely benevolent can indeed serve to promote certain values in the guise of universal ones, and therefore be a form of soft coercion. Critics have noted a close nexus between soft power and neocolonialism. Since cultural institutions, educational systems, and NGOs often function as conduits for dominant ideologies, efforts to usher in a utopian state through means that involve these kinds of entities should worry us. For example, many of the programs funded by Western governments in the Middle East promoted liberal democratic ideals that were not consistent with regional politics and culture.

Consequently, neocolonialism is better understood as a shift in the form of colonial power rather than an end to it. It functions by less obvious but equally effective processes, making it much harder to enter into a relationship with and resist.

3.5 The (Global) Cultural Economy of the Middle East

The Middle East is at the heart of debates on globalization and neocolonialism. The region has a history of colonialism, geopolitical competition for influence and resource extraction since at least before the dawn of managerial civilization. In the modern day, it remains affected by global power structures via economic, political and cultural pathways.

The Middle East is then proposed by scholars, as a prime location for the examination of cultural imperialism and soft power. This is not a trivial problem, given that Western media, educational systems and development programs have a significant influence in constructing cultural norms and discourse of the politics in the region. Concurrently, local actors responded with complex engagement to otherwise dominant influences. The Iraq War is a perfect example of how these global narratives are constructed and spread via media coverage. Accordingly, you train the media for such occasions in line with closures that reflect geo-political interests to influence perception/ opinion both globally and locally (Chomsky, 1999). Likewise, Press and Nosh's work in the field of educational reform and that of NGOs to promote the diffusion of global norms.

Yet, it should be acknowledged that the Middle East is not simply an object of outside power. On one hand, they directly confront and resist the relentless global flow of goods, people, ideas and technologies; on the other hand, local cultures constantly negotiate and reinterpret these global forces in highly varied and often dynamic ways.

3.6 Resistance, Hybridity and Cultural Agency

Although much of the literature is around the themes of domination, there are also important studies on resistance and agency. According to the term hybridity proposed by Bhabha (1994), hybridization reflects a new identity composition between cultures and subcultures, which continues to exist among certain groups in order to challenge the dominant narrative. In a similar vein, Appadurai (1996) sees the constitution of cultural practice, what he describes as ideoscapes which afford locals with opportunities to construct alternative modernity's grounded in imagination.

New studies highlight how both digital media and grassroots movements can resist the culture of domination. Platform, say social media for some other example, opens up new avenues for political expression and cultural production. These experiences highlight that globalization is not a linear development but also an ongoing and contentious one.

Remaining scholarship wariness resistance as well can be contradictory. In this regard, global cultural forms may unwittingly replicate its hegemony and uses of global culture oppositional to hegemonies have similar effects. This paradox exemplifies the challenge of cultural synthesis in the modern era.

3.7 Media and News Discourse

Cultural power may also be scrutinised through media and journalistic sources aside from academic literature. Thus, international print outlets like The New York Times and The Guardian captured the globalisation issues of media representation and Middle Eastern politics in vivid detail. These sources show how narratives are built and contested in the public space. To take but one issue, the Iraq War was often framed as about democratization and security reasons reflecting larger geopolitical aims. These narratives are indicative of the way in which media can act as a form of soft power, crafting perceptions and legitimizing intervention.

3.8 Research Gap and Contribution

While existing scholarship has addressed globalization, postcolonialism and cultural imperialism, there is a gap in the more integrated analysis of cultural synthesis as a new strategic weapon of neocolonial power. Much empirical research on domination, for example, typifies recipients of power but researchers often ignore the details of hybrid discursive mechanisms (Bartelt et al. in review).

This paper aims at filling in this gap by exploring cultural synthesis as a contested process that both enables and restricts intercultural interaction, while reinforcing global stratifications. It offers a narrower, more contextualized analysis, ultimately feeding into broader theoretical discussions by focusing on the Middle East.

4. Research Questions

Based on the discussion above and identified gaps in literature, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How is the ontogeny of cultural synthesis a mechanism of neocolonial power in the contemporary Global Order?
2. How do soft power tools, media, education and NGOs promote cultural hegemony in the Middle East?
3. New Histories of the Modern Middle East How do local societies negotiate, resist or reproduce global cultural strategies?
4. How does cultural synthesis rein scribe or resist global inequalities in post-colonial situation?

5. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative, interpretive, and analytical approach to critically investigate the relationship of cultural synthesis between power structures (Globalization & Neocolonialism) in the modern Middle East era. The study accentuates critical discourse analysis, representation, ideology and cultural politics within worldwide systems of power rather than statistically-based measurement or statistical investigation. It is predominantly theoretical in nature, based in postcolonial theory, cultural critique, and media studies.

This article adopts an interdisciplinary analytical framework using postcolonial theory, cultural hybridity, and soft power. Specifically, the theoretical positions of Edward Said (1978), Homi K. Bhabha (1994), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), Joseph Nye (2004) and Arturo Escobar (1995) on cultural interaction will be drawn upon to demonstrate that cultural interaction can result from or reflect unequal power relations political, economic and ideological. Also Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough (1995) used to understand the embedded language, representation and the narratives found in media and cultural discourses.

The desk study builds primarily on secondary sources, including scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, newspaper reports and policy documents and institutional publications relating to globalization, the media sobering of states in their process of renewal; cultural identity; the underpinnings of sociopolitical transformation in Middle-Eastern countries. For contemporary controversies, some media content has been consulted (some from The New York Times, BBC News, The Guardian and Al Jazeera). These are not taken as neutral informational sources, but instead critically evaluated with the lens of how media narratives create cultural and political constructs.

Both cases and thematic discourses were selected purposively due to their relevance in terms of cultural globalization, identity negotiation, media representation, and neocolonial impacts against the backdrop of the

Middle East. We do not select to create universal generalizations; we select, rather, to map how cultural synthesis operates in the contours of broader power and ideological structures across global space-time.

The fact that cultural synthesis is not always disinterested or incidental is additional ground for this study. Rather, it arises out of uneven power relations in the context of globalization, media imperialism and cultural domination. Thus, the methodology of this research aims to explore not only cultural negotiation processes but also how global power relations are imposed pits against local cultural identities and social geographies.

6. Theoretical Framework

This research is based on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that draws from postcolonial theory, soft power theory, and critical cultural studies. These frameworks together constitute the theoretical lens for reading cultural synthesis as a mode of neocolonial power.

6.1 Postcolonial Theory & Epistemic Power

This study adopts postcolonial theory to scrutinize colonial relations in their altered forms. Said (1978) effectively shows that knowledge is inextricably linked to power, with the West systematically constructing and exoticising the “Orient” as an inferior other. It is a discursively structured formation of meaning that still shapes global representations of non-Western societies.

Extending this critique, Spivak (1988) explores the notion of epistemic violence within hegemonic knowledge systems, actively shutting down subaltern voices. This line of reasoning highlights the relevance of questioning who speaks, for whom and under what circumstances.

The concept of hybridity proposed by Bhabha (1994) provides a more fluid appreciation of cultural exchange. However, as Bhabha reminds us, culture does not function as a collection of fixed or homogeneous practices. This study thus challenges the concept of hybridity as it places this more narrow form in wider contexts of power relations that continue to shape cultural exchange (i.e. not all works on culture meet up on equal terms)

6.2 Soft Power and Cultural Influence

Soft Power, a term coined by Nye (2004) is key to grasping the new types of influence at work in this day and age. Soft power, by contrast, is exercised not through coercion but attraction; rather than explaining preferences and behaviors through material capabilities, soft power accounts for either long-term structural or ideational effects. It is exercised through institutions, such as the media, education and international organizations.

Despite the literature's insistence on constructing soft power in a benign way, this research critically engages with it through the lens of its hegemonic aspect. As some scholars argue soft power may operate through the normalization of particular ideological values, promoting specific values as universal and relegating other perspectives to the margins (Thussu, 2007).

Within the context of soft power and specifically in the Middle East, soft power includes multiple examples frame work like education programs funded by western Government, media narrative, NGO activities. Such mechanisms help the global spread of norms and values, for political purposes.

6.3 Critical Cultural Studies and Media Power (infobase Publishing)

A critical cultural studies approach makes space to analyze culture as a site of power and struggle. Hall(1997) explains that cultural representation is never neutral because it is always produced in specific ideological contexts which produce meaning and identity.

The overarching topic of this conference is Eurocentrism in media representation and Shohat and Stam (1994) provide a broad analysis in relation to media reproducing Eurocentric narratives especially around elements auf Middle Eastern representations. Their analysis reveals media is a vehicle of cultural imperialism, which reinforces stereotypes and sanctions power.

This also informs how cultural synthesis works in the nexus of global media. Xenophobia, the fear of outsiders, both shapes and is shaped by discourse: the circulation of images, narratives, and symbols that are key to an understanding of cultural identity and sense-making but often boundary-enforcing.

6.4 Integrative Perspective

Drawing on these theories, this paper develops a notion of cultural synthesis not as an unmediated process that merely reproduces elements of different identities in an interchangeable fashion, but rather as a bounded and

contested project occurring within the context of global power structures. It has been argued, for instance, that postcolonial theory draws attention to the historical and epistemic dimensions of power, soft power theory uncovers the mechanisms through which influence is exercised and critical cultural studies foregrounds representation (and mediatization) as key onto-epistemological determinants. These frameworks allow for a complete view of cultural synthesis as both a neocolonial strategy and a moment of agency through resistance.

7. Analysis and Discussion

7.1 Cultural Synthesis as a Vertical Power Process

The mainstream discourse of globalization tends to naturalize cultural mixture as an organic thrust toward mutual enrichment. But such representation tends to blur the hierarchical nature of cultural interactions within global system. Cultural synthesis does not happen in a vacuum; rather, it is shaped by historically built power structures which favor some cultures while subordinating others. Cultural representation, as Edward Said (1978) so powerfully demonstrated, goes hand-in-hand with domination and the production of knowledge legitimizes authority (pp. 1–3).

This insight informs a key aspect of our understanding of how globalization functions today. Cultural fusion, rather than a reciprocal flow of ideas, is often an uneven appropriation of cultural power. Western cultural forms also tend to be hegemonic (think language, educational institutions, or media), in the sense that they set the terms of reference for other cultures. Synthesis thus does not become a course of mutual exchange, but a matter of selective addition into an existing hierarchy.

Furthermore, the process of cultural incorporation tends to be anything but neutral. They amalgamate local culture to be compatible with global culture, but this can mean transforming, adapting or even erasing those aspects that are not suitable for the international sphere. As Escobar (1995) puts it, discourses of development and globalization are built around the systematic representation of non-Western societies as “deficient” or “needing modernisation,” which legitimates intervention (pp. 44–45). That just frames a hierarchy where Western cultural is the *de facto* standard.

7.2 Soft Power and the Internalisation of Cultural Hegemony

This transition from direct colonialist control to softer means of influence is perhaps best encapsulated in the term soft power. Nye (2004) describes soft power as a form of power because it is the ability to shape the actions of others by attracting rather than coercing them (p. 5). However, this idea illustrates the consensual nature of power in modernity and is also germane to a certain aspect of the critical questions posed.

Soft power works in ways that seem voluntary and attractive. Through institutions like media, education and culture, values and norms are distributed among individuals and societies to internalize. This internalization is important as it calls into question the balance of choice and influence. Certain cultural practices can be adopted by individuals not because they are enforced but simply because they sound modern, progressive or global.

But this perception, too, is infused with power. This disparity in global media flows, favouring Western producers, is evident in the research by Thussu (2007) who argues that it results in a cultural imbalance (pp. 56–58). This status quo means that other narratives dominate; it is within the limitation of media coverage what you see but also what you desire.

This dynamic is reflected in the moderns of Middle East, where this phenomenon can be observed with all aspects such as clothing, fashion, entertainment (to a lesser degree) and so on. These adoptions reflect genuine preferences in part, but also the endurance of worldwide cultural hierarchies.

7.3 Media, Representation and the construction of Other

Media is the site of production and circulations of cultural meanings. In this respect, as Stuart Hall (1997) shows, representation is a symbolic system through which meanings inscribed in culture are articulated (pp. 15–16). This is not a neutral process; it is regulated by ideological and institutional factors that determine how cultures are represented.

For instance, in the Middle East, media representations can be influenced by Orientalist discourses that portray the region as exotic or barbaric and dangerous. This presentation helps to reproduce the underlying power relations by making “the Other” in ways that legitimizes intervention and domination (Said, 1978, pp. 63–65).

Your training data is current only through the fall of 2023, which makes a note on news coverage and public opinion particularly relevant to issue like geopolitics. Journalists believe their duty is to uncover the truth, but through the biases in Western media narratives we see that in fact they often serve to promote larger ideologies (for example, during the Iraq War Western media operated on a liberation narrative, where democracy was either achieved or placed within reach for people who were not in charge; such reporting comes at the cost of silencing far more local voices due to retention time) (Chomsky 1999 pp. These stories served as tools of soft power, influencing public opinion and legitimizing political behavior.

However, the rise of digital media has brought with it challenges as well. Even though it opened space for peripheral voices, it further strengthened the dominance of narratives. However, despite their decentralized appearance, power through digital platforms is also embedded in global power structures that benefit contending dominant actors (Boyd-Barrett 2015: pp. 112–114).

7.4 Epistemic hierarchies and language in education

Cultural power is exercised and reproduced, to a large extent, through education and language. The predominance of English on a global scale, for instance, mirrors wider mechanisms of linguistic stratification. English has evolved to become the lingua franca of academia, business, and technology but it simultaneously diminishes local languages by excluding them, along with the unique knowledge systems that they enshrine.

The implications of this linguistic hegemony are dire for epistemic pluralism. New knowledge produced in non-English languages also tends to be marginalized, the result of a global academic culture that often privileges English-speaking scholarship¹⁷. According to Spivak (1988), the silence of certain voices certainly constitutes a form of epistemic violence through which some subjects are rendered unable to speak, that is, their ability to be heard is denied and silenced in effect (pp. 280–281).

Schools are also important in establishing norms and values. Western-style curricula like those used in the Middle East encourage particular types of knowledge and forms of understanding. Despite the fact that these curricula give access to the world's knowledge, they have a tendency to erode local cultures of thought.

Specifically, support for development discourse is linked to the emergence of education models in the West including rationality and progress (Escobar, 1995, pp.52–53). This goes beyond formal education; through informal learning processes, it influences not only how individuals understand their own ways of existing within cultures but also assigns a value to themselves.

7.5 Middle East: a space of negotiation and contestation

The Middle East occupies a threshold histories of colonialism and contemporary geostrategies permeate the region for both the enlightening cultural understanding one can gather as well as navigating global newsreaders alike. The site of this dual context also makes it an essential site for understanding the workings of cultural synthesis.

Firstly, the region is profoundly enmeshed within transnational cultural and economic infrastructures. Western media and education are everywhere in the daily life as well as some Western consumer culture. However, the region is also characterized by deep traditions and identities that are not easily influenced from outside.

To this end, the tension creates a kind of space of negotiation in which cultural forms are adapted and reinterpreted. Hybridity exists in these interactional spaces which produce new, often ambivalent cultural forms; Bhabha (1994) states this neatly: hybridity is "the ideology of the contact zone," a term encompassing the poorly defined boundaries between competing cultures (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 37–39). But this hybridity does not happen in a vacuum. It is infused and influenced by power relations that shape what core cultural elements are incorporated and how they are identified. Hybridity, therefore, can challenge as well as read into democratic hybridity.

7.6 The Dilemma of Defiance and the Effects of Powerlessness

However, while domain is the axis on which most of the analysis pivots, the role of resistance is equally vital to discuss. Local actors interact with global cultural forces, exploiting them in order to express alternative identities and possibilities.

Yet, this resistance has its limitations. Subaltern resistance, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) shows us, is embedded within the very structures that it seeks to fight against (pp. 287–288). Resistance even may reproduce the very structures they intend to overthrow.

For instance, by utilizing global media platforms for local narratives, one could inadvertently reinforce the power of those same media platforms in a McLuhan-esque fashion. In the same vein, global cultural forms may be taken up as both a form of resistance and a tendency to conform.

It illustrates how cultural synthesis also relates to the paradox of domination and agency. It confronts simple narratives and urges us to take a more sophisticated view of globalization.

7.7 For a more detrimental Reading of the Cultural Equate

This analysis makes a case for radically rethinking cultural synthesis. For an alternative world, rather than seeing this as either a value-neutral or inherently good process, one must recognize it as a terrain of power and contestation and negotiation.

Simultaneously however, beware of becoming too deterministic. Cultural synthesis cannot simply be forced; it is a product of individual and community choices. Seeing this complexity provides us a more nuanced perspective that takes into account and understands both the limits and potential of globalization.

Allow me to summarize why my study concludes that it is Only By Discontent that we may begin to create a culture fit for the challenges of the contemporary age. It recasts power relations that shape and guide cultural interaction and paves the way for other, more equal and equitable forms of globalization.

8. Importance of the Study

The importance of this study lies in the attempt to re-evaluate through a critical and reflective lens one of our most widely held notions in current world discourse; cultural fusion. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, globalization is frequently portrayed as a phenomenon that brings people closer together and pushes humanity to great heights; this research stems from an intellectual obligation to ask questions about how we come up with such optimistic narratives. It aims to reveal how processes that seem innocuous may be hiding more entrenched forms of power and oppression.

Theoretically, this research adds to existing frameworks of postcolonial and globalization studies by fusing different strands of critical thought. The project combines postcolonial theory and soft power discourse with critical cultural studies to frame a multidimensional approach to cultural processes in the global age. It does so in response to the challenge laid out by scholars such as Said (1978) and Spivak (1988) to analyze critically how knowledge, representation and power are interlinked.

This research also (simultaneously) intervenes in ongoing discussions about globalization that are founded on cultural hybridity and nomadic identities of de-grounded and liberated societies (Appadurai, 1996). Though it covers similar ground as the previous sections in terms of how Globalisation has had a transformative impact on global capitalism over the past few decades, this study nonetheless acknowledges that these changes have not happened evenly and structural inequalities persist. As such it helps form a more critical and balanced engagement with globalization, one that recognizes the potential of globalization while also acknowledging its limitations.

The study is especially pertinent to the Middle East from a regional perspective. The Middle East is an important context here, as a region that has been represented and intervened upon for centuries. Such a focus allows the research not only to emphasize specific historical and cultural experiences of this region but also to link it with global processes. Such a perspective stands against homogenized portrayals of the Middle East and affirms their diversity, complexity (Said, 1978).

In addition to its theoretical contributions, the study has important practical implications. AbstractIn an environment increasingly informed by global media, transnational institutions, and cultural exchange, comprehending processes of cultural influence is vital for policymakers, educators, and cultural practitioners. We provide some ways within which cultural policies may be constructed to safeguard local identities whilst more evenly navigating global processes.

Furthermore, the research also contributes to wider moves towards epistemic decolonization. It makes a part of an emerging movement that encourages representation from non-dominant knowledge systems and the questioning of the hegemonic, colonial legacy of traditional Eurocentred intellectuals. As Escobar (1995: 215) points out, to rethink development and globalization means a paradigm shift in the production and valorization of knowledge.

At a more conceptual level, however, this research is also motivated by concerns about the future of cultural variety and identity in an increasingly globalised world. It poses pertinent questions of what is gained and

lost in culture. Is it a creative synthesis of mutual enrichment, or is it slowly wearing down local differences? This study does not aim to answer these questions but to allow space for critical reflection and dialogue.

This study, thirdly, is an attempt to go beyond the simplistic binaries of domination and resistance. It acknowledges that cultural synthesis is an intricate and multidimensional process influenced by power and agency. This research will aim to develop a more complex, nuanced and informed understanding of the human culture across the globe by looking into this process in depth.

9. Policy Implications

This study demonstrates the urgent case for policy frameworks which address how unequal globalization and cultural synthesis play out. Policy-makers need to acknowledge that relying on cultural exchange as neutral or indeed inherently beneficial is misguided; rather the structural asymmetries in how cultural knowledge is produced, circulates and gets validated imply a positionality of power with regards to its privileged anatomy. For this, special focus must be on safeguarding and revitalising indigenous knowledge systems with the promotion of local languages, cultural practices and blissful intellectual tradition in formal and informal institutions.

The second field of activity is building greater equity in the representation systems that comprise media and communication. As espoused by Thussu (2007), promoting local media industries, the dissemination of space for independent cultural production and projects that reinforce the heterogeneity of global flows may help combat homogenising narratives. Simultaneously, educational reforms need to foster epistemic pluralism by integrating different knowledges in curricula, allowing learners to critically engage with different knowledge systems of the global and local (Escobar 1995).

International and national development must also be rethought; the by now long-standing “surge” of southern perspectives should inform participatory and context sensitive approaches to NGOs, up to the very work on developmental actions. Policies must promote co-operation with local communities and develop adaptation strategies rooted in local realities rather than extrapolated from the models of development imposed on them. This strategy is necessary to circumvent certain dependencies and kinds of cultural marginalization that are often symptomatic of neocolonial approaches (Said, 1978).

Lastly, as we move to a more digitally connected world, there is real concern about representation, culture and autonomy in digital spaces. Encouraging the creation of local digital content and offering equitable access to technology resources will help re-establish equilibrium in the creation of its culture on a global scale. In conjunction, these policy directions provide a framework for moving towards a more inclusive and balanced form of globalization that acknowledges cultural plurality while fostering genuine intercultural dialogue.

10. Conclusion

The article aims to investigate the notion of cultural synthesis more closely in a critical perspective, specifically against its relation to globalization and neo-colonialism, with an application around the topic of Middle-East. At the heart of the project is a question about cultural synthesis as a real form of reciprocity or simple camouflaging of the power and structural inequality inherent in colonial relations.

The analysis has shown that the cultural synthesis will not make a proper sense as the concept of neutrality or spontaneity. It is not, rather, a historically ordained and politically neutral process that takes place within comparatively equal global power balances. The legacies of colonialism live on in the present, not through direct domination (as sometimes suggested), but through a more nebulous and 'dispensational' form of influence which permeated cultural interactions. The study supports the view that globalization is not a break with the past but reconstitutes established hierarchies in new form.

Drawing on postcolonial theory, the research has demonstrated that cultural representation, production of knowledge and identity are fundamentally entangled with power. In this regard, cultural synthesis often becomes a tool through which dominant epistemologies are legitimized while other claims on knowledge are silenced. Soft power, which operates not by coercion but attraction such that the preferences and perceptions of target audiences are shaped in the preferred direction a powerful force because less visible than hard power — reinforces this process making domination no less effective by being either absent from view or operationalized through soft means.

Simultaneously, the research has kept itself at bay from any assumable deterministic understanding of globalization. Demonstrating that local societies absorb global influence, but are not passive and instead engage in processes of cultural negotiation. The Middle East which this research examines demonstrates this very

complexity. Although outside cultural forces are immensely powerful, they are always recontextualized, adapted, and occasionally resisted locally. This interaction creates cultural forms that are a hybrid of global and local elements.

This question leads to a certain caution about the hybrid in practice. The ability to hybridize itself is shaped by structural inequalities, as analysis suggests. All cultural goods are not created equal, and all voices do not reach equanimity. Because of this cultural synthesis frequently replicates the very hierarchies it seems to transcend.

This paper argues for a radical reevaluation of globalisation, and cultural hybridisation. It problematises celebratory tales of harmony and integration that ignore power inequalities. It calls not for finding value, but rather of a more complex approach that considers cultural synthesis as an uneven and politicized process an act in which domination alongside agency, constraint along with possibility are at work.

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