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Deconstructing Identity and Reconfiguring the Imaginary: A Socio-Anthropological Reading of Civilisational Specificity in the Age of Globalisation

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Abstract
This study derives its significance from moving beyond a merely descriptive and superficial approach, instead offering a "semio-anthropological" perspective that deconstructs the mechanisms of epistemic and symbolic domination underpinning cultural globalisation. Cultural globalisation is no longer a transient phenomenon; rather, it has become a dominant, transnational reality that imposes a coercive flow of cultural values, social representations, and psychological sensibilities. This research reveals the existence of acute negative effects that threaten human cultural diversity in favour of tendencies toward global standardisation. Contemporary technological acceleration has likewise produced structural and functional displacement within societies, as digital spaces have become "alternative environments" that reshape collective consciousness and reconfigure the social imaginary, distancing them from the constants of national identities. This has placed individuals in a state of continuous alienation and cultural transformation.
Keywords: cultural globalisation, civilisational specificities, identity, collective consciousness, social imaginary.

1. Introduction

Globalisation represents one of the most prominent structural transformations that have reshaped the contemporary world, as its influence is no longer confined to political and economic systems but has extended to reconfigure symbolic structures, meanings, and patterns of everyday life. In this way, globalisation has shifted from being merely a mechanism of cultural exchange to a universal order aimed at reproducing values according to the logic of "soft domination".

In this context, Muslim societies face a complex problematic predicament, arising, on the one hand, from the central specificity of the religious frame of reference in their cultural formation and, on the other, from their deep historical legacy, which contributed to shaping the course of human civilisation.

With the steady acceleration of the technological revolution and digital fluidity, cultural globalisation is no longer merely an emergent phenomenon; rather, it has become a dominant reality that dismantles traditional geographical boundaries and drives an unprecedented flow of cultural values and representations. In doing so, it has not only opened the door to human

exchange but has also raised profound critical questions concerning the fate of "cultural specificity" in the face of tendencies toward global standardisation. As Arjun Appadurai indicates, the central essence of contemporary global interactions lies in the "tension between cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenization" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 32). From this standpoint, our research seeks to deconstruct the mechanisms through which globalisation affects Arab-Islamic societies, not as passive consumers but as civilisational subjects who are undergoing difficult labour between the hammer of openness and the anvil of preserving identity.

To address this problem, the article proceeds from a fundamental hypothesis, namely, that cultural globalisation does not necessarily lead to the wholesale erasure of cultural specificities but may instead push them into complex paths of adaptation and reformulation. Change, as imposed by the current global context, is no longer a choice but a historical necessity, and it will not be productive unless it is accompanied by critical awareness that prevents falling into the trap of blind imitation or cultural dissolution.

The importance of this subject lies in the fact that it addresses one of the most complex contemporary issues, namely, the tension between the cultural flows of globalisation and the need to preserve cultural specificity. The value of the study is also evident in its attempt to move beyond superficial descriptive readings of the phenomenon of globalisation toward an in-depth "socioanthropological" reading that deconstructs the mechanisms of technical control and the significance of symbolic domination while revealing the sites of structural dysfunction within the contemporary Arab personality, which lives in a state of alienation and dependency as a result of a sense of defeatism.

To achieve our epistemic aims, we relied on the critical analytical method, which combines the anthropological approach with the perspectives of cultural sociology and draws on certain semiological approaches to deconstruct the symbolic and conceptual structure of the phenomenon of cultural globalisation, especially in its digital version. The study also included a historical entry point linking the colonial period with contemporary globalisation because these are interconnected and continuous transformations.

2. Genealogy of Cultural Globalisation: From Acculturation to Civilisational Penetration

Undoubtedly, cultural globalisation cannot be reduced to an instantaneous product generated by the current digital revolution; rather, it is an extended historical process whose features began to take shape in the age of geographical discovery. Across its long trajectory, this process has witnessed multiple radical transformations, which ultimately led to the reformulation of traditional concepts of the boundaries of time and space. Undoubtedly, the manifestations of contemporary cultural globalisation cannot be separated from their past historical roots, especially those linked to the movement of colonial expansion. In essence, globalisation is nothing other than an assemblage of mechanisms of domination that began with those discoveries and reached their peak in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During this period, colonialism was not merely a movement of armies aimed at controlling land and plundering wealth; rather, as Gérard Leclerc argues in his book *Anthropology and*

Colonialism, it was a broad process of standardisation aimed at attaching colonised peoples to Western centrality because "the imperial vision refuses to recognise in non-Western societies any higher internal essence... an essence that can only be perceived as among the negatives or as something that arouses hostility" (Leclerc, 1990, p. 40). Therefore, we attempt to trace the most important stages of this "ethnicist" tendency that was associated with the European mentality for a long period of time.

1.2 From Traditional Colonialism to Cultural Dependency

The first repercussions of cultural globalisation manifested with the movement of colonial expansion, as Western colonialism, driven by a tendency towards "Eurocentrism", sought to impose the post-Renaissance model on colonised societies as the sole criterion of "civilisational advancement". This expansion did not aim to transfer the European model in its entirety but rather focused on deploying specific elements of it as a tool for dismantling and reconstructing local structures in ways that served strategies of domination and the extension of control. During that period, the influence of Enlightenment philosophy and the ideology of the evolutionary tendency clearly prevailed throughout the nineteenth century. The slogan of modernisation at the time was therefore that "scientific rationality must be imposed on other civilisations based on different patterns of thought" (Warnier, 2004, p. 11). In other words, according to colonial ideology, the "different" would remain in that state of civilisational backwardness without the intervention and assistance of the civilised European. At this stage, the colonial West attempted to impose its languages, cultures, and educational systems on colonised societies by force to transform military control into total and comprehensive domination. It also worked to encourage Orientalist studies as an intellectual and ideological system for redefining the "non-European" in a manner that served those interests of domination. This system paved the way for attempts to "erase historical memory in order to erase human beings' awareness of themselves" (Al-Messiri, 2009, p. 296). Colonial ideology therefore worked to portray non-European culture as a "static" or "primitive" culture, as opposed to a "dynamic and civilised" Western culture.

That colonial period produced the first beginnings of rupture in the cultural reality of Arab and Islamic societies. These deep cultural and educational policies attempted to separate local human beings from collective memory and popular culture. Since "culture is the arena in which domination and resistance confront one another" (Said, 1997, pp. 15–16), those attempts aimed to reproduce societies founded on intrusive cultural traits imposed by force, implanting within their psyche a "susceptibility to colonisation". When the coloniser's language is imposed as the sole framework of knowledge and modernity, while the "mother tongue" is transformed from a language of civilisation and science into a language of rituals and folklore, this act undoubtedly creates a "linguistic rupture" between the original society and its linguistic history. At that point, Arab thought entered a state of "decline, pushing it towards excess, mysticism, the obscure and the ambiguous, imprecision, and blind imitation" (Bennabi, 2002, p. 57). This causes the "self" to adopt the concepts of the "other" to describe its own reality and specific condition, which, over successive generations, leads to the loss of the capacity to express the self through its authentic features.

This linguistic dismantling produced what may be called a state of "identity schizophrenia". On the one hand, there is the Arabic language, which represents memory, affect, and connection with the ancestors; on the other hand, there is the language of the coloniser, which enables engagement in work and education and was promoted as allowing one to keep pace with material progress. This distinction led intellectuals to become dazzled by Western culture and politics, fascinated by their material appearance, and to borrow its tongue and language, followed by its values and morals, as "the Arab intellectuals of this period expressed admiration for constitutional systems and liberal democracy" (Leclerc, 2004, p. 200), believing that these constituted the path toward attaining the civilisational level of the West, as in the cases of Al-Tahtawi and Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi, for example. Here, Malek Bennabi alerts us to the fact that colonialism exploited the linguistic situation and succeeded in deluding us into believing that the problem was one of means and things, whereas the truth was the opposite: "it is a problem of ideas, not a problem of means" (Bennabi, 1986, p. 53). Possessing the language of the other without possessing its critical consciousness produces nothing but a "hybrid being", disturbed between past and present.

We find that colonialism used its language to standardise the Arab personality, as dictionaries were compiled and terms coined that described the Arab as static and dependent. Over time, the linguistically alienated Arab Muslim began to see himself through these foreign terms. When language is stripped away, the "social imaginary" of the society concerned is stripped away from it, and its ability to think about making the future becomes paralyzed because it moves along paths drawn by the language of the other and its semantic concepts. Since "to speak a language is to adopt a world and to bear the culture of that world on one's shoulders" (Fanon, 2004, p. 21), this is the state of susceptibility to colonisation as described by Malek Bennabi.

2.2 Cultural Moulding under the Cover of Ideological Conflict

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a transformation in the strategies of the forces of globalisation as they moved from direct military confrontation to the era of the "Cold War". Although this period projected a scene suggesting the existence of a conflict between two opposing ideological blocs, analytical reality reveals that this polarisation was nothing more than a façade for passing colonial policies that were reproduced in a new form. Third, World societies were thus pushed toward choosing one of the two alternatives, as although no others existed, and whichever choice they made, they created a rupture with their authentic culture. At this time, international institutions emerged in the cultural and social fields and worked to establish extensive cultural industries through films and cinema screenings, fashion shows, numerous musical releases, and other forms. Within the same framework, and with the contribution of private cultural institutions, broad projects were implemented to standardise global taste and normalise the culture of globalisation. This was carried out "by using the powerful global communications revolution, through which the interaction of the established cultures of the world's civilisations was marketed" (Majdi, 1999, p. 154). They even presented the matter as although it were a spontaneous interaction among those cultures, although this was not the case. Here, the gradual transformation of individuals into consumers of a single cultural model that transcended geographical borders

and cultural circles began. At that time, the second attempt at the systematic erasure to which the cultural specificities of people were subjected began, in favour of the Western way of life. In the second half of the twentieth century, the forces of globalisation worked to invest in the linguistic fragmentation and cultural backwardness to which local elites had been subjected during the era of military colonialism. They began to support the "globalist" elite in Arab and Islamic societies in particular to promote concepts such as liberal democracy, women's rights, and individual freedom. A representation was created whose content was that cultural specificity constituted an obstacle to economic and social development. Schools of commerce, business, and technical sciences were therefore established, teaching in French or English, and these two languages were employed as languages of "progress" and "entrepreneurship", entirely separate from the language of "everyday life". This reinforced the idea that material economic success was linked to abandoning the dimensions of identity and becoming acculturated to the values of globalisation, according to Pierre Bourdieu's concept. Malek Bennabi opposed this thesis and demonstrated its error, stating, "The primary value in the success of any economic project is the human being; the economy is not the establishment of a bank or the construction of a factory, but, before that, the construction of a human being and the mobilisation of social energies in a project driven by a civilisational will" (Malek, 2002, p. 105). Moreover, the weakness of the elite, which defends cultural specificity in providing strong and convincing alternatives to remove the state of "intellectual stagnation", especially within educated circles, made society easy prey for global cultural standardisation.

3.2 Digital Fluidity and the Death of Cultural Specificity

Since the 1990s, the world has witnessed accelerating technological transformations that have reshaped economic, cultural, and political structures on a global scale. The spread of the internet, the development of digital communication technologies, and the emergence of mobile phones and smartphones have contributed to accelerating the flow of information, capital, and cultural symbols across borders in an unparalleled manner. With the beginning of the third millennium, this trajectory was further reinforced by the emergence of social media platforms and electronic commerce, which led to a reduction in temporal and spatial distances and transformed the world into a narrow, overlapping communicative space.

These technical transformations were not merely instrumental developments but represented a fundamental channel for the spread of globalisation in its various dimensions. They enabled multinational corporations to manage transcontinental production networks, facilitated the transfer of consumer and cultural patterns between societies, and made it possible for "globalisation to reshape our personal identities in a way that makes us affected by events occurring at the other end of the world" (Giddens, 1999, p. 31). They also reinforced the formation of the knowledge economy and the digital economy. In return, this dynamism raised profound questions concerning cultural identity, national sovereignty, and the digital divide between states and societies, making digital technology a central factor in reshaping the features of globalisation in the twenty-first century.

Thus, cultural globalisation, in its final phase, entered its "liquid" stage to use Bauman's expression. Cultural invasion no longer requires armies or even embassies; rather, it now

takes place through "fibre optics". At this stage, Arjun Appadurai argues that the human imaginary has become a collective social act owing to digital flows whose acceleration increases daily and that "cultural globalisation does not create a homogeneous global culture but fragments identities into interchangeable lifestyles" (Lipovetsky, 2004, p. 54).

Finally, reviewing the history of the phenomenon of globalisation has revealed an important truth: cultural globalisation has never been an "equal exchange"; rather, it has always reflected balances of power. This explains why our article emphasises the idea of preserving cultural specificity, as history tells us that whoever does not possess their "own project" inevitably dissolves into the projects of others.

3. Theses on the Effects of Cultural Globalisation

The question of the impact of cultural globalisation on local specificities is among the most contested topics in the social sciences. Opinions range between the claim of "absolute domination", and thus the dissolution of local cultural specificities, and the claim of "acculturation", which refers to the practice of consciously selecting cultural content and then adapting to it. The most prominent contributions in this regard are three theses that have formed an intellectual triangle explaining the complexity of the relationship between globalisation and cultural specificities. While George Ritzer argues that globalisation imposes a unified consumer pattern that eliminates local cultural distinctiveness, stressing that we are living through a state of "the global proliferation of centrally designed and controlled social forms that are comparatively devoid of distinctive content" (Ritzer, 1993, p. 56), Homi Bhabha rejects the idea of the total disappearance of specificity, instead proposing the concept of "hybridity", which grants people the ability to reproduce their identity. He argues that "hybridity is the space in which forces meet to produce something new and unnamed" (Bhabha, 2018, p. 23).

Samuel Huntington, for his part, occupies the terrain of confrontation, considering that global cultural pressure does not lead to dissolution but to collision because "the world decreases, and interactions among peoples of different civilisations increase; these increasing interactions intensify civilisational consciousness and differences" (Huntington, 1998, p. 67). Thus, cultural specificity appears in contemporary thought either as a victim of standardisation, as Ritzer explains, or as a flexible element that negotiates with globalisation, or as a barrier that leads to major conflicts, as in Huntington.

Mention may be made of the study conducted by Nisa Taptiani with a group of researchers, entitled *The Impact of Globalisation on Local Cultural Traditions*, which examined the complex and dynamic relationship between globalisation and local cultural traditions, taking the "Jalawastu" community in West Java, Indonesia, as an applied model that reflects the harmony between Islamic values and local customs in the face of global transformations.

The most prominent points of this study may be summarised in its focus on the contradictory duality of impact. It showed that globalisation has two faces: a positive face that allows openness to global knowledge, opportunities for cultural exchange, and the revitalisation of cultural tourism; and a negative face that threatens the loss of local languages, the commercialisation of culture, and the dominance of foreign models at the expense of

traditional values. It also addressed the question of resistance and the capacity to adapt, meaning that local communities are not passive recipients but display a high capacity for "adaptation" through cultural education, the organisation of festivals, and the pursuit of legal protection for heritage, with a central focus on the role of the emerging generation in preserving this legacy amid the flood of globalisation (Taptiani, 2024).

In the Arab world, many Arab thinkers have addressed this relationship between cultural globalisation and the cultural specificities of Muslim societies. Most of these writings affirmed the weakness of resistance to the tide of globalisation and its extensions at the social and cultural levels. Some serious field studies have also appeared in this field, including the study by Muhammad Hasan al-Barghouthi, entitled *Arab Culture and Globalisation: A Sociological Study of the Opinions of Arab Intellectuals*. This study proceeded from a central question: What is the impact of globalisation on Arab culture?

The study also examined the dialectic of "authenticity and contemporaneity" and the extent to which Arab culture is capable of adapting to globalising values without losing its identity. This finding indicated the existence of apprehension that globalisation might become a tool for imposing Western culture and that national belonging might retreat in favour of a superficial consumer culture. Its findings also highlight the importance of creating local cultural centres that help strengthen awareness of national identity to confront the structural challenges resulting from globalisation. There are many other studies in which space does not allow us to mention, most of which expressed major concerns about the effects of cultural globalisation (Al-Barghouthi, 2007, p. 23).

4. The Dialectic of Collective Expansion and Collective Contraction

The social aspect is the most sensitive axis in the dialectic of globalisation and cultural specificity, since the impact is not limited to patterns of consumption and the question of individual choices but penetrates the "hard core" of societies, represented by the family and the system of values related to it. It is this system that governs social bonds and ensures the continuity of human existence, and through it, individual identities are constructed, "which enable the individual to find a particular place within this group or within the social system to which he belongs" (Cuche, 2010, p. 149). One of the deepest structural transformations produced by globalisation is manifested in the reformulation of the social constitution of the family, as it has brought about a transition from the pattern of the "extended family", with its clear hierarchy and multiple functions, to the pattern of the "nuclear family", with reduced functions. From an anthropological perspective, this transformation was not merely a change in the number of members of a single household but rather an undermining of what the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss calls the elementary structures of kinship. In traditional societies, the extended family represented an integrated productive and social unit that provided the individual with an existential safety network, met his various needs, and, beyond that, defined his different roles. Under globalisation, however, these bonds have been dismantled in favour of utilitarian individualism, which turns the individual into a separate "atom" subject to the requirements of the capitalist market. In this regard, Zygmunt Bauman states, "In the world of liquid modernity, human bonds are no longer solid enough to provide

security, but have become consumable bonds" (Zygmunt, 2016, pp. 45–47). This has led to the erosion of "collective conscience" and the transformation of family relations from sacred bonds based on permanence and mechanism into utilitarian bonds marked by fragility and rapid replaceability.

This transformation is followed by the sharp rise of the concept of "absolute individualism" as an ideology that transcends civilisations, a phenomenon that may be critically analysed as an alienation from the spirit of "group cohesion". Whereas the "spirit of the clan" or the local community was based on the principles of organic solidarity and shared responsibility, globalisation imposes an "atomic" model of the individual, which sanctifies autonomy as a supreme value. This shift toward individualism, promoted by digital media and various artistic practices, creates a major gap between the self and identity, especially in its ethical dimension. Durkheim referred to this earlier when he stated, "When collective conscience weakens, the individual loses his moral compass" (Durkheim, 1982, p. 120). The promotion of global citizenship often comes at the expense of local affiliations linked to coherent normative and functional dispositions. This produces what anthropologists call "identity alienation", whereby the individual finds himself possessing freedom of movement and choice but lacking the depth of belonging that the clan used to provide through its moral references and symbolic meanings.

Furthermore, globalisation has resulted in severe earthquakes in the system of social values, as "instrumental material values" have replaced the moral and symbolic values that once governed social relations. "The original version has disappeared beneath the rubble of digital images" (Baudrillard, 2008, pp. 12–15), meaning that the image of values is now subject to the pattern of display through social media, such as the hashtag, buzz, and trend, rather than through collective agreement. In the past, social status was acquired through the activation of values such as "generosity", "magnanimity", and "good neighborliness", which are solidaristic values par excellence, increasing both social capital and symbolic capital. Today, however, a "commodification" of social status has occurred, and the individual's social status has come to be measured solely by his economic capital and by the extent to which he keeps pace with patterns of global consumption and material affluence. Conspicuous consumption is not intended to satisfy needs but is rather a tool for consolidating social status. This transformation in values has also weakened traditional solidarity. The neighbor or relative is no longer part of the system of emotional supply and demand; rather, the individual has entered into a feverish competitive struggle in which the "ego" is privileged over "belonging". This has led to the emergence of phenomena such as social isolation and the decline of traditional institutions of social mediation, which are used to resolve disputes before they escalate.

Ultimately, the major epistemic challenge lies in how to manage these tensions between the criteria of authenticity and those of globalised contemporaneity. The sudden transition from societies of "collective conscience" to societies of "ego-centred conscience" has generated a state of identity schizophrenia, as stated earlier. Peoples have not completely abandoned their value-based heritage, yet they are no longer able to resist the dominance of globalising values. This scene has produced what may be called "hybrid identities", which attempt to

practise traditional solidarity on public social occasions in a predominantly "ritual" sense while practising "excessive individualism" in their professional and digital lives and in the greater part of their everyday existence. The absence of balance in this transformation threatens the social fabric with the loss of the "moral compass" that was once provided by the family, the local community, and the religious elite. This calls for a critical rereading of ways to recover deep human bonds in a world that is increasingly technologically connected and emotionally disconnected. Inevitably, as Malek Bennabi asserted, "social relations are corrupt when selves become inflated, making collective joint action difficult or impossible" (Bennabi, 2006, p. 64).

Nevertheless, certain models of balance between modernity and family bonds may appear in the emergence of what may be called "rooted modernity". Some societies, particularly in East Asia, have managed to adopt the technical and organisational mechanisms of globalisation without dismantling traditional "social capital", represented by family and clan formation. This stems from the fact that these societies are compatible with the thesis that identity is not merely heritage but a continuous construction; it is a process of communication and difference, not merely a wall behind which one takes shelter. From the perspective of functional anthropology, this may mean that these societies have adapted their traditional institutions to suit a changing global context. The clan is no longer an obstacle to development but has become a "logistical" support network that strengthens the individual's ability to compete in the global market. In the Japanese or South Korean model, during the early years of globalisation, the concept of "filial piety" and family loyalty moved from its narrow domestic framework to govern the employee's relationship with the institution in what is known as "institutional paternalism", whereby major companies are managed in the spirit of a single family, which preserved a high level of social solidarity, during that period, at the heart of a savage capitalist system (Ericsson, 2008, p. 13).

In alternative contexts, digital technology can be invested in strengthening family bonds rather than tearing them apart, as virtual communication platforms can be used as a means of directing "virtual relations" toward what prevents the individual from falling into the trap of "atomisation" driven by individualistic tendencies. The possibility of the success of this digital compensation shows that "cultural specificity" is not an isolating wall but would preferably function as a "filtering" apparatus, allowing the passage of modern practices that serve effectiveness and efficiency while preserving solidaristic values that provide psychological and social protection for individuals. This corresponds with the thesis of Denys Cuche, who considers that culture "is not a fixed essence, but a process of permanent construction, and acculturation does not mean the end of a culture, but its transformation" (Cuche, 2010, p. 78). I believe that a reconciliation of this kind may be easy and possible in cultures whose origins and branches are close, and should this occur, such a creative balance would create a human being who is "globalised" in his skills but "local" in his cultural affiliations. This offers a practical alternative to the idea of comprehensive cultural fusion, confirming that social stability in the age of globalisation is achieved not only by breaking with the past but also by reproducing the values of traditional solidarity in innovative contemporary forms.

5. Transient Digital Identity and the Manufacture of False Reality

The effects of cultural globalisation have moved from the superficial levels of the appearance of everyday life to the deep structure of cultural existence, where mental representations are reshaped through the semantic levels of language, as well as religious beliefs and rituals, and everything connected to the identity of people. This reflection can be analysed by tracing the penetration of the "global cultural pattern" into the local cultural fabric through the following levels:

First, the linguistic question is the primary target in the process of cultural globalisation, as we are witnessing what some linguists call "silent linguistic genocide". English, which is described as the language of science and technology and is also the language of consumption, is no longer merely a tool for learning and communication but has become a "cognitive framework" that imposes its concepts on speakers of mother tongues. The intermingling of foreign terms in everyday discourse is not merely a manifestation of modernity but also a structural displacement that leads to the erosion of linguistic memory linked to place, history, and the relationship with intangible heritage. "Globalisation has contributed significantly to the decline in the number of speakers of local languages, as foreign languages have increasingly come to dominate everyday communication and replace local languages in many areas of social life" (Lalombo, 2024, p. 734). This is because language is not merely an individual act of speech but a "reservoir of values"; when language weakens, the ability to express cultural identity weakens with it, and the individual becomes a consumer of ready-made concepts formulated in contexts alien to his cultural specificities.

With respect to customs and traditions, they have been transformed from rituals with spiritual and social dimensions and with symbolic meanings expressing the spirit of the group to folkloric "consumer" practices. This occurs within the processes of the "commodification of culture", which began at the start of the previous century, whereby customs are stripped of their historical context, which grants them their social roles and allows them to become products capable of being exported or displayed for tourism. For example, rituals associated with weddings or religious feasts, which once represented the peak of social solidarity, have become subject to the standards of "global fashion" and formal "protocols". This change is not superficial; rather, it is an emptying of custom of its value-based content, which once linked the individual to his group, and its transformation into a visual spectacle serving the impressionistic image of social media platforms. This is what Jean Baudrillard demonstrated when he stated: "In the contemporary digital world, the image itself is more influential than the thing it signifies... and thus what is required is no longer correspondence with real reality, but the production of copies that weave reality as a whole" (Baudrillard, 2008, p. 34).

The same applies to beliefs and existential ideas, as globalisation imposes what may be described as the "new universal religion", to which Auguste Comte referred in his positivist philosophy. This "religion" is based on material well-being and extreme scientistic tendencies, and the most recent practical steps seeking to consecrate it have been associated with what is called the "Abrahamic religion", through which the forces of cultural globalisation seek to replace the revealed religions with a new positivist beginning under the banner of humanism. This has created a conflict between "inherited beliefs", which offer

metaphysical and spiritual explanations of existence in its various forms, and the "culture of instrumental rationality", which abolishes everything sacred and elevates everything profane. This does not necessarily mean the disappearance of beliefs but rather their transformation into forms of "individual religiosity" or hybrid spiritualities that lack the institutional collective dimension. The danger lies in the emergence of a state of "moral wandering", in which the individual loses his innate compass in distinguishing between right and wrong, and his reference becomes the "trend" or the "liquid" ethical standards promoted by globalisation. In the early 1990s, Benjamin Barber discussed how globalisation imposes a unified culture through markets, technology, and media to the extent that this culture challenges local religious and cultural values and traditions and subjects them to intense pressure towards change or disappearance, thereby creating a conflict between global homogenisation and attachment to religious and cultural identity (Barber, 1995, p. 56).

Hence, the change in the cultural structure has led to the emergence of what is known as "one-dimensional man", in Herbert Marcuse's sense: the human being who possesses a unified technical language, similar consumer habits, and beliefs emptied of their historical depth and spiritual meaning, to the extent that "people recognise themselves in their commodities, and find their soul in their automobiles ..." (Herbert, 1988, p. 39). Resistance to this dissolution is certainly not achieved through complete closure but through critical awareness that restores the role of language and good and serious traditions with creative social functions as tools of "cultural resistance" and not merely as relics of the past, to ensure the continuity of human diversity, which represents the true richness of human civilisation, so that we may avoid the danger warned of by Claude Lévi-Strauss when he said: "the only danger is that we may become less different" (Lévi-Strauss, 1987, p. 85).

Digitisation and artificial intelligence also act as "technological accelerators" that move transformations in the cultural structure from the stage of slow influence to that of violent radical change. These tools go beyond being mere media for transmitting culture and becoming themselves producers of culture. Today, "algorithms" operate as a directive force that reshapes public taste and intellectual representations through what is known as "echo chambers". They not only disseminate globalised cultural patterns but also reinforce consumer values through hyperpersonalisation, which fragments the shared collective cultural sphere in favour of isolated individual "bubbles". Generative artificial intelligence, with its capacity to produce texts, arts, and images that are similar in their aesthetic essence, consecrates a form of "aesthetic modelling" that overwhelms local artistic specificities, leading to the trivialisation of creative expression, making it superficial, banal, and yet acceptable, before stripping it of its anthropological context linked to the lived experience of people.

Moreover, artificial intelligence contributes to deepening "digital linguistic dependency". Since large language models are trained primarily on massive amounts of data drawn from the languages of the unipolar center, English in particular, they reproduce their cultural load, ethical values, and logical assumptions when used in other languages. This leads to what may be called "susceptibility to digital intellectual colonisation", whereby the user in local cultures is forced to adapt his speech and mode of thinking to fit the logic and content of the

"globalised" machine. This accelerates the erosion of authentic linguistic habits and their symbolic representations. The danger of this stage lies in the fact that the sacred and the symbolic in local culture are now penetrated not through direct cultural invasion but through everyday technical tools that appear outwardly neutral, while carrying within them cultural "genes" that reengineer human identity to become more compatible with a unified digital world, stripped of cultural and sometimes even innate roots.

6. The Commodification of Existence and the Power of Consumerism

The focus here shifts from social structures and cultural characteristics to the economic organisation that represents, according to the Marxist proposition, the infrastructure of globalisation. The human being has been reshaped from a naturally social being, as described by Ibn Khaldun, into a "consumer being by habituation", whose dispositions have been adapted to respond to the requirements of the globalisation of consumption. From the perspective of the anthropology of the economy, consumption is no longer merely a means of satisfying basic biological needs; rather, it has acquired a semiotic and symbolic function that grants the individual his identity and status within the global community formed around the act of consumption. Economic globalisation, supported by digital media, has succeeded in implanting "instrumental reason" in place of the "wise reason" that once viewed the world of things with rationality and sound management. The believing Muslim sees things as blessings for which gratitude is due; the human being lives by them and does not live for them. However, these transformations have made the individual relate to his or her environment and to himself or herself through a purely material mediator. At that point, "luxuries" are elevated into "necessities" without which social existence cannot stand, creating a state of chronic "consumer hunger" that cannot be satisfied. This is because "globalisation has made consumption a logical basis of the contemporary economy, such that it moves beyond meeting basic needs to satisfying 'designed desires', thereby making consumer culture an ideological act dominant at the global level" (Culture-Ideology of Consumerism).

Modern technologies, specifically "algorithms of seduction", play a decisive role in deepening and standardising this materialistic tendency. Through the analysis of big data, major corporations have been able to penetrate the "collective unconscious" and direct human desires toward the glittering manifestations of life promoted by the culture of "influencers" across social media platforms. This mode of continuous visual display has created what the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman calls "liquid modernity", in which the individual loses psychological stability and remains in a constant pursuit of the latest "trends" for fear of losing his "virtual capital" and "virtual status". Social media now sell not only a product but also a globalised "lifestyle", uprooting the individual from his local reality, which may have been self-sufficient or balanced in consumption, and casting him into the labyrinths of economic debt as he chases false luxuries, believing that by acquiring them, he has achieved self-esteem.

Moreover, modern technology has transformed the very concept of "value". In traditional societies, the value of an object is associated with long-term use, durability, and even *barakah*, which means introducing invisible dimensions, incomprehensible to instrumental

reason, into the material being used. In the present age, however, value has become linked to "conspicuous consumption", which makes us consume for others before ourselves. Today, artificial intelligence has supported this tendency through "predictive marketing", which anticipates human desire and dictates what one must acquire to be "modern". This fusion of matter and technology has produced an individual from whom the symbolic meaning associated with the material dimension of the object is absent, replacing it with the accumulation or piling up of things, according to Bennabi's concept. This has weakened the spirit of asceticism and contentment, which once constituted a safety valve in the culture of earlier Islamic societies and through which they achieved their food security alongside similar values. This "instrumental human being" is the inevitable result of the policies of multinational corporations that sought to turn the world into a vast market, in which the victim is the spiritual and moral specificity of the human being and whose driving force is continuous technological progress, preventing the mind from pausing and reflecting on the consequences of this descent into absolute materialism. There is no doubt that "material civilisation inevitably develops towards decline and collapse" (Malek, 2002, p. 142).

Similarly, the transformation of "hyperconsumption" from a mere economic behavior into a "culture of the age" has led to deep fractures in social hierarchy, which in turn have produced sharp class differences and crises of identity. We find that the "commodification of identity" has become the new criterion of belonging. The individual no longer defines himself through his intellectual affiliation or cultural roots but through the "brands" and material symbols he consumes. This conditioned association between "consumption" and "self-worth" has created an acute psychological crisis among individuals, who find themselves in a permanent conflict between the impulses of their material desires and their limited economic reality, which does not provide even the minimum necessities of existence. This leads to a state of "double alienation", i.e., alienation from local culture, which appears to be "backwards" or "poor", and alienation from the globalised world, whose accelerating requirements they are unable to meet.

In the same context, the globalisation of consumption has redrawn the map of social inequality on sharper and clearer foundations in what the sociologist Thorstein Veblen calls "class emulation". Under the pressure of social media content, which displays the details of the daily lives of wealthy and influential people around the clock, the middle and poor classes engage in conspicuous consumption that exceeds their financial capacities through loans and debts in an attempt to bridge the symbolic gap with the upper classes. This tendency toward emulation has led not only to the material impoverishment of these classes but also to the erosion of solidarity among social groups. Instead of cooperating to improve collective living conditions, individuals have come to compete individually for the possession of symbols of "luxury" to prove their social worth. This has reinforced the disintegration of the social fabric and the emergence of values of selfishness and materialism, as well as psychological ailments such as jealousy and envy.

This new consumer system has also produced a new division that goes beyond the material criterion to include groups that control digital knowledge. Modern technology and advanced artificial intelligence reinforce the authority of this "technical elite", which controls the

algorithms of consumption, in contrast to broad segments of society that have turned to consumption through online shopping and to consumption through the use of their digital technical skills. At that point, their data and desires are exploited to increase the profits of transcontinental corporations. This inequality has created a form of "new feudalism", whereby the major powers dictate to us what we desire and what we buy, as well as how we feel and what we wish for. The final result of this trajectory is fragile societies whose members suffer from constant anxiety resulting from their inability to match global standards of life. "Consumption is no longer concerned with things in themselves, but with the signs they carry" (Baudrillard, 1995, p. 47). This has opened the door to social disturbances resulting from "relative deprivation", whereby the individual feels poor not because he lacks basic resources but because he lacks the luxuries that have become a "coercive standard" of human dignity in the age of globalisation.

Confronting the challenges of materialistic tendencies requires societal forces and authentic cultural elites to rebuild a "culture of sufficiency" to restore human control over desires and appetites as a mode of resistance capable of breaking the cycle of dependency on the global consumer economy. This may be achieved by redefining the meanings of concepts related to the sphere of consumption and by focusing on the depth of their human bonds and their balance with sound beliefs. This strategy may also be founded on reviving the system of values that considers "contentment" an inexhaustible capital embodied in everyday practices. An individual who is satisfied with "sufficiency" and who ceases to engage in "extravagance" is an individual who escapes the grip of algorithms that feed on his or her consumer anxiety. Societies can activate this by strengthening what sociologists call "conscious consumption" and disseminating a culture of rationalised consumption, a pattern that privileges the "use value" of things over their "conspicuous value". Building this culture requires an educational and institutional effort that restores consideration to asceticism in its religious and spiritual dimensions as a manifestation of intellectual refinement, not as a sign of poverty. This would reduce the intensity of class tension and alleviate the "status anxiety" that exhausts the psychological energies of contemporary societies.

In addition, modern technologies can be harnessed to support the "sharing economy" and recycling applications, which transform society from a "consumer herd" into a "solidaristic society". Redisseminating an education of sufficiency also requires the recovery of public spaces from the dominance of commercial advertising and their replacement with social and cultural activities that restore to the individual a sense of belonging to the group, the clan, the family, the neighbourhood, or the nation, rather than belonging to this or that brand. Societies are thereby transformed from "open markets" into "living entities" that possess their own compass in determining their needs. This ultimately leads to liberating identity from the constraint of matter and returning it to the sphere of authentic symbolic and spiritual values.

7. Conceptual Fluidity and the Ambiguity of the Social Imaginary

In its contemporary digital manifestation, globalisation moves from the stage of controlling the material sphere to the stage of dominating the immaterial sphere and even penetrating the depth of the mental structure to seize the "imaginary". The cybernetic environment has

sought to fuse social and cultural representations and reshape them according to the requirements of production companies through the use of algorithms. We are not merely facing a change in means; rather, we are confronted with a new phenomenon that must be studied within the "cognitive sciences". The dominance of digital content has led to the replacement of objective truth with "emotional truth". This is precisely what the system of mediocrity described by the Canadian philosopher Alain Deneault does when he states: "Mediocrity encourages us in every possible way to doze rather than think, to view what is unacceptable as inevitable, and what is detestable as necessary: it turns us into fools" (Deneault, 2020, p. 85). The criterion is no only the truthfulness of information or its historical and human depth but also its capacity for "circulation" and for provoking instantaneous interaction. This has transformed thought from a critical contemplative movement into an instinctive response to visual and auditory stimuli carefully designed to manipulate perception.

This falsification reaches its peak in what the anthropologist Jean Baudrillard calls "hyperreality", where symbols become detached from their original referents and acquire an independent life that surpasses reality. Digital content does not convey an image of reality; rather, it creates an "alternative reality" that imposes itself as the sole criterion of modernity and success. This detachment leads to "conceptual amorphousness": freedom becomes synonymous with moral fluidity, and happiness is transformed into a "spectacle" displayed to followers and evaluated by the number of likes. In this globalised age, "the masses are no longer the object of representation but have become a space for the absorption of all messages, where meaning dissolves in an excess of information" (Baudrillard, 2008, p. 35). This systematic falsehood does not merely mislead the individual in the present; its effect extends to tampering with the "collective memory" of people, which is the reservoir of cultural specificity, and, beyond that, to drawing the features of their future stripped of every moral and spiritual value.

The effect of this deception on collective memory assumes a destructive character. From an anthropological perspective, memory is the "organising thread" of the identity of the group. When modern technologies, such as generative artificial intelligence, intervene to falsify events or reinterpret history from a "globalist" perspective, they create an epistemic rupture between generations. Authentic historical references are replaced by artificial, superficial, and trivial references that serve the dominant cultural centrality. The danger here lies in the fact that collective memory is no longer transmitted through stories, rituals, and living practices but is instead drawn from "digital archives" controlled by biased algorithms. This makes people vulnerable to losing their historical compass and falling into the embrace of a stereotypical "global identity" without roots in the past and without bridges to the future.

For this reason, digital deception does not target the falsification of a passing piece of information; rather, it targets the very "structure of consciousness", transforming collective memory from a reservoir of resistance and continuity into an exposed space for cultural reengineering. Confronting this decline requires elite vigilance that restores consideration to authentic references and deconstructs the mechanisms of technical falsehood to regain sovereignty over the imaginary, memory, and sound belief before they dissolve into the

swamp of digital globalisation. At that point, the "cultural sovereignty" of authentic societies is placed at stake, since sovereignty is no longer measured only by geographical borders and historical reference but by the extent to which a society is able to protect the social and cultural imaginary of its members and fortify its value system against digital penetration. It must be noted that systematic digital falsification operates as a smooth tool that carves meaning into the collective unconscious, dissolving referential identities and replacing them with hybrid identities. This turns the nation into a mere cultural echo of civilisational centres that are technologically dominant.

8. Strategies for Protecting Civilisational Specificity

What distinguishes this historical stage is not only the scale of transformation but also the nature of its awareness. Muslim society must become more conscious of the nature of change and more capable of questioning itself. From this standpoint emerges the need for an elite capable of constructing scientific knowledge from within its own cultural context. The future will lie neither in adopting ready-made civilisational models nor in withdrawing into the past but in producing new forms of modernity reconciled with their roots and capable of participating in the making of meaning with global extension on the basis of their civilisational specificity.

Thus, the real challenge is linked to the critical awareness that accompanies this openness. The problem does not lie in interacting with the world but in the absence of a conceptual apparatus capable of absorbing concepts produced in different contexts and understanding their meanings without identifying them. When concepts are imported without semantic questioning, they become part of the mechanism of reproducing intellectual hegemony and existential domination. However, when they are deconstructed and reformulated in light of the local cultural context, they become a driving force for renewal and creativity. At that point, the essential role of the humanities and social sciences becomes apparent in deconstructing global discourse and revealing the implicit assumptions it conceals concerning the human being, knowledge, and value.

As previously indicated, cultural specificities have been subjected to deep structural and functional dismantling through the use of digital deception, by stripping every cultural feature or social construction of its symbolic significance, and by manipulating the images and biographies of religious symbols and figures of historical struggle. This has led to a loss of confidence in the references that constitute the pillar of authentic identities. Common consensus has also been weakened, and imaginary conflicts have been created within the same society through "polarising algorithms", which has weakened the internal cultural structure of societies and rendered our societies incapable of uniting behind a particular and shared civilisational project. This weakening also occurs at the "imaginary" level, when major concepts such as justice, equality, beauty, truth, and success are formulated in external digital laboratories and imposed through digital promotion. This has deprived particular cultures of their ability to produce their own abstract knowledge, since "each group has an identity that corresponds to its social definition" (Cuche, 2010, p. 149). Consequently, such

cultures become subordinate to virtual cultural sovereignty that dictates to them what to think, how to think, and how to feel.

Hence, confronting this accelerating globalising tide requires the adoption of strategies that move beyond isolation and closure toward conscious acculturation and the practice of cultural selection, beginning with the restoration of self-confidence that collapsed at the moments of historical fracture before the movement of colonial expansion, as indicated at the beginning of our article, and the overcoming of all feelings of fascination with the West and its material civilisation. Thereafter, generations must be raised in the spirit of "methodical doubt" and critical sensibility toward everything digital that comes from unknown, and even known, sources by posing a set of methodological questions: Who produced this content? To which cultural context does it belong? What are the hidden value-based objectives behind this "spectacle"? The goal is to transform the recipient from a passive consumer of globalised digital content into a vigilant critic who understands that the internet is not a neutral space but an arena of conflict over meaning. This education enables the implantation of the apparatus of reflex actions, as Malek Bennabi stated, which allows the individual to distinguish the authentic from the intrusive and the real from the false and to contribute to the construction of a solid value system.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, we arrive at the view that the dialectic of cultural globalisation and cultural specificity is not merely a passing intellectual debate but a struggle to prove existence and to preserve the law of cultural difference on the face of the earth. It unfolds in the depth of the social structures and mental representations of contemporary human beings. While globalisation, through its digital tools and consumer economy, seeks to dissolve individuals into the crucible of the one-dimensional human being directed by "instrumental" reason detached from the essence of his existence, cultural specificity, with its solidaristic values, authentic language, and collective memory, remains the final guarantee for protecting cultural diversity from disappearance. The challenge facing our societies today does not lie in rejecting technology or closing themselves behind the walls of the past but in creating an "alternative modernity" that combines the technical efficiency of the age with the symbolic meanings of existence, eliminates susceptibility to cultural and symbolic colonisation, and expands the concept of sovereignty to include the independence of consciousness and memory from the alienation of false imitation.

At the end of this modest article, we recall Erich Fromm's statement in his book *To Have or to Be?* as a final compass for this discussion, when he says, "The difference between having and being is the difference between a material society in which the human being is reified, and a human society in which the individual finds his meaning in existence and connection with others, not in the possession of things" (Erich, 2010, p. 33). Restoring being and essence in the face of the tyranny of possession is the only way to ensure that culture remains a living human act that moves society from the state of nature to the state of civilisation rather than merely a commodity in a global market that speaks only the language of numbers.

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