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ECONOMIC GLOBALISATION VS. CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Summary: The aim of the research undertaken is the analysis of the impact of economic globalisation on cultural transformations and an attempt at settling the problem of this process effects, i.e. deciding whether it results, to a greater extent, in social and economic unification or diversification.

There are more and more supporters of the opinion that, globally, cultural differences blur, and people representing different cultures gradually become similar to one another, mainly as a result of the Western dominance and the common fascination with the Western products, and, to a smaller extent, thanks to the contact and mixing of mutual cultural interactions. The dominant trends in the contemporary globalised world include commercialisation, consumerism, liberalisation, privatisation, deregulation, individualism and competition.

However, despite the enormous potential of the so-called global forces to influence cultural changes and the multitude of channels of influencing people, they are not able to impose one global culture on the world. The margin of diversity is still very wide. Moreover, the meetings of different cultures result in the emergence of new cultural varieties. Therefore, on the one hand, the contemporary world is undergoing cultural unification, and, on the other hand, it is a mosaic made up of increasing cultural varieties. It may happen that a positive social capital is developed within a multicultural organisation, characterised by a higher development potential, flexibility, creativity, productivity and innovativeness. Thus, cultural diversity, in which the modern man has to function, can be an asset and a source of advantage over monocultural organisations.

Key words: globalization, economy, cultural diversity.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the dominant processes taking place in the contemporary world is economic globalisation, which has an impact on other spheres of our lives. The most crucial consequence of this process covers changes regarding culture, and, in

particular, the concentration of the so-called soft power in the hands of powerful international business entities.

The research undertaken has been devoted to the impact of economic globalisation on cultural transformations and an attempt at settling the problem of this process effects, i.e. deciding whether it results, to a greater extent, in social and economic unification or diversification, and which of these consequences is more beneficial to the contemporary world.

In order to solve this research problem, the following research methods and techniques have been adopted: an analysis of the source literature and press coverage, a comparative method, analogical inference, and direct observation of reality. Moreover, a method has been used which consisted in synthesising distributed information and observations, as well as in formulating, on that basis, specific conclusions following the principles of logical analysis and deduction.

2. ESSENCE OF GLOBALISATION PROCESSES

Globalisation is a very broad, ambiguous and multidimensional concept. It can be defined as a process of growing extent, speed, density, intensity and diversity of mutual interactions, impacts and dependencies in the economic, social, cultural, political and technological areas worldwide or on the supraregional level. Globalisation is associated with removing borders, free flow of goods, services, capital, people, cultural goods, and scientific and technological achievements, as well as with eliminating the barriers of space and time, diffusion of outside influence, deterritorialisation of phenomena and processes (everything is everywhere), and dominance and subordination relationships. Globalisation is accompanied, or even driven, by progress in the field of transport and communication, as well as common acceptance of the rules of economic liberalism.

Contemporary globalisation refers to all the spheres of life. However, the most advanced and formalised globalisation-related processes take place in the economic sphere. Economy is expansive by nature, and it aims at overcoming borders, as well as conquering new markets and opportunities for capital investment. The components of economy are becoming global in their nature, as we distinguish global money, global crises, brands, enterprises, unemployment, demand, supply, competition, institutions and organisations, economic strategies and even differently understood global economic power. Economic globalisation sets the tone for changes in other spheres of life. It results in the concentration of resources and verticalisation of power, as well as processes of integration, standardisation, universalisation and even unification. At the same time, following the principle of action and reaction, globalisation can cause power dispersion, disintegration, polarisation and diversification, and provide people, business entities and states with both new chances and threats.

3. DISCUSSION ON THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON THE SPHERE OF CULTURE

There is no agreement among the researchers of contemporary cultural and civilisation changes as regards the impact of economic globalisation on transformations in the sphere of culture. The following opinions on this subject can be distinguished:

- there is gradual cultural and civilisation unification influenced by the dominance and expansiveness of the Western commercial culture and Western scientific and technological achievements, and globalisation is identified with Westernisation or Americanisation of the world [Ritzer 2007, p. 5; Friedman 2011; Friedman 2007; Barber 2009; Kerckhove 2001; Worsley 1997, p.123];
- there is gradual cultural and civilisation unification as a result of mutual interactions, foreignisms and mixing of the existing cultures [Toynbee 1991, p. 45; Rougemont 1995, p. 58; Znaniecki 1990, p. 64; Marien 1998];
- there is gradual universalisation and even unification being observed in the sphere of civilisation (dominance of material culture) and the constant diversity in the sphere of culture (dominance of spiritual culture) [Huntington 2008, p. 174; Znaniecki 1990, p. 65; Rougemont 1995, p.81; Alger 1990, p. 160-162; Koneczny 2003, p. 20; Kołakowski 1990, p. 182-183];
- there is cultural and civilisation standardisation proceeding with the maintenance of a cultural diversity margin [Kroeber 2002, p. 26, 308; Mazrui 1976, p. 63; Krzysztofek 2000, p. 74];
- there is a process of growing cultural diversification in compliance with the rule that the meeting of two cultures results in the emergence of a third culture, and culture is always an area for diversity [Nowicka 2018, p. 70; Kołakowska 2012, p. 110];
- there is disintegration and erosion of the Western culture, which will be superseded by another dominant culture in the future [Giddens 1990, p. 68; Bell 2014, p. 159-164; Naisbitt 1997].

4. INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ENTITIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE NATURE OF CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Nowadays, international business entities have increasingly higher aspirations. They want to not only increase their profits and extend the sphere of economic influence, but also make use of material wealth in order to strengthen their political power, and force and monopolise cultural power in their hands. In this regard, they are being offered more and more opportunities, including the growing numbers of channels of influence and operation mechanisms of global and regional economic organisations, regional integration groups, supranational corporations and the

mass media (e.g. “expert” opinions, limited or refused assistance, refused debt restructuring, economic sanctions, financial penalties, suspension of membership, ostracism and isolation, shaping the international public opinion, tangible and intangible rewards for politicians). Country membership of global and regional economic organisations (e.g. IMF and WBG, WTO, EU) and the opportunity to receive support from them are conditioned on the introduction of changes regarding the legal order and the acceptance of top-down adjustment and restructuring programmes. Moreover, risk capital and supranational corporations have an enormous potential in terms of influencing states. According to B. Barber, in order to sell its products, e.g. Coca-Cola or sneakers, the West has to, in the first place, convince its potential consumers of its commercial consumerist culture [Barber 2007, p. 214], with all of its values, concepts, norms, rituals, attitudes, customs, behaviours, aspirations, symbols, communication codes, lifestyles and myths. There is even a network of power that is said to have developed, with global and regional economic organisations, as well as expert, advisory, consulting, rating and financial institutions, and the media, which promote solutions and standards which are financed with their capital and which are favourable to rich countries.

Today, the most perfect and the most effective is cultural power, i.e. the power to influence the consciousness sphere, and the power to create and legitimate knowledge, patterns, symbols, meanings, associations, interpretations, and the ability to dictate values, norms, aspirations, sensations, the way of thinking and behaving, customs, trends and lifestyles, and to program reality. Cultural power places people in the right social space and imposes on them specific roles to perform. This is favoured by the adopted research and diagnostic procedures, examinations, certificates, diplomas, tests, surveys, opinions and advertising campaigns, which decide who is normal, law-abiding, progressive, intelligent, healthy, honest etc.

There are more and more supporters of the opinion that, globally, cultural differences blur, and people representing different cultures gradually become similar to one another, mainly as a result of the Western dominance and the common fascination with the Western products, and, to a smaller extent, thanks to the contact and mixing of mutual cultural interactions. Everywhere there are the same company logotypes, the same goods and advertisements, the same music, the same films offered, the same TV programmes, the same press magnates, similar educational offers, the same fashion trends and career patterns, and the same recommendations regarding economic management and internal and foreign policy. The dominant trends in the contemporary globalised world include commercialisation, consumerism, liberalisation, privatisation, deregulation, individualism and competition. According to G. Ritzer, unique phenomena, people, objects and behaviours which are deeply rooted in the local tradition can be seen less and less often in the local space. On the other hand, standardised goods, services, places (e.g. shopping centres, hotels, restaurant chains), people and behaviour mechanisms (e.g. corporation employees) are what spreads [Ritzer 2007].

In the economy, we can observe not only standardisation and unification on the part of supply (everybody manufactures the same products, using the same technologies and the same organisation and management styles), but also on the part of demand (everybody wants to own the same; consumers' decisions are less and less dependent on cultural and religious background, as well as on nationality, and, to an increasingly greater extent, on people's wealth). Cultural changes are connected with a common consent to liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation, income disparities, relativism and blurring of the boundaries, e.g. between the sacred and the profane, between truth and untruth, and between right and wrong.

K. Krzysztofek may be right when saying that, in the past, people were similar in appearance (one fashion trend, a narrow choice), but they differed in their interior. Now, on the other hand, we differ considerably and are more and more distinguished by our appearance, but commercial consumerism forces us to gradually become similar to one another on the inside, although we do not even realise this [Krzysztofek 2006-2007].

5. SYMPTOMS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION

A force which is the most effective in globalising the world and culture is supranational capital. Supranational corporations impose both on their employees and consumers specific value systems, consumption models, aims in life, ways of achieving life satisfaction and self-realisation, and career paths. However, despite their enormous potential to influence cultural changes and the multitude of channels of influencing people, they are not able to impose one global culture on the world. The margin of diversity is still very wide. The environment in which a person is born and brought up, the religious and other beliefs of his or her ancestors, local customs and tradition still matter. These elements influence the way of perceiving and understanding the basic notions, such as life, death, truth, justice, ethics, power or freedom, as well as the way of making decisions, settling disputes and the attitude to other people. In spite of cultural globalisation, common commercialisation of life and fascination with consumerism, as well as the global impact of new theories and movements related, for example, to multiculturalism, gender, feminism, ecology, antireligiousness, pacifism, antisystemic approach, the rights of individuals and social groups, alter-globalisation, and the attitude to abortion, death penalty and euthanasia, cultural differences keep on being noticeable. This fact is mentioned, *inter alia*, by G. Hofstede, S. Huntington, F. Fukuyama, Ch. Hampden-Turner, A. Trompenaars, E. Harrison, R. Zenderowski, B. Koziński, L. Korporowicz, W. Kalaga and R. Gesteland [Hampden-Turner, Trompenaars 2012; Huntington 2008; Fukuyama 1997; Harrison, Huntington 2003; Gesteland 2000; Kalaga 2004; Zenderowski, Koziński 2016; Hofstede 2000].

A culture which characterises a given country, region, social group or an individual is the product of interactions related to the prevailing geographical and geopolitical conditions, historical events, religion, social structure, outside influence and the state policy. For example, natural disasters occurring frequently in a given area cause the inhabitants of this area to assume a short time horizon; the loss of independence and being subject to a foreign power for a long period of time may result in a hostile attitude to the institution of power; ethnic conflicts may be the reason for a low level of trust among people; and a tropical climate may result in a lower economic activity of people and a low standard of living.

Cultural differences refer not only to large cultures and civilisations (e.g. Western, Islamic, Byzantine and Chinese civilisations), but also to countries and smaller territorial units and social groups. Culture is an area for diversity, and differences may refer even to individual professional, ethnic, age and political groups, with a specific economic status, e.g. there are cultural differences between northern and southern Italy and France, individual regions of Poland, Catholicism in Poland, Italy and South America, as well as between the inhabitants of urban and rural areas, and people with high and low social status. According to E. Nowicka, the meeting of two cultures always results in the emergence of a third culture [Nowicka 2018, p. 158]. This is confirmed by the growing diversity of religious beliefs, e.g. as a result of the meeting of local beliefs and missionary activity of Christian clergy in Africa and Central America, or by the nativisation of the English language, which has become a contemporary *lingua franca* on the one hand, and which is, on the other hand, becoming increasingly diverse under the influence of local languages and may become, similarly to Latin in the past, the foundation for a new language group.

The modern man lives in a number of realities (cultural and subcultural interest groups), which have an impact on his behaviour and personality, and, as a result, he can have several identities. Local culture is becoming an increasingly heterogeneous structure. Different cultures coexist locally. Local communities become internally diversified as a consequence of the local, regional, national, international and global dimensions getting mixed together and intermingled. Global transformations break into local ones, and local events may have global consequences [Szczepański 2003, p. 104]. Interactions of global forces result in questions about one's own identity, value system and attitude to the changes happening. The main problem of modern times is finding a formula for coexistence of these intersecting trends. The very ideas of globalism, universalism or local and ethnic autonomy are not sufficient and they result in negation and conflicts.

Globalisation itself triggers defense reactions. The pressure of foreign ideas and products, and, in particular, the expansion of the American popular culture, strengthens the feeling of individuality and gives rise of ethnocentrism. Cultural and civilisation globalisation and the multitude of patterns offered thanks to globalisation cause social disintegration, insecurity and, at the same time, a desire to look for one's own identity, as there is no global equivalent for ethnic

identity. According to Z. Bauman, the reviving divisions into “we” and “they” result from the desire to belong to a community, are an act of self-defense and are of defensive nature [Bauman 2006, p. 132]. Recently, the revival of small communities and narrow environmental cultures, the desire to get back to one’s roots and a fashion for ethnicity have been observed [Polak 2002, p. 447]. Arjun Appadurai, an Indian anthropologist, calls this phenomenon an outburst of small numbers, and a Spanish journalist, Andreas Ortega – the globalisation of differences [Ortega 2007].

6. ENTERPRISES AND EMPLOYEES VS. CULTURAL DIVERSITY

People participate in globalisation as consumers, manufacturers, investors, employees and citizens. For example, a modern enterprise and its employees participate in globalisation processes, inter alia, by way of:

- selling the manufactured goods abroad,
- importing raw materials and semi-finished products,
- offshoring,
- outsourcing,
- the growing role of international financial markets,
- working in foreign branches of corporations,
- interning abroad,
- having access to foreign technologies,
- takeovers, mergers, strategic alliances etc. as part of relations with foreign companies,
- participating in international competition,
- relations with foreign contractors,
- opportunities to obtain and invest capital abroad (productive capital, portfolio investments, loans, credits, securities),
- workforce migration,
- establishing international virtual teams,
- the growing role of international legal regulations,
- conducting business activities as subcontractors or subsuppliers for large corporations.

Globalisation and civilisation progress cause the increasing cultural diversity in work environments, as well as among people of the same nationality or representing the same social or age group.

All this forces us to develop new management strategies in view of multi-cultural environments:

- ethnocentric enterprises – imposing the headquarters’ corporate culture – arrogance and lack of understanding vs. cost savings;
- polycentric enterprises – management concepts adjusted to the local culture – high company’s flexibility and creativity stimulation but no uniform strategy for the company, chaos and higher operating costs;

- regiocentric enterprises – distribution of competencies among the headquarters and local offices, but with uniform general standards; standardisation is achieved over time as a result of mutual mixing;
- geocentric enterprises – a certain type of strategy is developed by the headquarters, and then it is adjusted to the conditions prevailing in individual countries [Rymarczyk 2012, p. 26; Duliniec 2012, p. 24-31; Pietrasiński 2005, p. 53-58].

The concepts of flexible multicultural organisations are characterised by heterarchy, acceptance of uncertainty, individualism, inner-containment, the ability to synthesise, the awareness of cultural differences, long-term orientation and delegation of authority.

Similarly, countries adopt various strategies regarding cultural diversity, from persuading people to assimilate and acculturation, to a multicultural policy, the application of parity and numerous mechanisms of protecting the cultural minorities' rights.

7. CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

Because of the increasing territorial and social mobility, people are forced to acquire cross-cultural communication abilities. It is difficult to move around the contemporary world, understand it and do business if you know nothing about cultural diversity.

The ignorance of other cultures may result in:

- culture shock and cultural dissonance;
- dominance of stereotypes and prejudice in mutual contacts (stereotypification);
- distrust, ethnocentrism and racism;
- lack of understanding and tension;
- division into “we” and “they”;
- conflicts, hostility towards diversity and discrimination;
- low efficiency;
- limitation of one one's chances and opportunities;
- misinterpretation of behaviours and communication;
- failure to identify with an organisation and a team;
- incohesion of social roles [French 2010, p. 176].

There is an increasing number of manuals devoted to cultural differences in business. They pay attention to numerous cultural differences regarding, for example, a reserve towards the authorities, and an attitude to risk, the individual's role in a group, time, space (e.g. personal space, the left-hand and right-hand sides), honesty, assertiveness, the present time, the past and the future, strangers, short and long time horizons, and to the natural environment. Cultures are also distinguished by languages, culture codes, tendencies to synthesise or analyse, emotionality, spontaneity or restraint, rationality, dominance of the material or

spiritual sphere of human life, the fact of being goal- or people- and relationship-oriented, as well as thinking and action patterns. In view of these differences, we can distinguish partnership-friendly vs. transaction-oriented cultures, ceremonial vs. non-ceremonial cultures, high-context vs. low-context cultures, monochronic vs. polychronic cultures, and restrained vs. expressive cultures. Individual cultures differ in the attitude to social status, women, social control mechanisms, corruption, manners of communication and the ways of developing informal relationships [Hofstede 2000, p. 47].

Despite the unifying influence of the contemporary globalisation processes, substantial cultural differences and misunderstandings in this context may refer to such seemingly minor issues as the way of greeting, the depth of bowing, handshake strength (e.g. German people prefer a firm handshake, and Asian people a gentle handshake), the way of giving and receiving business cards (e.g. when receiving a business card from a Chinese person, it should be received with both hands, stared at for a long period of time and put in front of you respectfully), the way of refusing (in the Far East, outright refusal is not accepted and people do not use the word “no”), the period of time between interlocutors’ statements (e.g. in Arab countries, it is good form to interrupt other people, while, in Japan, you should wait at least 5-10 seconds after your interlocutor has finished his or her speech), the spatial distance between interlocutors and a permission to touch (the farther north you go, the greater personal space), the loudness of speech (e.g. interlocutors’ loud speech and violent gesticulation may be recognised as a symptom of aggression by Thai people), looking straight in the eyes of you interlocutor (it is forbidden in the Far East, while in the Mediterranean countries, this proves your frankness and clear intentions), as well as giving and receiving gifts in business relationships (in the South, gifts are allowed and even desired, and, in the North, they are treated as a form of bribery) [Gesteland 2000, p. 74]. In China, it is a big faux pas to give, as a present, four items of anything, a clock or sharp objects. In Japan, you can unpack your presents only when your guests leave, and, in Europe, this would be perceived as tactless. Even words and gestures that are commonly known and used worldwide can be understood differently. For example, raising your eyebrows in Germany is a sign of admiration, in the USA – of interest, in Great Britain – of scepticism, and in China – of lack of agreement; tapping your forehead may be, depending on the country, a sign of admiration or disapproval or even contempt; the V sign made with your fingers is a symbol of victory and freedom in the majority of countries, but in the territory of the former British Empire, making this sign with the outside of your hand facing the addressee is a very insulting gesture; the sign used to show that it is great (a circle made with the thumb and the index finger) and the sign of satisfaction (getting the thumb up) may be very obscene gestures in some countries of the South. The last of the signs mentioned above also has sector meanings: hitchhikers use it to stop cars, and divers to signal that they want to return to the surface. Even the most international word *okay* may have different meanings, e.g. Indian people do not use it to give their approval, but to ask for repetition or explanation [Zenderowski, Koziński 2016, p. 43 et seq.].

In 1990s, an attempt was made at designing a global (i.e. enjoying the same level of acceptance everywhere) passenger car. However, this proved to be impossible, as for some countries the most important thing is travel safety, and for other it is comfort, gadgets, the price and operating costs or the car silhouette. Even the McDonald's chain makes concessions to the local customs. Similarly, advertisements of goods sold worldwide are often adjusted to local cultures.

8. SUMMARY

To sum up, on the one hand, the contemporary world is undergoing cultural unification, and, on the other hand, it is a mosaic made up of increasing cultural varieties. People are becoming more and more mobile, and the number of barriers making it difficult to move around the space of both people and cultural products is going down. Moreover, there are more and more opportunities for cultures to meet. As a result of the multikulti and political correctness policies, people are not willing to assimilate to new cultural environments, and they create enclaves and demand respect for their rights and individuality, and even privileges to be granted to them.

In multicultural organisations (enterprises, states), language codes get mixed together, there is no common past, no common myths and no common identity, and the social stratification criteria are ambiguous. Conflicts may be caused by religious diversity, access to privileges or differently understood work ethic, e.g. conflicts in Chinese factories located in Africa between regular employees coming from the local population and the Chinese management staff. Simultaneously, multicultural organisations are not characterised by a low variety of ideas and pursuance of compromise at any cost. It may happen that a positive social capital is developed within a multicultural organisation, which will be characterised by a higher development potential, flexibility, creativity, productivity and innovativeness.

Along with globalisation and the accompanying and growing speed and unpredictability of changes, as well as instability of the environment, there should be a growth in the flexibility and multivariance of rules, principles and procedures. Cultural diversity, in which the modern man has to function, can be an asset and a source of advantage over monocultural organisations. However, management of such a diversified organisation and skillful use of its assets is not easy. So far, neither the American melting pot policy nor the German multikulti policy has brought the expected results.

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GLOBALIZACJA GOSPODARCZA A ZRÓŻNICOWANIE KULTUROWE

Streszczenie: Celem podjętych badań jest analiza wpływu ekonomicznej globalizacji na przemiany kulturowe i próba rozstrzygnięcia problemu skutków tego procesu – czy wpływa on w większym stopniu na unifikację czy też na dywersyfikację społeczno – ekonomiczną.

Coraz więcej zwolenników zyskuje pogląd, że na poziomie globalnym zacierają się różnice kulturowe, a ludzie reprezentujący różne kultury stopniowo upodabniają się do siebie, przede wszystkim na skutek dominacji Zachodu i powszechnej fascynacji jego wytworami, a w mniejszym stopniu dzięki kontaktom i wymieszaniu wzajemnych wpływów kulturowych. Dominujące tendencje we współczesnym zglobalizowanym świecie to komercjalizacja, konsumpcjonizm, liberalizacja, prywatyzacja, deregulacja, indywidualizm, konkurencja.

Jednak pomimo ogromnych możliwości tzw. sił globalnych wpływania na zmiany kulturowe i wielość kanałów oddziaływania przez nie na ludzi, nie są one w stanie narzucić światu jednej globalnej kultury. Margines różnorodności jest jeszcze bardzo szeroki. Ponadto ze spotkań różnych kultur powstają nowe odmiany kulturowe. Tak więc współczesny świat z jednej strony podlega procesom unifikacji kulturowej, z drugiej natomiast stanowi mozaikę coraz większych zróżnicowań kulturowych. W środowisku wielokulturowym może się wykształcić pozytywny kapitał społeczny, charakteryzujący się większym potencjałem rozwojowym, elastycznością, kreatywnością, produktywnością i innowacyjnością.. Różnorodność kulturowa, w której funkcjonuje współczesny człowiek, może być zatem atutem i źródłem przewagi nad organizacjami monokulturowymi.

Słowa kluczowe: globalizacja, gospodarka, kulturowe zróżnicowanie.

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