

T.M. Sadykova^{1*}, S.Zh. Sapargaliyeva², A.T. Bakirova³¹*S. Seifullin Kazakh Agro-Technical Research University, Astana, Kaazakhstan;*²*O.A. Baikonurov Zhezkazgan University, Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan;*³*Karaganda Medical University, Karaganda, Kazakhstan**(E-mail: storgyn@mail.ru; assembkulbayeva@gmail.com; alua_23@mail.ru)*

The Existenza of Cultures in the Age of Globalization: Dialectics of Unity and Disintegration

This article explores the conflicting nature of globalization, focusing on how global integration impacts the preservation of cultural identities. It looks at the push and pull between cultural unification and local traditions in today's fast-changing world shaped by technology and shifting geopolitics. The analysis draws on the work of S. Huntington "Clash of Civilizations," F. Fukuyama "The End of History?," and D. Held's ideas on global integration. It also brings in perspectives from Russian scholars L.I. Fedorova and P.I. Kasatkin to highlight regional and cultural angles. The study combines theory with real-world examples from China, Russia, and several Islamic countries. These cases show how states may welcome modernization and global cultural influences, yet still reject liberal democratic norms and hold on to traditional values. The findings suggest that globalization doesn't always result in cultural blending. Instead, it often leads to hybrid forms — where global and local forces collide, coexist, or adapt to each other. The article highlights how cultural resistance and selective adaptation can help societies maintain their uniqueness under global pressure. It also looks closely at the role of identity, memory, and cultural symbols in this process. Overall, the piece argues that globalization isn't just about dominance or uniformity. It's a much messier process of negotiation, where cultures reshape themselves, resist certain aspects, and find ways to adapt. In doing so, globalization becomes both a challenge and a chance for deeper intercultural exchange.

Keywords: cultural globalization, national uniqueness, localization, integration, hybrid models, traditional values, geopolitical conflicts, cultural diversity, dialectics

Introduction

In today's fast-moving globalized world, the question of cultural identity feels more pressing than ever. In today's fast-moving globalized world, the question of cultural identity feels more pressing than ever. On one hand, global integration, digital communication, and rapid technological change open up new spaces for dialogue and connection across borders. On the other, these same forces can destroy the uniqueness of local cultures, creating a sense of cultural flattening. We're living in a paradox: the very dynamics that enable exchange and progress also risk speeding up cultural erosion. This tension — between unifying forces and growing fragmentation — deserves closer attention, especially as traditional values are increasingly being wiped out by emerging global norms.

This article takes a deep dive into the contradictions at the heart of cultural globalization and asks what impact they're really having. It looks at how globalization can bring cultures together while also triggering backlash and resistance. It also reflects on how economic shifts and technological advancements are reshaping daily cultural life — often in ways we barely notice.

Although globalization has been widely discussed in academic literature, many studies tend to focus on the big picture. Foundational thinkers like Samuel Huntington, Francis Fukuyama, and David Held have laid out important theories about global change, but their work often overlooks how these processes play out at the local level. What's missing is a closer look at how communities hold on to — or transform — their cultural traditions in the face of change. This article aims to fill that gap by bringing attention to the push and pull between global trends and local responses.

Rather than viewing globalization as a threat to cultural diversity, this research suggests a different approach. It argues that cultural convergence isn't inevitable — and more importantly, that it doesn't have to come at the cost of identity. Embracing hybridization and localization can offer a path forward. Tradition isn't something that needs to be cast aside; it can actually serve as a foundation for engaging with modernity on one's own terms.

* Corresponding author's e-mail: storgyn@mail.ru

Methodology and research methods

This article takes a closer look at the complex and often conflicting nature of globalization. To do this, it uses a mix of methods, such as blending theory, comparison, and qualitative interpretation. This enables a fuller picture of what's going on beneath the surface.

The first step involved analyzing both classical and more recent theories of globalization through analytical and theoretical lenses. Key thinkers like Samuel Huntington "The Clash of Civilizations," Francis Fukuyama "The End of History?," and David Held (known for his work on global integration) were central to this part of the study. Their ideas were revisited in light of today's changing geopolitical landscape. Alongside this, the research brings in the views of Russian scholars like L.I. Fedorova and P.I. Kasatkin, who shed light on how globalization can spark cultural tensions and even threaten the uniqueness of certain societies.

This intersection revealed that globalization is not a one-way flow of Western values, but rather a dialectical process shaped by both global forces and local responses. To test this idea, the study used qualitative analysis of specific case studies — China, Russia, and selected Islamic countries — examining how these states adopt modern technologies and global symbols while simultaneously preserving traditional values and cultural uniqueness.

The research confirms the central hypothesis: globalization is not simply a process of domination or erasure, but a dynamic negotiation between economic integration and cultural identity. In the era of global consumerism and digitalization, countries become more interconnected, and the preservation of cultural identity depends on communities' willingness and ability to balance culture with innovation.

Discussion and Results

The end of the Cold War opened the door to rapid globalization and cultural exchange, prompting many scholars to reflect on how these new connections would reshape the world. One of the most prominent among them was Samuel Huntington, who put forward his influential theory, "The Clash of Civilizations". In 1993, as president of the Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, Huntington published his controversial paper, where he suggested that future global conflicts wouldn't revolve around ideology, as during the Cold War, but would instead be rooted in deep civilizational divides. Huntington identified eight major civilizations — Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and African — and warned of a potential "Confucian-Islamic military connection," which he saw as a serious challenge to Western dominance. In response, he called for greater unity among Western civilizations — particularly Europe and North America — while also encouraging strategic alignment with Latin America, Japan, and even Russia. To protect Western influence, he even recommended using internal divisions within rival civilizations [1; 30-35].

Huntington drew a stark line between "the West," which he framed as a "universal civilization," and "the Rest," which might embrace modernization and technology but reject the values and norms of the West. To him, Westernization — closely tied to globalization — meant adopting liberal democratic systems, free markets, secularism, and individual rights. Post-Cold War, he believed the primary threat to Western identity was no longer ideological, but cultural — embodied in civilizations that modernize without Westernizing [2; 60-64].

For example, China actively absorbs Western technologies, music, fashion, and cinema — films like "Transformers" even outperform U.S. box-office numbers there [3]. Yet politically, China remains firmly authoritarian, resisting core liberal values like free speech and multiparty democracy. This shows how China accepts Western lifestyle and culture, but resists political system. With its massive population, economic power, and growing military strength, China has emerged as a direct competitor to U.S. influence [4].

Following Huntington's predictions, China has also strengthened ties with key countries in the Islamic world — most notably Pakistan and Iran. Together, they conduct joint military exercises, engage in arms sales, and coordinate efforts to resist Western-led sanctions and surveillance. Similar to China, both countries, in some contexts, accept Western lifestyle [5].

For instance, Pakistan, which experienced British colonization, accepts English as a major language in government, business, and higher education. The country has a network of schools with British and American curricula, such as Beaconhouse, City School, and Roots International. People in Pakistan widely celebrate Valentine's Day, Halloween, and New Year's Eve. At the same time, the government of Pakistan regularly blocks YouTube channels of independent journalists and website with anti-state sentiments. This shows how Pakistan rejects the concepts of freedom of speech and democracy in the country [6].

Similarly, Iran accepts elements of Western lifestyle in some contexts but, at the same time, strictly suppresses dissidents and independent journalists. In recent years, about 49 Iranian writers have been arrested, making it one of the most repressive countries worldwide [7].

Russia offers another example of civilizational friction. Huntington initially viewed post-Soviet Russia as a potential Western partner. For a time, Moscow focused on economic development and sold energy to Europe, while the West largely ignored Russia's actions in nearby post-Soviet states. But when Ukraine sought closer ties with NATO and the EU, Russia saw this as an existential threat. The invasion of Ukraine in 2022 marked a turning point — Russia moved firmly out of the Western orbit and into what Huntington might call “the Rest.” However, similar to China, Iran, and Pakistan, Russia also accepts Western culture, lifestyle, and technologies [8].

Indeed, Huntington's framework may not explain every global tension, but it remains strikingly relevant. He viewed the world through a cultural and civilizational lens — and believed that only one version of globalization, the Western one, could prevail.

Meanwhile, Francis Fukuyama took a more hopeful view. In his 1989 essay “The End of History?,” he argued that the liberal democratic model had triumphed over all alternatives. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union seemed to support his thesis. But more than three decades later, it's clear that liberal democracy hasn't spread as smoothly as expected [9].

Many states — including Turkey, Russia, China, and Iran — have embraced modernization without fully embracing democracy. Their leaders stay in power for decades. While these regimes are often labeled authoritarian, they've also adapted. Instead of broad repression, they now target dissent more selectively.

Ordinary citizens may still enjoy limited social and economic freedoms, but political pluralism remains weak, and genuine opposition is rare. These systems borrow certain liberal traits — such as market economies, private property, and some consumer freedoms — while strictly restricting political rights. They occupy a gray zone between democracy and authoritarianism, posing challenges to both Fukuyama's liberal optimism and Huntington's civilizational fears. In practice, they readily accept Western lifestyles, music, brands, and movies, but firmly reject the political values that underpin liberal democracy [10].

Another key thinker, David Held, took a more nuanced approach. In his book “Global Transformations”, he emphasized that globalization isn't just about politics or economics — it's also about social and cultural integration. He identified three major perspectives. The hyperglobalists see globalization as an unstoppable force dissolving national boundaries. The skeptics argue that nation-states and regional blocs still dominate. While the transformationalists suggest that globalization is reshaping the world unevenly, producing new forms of multilevel governance rather than replacing national control altogether [11].

Today, multinational corporations play a key role in this evolving global system. Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Apple — these brands are everywhere. Even in authoritarian states, people line up for iPhones and Big Macs. These products don't dictate government policy, but they shape how people live and what they aspire to. This consumer web connects people across cultures, forming a deeply interlinked global system. That, too, is globalization.

Indeed, globalization also has a profound impact on culture. In some places, like the European Union, countries share common political systems and values. But even in such tightly integrated regions, cultural tensions remain. As Russian scholar P.I. Kasatkin noted in “Globalization of Culture: Problems and Prospects”, globalization can foster unity — but it can also trigger conflict, especially when it touches on identity, heritage, and collective memory [12].

A powerful example is the long-standing dispute between Greece and North Macedonia. While both nations claim the name “Macedonia” as part of their history and identity, their narratives differ sharply. For people in North Macedonia, it's central to their national story. For many Greeks, it's tied to ancient history and figures like Alexander the Great. A powerful example is the long-standing dispute between Greece and North Macedonia. While both nations claim the name “Macedonia” as part of their history and identity, their narratives differ sharply. For people in North Macedonia, it's central to their national story. For many Greeks, it's tied to ancient history and figures like Alexander the Great. This isn't just a political disagreement — it's about whose version of culture, history, and identity gets recognized in the global arena.

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Such cases remind us that globalization doesn't erase cultural boundaries — it often brings them into sharper focus. As Russian scholar P.I. Kasatkin noted in “Globalization of Culture: Problems and Prospects,” globalization can foster unity, but it also generates tension when it touches on identity, heritage, and

memory. Different historical narratives are interpreted differently across countries, and these contrasting versions can lead to cultural or even political conflict — just as we saw in the dispute between Greece and North Macedonia.

According to P.I. Kasatkin, today we can distinguish three characteristic groups of theories of cultural globalization, the first of which he defined as hyperactive globalist, the second as globalist, and the third as anti-globalist. Two main provisions characterize the first group: firstly, globalization is an objective and inevitable process, and, secondly, it should eventually lead to unification and homogeneity of the global cultural space. The second group of theories is the opposite of the first group. Its supporters believe that the process of globalization is not inevitable and does not have a single direction; it can lead to the localization of cultures, i.e. to national cultures becoming insular, their resistance to the unification process. The third group of theories, in fact, is an extreme variant of the second group. Its representatives insist that culture in principle is impossible, since culture, when it was just emerging, was built on certain differences that led to the emergence of many civilizations [12].

It should be stressed that all the above three groups differ not only in their assessment of the historical perspective of the process of globalization of culture but also because they are built on a different value basis. It would be more correct to say that if for the first group of theories, the value basis of cultures is not considered fundamental to the historical future, the unity of all cultures achieved through their constant convergence is more important than their specificity, then for the other two groups values prevail over universalism and unification.

Building on this, Russian scholar L.I. Federova adds an important perspective. In her work “Changes in Culture in the Era of Globalization,” she emphasizes that cultures risk losing their distinctiveness if they adopt global norms uncritically. For example, while most countries celebrate Christmas on December 25, Orthodox Christians mark it on January 7. If, under the influence of globalization, Orthodox communities were to switch dates simply to align with the global norm, they would risk losing a part of what makes their cultural tradition unique. Federova’s insight reminds us that globalization is not just about economic integration — it’s also about preserving cultural identity in a rapidly changing world.

As L.I. Federova writes: “Rapid cultural changes affect people’s cultural identity, i.e. the ability of people to clearly understand their cultural identity... It can be stated that the process of globalization contributes to changes in identity and that this change can be painful and even dangerous. The loss of identity is dangerous, which entails value destruction, value misalignment or loss of values, as well as the attempt to construct an artificial identity. A rapid break with traditional local identity in the absence of a cultural pattern acceptable to humanity as a whole can lead to the creation of cultural monsters as models of identity” [13].

This analysis shows that globalization isn’t just about trade, politics, or new technologies — it’s also about culture, identity, and how societies choose to define themselves in a rapidly changing world.

Samuel Huntington’s idea of a “Clash of Civilizations” remains surprisingly relevant. He argued that even as countries modernize, they don’t necessarily Westernize. That insight still holds true. For example, China is home to one of the largest markets for Western films, brands, and gadgets — but its political values and governance remain rooted in a very different tradition. The same could be said for Russia and several other countries. Huntington’s point wasn’t just about political alliances; it was about how deeply culture shapes how societies engage with globalization.

On the other hand, Francis Fukuyama had a more hopeful take. In his “End of History?” essay, he believed that liberal democracy had triumphed and would eventually spread around the world. But today, we can see that many countries have chosen a different path. Yes, they’ve modernized. They’ve built strong economies and embraced aspects of global pop culture. But their political systems have remained largely authoritarian. These hybrid models — where Western lifestyle and technology exist alongside limited political freedoms — challenge Fukuyama’s optimism and remind us that culture doesn’t shift as easily as markets do.

David Held’s view helps make sense of this tension. He didn’t see globalization as one-size-fits-all. Instead, he described it as a multi-layered and uneven process, where global and local forces constantly interact. In practice, this means you can drink Coca-Cola in almost any country, but what it means to drink Coca-Cola will vary based on the culture you’re in. The same applies to Apple, McDonald’s, and many other global brands. They shape consumer habits worldwide, but they don’t erase cultural differences — they coexist with them.

Russian scholar P.I. Kasatkin adds to this by pointing out that globalization often brings people together — but just as often, it creates new friction. When identity, memory, and tradition are involved, emotions run

deep. One example is the ongoing dispute between Greece and North Macedonia over the name “Macedonia.” For North Macedonians, it’s central to their identity. For many Greeks, it’s tied to ancient history. This isn’t just about maps or politics — it’s about pride, legacy, and whose story gets told.

Building on this idea, Russian scholar L.I. Federova reminds us that culture can be quietly lost, not through force, but through slow erosion. In her work “Changes in Culture in the Era of Globalization,” she emphasizes how global norms can pressure smaller or less dominant cultures to adapt or conform. For instance, in some countries Christmas is celebrated on December 25, while in Orthodox Christian traditions it falls on January 7. If, over time, Orthodox communities began shifting toward the global norm just to “keep up,” that small change would represent a much bigger loss — one of identity, history, and meaning. We offered this example because it illustrates just how subtle but powerful globalization’s cultural impact can be.

In the end, globalization isn’t just reshaping economies — it’s reshaping how we see ourselves and each other. It doesn’t erase cultural boundaries. In fact, it can bring them into sharper focus. The challenge for societies today is not just how to participate in the global system, but how to do so while holding on to what makes them unique. Culture, in this context, becomes not something old-fashioned, but something worth protecting.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates the complex dialectics of cultural processes in the context of globalization, where integration and disintegration coexist as interrelated phenomena. On the one hand, economic interdependence, technological progress and digitalization create prerequisites for the formation of a single information and cultural space. On the other hand, the strengthening of global ties exacerbates conflicts between universalization and the preservation of local identity, which is particularly evident in the resistance of Islamic, Confucian and Russian communities to Westernization. The key conclusion of the article is that the globalization of culture is not a unidirectional process: it generates hybridization and adaptation of traditions to new realities, while simultaneously stimulating cultural resistance, which refutes the idea of inevitable unification.

While some countries accept Western lifestyles and technologies as part of globalization, they reject Western values like democracy and freedom of speech. Even among Western countries, globalization causes cultural conflicts. This shows how different nations respond to global trends. It does not mean that globalization has no effect on some states, but rather that it has varying degrees of influence on different states and affects them in different ways.

The scientific value of the work lies in the development of a comprehensive model for analyzing the political and cultural mechanisms of globalization. The work contributes to rethinking globalization not as a threat, but as a dynamic field of opportunities for dialogue and mutual enrichment of cultures and values.

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Т.М. Садыкова, С.Ж. Сапаргалиева, А.Т. Бакирова

Жаһандану дәуіріндегі мәдениеттердің экзистенциясы: бірлік пен ыдырау диалектикасы

Мақала жаһандану үдерісінің қарама-қайшы табиғатын зерттейді, атап айтқанда жаһандық ықпалдастық пен мәдени бірегейлікті сақтау арасындағы өзара әрекетке назар аударады. Зерттеу жедел технологиялық даму мен геосаяси өзгерістер дәуірінде мәдени біртектілік пен локализация арасындағы диалектикалық байланысты талдайды. Зерттеудің теориялық негізіне С. Хантингтонның «Өркениеттер қалыптасуы», Ф. Фукуяманың «Тарихтың соңы?» еңбегі және Д. Хелдтің жаһандық интеграция теориялары алынды. Сонымен қатар, ресейлік ғалымдар Л.И. Федорова мен П.И. Касаткиннің тұжырымдамалары аймақтық және мәдени ерекшеліктерді көрсету үшін пайдаланылды. Әдістемелік тұрғыда зерттеу теориялық талдауды Қытай, Ресей және кейбір ислам елдерінен алынған сапалық кейс-стадилермен ұштастырады. Бұл мысалдар мемлекеттердің модернизация мен жаһандық мәдени өнімдерді қабылдай отырып, либералды-демократиялық құндылықтарға қарсы тұрып, дәстүрлі нормаларды сақтап қалуға тырысатынын көрсетеді. Зерттеу нәтижелері жаһандану үдерісі мәдени біртектілікке міндетті түрде әкелмейтінін дәлелдейді. Керісінше, бұл үдеріс жаһандық және жергілікті күштердің шиеленісті өзара байланысы жағдайында гибриді бірегейлік пен басқару формаларын тудырады. Мақала жаһандық қысым жағдайында мәдени қарсылық пен селективті бейімделу бірегейлікті сақтаудың тиімді стратегиялары бола алатынын көрсетеді. Бұл ретте бірегейлік, тарихи жад және символдық дәстүрлердің рөліне ерекше мән беріледі. Сонымен қатар жаһандануды біржакты үстемдік ету үдерісі емес, мәдениеттер бейімделетін, қарсылық танытатын әрі өздерін қайта қалыптастыратын келіссөздер алаңы ретінде қарастырады. Бұл жұмыс жаһандануды мәдениеттер арасындағы диалог үшін де сын-қатер, әрі мүмкіндік ретінде ұғынудың күрделі әрі терең бейнесін ұсынады.

Кілт сөздер: мәдени жаһандану, ұлттық бірегейлік, локализация, интеграция, гибриді модельдер, дәстүрлі құндылықтар, геосаяси қалыптасу, мәдени әртүрлілік, диалектика.

Т.М. Садыкова, С.Ж. Сапаргалиева, А.Т. Бакирова

Экзистенция культур в эпоху глобализации: диалектика единства и распада

В данной статье исследуется противоречивая природа глобализации, особое внимание уделяется влиянию глобальной интеграции на сохранение культурной идентичности. Рассматривается взаимодействие культурной унификации и местных традиций в современном быстро меняющемся мире, сформированном технологиями и меняющейся геополитикой. Анализ опирается на работы С. Хантингтона «Столкновение цивилизаций», Ф. Фукуямы «Конец истории?» и идеи Д. Хелда о глобальной интеграции. Также привлекаются взгляды российских учёных Л.И. Фёдоровой и П.И. Касаткина, чтобы подчеркнуть региональные и культурные аспекты. Исследование сочетает теоретические положения с реальными примерами из Китая, России и ряда исламских стран. Эти примеры показывают, как государства могут приветствовать модернизацию и глобальные культурные влияния, при этом отвергая либерально-демократические нормы и придерживаясь традиционных ценностей. Результаты исследования свидетельствуют о том, что глобализация не всегда приводит к культурному смешению. Напротив, она часто приводит к гибридным формам, где глобальные и локальные силы сталкиваются, сосуществуют или адаптируются друг к другу. В статье рассматривается, как культурное сопротивление и избирательная адаптация могут помочь обществам сохранить свою уникальность в условиях глобального давления. Также подробно рассматривается роль идентичности, памяти и культурных символов в этом процессе. В целом, в статье утверждается, что глобализация — это не просто доминирование или единообразие. Это гораздо более сложный процесс переговоров, в

котором культуры перестраиваются, сопротивляются определённым аспектам и находят способы адаптации. При этом глобализация становится одновременно вызовом и возможностью для более глубокого межкультурного обмена.

Ключевые слова: культурная глобализация, национальная самобытность, локализация, интеграция, гибридные модели, традиционные ценности, геополитические конфликты, культурное разнообразие, диалектика

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Information about the authors

Sadykova Torgyn — Master of Humanities, Senior Lecturer, S. Seifullin Kazakh Agrotechnical Research University, Astana, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8952-0253>

Sapargaliyeva Sairash — Candidate of Philosophical Sciences, Senior Lecturer, O.A. Baikonurov Zhezkazgan University, Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4148-0845>

Bakirova Alua — Master of Humanities, Senior Lecturer, Karaganda Medical University, Karaganda, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4990-0582>