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**CHALLENGES IN AN INFORMED SOCIETY: THE  
IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON MALAYSIAN  
CULTURAL LIFE**

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17  
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**ABSTRACT:** The announcement of Vision 2020 marked the turning point of changes in the socio-cultural landscape in Malaysia. It leads to a view towards progress related to the introduction of Multimedia Super Corridor which brings huge implications to Malaysian into becoming informed society. Among the significant changes following this phenomenon are people becoming more IT literate and cultural globalization continues to slip in. The impact of information globalization leads to a culture known as consumer culture which is influenced by the market development of developing countries and also heaps of less valuable commodities by other countries. This is part of the globalization process. At the same time, the politics of this country receives an impact from the flow of information, thus creating a new political situation for Malaysia. Nevertheless, the ongoing globalization is a continuation of the globalization process which had started long ago in world history. The objectives of this paper are to look into the history of these changes and the impact on the cultural life of Malaysian based on socio-historical perspectives and sociological development that caused the onset of the changes.

**KEYWORDS:** Globalization; globalization theory; lifestyle; new politics; consumer culture.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

15  
Since the previous Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad announced Vision 2020 in 1991, the concept of a nation of intent Malaysia was prompted, which was to become an industrialized and fully developed country by the year 2020. The idea of betterment and advancement encompass the fields of economy, politics, social, spiritual, psychology, quality of life, and other social values. The sixth challenge of Vision 2020 is to build a scientific and progressive society, a highly innovative and forward-looking society, who are not only technology users but also act as contributors for the future of science and technology civilization. This aspect is a big challenge for Malaysia and is related to the globalization situation which is currently happening.

For the realization of Vision 2020 and to accelerate the development of the information technology field towards Knowledge-Based Economy, Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) was introduced in 1996, with the purpose to spur the modernization of Malaysia in 2020 by adapting knowledge-based society framework. The establishment of MSC is also to boost socio-economic development in the Information Age as to what was envisioned of "MSC as a global testbed (hub), where the limits of the possible can be explored, and new ways of living, working and playing in the new area of the Information Age" (Ibrahim Ariff & Goh Chen Chuan, 2000; Jeong, 2007). These were the hopes of the government as a new lifestyle in the era of information. Early preparation has brought Malaysia a step ahead in the area of Information technology compared to countries like Indonesia, Philippines, and Brunei.

Although the initial preparation was provided by a visionary leader (Mahathir), the term "globalization" was still alien in the early 90s. "Globalization" was popular in Malaysia in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, towards the end of 1990s. Around that time, the term and discussions about globalization were made widely. In this sense of

understanding, a few other terms were found to describe the new look of an advanced society. Mahathir had defined and referred to Malaysians as multi-race Malaysian. In other perspectives, other terms were also introduced, including "Melayu Baharu"/ New Malay (by Mahathir), Towering Malay (by Abdullah Badawi), Melayu Glokal (by Mohd Najib Tun Razak) in explaining the need for Malay society to move forward and to have positive identities. The term Glokal, for instance, is a combination of local and international elements to face obstacles in changes as coined by Dato' Seri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak in his speech at Dewan Merdeka, PWTC titled *Menjana Melayu Glokal* at the opening ceremony of the UMNO Women, Puteri, and Youth Conference on 18 July 2005. All of this can also be considered as a means to understand and integrate local and global aspects.

### **Globalization and Informed Society**

Globalization is a <sup>20</sup> process that transforms conditions, relations, social form and reduces national traits into a form of globality. According to Giddens, "globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of

Worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local<sup>2</sup> happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens, 1990: 64). *Globalization* refers to "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson, *Globalization*, 1992: 8). In thought and action, it makes the world a single place. What it means to live in this place, and how it must be ordered, become universal questions. These questions receive different answers from individuals and societies that define their position concerning both a system of societies and the shared properties of humankind from very different perspectives. The confrontation of their world views means that globalization involves "comparative interaction of different forms of life" (Robertson, 1992: 27).

<sup>5</sup> Globalization involves the creation of new, and multiplication of existing social networks and activities that cut across traditional political, economic, cultural, and geographical boundaries (Steger, 2009: 14). This is not something new as Great Britain and Germany had used BBC radio to influence public opinion in the United States and marked as one of the earliest transnational broadcasting with implications to the politics of the country and the world. Similarly, Al-Jazeera that targets Muslim population of approximately 4 billion which could change public opinion about politics, culture, ideology, and build new social orders based on transcending nationality. Now, New York Times, Bloomberg, Guardian, and other western media can easily penetrate Southeast Asia, reporting issues about countries in Southeast Asia including those with uncertainty.

<sup>5</sup> The second effect of globalization is reflected in the expansion and stretching of social relations, activities, and interdependencies (Steger, 2009: 14). Regional and the world stock markets from Hong Kong to London Stock Exchange, the Stock Exchange in New York can be seen in a blink of eyes and real-time. Personal experience in book searching on amazon.com is much easier compared to the "conventional method" during human traffic in New York City. Purchasing flight tickets and web check-in worldwide are made easy and time-saving, thus able to improve human relations across the globe. All of these features facilitate people around the world who can participate as users. Applications like WhatsApp and Facebook foster another global social network. Social processes in this era with the existence of Google, for instance, accelerate the process of shaping up informed society. Globalization also <sup>11</sup> involves the *intensification* and *acceleration* of social exchanges and activities, and also involve the subjective plane of human consciousness (Steger, 2015: 15). These open up new perspectives at the national and regional levels. However, globalization's impact also involves micro-community and macrostructure changes, forming identity collectively and develop a new individual identity which is influence by cluster intimate relation and globalization.

Appadurai (1990:295-310) defines globalization as a cultural process which is characterized by five dimensions and currently dominating the world community:

- (a) ethnoscapes: which is created by migration by people across borders as tourists, refugees, migrant workers,
- (b) technoscapes: refers to the easiness of technology flow with the availability of technological facilities by the presence of increasing multinational companies and e-government,
- (c) finanscapes: capital flow through global financial systems which can be seen in the money market and stock exchange,
- (d) mediascape: information flow via mass and electronic media like newspapers, television, film, and internet,
- (e) ideoscape: ideas flow like consumerism culture, freedom, democracy, the welfare state, free market, and

so forth.

### Globalization and Malay World

From the academic research point of view, the globalization process is not something new. According to a research by Moore and Lewis (2009; 2017), globalization had started long ago and has a few stages; the era of Egyptian-African (C. 3100 BCE-476 CE), The Temple-Palace Conglomerate: Trade and Enterprise(3500–2000 BCE), The Golden Age of Temple Capitalism: Mesopotamia and India(2250–1400 BCE), Assyria and Babylon: Previewing the Multinational in the middle Bronze Age (2000–1500 BCE), Maritime Capitalism at High Tide: Trade and Investment under the Phoenicians (1500–500 BCE), Entrepreneurs of the Aegean: The Greek Free-Market Revolution, (825–480 BCE), Publicans and Patriarchs: The Triumph of Roman Family Enterprise(146 BCE–14CE), and The Hellenistic Climax: India, China and Rome (331–100 BCE). All of these involved processes and provided significant as well as changes in society at that time. Based on this early globalization situation, it can be said that the continuation of internationalization and globalization between the present and past has existed. However, this process can be considered as proto-globalization whereas destroy-globalization started as a result of the industrial revolution which brought important changes in the history of mankind for 300 years until now. After the explosion of information, globalization is an extension of the ongoing process of changes. This is what can be concluded as the world neo-globalization which had begun since the 1970s or earliest process after World War II, in the dawn of television which then being commercialized to flood in cultural ideology and influence.

From the perspective of colonialism, the globalization process is often being connected with the voyages of Columbus in 1492 and the discovery of the America continent (although the continent was populated by indigenous Native Americans). Here was the beginning of the expansion of European power using their maritime technology to spread out their power. Major colonial empires like Spain, Portugal, England, Netherlands, and France made conquests, expanded trading, and their territories to other foreign lands. This caused economic and European cultural expansion. This resulted in hundreds of years of colonialism and the birth of the western empire in the eastern region. Spices and other eastern wealth were brought to Europe for trading. The spread of Christianity began to expand in Southeast Asia.

### Globalization and Malay World

In Malay world, the process of globalization can be seen with the arrival of migrants from India who brought along Buddhism and Hinduism before the 7th century. Relations between China and Java for example had started as early as 500 BCE, trading at South China, Southeast Asia, and the eastern coast of Peninsula India. The goods were spices and wood. According to a Romanian historian named Pliny the Elder, trading from the archipelago included trading with the east coast of Africa since the first century (CE). Emperors of Rome had already received garlic (cloves) from Maluku region (Brown, 2003: 13). Buddhist texts were also found in the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE Kalimantan Brunei and West Java. Sanskrit inscriptions were also discovered at the same time in Kutai, around Mahakam River. According to Chinese sources, there was the dominant government in Malay Archipelago, which were Ho-Ling in Java and Srivijaya in Sumatera (Brown, 2003: 15-17). Ho-Ling merged and formed the kingdom of Mataram in the 8th century and this caused a mixture of Buddhists and Hindu in the century. This Mataram achievement led to the construction of Borobudur temple.

The process of globalization also meets the influence of Islam in the Malay world. Tomb of Sultan Sulaiman bin Abdullah bin al-Basir dated 1211 in northern Sumatra proved the existence of Islam in the Malay world. Marco Polo's records while traveling from China about Perlak as an Islamic city in 1292. Sultan Malik as-Salih's tomb, founded in Sumatra in 1297 proved the arrival of Islam had happened. The legendary Medieval Moroccan traveler, Ibn Battuta who passed across Sumatera in 1345 and 1346 found that the ruler practiced Shafi'i Madhhab. Date of the Inscribed Stone of Terengganu was estimated around 1303 to 1287, proving the practice of Islamic law at the state with the influence of Sanskrit language which referred 'glorious feast of the gods' ('*dewata mulia raya*') instead of the name of Allah S.W.T (Ricklefs, 2001: 4-5). All of this proved the socialization process of Islam evolved and prolonged in the Malay world as early as the 13th century.

Melaka was involved in the process of globalization and known by international traders. In that period, Malay language was a lingua franca. Books on geography, nature, and the history of world culture written by Francois Valentijn in Oud en nieuw Ost-Indian (1856) stated that Malay language is "much like French and Latin is in Europe". The arrival of European such as Portuguese, Dutch, Spaniards, and English men had led to the colonization of Malay world and were divided among them. One clear example was the division between the English and the Dutch on Malay territories which resulted in what it is now the States of Malaya and Indonesia

(Awang Azman Awang Pawi, 2013:40) This showed that Malay world had gone through a process of expansive globalization. According to Held and et al (1999), among other things, "high extensity since most regions of the world are interconnected through the colonial regime; low intensity as interconnections take place mostly between colonizing powers and colonized nations; and since transportation and communication are still slow, therefore, low velocity as well; high impact as the colonized societies are deeply affected by colonialism."

## II. MODERNITY

After the independence of Malaya, the development process for the country started to accelerate because of the freedom from English colonial influence and barriers. A few series of development spurred especially after the formation of Malaysia. First Malaysia Plan (RMK1) was conducted as a five years plan for economic growth (1966-1970). Among its objectives was to increase efforts towards diversifying the country's economy and to bring forward the industrial sector. This was the point of existence for middle-class urban Malay, as part of the results of English systems education. These people began to replace English expatriates and took over their administrative role. This was also the point of western influence on the socio-cultural lifestyle among the locals, including picnicking, swimming in pools, bikini-wearing, clubbing at pubs, cigar-smoking, shopping at malls, and supermarkets. Popular culture influences from the Americans were manifested through fast food, watching movies, golfing, music, traveling abroad, jeans-wearing and the list goes on. Little by little, western modern lifestyle becoming a trend.

The process of development in Malaysia was driven more actively when the New Economic Policy-NEP (*Dasar Ekonomi Baru- DEB*) was launched by the Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak in 1971 (until 2000)

to reduce and exterminate poverty and to increase jobs for the people of all races. Next was to accelerate the process of restructuring Malaysian society to balance out the economy to break the boundary of economic function according to race. Within 20 years of the program, economic gap and per capita income of each race were successfully bridged, new viable companies and agencies like Petronas, Felda, and Tabung Haji were set up, more Bumiputera businessmen, professionals like CEO, lawyers, doctors, engineers, lecturers, and accountants. Foreign investors, factories, and industries were pouring in. This phenomenon created "Minah Kanan" which referred to the flooding of women from the outskirts areas who moved to the city and worked at electronics factories. Broadening the meaning of globalization, it was an early stage for women to focus on their careers in the industrial sector. Changes in lifestyle affected the nation's socio-economic for example, late marriage and family plan, a shift of perspective on working women which was viewed as a contribution to the country's growth.

The existence of middle-class bumiputera as a result of NEP also created "*Orang Kaya Baru*" or Nouveau riche. This group of rich people was the ones given the opportunities by the government via development projects. The shift had brought up a better living status. The changes were projected on the ownerships of shares at the Stock Exchange and some people invested abroad from the profits they gained through local investments. From a political perspective, corporate people started to replace school teachers' domination in UMNO politics as they mainly did previously, as UMNO was and still is the core of political party for Malay people. The economic achievement until the 1990s was remarkable and even considered as one of the Asian little tigers. Institutions of higher education also increased up to 20 institutions, not including branches of international and private universities. The agriculture-based economy also was shifting towards industrialization and human capital began to expand.

However, the Asian financial crisis in 1997 had led to a downfall of Southeast Asia's economic development. The crises which began in Thailand in July 1997 had influenced currencies, stock exchange, and asset prices of other Asia countries including Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. Before this, Malaysia's financial crisis was thought to have a strong foundation, was seen to be weak and vulnerable by the world currencies conspirator; George Soros as claimed by Tun Dr. Mahathir. Even the experts and economists did not foresee the crisis. It affected Malaysia's economy, moreover, there was a prolonged political crisis at the time.

Changes in socio-cultural values were felt when taboo words for Malay society, such as sodomy, homosexuality were openly discussed in media following the country's political issues. The wave of globalization as referred by Appadurai (1990) hit the country. Capital flows and global financial will not always in favor of developing countries. Imbalance news and coverage flow at that time criticized Malaysia for pegging the ringgit and was considered by global media as a step not to bow to IMF was imbalance at that time when it has been criticized Malaysia peg of the ringgit and regarded this action as a step refused to bow to IMF by the global media. However, the idea of the free-market was highly supported by other developing countries as now proved the

other way round. All of this led to chaos to the economy of the country and ringgit peg was introduced to ensure sustainability.

### Globalization and Liminality Society

The globalization process in Malaysia, just like other developing countries has lead Malaysia to a transnational phase. However, the economic situation as inherited since the colonial is in the form of a segmented economy (Drabble, 2000:109, Myink, 1985:23-26). The export economy under the colonial ruler was segmented or integrated structure as defined by Drable in summarizing the situation by Mint as

*“..the usual model is that of a dual (or dualistic) economy in which a ‘modern’ sector with large, capital-intensive, specialised units of production, wage labour and advanced technology exists alongside a ‘traditional’ sector of small-scale, unspecialised producers (largely peasant farmers) using mainly household, non-wage, labour and low-level technology. The modern sector is dominated by foreign interests, whilst the traditional sector contains mostly indigenous farmers. Similar dichotomies have been discerned in the financial sector, the markets for labour, the administrative and fiscal system of government, and a ‘sociological dualism’ which contrasts ‘rational’ profit-maximising behaviour of (western) capitalist enterprises with ‘irrational’, non-profit oriented behaviour of indigenous producers”*

(Drabble, 2000: 109, Myint, 1985, 24–5).

The situation was economic dualism, as an effect from colonialism administration which caused the indigenous economy to continuously being traditional whereas economy which was strategically beneficial for the colonial being modernly developed and this caused the formation of economic dualism. Economy structure in the early 20th century can be viewed in the context of foreign ownership, investment in plantations (estates) and mining whereas indigenous economy can be seen in the inviable agricultural sector. There was a clear ownership gap in sectors of foreign-owned and local companies, labor, and agriculture. In the modern financial sector, capital and credit facilities at low-interest rates were offered through institutionalized banking systems. In the rubber production sector, for instance, the cultivating process has relied on money lenders or Chettiar while domestic traders provided credits and loans with high interests. In the context of labour usage, the colonial employer typically hired outsiders while local farmers used their family members to work on the farm. In fiscal policy and government administration, large scale enterprises which commonly seen as the driving factor in the development of trade is often separated while activities by indigenous communities as subsistence farmers (Drabble, 2000: 110). For example, in the rubber industry, as recorded by Drabble (1991: 2), *“there was a continuum of holdings from the larger estates over 400 hectares (mostly European owned), down through the medium-size estates (40–400 hectares) and the medium smallholdings (10–40 hectares) with Chinese predominant in both, and the ‘true’ smallholdings under 10 hectares, again with substantial Chinese ownership, but with Malays heavily in the majority under 2 hectares”*. After Independence, the changes in the Malaysia economic structure was not rapid. Most of the segmented economic sector was dominated by the Chinese who were intermediary between the ruler and the people, previously involved and experienced in mining and business activities.

In industrial modernity as a result of the industrial revolution, the modern manufacturing sector appeared under laissez-faire version of colonial trading. The increase in demand for manufactured goods, dynamic influence from the prominent sector, government machinery, foreign engineering, and manufacturing firm (market access and employees transfers to local companies) largely explained the growth of production in the Malaya colonial region. Growth in demand happened and what important was a foreign firm influence as suggested by Rajah Rasiah (1995: 66-67), *“... Western smelting, gravel dredge pumping, and construction methods were gradually absorbed by local Chinese. The market outlets provided by the tin mining industry stimulated the growth of Chinese foundries and engineering workshops for substantial levels of technology spill overtook the place from foreign firms to local firms. In addition to employee transfers, Western firms increasingly subcontracted engineering and construction work to local Chinese firms”* (Rasiah, 1995: 66-67). Malays were still living in a social structure outside the modern city (outskirt area) or village up until NEP with the openings of new cities and they began to migrate to town.

Malaysia's economy was significant after the 70s. The undeveloped zone was improved by this policy through commercialization and industrialization. Bandar Baru Bangi for instance was originally a palm oil estate that was developed in 1974 when the land was taken over by the Selangor State Government. The development started with a limited of 200 units of low, middle, and high-cost house construction. Now, the new city has 16 sections, not less than 40 factories, government office complex, hundred units of shop lots and more than 11 thousand houses. The area of Bandar Baru Bagi was open for ownership to the public from outside Selangor only at the end of the 1990s. This is where we can see the process of openness is parallel with the heat of globalization in Malaysia which then resulted in domestic migration because of push-pull factors. The growth of

economy and industry in Malaysia had caused the transition from the agricultural sector into the industrial sector in Hulu Langat, transforming the area from palm oil estate into a new community and industrial areas, thus growing as the center of new growth for commercial field.

The transition from agriculture to the industrial sector had affected the life of modern society. Total and unfiltered acceptance towards elements from western culture struck the lifestyle sphere of local society. Science and technology also influenced the change in the trading sector and sparked a new lifestyle. Most of the change is not original creation by local society, instead of being imported from outside. They continue as active consumers by benefitting imported influence and products. This consumer culture is increasingly spreading in society. However, it does not reach everybody since some people are unable to enjoy this facility.

This situation leads Malaysian to a transitional stage as Victor Turner (1976) called "liminality" which means "not going anywhere", "cultural misfit and lag" in social lifestyle. The traditional way of living is no longer relevant and is considered as outdated, and do not fulfill the new lifestyle model. It is also a form of new quests in finding the meaning of this modern lifestyle. Modern symbols are not rightly integrated with life whereas inner-traditional symbols are fading from inside. In the context of transition, adjustment, and adaptation of traditional aspects with developed society should be made. In the context of new social development, the social transition from the lower class to a higher class status among society is a result of social mobility and education received. These people went through the experience of transition which can be seen from their behavior, even if modern symbols are conveyed with the lifestyle, a person cannot escape from inheriting his/her traditional culture. Sometimes, it is seen as confusion or modernity and even as traditional. In the event of the wedding, for instance, a variety of wedding attires from multiple races or countries reflecting new traditions in the early 1990s and became a norm between traditional and modern values. This shows modernity elements penetrated Malaysian society and depicting globalization taste in their value of life.

### III. BETWEEN CONSUMER CULTURE AND POPULAR CULTURE

The history of consumer culture began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century after the industrial revolution in England. Commercialization of fashion, with the change of tastes among people who previously lived in the village, then migrated to the city required cultural adjustment. Commercialization accelerated the change of tastes in modern society to suit the new environment while speeding up design and demands for mass production. Advancement in the textile industry, creative marketing strategy, and aggressive advertisement contributed to fulfilling mass demand. This situation was similar in France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when traders collaborated closely with major advertisers which then transformed Paris from being a historical city to a city of fashion and modern lifestyle in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. All of this was caused by the industrial revolution and changes in the social structure in the process of modern society. England, Paris, and Rome developed consumer culture with fashions for the new society. Buying power by consumers played an important role in this matter.

In Malaya, consumer culture can be seen among the middle-class of Malay administrators. The taste for arts in the 1960s was influenced by western music like The Beatles in 1962. Then *pop yeh yeh* came along in 1965. The origin of the name *pop yeh yeh* was from a popular song by The Beatles titled "She loves you" ("She loves you, yeah-yeah-yeah"). This situation was loved by youngsters all over the world. There were also M. Osman, A. Ramlie, and Jeffreydin in local pop culture in Malaysia. This certainly had brought the development of fashion and the influence was an initial globalization process in Malaysia. The process can be seen in the 1970s when people were attracted to songs with Hindustani influence and there were a lot of duet songs by Uji Rashid and Hail Amir. In the 80s globalization process can again be seen when western rock bands like Scorpions, Deep Purple, Iron Maiden, Led Zeppelin had deep influenced on Malaysia music industry, with variety of genre (slow rock, heavy metal, hard rock, and blues) with a lot of protest and critics on the society. However, with the change in middle-class society, other changes were triggered. Professional society had increased, education mobility expanded and the effect of NEP gave additional twist to a more relaxing taste and lifestyle. R&B music popularized by singer Sheila Majid and pop music were part of manifestation of the change around the 1980s. In fact, according to Ariel Aryanto (2008:8), "producers of pop culture do not always convey political value or messages in their work, and consumers of this work do not necessarily seek such value or messages. Pop cultures are often meant primarily to be objects of entertainment and commodity for profit, although there are cases where cultures (pop or otherwise) are overtly designed to make political statements, and maybe celebrated, or banned, as such (Ariel Aryanto, 2008: 8).



### Globalization Victims or Predators

The explosion of the information era in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century led to the technology of the Internet which was beyond imagination in centuries before. Never was there an effect of globalization process as it is now including Malaysia. In the context of music and entertainment industries, fans/ users/ consumers can now download songs and even movies either free or illegally from the internet. The most affected parties by this cause are the music industry. "Pirated" disc adds more pressure on this matter.

In the era of globalization, a plethora of soap opera in Malaysia proved that not only the United States emerged with cultural hegemony, but there are other non-western countries like Korea, Indonesia, Philippines, Japan, and Latin America which create a new phenomenon and give colors in shaping Malaysian popular culture. Before this, Japanese series like *Oshin* and *Rin Hanne Konma* had reached Malaysia in the 1980s. Then the list continues with *Opah* (1982-2000), *Wardah* (1990-1993), *Pangako Sa'yo* (My promise to you), *Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas* (I wish it would never end), *El Amor No Es Como Lo Pintan* (Love Is Not How People Make It out to be) and *Por Tu Amor* (For Your Love) and *Betty Yo Soy La Fea* (Betty, the Ugly), *Bawang Putih Bawang Merah*, *Malim Kundang* and so forth. Korean wave (Hallyu) began with the airing of *Winter Sonata* followed by other Korean series and turned Nami Island in Korea as a centre of attraction for tourism for people all over the world. How does watching other than cathartic work of arts be beneficial for Malaysia? It turns out that many advertisers and multinational product manufacturers are behind this to increase their sales. Thus, globalization is benefitting world capitalists. Small players like Malaysia are far from becoming major manufacturers. However, *Upin dan Ipin* is exceptional and widely marketed in Malaysia and Indonesia. Other than that, Malaysian are mostly consuming rather than creating in this world of globalization. The initial globalization for Malaysian society was in the 1980s through Dallas and Dynasty soap opera, depicting the lifestyle of middle-class Americans. Joan Collins and Linda Gray become trendsetters in fashion. Western lifestyles, popularity, and luxurious life became inspirations while influence and manipulation of power were the sources of satisfaction in western or Hollywood perspective.

### IV. CAPTIVE MIND

This situation seems to have no originality except for being imitators and part of the cultural lag phenomenon. Globalization also means strong external influence towards changes in society. The format of reality television series, *La Academia* (2002) from Mexico was quickly adapted by *Akademi Fantasia* (2003) in Malaysia which later followed other Southeast Asia countries like Indonesia and Thailand. Other programs like *Pop Idol* (2001) and *American Idol* (2002) were also copied by the popular culture industry in Malaysia (2004). People all over the world are in the race to create their idol, including *Australia Idol*, *Arab Idol*, *Indonesia Idol*, *Indian Idol*, *New Zealand Idol*, *Latin American Idol*, *Idol* (Poland), *Idols* (South Africa) and *Pakistan Idola*. This is a form of imperialism that swept the world through globalization. It carries along with the symbolic meaning of international values and new social tendencies which never before overflowed in such a rapid and drastic way. Imported brands like *Polo*, *Masseratti*, *Guess* which influence consumer culture is not an urgency in needs but more of a symbol of status and prestige, a mask of inferiority complex. There is a captive mind character in this matter. According to Syed Hussein Alatas (2005), a lot of people in the society have this character or invaded, tendencies to copy colonial's act (western or outsiders), imitation without critical thinking. These people are incapable to raise new issues needed by society and the environment (Awang Azman Awang Pawi, 2009:2-15) When Westerners were promoting *American Idol*, we were also excited to make *Malaysia Idol*.

But nowadays, efforts being made to balance out globalization exploration by bringing in the new form of Islamic da'wah. Society popular culture with Islamic features like *Imam Muda* (2010) was introduced as a reality tv program. The rewards for the winner of the show are becoming Imam at mosque and scholarship to study at the University of Medina. Awareness in the benefit of social media has also risen among local Muslims with the creation of *WhatsApp* group to recite the holy Al-Quran, "one juzuk a day". Changes in attitude and social behaviour in society have shaped the phenomenon of popular culture. Many women artists have now decided to wear hijab and to cover themselves according to syariah. As a result, hijab by celebrities such as Naelofar by Neelofa and OWL by Nora Danish becomes a phenomenon and social media plays an important role in publicity. Some celebrities use media social to sell their products. This situation spread rapidly and more artists are involved in entrepreneurship via online applications and with the advantage of popularity, have helped to market their products.

The ongoing process of globalization has also triggered dissemination of ideas like democracy, human rights, feminism, transparency, integrity, and so forth. These concepts were previously vague and were not well-spread, but now with information technology, things have changed the other way round. The spreading of these

ideas formed the real politic (a system of politics or principles based on practical rather than moral or ideological considerations) of Malaysia. News and information regarding politic issues quickly spread out via social media, whether or not has been validated, thus making perception politic is much alive compared to reality politic. The process of information dissemination has also resulted in LGBT idea and movement. When news on the acceptance of same-sex marriage at many states in the United States started to spread out, Malaysian LGBT were influenced by the idea and becoming more vocal. There was a court case of a Malaysian transgender guy who after underwent transgender surgery, requested to change his status to female but was rejected (Sinar Harian, 15 Jun 2015). This shows that if information dissemination are opposite from religious and local culture, values in society will erode. Bias information flow will also cause suspicion, prejudice, and fear in people of the world. This is because globalization shows that western media are dominating world news. There is a lot of news on terrorism in western news, implying all Muslims are in support of terrorism when the actual fact is "terrorism is neither nationality nor religion". As a result, Muslims entering European countries or America are being suspected as terrorists, and at a certain point, some were even restricted to enter because of their Arabic/ Muslims names. It seems that their people assume that all Muslims abetting terrorism. The fact is, blaming Islam for terrorism is like blaming Germany for Holocaust or blaming Christianity for colonialism. A lot of challenges to be faced in globalization which include organized crime, money laundering, beggar syndicates, and mafia's network. These are all tough challenges for the government to overcome.

## V. CONCLUSION

New values created by the process of globalization in Malaysia are inevitable and can be seen from the perspective of historical and socio-culture since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Globalization leads to a consumptive culture in a society that is prone to foreign products that are associated with mass culture, not only the western countries but also commercialized products from Korea and Japan. The economic crisis in 1997 which we had just recently recovered from has now returned after 20 years. Now, globalization is not only coordinated by the United States. China, South Korea, and Japan also major players in consumptive culture, with the increasing numbers of sushi restaurants, imported Korean cars, and inexpensive goods from China. All of this leads to symbolic value to Malaysian society not only in terms of status but also in the elements of the captive mind. There is also a connection between the economic aspect and Malaysian social life. Whatever situation occurs from the process of globalization, the traditional aspect, modernity, and critical thought on history as well as the present should be balanced for it could drive the society towards betterment without unnecessary social lifestyle and behavior.

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