Globalization, Culture and Message Bazaar

Mehdi Mohsenian Rad, Ph.D.
Imam Sadegh University
Tehran, Iran

Abstract:

"Cultural Imperialism" was a term to be used to explain the relationship between the culture and the media in the Third World, before the "global village" and "globalization" terms became popular in the world. Later on, Americanization, denationalization, center-periphery, glocalization, and finally cultural invasion were added into the dictionary of communication. But perhaps none of the above terminologies represent the phenomenon which will happen in the world of communication in the future.

There are certain evidences which indicate that in the future the concept of mass audience would be replaced by a new one, which can be called numerous communicators (numerous senders and numerous receivers). The popularity of Internet chat rooms and web sites throughout the world along with the usage of DV cameras in the movie industries especially in the African countries are the best example for the argument that I am presenting in this paper.

This article explains how the "mass media" system would change its structure to include numerous "communicators," similar to the traditional market space that can be called Global Message Bazaar. This space is similar to the Old Persian market or oriental Bazaars which were used to sell, buy, and trade goods. The traditional market, in terms of communication, represents the largest pluralistic and diversified media space in the human history. The system is such that it allows audiences to participate in the communication processes as individuals rather than a faceless "mass." These individuals share some characteristics with some minorities and majorities in the society, but remain independent and choose to receive only specified messages. Therefore, there will be numerous representations and message that would serve the needs of individuals. Just similar to the oriental bazaar, which this paper presents in the "Message Bazaar Model," the mass media must fulfill their increasingly diverse audience needs.

Introduction

Until recently the concept of mass media was considered to be the focal point of mass communication. But in the near future, we can use the concept of numerous communicators (numerous senders and numerous receivers) instead of mass audience. Before the emergence of globalization, the mass communication process was mainly "one–way communication." However, in the future, each of the audience can be communicator on the basis of his or her will, facilities and capabilities of sharing the role of both a receiver and a sender. Now if we examine the relationship between information and culture we can express the place of culture in globalization in a specified way.

Clifford Greets in his definition of culture says: Naturally culture is a piece of information which is shared by a group. He adds that the nature of information contrary to the nature of a real object is that the informant can keep for himself what he has given to the others.

If we view the present status of globalization as a passing and changing concept and we visualize the future era with consideration of the extension of digital technology, transformation, storage and process of information and usage of artificial intelligence, a situation will be provided that the habitants of earth would be able to transfer message in a vast area with a small translation apparatus without the presence of any gate and gate- keeper , then the question is: what would happen to our culture?

The expression of globalization started by the utilization of some old expressions such as cultural imperialism and gradually some other expressions such as Americanization, Denationalization, Center – Periphery, Glocalization and Cultural Invasion entered in to the communication literature.

We are aware of the background of the term so called "cultural imperialism" and we can observe it in 1980 report, *many voices, one world* [1] and 1985 report the *process of international T.V programs* [2] *A one – way street* [3]

Also during these years whenever cultural imperialism have been discussed, the dominance of American media productions, especially Hollywood cinema was taken into account. [4]

It is said that American movie industry is providing 70% of distributed films in the Western Europe and 90% of movie trades in the most other countries in the world.

Actually the formation of media trusts will bring more power for cultural imperialism than before; certainly it should be considered that while American movie industry is active in 70% of film trades in Europe, still the trade of American films in the US itself is 2/5 times more than Europe's cinema trade. [5]

Besides, some other researchers – especially in French speaking countries – describe the contemporary situation as "Americanization", or even "Denationalization". They bring some reasons that the increase of globalization's need is going toward America's concentrated media. [6]

One of Indianan's university professors explains the contemporary situation as a change in centre – periphery and shows that how the commercial world was shaped in the BC centuries, as a multi Polar by the centralization of china, India, Iraq [Iran], Greece, Egypt and Italy and each country in the centre of one of the eight drafted ovals on the earth of which one intersect with the others. They held the control of exchanges, and actually the global communication system in a decentralized way.

During 14 and 15 century, because of some reasons including the expansion of technical science in the Western Europe and backward phenomenon among the other countries, a new centre was

created that England along with other countries including Spain, Portugal and France were at the peak of that centre.

So those interrelated ovals turned into concentric circles which its centre was western European countries and the rest of the world was at its margin. [It can be said that a monopole, multi country system was formed].

Along with the termination of the second world war and the role which America played in it and subsequently the colonies access to independence, the world system changed and this time centralization arose more from economic and cultural authority rather than political one. In this system the United States of America was shown in the centre of a big circle from which some lines were being drawn to the several smaller circles which were the representative of other countries. [7]

One of the other ideas focusing on the future is the one based on cultural invasion. On the basis of this idea the more globalization power declines traditional limits; the more powerful becomes cultural invasion. This point of view is more related to the societies which have deep difference with west from the point of view of value system and before the exterior dominance – either in the case of official and direct colonization or the indirect one – they had suffered from the serious damage on their material and spiritual value. They have also considered some branches for cultural invasion, for example one of Egyptian researchers has applied "intellectual invasion" and it is the combination of strangers' cultural invasion and interior forces [8] which might be known similar to an innovative _expression of decade of 1950's propounded by one of Iranian sociologists "Jalal- Al- Ahmad" as "westernization". [9]

Some of thinkers regarded the future situation as a cultural overlap and the extension of cultural hybrids phenomenon and has applied a new _expression which is called glocalization.

Basically cultural identity is placed in the history and individual's background, while like any other phenomenon related to history, it is fluid and dynamic.

Message Bazaar

Globalization has led cultural identities to touch other cultural identities in a virtual way, more than before. It is predicted that in future, this matter will lead to the entrance of the word "hybridist" in culture as we have it, in the genetic (such as a youngster whose father is German and his mother is Chinese)

Stuart Hall believes that globalization process has some sub sequences for cultural identity .The most important ones which are affected by globalization are national identity and local identity resistance. Under these circumstances we have a phenomenon which could be named cultural identity of hybridist.[10] An identity which can be seen in some Chinese restaurants in different countries that functionally instead of cooking real Chinese food they cook in a way that both Chinese and the host countries enjoys. [11]

In 1994 Robertson brought up this topic that "grafted restaurants" process is going to occur in globalization and cultural insertion. A process which can be named glocalization and different performances of Shakespeare in different countries is an old example of it. [12]

As far as I'm concerned, there are some evidences that on their basis future situation would be different from the various performances of Shakespeare's works. A situation can be regarded similar to the dominant system on transportation of goods in old traditional bazaar of oriental countries in early centuries. In this situation global communication space will transform to a market which can be named Message Bazaar.

For getting familiar with message bazaar we should get familiar with the traditional bazaar of oriental countries in early centuries, especially is Iran which is the origin of bazaar.

Bazaar is an Iranian word which was pronounced as " Vakar" in ancient and archaeological language of Iran (Pahlavi) and from then on it was transformed to "Al bazaar" and it entered by French language to other European languages in the same way. [13] Traditional oriental bazaar is related to two rows of Hojreh (traditional stores) which are located in front of each other under the same roof [some of these Hojreh include several Hojrehs and some include even a half one].

Since most of the big cities, bazaars continuously reach a public square; bazaar also has the role of a shortcut for passing from one part of the town to another. So there were so many people who passed bazaar without being a customer or a seller.

Some European traveler's description of Iran's bazaars, in ancient centuries, can be helpful for having a conception of message bazaar in the future. One of the Russian explorers in 1468 writes about Iran's bazaar. News was first disseminated in bazaar. [14]. Another Russian explorer in 1834 in description of Iran's bazaar writes that bazaar is the place for noisy and talkative people together. The latest news about town is being retold and disseminated by word of mouth. A person with a heavy heart or someone who wants to chat away goes to bazaar and gathers some loafers around him and chats away about the things that he has some knowledge of it or he doesn't. [15]. A French explorer writes about what he saw in 1877 in bazaar: Bazaar is the centre of actions and moments where people are in action from early hours of dawn till sunset. Bazaar is the place of all visits and public treaties, news, rumors, offences the dissemination of lies, quarrels, vilifications, dissemination and all originate from bazaar. As well as talking about their own affairs and personal commercial profits in bazaar, people exchange their views about public and governmental matters. [16]

Isn't it possible to use the same description for the present era's web travelers? The dominant architectural style, organization and institution of traditional bazaar in Iran and several west – Asian countries has created some situation, facilities and limitation that if we consider the mentioned bazaar as global communication space and the message sender as a substitute for bazaar seller and message receiver as bazaar customer, we would be able to discover some similarities among interactions in traditional bazaar and global message bazaar.

1. In Global message bazaar, the sort of communication would be horizontal not vertical. This situation is similar to traditional bazaar that because of people's location in a space

which the distances of Hojreh are the same across from each other, communication is arranged in a way that the performance of vertical communication was functionally impossible and there were no priority among sender and receiver.

2. In global message bazaar, like what is now taking place in internet, message transfer would happen continuously. In traditional bazaars architecture there wasn't any public door to be opened and closed and all Hojrehs where opened in a way that no door was basically considered for them, a free traversing existed among all the sellers and customers and passengers all the time.

3. In message bazaar beside thousand of great T.V senders and other media's, millions of individual sender would exist variously similar to the modern Web logs. From the primary example we can point to the access of video film makers of Ghana to African cinema trade which its development in the year 2000 was in a way that one of western connoisseurs said: "if the world of cinema is conquered by Hollywood, Ghana cinema is conquered by Ghanawood. [17]

In future, the common use of digital cameras will cause a great cultural recognition. An outstanding 62- year-old Iranian film- maker, Abas Kiarostami made the movie "ten" by installing two digital cameras on his cars dashboard and omitting all other needed instruments such as light-projector and etc, after 23 hours of taking film from 10 dialogue and 10 emotional situation with 10 women in the car in Tehran, which away from receiving presents from cinema festivals by earning a high in come, this film was also performed in many European countries. This happening is similar to the situation which used to happen to seller mono s in traditional oriental bazaars. Those were some people that although they played the role of peddlers, they didn't have the same proficiency. They issued their goods in front of a big Hojreh of bazaar and it was possible to be the customer of other goods from big Hojrehs as they were selling their own goods. In other words in traditional bazaars everybody could played both the role of seller and customer and if there was a mass of customers there seller had the same mood too. In message bazaar also everybody has the opportunity to be communicator and play both the role of receiver and sender.

4. The existence of searching engines in internet would exceed in future and it also includes voice, immovable and movable pictures, beside scripture. These engines will help a person to be completely a searcher and chooser not only an objective user. This matter will lead to the preparation of a correlation between the belief in news and the receiving news. Consequently the gate keeping phenomenon would be greatly vaster in receivers than which was particularly for senders.

Also in traditional bazaars the presence of an individual as a passenger of the short-cut way- not necessarily a customer – and the way the Hojrehs of special goods have been located in a single row and next to each other on the other side brought the role of a searcher and a chooser for the customer to need a less energy for searching, there was and opportunity to cast a cursory glance at every Hojreh and even the mono seller, and in this search the importance of Hojrehs size, was at a lower degree in comparison to the goods.

5. 5 - In the Message Bazaar, the audiences will reach the highest degree of media pluralism that they have ever experienced; therefore they will not be *the mass* anymore. They will be *the independent individuals* instead. At any given time, one individual has some common characteristics with a minority or majority groups of other individuals who are experiencing (and are more interested to) the same message source at the same time. For example it has been observed that lower-educated audiences (a group of some individuals with some common characteristics) are more interested to the message sources with short messages [18] or audiences who are belonging to a specific social class are more interested to some specific message sources that are more coordinated to their class [19].

   For example consider a lower-educated (first characteristic) male (second characteristic) as an *individual* and a lower-educated (first characteristic) female (second characteristic) as another *individual*. Both of them maybe prefer to experience the same message source, because of their common (first) characteristic regardless what is their different (second) characteristic. In addition, the woman may be prefers to experience a different message source because of her different (second) characteristic. In that case again there are some other individuals (females) who are experiencing the new message source because of their common characteristic regardless they are higher educated or lower-educated.

To have a better imagination of the audiences in Message Bazaar, assume that an individual is like a colored glass with an independent specific color. At any given time, one part of this glass is experienced to a specific colored light (message) and has some overlaps with some other mutually colored glasses (individuals); therefore it will get a new color at the given time and is also able to experience a new colored light (another message source) and overlap with some other mutually colored glasses (other individuals) to get a different and more desired color. Although it is still possible that at a specific given time all of the glasses, regardless of their different colors, prefer to experience one light source which is reporting the landing of a manned spacecraft on Mars in a live program! To derive a model of audiences, from the message source view, we can show each individual with a circular colored glass and determine each color by one number; therefore at a given time, a message source experiences some mutually colored glasses with a separate color in some parts, representative of single individuals, and interfered colors in some other parts, representative of a group of individuals. The model is illustrated in Figure 1.
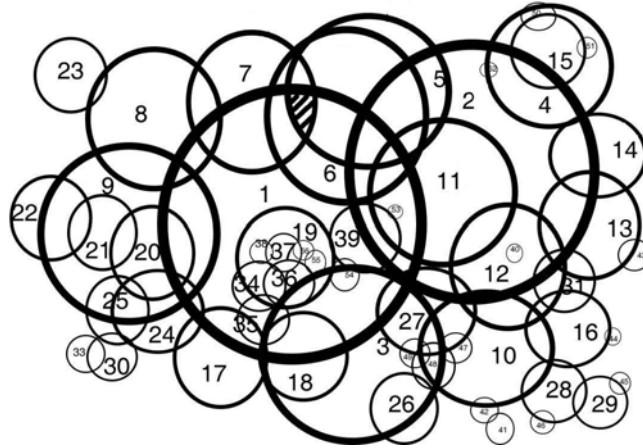
Figure No.1- incarnation of audiences of Message Bazaar as mutually colored glasses.

Considering the model, it is observed that the potential variety of taste in the *individual* audiences is the factorial of the number of colors and the number of interferences. This number will be a very huge number and is the representative of the Message Bazaar age which is completely different from the last age that audiences were considered as *mass*.

6. In message bazaar, the loss of communicational limits will cause innovation along with borrowing and imitating the style and content of message to destroy individualism. Face to face visits but the virtual ones, different cultures and permanent supervision of visitors to sites would be the reason to vast media in many various sizes by the awareness of tastes and making them available.

7. In traditional oriental bazaars the limitation of the space between Hojrehs, along with their doors left opened and the possibility for watching the traverse of goods always brought the opportunity for sellers to become aware of peoples taste, meanwhile they became aware of their competitor's function and their profession's secrets. In this way it was possible that a Mono Seller has the opportunity to look hopefully to their jobs growth and development.

8. In global message bazaar, the limitation of monitor screens, decreases, the inequality of advertising facilities. While the fabric advertisement would be the nature of message, not an advertisement for that message .This situation is similar to traditional Bazaars that the limitation of the ceiling height, especially it's domed and bow- shaped form, limited the possibility of installing billboard and other advertising elements in big sizes. Consequently the ability of Hojreh to compete with each other was more related to the nature and characteristic of goods than the size of stores and number of their Hojrehs with advertising facilities in this way there was the chance of competition for everybody.

9. The habitants of global message bazaar without any attention to governments would be able to communicate about their ordinary and routine problems more than before by many degrees.

10. In traditional oriental bazaars also, people's physical intimacy – including seller and customer or seller and seller – brought the opportunity for talking and discussing about their daily affairs as well as their main aims.

11. In global message bazaar, communications would have the chance to use communication space for evacuating their mental pressures and confide in strangers which are a typical phenomenon in traditional bazaars more than before.

12. The collapse of communicational limits and the increase of individuals communicating independence would be the occasion of communicators, safety and security. In fact it is expected that the security degree in message space, will reach an ultra national standard. Similar to the situation existing in traditional bazaars which the seller and customer had the same security against rain, cold weather and sun.

13. In global message bazaar, the opportunity for getting familiar with cultures would be provided with propagandist's supervision. (For example non- Islamic religions will be more informed that on the basis of Koran's sentences, Moslems must believe in all prophets and no difference has been considered among them and they should believe in what inspired to Christ and Moses and other profits.)

14. In traditional bazaars of past centuries, especially the great bazaars of "silk road" it was typical for businessmen believing in different religions to have some inter-civilized dialogues.

15. In global message bazaar social reformer would be able to change "cultural invasion" _expression to Cultural Interference which was common in traditional oriental bazaar. In those bazaars in apothecary section it was taught to customers that which foods are in contrary to each other such as honey dew melon and honey – with any suggestions about the quality of each food on its own. And they were told to be cautious about interfere phenomenon – the denotation of interfere in Old Persian dictionaries was the mixture of digestible and indigestible food.

It seems that in field of culture – especially from morality point of view – we can face with similar occasions to interfere meant by apothecaries in old traditional bazaar. For example in west because of supporting individual freedom adults appeal to pornography is not prohibited but it is obviously known to have severe damage for children. While in Islamic societies vice versa the prohibition of adults to pornography is more severe and serious than children s prohibition in many degrees.

In Koran believers including men and women – must avert their glances. In fact there exists an interfered between Islam and pornography which can be called cultural interference.

According to former descriptions, by extracting the system of traditional – oriental bazaars the figure number 2 suggested in this model, countries are shown like some ovals with different sizes by the world "C" of each oval is a subordination of hardware and software capabilities and facilities of that country in the field of media. But the arrangement of the ovals is in a way that the distance between two opposite ovals – without considering their size – is the same.
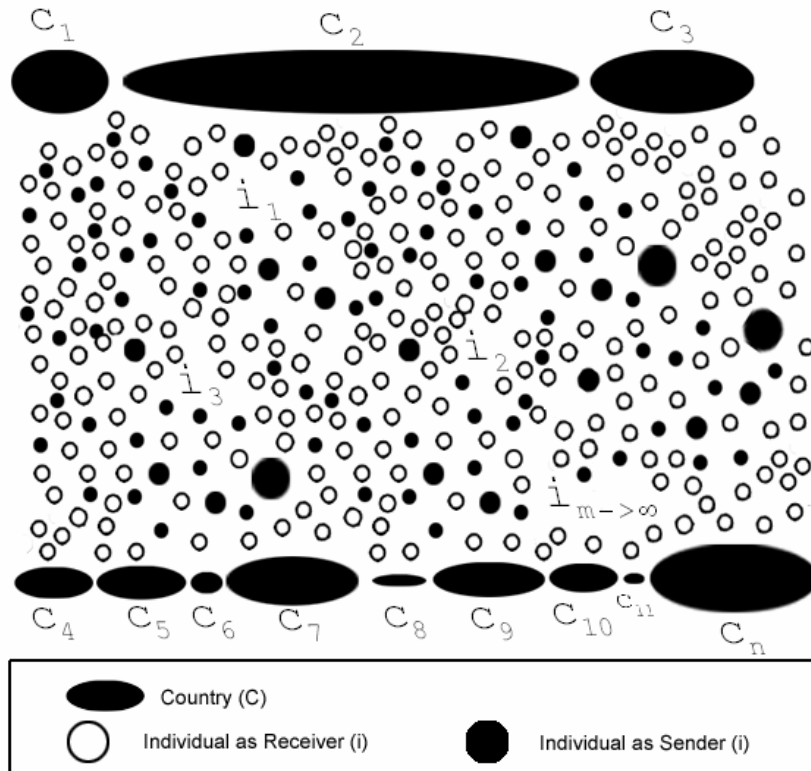
Figure No.2- incarnation of numerous communicators (message senders and audiences) in Message Bazaar

In the model the arrangement of countries is similar to the arrangement of "Hojreh" in Bazaar, and among them individuals shown with the sign i1 till i unlimited are located as various white and black circles (white is the represent of receiver and black is the representative of sender)

In the model all white circles have the same and the black ones which are in competition with ovals do not have the same sizes which beside being the addressed are the senders too.

While the white circles can change their colors and shift from the addressed to the addressed – sender and gradually change their form by increasing the measure and change from circle to oval and get into the ovals arrangement.

In this model, the existence of equal distances between two opposite ovals, make the same opportunity for circles to reach the ovals.

Among the ovals and the circles, or black circles and white circles in the way of traditional communicational models no arrow is drew because the existence of millions of arrows. (According to factorial numbers of circles and ovals) could be imagined and this is definitely the nature of cobwebby globalization in the field of communication. Perhaps after decades of experience of living in the Global Village, citizen of the world are going to face a new era: Global Message Bazaar".

References

1) Mc Creery, John. (1994) Culture? "Us" vs. "Them"
www.anatomy.usyd.au/danny/anthropology/anthro-I/archive/feburary 1994 / 0041. html.

2) Mac Bride, Sean. (1980).Many Voices, one World .London: Kogan Page Ltd. 3) Varis, Tapio. (1985) International Flow of Television Programmes. Reports and Papers on Mass Communication. No. 100. Paris: UNESCO.

4) Wells, Alan. (1996).World broadcasting: A Comparative Views. New Jersey: Ablex.

5) Cowen, Tyler (2001) Why Hollywood rules the World (and should as we care?).P.6. Correspondence. An International Review of Culture and Society.

6) American Invasion (2000). www.media.uio.no/summerschool/htm/invasion.html.

7) Sawhney, Harmeet. (2000). Global Economy and International Telecommunications Networks. In Yahya R. Kamalipour (Ed.) Global Communication, pp. 39 – 42. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

8) El-Maghawry, Saleh. (2000). Islamic Education in Facing the Intellectual and Cultural Invasion to the Egyptian Society.

9) Jafarian, Habibeh. (2002). Jalal Aalahmad. Tehran : Soroosh publication.

10) Hall, S. (1992). The Question of cultural identity. In S. Hall, D. Held & T. Grew (Eds.) Modernity and its futures.P.300. Cambridge: Polity Press.

11) Hall, S. (1997). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In K. Woodward, (Ed.), p. 52

12) Roberson, R. (1994) Globalization or Glocalization? Journal of international communication, 1(1)

13) Forghani, Mohammad M. (2003).Daramadi bar Ertebatate Sonati dar Iran. (Traditional Communication in Iran. An Introduction) Tehran: Centre for Media Studies & Research.

14) Nikitin, B. (1984) Irani Keh Man Shenakhteham. (The voyage of Nikitin, B.) Tehran: Marefat.

15) Korf. F. (1993). Safarnameh Baron Fiodor Korf. (The voyage of F.Korf) .Tehran: Fekr.

16) Soltanzadeh, Hosin (2001) Bazaarhai Iran. (Iran's Bazaars) Tehran: Daftar Pazhoheshhai Farhangi.

17) Dehkhoda. (2001) Loghatnameh Dehkhoda. (Dehkhoda Dictionary).Tehran : Moaseseh Loghatnameh Dehkhoda and Daneshgah Tehran.

18) Nimmon, Dan. D. and Keith R. Sanders. (1981). Hand book of Political Communication. London: Sage

19) Defleur, Melvin and Sandra Rokegch. (1989) Theories of Mass Communication. New York: Longman.