2.1. Introduction

Like all other regions, the Arab world is confronted with globalization, and for the Arabs to enter the new millennium and be a part of the new world, they have to deal with it. However, it is a very daunting task to make assumptions about the way Arab people deal with globalization and how this process impacts the Arab world generally and their culture and identity in particular. This second chapter focuses on the impact of globalization on the Arab world in the realm of culture and cultural identity.

My main concern in this chapter is with the way the Arab world negotiates with globalization and to highlight the nature of struggle between Arab cultural-identity and cultural globalization, a concept Western in orientation, and heavily promoted by Western ideology makers and politicians. I intend through my argument here to challenge this overly Western approach, and advocate an interpretation of cultural globalization that allows for cultural diversity and the right of every nation to maintain and preserve its ethnic heritage. I divide this chapter into two parts. In the first part, I will present the contemporary Arab views on globalization. Arab thinkers are divided into three groups—the Anti-globalization view; the Pro-globalization view; and the Moderate view as I name them in this section. In this part, I will also discuss the apprehensions/fears the Arab world has about globalization. I will try to analyze the way these apprehensions have been dealt with in the Arab world. I also seek to assess the extent to which these fears are real. The second part of this chapter is meant to deal with the
dimensional aspects of globalization economically, politically, and culturally. Economically, the pros and cons of globalization on the Arab world are to be addressed with especial concern on the AGSs (Arab Gulf States). Next, I discuss the political globalization in the Arab world with especial concentration on the recent Arab revolutions or uprisings (Arab Spring). The last section is to deal with cultural globalization and its impact on the Arab world's culture and identity. I highlight the danger of the Western cultural imposition on Arab thought, which I believe could eventually threaten Arabs' ethnic identity, traditions, and values, and put the cultural sovereignty at risk. In the realm of culture, globalization has both negative and positive aspects. I argue that globalization poses a serious challenge to the Arab cultural identity. The critique of globalization in the Arabian context is based on certain assumptions about ways to appropriating progressive aspects of another culture. I conclude this chapter with some steps through which Arabs would be able to reap the fruitful aspects of globalization and at the same time avoid its minuses. Since globalization is inevitable, I propose that Arabs should aim at an intercultural existence where all cultures are treated as equal.

2.2. Contemporary Arab Views on Globalization

Among the important challenging issues currently discussed by Arab scholars is the phenomenon called 'globalization'. Therefore, a significant issue that has to be addressed here is the way Arab people think of globalization. I attempt to state a number of views and attitudes that currently prevail among Arabs concerned with globalization. My focus here is primarily on the cultural implications of globalization for Arab culture as viewed by Arabs, particularly the Islamists who
view globalization as cultural paradigm imposed by the West. The views of moderate Arab thinkers and those of advocates of globalization will also receive especial attention.

2.2.1. The Anti-Globalization Views

The first group of Arab thinkers consists of those who reject globalization seeing it as the highest level of imperialism emanating from the technological and informatics revolution of the Western capitalist free market. They assert that globalization is controlled by US and Western countries who exploit Third-World countries by means of international corporations under the umbrella of 'globalization'. They further see it as an imperialist tool to suppress traditional cultural values, social structures, national identities, and the economies of the developing countries.

This group of thinkers wholeheartedly rejects cultural globalization and resists any initiation of dialogue on the topic, openly condemning it in all conferences and meetings dealing with the issue. Their animosity comes from their belief that this new world order has been devised by Western imperialists to dominate the Arab Islamic culture. While not opposing technological advancement, they are strongly against any subordination to Western culture. Cultural globalization, for them, is merely the latest Western attempt to culturally colonize the Arab and Islamic nations.

For this group, globalization is an evil device invented by the West that is of no use to the Arab-Muslim world. It represents the highest level of neo-capitalism led by the giant Western industrial and technological multinational companies. It is mainly an instrument of economic, cultural, and social pressure against the Third-World countries to force them to surrender beliefs, traditions, and social values to the Western civilization. Mohamed El-Shibiny in his book *The Threat of Globalization* observes that while for Arabs, globalization equals backwardness, for the
West, globalization represents the triumph of the European and American economic new world of hegemony over developing nations that will finally oblige them to follow the Western imperialist culture. It strives to eradicate the cultural identities of the developing nations. Indeed, globalization “reinforces Western civilization, strengthens its own social values, and spreads modes of behavior which contradict the traditional values of developing countries” (30-31).

Such pessimistic Arab thinkers find no advantage in following the path of globalization. They expect globalization to swallow the Arab oil wealth, exploit human and material resources, eradicate traditional beliefs and values, and crush the Arab-Islamic civilization. For them, it means aggression and hatred towards the Arab nations, combined with an intention to humiliate the Arabs and repeat the dark history of European imperialism.

Arab radical and socialist thinkers are among those who view globalization as an imperialist deception designed by the West to intervene in the international affairs of the strongholds of socialist nationalism in the Arab States. The Arab scholar Sayar Al-Gomail analyzed the beliefs of these Arab thinkers in the Intellectual Symposium entitled “The Arabs and Globalization” held in Lebanon. Al-Gomail finds that globalization, as seen by the socialist, radicals, and traditional Arab thinkers, is no more than cultural imperialism aiming at imposing Western ideology in order to deprive the Arab culture of its identity. Furthermore, globalization, he believes, has “no respect for other cultures’ rights to preserve their indigenous traditions, values, and beliefs” (41). In addition, Suliman Al-khurashy writes that “since the political and economic risks/impacts of globalization are apparently seen through the domination of the First World countries and multinational corporations, the worst impact has to do with the domain of culture. By what is called ‘globalization,’ the First World countries aim to impose their culture on the Third World nations” (28).
For Mustafa Al-Nashar, “the age of globalization is that of power” (48). Of course, power here is meant for the West. He adds that “the tools and manners of the West’s domination may differ from time to time but they all serve the same purpose [domination on the Third World nations]... in this way, we [Arabs] have no other choice to resist it [globalization] but rejection” (54). Globalization, for Mohammed Abdulgader Hatim, is “the latest stage of imperialism... celebrating globalization is celebrating the domination of the Western culture on the other cultures” (70).

Some consider cultural globalization as fatal. The rhetoric surrounding the globalization of culture, sometimes compares it to colonialism, as is evident, in the critical speech of President Mohammed Khatami of Iran who views globalization as “a destructive force threatening dialogue between cultures. The new world order and globalization that certain powers are trying to make us accept, in which the culture of the entire world is ignored, looks like a kind of neocolonialism. This imperialism threatens mutual understanding between nations and communication and dialogue between cultures” (qtd. in Lieber and Weisberg 281).

This group of thinkers calls for abandoning the views of the American and European thinkers who want a single Western culture to dominate the cultures of the developing countries. Moreover, they consider globalization to be inappropriate for Islam as a world civilization of over a billion devotees around the world to be a follower of other civilizations. They argue that Islam treats all cultures as equal, regardless of economic power, beliefs, social status, and traditions. Therefore, Islamic culture can coexist with other cultures without bias, intolerance, or prejudice, benefiting from each other’s wisdom, traditions, science, technologies, and so forth. They claim that Islamic culture can interact with other cultures without confrontation or challenges, viewing each culture as master of its own destiny. However, Western culture does
not tolerate the idea of coexistence and equality. Abdullah Ben Ali Al-Alian, a young Arab thinker, sees cultural globalization as nothing but “a tool devised by the West to destroy the identities of the Third-World cultures” (8).

There is a general consensus among many Arabs that globalization is identical with Americanization. They perceive globalization as ‘Americanization’ due to the wide-ranging impact of the process in many developing nations, and their fear to lose their sense of identity. Even globalization champions like Thomas Friedman see it as Americanization.

Today, globalization often wears Mickey Mouse ears, eats Big Macs, drinks Coke or Pepsi and does its computing on an IBM PC, using Windows 98, with an Intel Pentium II processor and a network link from Cisco Systems. Therefore, while the distinction between what is globalization and what is Americanization may be clear to most Americans, it is not—unfortunately—to many others around the world. (The Lexus 382)

Radwan Al-Sayyid in his book *The Crisis of Arab Political Thought* cites Abd al-Allah Balqaziz, an African writer as saying that the Western First countries are using war on terror as a justification for their zealotry, intolerance, and racialism to diminish Islam, for Muslims are the only challenge in the face of the American hegemony. The American advancement in economy, politics, and military power, and the informational and technological revolution along with the attractive cultural patterns strengthen and enhance the American homogenization that it has become hard and knotty to differentiate between globalization and Americanization.

Those who reject globalization and see it as a threat to individuals and to the nation look at the so called global culture as a representative of the United States of America, and therefore
they call it ‘Americanization’. Europe and some Arab countries such as Syria rejected this Americanization. As to them, “Americanization is a threat to their language, culture, and identity” (Al-Mursi 178-182). Husayn Malum is quoted in Fred Halliday’s book The World at 2000: Perils and Promises as stating that globalization is a translation of “New American Political Project...to compress time and space and make the world as a small village by means of ‘market capitalism’” (117). Nevertheless, globalization is not only capitalism; it is a system of ideas that reflects a hegemonic will over the whole world and Americanizing it” (Al-Jabri, Arabs and Globalization 304).

Consequently, the bulk of Arabic literature on globalization reflects fear and suspicion of this new phenomenon. The views of a few leading Arab writers are sufficient to show how their arguments are reminiscent of the same arguments mobilized against modernism, imperialism, and Western domination. Adel Husain, an outspoken leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, states that “those claiming that globalization is inevitable are slow-witted” (37). He warns against the deception and cunning of Western media in brainwashing the minds of Arabs and Muslims. By controlling the media, he says: “Westerners spread immorality and smother our religion and identity.” Moreover, Abd al-Wahhab Al-Masiri, a noted Muslim author, describes the West’s claim that people are alike; that there is a new world order, justice, and human rights; and that the world is a ‘small village’ governed by a global set of values as ‘ridiculous lies’. Cynically, he avers that the globalization we know is that of the hamburger, Coca Cola, McDonald’s, and the like. Al-Masiri argues that globalization is based on a set of material values: the market, the economic, sex, and corporeal man, all of which negate human peculiarities, even humanity as such.

However, he is confident that Islamic values will “mobilize this Muslim nation to confront this deadly trend, which dissolves national and religious peculiarities” (85-90).
Furthermore, for this group, globalization is equated with secularization, which means the separation of religion and life, replacing Islam with a pragmatic and materialistic European, and American thought, asserts Ahmed Abd Al-Rahman. The globalization of the Muslim world would mean the “removal of Islam from thought and action, so that Muslims become mere submissive to the West.” Democracy, human rights, and freedom are rationalizations of the interests and power of the First World countries, especially of America. In order to impose American globalization on the Muslim world, “the United States government supports secular forces, protects apostates from Islam such as Salman Rushdie...” (164-165). Dr. Abdallah Al-Turky, warns that misfortune will spread all over the world if globalization succeeds in detaching people from their culture and their identity. He charges the United States and its allies with “using the 11/9 events to direct globalization against the Islamic culture and to arouse Western prejudices against Islam” (qtd. in Najjar 95).

In his book *Muslims and Globalization*, the well-known Islamic scholar, Muhammad Qutb sees globalization as nothing but imperialism and domination of the West on the rest. It spreads trets into all spheres of life economically, culturally, politically, and even religiously. He blames Arab youths who surrender to the temptations of the Western culture. Qutb believes that Islam is superior to both Western culture and the process called globalization since Islam encourages diversity while globalization imposes only one hegemonic way of life, namely, the American way of life. Another renowned Islamic scholar, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, wrote a book having the same title as that of Muhammad Qutb, *Muslims and Globalization*. Qaradawi describes globalization as “a new imperialism, a fate imposed on us [Arabs].” For him, the worst peril of cultural globalization is the spread of the secular culture of libertinism and consumption. He warns again the globalization as this process justifies religious ideals and prohibitions. It is a culture of nudeness and free sex.
Qaradawi is afraid that Arab youths may fail victims to the attractions of such erotic and humiliating culture (46-49). Besides, he sees globalization as one of the West’s efforts to “dominate and Americanize the globe” (79).

These Arab thinkers are not hostile to cultural globalization per se, but they reject the concept of the hegemony of one single culture over the Third-World cultures. Like Samuel Huntington, they believe that “a multicultural world is unavoidable because global empire is impossible” (*The Clash of Civilizations* 318). So, they are willing to accept globalization as a multicultural endeavour in which all cultures take part, regardless of their economic, technological, or military power, on the basis that every culture has the right to retain its identity, preserve its traditions and beliefs, and develop its indigenous values and ethical norms.

2.2.2. The Pro-Globalization Views

Not all Arab thinkers are against globalization. A minor number of Arab thinkers support the issue of globalization and cultural exchange viewing it as a window to progress. They are against the Arab leaders and their regimes. They also criticize Islamists regarding them as sloven and tarrying. This group of thinkers is of the view that thanks to the communication revolution, the world has become ‘a small village’.

This group of Arab thinkers not only welcomes the concept of Western globalization but encourages its spreading in the Arab countries. They have their own functional logic and practical interpretation of globalization and consider that the Arab countries should not remain cocooned in tradition when faced with the tremendous challenges of globalization. They want the Arabs to embrace Western globalization urgently, so that they can benefit from it. They see that
global development is moving very fast; those who are hesitant will miss out and face economic, cultural, scientific, and technological marginalization.

The enlightened Arab elites on the whole strongly advocate and promote the concept of globalization to Arab communities in the belief that it is only when Arabs accepts globalization, they will be in a position to modernize and move forward economically, intellectually, and technologically. In their opinion, globalization and modernization of Arab communities are complementary to each other. They see the world inevitably becoming a modern global village. They tend to advocate the concept of a ‘universal culture’ which is a distinctive extension of Western culture, and seek to combine Arab cultural values with core global values that promote social advancement and democracy. These Arab thinkers agree with Thomas Friedman that “globalization is not a choice. It is a reality” (*The Lexus* 93). Emphasizing the need for revitalizing Arab thought through modernization, innovation, and creativity, this group of Arab thinkers sees embracing globalization as the only positive option. There is no benefit, they believe, in the Arabs’ closing their doors on other cultures, withdrawing from the global arena, and reverting to a more traditional position. However, while they express their belief in a culturally homogenized world, they favour respect for the sovereignty of the indigenous cultures of each nation. They see that the time is ripe for conciliation and not for clashes with other cultures.

Many Arab intellectuals, in particular those who have been exposed to Western communities and higher-education institutions justify their appeal for the Arabs to accept cultural globalization by referring to the degree with which Western technology connects all global cultures. This high-tech world promotes cultural interaction among nations regardless of religion, race, beliefs, or degree of wealth, and so there is no place for a culture to be isolated or
withdrawn. Arabs need to embrace and participate in this technology in order to fully represent themselves in the arena of informatics, global telecommunication, Internet, and web networks, computerization, digitalization, and so on.

Arab scholar Galal Amin in his book *Globalization* observes that "globalization will free Arabs from a narrow national life with traditional ideology and a closed, biased culture and offer access to an open worldwide civilization and modern life style" (31). Mohamed El-Shibiny cites the Egyptian thinker Fuad Zakariya as saying that those attacking the process of globalization know nothing about it that they are unable to give a definite conceptualization of the term. Zakariya refers to some uses and benefits of globalization with especial focus on the realm of culture and information. He remarks that there is a lot of misapprehension about globalization. Zakariya reminds his readers that there are certain obstacles that can only be solved globally such as environmental pollution.

A fellow traveller of Zakaria’s notion is the well-known Syrian writer George Tarabishi. In his book *Arab Culture and its Discontents in the Era of Globalization*, Tarabishi expands Zakaria’s idea and argues that Arab critics of globalization are not very well aware of what globalization actually is, and that they utilize the term only to refresh their criticism of Western civilization and modernity in general. He states that the Arab intellectuals censuring globalization are only repeating the old stories of imperialism, modernity, dependence, and cultural invasion. Tarabishi is afraid that “the Arab denial and disapprobation of globalization may crystallize and jell into disapproval of modernity as a whole” (166-168).

The Saudi writer Turkey Al-Hamad in his book *The Arab Culture in the Era of Globalization* remarks that the apprehension, fear, and dread of the Western cultural hegemony is
still exaggerated. He states that globalization is in progress with or without America. The Arab rejection of globalization for the sake of preserving the cultural identity would lead to political, cultural, and economic annihilation. He elaborates that the simple Arab people are not concerned with issues of identity and culture; it is the Arab scholars who have made the idea of globalization problematic (22 & 89). Al-Hamad assures that the process of globalization along with all its development in science, technology, information, and education is in a continuous and unstoppable progress whether the Arab people want/like/ follow it or not.

This group of thinkers is of the view that in order to really narrow the gap between the Arab and the Western worlds, and to really benefit from the technological advancement in the West, the Arabs communities need to open up immediately. Cultural globalization, they believe, is the best tool to access and share this technology in order to achieve technological modernization in the Arab nations. However, I think that the Arab thinkers who call for wholesale acceptance of the Western view of globalization have apparently not examined the concept in the light of the needs, interests, and indigenous culture of the Arab countries. The following section provides a discussion of a practical view that takes these issues into consideration.

2.2.3. A Balanced Approach (The Moderate Views)

The third group of Arab thinkers holds neutral view of the concept that reconciles the interests and ambitions of the Arab countries. They are also pragmatic in their thinking, neither refusing globalization nor accepting it totally. They want to see a globalization that is more suited to the development of the economic, cultural, and social interests of the Arabs; and that would take into consideration the ambition of the Arab states for development and prosperity. They oppose the
trend of Arab thinkers who reject globalization totally on the ground of being a Western imperialist scheme; and they equally reject the wholesale acceptance of Western globalization on the ground that it is the only way to progress. Their outlook is mostly positive towards Western globalization, seeing it as an inevitable historical phenomenon of the present age, which should be dealt with within the framework of Arab interests. These thinkers welcome globalization as long as Arabs do not lose their political independence, economic freedom, and Islamic values. They do not want to see the West lording it over developing countries, but instead, providing them with cooperation and technical assistance and helping them in their economic, technological, and cultural development.

To say it differently, this group of Arab thinkers calls for a balanced approach, promoting the idea of active participation in cultural globalization while protecting Arab-Islamic culture at the same time. They oppose isolation for fear that their culture would be misinterpreted and marginalized, and they are concerned that current Arab policy does not meet the needs of the present era. They would like to see more efforts made to embrace the new sciences and advanced technology and integrate them effectively into Arab communities, and call for more modernization and innovation. However, while they would like to see modernization in Arab thought, they still emphasize the need to consciously preserve Arab identity and cultural peculiarities. They see no reason for Islamic and Western cultures to clash. On the contrary, the world, in their eyes, requires global acceptance of multiculturalism, universal values, democratic principles, and cultural interaction.

For this group of Arab thinkers, the challenge facing cultural globalization nowadays is the wide gap that exists between the affluent modern cultures of the US and Europe and the underdeveloped traditional cultures of Africa, South America, and Asia. The former cultures are
economically prosperous, technologically superior, and socially advanced. In contrast, cultures of developing nations are less fortunate. For the most part, they are economically poor, and suffer from impoverishment and suppression under the yoke of colonialism. Thus, their aspiration to develop requires intensive assistance in all fields of development, educationally, economically, technologically, and culturally. Moreover, in order to fulfill such development in all spheres of life, these thinkers are more concerned that globalization must be an arena for free dialogue between various cultures allowing respect of all cultures' beliefs and traditions. The Saudi writer Ghazi Al-Gosaibi in his book *Globalization and National Identity* argues that for Arabs to make use of globalization's boons and avoid its negatives, they should deal with it carefully. He writes

> The world is being dominatingly dictated by two currents: globalization and preservation of the national identity. Our interaction with such currents should sagaciously be organized, so that an international prosperous community would be the result in the years to come. But, beyond the failure of wisdom, God forbid, there are inevitably unprecedented and dire consequences. In my opinion, the likelihood of successes and failures, that may lead to progress or impasse, is likely equal. (7)

The problem facing many Arab Islamic thinkers is their belief that they must choose either to accept, without hesitation, globalization as designed by the West, or reject it completely, in which case the Arabs will remain behind the race in this technological age. Hence, this group of thinkers is of the notion that for the Arabs not to be left behind, they should reap globalization’s benefits and avoid its negative aspects. In June 1999, the ex-president of the Arab Republic of Egypt in an address to the conference of the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs held
in Cairo stated the position of Egypt towards the question of globalization. Hosni Mubarak told the participants that “globalization is a reality we should not deny and that while it is neither all good nor all bad, it should not be neglected.” He proposed that Muslims should reach an appropriate understanding of globalization which acknowledges Arab civilization’s cultural identity, traditions, and beliefs.

Furthermore, in the light of the recent rapid changes, Arab thinkers find no other choice for world peace and understanding other than coexistence among world cultures. They strongly advocate more intensive intellectual dialogue, conferences, and communication among nations to build bridges across the gaps that isolate cultures from one another. These thinkers feel that the New World Order, in essence, invites the nations of the world, developed or underdeveloped, industrial or agricultural, modern or feudal to consolidate their efforts to achieve a high degree of mutual cooperation, understanding, and cultural tolerance. In this way, peaceful coexistence among cultures could be realized without clashes or conflicts.

I do agree with this group of thinkers who neither totally accepts nor summarily rejects the phenomenon of globalization. In my viewpoint, we (Arabs, Muslims, Africans and all the poor) should not accept it as it is. People of the developing countries have to filter it out and decide what to approve or accept and what to disapprove or reject. What they have to reject is its flip-side.

Unfortunately, the Arab intellects working on globalization are a few. It is not surprising, then, that there is no clear understanding of the concept of globalization. Some believe that it is a Western imperialism in a new grab. Others assert that globalization is a machination to weaken Islam and Arab culture. It is the basic supporter of the Western corrupted and unwholesome values. However, a few Arab thinkers are aware of the importance of globalization and believe
that if sober-minded, Arabs would crop and harvest great utilities from the new developments and inventions brought up by globalization. I think that the problem is not whether Arab nations accept or avoid globalization, but whether these underdeveloped nations are well prepared for it. The Arab world is in a state of underdevelopment, and retardation. True, the indisposition/problem is a little bit exaggerated but it is not fanciful. The Arabs are in a state of uncivilization, their freedom and democracy are confiscated, the have-nots are getting richer and the have-nots are getting poorer: all of these obstacles hinder the Arabs to make use of globalization and do favourable role in the new world order. Also, the old history of colonization and imperialism is one of the problems that have raised the Arabs' fears and suspicions of the process of globalization. The following section deals with the Arabs' negotiations with these fears in the context of the process of globalization.

2.3. Globalization and the Fears of the Arab World

The prospect of globalization evokes fear in the minds of most Arabs as they often do not differentiate between globalization as an objective process and as a policy, and globalization as the epiphenomenon of late capitalism. They associate it with previous bad memories of unfair imperialistic experiences inflicted upon the Arabs and Muslims by the capitalist West. The question Arab thinkers constantly raise is whether more powerful cultures will marginalize other cultures through cultural globalization, threatening the cultures of developing countries. Their fear springs from their belief that the superiority of First-World countries economically, politically, technologically, and militarily means that they are in a position to do this. Third-World cultures could be dismissed and remain unacknowledged in comparison with the First World cultures. They would then exist only on the fringes of global civilization. In this section of this chapter, I discuss the reasons beyond the Arabs' fear, explain how the Arabs have dealt with
these fears and find out what is the fact about such uneasiness in relation to the contemporary
process of globalization.

Many Arab countries were dominated militarily, politically, and economically for a long
time by Western colonialists, and as a result, forced to give up their civil rights, native traditions,
national pride, and indigenous identities, which were replaced by the colonial cultures. The
colonialists were able to govern the occupied nations without much resistance because they
[colonialists] plotted political and social intrigues to instigate dissention and friction among the
various political and religious groups in the occupied countries. It is no wonder then, that today
these countries fear and doubt the real Western intentions behind globalization. To say it
differently, Western penetration into the cultures of the developing world with the purpose of
obliterating them and eliminating their traditional norms is proposed by a large number of writers
and thinkers in the developed countries who call for the Westernization of the economies and
cultures of developing countries. Because of this, many people of the Third-World are afraid of
and hostile towards Western globalization.

Paranoia over globalization, and what foreigners and their cultures may have in store for
the Arabs, is currently rampant in the Arab world. Globalization means different things to
different people: some object to the material things of America; others fear deeper forms of
subjugation to foreigner control. American cultural influences in terms of fast-food restaurants
and malls are widespread in the Gulf (Saudi Arabia has allowed McDonald’s and Kentucky Fried
Chicken to operate in the heart of the holy Muslim city of Mecca). Some countries like the UAE
(United Arab Emirates) and Lebanon have had no qualms about foreign capital investing in their
territory; others who have dreamed of doing it all themselves have balked at it. Fear of
globalization can mean fear of losing control—over the economy, foreign policy, losing identity, and public morality.

A number of Western thinkers insist that if developing cultures reject Western values as non-universal, those cultures should be deservedly marginalized. They conceive of Western as the undisputed universal culture of the world, with Western civilization as the universal civilization, having spread art, literature, science, technology, and modernization all over the world since the 14th century. To these thinkers, Western culture should spread its universal values all over the world through intensive manipulation of mass media, regardless of the fact that ignoring the legitimacy of other cultural values and rejecting the ethical and traditional norms of developing countries will inevitably lead to clashes between the cultures of the developed and developing countries. This idea of Western cultural universality and superiority is no longer accepted by Third-World nations. Indeed, Islamic thinkers see this approach as unethical and undemocratic and it is at the same time a source of their fear of the process of globalization. More than anything, Mohamed El-Shibiny is his book *The Threat of Globalization* remarks that the Arabs’ fear of Western globalization springs from their belief that globalization will ultimately lead to “the erosion of the sovereignty of Islam, to impair its universal cultural status, and to weaken adherence of Muslims to their beliefs, traditions, and values” (9). As a result, some Arabs prefer to isolate themselves from Western cultural activities and they would like to resist cultural globalization and combat its influence over the Islamic World.

Despite the fact that cultural globalization, in theory, tolerates cultural differences among nations in order to achieve a cross cultural homogenized world, marginalizing of developing cultures is taking place. Therefore, most of the politicians in the Arab countries, as well as the other countries of the region consider globalization as an advanced stage of the international
capitalist system. Such a process is being led by the advanced, capitalist countries, which are applying new liberal policies to invest in the outcome of the third industrial revolution, i.e. the revolution in information and communications. This aims at a further exploitation of their own people, at gaining more use from the people and resources of the developing countries and at marginalizing them internationally. This group provokes Arabs to refuse to join the capitalist globalization in order to avoid becoming yet more dependent and marginalized. They should instead exert efforts to achieve a self-sufficient economic and social development. Roger Garaudy, the French philosopher and international thinker, has warned of the increasing degree of American military, economic, political, and cultural hegemony. He says: "we should eradicate the economic hegemony and wipe out the cultural intervention. We shall fight the enemies of cultures, the dinosaurs of Hollywood and their entertainment tools, and all their non-ethical and materialistic revelations" (210). He also insists that it is the duty of the non-developed countries to unite their efforts to defend their freedom and cultural identities and preserve their economic, political, and cultural peculiarities. He points out that the multinational corporations working diligently to dominate the world do not confine their efforts to achieving global economic control, but also aim politically to "monopolize the cultural identities of developing countries" (211).

Almost all the Arab countries underwent European colonial control. Only after the World War II, the Arab nations began to get their political independence. The Western colonization of almost all the Arab countries has formed the Arabs' relationship with the West. The majority of Arabs consider globalization as a risk that endangers a number of local assumptions that should never be examined. Recently, the Arabs' fears have been intensified because of the Western support of the state of Israel and the occupation of two Muslim countries: Iraq and Afghanistan.
Hence, the Arab and Muslim people do not perceive globalization as an objective process but an American project attempting to control the Arab world on the name of fake values. Though many efforts are made so as to develop the Arab countries, they are still referred to as underdeveloped and backward. Hence, the Arabs still perceive globalization as an entanglement and/or conspiracy theory that aims to emasculate, weaken, and undermine the Arabs.

Kadhim Habib in his article “Globalization and the Fears of the Islamic World,” notes that the Arabs’ anxiety of globalization and Westerners’ intentions result in their rejection of the European process of enlightenment which is necessary for the further progress of communities. There is a wide gap between West and the Arab world. While the West has reached the climate level of their third industrial revolution, the Arab world is still at the very beginning of their initial industrialized revolution. This wide gap in culture and technology is caused by the dictator regimes ruling the Arab countries. The tyrannical Arab regimes deprive their people of free expression, and hinder human rights. The First-World counties take the issue of human rights as a pretext to penetrate in the indoor affairs of developing countries. That is the point where fears of globalization arise, and that is why, the people of the needy nations regard globalization, with its capitalist baggage, as a new way to increase the exploitation of people, to plunder the resources of the countries, and to impose on them subordination and surrender to the West.

Though Arabs welcome the development brought up by globalization, it provokes their fears. For example, Arabs want the Internet, but they also fear the polluting influences that come with it. The Internet is a means not an end. Instead of being a source of communication, knowledge, and illumination in all fields of life; for some Arabs, the Internet has become a window to enter a world of pornography, lewdness, and permissiveness which result in the breakdown of Islamic rules and family ties. The fear of foreign culture and interaction also
operates between Arab countries. Faced with economic troubles, Saudi Arabia is less interested than it once was in mass importation of non-Saudi labour, and since the late 1990s it has promoted [sa'wada], or Saudization, of its economy. The wealthy Gulf States have feared since the 1970s that the urban-based, nationalist Arab regimes have an eye on their oil as part of a wider redistribution of Arab wealth. The oil is seen as a curse by many: for the secularists it has divided the Arabs and let the foreigners in, and for the Islamists it has corrupted the Arab society. Even former Saudi oil minister Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani viewed the presence of oil in his country with a fair degree of ambivalence. He is cited in Jeff Goodell’s book “The Dirty Secret behind America’s Energy” as saying “I wish we had discovered water.”

Overcoming Arab’s reservation about globalization is not an easy challenge. It demands cooperative efforts among nations to create a system for protecting the cultural autonomy of Third-World nations. In cultural globalization, non-Western cultures should not be obliged to commit themselves to Western traditions, modernization, values, governance, institutions, social way of life, and individualism. Third World nations should retain their right to cultural self-determination and not controlled by powerful cultures in the name of universal global values. It is unjust and defies international democracy to marginalize Third-World cultures that do not commit to a Western universal cultural model. Indeed, for globalization to be viewed as a gateway to new technologies and new experiences, cultural changes are an important prerequisite of these experiences, globalization has to shed its negative connotations.
2.4. Globalization and its Impact on the Arab World

After the discussion of what Arabs think of globalization and the reasons behind their fear of the phenomenon, I would like to have a glance at the actual issues related to globalization in the context of the Arab world i.e., the impact of globalization on the Arab world economically, politically, and culturally. I start with economic globalization and the Arab world.

2.4.1. Economic Globalization and the Arab World

Nowadays there is a lot of discussion about the economic dimension of globalization—about its pros and cons, about the chances it provides and the dangers it results in. I would like to present the diverse responses to the question of the position of the Arab countries in global economy. Some scholars classify the Arab world economically into four categories. There are those that depend on oil to run their economy like the Arab Gulf States; others are mixed oil economies like Iraq and Algeria; the third group includes countries like Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and others that depend not on oil but on diversified economies; and in the last category come poor countries like Yemen and Sudan that are mainly export economies.

Despite the rapid achievements of globalization in the whole world, I am concerned that Arab countries as a group (especially non-Gulf States) are operating below potential. They are not, in fact, taking full advantage of the opportunities that the global economy has to offer. Hence, the Arab States may not be an exciting field of study to anyone interested in the study of economic globalization. What is more attractive is the Gulf States, which in my view, have taken full advantages of globalization. So, in this section, I concentrate on the Gulf States and the impact of economic globalization on these States. The Arab Gulf States of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and recently Morocco and Jordan have been exposed to direct
global forces for the last three decades. I call these states without much exaggeration “the beating heart of globalization” in the Arab world for they have emerged as the Arab region’s flagship of globalization.

The AGSs have become international players on the economic world stage. Aerial pictures that were taken before the discovery of oil reveal that the small desert was but a settlement amidst a nearly forgotten corner of the Middle East. Today, the same aerial photos reflect an utterly different and quite dramatic change to a once harsh and unforgiving landscape. From desert to development, the AGSs have exploited its gift of oil and have transformed their image from a traditional and modest people to glamorous and innovative societies. Not too long ago, the city of Dubai would not have been regarded as a global icon of modernity, commercialism, and internationalism. Today however, Dubai has entered the global marketplace in style and is positioning itself to challenge the status quo of the world’s most economic powerhouses such as New York, London, Singapore, and Hong Kong. With nearly eighty percent of the population of foreign citizenship, “the UAE boasts an impressive diversification among its resident population with many of its residents having come from the Middle East, South-East Asia, and Europe” (Al-Khazraj i 1).

A major boon of economic globalization is that it helps the AGSs build a better infrastructure. The growth of cooperation between the Arab countries and other countries was conditioned by the international interest in the perspectives of the Arab states. Arab countries realized the importance of creating an open economy that can offer investors something new and attractive. The Emirate of Dubai is a good example of the aspiration for the active participation in globalization. Dubai attracts foreign investors and corporations because of the considerable economic opportunities offered to businesses there. The city is seeking to diversify its economy
and move away from its reliance on oil, which means that it is increasingly reaching out to businesses and investment from the rest of the world. The vision of Vice President of UAE and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum is “to create an open society where international businesses are invited to actively participate in building a better infrastructure and improving business relations” (qtd. in Hollis 52). According to a survey that was conducted in 2005, “foreign direct investment inflow into the UAE achieved a record US $10 billion amounting to nearly 34 percent of the total foreign capital flow into the Arab world” (Al-Abed 76).

Since globalization has turned the world into one small village, it was easy for other countries to know about the economic virtues the AGSs grant for businessmen. The UAE preserves working rights for businessmen by allowing them to rent and sell easily without interfering with them or imposing taxes on their products and revenues. One might argue that foreign investments flow back to foreign owners and this means no benefit for the local society. Yet, the UAE authorities have decided that “in order for a business to be conducted in the UAE, 51 percent of the business must be owned by a UAE citizen” (Damyanova and Singer 102). Therefore, the UAE economic growth and living standard have both increased.

In addition to that, globalization has encouraged the UAE domestic investments. For instance, “the UAE is an important participant in global capital markets through several investment institutions, including, among others, the Abu Dhabi Investment Council, the Dubai Port, Dubai Holding, and the Abu Dhabi’s International Petroleum Investment Co. (IPIC)” (Al-Abed 76). In fact, the reason for the large increase in the UAE domestic investment is because globalization has entitled UAE to deal with developed countries like the US and the UK and learn from them that savings and investments are the shortcuts towards a faster growth rate.
Furthermore, globalization is the main reason for the promotion of free trade between the AGSs and other countries. Free trade has benefited AGSs a lot because it allows them to import goods at a lower cost than producing them domestically. Jaime Sabal in his book *Financial Decisions in Emerging Markets* examines the export market of the AGSs and found that Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and India come at the first four positions with petroleum, fish, and natural gas as the basic export goods. The import goods are mainly chemicals and equipments for the improvement of local business with countries such as Germany, America, France, and India at the top of long list of import markets (156).

Another benefit of economic globalization in the AGSs is that the people make use of the revolution in information and technology. AGSs are on the top of Arab countries participating in the phenomenon of globalization due to their awareness of the importance of technology. The Gulf markets depend to a large extent on technology. They are creating the first dot com and the first www world that unites them economically and culturally. They realize that globalization will profoundly restructure the way they used to live. These realizations have been quickly absorbed by government officials and elites, not to mention large social segments in the AGSs. Sheikh Abdulla bin Zayed Al Nahayan, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs, articulated this awareness to a conference on e-business during which he warned that the AGSs “must not be left behind in this global transformation of ideas and attitudes. To be e-active is no longer a matter of choice, but a necessity to compete in the global economy” (Abdullah 183). The UAE, perhaps more than the other AGSs, possesses the necessary ingredients to thrive in globalization. When compared to other Arab states, the AGSs initially are making globalization work and are showing more confidence in dealing with its risks. Most of the AGSs are “increasingly involved in globalization but seemingly they do not have any other choice” (McGrew 14). Indeed, the
AGSs have gravitated to the benefits of the information technology, such as computerization, miniaturization, satellization, and internetization. Using Alan Oxley’s term, AGSs want to “seize the future” like the West and become fully wired in the information technology rush. They are racing to hook up with the new economy and the e-commerce, as the wave of the future, well ahead of the Arab states outside the Gulf.

The UAE, which is already in the Middle East hub for business, shopping, and tourism, is launching the Internet City, the Media City, the Incubator City, the Silicon Oasis, and the Internet University, which are part of a vision to establish the Dubai free zone for technology and media. This is the first of its kind in the Arab world, which could determine not just the UAE future but also the future of the region. The UAE, especially its dynamic city of Dubai, is no longer dependent on oil that dominated events and developments in the past. Dubai is aspiring to be a visionary and pioneering global city. All across the city can be found global brands, names, events, and transnational companies. Dubai is a center with the greatest connections to the operations and many transnational corporations which have also been assuming a global role and turning into an essential unit in the chain of global command and control over input and output of services and products. No other city in the Middle East probably has such tolerant, easy going, and conspicuously liberal social lifestyles as Dubai, which includes entertainment, shopping malls, cinemas, hotels, leisure facilities, and resorts of world standard. Dubai possesses information and accumulated knowledge and is the preferred place for many consulting and legal firms, news agencies, advertising houses, television networks, and international journalists covering events in the wider Gulf and Middle East region. The city agglomerates professional talents in legal services, technicians, managers, and computer experts. These are highly paid professionals: wealth is made and money is spent in large quantities. A global city like Dubai is
where a disproportionate share of world's most important business is conducted, especially in the banks. Dubai is diligently preparing itself to play a high-profile global role as a command point in the organization of global economy.

Tourism is also one of the major sources that help in building the UAE's economy. Dubai has attracted visitors and tourists from all over the world. Burj Khalifa, Burj Al-Arab, the Palm Jumeirah are some of the places that have enhanced tourism in the country. In addition, the economy of Dubai has been developed through international sports because Dubai has hosted global sport events.

The Dubai's free zone helps the international companies to work with no limitations or restrictions. Thus, calling Dubai the 'mother of globalization,' may not sound like an exaggeration. Dubai is increasingly becoming a global center of business because of the lifestyle it provides to its residents and the willingness of its leaders and citizens to cater to a diverse clientele. There are considerably fewer rules and regulations in Dubai than in neighbouring countries. For example, alcohol is permitted to be consumed, and there are entertainment centers, bars, pubs and discotheques, which are banned in other Gulf States. Thus, despite Saudi Arabia's larger population and market base, international companies choose to locate their offices in Dubai so that their employees are not required to dramatically alter their lifestyles.

Anyone who visits the AGSs especially Dubai can find that this modern city has managed to experience modern economic and technological development. Multinational corporations play an important role in facilitating this economic growth. In order to be successful in this region, these companies quickly realized that they would have to find a model that is both internationally competitive and respectful of local culture and traditions. In essence, these companies are localizing globalization. Many of the multinational corporations employ unique marketing and
advertising strategies in order to accommodate and appeal to the diverse population of the UAE. Consequently, the majority of the citizens and the government of Dubai welcome the presence of these companies. The success of multinational companies in Dubai reveals that, if managed properly, modernity can exist quite well, and that these companies can contribute responsibly to the development of the region.

Although the Gulf region has economically developed, in so many ways it “remains an organic part of the Arab world and cannot remain indefinitely immune to the problems of the region as a whole” (Hudson 148). Globalization does help to improve the AGSs economically and technologically, but, at the same time, these States have become scientifically and technologically subordinate to the West and have lost their political independence. Mohamed El-Shibiny in his book *The Threat of Globalization* observes that the control of multinational corporations over human, scientific, and technological development worries the Arab nations whenever questions about concepts of globalization and technological dependence arise. Arab countries “cannot avoid domination since multinational corporations control eighty percent of the world production” (102). The Western multinational companies have been increasing their economic influence and political dominance in the Arab states though it had been anticipated that petroleum, in the region which produces 30 percent of the world’s supply would be a crucial weapon enabling the Arabs to maintain their sovereignty and resist political and cultural subordination to foreign ideological dominance. Nonetheless, current events have proved otherwise. Willingly or reluctantly, all Third World cultures face Western multinational corporations that oppose multicultural globalization and have the power to impose their own culture as they monopolize the field of knowledge and modern technology. These giant
multinational corporations have the capital and marketing ability to export all kinds of products to developing countries.

Arab countries, under the pressing need to develop their societies, are targeted by these multinational corporations and are yielding to multinational marketing. In importing know-how and technology, they accept terms and conditions that may not be in their best interest and that undoubtedly will result in the economic invasion and political influence of these companies in the Arab world. The danger is that during the process of transferring Western technology through these corporations, they subordinate themselves scientifically and technologically to these corporations and are quite likely to lose their political independence. The process of integration into the wider global economics and politics, even if benign, introduces stresses that demand considerable adjustments. Perhaps most immediately is the question of the role of states in the possible breakdown of what is inside and outside their borders—that is, what is within and what is beyond domestic affairs. Abdulkhaleq Abdullah in his "The Impact of Globalization on Arab Gulf States," writes that as the processes of economic and cultural globalization are being widening, the political space automatically shifts to the wider world order, in which the state can no longer control the flow of ideas and products. As a result, the internal policy instruments of the state become ineffective, and many areas of its responsibility must be coordinated with transnational actors. In one view, this is but one step towards "the eventual death of the nation state" (185). This futuristic scenario could also be feasible for some but not all parts of the world.

Another disadvantage of economic globalization in the Arab world is that it is the cause of growing disparity and increasing poverty in many Arab countries. Globalization widens the gap between the rich and the poor. The rich get richer and vice versa. Economics was ruled by the logic of the nation-State, the logic of domestic vs. foreign. But globalization of today is
characterized by economic activities carried out by independent contractors and industrial or financial groups, assisted by their governments, through multinational corporations and establishments. Their goal is to overcome borders and eliminate the distinction between domestic and foreign, and to gain control of worldwide economic and financial activities. It is estimated that no more than 15 integrated global networks control the world's markets, and that the owners of these networks are the real masters of today's world, the world of globalization. Hence the concentration of worldwide economic activity is in the hands of a small group of actors, resulting in the marginalization or even the elimination of everyone else. Mohammed Al-Jabri in his article “Contemporary Arab Views on Globalization,” points out that five countries—the United States, Japan, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom—are home to 172 of the world's 200 biggest corporations. These 200 giants in effect control the world's economy, and they are determined to strengthen this control. A United Nations report stated that 358 wealthy individuals in the world control financial resources that are equal to the combined resources of 1.3 billion people living in poverty. Expressed in other terms, 20 percent of the world's wealthy control 80 percent of domestic production of raw materials throughout the world.

One of the direct side effects of economic globalization in the Arab world is increasing unemployment. While economic growth in the past used to create jobs, economic growth in the context of globalization and extreme liberalism leads to—and in fact depends on—a decrease in the number of jobs. A number of sectors in the fields of electronics, information, and communications, which are among the fastest-growing in the today sectors, require only a small number of workers. In the context of globalization and privatization, technological advances lead to increased unemployment, and in turn, to social crises.
Globalization impacts the Arab nations not only economically but also poses its nose into the cultural patterns and tries to reshape the minds of the people. For a country to flourish in the field of tourism and attracts tourists from all over the planet, some Islamic regulations have to be broken. Again, here I can give an instance of Dubai which attracts tourists from the entire world because they do not have to change their life style. For example, alcohol is not prohibited and many other religious practices are to be violated for the sake of attracting tourists. All the above mentioned cons/harms of globalization and multinational corporations are represented fictionally in the novels of Sunallah Ibrahim and Subhi Fahmawi to be discussed in the next chapter.

In sum, the influence of globalization on the Arab countries generally and the AGSs particularly—on their market—has greatly assisted them to flourish and become a region enjoying a certain level of significance. The process of foreign investment is facilitated by the governments and the export and import markets have been expanded. With the collaboration with and assistance of other nations, the AGSs could manage to be a region of great significance of investment and business. The impact of globalization can also be harmful as it entails the liberty of the nation, widens the gulf between the rich and the poor, and increases unemployment. Accordingly, the influences brought up by globalization economically, politically, culturally, religiously, and intellectually are very apparent even to a casual observer.

2.4.2. Political Globalization and the Arab World

In the political sphere, Arab regimes are conservative kingdoms or dictator republics distinguished by the many blocks of democracy, freedom, and free expression in politics, culture, and economy. Rafal Ozarowski in his article “Globalization and the Arab World,” observes that
US’s reliance on the Arab oil is approximately 50 percent of the whole import and this is the reason beyond the Americans’ interest to continuously interfere in the internal affairs and policy of the Middle East on the name of establishing ‘free’ world, and maintaining stability. Political globalization has not been embraced by Arab countries. These largely conservative oil-rich countries more easily deal with the economic and technical aspects of globalization but not necessarily its political aspects. As political globalization “threatens the nation State, it is not welcomed by [Arabs]” (Abdullah 184).

Clearly, the opportunities of political globalization are just as numerous as its risks. What we should keep in mind at least theoretically is that, even in a partially globalized world, almost all states lose control over their own affairs. As mentioned above, the expansion of the process of economic and cultural globalization leads to the loss of political independence and undermining the role of the State. The Arab countries are not immune from the other implication of political globalization, especially democratization. They have yet to address this first tenet of globalization. Democracy is spreading all over the world and the viability of the democratic political system is universally recognized. Authoritarian practices are becoming antiquated in this world of fast and open communication. Governments that are used to heavy handed control of their people—how they live, where they live, where they travel, what they say, and even what they think—are dwindling in number and becoming obsolete. Information technology is ending this kind of authoritarian rule. It is creating opportunities to communicate and experience freedom, which has not been there before. This is disconcerting for many authoritarian regimes still operating in the Arab world, especially those that do not insure the material well-being of their population with the surpluses from oil extraction. The holiday is almost over for all the
remaining authoritarian and dictatorial regimes that still believe they can control what their citizens think and say.

Many of the Arab countries realize that the world is becoming more liberal. Hence some liberal and democratic ideas are already flourishing in the Arab world, but with considerable hesitation and trepidation. Most of the Arab countries look more democratic and more tolerant than a decade ago. Elections, however controlled, have been taking place recently in many Arab countries. Local human rights organizations are allowed to attend to their business more freely. And women’s rights and participation is becoming a public issue. It is clear that Arab countries are quietly responding to the worldwide call for democratization and the ‘Arab Spring’ is a case in point. In the current section of this chapter, I will focus on the recent Arab uprisings (Arab Spring).

When talking about the Arab recent uprisings or what is called the Arab Spring, I feel speechless and actually do not yet know what we are witnessing, but for sure it will change the Arab world forever; and hopefully for the better. To present a snapshot into the Arab spring I can say that it began on 17 December 2010, when Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old Tunisian vendor, set himself on fire in protest against the confiscation of his cart. Protests began the very same day, locally, and then spread across the country. On 14 January, Ben Ali left Tunisia for Saudi Arabia. The uprising had been successful. The Arab and Muslim world was watching with incredulity, wondering: was this really possible—is it that easy? On 17 January 2011, a 40-year old Egyptian restaurant owner, Abdou Abdel-Monaam Hamadah, set himself on fire near the Egyptian parliament in protest against the dire economic situation. This was a copycat action. On 25 January, the Egyptian poured into their streets, for what they called a ‘Day of Rage’. On 30 January, US President Obama was asking for a smooth transition of power in Egypt. On 11
February, Omer Suleiman the newly appointed vice president, announced that Hosni Mubarak had stepped down and that the army was now in charge. The Arab Spring now had its biggest apple, and events were in full swing. What country would be next? Five days later, protests erupted in Benghazi, Libya. Gaddafi refused to give up power and the NATO was authorized to end his regime. Gaddafi was killed on 20 October 2011. In Yemen, Protests began on 11 February, the same day when Mubarak stepped down. On 3 June, Ali Saleh was injured in his presidential palace and was flown to Saudi Arabia for treatment. On 23 November 2011, Saleh signed deal to give up power and formally handed power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

On 14 February, Bahrain launched its own ‘Day of Rage,’ organized through social media. Demonstrators were mostly Shi’a. The ruling Sunni regime soon denounced the uprising, arguing that it was different from the Arab Spring. On 14 March, the AGSs sent troops to assist Bahraini security forces in suppressing the uprising. Imitating the Egyptians, Syrians declared a ‘Day of Rage,’ on 5 February 2011 using Twitter and Facebook. Though the number of protestors was very small, the security forces killed them, triggering further rallies. The clash between the Assad forces and the armed protestors led to civil war. Thousands of Syrians left the country to Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and some to Yemen.

In Algeria similar demonstrations broke out in January over food prices and unemployment. In response, the government ordered cuts to the price of basic foodstuffs. In February in Oman, protesters demanded jobs and political reform. Sultan Qaboos immediately reacted by promising more jobs and benefits. In Saudi Arabia, in February, King Abdullah announced increased welfare spending. In March, in Kuwait, hundreds of young people
demonstrated for political reform, demanding more meaningful participation in the affairs of their homeland.

Thus, between January and June 2011, a period of only six months, the map of the Middle East and North Africa changed radically. From Morocco to Iran, from Syria to Yemen—from one end of the Arab and Muslim world to the other—demonstrations spread in a relentless wave, and they were producing results. The tally of casualties was high, but varied from country to country. In Tunisia it was hundreds, in Yemen more, in Egypt many more; and in Libya it was much higher, and in Syria the number exceeded what one may expect. It continues till the moment. Every one of these postcolonial nation-states and political climes has a special significance in the blossoming of the Arab Spring. The regional and global consequences of the Arab Spring are yet to be assayed. To sum up the above discussion, the Arab Spring results in:

a. The Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia resulted in the overthrow of Ben Ali and the awakening of suppressed people in a whole region.
b. The Facebook revolution in Tahrir Square in Cairo led to Hosni Mubarak stepping down.
c. The Pearl Revolution in Bahrain was subsided by the Gulf army, but its ultimate fate is not yet decided and I think that it is still gaining support.
d. In Libya, the revolt led to the overthrow, capture, and killing of Muammar Gadaffi.
e. The Revolts in Yemen led to the injury and then the step down of Ali Saleh.
f. The Revolts against Bashar El-Ased in Syria led to civil or doctrinal war.

Globalization is not associated with goods and economy only; it has also to do with notions and ideas. Many have viewed the Arab uprisings as the victory of the model of globalization. The modern revolution in communication enables people to know the events in the
rest of the world whenever and wherever they take place. The economic shortage the Arab citizens are suffering from in the developing countries participates in fueling the Arab risings. Also, the massive recess between the First World and the Third World, between the Arab youths' ambition and their knotty lives have played a significant role in inflaming the Arab Spring. In other words, social media with its many forms has helped the protestors to share their ideas and to get organized. But it would be an exaggeration to remark that it is only social media that has created what we have been witnessing. The combination of many factors in economy, culture, politics, the absence of democracy and free press have facilitated the Arab revolutions.

The Tunisian revolt is called without much exaggeration the ‘father of Arab revolutions’. Tunisian protestors made a shake in the Arab world and woke up the Arab publics from their stupor. After a long period of injustice, oppression, inequity, despotism, and iniquity by American-client dictators, the powerless Arab people rose from their slumber and revolt for their rights and individual dignity. The significant tale of 2011 turbulences in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria is not how globalization and media inspired the protestors to revolt or how the organizers of these revolts utilized technology and the different communication tools to spread their notions, but how these ideas found basis and reactions in their diverse contexts. The patterns and reactions differ from country to another. The demonstrations in Tunisia rose steeply towards the capital from the villatic areas. In Egypt, by contrast, cultivated young people in the big cities arranged the revolts through the various communications instruments as Facebook, Twitter, cell phones etc. In Libya, blowzy groups of weaponed insurgents fuel the protests. In Yemen, and Syria the political opponent parties led by Islamic Brotherhood Party organized the protesters. While the revolution in Yemen succeeded to some extent, in Syrian it led to civil war. Though all the protestors in all the Arab countries shared a common goal that they revolt for
personal freedom, equality, and dignity, the risings across the countries reverberated dissimilar economic difficulties and social wrongs.

The elites of the Arab world and their Western supporters are trembling. The revolution in Tunisia overthrew two puppets in two days, shaking the politics of all the Arab countries. Ian Black in his article “Tunisia's Protests,” reports:

Tunisia's 'jasmine revolution' sent new shock waves across north Africa today, with a copycat suicide protest reported in Algeria and official dismay in Libya...Egypt, Jordan, Algeria and Morocco are seen as the other countries most likely to face serious popular unrest over unemployment, corruption and hopelessness, though social, political and economic conditions vary considerably between them.

I believe that the Tunisian revolution has broken the doors of dread built by injustice, aggrievement, and marginalization, thus recollecting the Arab people capacity to urge for their looted rights and diminish oppression. It is a cautioning message to all the tyrannical regimes that they are no more resistant to popular remonstrations. I can say that the Tunisian revolution is a seed that found roots in Arab countries. It is the first Arab revolution in modern times which has a real influence on the other Arab countries.

At the beginning of the uprisings, the Western leaders with Obama in the lead remained silent till Ben Ali was overthrown and was leaving the country. Suddenly, Obama disowned his dictator friend and told the Tunisians that he ‘applauds and appreciates’ their ‘courage and dignity’. However, the Americans continued to be uncritical of the status-quo of inhumanity, and had nothing to say to their clients of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Emirates, Qatar, and many others.
Indeed, American’s policy is the same in all the Arab regions. As we all know, the relation between America and Egypt was characterized by mutual cooperation in the while period of Mubarak’s rule. Mubarak was known as one of America’s puppets through his “assisting US diplomatic efforts in the Arab–Israeli conflict and facilitating, through joint exercises and the right to passage for US aircraft and warships, the regional US military presence” (Berger 165). However, when Mubarak stepped down, Obama declared his appreciation of the courage of the Egyptian people much the same way he lauded the Tunisians at the ouster of Ben Ali. He also gave orders to Al-Gaddafi- his puppet in Libya and Saleh in Yemen to step down.

This rather surprising response of the leaders of Western powers, with Obama in the lead, to the popular uprisings in the Arab world confirms the suspicion that globalization has made the old-world political equations obsolete. In hurriedly issuing marching orders to his former allies, president Obama has made his political compulsion clear: align with the rising young generation in the Arab world or lose control over the region. This compulsion is due mainly to the onset of globalization. The Arab leaders are now being forced to allow the American dream to reach the middle-eastern shores. The Arab youth has ushered in a new dawn of equal rights and opportunities, of freedom, of expression, even if all this is a far-cry from the true democracy. The axle of the wheels of this pan-Arab world movement is globalization.

It is also said that the Arab uprising is nothing but the natural result of the failure of the globalization model and the impasse affecting the entire world. It has entailed the cancellation of the notion of the nation state that emerged following World War II and the independence movement; and whose legitimacy is based on the notion of progress and of the well-being of its citizens. It has also entailed the cancellation of the socialist aspirations of the people based on
their desire for a welfare state and the provision of public services. The destruction of Ben Ali and his regime reflects the fall of the globalization process of imperialism and capitalism for all the developing nations. The situation is almost the same even in rich oil-producing nations because a process like globalization whenever and wherever it is found will result only in the growth of the elites’ wealth and the impoverishment of the needy, and the desertion of the local behalves to the behalves of the capitalists.

All the Arab dictators are falling down like autumn leaves. The fleeing of Ben Ali, the dishonourable end of Mubarak, the calamitous death of Al Gaddafi, and the ouster of Saleh have come to mark the end of all those Arab aggressors who served the American interests in the Middle East. The Arab world is hopefully bracing itself for a new alignment of powers and new strategies of governance.

But cynicism apart, the approximation of a democratic society, however, poor a substitute it is for a true democracy, definitely marks a step ahead in the direction of freedom. Hamid Dabashi in his latest book *The Arab Spring: The end of Postcolonialism* states that because of the Arab Spring, the world is once again pregnant with better and more hopeful versions of itself. These uprisings have already moved beyond race and religion, sects and ideologies, pro- or anti-Western. The West produced such postcolonial regimes as Mubarak, and Ben Ali. However, the Arab Spring put an end to this all. What we are witnessing in what used to be called "the Middle East" (and beyond) marks the beginning of new ideological formations. However, what we are witnessing in Syria and the second Egyptian revolution/military coup on 30 June 2013 lead me to say that there is no Arab Spring anymore. It has been replaced by the struggle for power. The days of the protesters with laptops and BlackBerrys in Tahrir Square are long gone.
The popular uprisings across the Arab world were exploited by the Western powers and their allies in the region to create new power centres in the interest of Western capitalists. The Arab Spring lost its radical edge, its spread to pro-Western states prevented, and the newly elected leaders who are not well-disposed towards their benefactors in the West are being fast gotten rid of. The military coup on 30 June 2013 against the Egyptian elected president Mohammed Mursi is a case in point.

To conclude, I would like to remark that overseers of the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, and Algeria have emphasized the role of media in fueling the Arab Spring. The revolutions, they believe, are the creation of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube etc. However, the truth is much more complex. Many factors such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, hopelessness, and political oppression come into play and are driven by a process called globalization. There is no doubt that what started in Tunisia spread like blaze in other countries due to many factors such as social media. In this regard, for me, it is appealing to pose a humble question: Why now? What are the factors that created such rapid changes? What is forcing this society to appear in a new avatar? There is no doubt that the grave economic realities, coupled with the opportunities for self-expression that the new forum, the social media provided contributed the making of the Arab Spring. But what is more important is the gap between the youths’ high dreams and the slight opportunities. Social change of the kind that is being witnessed in the Arab world today is over-determined by such diverse factors as abject poverty, absolute despotism, political deprivation, and perceived absence of equal opportunities for all. The trigger for the change, however, is the diminishing opportunities relative to growing expectations, created by exposure to other societies, mediated by the Internet. Globalization helps the Arab people to know about the opportunities available elsewhere. Therefore, it is clear
that it is the gap between the high expectations and the bitter lives that really matters. Moreover, social inequality, poverty, economic deficiencies/shortage, the lack of free political expressions, and unemployment increase the misery. In short, thanks to the combination of all these factors, the Arab world is experiencing what is called the 'Arab Spring'.

2.4.3. Cultural Globalization and the Arab world

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

The impact of globalization on Arab culture is a phenomenon that is set to change the inner and outer life of the people. Abu Sadat Nurullah in his article “Globalization as a Challenge to Islamic Cultural Identity,” argues that globalization is “a dynamic process which impacts various cultures differently around the world. It permeates cultural boundaries and results in the spread of Western ideologies and values across the world” (45). In this section, I try to point out that globalization is a fruitful to the Western capitalists. However, in the realm of the Arab world, globalization is a threat to their culture and identity for it promotes the hegemony of Western culture. Besides, it emaciates local culture aiming at Americanizing the world that the American culture becomes everyone's second culture. The impact of globalization is not negative in all cases. It affects the Arab culture and identity in a good way. There is a focal minority of Arab scholars who see globalization as a bridge that facilitates cultural integration and encourages healthy cultural exchange. This view is also to be addressed in this section.
2.4.3.1. Cultural Globalization and its Impact on the Arab Cultural Identity

Reactions towards the impact of globalization on Arab culture tend to be divided. Some thinkers such as Mohamed El-Shibiny, Yousef Qardawi, and Mohammed Qutb are of the view that it is a devil that threatens the native culture for the interest of the powerful one. Others like Galal Amin, Turky Al-Hamad, and George Tarabishi however, see globalization as a new phase of development. Robert Lieber and Ruth Weisberg have maintained that globalization, “promotes integration and the removal not only of cultural barriers but many of the negative dimensions of culture. Globalization is a vital step toward both a more stable world and better lives for the people within it” (274).

The process of globalization for Malcolm Waters as expressed in his *Globalization: Key Ideas* is “the direct consequence of the expansion of Western culture across the planet via media, economic domination, colonization, and cultural mimesis” (6). This Western domination on many fields of life such as economy, culture, politics, lifestyle, etc. reshapes the cultural identity of the Arab people and results in the formation of cultural hybridization in which the importance of Arab culture is almost unfound. Hence, it is no wonder that Arab culture has come into conflict with two alien cultures: one is the secularized pop sub-culture distributed by globalized media; the other is a version of Western culture that projects itself as compatible with Islamic culture.

How and why globalization affects cultural identity and what consequences it has. Globalization has underestimated geographic boundaries and has developed effectual associations and reshaped new identities through the immediate and unstoppable communications between different people of diverse cultures. The growth of these virtual
relations basically multiplies or increases the wide range of exchanges between people in the realms of culture, politics, religion, traditions, ways of life and so on. As a result of such exchanges and interferences, globalization has both negative and positive impacts on cultural identity.

Although globalization broadens the scope and opens new horizons for an increasing number of people from divergent origins, it has its evident shadowy sides. Tragic events such as the 11/9 terrorist attacks and the bombings in Bali, Madrid, and London are fixed forever in our memories. They happened in a globalizing world filled with tensions, oppositions, clashes, prejudices, and misunderstandings between people from different cultural backgrounds who never in history have been so interconnected with each other as in the present era. To put it differently, the event of 11/9 is the main reason for the West to develop a sense of hatred against innocent Muslims in general and Arabs in particular. Another effect of globalization on Arab cultural identity is the spread of multinational corporations. The Western corporations spread in the Middle East with the goal of seizing the wealth of the Arab oil-producing countries. The aim of these companies is only profit-making and not building or assisting the developing nations as they mislead the public. Native people get only the environmental pollution caused by these corporations.

In this modern age, the Arab cultural identity is in crisis due to the haphazard and aimless mimicry or imitation of the Western secularized cultural patterns and values. Globalization with its effects on culture is a threat to the Arab cultural identity because it nerves or supports the existence of liberal or secular communities where Islamic patterns are transgressed. Arab young generations wear global brands such as jeans, Nike, Adidas, consume McDonald’s, drink Pepsi,
Coca-Cola with no idea that these corporations are rooted in the American society and work to dominate the world more culturally rather than economically, and the Arab world is no exception.

Furthermore, Arab identity and culture is under crisis since cultural globalization encourages Western values that seek to establish an open society where there is no censorship on what is being telecasted. There are no limitations on vulgar display of sexuality. Many Arab young generations fall victims to the pornographic and sexual materials being merchandised by some of the Western movies, websites, and TV channels. The fall of Arab youths as smooth prey to these islamically prohibited attractions of the Western media is not because they are sex-addict, but because they have no other choice and Arab social media has nothing to offer for them. Though we are in the 21st century, Arabs are still backward that they do not have any powerful social media to emulate and compete with the Western ones. Though globalization has facilitated some advancement in technology and media in the Arab world, Arabs' programmes are still mere blind imitations of the Western ones. The very well-known programmes such as “Star Academy”, “Arab Idol”, “Arabs Got Talent”, and recently “The Voice” are mere imitations of Western programmes having the same ideas and even titles. Without appearing to demean the cultural practices of the Arabs, be it their style of dressing, food habits or greeting style, all of which are deeply connected to Arab reality and their interpretation of it, Western media succeeds in presenting non-Western cultures as inferior to Western patterns of behaviours. For instance, women wearing of hijab is regarded as an indication of uncivilization and mixing freely with the opposite sexes is said to be the mark of development and cultivation.

In her article “The Crisis of Cultural Identity in the Era of Globalization,” Fethiya Mohammed Ibrahim perceives that the communications revolution has played a key role in
bringing about the cultural influence. Instead of national and cultural boundaries, "the ideology of globalization has produced other invisible 'limits', led by global networks (i.e. the Internet) and satellite channels, in order to dominate the world’s taste, thought, and behaviour" (122).

Hence, in this Western or American age, Western media goes on to dominate and reshape the Arabs’ identity, values, and beliefs.

Globalization helps the American values not only to spread in the rest of the world but it also assists in the calumniation or defamation of the Arab people and culture. The global information is dominated by Western media that it has become difficult to find any Arab cultural aspects. Instead, the Arab culture is presented in a negative way. Arabs, for instance, are portrayed as sex-addict, backward, barbarian, women and wine-lovers, and uncivilized. The newspaper cartoons and films about the prophet Mohammed [peace be upon him] which represent him, his friends, and wives as sex-addict are a case in point. Indeed, Hollywood movies, Bollywood culture in terms of their fame attracts youths all over the world. Young boys and girls from Saudi Arabia to New York watch the same movie, listen to the same song. These immoral attractions only deprecate the youths’ mind and lead to permissivism and pornography. Thus, the Arab culture is challenged by Western globalization propagated by Western media.

Englishness adds to the lessening and degradation of Arab culture and language for English language, in this modern age, has become the global language of Internet, communication, education, and technology. Also, globalization is the cause of family disintegration. James L. Watson in his book *Golden Arches East* argues that McDonald’s and other fast food restaurants are "working as have been serving as the agencies of Western cultural imperialism" (4-5). Due to fast food restaurants, the habit of eating-together has almost become forgotten in the Arab families.
On the whole, cultural globalization poses a menace to the Arab-Islamic ways of life. As it has been discussed earlier, globalization originates Western cultural domination, in which Arab cultural characteristics are considered as retrogressive. The crass commercialization of human needs and desires, worse still, the creation of needs purely in the interest of profit, masquerades itself as progressive, secular culture. Any culture that gets in the way of this process is systematically projected as a reactionary belief-system.

However, globalization influences cultural identity also in so many good ways. The rapid flow of information, greater integration of cultures through technological advancement and easier access to countries are not harmful to the culture of a community. Globalization can potentially create an atmosphere conducive to multicultural existence, wherein one truly admires the good points of cultures different from one’s own without being forced to give up the belief-system that sustains one’s own culture.

Globalization facilitates the interaction and dialogue between different cultures. It helps narrow the gap between and within nations through the process of negotiation and learning about others’ language, customs, and traditions. Communication with people from other cultures and nations helps benefit from each other. For example, the global dominance of English is of vital significance not only in the issue of cultural identity and globalization, but also in the domain of economics. Since American companies are the main producers of products, knowing English has become compulsory so as to have a speedy communications with these giant American corporations. People’s ability to speak English has given them the opportunity to communicate with each other, know each other, and to know about other culture. In its present form, however, globalization actively discourages a truly multicultural existence.
To some thinkers such as David Rothkopf, globalization encourages human brotherhood as it strengthens the integration and the remoteness of cultural preclusives. The process of globalization enables the local cultures which are regarded as backward to interact and mix with other cultures which are said to be developed and benefit from them. At the same time, the cultures of the Western world that are regarded as superior can make use of the cultural patterns of inferior cultures. Hence, globalization fortifies cultural exchange in all walks of life.

The last advantage of globalization in the realm of its impact on culture and identity is the spread of technology and Internet. Because of these factors people have the ability to communicate with each other easily whenever they want and wherever they are. Jan Aart Scholte in his book *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*, writes that “with globalization people become more able – physically, legally, linguistically, culturally and psychologically – to engage with each other wherever on planet Earth they might be” (59). The same viewpoint is enhanced by David Morley and Kevin Robins who insist that now is the time of placelessness. In their book *Spaces of Identity*, they argue that this modern age is the time of “a placeless geography... a world of instantaneous and depthless communication, a world in which space and time horizons have become compressed and collapsed...that is ... provoking a new senses of placed and placeless identity and a challenge of elaborating a new self-interpretation” (112 & 121).

The originator of the term “travelling culture,” James Clifford insists that the end of boundaries is the characteristic of the age and that identity is usually in mobility, and not associated with a definite place or location. Also, John Tomlinson in his well-reputed book *Globalization and Culture*, corroborates this idea of placelessness and announces that the best celebrated utility of globalization is “the weakening of the connection between everyday lived culture and territorial location” (34). Thus, the above discussions and viewpoints show that
man's modern development and his/her devotion to technology have undermined and weakened his/her sense of the self or identity. Identity for those who celebrate globalization is not confined to a geographical space. One's identity/home is where one has the "feeling at home," a feeling of comfort and security (Brah 4). Whereas the novels discussed in the next chapter represent the curses of globalization, the novels to be discussed in chapter four provide a discussion of the above and many other merits of globalization fictionally through three novels by three contemporary Arab female novelists.

Today Arab communities are challenged with the winds of globalization. They want the progress brought about by globalization, but at the same time they are afraid of it. Arab societies are in deadlock/dilemma because they want their generations to be in touch with the other developed world so that they can reap the positive changes taking place in the Western world, and at the sometime they can adapt themselves to face the challenges of the Western globalization. However, they are afraid that their youths will only get affected negatively and lose their sense of identity. Therefore, Arabs are in a process of arguments on how to find an appropriate way that combines the local with the universal. Namely, they are attempting to find a way in which their generations can have the ability to choose what suits them and help them to change in a good way; and at the same time they have the freedom to reject what affects them in a negative way. A process that is characterized by a mixture or a combination of the local and global in order to form a new/hybrid identity is named by Roland Robertson in his *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Cultures,* as ‘glocalization’.

To sum up, globalization influences cultural identity. The revolution in telecommunication and technology has created a world that is a well-knit unit. Globalization has made the people of the world more alike, and in a profound way it reinforces cultural identity.
People around the universe become closer than before. However, although globalization promotes healthy cultural exchange, in many cases those are harmful to Arab-Islamic culture. Globalization, for the Islamists, is considered as the issue by which the Western patterns and notions spread in rest of the world. Globalization is “globalizing American culture and American cultural icons” (Friedman, *The Lexus* 380). In the name of cultural exchange, the American values are dominating and eliminating the local cultural patterns. Therefore, Arabs and Muslims across the world need to reassess the Western culture, and should not rush to reject it completely. They should filter out the negative aspects of the culture they encounter before adopting or practising it. They should know how to stand in the face of cultural globalization benefiting from its boons and filtering out its harms. In the following section, I mention some ways following which, in my viewpoint, Arabs and Muslims can position themselves in the face of cultural globalization.

2.4.3.2. Is it Possible for Arabs to Face Cultural Globalization?

Given that Arab cultural identity is under crisis in this age of globalization, Arabs and Muslims around the world need solutions to these problems. The superiority of First-World countries economically, politically, technologically, and militarily means that they are in a position to marginalize other cultures through cultural globalization and Arab culture is no exception. To avoid such marginalization, I would like to suggest some strategies that would help to revive the cultural identity of the Arab world.

A first major step to ameliorate Arab-Muslim life is that Arabs have to realize their faults and they should not blame the Western ‘others’ for their deficiencies. Arabs’ current
underdeveloped status in all walks of life disenables them to confront cultural globalization. Admitting their ills and setbacks is not a scandal or dishonour for Arabs. However, obdurateness will pose a threat to them and increase the complication and entanglement of the problem. However, Arabs must endeavour to change themselves, their lives, and their society.

One of the ways in which the Arab world can deal with the West’s epistemic violence is through openness to reform. The Arab intellectuals should evoke the vision of a society that encourages free thinking, creativity, innovation, and mutual-tolerance. They should help the rest of the Arab society believe in the possibility of a democratic Arab society. Free expression and effective dialogue cannot happen until there is a more democratic approach in Arab thought, allowing Arabs the necessary freedom of expression and encouragement to develop innovative ideas and creative solutions.

It is an essential requirement for the Arabs to devise a new curriculum combining both revealed and rational knowledge which encourages them towards the field of research and learning. Besides, it is the responsibility of Arab thinkers not to submit to the pressure of Western writers who call for a single universal culture for developing countries to follow. On the contrary, Arab thinkers should promote pride in their civilization which contributed to the emergence of enlightenment in science, medicine, mathematics, arts, and literature in the European cultures in the 13th and 14th centuries. Furthermore, for Arabs to be capable to control the tide of globalization, they should evaluate everything rationally and critically. Prior to this Arabs must always critically evaluate ideas and cultural products found in the ‘global supermarket’. Moreover, Arabs and Muslims should develop strong moral character that guards them from all kinds of evil and immoral alien culture. It is morality and value-based structure that is common to the Arab way of life, both the inner and outer aspects of life. If the morality of
individuals is sturdy, then their inclination towards pornography and other perversions of desire will automatically diminish. In the same manner, the ‘culture pollution’ by the Western movie industry must be rejected. Arabs must have many influential and dominant media of their own, (especially television, movies, Internet, and newspapers) in order to compete with world culture. The example of Iran, that has gone a step further to produce movies that carry Islamic values and has earned universal acclamation, can be emulated. Through the development of strong media that can influence the world, Arabs not only would be able to ‘ride the tide’ of globalization, but also would be capable of deciding ‘the direction of the tide’. The Dubai Media City is likely to uphold the cultural order of the region. The Dubai Media City is surely likely to be in the business of generating wealth, but it would also have to grow in line with the socio-cultural values of the Arab world. More importantly is bridging the hole between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ in the Arab world and providing equal work opportunities would probably help to cancel the forces of cultural globalization that seek to plunder people and to establish a hegemonic Western culture. On the whole, any Arab citizen would agree with Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri who believes that for Arabs to protect their culture and sense of identity and to compete with the Western world, they have to join all the abilities, and seek progress and development in education, information, technology, economy, and so on. When Arabs become in “a position of power in all fields of life especially in education and technology, only then they can make use of the fruitful aspects of cultural globalization and, at the same time, overcome its harmful effects” (24).

Before I conclude this chapter, I would like to deal with a question, that is, a continuation of the main argument. This question is: are Arabs ready to accept cultural globalization or not? The whole issue of globalization is complicated by the fact that the Arab people do not enjoy its
benefits but suffer from instability, conflict, and repression. I believe that the Arab world is suspended between globalization, which is associated with Americanization, and Islamization. Both have had tremendous positive and negative impacts on Arab culture. Globalization and Islamization, separately and together, have led to new perceptions, both negative and positive.

Arabs definitely need the positive effects of globalization for they are on a downward trajectory when it comes to development. The Arabs are profoundly focused with maintaining their sense of identity, cultural pattern, and autonomy in the face of the West’s superiority—and the globalization it has spread. They seek reassurance that globalization is not one-sided but accommodating all world cultures. They want to see it serving the world equally in an atmosphere of democracy respecting the rights of developing countries.

Thomas Friedman and many Western thinkers see globalization and the new international system led by the US as the only way forward, for countries to flourish and develop. Arab intellectuals, however, are unconvinced and still sceptical of Western intentions with regard to cultural globalization. They are dismayed by the writing of Western intellectuals who promote concepts that highlight the gap between the two worlds with regard to views on cultural globalization.

For the Arabs to accept cultural globalization, it should be clear that this process aims at narrowing the gaps and differences between cultures with the goal of coexistence and positive interaction among human civilizations. For such atmosphere of coexistence and democratic interaction to take place, it should be made clear that while the Western world does indeed want to control the developing world and use its raw material and markets, it does not aim at converting Muslims. While the Islamic perspective focuses more on the religious dimension of
the conflict, it is ready to share its resources with the West. The two perspectives have been misunderstood. Both sides must develop deeper channels of communication: the Western, to communicate the idea that the West does not want to undermine or abolish the Islamic faith and Arab culture; the Islamic and Arab, to communicate the idea that they do not stand against Western interests. Creating such channels of communication is the duty of both Arabs and Westerners, especially the Americans.

In sum, for Arabs to accept cultural globalization, all cultures should be treated as equal. Superiority should not be attributed to any one culture and such arrogance must be avoided through acute self-criticism. Besides, the subordination of Third World cultures to supposedly more advanced cultures will not be tolerated by Third World cultures, particularly Arab cultures. Moreover, political, military, or economic pressure that result in major changes to indigenous cultures which might in turn lead to loss of cultural identity pose a major threat to the acceptance of a truly multicultural society. In other words, the Arabs will no longer obstruct cultural globalization when there is an understanding among nations that all world cultures meet together, interact with one another, and benefit from the diversities in global traditions, values, and norms, technological and scientific advancement, in a free and democratic atmosphere. No culture should express its superiority or show desire to dominate, but all should cooperate to foster a global understanding, democratic values, and human rights among nations. It is clear, then, that the Arabs neither completely reject nor accept globalization. Instead, they view it differently in its diverse domains of realization.

To conclude this chapter, I would like to remark that globalization has become a significant issue that the Arab world has to deal with. In their interaction with the issue, some Arab thinkers view it as a new way to impose a secular American way of life that aims at
weakening local cultures and Arab culture is no exception. Others see globalization as inevitable process that argues well for societies. They also attack those who oppose it. They accuse the globalization opponents to be simpleminded who rush to reject the process without even attempting to understand it. And finally, there is the pragmatic group who neither accepts nor rejects globalization. Admitting that the globalization is inevitable, this group is of the view that Arabs should make use of its pros and avoids its cons. In the domain of economy, globalization has impacted the Arab world in general and the AGSs in particular. Thanks to globalization, these small states have been changed from a desert area to a region of great importance in the fields of economy, technology, investment, and tourism. On the contrary, globalization has impacted these nations in a negative way. It contributes to the openness and liberty of the country, and increases the gap between and within nations. In the realm of politics, the new inventions of this age of globalization such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and cell phones have enabled the Arab crushed masses to communicate, experience, and share revolutionary ideas. They have facilitated the Arab Spring. Culturally, globalization promotes cultural identity in the sense that it makes the people of world more alike. It supports the idea of useful cultural exchange and the integration of cultural patterns and values. However, this cultural interaction in many cases may result in the domination of the Western values. Therefore, Arabs need to examine it well. They should know how to stand in the face of cultural globalization benefiting from its boons and filtering out its harms. Thus, it is not too easy to ascertain for sure whether globalization is a positive or a negative development in the course of human history and life. The only sure thing is that the process of globalization has already started and is rapidly unfolding.
Notes

1) For more details see a paper entitled "Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication Principles, Opportunities and Challenges in the Arab Region." This paper was presented in a conference on “Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)”, Cairo, 16-17 Oct 2011.

2) In May 1981, six Arab States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Saudi Arabia have established a political and economic alliance. It is called GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council). The purpose of the GCC is to achieve unity among its members based on their common objectives and their identical political and cultural identities. In May 2011, Jordan and Morocco joined the union.