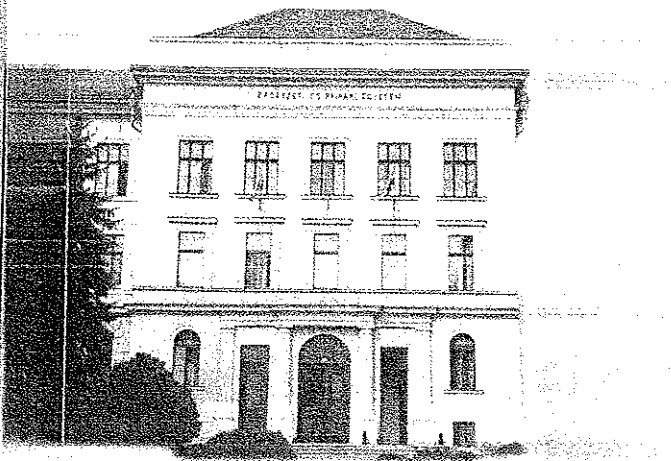


Conference Issue

National Culture – Globalization "Roots and Wings"
International Conference



Sopron > 10th-13th April 2002

University of West Hungary
Faculty of Economic Sciences

NATIONAL CULTURE – GLOBALIZATION

“ROOTS AND WINGS”

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NATIONAL CULTURE IN THE WORLD OF GLOBALISATION

Attila Fábrián

The world has been getting to know the economic globalisation for decades. Products of multinational companies have become extensively accessible at a cheap rate. The bounds, which were established as protective tariff and quotas in the 19th and 20th centuries, are disappearing in liberal trade. Development of the virtual world was a great progress in telecommunications: possibilities of electronics created a system of communication, which seems to be unlimited. This system fundamentally changed the ways of human communication.

How can human being control process in the age of great progress of economy and technology? How can individuality, creative mind be preserved and how can humans form and control all these in the interests of community? Or do humans take responsibility for the fact that human mind becomes mass-produced goods like the car or the mobile phone? How can their 'roots' stay in the earth from which they stem from?

Globalisation is present in the cultural life of the world. The question sounds like this: What is exciting globalisation of culture?

First of all the way of thinking can be mentioned which degrades culture or rather certain part of culture and makes it as 'important' as a washing machine. European mentality has already been fighting against it with success.

The second factor derives from the first one: if culture is regarded as a product then it must be accessible for more and more people in the simplest possible way.

The third factor derives from this: Simplification and unification are the reasons why customers can only choose with guiding. The principles of this guiding are determined by interests of business, which not always or sometimes not at all coincide with cultural values; but it may happen...

Many people are afraid that this progress is excited by efforts of our joining European organisations and European integration. Many people are afraid that simplified culture is developed in these organisations and our participation in the work of them is going to result in damage of national culture that is why they are hurrying protective steps.

The main principle of the Council of Europe is the cultural complexity: Europe regards this as important as the preservation of national culture. The Council of Europe bases the cultural co-operation on the elements of European culture, which are common for all European people; which are valuable for a Portuguese fisherman, a Norwegian sailor, a Slovenian painter or a German teacher. These common roots in European culture are: respect of human rights, democracy and humanity.

Because of similar principles the European Union, so far, has refused working out common European policy in the case of culture as it is the case in other specialisations: EU aims at preserving and protecting common universal European values.

If not the European integration then what is exciting cultural globalisation? Where does it stem from and what is feeding it?

The phenomenon of globalisation – as the word explains itself – is a result of process of global dimensions. Still if we have to face problems, first of all we must take ourselves into account. It is doubtless that not enough attention has been paid to the existence of globalisation, its dangers, its advantages and, still less, causes of it. In this situation there is a lot to do for cultural systems of government.

Free flow of information is a fundamental principle in democracy. However, freedom can be abused easily; we can experience difficult consequences of licentiousness whenever we witness what kind of information can be accessed without restriction in electronic network. We must carefully teach the next generation how to

handle this source of information in order to enjoy its blessings. Let us think of the success of interactive teaching programs! Parental responsibility cannot be neglected any more.

Globalisation, in the first place but not exclusively, arrives through electronic channels. We can meet these phenomena in the traditional sections like publishing of books when non-literary novels are dominant in book market or – which is even more dangerous – when we uncritically take over slavish translation of handbooks, technical books, encyclopaedias of foreign edition even with their mistakes. It is difficult to fight against irresponsibility of publishers.

In my particular point of view, based on traditions, books should remain pieces of reading held in hands and at the same time intellectual, visual experience.

It is a depressing fact that music, for loads of people, means only the global light music and folk music (the musical mother tongue) is disappearing from common knowledge. Referring to mass demand and commercial possibilities this one-sidedness is due to television commercial channels. Classical music is practically repressed.

Theatres are also flooded with light plays. National theatres like islands in the sea, try to fulfil their mission with classical plays.

Means of globalisation is available for all particular nations. We have to learn how to use these means. We must be able to bring them closer to all of us and the next generation and we should be able to make people be acquainted with our unique culture.

People's ability to preserve and protect values is summarised in our national culture. We can find everything in culture that is common in all of us and also that is different in all of us. As there is no state and society without citizens, a nation cannot exist without culture either. Preserving and increasing of communal, national and European values are therefore possibility and obligation of everyone.

At the beginning of the third millennium globalisation of world economy and the changed informational society mean a great challenge to the nations of the world especially the smaller nations of Europe. Leaders of the nations, preserving their national heritage, are forced to spend more and more money to protect their national language and values. In the third millennium every single nation and also the community of nations need a strategy to protect their cultural scale of values.

According to this, the importance of cultural policy is being appreciated especially where national culture and identity are key issues, which derives from the size and situation of a certain country.

There is an important fact in preserving, increasing of cultural values: being an essential part of the bigger whole by making it rich with our preserved national treasures.

There are several possible answers to the effects of cultural globalisation: making vernacular culture more conscious (school education, scientific research, popularisation); supporting national filmmaking – which is often repressed by market –; responsible and conscious choosing from certain values.

Informational society, spreading of digital culture, the mass usage of audio-visual instruments mean a big challenge that results in changing of reading and writing culture in the first place. The aim is not to repress these new sources of information but to encourage people to read. In addition to the advantages of these new instruments it must be achieved that reading experience and respect of books should be important for more and more people.

New techniques of the expression, acquisition and passing of culture are coming into existence. Those who cannot acquire these techniques will become marginal. (Present problems of functional illiteracy can turn into more serious problems of digital illiteracy). Through digital network unlimited quantity of constantly refreshed information is available for everyone. In addition to democracy it is also a problem how to select from and deal with these large quantities of information and how to judge their truth.

Almost all members of society become (or rather theoretically) can become source of information. Understanding, considering, agreeing reception can be expected to strengthen. However, this phenomenon makes it necessary that these kinds of ability of members of society should be strengthened in order to find arguing techniques, which help effective communication.

The uncontrolled liberty of information can mislead 'non-mature' personalities in judging traditional and new values and establishing values. It is a particular problem in those countries where 'maturity' of society has been disintegrated or is undergoing a change. The stable life of a community without common values can lead to frustration and social paranoia.

Strategic attitude is going to be needed. In the future media policy cannot be separated from telecommunication policy, informatics policy and culture policy. If – as a result of convergence – we can talk about informational society and we take notice of the fact that how many areas – from education to labour – is going to be concerned and we can accept that we are facing a new kind of society forming power; then we have passed Rubicon. In this case informational society will bring advance.

Is it allowed to be afraid of globalisation? Do we have to fear of the fact that globalisation will spread at the expense of traditional values by means of unification? The task is to be cautious, to understand new process carefully, to prepare for its disadvantages, to make use of its advantages in all areas for even protection of culture which is connected to common place, language and tradition.

Young people do not have to be closed from the progress of globalisation and from the world. They must be taught the advantages of all these both in respect of innovation of communication and technology and in respect of new working methods in economic and business life. We should neither allow to surrender ourselves with raised hands nor to be reserved. With modern educational methods we must make young people be aware of 'diversity', the supplementary part of 'universal' values, respect of our individual, national values; as well as the respect of 'being' different. We must take care of our language; history and literature must be taught.

All modern instruments must be used which are accessible by means of globalisation not only in business life – which is especially based on knowledge in economy – but also in looking after our culture and values.

Full knowledge of our native country must be strengthened in addition to knowledge of the whole world.