

THE ROLE OF COLONIAL MENTALITY AS A SOFT THREAT ON CIVILIZATIONAL MEMORY

دور العقلية الاستعمارية كتهديد ناعم على الذاكرة الحضارية



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Date de soumission: 25/10/2019 date d'acceptation: 09/12/2019



Abstract:

Colonial mentality as a psychological characteristic of the colonial period plays a special role in shaping opinion and action in post-colonial society. One of the serious points of the influence of this feature is its effect on human memory and their attitudes. On this basis, the present study aims to explain the impact of colonial mentality on civilizational memory. The authors intend to contribute to the clarification of theoretical studies in the field of soft threats against civilizational construction and movement. The research method is descriptive-analytical and the method of data collection is library-based (documentary). In this work, because of the newness of the research variables for the readers, it is attempted to clarify the concepts first and then analyze the impact of the variables. The findings of this study show that colonial mentality as a soft threat challenges the indigenous community from a theoretical and practical point of view and by

immersing it in an eclectic civilization exacerbates the problem of citizen migration.

Keywords:

Colonial mentality, soft threat, civilizational memory, post-colonial society, identity, immigration

ملخص:

تلعب العقلية الاستعمارية كخاصية نفسية للعصر الاستعماري دوراً خاصاً في تشكيل الرأي والعمل في مجتمع ما بعد الاستعمار. واحدة من النقاط الخطيرة لتأثير هذه الميزة هو تأثيرها على الذاكرة البشرية ومواقفهم. على هذا الأساس ، تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى شرح تأثير الذهنية الاستعمارية على الذاكرة الحضارية. ينوي المؤلفون المساهمة في توضيح الدراسات النظرية في مجال التهديدات الناعمة ضد البناء والحركة الحضارية. طريقة البحث وصفية تحليلية وطريقة جمع البيانات تعتمد على المكتبة (وثائقي). في هذا العمل ، وبسبب حداثة متغيرات البحث للقراء ، يتم محاولة توضيح المفاهيم أولاً ثم تحليل تأثير المتغيرات. تظهر نتائج هذه الدراسة أن العقلية الاستعمارية كتهديد ناعم تتحدى المجتمع الأصلي من وجهة نظر نظرية وعملية ومن خلال غمرها في حضارة انتقائية تزيد من مشكلة هجرة المواطنين.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

عقلية الاستعمار ، التهديد الناعم ، الذاكرة الحضارية ، مجتمع ما بعد الاستعمار ، الهوية ، الهجرة ،

Introduction and expression of the problem

A branch of postcolonial studies shows that many peoples today feel the impact of colonialism and the cultural domination of domineering civilizations.¹ These colonial influences can encompass a wide variety of issues such as civilizational appearances and models of institutions,

public beliefs, systems of thought, systems of emotions, social interactions and behaviors, historical imagery, and so on. One of the issues concerning colonial influence is the postcolonial impact of colonialism. That is, what a society accepts or cause them to emerge after the transition from classical or direct colonial times. This can be with or without awareness and with or without intervention. An important issue in this regard is the issue of “Coloniability” of society, a society that, with the passage of classic colonialism, has its own tendencies towards colonialism, both in the cultural classes of society and in the institutions and territorial management. Coloniability or, as Algerian thinker, Malik bin Nabi says: “al-Qabliyah Lel-Estemar” refers to the acceptance of colonialism by humans and societies, a soft threat that affects and disrupts the network of social interactions, and leads to the entry and emergence of various forms of dependency and colonization.² The primary place of acceptance of colonialism or Coloniability is the mind of the inhabitants of a society. In this respect, what makes the first and foremost steps towards colonial forms is another threat that called “colonial mentality”.

According to the author, colonial mentality as a ground for colonization of societies is a serious factor in distorting and misinterpreting the civilizational memory of societies that has many civilizational values and a range of behaviors and identity beliefs have formed on its orbit. This research work addresses this effect.

Research Objectives and Questions

Following the above topics, the aims of this article are: to understand colonial mentality and civilizational memory as well as to explain the impact of this mentality on that memory. The research questions also include:

- What are the definitions and characteristics of colonial mentality?
- What are the features of civilizational memory?
- How does colonial mentality direct the civilizational memory of a community?

Colonialism and colonial mentality

Linda Smith, a researcher on colonialism, argues that there are four main concepts of colonialism: Colonialism is one of the interpretations of imperialism. By examining European imperialism after the 15th century,

we come to at least four different types of imperialism that are not necessarily contradictory. Instead, they should be considered as different levels of imperialism in analysis.³

These 4 types are:

- Imperialism as Economic Development
- Imperialism as subjugation of others
- Imperialism as an idea or spirit and attitude with different forms of realization (constructing the imperialist new western world in different spheres of culture, politics, economics, etc.)
- Imperialism as a broad field of study

Examination of the second and third cases shows that a high volume of ideology and culture is imposed by the old and modern colonialism on other societies and creates a new mentality and identity for those societies. This comes as a result of a mentality that the owner of this trait and the community affected by it, prioritize everything that is dependent on colonial society.⁴ Such a mentality is called colonial mentality. Accordingly, colonial mentality is: thinking and mental life on the basis of the features derived from colonization, or thinking as a human being living in the colonial environment behaved and acted on it.

The word Mental, as it is known from its root, is derived from the word mind, and refers to the type of thought and vision. Here the word colonialism is examined from the mental point of view, because this type of colonized person is physically or politically free from colonialism. Colonial mentality is also recognized as a form of internal racial oppression that poses a soft threat to colonized groups as a result of their colonial era.⁵

The stratification of colonial mentality

To make the study of colonial mentality tangible, David and Okazaki developed a scale to estimate the severity and weakness of the colonial mentality problem. Their case study for research was the land and people of the Philippines, which we used in the theorizing. They first divided the colonial mentality of their target society into four distinct sections:

- Thinking of themselves as poor
- Minimizing the culture of their community
- Discrimination against less colonized (Westernized) compatriots
- Enduring and dealing with historical and contemporary repression

After this segmentation, the target population was subjected to a five-point scoring associated with these four sections.⁶ They then identified five distinct ways of representing colonial mentality:⁷

- Ethnic and cultural inferiority
- Cultural embarrassment
- In-group discrimination
- Changes in body and physical characteristics
- Acceptance of colonial debt (the need to thank the colonizers because of awareness and systematization)

In his study of mental illness in community, David examined the extent to which colonial mentality was effective on depression and in other words theoretical and behavioral inactivity.⁸ The results of this study show the intensity of the role and impact of colonial mentality on the macro identity of post-colonial societies, a theme whose analysis reveals the link between history and the psychological interactions resulting from such a soft threat in post-colonial society.

Also, by integrating more examples of behavioral representations of colonial mentality from societies, this type of mentality was divided into two general categories:

- explicit colonial mentality (related to acts of self-expression, such as discrimination against others)
- Concealed colonial mentality (related to negative and institutionalized attitudes about the individual himself, such as feeling shame or inferiority to one's culture or identity)⁹

This division showed that the internal problems arising from colonial mentality played a role in shaping the external behavior of society, which has shaped social identity over the years.

Given the importance of the issue of colonial mentality to modern societies, other studies have examined different aspects of this factor and its role in post-colonial society.¹⁰ One of the issues that could be included in such studies is the study of the impact of colonial mentality on the civilizational memory of societies, a memory that holds the cultural past and identity of the individual and society as well as the linking factor in the network of social interactions.

Collective, historical and civilizational memory

Historical memory represents civilizational memory when it carries with it the civilizational dimensions. Indeed, the civilizational memory is defined in the likeness and association with historical and collective

memory, meaning that memory is a shared civilization image in the memory of the community.

Collective or historical memory is a concept that brings people together by showing a shared past. It is a storehouse of knowledge and information shared between multiple people or multiple communities. Some scholars refer to collective memory as a collective narrative that, by representing the past in the present, as well as formulating historical experiences within itself, becomes a statement for common understanding of life and a powerful source for identity.¹¹

Civilizational memory is also a factor in reinforcing identity and in strengthening societal networks within societies. In fact, at the civilizational scale, collective or historical memory forms the common identity.

Using historical memory studies as well as topics in the field of nations research, these two areas of cognition have become ever closer together. Regarding the importance of collective and historical memory, governments place great emphasis on its shaping through rituals, the construction and redefinition of myths, illustrations and repetitions of specific parts of common history. In this way, governments can either enhance or modify territorial belonging to the community according to their purpose. It is clear that among the inhabitants of a collective memory, the shared civilizational identity becomes clearer with the rise and strength of common collective narratives of the civilizational past in the target society. In this respect, some have used collective memory as a set of symbols for shaping social and cultural cohesion.¹² From here one can understand the importance of historical and civilizational memory in the construction and formation of power.

One of the characteristics of collective memory, and consequently, of civilizational memory, is that it is formed in proportion to the context of society, such as group, class and institutional memory. That is to say, within society, every group and organization has a memory that is not universal; only a few individuals within the community are associated with it. Also one of the things that should not be forgotten in analyzing the diversity of society about this memory is the issue of the existence of heterogeneous civilizational memories among the generations in a society. However, it can be said that they share much of the historical memory that makes their civilizational memory and identity.

Civilizational memory, like historical memory, is strongly influenced by time and space, and the present has a major role in its mental

reconstruction of the past. As such, civilizational memory is subject to change, formation, and persistence in accordance with the present time. On the other hand, civilizational present is also evolving according to the civilizational memory itself, which is constantly changing. It is actually a two-way relationship between the present and the past. This rebuilt memory can guide today's behavior and vision in specific ways. Halbwachs believes in collective and historical memory as a fluid memory that evolves over time and across historical and generational periods.¹³ In his view, historical memory has a serious distinction with history because it is alive in the present. Civilizational memory is also directly related to living customs, rituals and symbols. These factors lead us to have a living and ongoing connection with historical and civilizational memory, as opposed to historical events and phenomena, which are directly involved with our identity. The civilizational narrative that recounts the civilizational memory of a particular community is a reflection of their identity, which shapes their thought and action as they go through different stages.

Global experiences have shown that failure to preserve and redefine civilizational narratives increases the likelihood of the emergence of inter-sectarian and inter-civilization conflicts in multi-ethnic and multi-sectarian societies. Especially with the involvement of an agent outside of a civilization in the memory system.

Colonial mentality is a type of soft threat that can cause such intervention to grow.

Colonial mentality and civilizational memory

The results of research by Hobsbawm and Anderson on collective and historical memory show that the work of this memory can be interpreted as legitimizing power flow. Accordingly, the importance of examining the changing context of historical and civilizational memory becomes more apparent. A context such as the colonial mentality that is capable of playing a role in directing this memory to empower a particular identity and culture.¹⁴ Here are some examples of the impact of colonial mentality on civilizational memory such as the destruction of civilization's glory, the distortion of civilizational issues, the unrealistic interpretation of self, the weakening of civilizational interests, the crisis of objectivity and subjectivity duality...:

- The issue of inferiority is at the core of the category of colonial mentality, which has also received special attention in the fields of

social psychology.¹⁵ This lack of self-esteem in relation to civilizational memory has the following consequences:

- Colonial mentality denies the original image of indigenous civilization and its belongings. This mentality begins to make unrealistic interpretations. It also finds it impossible to achieve the glory of civilization.

- Colonial mentality recounts the repeated failure of indigenous civilization or the event of weakness whose images are contained in civilizational memory. It also compares indigenous civilization with colonial (e.g. western) civilization in such cases.

- Colonial mentality as a subjective factor, by drawing attention to and promoting an alien life style, leads to a decline in attention to indigenous civilization. This mentality, by reducing the inclination to indigenous civilization, tends the individual and society to colonial civilization. In this way, by reducing attachment to the memories of their historical society and creating attachment to the alien one, it causes one to distance oneself from indigenous identity and appearance. Such a person chooses an eclectic way to live. In this context, due to the degree of colonization of the peripheral environment, the pace of the identity crisis is changing.¹⁶ Over time, such a shift will widen the gap between eclectic civilization and indigenous culture.

- By promoting imported consumerism, colonial mentality becomes a serious obstacle to the reproduction and productivity of native civilization.¹⁷ The preference for alien and alien civilization over one's own civilization is reasonably likely to increase the influence of other societies' issues and products in their lives. One of the biggest problems associated with the recent damage of colonial mentality is the coming of the challenges and problems of other civilization to its own society, meaning that society is considering issues that are fundamentally beyond its own challenges and needs. The advent of these factors causes the community to experience "imported artificial crises".

- A society plagued by colonial mentality deals with the challenges of the day and its previous civilizational solutions. That is to say, that person, on the basis of his memory when confronted with a problem in his life, has two primary answers, an answer to the

methods that his predecessors had come to, and an answer to the way that his colonial society offers. At this stage, the colonial mentality, as noted earlier, prefers the answer or method belonging to the colonial society. We should know that members of that society, although inclined to alien civilization, cannot forget the way their fathers did. They will therefore judge and compare the two lifestyles. Here one begins to make a persuasive interpretation of the practice of his native civilization, either he calls it old and ineffective for his time, or he inevitably presents an interpretation that the old practice has also been mistaken in ancient time; With the hidden condition that if his civilization had come this way sooner, he too would have had power like colonial power.

- In relation to the current debate, the exchange of generations in the field of civilizational memory and the involvement of colonial mentality in changing it, is important. For civilizational memory, the transfer of identity from one generation to another is an important function that is influenced by the Ummah at the macro level and the family and social group at the micro level.¹⁸ Enabling colonial mentality to effect change in generational interpretations, values, and orientations makes the good and bad of civilization inverted. At each stage, a system of understanding, practice, judgment, and evaluation of the individuals in society is transformed. Due to the influence of colonial mentality, the relationship of indigenous civilization with colonial civilization has undergone a change, thus it creates another civilizational narrative for him.

- Because of the hatred of the colonial mentality about indigenous civilization, people draw fantastical images of living in an alien civilization in their memory. Applying the imagination factor can have a profound effect on the magnification of mental images of colonial civilization sought by colonialists.¹⁹ Over time, this exaggeration diminishes the interest in indigenous civilization by diminishing the images of indigenous civilization in the minds of the community. In this case the individual and the community gradually progress to islandization. In other words, the discontinuance of historical civilization occurs, but because of the historical and identity heterogeneity, it is not easy, if not impossible, to connect and obtain colonial (e.g. western) civilization.

- The identity arising from colonial mentality and colonization, as noted above, is accompanied by the continuous injection of images

of another civilization into the minds of the individual and society. The individual and society thereby paint a beautiful picture of colonial civilization and see only the strengths of them. On the other hand, by influencing colonial mentality, he attempts to construct black images and interpretations of his civilization, leaving an undesirable image in his memory. The consequence of this coexistence of black and white images and interpretations of civilization is the confluence of objectivity and subjectivity, which can be interpreted as cultural duality.²⁰ He lives in objective reality with the incomplete remnants of his civilization and other augments of others in the form of an eclectic identity and civilization, but in the ideal mind he is associated with the beautiful (!) civilization of the previous colonialists.

- The aforementioned mental and objective crisis, as well as the intra-mental conflict, poses a serious challenge to the individual and society, the challenge of migrating to the utopian ideal. By proposing the possibility of migration, the individual, by keeping his colonial mentality dynamic, seeks to build a personality and environment appropriate to the needs of the alien community in his society. In doing so, he becomes a self-proclaimed and active broker for the importation of colonial identity as well as an active contributor to changing his environment as a temporary pre-departure habitat.

Conclusion

As seen in this study, colonial mentality as a soft threat and as an active agency in the individual and society, tends to make the look at colonial civilization and its associated narratives more valuable than its own. Also paying attention to the idea and product of colonial civilization is associated with undervaluing the idea and product of indigenous civilization. An important part of this attitude is due to the involvement of the colonial mentality in the memory of the individual and society. This interference, when it comes to civilizational identity and memory, has an increasing impact on the civilizational narrative and movement. Things like the devastation of civilizational values, civilizational eclecticism, the transformation of civilizational issues, the unrealistic interpretation of self and society, the weakening of civilizational interests, the challenge of the dualism of subjectivity and subjectivity, and the migration of human forces and civilizational ideas

can be the results of this influence of colonial mentality on civilizational memory.

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