

NEW MEDIA AND IDENTITY CRISES: A CHALLENGE OF CULTURAL HOMOGENIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Due to the supply of modern networks considerable modifications are now bringing new trends to media, consumer interaction and knowledge. New media and modern technology leads towards better infrastructure, reordering factual information which is followed by updated global networks and free flow of international communication. So the current paper is intended to serve two objectives: 1) review the globalization of media and 2) how the global media affect the national cultures in different ways. The main focus of the study is to understand the basic concept of the process of globalization with all of its challenges for cultural homogenization and will further indicate that uniqueness of identity does get affected both by new media and globalization. Further this paper has viewed the relationship between globalization and cultural identity crisis underlying assumption that globalization is manifested in the intercultural penetration Processes which have substantial effects on the cultural identities. Moreover the paper reveals that effects of globalization and new media has influenced the younger youth as compared to the older youth, as result of that the uniqueness of identity is transformed in to one global identity and changes in the cultural patterns.

Keywords: Cultural Homogenization, Globalization, New Media, Cultural Identity

INTRODUCTION

Today world is evolving with new principles and guidelines and changes have occurred in the current ideas and conceptions related to economic, political and cultural philosophies. Due to these changes human beings are continuously thinking about the different characteristics of mankind nature. Moreover these changes have created difficulties which is significantly related to employment, business, impartiality, and harmony. The beginning of twenty-first century gave rise to the most important concept of constructing the world in the form of one common culture that is globalization. Globalization has significant effects on almost every individual of the society because the concept of globalization is extended among all parts of the world no matter its education, health, business and technology.

The current paper has viewed the researches of various scholars and authors on the construction of different identities due to the advent of new media. Moreover, the mentioned researches highlight the concept of globalization which in turns reflects different challenges to cultural homogenization. The main objective of this paper is to highlight that how media has developed new ways of structuring and assimilating information, which further affects the uniqueness of one's identity and leads toward global culture. As globalization is considered as main the cause of change in the national and cultural identities. Moreover Ina and Rosaldo (2002) defines globalization as the combination of information and beliefs through which peoples identity is constructed and developed, and it also builds up relationship among different cultural and social groups.

Arnett (2006) and Dubow et al., (2006) believes that in current years media has played a substantial and rising place in the commercial environment of manufacturing society. Moreover media

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has developed a new world of communication and technology that goes beyond the outdated limitations of physical environment and time. Media has explored new ways for socialization, fashion, entertainment, knowledge, interaction processes, different day to day routines and most importantly the creation of identity. Besozzi (2006) and Pattaro (2007) stated that the development of new media has changed the consumption patterns of the consumers thus transforming the opportunities and methods for accessing information about information communication and technology.

New media and communication technologies

Most current research gives attention to the tangible usage of internet and to the way interactive technologies are incorporated in the life of people. many international research projects have explored the connection between the age groups and media e.g. many researches have highlighted the way youth use the new media to shape up their identity at the personal and group level and moreover how they engage in new styles of communication by using the new media (Livingstone et al., 2011, Stella, Morcellini & Lalli, 2008; Riva, 2012).

Most of these studies have focused the youth and media. But still the gap exist gap in the literature that need to be filled by presenting explanatory frameworks on how the technology and social communication is effecting everyday life of the commoner with special focus on the role of new media and internet (Dorman, 2000). Since pervious researches have focused on the old media from the collective view point but currently the debate in sociology is highly dominated by the new media and its effect on the individuals (Morcellini, 2002).

Identity versus new media

Researchers from multidisciplinary fields have given considerable attention to the concept of identity development (Cote & Levine, 2002; Erikson, 1965, Waterman, 1992, Martin & Nakayama, 1997; Katz, 1995) but current stream of research is taking into account use of internet and its influence on identity development.

Buckingham (2008) identified five ways to study identity. Among these five third approach offers explanation for social identity as “identification” which argues that individual’s understanding of self is related to the group. In this approach self-presentation and impression management has a significant role. These approaches can be implied to the adolescent and their use of media especially how they construct their identity on the online media.

Adolescence and teenagers are involved in intricate procedures of creating one’s own identity so that they see their presence in the external environment and that is located primarily among friends, colleges and merely family. It is evident that new media is not only changing the culture of the society, but it has increased our linkage with internet, whose dominance is not only to access information and knowledge, but most significantly, the development of one’s own personality

Role of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Globalization in Formation of Cultural Identity

Role of information technology is quite evident in the determination of identity (Castells 1997; Turkle, 1997; Poster, 2001). Technology developed in the other country can have tremendous role in the lives of the people and culture of society of another country. In this role of media is very significant in this regard since it develop awareness about the features of new technology introduced and persuade common man to adopt such technologies. Consumers on the other hand don’t do much research and are not very concern about the social and cultural repercussions of the technology that they are using. They don’t think much about the way it is produced and distributed. So it can be argued that technological innovation do influence the social identity and since technology can communicate information that represent various social and cultural aspects.

Identities are result of power play and differences. They can be built both ways either negatively as the elimination and forgetting or positively since it leads to variety, heterogeneity and hybridity suggesting that they are relational to other identities. Identity formation is a continuous process of differentiating the identities from each other through the various representation tools (Hall, 1996; Bhabha 1996; Gilroy, 1997).

Role of Internet in the development of Self-Identity of youth

Adams and Ryan (2000) has examined the development of uniqueness of identity by raising questions those created from adapted structure of self-character. Moreover four aspects of developing unique identity are identity development, self-contemplation and self-esteem or faithfulness and escaping strength for making decision. This study inspects that the use of internet affects the creation of unique

identity and it was examined with sample size of 10 students. And the age of students was between 12 to 18. Results were taken by taking in depth interviews of public and private students. After taking interviews it was deduced that majority student's oftenly use the instant messenger and they had experience of minimum one year. The results of study clearly indicates that the use of internet affects the above mentioned aspects.

Ong (1982) indicated that when media changes it upsets the inner state of the consumer. McLuhan (1964) stated that media regulates the structure and limitation of social interaction, as social interaction is the most fundamental element in mental expansion. McKenna (1999) stresses on the practices of social media interaction which particularly includes one to one interaction in the text actually as it leads to the most significant and interesting area of study for the construction of self-identity.

McKenna and Bargh (1999) identified that confession of spirits and emotion less communications are sturdy interpreters of familiarity in contrast with revealing basic facts about the personal identity, due to the advent of internet two different aspects aroused i.e. behavior related to group and behavior related to oneself. New media has changed the concept of identity as identity represents self-idealism. As a result the audience of new media gain more recognition and approval. This is done to gain rewards or to claim an identity for oneself. Social motivators for usage list a need to reveal in order to increase closeness.

In the modern world as noticed by some academicians use of computers have influenced the personalities of the growing kids. It is noticed that kids who use computers tend to peruse dual lives; in one life they see themselves submissive and reliant but in other world they find themselves to be confident and enjoying. (Bagnall, 2000). Riva and Galimberti (1998) described same behavioral inconsistencies that people can experience as a result of telepresence on the internet.

Evolving Cultural Identity in the Global World

Globalization has evolved the way world was shaped few years ago; now people are more willing to go beyond national and regional boundaries and constitute new multinational communities. People from corporate world, media and youth are more open to such multinational interactions. But at the same time it is also noticed that people from the similar cultures living in close proximity tend to form small national communities and this phenomena is quiet noticeable in the communist countries. People try to protect their cultural identities as this distinguish them from each other and it was especially observed after the fall of Soviet Union when many groups tried to restore their cultural identities. So it can be argued that globalization and localization are the parts of same process. Even though the dissimilarities exist due to different national cultural orientation of individuals but still they can participate in and benefit from the extended global context (Neumann, 2009).

Protecting Cultural Identity

Gerger (2000) stated that protecting cultural identity is challenging as it is a complex process having dual effects. On one hand it is anticipated that globalization can result in cultural homogenization meaning that the world will have single culture but on the other hand if the individuals and societies try to protect their respective cultures it can result in the cultural and psychological dissolution

Cultural homogenization

Gripsrud (1995) view that in the past few years researchers and academicians have given considerable attention to the concept of cultural homogenization. Different terms are used to define the concept out of which most considerable are cultural imperialism and Americanization. Cultural homogenization is also debated on other different forums such as electronic, print and social media. Since cultural homogenization is closely associated with globalization and the phenomena of globalization according to Toby Miller became popular because it permits "incoherent, multi-lateral forms and directions of power, celebrating them as market flexibilities or sites of popular resistance, depending on who is speaking".

Cultural-Identity crisis

Muzaffar (2002) stated that the concept of globalization has influenced beliefs, Aesthetics, religion, and lifestyle of people. Moreover factors like global economy, individual's concept of true and false, uniqueness and diversity, peoples association with the external environment, and the importance of life are affected and degraded by unnecessary expansion of access, media for communication, global economy and new international business trends. Globalization has also affect the mode communication and culture of world as a result of that cultural heritage has disappeared. Globalization leads to inclusive

commercialism, thus creating one common culture. The homogenization of culture has changed native culture to dominant culture. However there are others who are mentioned as international interventionist. Held (2000) was of the view that they think globalization has not only avoidable growth but it is increasing with great momentum, it is due to international communication and weak significance of local borders. Moreover they think that the procedures, philosophies and local economies will assimilate in to vast international system and that indigenous and local authority will decrease in favor of common international culture and economy

Agarwal (1992) stated that from the above mentioned viewpoint that identities formed by cultures have been described as the target of standardized western culture for consumers. It has been evident from the credible facts that politics and economy of the world is the result of past consequences which defines the mixture of various reasons for global migration and indigenous schemes which in turns forms various societal systems for marketing and business. 'Indigenous army of influence, honor, and possessions relationships that antedate colonialism'.

CONCLUSION

Gil (2009) stated that strong cultural and local identity has recurrently affected by the expansion of globalization. Few scholars were of the view that the increased access of globalization is leading towards the sameness of unique identities, by promoting every single element of uniqueness. Though the processes of globalization have the tendency to remove all the local and national boundaries, as a result of that new cultural patterns have introduced across the globe. Moreover repetitiveness in the cultural patterns has shattered the uniqueness of identities, cultural discrimination disappeared and objectivity is lost. Few researches reveal that age group create differences in terms of perceiving thoughts and philosophies. Further it was observed that youth particularly the young took all thoughts and philosophies for granted whereas the older youth get less affected by globalization. Effects of globalization is very significant as it creates huge difference. So it is finally concluded that globalization has strong effects to the development of unique identity which leads to the sameness of cultural norms, values, beliefs and traditions etc.

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