



GLOCALIZATION – A NEW SYNTHESIS OF CONTRARIES? THE CULTURAL IDENTITIES PERCEIVED AS COMPOSITION EFFECT

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Abstract: *Social and human sciences face today, as yesterday, the challenge to explain the unity and diversity of cultures. This complex relationship between unity and diversity has been encoded over time in different formulas and equations, but its substance has remained relatively the same. In today's world, guided by contradictory vectors, this relationship could be found into the tension between global flows and cultural identities. The concept of globalization, more commonly used in scientific discourses, is meant to express the coexistence and the interference of certain opposite elements and tendencies at different levels of social reality. Understanding these realities marked by unusual hybridizations requires a new mindset, a conjunctive paradigm, able to explain the combinatorial virtues of new languages and cultural creations. Given this context, under the pressure of globalization and intercultural communication, cultures change their internal structure and redefine their identity's architecture. In a world of conjunctions, the cultural identities are viewed as a composition effect, as a result of combination between global and local.*

Keywords: *globalization, glocalization, grobalization, intercultural communication*

1. INTRODUCTION. GLOBALIZATION AS TYPE OF CULTURAL CHANGE

Globalization, wide phenomenon, not clearly defined, understood as a universal, internal and ascendant tendency towards the „concrete totality”, or as a tendency adapting to the new meanings of the contemporary multicultural phenomenon (including correlative aspects such as the cultural homogeneousness), or as the expression of the expansion of commercial systems at a planetary scale (Bădescu, 2003:77-78), represents not only a current term attached to the multicausal, complex process, imperceptible in its totality, as it is described through our intentions, but also within the limits of our research, a term that leads us to that meaning associated with cultural change. The globalization phenomenon can be seen from distinct perspectives. It represents, on the one hand, according to the communication principle (*principium communicationis*)

perspective, as a progressive dynamic result, of a process of internal spontaneous change, on the other hand, the result of induction, „while the host countries perceived it as a pressure and less as a free choice” (Mamulea, 2007:107). Therefore, globalization can be perceived differently, having a general understanding and being the designed result of an unfinished process (and from this specificity towards *genus proximus* differences perceptive occur: 1. that will end sometime, in the universalist, consensual perception, where the cultural encounter would be unproblematic, and 2. That will never end, in relativist understanding, situation in which the cultural encounter is a temporal experiencing of otherness). The rigid term delimitation of globalization would be impossible. Within the fluctuant limits of this weak definition, globalization has known rough content clusters, such as those that limit the forms of a possible project ending, overlapping the global cultural rhetoric version: *cultural mosaic*,

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consisting of a pastiche of denationalized styles and motifs, complemented by a range of values with origins in local cultures; *cultural melting pot*, being a unique and uniform trans- and supralocal mixture; and *cultural imperialism* (whose particular form is Americanization), a copy of a specific culture, globally spread (Mamulea, 2007:115-116). Within the reductive meaning of culture to civilization, the latter being a largely written culture or a regrouping of cultures in Huntington terms (1993/1998), globalization may be regarded as a „universal civilization” project, of regrouping of cultures under the same ideological roof of occidental origin, translatable up to identification – only from this reductionist perspective, of Anglo-Saxon style – through a proper Occidentalized „culture”, (understood within the limits of the intelligible, Davos culture). This project of universal „civilizing” produces, under the mask of integrative action, the dislocation of blocks civilization (idea developed by Huntington from Toynbee’s theses), leading to diversification and move of emphasis from global to local.

2. LOCALISM vs. GLOBALISM OR LOCALISM & GLOBALISM?

Localism – ideology of opposition, in the meaning of many theorists, such as Levitt (1983), Giddens (1990), Barber (1992), – is not a form of cultural change, but one of maintaining inertial within tradition limits. Localism is the result of conservation, the principle of individuation being implied this time (*principium individuationis*), that is responsible for the ethnicity process. Understood in a conjunctive logic, globalization deals with those dynamic processes between societies and cultures allowing the local not to be denied by global, and, in turn, not to deny the global. Therefore, the main problem is not that of understanding globalization as a developing process, not that of perception within strong, disjunctive terms of ideologies that lead the phenomenon beyond the natural limits of its production:

localism vs. globalism, but that of overcoming the disjunctive paradigm through conjunctive terms that a certain Stephane Lupasco have proposed, through *Logica dinamică a contradictoriului* (1982) or a certain Constantin Noica through *Scrisori despre logica lui Hermes* (1986). In these terms, the American analytical, procedural and inductive spirit, precludes the possibility of going beyond the opposition.

The need to overcome the disjunctive paradigm has been conscious, but the impossibility of paradoxical thinking, within a cultural environment – American one – characterized by questioning the validity, by association with the praxis, the action, the proof and the implicit (Stewart, Bennett, 1991:37) has led to the need of functional model of practice. This model did not hesitate to appear: the micromarketing model. More, the term that now characterizes the conjunctive paradigm of global spread, together with the local fortification didn’t hesitate to produce effects at the employment level within the conjunctive logic: glocalism. Unfortunately, in American and quasi-occidental understanding, glocalization, introduced in 1991 in *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words*, designating „globalization of the local” together with „localization of global” and representing the simple mixonimic association („telescopic”, in American contemporary trend) of the words global and local, is maintained within the limits of a strict reference to the reference model: micromarketing model¹, being

¹ „The idea of glocalization in its business sense is closely related to what in some contexts is called, in more straightforwardly economic terms, micromarketing: the tailoring and advertising of goods and services on a global or near-global basis is increasingly differentiated local and particular markets. Almost needless to say, in the world of capitalistic production for increasingly global markets the adaptation to local and other particular conditions is not simply a case of business responses to existing global variety – to civilizational, regional, societal, ethnic, gender and still other types of differentiated consumers – as if such variety of heterogeneity existed simply „in itself”. To a considerable extent micromarketing – or, in a more comprehensive phrase, glocalization – involves the construction of increasingly differentiated

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understood as denotative „one of the main marketing buzzwords of the beginning of the nineties” (*The Oxford Dictionary of New Words*, apud Robertson, 1995:28). Therefore, glocalism, understood as its origin and in the promoting culture as the measure of a non-contradiction (between global and local), as long as something related to the quotidian (small markets, global TV networks that promote the local spirit, McNeill’s poly-ethnicity (2003), pan-Africanism, but also the „paradoxical” global organizations that fight for local rights, etc.) prove the non-contradiction. In European understanding in general and East-European/Romanian, in particular, glocalism finds the reflexive environment proper to inculcate the idea of lack of opposition between identity and globalization. Obviously, glocalism can be one of the terms that takes into consideration the non-opposition reality of global-local (complex at the reflexive level, requiring prolonged cultural training, of centuries or, even millenniums), similar to part-whole non-opposition. Within the cultural environment where the whole partially lives, or even develops through it, the acceptance of a global world where local culture flourishes comes natural. In an area of pragmatic mediation of each thought, glocalism is represented by those „slippages” in logic, existing in the palpable reality and spreading, as distribution, among the functioning principles of micro-markets and pan-Africanism.

3. IMAGES OF THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

The images we use to represent our globalization can be grouped into two categories, depending on the reference system in which we place ourselves: one external and one internal. It is a possible criterion is to find some order in the nebulous theories about

consumers, the „invention” of „consumer traditions” (of which tourism, arguably the biggest „industry” of the contemporary world, is undoubtedly the most clear-cut example). To put it very simply, diversity sells.” (Robertson, 1995:28-29)

globalization and cultural identity. In terms of this criterion, we find two metaphor-images, which are frequently used by theorists: *images of network* (connections, remote interactions, Butterfly Effect) and *images of amalgam* (interference, hybridization, cultural creolization, mix, mosaic, „salad bowl”, „multicultural bazaar”, the new Babel).

In the first case, the world appears as a whole, a unique context, made of "multiplying synapses", by interdependencies, networks, synchronization, interconnections. It is a top view, "from the plane" when we see the world wrapped in "nets, wires and knots", surrounded by the same atmosphere and subject to the same gravitational field. From this position, of an observer located "outside", we see that the globalization and new media interconnected all corners of the world. For example, it is McLuhan’s perspective („global village”), of Manuel Castells’s (2001) or of Thomas Friedman’s (2008), for whom the revolution of the NTIC has "flattened" the world and built a communication infrastructure (hard common online platform) that can interact and communicate with individuals, groups and organizations from various parts of the world and different cultural orientations.

The second image is the interior of globalization, which requires an analytical X-ray of the effects that have produced these changes in the internal structure of societies, social relationships, daily structures, ways of life, value systems and attitudes in ways of thinking, in symbolic practices and various forms of cultural expression. The inside image shows a heterogeneous world, inconsistent, irregular, diversified, varied, mosaic, with discrepancies, synchronization, gaps and glaring economic inequalities. Only in this internal image some areas of concern are visible: the collapse of the social fabric and of earlier forms of solidarity, relativization of borders between the public and private under the impact of media system (which has "colonized" the public sphere), cultural identity crisis built in modern times, the hybridization of cultures, deterritorialization of

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financial capital and the new wave of labor migration, erosion and fluidity of identities in the context of globalization and the virtual world of the Internet. These aspects of "mixed worlds" strange synthesis of global and local, between modern and traditional, are investigated with passion and application of various theoretical and applied research.

So, the first image has emphasis on unity, the second on diversity. The first picture shows us a unified integrated world, interconnected within various networks, cohesive and focused on process of convergence with global reach, which induce, in some sections of societies, trans-cultural phenomena of mixing and uniformity. The second image shows a heterogeneous world, diversified internally, marked by cultural differences, political, social, economic, ethnic and religious conflicts including geopolitical order and civilization, as Huntington claims together with many other theorists and analysts..

These different images coexist in our minds and are alternatively or simultaneously updated, when it comes to today's world. To understand today's world of contradictory configuration we must always combine within a conjunctive paradigm, the two images, to combine unity and diversity, and differences convergences, the whole and the parts, the global and the local. Given these hybridization and mixtures of values and cultures, theorists consider that the term "glocalization" is best to define this "cultural amalgam" that anticipates the future of global and local synthesis.

Obviously, the new context of globalization provides an environment for some major actors (states, transnational corporations, banks, trusts and media and cultural industries) to expand its sphere of influence and domination, with the intention of achieving global hegemony. To express this trend, George Ritzer (2010:33), author of the thesis about "mcdonaldization of society", has created a new term, *the glocalization* (from the verb to grow, grow, increase). He refers to "the imperialist ambitions of nations, corporations, organizations, etc. and desire, if

not even their need to impose different geographical areas."

In this view, globalization involves two opposing processes: a) glocalization, interference (hybridization, creolization) between global and local, having as result of redefining identities and maintaining differences; b) glocalization, tendency of domination and hegemony of state and non-state entities, the "transnational expansion of codes and common practice" of similar institutions and organization models (at economic, political and educational level, etc.) „Glocalization” is associated with neo imperialist and neocolonial tendencies, with mcdonalization and Americanization of ways of life, with processes of cultural convergence and homogenization under the almighty pressure of consumer culture, and at the level of economic policy with neoliberal theses on minimal state, deregulation and the free market capacity of self-leveling. An effective tool of cultural homogeneity is the planetary expansion of "cathedrals of consumption" (malls, restaurants fast-food, casinos-hotels, Disneyland, the cruise-ship, etc.), which have as predictable effect the uniformity of consumer attitudes and practices, the mitigation of cultural differences, the devaluation and deleting of local identities (Ritzer, 2010: 33-39).

To summarize, we can talk about some similarities between the theoretical perspectives that use by preference what we called "external image" of globalization and Ritzer's concept of "glocalization". The external image leads us towards the cultural convergence paradigm, where the relevant phenomena appear as timing, isomorphism and homogenization. From this perspective, the emphasis is on ideas of integration and unity, invoking common values, ideas and attitudes, universally claimed. But, at a deeper analysis, we discover that this paradigm, apparently generous, is used as a form of legitimating domination and geopolitical hegemony.

However, theorists who focus their analysis on "inside picture" of globalization operate with glocalization paradigm, being

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sensitive to differences between societies and the differences within them (of historical, ethnic, religious, linguistic nature) and also to the sensitive issue of cultural identities. Globalization expresses the tendency towards uniformity while glocalization is a new form of the existence of differences and identities. To understand the globalization effects we should mix the two paradigms.

4. THE NEW KEPLERIAN REVOLUTION. BUILDING THE GLOCAL PARADIGM

Taking into account the cultural sciences, the Copernican revolution, we should analyze the orbital concepts, models and abstract theories gravitating around an abstract point from which a historical and cultural determined path derives. The Keplerian Revolution, on the other hand, adaptable to culture sciences (Moscovici, *apud* Georgiu, 1997:391), involves ordering (also meta-discursive) around at least two focuses. In terms of analysis under the Keplerian tutelage, not only the "escape" from history of Romanian culture is explained, throughout its ahistorical process, but also that the Copernican sense was sporadically and unfruitfully accepted into the Romanian culture. The shift towards glocal paradigm, characterized by the abolition of unique viewpoints, of the center of gravity, with the restless interpretation, involves placing on the wave of a Keplerian revolution.

The cultural expansion on spatial coordinates must be understood according to a set of new relationships types between the involved entities and with a new type of organization of these relations within multifunctional networks. Networks, in simple analytical terms are just communication flows, frozen and linear reproduced; characterized by interactions, connections, interdependences, create a unique context of reception in terms of spatial and temporal compression. In this context, globalization leads to a world remapping according to traffic information coordinates, like the network nodes and

connections made between these. Remapping involves new rules of graphic configuration and the complexity of the phenomenon does not mean simple laws or simplified ways of expression, by appeal to logic code limits. Within this relational and multicausal universe that is in a transitional period from the internal organization point of view, globalization may be described as „functional coating”, as world physiology, context in which „the butterfly effect”, cut from chaos theories, can be the adequate descriptive vehicle:

Dans un monde global, chaque part dépend de ses liaisons multiples avec les autres parts. C'est un monde solidaire, où un événement local peut produire des modifications aux autres parts, et même au réseau entier. Ainsi, nous nous sommes habitués à regarder la globalisation comme une sorte d'enveloppe du monde, une atmosphère qui entoure la planète et qui influence notre vie. (Georgiu, 2010:193)

The image of globalization is continuously sold in various conditions and with ideological costs included into the total cost. The descriptive order of the phenomenon is important and, therefore, starting from the distinction internal / external image of globalization proposed by Georgiu (2010), one can see that, on the one hand, the structure is heterogeneous, inconsistent, uneven, diversified, discordant and out of sync, that this structure provides a mosaic of reflections, sometimes overlapping, and on the other hand, a whole uniformly reducible to function and traffic (information) is revealed, coagulated in neural networks to describe a living, growing network. The glocalization should be, within this perceptive context, the result of overlapping the inside rigid construct with the outside neuronal one, in order to render a correct, complete and objective image on the organic whole represented by society. In other words, Robertson's American glocalization, trying to explain the paradoxical functionality of some structures, such as the small market, is not so loaded by ideology, but blocked by the unidirectional, pragmatic perspective,

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inadequate as a reading grid for such a complex phenomenon. The corporate ideological tendency found in Ritzer's construction (1993/2003), *glocalization*, places us on the same perceptual level. Both terms, glocalization and glocalization, are, originally, poor in content, with a rigid epistemic core and loaded by „ideological task”, but their epistemic shell creates the mosaic, in a fragmented world, made up of entities with some degree of cultural opacity and continuous analogical, in a world of intercultural interference (and not multicultural) a semantic richness and emergence of developments of such degree that the putting off the ideology that created them can only lead to their inclusion among the metaphors that "re-enchant" the world. At the level of epistemic core, as well as the entire conceptual apparatus that globalization operates with, glocalization and glocalization terms are binding (i.e. they are charged with negative "ideological task"). The escape from this false opposition can be done, as Sfez suggested (2002:10) only through critics. And critics of the phenomena can only come from the pole of epistemic core, from the symbolically shell, culturally shaped. This is actually a drawback of lack of ideology: undress the clothes of the operated idea does not mean, in essence, putting off the cultural flow of ideas that lead to convergent ideational construct. Putting off ideology is therefore putting off the cultural clothes. This is the way of action that remains the intention of melting barriers of ideas and belief systems that confer, from inside, the image reproduced in mosaic of broken mirror that reflects the world and globalization. The drop of ideological path subtly attached to a rigid terminology increases the difference between distinct views (similar perspective "inflationary universe" of cosmology) and fragment more the localism within an aggressive localism, as response reaction. The phenomenon convergence is possible only through cultural one (achieved through intercultural communication means), despite the existent barriers and cultural relativism (for our image, possibly explained

by targeting shard of mirror that reflects the cultural reality of the changing world, subject to globalization by its curvature and "the" spatial and temporal focus of the event in relation to mirror accurately reported in the focal length). Or, cultural convergence offers another perspective on globalism – a tendency manifested by the imperialism of seduction, but also another perspective on glocalism – a natural paradoxical organization of a complex phenomenon, that, just by calling this type of establishment, within symbolic cover, of paradoxical type, may lead to synchronicity, isomorphism and homogenization (as side effects of homeomeric meaning). Following de de-ideologization and expanding field perspective, glocalization does not remain just a name associated with paradoxical realities manifested equally globally and locally: it becomes the paradigm of cultural visions regrouping (apparent discrepancies) located in relation to a whole dynamic, to a cultural change to diffusionist shades. Glocalization is, in terms of "inner image" as Georgiu defines it, the paradigm to provide further clues to stabilize fluctuations upon conclusion of the transitional period in which humanity entered. This stability can be "controlled" only by communication, and not by media networks and the Internet in a manner that stifles rather carcinogen the still alive body, but through homeopathic action, from homeomeric perspective, the part being made of a shard of reality of a culture about to fragment. Glocalization does not represent in these terms, a creolization, but a melting of barriers, of differences through identity affirmation:

(...) les théoriciens qui focalisent leur analyse sur „l'image de l'intérieur" de la mondialisation opèrent avec le paradigme de glocalisation, étant réceptifs aux différences entre les sociétés et leurs différences à l'intérieur (de nature historique, ethnique, religieuse, linguistique, etc) et la problématique tellement sensible des identités culturelles. (Georgiu, 2010:195-196)

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In this context where forces of globalization have set in motion, culture cannot avoid change, despite the manifested inertial force. Two solutions are possible: *the opposition* which will be completed with the deployment of culture conglomerate, that is closed dull, refractory, its dragging into the stream of radical transformation and dissolution even after the brutal forces that act, or *acceptance of adaptation*, i.e. the promotion of identity, cultural affirmation in the global (ist), dynamic context. The issue of globalization (the glocalist accepted paradigm) is limited to an issue of identity assertion that can only be provided only if the cultural openness is manifested, that is, while the intercultural communication is a real vehicle of interconnection and adaptation to environment change.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The abandonment of ideological concept of forestalling globalism, as opposed to virulent localism (in parallel with the existence of glocal "oasis", within denotative meaning, origin of the American phrase) and acceptance of paradoxical thinking within glocal paradigm, i.e. within the limits of conjunctive logic, is a true Keplerian revolution of our times. Global society seems not to revolve around consumerist structures that define globalization movement constellations of values of civilization in the firmament of stock exchanges. It rotates in multiple planes, around solid axiological systems, bombarded by consumerism, through meteoric showers of civilization values which, in contact with ionized atmosphere of culture, became instrumental in adapting society to the movements at a larger scale. Different densities of the ionized atmosphere of each culture allow more or less the penetration of meteoric objects and the change of local axiological relief due to the impact. The Keplerian revolution of glocalist movement not only explains the manner of organization of gravitational movement, of value systems, but also reduces the number of epicycles

associated with the previous paradigm (unexplained paradoxical realities in terms of "Ptolemaic" globalism requiring the term construction of "glocal").

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