



## CULTURAL-GLOBALIZATION AND ITS EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL IMPACT ON MUSLIM MARRIAGE

Mohammed Farid Ali al-Fijawi<sup>(1)</sup>, Sayid Sikandar Hanif<sup>(2)</sup> & Mek Wok Mahmud<sup>(3)</sup>

### Abstract:

Cultural globalization as an integral part of wholesale transformation of societies along the patterns set by the domineering and hegemonic civilization of our time that has all the needed tools to import and transplant its own life styles and patterns of behaviors to people of other cultures. In this process, Muslim concept of marriage and family feels the effects the most as it is a personal and sensitive domain which even European colonialists avoided touching. The irony in globalizing the hegemonic pattern of marriage, however, is that it comes in the name of modernizing and keeping pace with economic and technological progresses, thus surreptitiously seeping into Muslim minds and psyche. In this paper, we make a disclosure of the hidden face of cultural globalization in the cases of marriage ceremony and spousal roles which our Muslims need to rethink.

**Keywords:** Cultural Globalization, Cost of Marriage Ceremony, Marriage, Spousal Roles.

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(1) Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh, KIRKHS, International Islamic University Malaysia.

e-mail: Abumariyah@iium.edu.my

(2) Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh, KIRKHS, International Islamic University Malaysia.

e-mail: sayedsikandar@iium.edu.my

(3) Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh, KIRKHS, International Islamic University Malaysia.

e-mail: mekwok@iium.edu.my





## العولمة وتأثيرها الخارجي والداخلي على زواج المسلمين

د. محمد فريد علي، و د. سيد اسكندر حنيف، و د. ميك وك محمود

**المستخلص:** العولمة الثقافية جزء لا يتجزأ من التحول الشامل للمجتمعات بناءً على الأنماط التي وضعتها الحضارة السائدة والمهيمنة في عصرنا حيث تمتلك هذه الحضارة كل الأدوات اللازمة لتصدير وزرع أنماط الحياة والسلوكيات الخاصة بها على الثقافات الأخرى. وفي خضم هذه العملية، يتعرض مفهوم الزواج والأسرة بين المسلمين لتغيرات كبيرة على الرغم من كونه مجالاً شخصياً وحساساً لم يتعرض له أحد من قبل. يكمن خطر عولمة مفهوم الزواج والأسرة في تسرب العولمة بلباس التحديث ومواكبة التقدم الاقتصادي والتكنولوجي، وبالتالي فهي تتسرب خفية إلى مجتمعات المسلمين وعقولهم. يحاول هذا البحث كشف اللثام عن الوجه الخفي للعولمة الثقافية في قضايا هامة تتعلق بأدوار الزوجين وحفلات الزفاف، وهي من القضايا التي يجب إعادة النظر فيها من قبل المسلمين في ماليزيا.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** العولمة الثقافية، مصارف حفل الزفاف، النكاح، أدوار الزوجين.

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## INTRODUCTION

“Globalization” is no longer a strange phenomenon in the era we are living. The territorial borders are just like leaking dams, which can no longer block the forceful flow of multidimensional global effects from rushing into local communities and societies. It gives impact to the dimensions of social life influencing local economy; local culture and local people to behave in certain ways. John Feffer’s definition of globalization bolsters the ongoing:

Globalization is a Nike trainer on every foot, Golden Arch in every town, a Madonna on every magazine cover, a sweatshop in every alley, a coke on every table, a big dam on every river, a cloud of pollution on every landscape, and structural adjustment in the speech of every government leader. Globalization is an assembly line circling the world, generating ever more 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) and widening the gap between rich and poor. Globalization is the same answer to multitude of problems: Let the market decide. Globalization is TINA (There is no alternative), which Margaret Thatcher declared victorious after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe<sup>(1)</sup>.

The target to which the globalization process is stretching its hands is to pull everyone under one umbrella culture and values, irrespective to which origin or to where one belongs to. The call to cultural uniformity, global ethics, global village, society with no differences and one legal system is self-explanatory. In other words the globalization is in process of converting the whole world to a monoculture society from multicultural societies. This process gives rise to questions such as “whose hands are behind this process?” and “whose values, norms, institutions and practice will dominate the worldwide cultural dimensions?”

(1) John Feffer, *Living in Hope: People Challenging Globalization* (London: American Friends Services Committee, 2002).





Answers to these questions will be answered through time, but more crucial is to identify the effects the process of mono-culturalization or cultural globalization imparts to other cultures and societies. It takes centuries for each society and culture to come into shape. A sudden change will either have positive or negative impact. The nature of the culture and the society will decide the type of impact on a people. Impacts that will either result to complete destruction or impacts that will open the spectrum of opportunities or both. Having said this, cultural globalization will have impacts on Muslims and their cultures. In their case, the impact can be graver because in Islamic civilization culture is considered to be a byproduct of the religion (*dĒn*). In Islam, culture reflects the holistic teachings connecting the dots between the injunctions of the Qur'an and Prophetic Tradition (*Sunnah*) and the way of life. On the contrary, civilizations which believe religion to be only a byproduct of their culture will not have problems of clash between culture and religion. In case of Islam, Muslims will have to face the challenge of those cultural globalization which are pruned to negate and erode the Islamic institutions, values, and norms Islam developed through time.

Since Islam is a dynamic Religion (*din*), the Muslims are not expected to take a passive stance against the challenges inflicted by cultural globalization. Islam has taught them the creative application of *ijtihĒd* to fend for solutions. *Ijtihad* is the built-in mechanism in Islam that ensures harmonization of the new cultures influenced by globalization with the dictates of Islam. Muslims through time develop cultures to realize the Islamic traditions such as marriage ceremony, celebration of the two *eids*, *aqiqah* of the new born, circumcision, sale contracts, and many others. The Islamic cultures for these Islamic traditions are wheels without which the latter cannot maneuver. Similarly, the Islamic cultures are designed in a manner that they should not oppose other dictates of Islam. For instance, the Islamic culture in relation to marriage ceremony not only assures the smooth realization of the *nikah* contract and its particulars prescribed by the *Shari'ah*, but also assures not to oppose other Islamic dictates such as "*kulu wa-shrabu wa la tusrifu* (eat and drink, but do not be extravagant," "*inna al-mubadhahirina kanu ikhwan al-shayatin* (the wasteful are the

brothers of Satan),” intermingling of opposite sex, and actions that will oppose the very nature of the *nikah* contract.

By this, we can deliberate a bench mark to evaluate the impacts influenced by the cultural globalization. If the impacts on the Islamic cultures do not allow the smooth realization of an Islamic dictate or allows the realization but opposes other teachings concomitantly, then such impact will be considered negative and destructive. In this case the Muslims can express this situation as “challenges of globalization in Islam.” If the impacts guaranty advance form of realization without opposing other directives, then the Muslims can express this situation as “opportunities of globalization in Islam.”

When cultural-globalization makes an impact through influencing the social life of a society, it comes into direct contact with the basic unit of the society, the family institution. The impact demands changes in the social environment because of which the family unit is forced to ‘reinvent’ its ways of relating and coping in that environment<sup>(1)</sup>. Such reinventing is necessary because previous social environment was different, which a society and their forebears used to cope up with. The unit of family plays the role in explaining the members and societies the method of coping, which generally means parents explaining to children<sup>(2)</sup>. So the reinvention of a generation in order to cope up with the new globalized social environment will be either opposing the directives of Islam or will be in concordance with it. This paper discusses some of the impacts of cultural globalization on the family institution particularly marriage ceremony. This is discussed after outlining the importance of marriage in Islam.

(1) Robert N. Rapoport, *Families, Children and the Quest for a Global Ethic* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1997), pp. 46.

(2) Conveying of coping methods is not always easy. Especially when the new generation growing in a social environment different from their parents absorbs new influences, skills, and methods their parents were not exposed to. This is one of the factors resulting to generation gap.



## WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

A marriage is a legally recognized union between a man and a woman in which they are united sexually; cooperate economically; and may give birth to, adopt, or rear children. The union is assumed to be permanent (although in reality it may be dissolved by separation or divorce)<sup>(1)</sup>. From Islamic perspective, marriage is a wedlock, is a contact in which, it is lawful for each of the two married to enjoy each other's companionship<sup>(2)</sup>. The marriage is legalized by the verse stated in the Qur'an:

And marry those among you who are single, and those who are pious among you, your male slaves and your female slaves; if there are needy, Allah will make them free from want out of His Grace; and Allah is ample- Giving, knowing and let those who cannot find a match keep chaste until Allah makes them free from want out of His Grace"<sup>(3)</sup>.

## IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE IN ISLAM

Institution of marriage in Islam is a religious duty, moral safeguard as well as a social necessity<sup>(4)</sup>. Marriage is considered one half of the religion. Al-Bayhaqi reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "when the slave of Allah marries, he has completed half of the religion. He should fear Allah for the remaining half of the religion." The reward for marriage is similar to building a masjid<sup>(5)</sup>. Its importance can be well perceived when looking at the role of family institution in a society. Family is the basic unit of a society, which came into existence with the creation of man. Men through experiments sometimes fail and sometimes succeed and produce other

(1) Bryan Strong and Theodore F. Cohen, *The Marriage and Family Experience Intimate Relationship in a Changing Society* (Belmont, USA: Wadsworth Thomson Learning, 8th Edition, 2001), p. 15.

(2) *Family Management and Parenting CCLS 2052*, (CCAC, IIUM), p. 5.

(3) Al-Nur: 32.

(4) Hammudah 'Abd al-'Ati, *The Family structure in Islam* (America: American Trust Publication, 1977), pp. 52.

(5) Mustafa Haji Daud, *Perkahwinan Menurut Islam* (Cheras, Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications and Distributors Sdn. Bhd., v. 2, 1993), p. 19.

institutions. The case of family institution is the other way round. It produces humans and all their tools of veneration<sup>(1)</sup>. Almighty Allah in the Chapter The Women (al-Nisa) in the Qur'an stated:

O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, Who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women; - Reverence God, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you): for God ever watches over you<sup>(2)</sup>.

Such divinely inspired institution originates through marriage. Besides establishing family institution, marriage is the solution to social diseases humans currently are addicted to. These moral decadence, has crippled and un-stabilized some societies. To have a stable society requires stabilized units. Marriage is the remedy to stabilize an individual. Al-Mighty Allah said:

And among His signs is this that he created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect<sup>(3)</sup>.

The Prophet (peace be upon Him) said: "O young people! Who so ever can bear the burden of marriage should marry, for indeed marriage is most effective in lowering the gaze and most protective for the private parts"<sup>(4)</sup>. and to strengthen the injunction of marriage he said: "He who turns away from my path (*sunnah*) is not from me"<sup>(5)</sup>. Al-Jazāyri in his discussion of

(1) Khurshid Ahmad, *Family Life in Islam* (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1974), pp.14.

(2) Al-Quran, Surah al-Nisā, 4:1.

(3) Al-Quran, Surah al-Rūm 30-21.

(4) Ahmad Ibn Ali Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalāni, *Kitāb al-Nikāh min Fath al-Bāri* (Beirut: Dār al-Balāgh, 1986), pp.22.

(5) Ibid.





marriage<sup>(1)</sup> enumerates some marriage wisdoms, which are as follows:

1. Continuing the existence of the human race through the procreation process, a direct result of marriage.
2. Maintaining chastity by satisfying natural sexual desires of each spouse by the other.
3. Cooperation of each partner in raising the progeny and preservation of life.
4. Organizing the relationship between a husband and wife upon the foundation of exchanging rights with one another and mutual assistance that comes about in the circle of love, affection, respect and honor of each other.

Other than these, marriage provides psychological tranquility to married people. They are capable of controlling their emotions and act towards constructive solutions of problems<sup>(2)</sup>. It is a source of social and economic security. Only after marriage the individuals realize the sense of responsibility to collect and save money for the purpose of providing food, clothing, and shelter to family members. Through marriage the spouses become source of support and motivation for each other. The success in projects and carrier is primary for the happiness of the spouse and family members. Marriage also secures unity and brotherhood. It creates a bond between two communities and promotes social cohesion. It is the strongest protection scheme for wealth and heritage. Whatever the parents earn and collect in their life time is safely transferred to children and family members because of the bond created by the marriage. It is the marriage and family life that enable people to realize their role as vicegerent of Almighty Allah on earth. Among the things entrusted to man is his wife. It is reported in Sahih al-Bukhari that the Messenger of Allah said: "Fear Allah about the women. You take them in marriage as a trust from Allah."



(1) Abu Bakr Jābir al-Jazāyri, *Minhāj al-Muslim* (Riyād: Dār al-Salam, 2001), pp.321, vol. 2.

(2) Yusuf Ali Bedewi, *Asas-Asas Kebahagiaan Rumahtangga Dalam Islam* (Jln Perdana; Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia, v. 1, 1996), p. 17 & 18.



## NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CULTURAL-GLOBALIZATION ON MARRIAGE

Globalization which in a nutshell, stands for homogenization of diverse pattern of life after the model of the dominant way of life while bringing mechanical improvements in terms of gadgets and tools is apt to homogenize cultures by creating a new life style and pattern of thinking and behaviors.<sup>(1)</sup> In the area of personal life, since early twenties its impacts on family and marriage have not been less pervasive as is in other aspects of the consuming nations and societies. Marriage as the bedrock of Islamic social structure has been most impacted by the invasion of globalized cultures in so many aspects, the obvious symptoms of which include, postponement of marriage, repulsive attitude to marriage but openness to unrestricted free mixing of the sexes prior to marriage, high index of children born out of wedlock, increasing number of marriage breakdowns and lack of inhibition against marriage fidelity, and lists goes on. All the above and others which are characteristic features of societies with “disintegrated family system”<sup>(2)</sup> have impacted Muslims which traditionally possessed cohesive and harmonious families. For the purpose of this paper, we delineate two negative effects of cultural-globalization on marriage, one of which relates to external factors of the marriage such as cost of marriage, and the other is associated with the internal factors of the marriage, such as role of a spouse in marital life.

### Cost of Marriage as an External Impact

The cost of contemporary marriage ceremony is sky rocketing. Previous generation had their ceremony outlined according to the religious guidelines, which looked out to be simple and free from extravagance, but the cultural globalization influenced the new generation to add foreign cultural styles of celebration to their marriage. This resulted to excessively magnifying the cost of marriage ceremony; a cost that discourages

(1) Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Khitabuna al-Islami fi `Asr al-`Awlamah* (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 2004), p. 23.

(2) Muhammad Sali and Abdul Hayy, *`Afat al-`Awlamah wa Ta`thiruha `ala Tamasul al-Ussrah al-Muslimah*. At <https://manifest.univ-ouargla.dz/index.php/seminaires/archive/faculté-des-sciences-sociales-et-sciences-humaines/57> (accessed 20 March 2018).



marriage itself for families with low income.

While such vacillation in weddings from laymen perspective may be associated with inflation and moving with time, in essence it is a manifestation of cultural globalization in the garb of progress and social development. The reason being that cultural globalization as a form of alien cultural onslaught (*al-ghazw al-thaqafi*) purports to mold the whole world into one single multiracial village in the process of which cultures and life styles contrary to it are gradually eroded and wiped out either openly or subtly. As time passes by, the borrowed culture gets assimilated and gets blended into the borrower's social environment that appears in conformity with their indigenous cultural norms. It blends so perfectly that the society starts to believe that performing without those cultures will invalidate the whole marriage ceremony. The bride feels that if she will not wear the white princess marriage gown, her marriage will not achieve a remarkable memory; the bridegroom thinks that if he will not wear Versace black three piece suit, his marriage will not be the best; the family of the couple assumes that if the marriage ceremony doesn't take place in the glittering 5 star hotel then it will be a insult; the invited guest's and families' expectation is to set eyes on live concert or no less than a DJ on the marriage stage other wise the ceremony is not considered modern and so on. It is a dilemma to observe that these impacts are not only on city habitants, but villagers as well. A poor villager earns whole of his life with the aim to fulfil the cultural rituals of marriage ceremony which originally does not belong to his culture<sup>(1)</sup>.

### Changing Spousal Roles as an Internal Impact

“Traditional sex-typed division of labour between women's work at home and men's work at job” is no longer the practice of the day<sup>(2)</sup>. Cultural-globalization encouraged the women to be financially independent and join

(1) In my stay in Pakistan for studies from 1989-2001 I observed the villages of Punjab. A villagers concern is his children's (especially daughters') marriage rituals and ceremony. If his lifetime earning is not sufficient then borrowing loan is his last resort.

(2) J. Gipson Wells, *Current issues in Marriage and Family* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988), pp. 122.

paid job. It has done so by downplaying its real motivation under the pretext of assumed modern necessity so that a married woman can help the husband financially to cater for the new life styles and habits introduced by the modern life style. This recent change in the sex role has raised the issue of imbalance of work and leisure. Married women especially pay the penalty of overburdening herself with both domestic duties and her career<sup>(1)</sup>. Capturing this, Wells writes:

Although 40 to 60 percent of women are employed in such countries as the United States, Russia, Poland, and Japan, they pay a penalty of being overburdened by both domestic and paid work (Blake, 1974). Employed American women who have families average a total of seventy hours of work a week (Gauger, 1973: 23). Each week they have a few hours less leisure time than men for sleep or relaxation (Szalai, 1973)<sup>(2)</sup>.

Since the turn of twentieth century 'dual-worker families' increased and affected deeply in the participation patterns of family life. These changing patterns are the main culprit in precipitating strains in the patterns set by previous generation. Hence when these changes reach the point of intolerance, then the reaction leads to broken family or the debauched bond of marriage.

## CONCLUSION

From the above reflection, it is submitted that the external and internal effects of cultural-globalization on marriage directly oppose the wisdoms of marriage in Islam. The external—high cost of marriage—discourages the new generation to marry and on the other hand lures them towards immoral sexual behaviors that come with a cheaper price than the marriage<sup>(3)</sup>. This openly opposes the purpose of marriage in Islam i.e. lawful sexual

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Famous scholar Maulana Ahsān al-Haq a distinguished disciple of *Shaykh al-Hadith* Maulana Zakaria used to say in his speeches that we Muslims today have made marriage expensive because of our traditions and cultures and fornication (*zinā*) cheap.



behavior<sup>(1)</sup>. The internal (changing sex roles) completely breaks down the whole machinery of the marriage institution. The women because of the burden of domestic and paid work are not free to bear child, for it is time consuming and if they decide to have child then only once or twice is possible to sacrifice the paid work. The dual-worker idea has snatched the concentration of the parents away from their children, stole the time of husband and wife to share love and affection, and destroyed the family structure. To reverse the tide of such invasive negativities, Muslims have to be creative so as to creatively sift through the adoptable from non-adoptable cultural choices with current dominant culture and from new lifestyles which aggressively promote and tend to impose. The best resistance to such cultural invasion comes from within. Almighty Allah has prescribed: “Verily, Allah will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allah)” [al-Ra'd 13:11].

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(1) Hammudah ‘Abd al-‘Ati, *The Family structure in Islam*, pp. 54.



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