

# The Effects of Globalization on Somalian Culture

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## Abstract

The idea of Globalization today is commonly understood to be a process of change and interactions towards political, cultural, religious, social, demographic, environmental and military aspects. After Somalia gained independence in the 1960s Somalia established the name we know today as the Republic of Somalia. However, it remains undeniable that the impact of globalization on Somalian culture has been there since the colonial period and continued post-independence. Globalization has positive and negative effects on many aspects of the society. This paper discovered the negative and positive trends globalization has had on the Somali culture. And the paper argued that there is an inherent fear towards the aims and objectives of globalization towards Africa which normally entails cultural homogenization and moreover, that the culture which will emerge at the end of the day will be predominantly American culture, Americanism and/or western culture. Thus, Americanization has been witnessed in many parts of the continent. This study was thus limited to address globalization's effect on Somalian culture. The study examined the definition of globalization, culture, and the appearance of globalization in Somalia. Finally, the paper discussed the effect of globalization and its impact on Cultural perspective and provides recommendations.

**Key terms:** Somalia, Globalization, Culture, Extinction, Africa, and Foreign.

## A brief Introduction of Somalia:

The country known as Somalia, considered to be one of the world's most homogenous nation, the people of Somalia speak one language, have one culture and one Religion – Islam is the main religion in Somalia 100% of the population is Muslim Sunni. Somali is located in the Horn of Africa and has a land area of 637,540 square kilometers. From map Somalia resembles the figure 7 or "Seven sign." Its terrain mostly consists of plateaus, plains, and highlands. Measuring 3,025km, Somalia has the longest coastline in the African continent.

The population of Somalia is 12,303,081 as UN estimated in 2016. Somali has a neighbor countries Djibouti (inhabited by Somali- and Somali speaking nation) to the northwest, the Gulf of Aden and Yemen to the north, Kenya to the southwest, Ethiopia to the West and the Indian Ocean to the East. Somalia is endowed with unexploited mineral resources and vast maritime resources that have been a source of contention since the collapse of the central government late in the 1991. Considering the impact of globalization many Somali Scholars believe that globalization process has impacts on Somalian economy, politics, and culture. However, since the appearance of globalization, Somalia remains a strategically, economically, politically, culturally and religiously sensitive region. Concerning the globalization process, Somalia did not gain many economic and cultural benefits as many scholars argue but, instead of the country much learned adverse effects from the globalization process.

## Conceptual Framework - Globalization and Culture

### The meaning of Globalization

The word globalization is an essential phenomenon which is rapidly increasing and expansion many sorts of global interactions. In this paper, globalization is defined as the way countries are becoming more interconnected both economically and technologically. The following, for instance, are an example of how globalization process is increasing.

- ✓ Through Trade.
- ✓ Through Political Cooperation.
- ✓ Through Cultural exchange.
- ✓ And through Science, media, and technology.

Considering the world Politics trend and transformation, describe globalization as the integration of states, through increasing contact, communication, and trade, to create a shared global culture for all humanity. The creation of a comprehensive joint culture could sound a worrisome anecdote for those whose strength of character rest on the preservation of local heritage and dynamic cultures. Jan Aart Scholte also defined Globalization as a term in heavy current usage but one whose meaning remains obscure, often even among those who invoke it. Prof. Jan Aart Scholte indicates that "globalization process spread throughout the states and across the world. This shows that culture becomes a concept that can support people's interpretations from economic, political and social practice, but it also indicates that social and interaction between people from a different background is threatening each other from his or her cultural perception, (Bærenholdt 1991).

Considering how Philip G. Cerny's defined Globalization the preliminary indicates and that globalization is not only for the economic matter. He points out that globalization needs a set of financial, economics, cultural and political structures and how these structures is being processed is what determines the changes that globalization made concerning the goods and Services and the international political economy as well. For instance, understanding globalization we need to point out, however, that the preliminary examination indicates that there are at least characteristics of the definitions of globalization that are increasingly used in the academic literature these includes: globalization as economic phenomena for example "Trade." Through Political Cooperation between and among states and international organization, Cultural exchange perspective and finally defining globalization the most important thing is that globalization as a technology, Science, media and social revolution. All these characteristics are what comes to mind of many scholars when discussing globalization process from a different context.

As mentioned earlier, the globalization process has been addressed from the points of view of culture, economics especially trade, science, technology media, political science and international matters and has been an issue to endless debates in various disciplines in 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, the globalization effects towards, economy, culture, and international relations are rarely addressed as a determinant that impacts societies and their cultures.

Moreover, the interaction between culture and globalization and still remains under-researchable topic (Prasad and Prasad, 2007) and the somalian case studying such kind of topics might discover some hidden effects.

### **The Meaning of Culture**

The term culture comes from Latin word, which means, "to cultivate." So, Archaeologists, anthropologist, Sociologist and other fields of study define the concept of culture different ways meaning the definition of culture depends on who you ask. Scholars and researchers do not agree on a general definition of culture. However, this study conceives the definition of culture from sociological systems of theories. The sociological theories defined about culture as the system of value orientation whose generalized symbols of action orientation solved the problem of double contingency in social policies of the society (Parsons/Shils 1951). We need to point out, however, that Culture is the identity of a group of people, or community living in the same area. Considering Somali's state identity is composed of a single, homogeneous ethnic society. Even though Somalis may differ in nuances of the local lifestyle, they share the language, religion, and culture, and trace their heritage to a common ancestor.

Cowen (2002) defined culture as a product that refers to arts, music, literature and other activities as well as food and life style, in this regard, we can have understood that culture is a process that gradually builds up through interaction of the people.

### **Globalization and Somalia**

The word globalization has been in Somalia for a long period of time beginning with the interaction of the people and integration of different societies from a different corner of the world through international trade, and investment. Considering, Somali's location in Africa which is a strategic place is an essential part of the world marked Somalia as the center for commerce in historical antiquity with Somali sailors and merchants trading in myrrh, frankincense, ivory, and spices with ancient Egyptians, Phoenicians, Mycenaean, and Babylonians. Even though there could be similarities between Somalia's previous era of globalization and the current one, today's experience with globalization is to some degree more intense for Somalia and her trading partners.

Somalia test and trial with capitalism got off the ground immediately after the country gained independence in 1960. The nation's elected leaders adopted democracy as the preferred form of governance of the country. However, that dream doesn't live longer, and it failed democracy when military movement captured in Somalia. The military immediately changed the form government style to Leninist-Marxist ideology.

Regarding economic gain from the globalization process Somali does not export much goods and services to the world. However, many countries import Somalia through barriers of trade. Therefore, Somalia did not gain a lot of tax but, the nation remains economic crisis since the collapse of central government in 1991. Considering the period of military government between the years of 1969 and 1991 imperiled and put in danger the political, social, and economic welfare of the entire state. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the colonial period, Somali culture remained relatively free from external contamination, unlike other African cultures that disappeared as a result of European Imperial Superiority and latter not able to cope with a result of globalization.

### **Impact of Globalization on the Somalia:**

Globalization has had a very profound effect on Somalian culture in different ways, and this can be summarized as follows:

- ❖ Globalization has broken all borders in the world. As a result of this, the youth and the new generation

of Somali is becoming more knowledgeable, more aware and more interested what is going on the world politics.

- ❖ Considering Somali traditional culture Women, who were exploited and ignored part of the society meaning, women were not sending to schools, but they were responsible for the houses. However, the appearance of globalization women claims their rights of being a woman and young girls have access to education; jobs and they know more about their rights and their responsibility. Today they are no longer bearing the traditional culture, wife, mother or homemaker. In Somalia, today Men and women are being treated equally in the society but, the need of improvements in some areas still needed in the country.
- ❖ Through Television - In 1991, only 10% of the Somalian urban population had access to television news, films, and technology. In 2010 that has increased to a whopping 80%. Cable television has made inroads into the Somalian household. Different foreign movies have come to Somalia and have reflected people's culture in different ways. This has made an enormous impact on the minds of many Somalis. Internet becomes easy to access.
- ❖ Globalization as Americanization of the Continent: Considering “Americanization” as a worldwide spread and dominance of American influence on culture and Science, and technology. Today almost United States goods and services flooded world markets and especially in Africa. US culture is now penetrating in Somalia through the dramatic growth of mass communications such as music, festivals, television, media, films, and the internet documentary.
- ❖ The internet usage has opened many opportunities for youth to learn more about other foreign languages, cultures and different places in the world, meaning what Sydney, London, Paris, and Istanbul have in common, is famous in Somalia. For instance, this also marked Somalis to become more acceptable for other culture.
- ❖ Several major universities across the globe have taken the responsibility to teach Somali language. One such example is the University of Indiana in Bloomington. The University of Ohio has also included the teaching of Somali into its African studies program. And many Several European countries teach the Somali language to Somali children. Higher institutions of learning such as the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) which is part of the University of London, the Swedish Academy in Uppsala, and Rome University have specialized study programs preserved for the Somali language this has been achieved through the globalization process.

**The points as mentioned earlier are the positive effects of globalization on Somalian culture. The negative impacts, as are follows:**

- ❖ Westernization is happening to Somalia, for example, Somali language has have been replaced by international languages like English and Arabic, the official language of the country is dying out there.
- ❖ Somalian youth men and women have started clothing like the western style, cutting hire like a western model, everything else Europe, and America. Youth also began celebrating festivals such as Valentine’s Day, happy New Year, and buying an expensive gift to celebrate western constructed days. This has impacted the Somali celebrations and culture is dying out fast. The only festival, which is alive in Somalia, is the national independent day.
- ❖ With the result of globalization, Somalia has access to things like movies, 18+ films and other modern films around the world.
- ❖ The Somali youth has become more promiscuous they are doing rape, and things are never seen in Somalian culture. Earlier, rape would bring a very strong reaction from society, but today it is no longer very surprising to hear rape.
- ❖ Globalization resulted to reduced Somali nationalism and patriotism. Somalis don’t feel nationalism and patriotic anymore. Many youths believe that living Europe and other developed countries is more important than to live in Somalia. While many others are crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe looking a better life and better future, many others lost their lives during that journey.

## Conclusion

This study investigates the effect of globalization on Somalin Culture. The researcher attempts to examine three objectives. The first objective of the study was to examine globalization and its effects on culture. The second objective was that the researchers is trying to determine the major negative and positive trends of globalization process has on Somalian culture. The third objective of the study was to recommend and give policy suggestions to deal with globalization effects towards culture. The study has found that the globalization has both positive and negative impacts. In the case of Somalia, the study discovered that Somalia have had more of bad impacts than good.

### Recommendation

It is difficult to provide a recommendation on a subject like globalization, especially when studying its impacts on the cultural matter. The key reason is because of the different nature of the globalization, and artistic always receive divergent, views on the society. What is important for any state is to manage and assess critically the impacts of globalization in cultural and economic aspects. Identifying the relevant critical factors which will guide the government execution of the project/programs that can protect the indigenous culture. The researcher suggests the following recommendations, which he considers essential.

1. Government of Somalia should introduce new policies that increase the indigenous culture and arts.
2. Somali government should not enter into any agreement that constrains local culture and systems which supports them.
3. There is a need to establish and to promote culture, and libraries.
4. The government should provide training in writing and documentation for Somalia language, (new words) and cultural heritage.
5. There is the need to establish “museum” where issues of culture can be preserved and discussed, and young Somalis who born abroad can learn their culture.

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