

Consciousness, Imagination, and Media Globalization (The Ambiguous Interaction)

Abdelkader Nouai

Faculty of Humanities, University of Amar Telidji - Laghouat - Algeria

Email : ae.k.nouai@lagh-univ.dz

Received: 24/11/2024 ; Accepted: 11/03/2025 ; Published: 08/04/2025

ABSTRACT

Consciousness is a human phenomenon that is uniquely embodied by humans, as it is a concept primarily linked to mental and intellectual activity. Consciousness is considered a true indicator of intellectual maturity and cognitive development. This complex, interconnected concept holds great significance in psychological, psychosociological, and sociological studies. It transcends cognitive boundaries and permeates the aforementioned fields, as well as others. Sociologists have given particular attention to this concept, including figures such as Igor Kon, Burhan Ghalioun, and even some thinkers like Abdul Karim Bakkar. However, studies especially within the fields of communication and media on this topic remain limited and insufficient. This article seeks to shed light on the relationship between consciousness and another concept that shares similar methodological characteristics in terms of complexity, dissemination, and comprehensiveness: the concept of mass imagination. Here, we speak of the imagination constructed upon the media content provided by globalized media. So, what is the relationship between these two concepts? And what is the reality of the socio-communicational concepts being produced?

We will address the topic according to the following outline:

- Introduction
- Forms of Consciousness
- Globalization
- Media Globalization
- Imagination
- Mass Imagination
- Consciousness and Imagination

Keywords: Consciousness, Forms of Consciousness, Imagination, Mass Imagination, Globalization, Media Globalization.

1. Introduction:

The scientific definition of consciousness is an epistemological and methodological process of extreme complexity, especially since some researchers—particularly in the material sciences—limit this concept to the physiological dimension, reducing consciousness to a mere neural mental activity linked exclusively to the brain. From this perspective, the concept pertains solely to the

physio-biological and bodily dimension. However, this definition remains insufficient, flawed, and incomplete.

Sociological schools of thought, on the other hand, propose consciousness as a fundamental and vital foundation of human existence itself. They regard it as the core and essence of the being and existence of the human entity, and as the very basis of its relationship with the external world. Nevertheless, this concept, within the scope of the aforementioned sciences and bodies of knowledge, gives rise to numerous epistemological and methodological issues, particularly due to its influence by countless other human and cognitive concepts such as planning, intelligence, ideology, culture, politics, media, imagination, and more.

However, this research will specifically focus its analytical attention on two key concepts: consciousness and imagination, within the framework of globalized media.

2. The Nature of Consciousness:

It is the individual's direct awareness of their surroundings and involves the realization of a new idea and the feeling of a need for more information about it ¹.

In reality, it is a concept that is epistemologically based on two approaches:

- **The first approach (Psychological):** Consciousness rooted in the awakening of perception in an individual.
- **The second approach (Sociological):** Consciousness rooted in the awakening of perception among members of a public or society.

Self-awareness, according to the second approach, goes beyond individualistic dimensions and boundaries to those of the group, the public, or society. It is distinct from individual consciousness, as it is a psychosocial and communicational phenomenon through which we assess the extent to which members of a given audience truly comprehend globalized media content presented through various sources be they classical or interactive digital comprehension that includes the meanings and connotations of both abstract and material symbols, within their three temporal dimensions (past, present, and future) and spatial dimensions.

This audience carries out processes of classification, organization, safe or cautious engagement, acceptance or rejection, etc., of that content. In other words, consciousness is a filtering mechanism. This mechanism is linked to specific behaviors that later serve as decisive indicators of the authenticity or falsity, and the strength or weakness, of consciousness.

The degree of awareness among different audiences serves as a reliable indicator for judging a society's progress or backwardness.

$$\text{Consciousness} = \text{Perception} + \text{Culture} + \text{Methodology}$$

In other words:

$$\text{Consciousness} = \text{Awareness of Perception} + \text{Indicative Behaviors} + \text{Foundational Classification Criterion}$$

Where:

- **Perception** = A primary mechanism for receiving and deconstructing data.
- **Indicative Behaviors** = Symbolic behavioral expressions that reflect either inherited culture adopted by the social actor, or acquired/developed culture practiced by the social actor, revealing the state of consciousness.
- **Foundational Classification Criterion** = A fundamental methodological mechanism for classification, through which we determine the category and type of consciousness by identifying its dimensions and components such as saying (consumer consciousness, sports consciousness, political consciousness).

Consciousness, before and after all else, serves as the foundation for filtering human behavior. Conscious behavior requires the presence of reason, which distinguishes humans from other living beings. Human behavior is not tied to the stimulus-response concept; rather, humans plan their actions based on expectations, making them more rational. Through reason, individuals can review their actions, expectations, and independent practices in light of their past experiences and the lessons learned from previous actions.

Furthermore, humans are distinguished by their ability to reflect upon themselves. Consciousness depends on the human capacity to form an attitude toward the self in the same way they relate to others of their kind ². This is the same scientific detail held by researcher **Ali Mansour Kayali**, who believes that “humans are a form of creature with external morphological characteristics that distinguish them from other living beings only,” basing this view on the Quranic verse: “and he appeared to her as a well-proportioned man.”

In his view, people are divided into two categories: those with apparent and socially desirable actions or behaviors such as doctors and those with hidden and socially undesirable actions or behaviors such as smugglers. His reference for this distinction is Surat An-Nas ³.

Therefore, when we speak of human behavior, we are speaking of the human being, of values, principles, and foundations we are speaking of consciousness. Thus, we find that human behavior fundamentally differs from biological behavior, as it is more complex, more evolved, and requires an essential mechanism called reason as previously mentioned. Hence:

Human Behavior = Goal + Value + Criterion + Limits and Dimensions

Where:

- **Goal:**

It is the foundation upon which human behavior is based. No human behavior is valid unless it is built upon clear, precise, and specific goals whether declared or undeclared. A goal may be valuable, meaning positive, or non-valuable, meaning negative or purposeless. The goal is what determines the classification of consciousness and is linked to the type of action or behavior. Researcher **Ali Mansour Kayali** notes: “Good behavior is an initial act or behavior with no clear or purposeful goal, while righteous behavior is goal-oriented, with clearly defined features marked by precision and mastery. Going to school is good behavior, but the goal of success is what characterizes it as righteous behavior. Going to work is good behavior, but the goal of mastering the work is what characterizes it as righteous behavior” ⁴.

- **Value:**

It is one of the outcomes of achieving the goal. Every goal is ultimately linked to a certain human value, which may be social, economic, or political. When a person engages in a particular behavior toward a certain goal, they are certainly aiming for a specific human value, which is often the primary motivator driving one behavior over another. The integration of both goal and value is the foundational basis for building plans and strategies.

- **Criterion:**

This refers to the defining boundary from which one embarks toward the goal. This criterion may be internal, determined by the individual themselves through justified personal factors, and is reflected in principles the individual establishes independently while engaging in a specific action (e.g., a strike, boycott, or particular production). Or it may be external, dictated by nature or certain environmental conditions. For instance, the passing grade in a particular exam is predefined by relevant authorities and serves as the dividing line between success and failure—i.e., it is the criterion that determines success.

- **Limits and Dimensions:**

Here, we refer to the minimum and maximum thresholds through which the goal is reached. These are represented by the human and environmental capacities that enable the human actor to engage in the behavior itself in order to achieve the previously set goals. These limits serve as the mechanism through which we determine the type of human behavior, and whether it is conscious or unconscious.

3. Conceptual Views of Consciousness

3.1. Consciousness from Max Weber's Perspective:

In the first volume of Weber's *Economy and Society* a work to which several contributors participated in translating and editing most of Weber's concepts and ideas related to sociology and its issues are presented. Notably, the first part contains the basic sociological concepts that served as Weber's analytical tools for examining society, its systems, and its social actions in this work.

Weber defines sociology as a science that dedicates its efforts to the interpretive understanding of social action... its causes and accompanying conditions. He defines action as the product of the subjective meaning that individuals assign to their behavior, whether that meaning is explicit or implicit. Social action, in his view, is characterized by the extent to which the actor takes into account the behavior of others in their orientation and conduct.

It is important to note that Weber granted the concept of social action a particularly broad definition, considering it the central subject of sociological inquiry from his standpoint. He included within it all types of behavior, as long as the actor attributes meaning to them ⁵.

Accordingly, behavior resulting from interaction with media content is to be interpreted and understood as a social action under Weberian theory.

3.2. Consciousness from the Perspective of Ali Shariati:

In this context, Shariati equates consciousness with alertness (nabaaha), describing it as "psychological knowledge or awareness or alertness that an individual has about themselves. It is beyond the knowledge of philosophy, science, or craft, because those are knowledge, but not psychological knowledge that is, not the kind that reveals myself to me, extracts me and allows me to know my own self. It is what draws my attention to my destiny and my value, for the value of each person is as great as their belief in themselves" ⁶.

Lalande, meanwhile, sees consciousness as "what remains with us at the faintest level as we gradually fall into a dreamless sleep, and what intensifies more and more as noise slowly awakens us this is what is referred to as consciousness" ⁷.

3.3. Consciousness according to Burhan Ghalioun:

Researcher Burhan Ghalioun considers self-awareness to be tied to the broader domains of human and civilizational activity, such as politics and culture, and related fields. In his view, self-awareness stands in opposition to what he calls the dissolution of historical perception, wherein society and the individual lose all spatial and temporal coordinates and become incapable of determining their actual place in history, as well as of identifying their aims, demands, and the conditions that shape their actions ⁸.

Thus, self-awareness for Burhan Ghalioun is synonymous with collective awareness or general collective attention, and it is expressed starting from the individual's sense of historical reality until the individual becomes a historical collective. According to the same researcher, this condition has negative consequences and regressive tendencies. He states: "Periods of decline are marked by the loss of historical intuition and sense, and the surrender to pure, direct reactions and impulses driven by external or internal forces whether material or moral" ⁹.

3.4. Consciousness According to Igor Kon:

Through the propositions of Igor Kon, it becomes evident that the concept of self-awareness or awareness of the self is primarily tied to psychological fields, with natural philosophical associations extending from the early descriptions of Kant and even earlier, to more modern interpretations. For Kon, self-awareness is considered a stage in the development of inner wisdom.

He clearly distinguishes between general consciousness and self-awareness:

- The former is linked to moral and social dimensions, meaning it is holistic, moving from the outside inward.
- The latter self-awareness is an individual mechanism, inherently isolated, and corresponds precisely to the commonly used term "individual characteristics."

In other words:

- **Consciousness** = Awareness associated with traits drawn from the general social sphere, where individual components interact with the society's broader cultural inputs.
- **Self-awareness** = Awareness tied to the unique individual traits of a specific person.

Igor Kon, quoting the philosopher **Hegel**, outlined three stages through which consciousness evolves in the individual after having elaborated on the foundations of consciousness and its

relation to the self (ego) and to wisdom. He described consciousness as progressing through the following stages:¹⁰

▪ **First Stage: Individual Self-Awareness**

Although this form of awareness is independent and linked to the individual, it remains limited and possibly misaligned with the surrounding environment and reality.

▪ **Second Stage: Self-Awareness**

This stage assumes the emergence of interactive relationships between the individual and their environment that is, the individual becomes aware of their existence alongside others through what is called mutual recognition. At this point, the foundations of psychosociological processes are purely reciprocal, relational, and interactive. Here, what emerges is often referred to as awareness of differences between the self and others. The ego, in this stage, tends to distinguish itself from the other for the sake of more effective interaction.

▪ **Third Stage: General Self-Awareness**

Here, self-awareness merges with the general, under the influence of what are known as societal principles. Elements such as family, nation, and state play a role in shaping human consciousness. In this stage, consciousness is built on a shared self, giving rise to specific behaviors such as altruism and sacrifice. Unlike the previous stage where clear distinctions between self and others are evident this stage does not dwell much on differentiating between self and other on an individual level. Instead, the self interacts with the other in a general or abstract form, such as the state or society.

From the foregoing, it appears that there are clear distinctions between self-awareness and awareness of the self. However, the researcher does not seem to have arrived at precise differences between the concepts of awareness of the self and self-consciousness. Nonetheless, using these two terms interchangeably does not seem to pose a major issue, as they both refer to the same essential meaning provided that each concept is understood within its respective human knowledge domain, as suggested in the following proposal:

- **Self-awareness** = A form of self-consciousness related to purely psychological knowledge.
- **Awareness of the self** = A form of self-consciousness related to both psychological and sociological knowledge.

Accordingly, the researcher distinguishes between awareness of the self and self-awareness, considering the latter a strictly psychological concept, unlike the former, which has broader applicational uses. Examples include:

- Awareness of the self in a group (or a group's self-consciousness).
- Awareness of the self among the public (or the public's self-consciousness).
- Awareness of the self among individuals, and so on.

Thus, it can be said that the concept of **awareness of the self** is the same as **self-consciousness**, while the concept of **self-awareness** is distinct, and its applications, as previously noted, are primarily **psychological**.

4. Forms of Consciousness:

4.1. In Terms of Domain Dimension:

- **General Consciousness:** This is a comprehensive form of consciousness that is not tied to any specific human field of activity or knowledge. It involves the blending of consciousness derived from one domain of knowledge with that of another possibly even a third or fourth domain.
- **Specific Consciousness:** This refers to specialized awareness, such as consumer consciousness, sports consciousness, and similar domain-specific forms.

4.2. In Terms of Being and Reality:

- **True Consciousness:** True consciousness is a state built upon the individual's deep and distinct awareness of the self and surroundings, filled with alertness and insight. This consciousness encompasses an understanding of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, along with the capacity for critical thinking and conscious decision-making that reflects an authentic understanding of both internal and external realities. It is a form of awareness untainted by elements of denial, manipulation, negligence, or the like.
- **False Consciousness:** False consciousness is a state built on distorted or illusory awareness, whether intentional or unintentional. The individual exists in a state of confusion regarding emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and the ability to engage in critical thinking and make informed decisions. This understanding is based on incorrect data or flawed or disoriented mental processing often influenced by misleading external factors such as media. Key indicators of false consciousness include:

- ❖ Cognitive bias
- ❖ Logical fallacies
- ❖ The dominance of mythology over reasoning
- ❖ The overreach of ideology

4.3. In Terms of Human Grouping:

Based on numerous references and sources, human consciousness can be classified according to population grouping into four main categories: self-awareness, situational awareness, cognitive awareness, and collective awareness. These categories do not operate in isolation but rather overlap and interact to shape our understanding of the world and influence our behavior in daily life. Let us explore each type in more detail:

- **Self-Awareness (Self-awareness):**

- ✓ **Definition:**

It is the individual's recognition of themselves as a distinct entity, with the ability to reflect on their own thoughts, analyze their emotions, and understand how their actions affect others. Self-awareness enables a person to evaluate themselves, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and make more informed and responsible decisions.

- ✓ **Characteristics:**

- ❖ **Introspection:** The ability to think about one's own thinking and analyze internal feelings.
 - ❖ **Emotional Perception:** Awareness of one's own emotions and their impact on behavior.
 - ❖ **Self-Reflection:** Reviewing past decisions and analyzing the reasons behind successes or failures.
 - ❖ **Social Impact Awareness:** Understanding how one's behavior affects others.
- ✓ **Importance:**
- ❖ Enhances self-control and emotional regulation.
 - ❖ Improves social relationships by strengthening empathy and effective communication skills.
 - ❖ Supports the achievement of personal and professional goals by recognizing strengths and weaknesses.
- **Situational Awareness (Situational Awareness):**
- ✓ **Definition:**
It is the ability to understand what is happening in the present moment and to interact with the surrounding environment consciously and attentively. This form of awareness aids in making appropriate decisions based on available information, thereby reducing errors and enhancing both personal and public safety.
- ✓ **Characteristics:**
- ❖ **Environmental Perception:** The ability to comprehend surrounding elements and interact with them effectively.
 - ❖ **Real-Time Decision-Making:** The capacity to respond quickly to changing situations.
 - ❖ **Anticipation and Prediction:** The ability to foresee risks or opportunities based on immediate observations.
 - ❖ **Adaptability:** The ability to adjust behavior in response to changing circumstances.
- ✓ **Importance:**
- ❖ Essential in dynamic environments such as driving and emergency response.
 - ❖ Enhances professional performance, especially in roles requiring high attention like security and safety.
 - ❖ Helps maintain focus and reduce mental distraction, leading to more accurate decision-making.
- **Cognitive Awareness (Cognitive Awareness):**
- ✓ **Definition:**
This type of awareness is linked to higher mental processes such as thinking, planning, problem-solving, and decision-making. It also includes **metacognition**, which is the ability to think about one's own thinking process helping to improve learning methods and logical analysis.
- ✓ **Characteristics:**

- ❖ **Critical Thinking:** The ability to analyze information and make decisions based on logic.
- ❖ **Cognitive Flexibility:** The ability to adapt to new information and change perspectives when necessary.
- ❖ **Continuous Learning:** A tendency to acquire knowledge and expand mental awareness.
- ❖ **Creative Thinking:** The ability to find innovative and non-traditional solutions to problems.
- ✓ **Importance:**
 - ❖ Enhances the capacity for critical thinking and sound decision-making.
 - ❖ Supports the development of self-learning skills and learning from past experiences.
 - ❖ Enables individuals to objectively analyze information, reducing cognitive biases.
- **Collective Awareness (Collective Awareness):**
- ✓ **Definition:**

It is the individual's awareness of their society and surrounding culture, and how these influence their behaviors and perceptions. This awareness includes a deep understanding of the values and beliefs prevalent within a group, and an awareness of how these factors shape both individual and collective thinking and behavior.
- ✓ **Characteristics:**
 - ❖ **Mutual Influence:** Awareness of how the individual affects society and how society affects the individual.
 - ❖ **Social Adaptation:** The ability to understand and comply with social norms.
 - ❖ **Group Participation:** Engagement in activities that contribute to societal development.
 - ❖ **Cultural Influence:** The ability to recognize how dominant cultural values impact personal behavior.
- ✓ **Importance:**
 - ❖ Enhances positive social interaction and strengthens the sense of belonging.
 - ❖ Aids in understanding social issues and forming conscious positions on them.
 - ❖ Empowers individuals to effectively contribute to community development and to promote values of cooperation and solidarity.

5. Sources of Consciousness:

Consciousness is the result of complex mental and emotional processes. Thinking alone does not shape consciousness intuition, imagination, sensations, emotions, will, and conscience all play a role. In addition, principles, values, innate tendencies, life events, social systems, and the circumstances surrounding a person's life contribute. This vast mixture of elements functions in a highly complex way, with each component contributing to varying degrees from one person to another. As a result, each individual develops a unique form of consciousness that differs from that of others ¹¹.

Below are proposed categories that may be suitable for identifying the sources of consciousness:

- **Innate, Natural, or Internal Sources:**

- ✓ **Genetics and Biological Composition:**

- A person's neurological and mental structure influences their responsiveness to external stimuli, thereby affecting their level of consciousness and awareness.

- ✓ **Senses and Direct Experience:**

- The senses play a fundamental role in receiving information such as sight, hearing, and touch which contributes to the formation of sensory knowledge.

- ✓ **Reason and Self-Reflection:**

- The human capacity to think about their own thoughts and feelings supports the development of independent self-awareness.

- **External Sources of Consciousness:**

- ✓ **Socialization and Coordinates of Social Interaction:**

- Family, school, friends, and media influence the formation of value systems and norms that shape the individual's perception of the world.

- ✓ **Politics and Social Systems:**

- Ideologies and public policies shape individual consciousness through laws and structures that govern societal behavior.

- ✓ **Practical Experience and Real-World Exposure:**

- Consciousness is not limited to theoretical knowledge but also evolves through direct interaction with reality and life experiences.

- For example, studying history helps in understanding the development of ideas and societies, expanding individuals' awareness of major issues. Likewise, artificial intelligence, algorithms, and technological research have a clear and growing impact on both individual and collective consciousness.

6. Mass Imagination

6.1. Mass Imagination:

Mohammed Arkoun was among the first to draw attention to the importance of the mental image, which he referred to as imagination ("mukhayyal") in his various writings. He believed that imaginary representations exert influence not only in the realm of perception but also in the sphere of social action carried out by every existing human group, which defines itself through comparison with others ¹².

In reality, the imagination of the masses, like that of all beings that do not engage in rational thinking, is highly susceptible to influence. The images evoked by a person, an event, or an incident do not carry the same vitality or strength as actual realities. The masses resemble, to some extent, a sleeping individual, whose rational mind is temporarily suspended, making them vulnerable to the emergence of a powerful and intense image one that quickly dissolves under the pressure of rational thought.

Since the masses are incapable of rational thinking or critical reasoning, they do not comprehend the meaning of the impossible or highly unlikely. In fact, the most impossible things are usually the most astonishing and impactful ¹³.

6.2. The Conceptual Power of Imagination:

A nation is a politically imagined community, where the very idea of it being defined and sovereign is rooted in imagination ¹⁴.

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know, meet, or even hear of most of their fellow-members, yet the image of communion remains vividly alive in the minds of each one of them ¹⁵.

6.3. The Mental Image:

The mental image is the sum total of knowledge and beliefs that an individual holds according to a specific internal system about themselves and the world in which they live. It is the result of intense mental and cultural processing carried out by consciousness to establish a solid cognitive foundation, which serves as a springboard for grasping the elements of existence ¹⁶.

6.4. Consciousness and Imagination

Consciousness and imagination are deeply interrelated concepts, with each influencing the other in multiple ways. Consciousness refers to a person's awareness of themselves and the surrounding world, while imagination (*mukhayyal*) represents the creative and fictional dimension of that awareness it helps form cultural and social symbols and representations.

Imagination enables individuals to reconstruct reality, whether through art, literature, myths, or even ideologies. In this context, a dialectical relationship between consciousness and imagination emerges: consciousness cannot be complete without imagination, and imagination cannot be effective unless it is rooted in human awareness.

▪ Imagination as an Extension of Consciousness

Imagination is not merely the capacity to “imagine,” but rather a symbolic system that enables individuals and societies to reinterpret the world. Human beings do not passively accept reality they reshape it according to their individual and collective imagination. In this context, consciousness plays the role of:

- ✓ **Defining the nature of imagination:** Critical consciousness can distinguish between *productive imagination* and *deceptive or illusory imagination*.
- ✓ **Analyzing cultural symbols:** Consciousness helps decode myths, collective dreams, and symbolic societal representations.
- ✓ **Guiding imagination:** Consciousness ensures imagination does not become an escape from reality but instead serves as a **tool for change and creativity**. For instance, art and literature are forms of collective imagination but they only carry meaning when linked to a specific historical or social awareness.

▪ Imagination as a Creator of Consciousness

Imagination is not merely influenced by consciousness it also shapes it. The ideas and perceptions adopted by individuals and societies are often rooted in a shared imagination. For example:

- ✓ Foundational myths of societies: Every culture relies on a specific imagination that defines its identity and worldview.
- ✓ Political and religious ideologies: Imagination contributes to the formation of notions surrounding authority, justice, and collective destiny.
- ✓ Scientific and technological progress: Many scientific breakthroughs began as mere science fiction before becoming reality thanks to a consciousness that dared to question the limits of the possible and the impossible.

Thus, imagination serves as a space of creativity that allows consciousness to expand beyond immediate reality.

▪ **Consciousness and Imagination in the Digital Age**

With technological advancements and the spread of digital media, mass imagination has become more influential than ever before. Today, films, video games, and social media constitute a significant part of contemporary imagination, impacting consciousness in both positive and negative ways:

- ✓ **Positively:**
 - Broadens intellectual horizons
 - Fosters creativity
 - Enables individuals to imagine new worlds
- ✓ **Negatively:**
 - Spreads illusions
 - Distorts facts
 - Implants unrealistic stereotypical representations

7. Mass Media Under the Globalization System

7.1. Globalization as Ideology:

In reality, globalization is not merely an economic or technological process such a view would be reductive. Rather, globalization is, in its essence, an ideology in the full sense of the term. It is an ideology that seeks to impose a unified model of development, economy, and culture on a global scale. This ideology relies on market freedom, technological proliferation, and political and social openness, but in parallel, it reinforces the economic and cultural dominance of major powers and multinational corporations.

As an ideology, globalization promotes the values of modernity, liberal democracy, and consumerism, which leads to the marginalization and eventual erasure of cultural identities, and the weakening of state sovereignty in its national and regional forms, in the face of the growing influence of transnational companies and international organizations. Globalization also attempts to wear a political guise to legitimize what is known as neoliberalism—or in other terms, an old

project branded as the "Americanization of the world", focused on privatization, minimizing the state's role, and freeing up markets.

While globalization offers significant opportunities such as the facilitation of knowledge transfer, the promotion of human rights, and the opening of markets it also faces major criticisms regarding its role in: Exacerbating inequality, destroying local industries, Manipulating public opinion through global media

Ultimately, globalization remains a problematic and contested concept. Some view it as progress toward modernity and development, while others see it as a tool of dominance and neocolonialism.

7.2. Definition of Mass Media:

Mass media refers to an organized and deliberate form of communication based on sending public messages issued by a mass communication institution (such as a broadcasting station, newspaper, television channel, advertising agency, or publishing house) through a mass communication medium (auditory, visual, or audiovisual) to a large audience with the aim of influencing their knowledge, attitudes, or behavior ¹⁷.

7.3. Characteristics of Mass Media:

Mass media is distinguished by a number of key features, including:

- It requires a complex media institution to prepare and produce communication messages.
- It generally operates in a one-way communication flow.
- Participants in mass media do not know each other, as the communication message is public and addressed to all.
- The audience is heterogeneous, consisting of diverse groups with varying cultures, preferences, orientations, and affiliations.
- Mass media messages are characterized by immediacy.
- Messages are broadcast and distributed at extremely high speed.
- Media content is quickly consumed and constantly replaced due to the continuous flow of news and information.
- Mass media messages are expensive and high-cost.
- Media messages are often subject to censorship by regulatory authorities ¹⁸.

7.4. Mass Media Platforms:

Mass media platforms refer to the currently available channels such as satellite networks, television, and transnational mass media, which reinforce the concept of the "global village" and globalization ¹⁹.

Media-on-demand platforms reflect the transformation expected from interactive television in the post-mass-media era, where viewers will have control over their own programming. They will be able to modify broadcast schedules to suit their personal timing and preferences ²⁰.

7.5. Globalization and Mass Media:

Some researchers trace globalization as an economic, media, and ideological system back to an initiative proposed by certain theorists in the United States in 1965, in which they presented three key issues, including an action plan to ensure U.S. dominance over the world:

- **First issue:** The use of the global market as a tool to disrupt the balance within nation-states, particularly in relation to their social protection systems and policies.
- **Second issue:** Concerns media, considered the central issue, and emphasized its critical role in driving the desired local and global transformations.
- **Third issue:** Focuses on the market as a space of competition, promoting the idea of liberalized, open competition as a guiding principle of the new global order ²¹.

7.6. The Essence of the Concept of Media Globalization:

The emergence of media globalization has been significantly influenced by the transformation of the international media system from a bipolar model, dominated by the liberal Western and Eastern socialist media systems, to a unipolar model dominated by a single international media system, namely the Western liberal model and the hegemony of a single global power over that system.

It is important to emphasize that communication and information technologies were among the main drivers behind this shift from a dual to a unipolar media order. These two variables constitute the core of the concept of media globalization ²².

Additionally, there has been a technological evolution in the integration of word, sound, and image, which were once controlled separately via keyboard or microphone but are now combined and managed by a single computer system. For example, a computer can now simulate an entire orchestra.

The drop in the cost of receivers has also contributed to the widespread diffusion of communication and media technologies, enabling their access across virtually all segments of the global population. This has led not only to greater reach but also to a broader range of choices and preferences among users.

Furthermore, this development has led to the erosion of national sovereignty over broadcast content, as satellite transmissions via dish antennas reach all communities, bypassing traditional territorial and political boundaries ²³.

8. Globalized Media, Imagination, and Consciousness (The Compound Crime):

- Collective viewing of certain media may lead to moral corruption.
- One of the encouraging factors for crime and violence.
- Addiction to it reduces opportunities for reading.
- A threat to social structure.
- Increases anxiety and tension.
- Decline of original culture ²⁴.

8.1. Globalized Media and Perceptual Flooding:

Media influence is reinforced through what is called the **principle of perceptual flooding**, where propaganda is repeated multiple times, to the extent that it surrounds the viewer without their awareness... thus, the satisfaction of needs is spontaneously linked to what has been promoted ²⁵.

8.2. Globalized Media and the Hyperreal World:

The French postmodern thinker Jean Baudrillard, one of the most prominent contemporary theorists on media and communication, believes that modern media differs significantly in its effects and depth from any other technological products. The emergence of mass media particularly electronic media such as television has led to profound transformations in the nature of our lives.

Television does not "show us the world" or reflect or represent it. Instead, it increasingly defines and redefines the very nature of the world we live in. A quick look at the events shown on television around the world with their detailed, dramatic, and exaggerated portrayals, such as wars, famines, trials, and chases confirms what Baudrillard calls the "hyperreal world."

The real world no longer truly exists; it has been replaced by what we see on television screens scenes, images, conversations, and commentary ²⁶.

During the Gulf War, Baudrillard asked in an article published in *Libération* on March 29, 1991, titled "The Gulf War Did Not Take Place" about the very reality of the war itself, which he described as practicing "sabotage" on another level, through falsification, transcendence of reality, fake images, and psychological deterrence strategies that blend play with facts, image with reality, appearance over substance, and virtual time over actual time, creating a tight confusion between them.

This leads to a simple question:

Were we watching the war as it truly was on CNN, or were we watching images of the war?

Modernists still believe it is possible to distinguish between the thing and the image, or the thing and its representation. But postmodern eyes, ears, and minds have ceased the anxious search for the real thing. The television or computer screen which one can now possess individually has ended that transitional phase ²⁷.

8.3. Globalized Media and the Global Human:

Toffler and Masuda believe that the Information Civilization will create equality among human beings and contribute to forming a global society governed by justice and equality after the globalization of the human and the dismantling of diverse identities. The spirit of the age in the "media society" will be defined by "cosmopolitanism", characterized by three key ideas:

- A sense of human unity
- Peaceful coexistence between humanity and nature
- The emergence of a global media space that recognizes neither regional nor national boundaries

Through this, technological capabilities for solving social problems will eliminate the ground on which social conflicts and class struggles grow. This is the essence of technological utopia. Based on this vision, some proclaim the birth of the global human... Thus, we are facing

unprecedented new possibilities for existence and life leading not only to the globalization of the market, the city, and politics, but also to the globalization of the self ²⁸.

How Have the Media Cancelled the Minds of the Masses...???

According to world-renowned director **Peter Watkins**, the most serious problems caused by media in society include:

- **Refusal to engage in political discussion** of programs whether on screen or publicly
- **Use of digital technology and satellites** to globalize the dominance of media
- **Rising corruption** within the media sector, as economic and institutional power accumulates **without public accountability**
- **Huge budgets** spent on **violent and commercial films and programs** aiming primarily to reinforce **American and European dominance** through what is called *popular culture*, rather than investing in health, education, detox, peacekeeping, or conflict resolution
- **Refusal to discuss media production methods** and their effects on viewers including increased aggression and reduced reflection
- **Suppression and prevention** of the development of **critical and alternative media** within audiovisual organizations
- **Growing propaganda** for global market forces and the **rejection of discussions** around alternative economic, political, and social models
- **Rejection of addressing gender inequality** in modern society
- **Avoidance of any critical stance** towards the increasing dominance of **Hollywood culture**, turning channels and programs into **automatic carriers of this violent, simplistic, and distorting culture** that dominates the world's audiovisual sphere and suppresses local cultures
- **Persistent refusal** of global media to allow **public participation in its authority**, or even to develop **real accountability** or a **responsible relationship with society**

✓ **Confusion of Consciousness:**

The confusion of consciousness is not a strange occurrence in people's lives, nor is its division upon itself a rare phenomenon in our contemporary reality. The very nature of consciousness constantly mediating between the old and the new, between the self and the other, between the spiritual and the material, and between principles and interests exposes it to such dangers and turns it into a field where contradictions converge. This is what causes it to fragment and become scattered ²⁹.

✓ **Renewal of Consciousness:**

It is the continuous effort to discover new balances within our thinking and culture that support our value-based existence and enhance our effectiveness and performance on the path toward comprehensive advancement ³⁰.

It also means attempting to understand the conditions created by scientific and technological progress, grasping the new challenges it generates, and responding to them with wisdom ³¹.

✓ **Consciousness and Fascination with Globalized Media:**

Marie Winn, quoting Gerald S. Lesser, pointed to a very important idea: “the absence of consciousness during viewing”, describing this state as that of “**living-dead viewers**”. He also introduced a new concept called “**absorptive viewing**”, concluding that “living-dead viewing either reflects intense focus or complete stupefaction”³².

From an interpretive standpoint, fascination with media is framed by two fundamental poles:

- ❖ **Fascination grounded in reasoned arguments and justifications** that do not neglect substantive dimensions, approached with objective, sound, and normatively acceptable analysis this reflects **a certain level of public awareness**.
- ❖ **Fascination based only on superficial or shallow arguments and justifications** this indicates a **low or even significantly diminished level of public awareness**.

8.4. Consciousness and Gratifications of Globalized Media:

According to media and communication theorists, the true foundation of this theory stems from the idea of “gratification of desire” meaning that the audience of mass communication channels has needs that require fulfillment. These needs originate from various sources that define their nature and essence. Some of these are physical needs (biological and similar), psychological needs (intellectual, cultural, emotional, or instinctual), and spiritual needs.

In this context, the audience turns to communication and interaction with the media to satisfy those desires and tendencies. Naturally, when their needs are not met, they seek functional alternatives, i.e., alternative media platforms aligned with their inclinations. This drives media institutions to continuously explore unmet individual needs and preferences in order to reflect them in their programming.

Consciousness, in this case, is placed under a very difficult test, as the type of desire or need becomes a key indicator for researchers in communication, media studies, behavioral sciences, and beyond, in assessing the level of audience awareness.

In fact, according to specialists as previously mentioned this theory affirms the active role of the audience and regards them as a key player in the communication process, as they constitute the primary reference upon which media and communication institutions rely when crafting their messages.

Hence, the theory assumes that the audience uses media content to satisfy latent needs, and that the role of media is merely to meet those needs ³³.

However, the question arises: **Does the gratification process necessarily reflect awareness?** In truth, the answer is no, because awareness here is linked to the nature and quality of the gratification, as outlined in the following proposal:

- **Gratification based on rational, objective, sound, and normatively acceptable arguments and justifications** indicates a certain level of awareness among the audience.
- **Gratification based on cultural, ethnic, sectarian, fanatical, extremist ideological, unethical, or inhumane arguments and justifications** indicates a low or even significantly diminished level of awareness among the audience.

The strong linkage between consciousness and globalized media is likely to produce a form of consciousness that suffers from symptoms negatively impacting the health of mass imagination.

The Arkounian concept may acquire new meanings and deeper sociological implications. Consequently, we may observe pathological symptoms that reflect an abnormal or unhealthy state of consciousness, which some specialists refer to as "confusion of consciousness": "It is not a strange thing in people's lives, nor is its division upon itself a rare occurrence in our contemporary reality. The very nature of consciousness mediating between the old and the new, the self and the other, the spiritual and the material, principles and interests exposes it to such risks, making it a field where contradictions converge, and causing it to fragment and become scattered"³⁴.

This condition calls for what is known as "renewal of consciousness", which means: "The continuous effort to discover new balances within our thinking and culture that support our value-based existence and enhance our effectiveness and performance on the path toward comprehensive advancement"³⁵.

Also, the concept of renewing consciousness: **"Means the attempt to understand the circumstances created by scientific and technological progress, and to comprehend the new challenges arising from it and the wise responses to them"**³⁶.

9. CONCLUSION:

From the above, it becomes clear that satellite media continuously leaks, on a daily and hourly basis, streams of content that often clash with the values and constants of our societies. In other words, it excessively and overwhelmingly injects a massive volume of globalized inputs in an upward trajectory. The cost of the global media's frantic search for a place within the audience's space is reflected in the danger of tampering with the forest of interactive symbols, especially in Third World societies, due to the nature and volume of transcontinental and alien symbols entering our communities without control or deterrence. This causes disruption and confusion in the components of human consciousness, contributing to the numbing of true awareness, drying up its sources, encircling it, or even completely demolishing it. As a result, this fosters the notion of the open squandering of genuine mass awareness, in a rapidly depleting manner, aiming to replace it with a fabricated and illegitimate consciousness.

It can be said that the relationship between consciousness and imagination under media globalization is complex and entangled. Individual and collective consciousness is significantly affected by the content provided by globalized media. Media globalization, as an ideology seeking to impose a unified model of development and culture, plays a central role in shaping mass imagination, which in turn influences the nature of consciousness among individuals and societies.

Our analysis shows that consciousness is not merely an individual cognitive process but a social phenomenon formed through interaction with cultural, political, and economic environments. Under media globalization, mass imagination is largely shaped by the images and messages broadcast by global media, leading to the creation of shared perceptions of reality that are often far from the truth. This interaction between consciousness and imagination creates a state of "hyperreality," as described by Jean Baudrillard, where it becomes difficult to distinguish between real reality and the reality displayed on screens.

Although media globalization offers opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and culture, it carries great risks, especially in terms of threatening local cultural identities and reinforcing the cultural and economic dominance of major powers and multinational corporations. This creates a

state of “confusion of consciousness,” where individuals are no longer able to distinguish between local and imported values, resulting in identity fragmentation and the loss of original cultural references.

On the other hand, mass imagination, which is shaped through globalized media, plays a major role in shaping collective consciousness. The mental images broadcast through media directly influence how individuals perceive themselves and the world around them. This makes mass imagination a powerful tool in the hands of dominant forces, as it can be used to steer public opinion and promote certain values such as consumerism and economic liberalism at the expense of local social and cultural values.

In this context, renewing consciousness becomes an urgent necessity to confront the challenges posed by media globalization. Renewing consciousness means striving to rebuild the balance between local and global values, between the past and the present, and between the material and the spiritual. It also means developing individuals’ capacity for critical and analytical thinking, enabling them to resist the negative effects of globalized media and preserve their cultural identity.

Finally, it can be said that despite its advantages, media globalization remains a major dilemma in the absence of critical awareness and creative imagination capable of addressing the challenges it brings. Therefore, strengthening individual and collective awareness, and developing creative imagination, remain key to achieving a balance between openness to the world and the preservation of local cultural identity.

FOOTNOTES:

-
- ¹ Ismail Abdel Fattah Al-Kafi: Glossary of Globalization Era Terms, Dar Kutub Arabia, no edition, no publisher, no date, p. 409.
 - ² Amer Misbah: Sociology (Pioneers and Theories), Dar Al-Ummah for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 1st ed., Algeria, 2010, p. 248.
 - ³ See: Ali Mansour Kayali: Noor Hayatak Program on YouTube (Episode titled: “The Qur’an and the Human”), Dubai Media Channel, viewed 24/01/2015.
 - ⁴ Same source.
 - ⁵ Abdel-Moati Abdel-Basset: Theoretical Trends in Sociology, Al-Ma’rifa Series, National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Kuwait, 1998, pp. 91–92.
 - ⁶ Ali Shariati: Awareness and Foolishness, trans. Hadi Al-Sayyid Yas, Dar Al-Amir, 1st ed., Beirut/Lebanon, 2004, p. 85.
 - ⁷ Lalande, A.: Lalande’s Philosophical Encyclopedia, trans. Khalil Ahmed Khalil, Oweidat Publications, 2nd ed., Beirut, 2001, p. 211.
 - ⁸ Burhan Ghalioun: Self-Awareness, trans. Ghassan Nasr, Arab Institute for Studies and Publishing, 2nd ed., Beirut, 1992, p. 21.
 - ⁹ Same previous reference, p. 21.
 - ¹⁰ Igor Kon: In Search of the Self (A Study in Personality and Self-Awareness), trans. Ghassan Nasr, Dar Maad for Publishing and Distribution, no edition, Damascus/Syria, 1992, pp. 22–23.
 - ¹¹ Abdul Karim Bakkar: Renewing Consciousness, Dar Al-Qalam, 1st ed., Damascus, 2000, p. 10.
 - ¹² Intissar Ibrahim Abdul Razzaq and Safad Hossam Al-Samouk: New Media (Media and Society Library Series), Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 1st ed., University of Baghdad, 2001, p. 47.

- ¹³ Gustave Le Bon: *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, trans. Hashem Saleh, Dar Al-Saqi, 1st ed., Beirut, Lebanon, 1991, p. 86.
- ¹⁴ Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities*, trans. Thaer Deeb, Qadmus Publishing, 1st ed., Beirut/Lebanon, 2009, p. 52.
- ¹⁵ Same previous reference, p. 52.
- ¹⁶ Abdul Karim Bakkar: Previously cited reference, p. 11.
- ¹⁷ Ibrahim Abu Arqoub: Previously cited reference, p. 129.
- ¹⁸ Same previous reference, p. 129.
- ¹⁹ Ismail Abdel Fattah Al-Kafi: *Glossary of Globalization Era Terms*, Dar Kutub Arabia, no edition, no publisher, no date, p. 405.
- ²⁰ Same previous reference, p. 405.
- ²¹ Abdel-Aali Dabla: *Introduction to Sociological Analysis*, Dar Al-Khaldounia for Publishing and Distribution, 1st ed., Algeria, 2011, p. 153.
- ²² Mohamed Abdel Qader Hatem: *Globalization (Pros and Cons)*, Egyptian General Book Authority, no edition, Cairo, 2005, p. 549.
- ²³ Same previous reference, p. 552.
- ²⁴ Sanaa Al-Khouli: *Introduction to Sociology*, Dar Al-Ma'arifa Al-Jami'iyya, no edition, Egypt, no date, p. 226.
- ²⁵ Faisal Abbas: *Globalization and Contemporary Violence (The Dialectic of Right and Power)*, Dar Al-Manhal Al-Lubnani, no edition, Beirut, Lebanon, 2008, p. 193.
- ²⁶ Anthony Giddens: *Sociology*, trans. Dr. Fayez Al-Sayyagh, Center for Arab Unity Studies, 4th ed., Beirut/Lebanon, 2005, pp. 512–513.
- ²⁷ Abdel-Ghani Imad: *Sociology of Concepts and Issues: From Modernity to Globalization*, Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1st ed., Beirut, 2006, p. 227.
- ²⁸ Faisal Abbas: Previously cited reference, pp. 180–181.
- ²⁹ Abdul Karim Bakkar: Previously cited reference, p. 17.
- ³⁰ Same previous reference, p. 5.
- ³¹ Same previous reference, p. 5.
- ³² Marie Winn: *Children and Television Addiction*, trans. Abdel Fattah Al-Subhi, National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, no edition, Kuwait, 1985, p. 28.
- ³³ Badani Fouad, quoting Mohamed Abdel Hamid: Article titled: McLuhan's Inevitability to Understand the Value of Azzi Abdel Rahman, *Journal of Social Studies and Research*, Issue 04, University of El Oued, January 2014, p. 113.
- ³⁴ Same previous reference, p. 17.
- ³⁵ Same previous reference, p. 5.
- ³⁶ Same previous reference, p. 5.