

The Influence of Globalization on Fragemegration* of Culture

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ABSTRACT: Given that each generation brings new elements and values different from those before it, the style and forms of life are constantly changing and the known traditional models have come to be considered obsolete. In such a society, man has to face an avalanche of information, habits, beliefs, and even religions. Cultures, characteristic of peoples or geographical areas, have become increasingly intertwined, coexisting in the same society, and exerting a particular pressure on the formation of the individual. The phenomenon of globalization has come to have a growing influence on culture. On the one hand, one can see a tendency of fragemegration of culture, and on the other hand an attempt to integrate culture into a wider space. This integration does not involve a cultural leveling. This article emphasizes both the influence of globalization on the fragemegration of culture and the need to change the understanding of culture in relation to previous generations. A proper understanding of globalization and culture gives the world the opportunity to get out of the deepest crisis they are in.

KEY WORDS: globalization, culture, influence, faith, society

Over time, the concept of globalization has been attributed to both negative and positive connotations. Negative connotations are usually linked to the idea of losing cultural identity, while positive connotations refer to the possibility of cultural closeness between people, communities and societies.

* Concept resulting from the union of “fragmentary” and “integration” terms.

Globalization refers to the fact that most cultures are subject to factors of common influences, common processes, or similar social, political, and economic issues. Even if globalization facilitates more rapid dissemination of information, beliefs, values, customs, helping cultures to be better known and understood, this is not always good, Pahlavi said. From Pierre Cyril Pahlavi's (2003) perspective: "Globalization creates a world where it is increasingly difficult to be protected by external cultural influences."

On the other hand, the definition of the culture concept has oscillated between different reference poles. While some researchers want to integrate culture into the objective or subjective elements of the way to live, for other researchers, culture is particularly integrated into the sphere of consciousness.

When it comes to culture, in essence, it can be said that it is reflected in the social organization and the development of a society. Culture is not something that belongs or can only be found within a social class or communities. Culture is not just a privilege for some, but can be found everywhere.

Every community, society, civilization has had and has a more or less developed, but unique culture. According to Tylor: "Culture, considered in its broad ethnographic sense, is a whole complex that includes knowledge, faith, art, morality, law, custom, and all the other skills and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor apud G. Ferreol 1998, 49).

For R. Benedict, M. Mead, R. Linton, or A. Kardnier: "A culture is not determined by objective elements, but by the attitude towards life and the affective behavior of its members" (Ferreol 1998, 50). Melville Herskovits defined culture as "the footprint man puts on the environment".

The influence of globalization on the fragmentation of culture can be seen in the increasingly insistent emphasis of cultural relativism. From this perspective, a culture has no absolute criterion to decide that the activities of another culture are "inferior" or "noble". Cultural relativism supports the elimination of prejudice when addressing certain communities or societies different from one's own. According to McGrew's definition:

Globalization is an intensification of global interconnection, a spread of all beliefs, values, goods, beyond the territorial boundaries all spread effortlessly. Globalization leads to a compression of the notion of space and time;

distances narrow, the world becomes smaller, and this is made possible the audio-video means. But even if there is a certain proximity of cultures given by this technological development, cultures are still separated from their cultural specifics. Unfortunately, globalization tends to suppress this by making these cultures take on the character of consumption, making every place look more or less like the other. (Tomlinson A. M. 2002, 10)

The notion of global implies the world as a unique place, the forms of culture becoming more and more in contact. Taking all these things into account, one can say that the cultural dimension of a society is difficult to demarcate, but it has some features:

- ✦ Culture can be understood as the sphere of existence where people build the meaning of practices with the help of symbols.
- ✦ Culture can be understood as the territory of meaningful connotations from an existential point of view, the purpose of culture being to give meaning to life.

Culture, therefore harnesses human existence. Individual cultural actions define the very culture they belong to, resulting in global consequences. Through globalization, culture is of particular importance, whether it be political, environmental, or economic. However, globalization does not have the role of homogenization, but leads to differentiation of global space by developing the consciousness of the variety, with the possibility of choosing among several possible variants. This is facilitated by the fact that globalization annihilates the distance between cultures. On the other hand:

The values, the attitudes, the cultural processes become more uniform, the cultures become more conscious and more protective of their own identity. Strong, dominant cultures that have a larger spreading area promote integration, while smaller cultures, whose proliferation is limited, promote fragementation in order to preserve their own identity. This can be constituted as a means of defending smaller or weaker cultures against the domination of large cultures. Thus, the latter is more reluctant to assimilate external values, while being more protective of their own values (Intercultural Communication, Distance Learning Course, 2014).

In his book, simply titled *Globalization*, Malcolm Waters defines this phenomenon as “a concept that refers to compressing the world and enhancing its perception as a whole” (Waters 1995, 48). Richard Tiplady added, saying:

Globalization at its basic level means at least two things. First, it represents the dynamic expansion of a local phenomenon in the rest of the world. This phenomenon can be a product (e.g. Coca-Cola), an idea (e.g. human rights) or a social interaction system (e.g. the banking system). Secondly, globalization means the global influence exerted on a local phenomenon, such as the pertinent insertion of English ideological expressions into the day-to-day life of English-speaking societies, because of the computer revolution. (Tiplady 2003, 230)

Extending the assertions contained in these definitions to the spiritual space of modern society, one can say that each individual is confronted at the level of spiritual convictions with a conformation or acceptance of a mixed system of beliefs, forms of worship, and even a plurality of deities, he from all corners of the earth. In such a society the question arises, especially for the authentic Christian, what are the things that can change and what are the values to which he is not allowed to give up.

A factor of influence in the evolution of globalization is represented by the media. This is considered to be a mediator between globalization and the cultures in which it manifests itself. Media development is part of the development of the so-called “culture industry” (Fourie 2007). This may also turn into a stress factor. Taking into account the pressure exerted on the individual to always be aware of current global information - which, according to Giddens, has become a survival tool in today’s society - is overwhelmed, saturated by the media.

The media has come to shape people’s consciences, attitudes and lifestyles, which is why those who do not have the same access to information tend to feel excluded, isolated, and to some extent threatened. This addiction to information is called by Giddens (2000): “the main existential dilemma of globalization.”

Colin Sparks (2007) has highlighted that the most important advantage of the interdependence between globalization and the media is that not only cultural values and customs become globally known but also

issues or needs. In other words, due to globalization and the media, the global community can provide its resources and support in case of need or to help improve certain systems, due to the high visibility and rapid circulation of information.

One thing that can be noticed in connection with the media is the growing space that advertising takes. In this regard, Francois Brune stressed that:

Advertising is an industry that creates the possibility of tight control over individuals through the forms of depersonalization exposing our commercials, an industry capable of satisfying induced needs. Advertising gives man a good self-image, man begins to identify with prestigious models with real people. At the same time, advertising gets to distort the purpose of communication, exploiting rhetorical and stylistic, visual and linguistic processes, which leads to the disappearance of the correct reflection of reality in the advertising message. [...] Advertising leads the individual to believe that everything related to his / her socio-cultural life can be satisfied through consumption. The aspirations of the individual are thus reduced to things and closed in things. We live in a consumer society where man is constantly frustrated for the desire to buy to be relaunched. This is done through advertising and what we consider to be a valuation of products is only a devaluation of values. [...] Advertising does not inform about a product, but it praises it. Advertising is not a free show; it costs consumers. (Brune 2005, 15, 147)

Unlike Francois Brune, Bernard Cathelat (2005) considers that "Advertising is, besides a source of artistic creation, a mechanism that creates new values and lifestyles, but also a school for adaptation to the crisis, a social phenomenon. For many, advertising has become the solution to the significant problems we face. Advertising is a form of culturalising society by inducing values, norms, life patterns, etc."

In conclusion, one can say that advertising is accused of leading to the destruction of the individual by encouraging excessive consumption and by creating false indicators. Advertising thus becomes a way of escaping from everyday reality, detaching from everyday problems, becoming an ideal created artificial world. In such a context, it is particularly important to pay

attention to culture, given that culture cannot be conceived outside the social or human culture.

In this context of globalization, sociologist Dimitrie Gusti (1965, 252-260) distinguished three concepts of culture:

- ♦ **Objective culture** - which is a system of cultural goods that formed the style of an era.
- ♦ **Institutional culture** - including the State, Church, customs, economic organizations.
- ♦ **Personal culture** - where the individual is included in the sphere of values.

Culture is determined by the very existential status of man. Bruno Cescon highlights other types of culture of which it is important to take into account, namely:

- ♦ **Culture of proximity** (or proximate universe), of people and events, both spatially and temporally: the so-called “delocalization” and “detemporalization”.
- ♦ **Culture of contact and non-confrontation with others.** The communications network, overcoming geographical distances, makes it easier to interact with people and their stories.
- ♦ **The culture of contemporary events.** Relational temporal distance reduces everything to the present, to “now” and “here”, diluting tradition and memory.
- ♦ **Equal identity culture.** This disguises the danger of a homogenization of all, losing not only its own difference, but also that of another.
- ♦ **Culture of transparency and opinion.** Loss of distance confronts cultures, makes them known, makes them transparent to each other, but deprives them of their truth, reducing them to a simple opinion, referring to them.
- ♦ **Culture of complaisance and disinterest.** The risk is to make the search for the truth a very slow and passive objective.
- ♦ **Culture of absent participation from outside.** It’s about a performative representation, in which language is action. There is a risk of missing the meeting with the fellow.
- ♦ **Encyclopedia culture** (the new style of knowledge). The illusion of easy knowledge, without discernment, could arise under the pretext of encyclopedic knowledge. (Cescon 2003, 74-76)

Globalization is not, therefore, a goal in itself, but a means in the service of man, of culture, for which it must be accompanied by different forms of control. "There are values that are rooted in human nature, which does not make a difference of ethnicity, wealth, geographic area, I dare to say of religion. They are values of man as such, values that must learn to dialogue, living together in the global audience, without flattening themselves into a homogenization that expels differences, traditions, languages and religions" (Cescon 2003, 79-80).

The last half century brought an interesting phenomenon on the stage of history. First, it has been outlined in the United States as Edward Glenny and William Smallman point out: "Fifty years ago in the United States, most of the Churches were monocultures and pursued their activity without striking different masses of people in their sphere of action [...] In an urban community there may be today twenty to thirty cultural or racial groups" (Edward W. Glenny & William H. Smallman 2000, 393). This phenomenon, then spread to other parts of the world, including over the last twenty years, especially the European space.

"Globalization can therefore become an extraordinary opportunity for man if he is enlightened by those human dimensions present in cultures and in faith, allowing the return to essence, the return to the questions that humanity has always sought to answer, and achieve in the world, in a more authentic way, his own pilgrimage, his own "time and space traveling being" even in a world with a time and an accelerated space" (Cescon 2003, 81). Surely globalization has not only negative parts, it does not mean a unique way from a superior culture to everything else. Globalization reflects the interaction between different cultures and has its positive contribution to humanity.

Each culture, therefore corresponds to a certain way of being and acting, which outlines a distinct civilization. Speaking about the relationship between culture and civilization, Ricoeur states, "There are two ways in which mankind can pass through time: civilization develops a certain sense of time, which is based on accumulation and progress, while the way a people develop their culture is based on a law of fidelity and creation: a culture dies as soon as it is not renewed and recreated" (Ricoeur 1955, 286).

A civilization cannot therefore be properly understood unless it's integrated into culture. It is the pragmatic component of culture and serves to service it and not to subordinate it. Each culture crystallizes by determining the conditions in which it has formed and consolidated thanks to the contribution of several factors that determine the culmination of the culture. As Tudor Vianu notes:

There is a natural link between the conditions and goals of the culture. By belonging to different national communities, people live in very diverse environments that require reason and shape their sensitivity. In correlation with the variety of living conditions and their own sensitivity, they project a diversity of goals that are constituted by cultural specificities of each community. In any age or stage of its evolution, culture maintains respect for certain values, specific to the time and aspirations of each society. Therefore, even if we admit a unitary and progressive evolution of human culture, the cultural ideal, before it is generally valid for all humanity, is the same for certain societies and certain epochs. (Vianu 1979, 292-293)

Consequently, Marin Aiftinca (2003, 212) remarks: "There is a complex of spatial, temporal, environmental, spiritual and axiological factors that give specificity to each national culture. That is why, first of all, we speak of a national cultural identity and, only afterwards, by the extensive derivation of a regional cultural identity or, by compression, individual and group. On these grounds the specificity and the difference, which explains the diversity of cultures in history, appeared on the ontological substratum common to all of them. This substrate ensures the unity of culture, which is not jeopardized by their dynamic variety."

Cultures give identity and value to individuals and human communities. Each culture has an open character, which makes it capable of receiving or rejecting the influences from outside and at the same time giving something worthy of attention. In essence: "Every culture exists and preserves vigor and identity as long as it is constantly recreated, in line with the claims of modernity. This recreation is the basis of any real dialogue, and the dialogue carried out according to its rules has the virtue of giving the opportunity to affirm cultural identity, guaranteeing by diversity the evolution of universal culture and undoubtedly the improvement of the human condition" (Aiftinca 2003, 215).

We live in a time when most of our social life is driven by global processes where national cultures, economies and borders have begun to disappear. At the heart of this perception lies the idea of a rapid and recent process of economic globalization (Hirst & Thompson 2002, 11).

Globalization is now seen as a “multi-dimensional” phenomenon - a description that involves serious difficulties for any analysis (Tomlinson J. 2002, 25), on the one hand, or as a “one-dimensional” manifestation, on the other (Hirst & Thompson 2002, 16).

For some, “globalization” is something that needs to be accomplished if we want to be happy; for others, the source of our unhappiness lies precisely in “globalization”. (Bauman, [f.a.], p. 5) Dumitru Popescu (2001, 86) underlined the fact that: “The globalization that is being spoken today is devoid of its spiritual and vertical dimension and remains a simple horizontal phenomenon with purely economic content.”

“The phenomenon of globalization is a fact with which present and future generations will have to live together. It presents itself as a permanent and dynamic process, self-sustaining and very unsighted” (Tia 2003, 349). The world of the future seems to be a fragmented world in several conflicting cultural blocks, according to the model of civilization cravings predicted by S. Huntington (Ică 2002, 481). “We have come to live in a world where there is” wealth without nation “and” nations without wealth” (Tia 2003, 359).

Faced with the new phenomenon of globalization, which for some is an illusion, and for others it is necessary, the Church will have to establish its doctrinal positions in a clearer and more concise way about what globalization is, or wants to look like, through the conditions imposed and by its effects. [...] The Church can not be indifferent to the geopolitics of chaos, the effects of globalism at human level, the way of the anticultural and antireligious thinking of the individual who remained isolated in front of the gate of the new millennium (Himcinschi 2003, 395-396).

This position of the Church is all the more necessary, from the point of view of Adrian Lemeni:

Globalization based on ideological multiculturalism and economic ultraliberalism produces a true mutation at the human level, producing and endlessly reproducing the type of consumer. It is a way of being, which

substitutes the true human identity by refusing the existential depth with a deceiving existence centered on the convenience and mediocrity of a consuming life. [...] Values of education and culture rooted in a paradigm of tradition are replaced by pseudo-ideals produced by a society marked by the idolatry of material prosperity that refuses any appeal to transcendence. Conquered by the market, doped by television, sports or the Internet, the world of globalization is experiencing, at the same time, a global crisis of life, a global educational and cultural disaster, a worrying but sure symptom of the barbarism of the society of the future. Traditional culture of societies disappears or transforms into spectacle and commodity instead of formative transmission, scientific culture is ultraspecialized and all places the place of absolute mediocrity of mass and consumer culture conveyed by contemporary electronic environments, the most profitable industries of the global economy. Globalization risks becoming the agent by the end of history and the overthrow of human civilization through the creation of the last man: the world man, homo economicus the atomized atom, who lives only for production and consumption empty of culture, politics, sense, conscience, religion and any transcendence. (Lemeni 2003, 443-444)

At the same time, Lemeni (2003, 445) remarked: "Globalization seeks only an artificial unification made externally, being in this sense an expression of the mutilating pride of a fallen sinful world. The Church of Christ, instead, follows the unity of the whole world and the transformation of all creation, but from the inward unification of man. A sum of divided people can not form a united world." On the other hand, Georgios Mantzaridis (2002, 6) stressed that: "Globalization promoted by the new world order is only a deceptive to universality. While it seems to unite people outwardly or favor their mutual reconciliation, it eliminates the barriers between them and facilitates communication, in reality it leads to the transformation of the peoples into masses of individuals, the leveling of cultures, the intermingling of religions, to homogenize the appearance and behavior of people, to Americanizing their way of life. The culmination of this negative process is the annihilation of man as a person and even of the very truth about himself."

After all, the declared purpose of globalization is to simplify life and to increase freedom by applying a single system. However, Clement (1997, 134) remarks: "Little by little, the different areas of existence - political,

social, cultural — are emancipated in such a way that the “religious” becomes a simple compartment of the latter. There is no “dominant” authority and ideologies, but only independent authorities, each in its own field. [...] Thus, a multicultural, heterogeneous culture, not at all, a critical culture of its essence, never secure on its own bases, was formed.”

Taking into account all these things, it can be said that the globalized world in which we have come to live is a more and more dull, uniform and non-human world. For many adherents of globalization, culture has become ambiguous and subject to many interpretations. Homogeneity and cultural exclusivity are becoming less and less achievable.

By compressing several cultures from different parts of the world in the same space, a very serious challenge ensued, especially for the Church, to remain faithful to the pure message of Scripture, and to carry forward the ministry of the gospel of Christ. Some Christian leaders have seen this phenomenon as an extraordinary opportunity for the mission, others have been very tangled and clumsy in their approach, especially as they have seen a change of Christian values and concepts in their society with the principles of life outside of Christianity.

Due to the phenomenon of globalization, the own space of any country has become the scene they play, people impregnated by different cultures, with different beliefs, beliefs and practices. This puts the Church in front of a great opportunity. If for a long time, the desire to make a mission among ethnic groups implies a vast geographical area and not always accessible, today, due to the global population movement, it can be a global mission at the local level.

The great challenge for the Church is doubled. First, the Church is called to remain faithful to the teaching of Scripture, without compromising by forgoing the requirements of God’s commandments. This is all the more challenging as globalization can put enormous pressure on uniformity or accepting different ways of religious expression, by virtue of mutual respect (Rotaru 2013, 49-75). This is harmful and leads to the desacralization of sacred life, to the abandonment of the Christian living standard that God required of His children (Rotaru 2014, 532-541).

On the other hand, the Church is challenged to dare to cross cultural barriers. The mission is possible only when the message of the Gospel reaches people from different cultures. Sometimes the Church has its hardships in this regard for reasons of fear of being understood or accepted, or simply for reasons of convenience. It is much easier to speak to those who think, feel and act in the same way, being part of the same cultural context. The danger here is that the Church contextualizes the biblical message very much, just to make it easier for the mission to work, ensuring somehow the success of being accepted by the different cultures. The great challenge, however, is to bring the gospel in the purest, but also the most appropriate way for those who need its message of salvation.

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