## CULTURE, ACCULTURATION AND CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION

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**Abstract:** In all meanings, culture is the defining element of a people, it helps it grow, and sometimes it magnifies or minimizes it in relation with other nations. Acculturation involves the partial acquisition of another culture, and interculturality, acceptance and respect of another culture. Cultural globalization means the dissolution of indigenous cultures, basically their digesting in the "great global cultural paste" which, unfortunately, is timeless, ahistorical, without originality, artificially constructed and based on cultural falsity and mendacity.

Keywords: culture, acculturation, interculturality, cultural globalization

# 1. The concept of culture

The term "culture" comes from the Latin "cultura" which, etymologically, means farming. Cicero (106-44 BC) was the one who gave the meaning of spirit cultivation, making a distinction between "cultura animi" (human culture), "culture mensis" (spiritual culture) and "agri culture" (land culture). Throughout history, there have been set and proposed various theories about the meaning of the culture concept, not infrequently contradictory, some integrating and assimilating it to civilization, others giving it a restrictive accept of integration in the spiritual and consciousness area.

The concept was introduced by *Taylor*, through his work "*Primitive Culture*" published in 1871, according to which "*culture is a complex of knowledge, religious beliefs, art, morals, customs and all other capabilities and habits that man acquires as a member of society*". In summary, Taylor concludes "*Culture refers to those non-living things that are transmitted to man in the process of interpersonal communication by non-genetic means*".

Carl Sauer (1925), believes that "every individual and every group of individuals, respectively social groups that differ in size, have a quantity of culture and civilization, consisting of a variety of behavioural gestures, until the current technique", confusing culture with civilization. Sauer studied Native American culture in the U.S. and Mexico and criticized the American society which he considered as lacking culture and insensitive to nature.

Over time, we find other definitions of culture: *Malinowski* (1944) says that "culture can be defined as a set of tools, consumer goods, organic rights of different social groups, ideas and arts, crafts, beliefs and habits".

Linton (1945) - "Culture is a congregation of learned behaviours and their results, whose components are shared and transmitted by members of a given society".

Kluckhohn and Kelly (1945) - "Culture means those historic patterns of life, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational and non-rational, which are potential guides for the behavior of people".

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Pearson (2002) - "Culture consists of those patterns of behaviour and products related to human activity that can be maintained, that are passed from generation to generation, regardless of biological genes".

Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) evoke different points of view regarding the term of culture among which "Culture consists of implicit and explicit models of behaviour and attitude, acquired and transmitted by symbols, including their implementation in tools".

Lederach (1995) - "Culture means knowledge and mutual templates developed by a group of people for the perception, interpretation, expression and interaction with social relationships around them".

The German historian and philosopher Oswald Spengler gave precedence to culture against civilization. For him *civilization is the death of culture*. *Civilizations are the most superficial* and artificial stages a superior human community can reach. They represent an end, they follow the becoming as become, as existing, they follow life after death, evolution as stillness. They represent an irrevocable deadline, but which is reached from a deep need (Spengler, 1966, page 5).

UNESCO (2008) defines culture as "the whole complex of spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional traits that characterize a society or a social group".

According to White (1959) - The concept of culture includes material objects, concepts, beliefs, emotions, attitudes and facts (actions), while for Moles (1974) - "Culture is the intellectual aspect of the artificial environment that man creates during his social lifetime, both in terms of a society and individual culture".

Another definition is given by Rickert (1924) - "Culture is the essence of the goods we cherish due to them"; Habermas (1976) says that "culture represents the essence of ways by which we can technically dispose of nature".

Richards (2005) explains the difference between nature and culture; if nature means what it is in us by biological heredity, culture confronts with the skills and abilities learned by man as a member of a society.

Simion Mehedinţi (1925) sees culture from a restrictive point of view, noticing that it is "a sum of spiritual creations by which man tried to get in harmony not only with the physical universe, but also with the mental one". Mehedinţi (2008) also says "civilization and culture; the first circumscribes occupations, technics and the material life of the people, the other subsumes other spiritual manifestations (art, religion, etc.)".

For *Dimitrie Gusti* (1941) - the concept of culture has three meanings:

- systems of cultural goods that form the style of an era;
- *- institutions and rules that they accomplish;*
- the moving and becoming process, the attitude towards the culture work.

In defining culture, *Tudor Vianu* (1945), emphasizes the components:

- the idea of human activity;
- the idea of a nature whose cultural opportunities it develops;
- the idea of a value that leads the culture work.

For Petre Andrei (1973 p. 213) - "Culture is nothing else but nature put in value by man, a continual process of value creation". Resorting to value in his approach to define culture, the Romanian thinker conceived this social phenomenon as a "synthetic process of creation, transformation of reality under impulses of a higher value, in which the individual collaborates with society".

Culture can be defined from different perspectives, including:

value, that was regarded as the core constituent of culture that lasted, hence different temporal stances defining the cultural phenomenon, either as a whole of spiritual values, as a set of material values, or as the amount of material and spiritual values (Andrei, Gusti, Vianu);

- behavior (by Zipp 2005 "Culture represents n responses to social signals");
- number of individuals (it takes at least two individuals to have a culture, basically, we can say that "we do not have a culture unless there is a standardized procedure in a group", Winkin, 2002).

The concept of culture can also be defined in terms of extensive and intensive:

- *extensive* through culture we understand everything that man adds to nature by means of his creative activities;
- intensive culture represents that original generative structure that determines both the permanent source of value creation, the stable organization and continuous development of social life, as in its whole as well as in each of its specific fields (*Pană*, 2002, p 19). Williams, quoted by Richards (2005) identifies three broad categories of modern use of the term culture: as general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development, as an indicator of a way of life; as intellectual and artistic activities.

Briefly, we can distinguish different approaches of the concept of culture:

- philosophic (Cassirer, 1994, p 314) who, starting from the assumption of the distinction between man, nature and culture, defines human culture as "the progressive self-emancipation process of man";
- anthropologic (Taylor, White, Kroeber, Linton) relating to culture as "the sum of ideas, reactions conditioned by the behaviour that the members of a society acquire through training and imitation" or "the contents of a culture can be established, known, based on the personality and behaviour of individuals who share, not the behaviour itself, but what determines that type of behaviour "(Linton, 1968, p. 319);
- historic (Hegel, Taylor, Mehedinţi, Rădulescu-Motru) raises the question from the historical point of view upon the distinction or identity, separation or unity of the two terms consecrated for the cultural phenomenon, culture and civilization. For Rădulescu-Motru (1999, p. 118) "History is the biography of different cultures. In the phenomenon of succession, touching, struggling and overlapping of different cultures all the content of history is resumed".
- informational (Cassirer, Moles, Habermas, etc..) defines culture from the informational and communicational perspective: "the sum of probabilities of association of all kinds that exist between the elements of knowledge" (Moles, 1974, p. 62), culture is seen as "a system of signs and languages". Not incidentally, Habermas (1976) "considered culture as the field of reality structured through language";
- sociological (Hill, Turner, Andrei, Mucchieli) conceives culture as "a creation of human groups in terms of the compliance to a system of values"; "the assembly of common habitudes of a group" (Mucchieli, 1985, p. 8).

In essence, specialized literature speaks of two meanings of the term culture, respectively: *culture as a process and culture as a product.* 

The first approach, *culture as a process* refers to the accepted conduct within a social group that has specific roles and standards that differ from one culture to another. These groups can be primary (family, friends) or secondary (unions, fraternities, etc.). If the role of each individual in the group and the way of approach and knowledge of other people are taken into consideration, it can be shown that "the learning process through the society and transmission of culture from generation to generation is essential in educating children". The journey is an experience that is learned and therefore one can demonstrate the importance of encouraging the participation to trips since childhood. Culture can be influenced by both internal and external factors. Within a group, some individuals tend to claim themselves as leaders due to their wider education, higher income or social position. Thus, in practice it was found that a cultural destination is visited firstly by an elite which is then followed by other people in the group. In case of external factors, the influences manifest themselves in

changing the attitude towards the country of destination or the discovery of passion for its cuisine. In this regard, *Clarke* (2005) considered culture as "the process by which people make sense of their personality or of their life". The boundaries of social groups and thus of a culture can cover a community with different sizes in which specific activities are carried out. This concept has its roots in anthropology and sociology.

Culture as a product originates in literary criticism, being regarded as the result of individual and group activities to which it is associated a particular interpretation and a certain hierarchy, in superior culture and inferior culture, the elite culture referring to the works of great artists, painters, sculptors, composers, architects, filmmakers, etc.

McCartney and Nadkarni (2003) believe that there are three components of culture as a product: superior culture, popular culture and multiculturalism. Superior culture includes art galleries, museums and historical sites as cultural heritage values, and theatre, music, dance and cultural events as performing arts. Folklore and popular culture involve lifestyles (food, traditions, crafts, social media and folk festivals) and mass culture (shopping, movie, sports, entertainment, media and vernacular architecture). Multiculturalism includes ethnic festivals, community celebrations, religious events etc.

In the widest sense, culture may now be defined as "the assembly of all distinct, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional traits that characterize a society, a group of users. It includes, besides literature and arts, the way of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, the systems of values, traditions and beliefs. Culture gives man the ability to reflect on his own self, it is what makes us human, rational, critical and ethically engaged. Through it we discern values and make choices, by it man expresses himself, is aware (of himself), recognizes himself in the way a project analyses its achievements, constantly seeking new meanings and creating new works that transcend him ".

## 2. Culture and acculturation

The brief Introduction of the issues of culture cannot be complete without approaching acculturation as a social phenomenon, which occurred in all historical periods, including at present.

The concept of acculturation is defined as an acquisition by a community of spiritual and material culture items or the entire culture of another community in a superior stage of development. It can also be defined as the totality of cultural transformations that are undergone by a social group in contact with a larger one. It also includes the group adaptation to a new way of working and thinking, behaving and judging and by default creating.

The idea of "cultural mix" was first issued by *Paul Vidal de la Blanche* (1908, 1922) and defined by *Paul Claval* (1995) as "the diffusion of one culture into another culture cohabiting in the same geographical area".

In all cases of acculturation there are three possible attitudes: acceptance of foreign culture; reactions against it and syncretism (exchange, merger) (*Teodorescu*, 2009, p. 28).

Of course, Europe can be considered the global cultural melting pot, found in successive cultures, Greek, Roman, Renaissance, Enlightenment, pre-modern, modern and postmodern. Today, it is known that all variants of European culture have won over indigenous cultures, including over the New World (North America, Latin America and Australia). In Africa, the European culture is visibly present only in South Africa and Christian African countries. The Asian cultural space was less influenced by the European culture, except for the Philippines culture.

In some eras there appeared an international elite created by a common culture, sometimes on a very large area. This happened in cities surrounding the Mediterranean during the Hellenistic and Roman period (*Teodorescu*, 2009, p.29). In Asia a major role in

acculturation was played by the Chinese culture that influenced a great part of Eastern cultures, as well as the Arabic culture which prevails in the Middle East and Near East, northern Africa and southern Europe, in Spain. Acculturation occurred either voluntarily or by coercion, the latter being successful neither in depth nor for long term. The most conclusive example of cultural non-constrain was that of Ancient Rome, which, based on the famous Pax Romana, respected the local culture and the customs of the conquered peoples. In time, sometimes a long one, the Latin culture, including Christianity, was taken by Gauls, Dacians, Iberians, Franks, Celts, etc.

The popular culture is the least affected by acculturation, either because of the isolation of social groups (see mountain areas in the Andes, Pyrenees, Caucasus, Poiana Ruscă-Pădurenii) or because of the stubbornness of some social groups to take over other cultures (see mental areas called "countries" such as Oaş Land, Maramureş Land, Moţilor Land, Haţeg Land, Amlaş Land, etc.) (*Cocean*, 2011).

One thing is certain: "acculturation is never complete, and mainly, especially not immediate", it needs some time to mature, sometimes 100-140 years (*Djuvara*, p. 339).

There were situations when the culture of a people was preserved much better in the new areas, such as French folklore dating from the XVII and XVIII centuries, which is now better preserved in Canada (Quebec) than in the French provinces where it originated (*Teodorescu*, 2009, p. 30).

Acculturation had sometimes a positive role in the development of cultural tourism, by the simple fact that tourists were immigrants who found their own cultures implemented in other geographical areas, which even led to a rapprochement between them and the inhabitants of those areas. Not infrequently it aroused curiosity and made them return and understand the "new culture" that their ancestors had implemented in other areas, sometimes very remote. Examples are numerous, starting with the Roman and French culture in the Romanian, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese space, former colonies.

Today, some states, consciously or not, sometimes completely abandon some valuable cultural traditions, bringing out instead foreign cultural models, different from the way of life of their people, thus constituting a major source of national incoherence and disorientation.

Of course, between cultural abandon and interculturality there is a major difference. Interculturality means the mutual recognition of origin and received cultures, as well as of the diversity of cultural expressions of the emigrants and indigenous people, and interculturalism is a tool for improving the equalization of opportunities, putting into practice the desire of strengthening everyone's rights, and even the development of democracy, and involves understanding, appreciation and valuing of one's own culture, plus the respect based on an authentic information and by building the curiosity to the ethnic culture of the other.

Moreover, the culture of a people removes many differences and brings people closer to one another. It exists within each human group and it is consumed only inside the life within the group and transmitted from one generation to another. Culture is the core of the whole organizational network, it influences and it is influenced by strategy, structure, systems, staff, etc., it is the identification of an organization, of a group and of a people.

An overview of the history of universal culture takes us to the human creative achievements embodied in countless spiritual and material values, which placed man in competition with his fellows, with the surrounding nature, with the whole universe and even divinity.

Robinson and Picard (2006, p. 20) argue that "the preservation of the cultural diversity is a moral issue, and preserving and promoting the cultural traditions of different ethnic groups is an alternative of sustainable development through cultural tourism for all peoples of the world, especially for those who are in a precarious economic condition". They

also emphasize the role of social identity and cultural heritage, the importance of culture in democracy and the responsibility that artists and intellectuals must uphold in promoting authentic culture, including through the education of the younger generation.

### 3. Culture and Globalization

The difference between acculturation and cultural globalization is that acculturation has occurred regionally, usually in a long time and with the acculturated social group's acceptance and cultural globalization is produced almost on the entire planet by informational manipulation in a very short time and with the risk of digesting of the great national cultures into a "paste" of the global culture.

Globalization, interdependence and interactions mark the evolution of the economy in recent decades. Whatever happens in any corner of the world has effects more or less extensive, upon the entire world economy.

Globalization has manifested especially after the Second World War when international trade has sharply increased, being stimulated by international economic institutions and programs for reconstruction and development, but starting with the 70s the effects of this kind of trade have become more visible both regarding the benefits, and the destructive effects. The first negotiations regarding globalization were led in the first stage under the auspices of GATT, which conducted to several agreements to remove restrictions on free trade. Uruguay Round led to the signing of a treaty which created the World Trade Organization with the role of mediating commercial disputes. Other bilateral trade agreements, including sections of the Treaty of Maastricht and NAFTA, have also been signed with the aim of reducing tariffs and commercial barriers.

Regarding the definitions of globalization, we can say that they are multiple, as globalization sub-includes a multitude of complex processes with a dynamic variable reaching different areas of society. It may be an ideology, a strategy, a phenomenon, or all together. Thus, to describe a multi causal process that has as a result the fact that events that occur in one part of the globe have increasingly wider repercussions upon societies and problems in other parts of the globe. The term globalization is used to describe the changes in societies and the world economy resulting from increased international trade and cultural exchanges.

We find two aspects of globalization: *globalization as an economic and technical process* (which makes actors anonymous and behaviours more mechanic), and *globalization as a process of cultural intercommunication*, which allows us to talk more and more about the world communication based on a unity of values, a communication coming out of the fiction and going into the political reality. *Huntington* (1998) even predicts a conflict between civilizations and beliefs that will shake the foundations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

Anthony Giddens (2009) says that "democracy needs to be democratized" and that "now, the most important thing for mankind is the development of civic culture and the transformation of transnational bodies, such as the European Union, in more open and accountable structures from the cultural point of view."

Globalization is a generic term designating different qualitative processes, essentially about the amount of economic, technological, social, cultural, political and psychological dynamics that have accelerated since the '80s, but whose meaning and values remain unclear. The end of the Cold War released a universal negative truth based on the ineffectiveness of the communist system and authoritarian regulation of the economy and society.

The socio-economic aspects that reflect the process of globalization are:

The global nature of science and technology: even if the main sources of technical progress are developed countries, research is based on the global resources around the world.

- *Global Marketing*: the strategy of the companies seeks to promote global brand companies, the culture of advertising becoming a real industry.
- *The global financial system*: the banking institutions, capital market operators, international financial institutions form a true network and a true global power.
- The degree reached by the communication infrastructure, especially through the media, which has got planetary scale coverage and the establishment of a global network for the transmission and reception of information which allows rapid information, but also manipulation (*Appadurai* 2003).

What creates identity is culture. It is a term that applies to the essence of things. Globalization is a phenomenon concerning the circulation of information and ideas, which is somehow outside cultural facts, but basically, an obvious danger to culture.

The problem of preserving the cultural identity is presented in two aspects in the complex process of globalization. On the one hand, there is an acute danger of cultural and psychological disintegration for both individuals and society, and on the other hand the danger of cultural homogenization that becomes obvious by the fact that people might get only one form of culture. These two risks are correlated. There is one form of behavior, often unconscious, that for some people can be interpreted as cultural aggression, known as wrong led ethnocentrism. This behavior, which is characteristic especially for developed countries (Germany, England, France, Netherlands, Luxemburg), is a threat to European understanding and should be corrected.

Globalization operates in six directions, formed in so-called dimensions: political, social, economic, environmental, spiritual and cultural (*Appadurai*, 2003).

The political dimension - globalization argues that political disputes at regional and local level limit the space of action of national policies and that many problems can be adequately solved only at the international and global level, respectively. Therefore, it is necessary for new forms and political arenas to be found. In this respect, the European integration is seen as a successful response to the challenges of political globalization. The regional and national policy has been suffering from the delimited and dematerialized economy increasingly practiced at the international and global level, respectively. Capitalism, an integrating factor of the social state, is also threatened by the fundamental imbalance. Yet, not all things that are considered to be due to globalization are true. Politicians often use globalization as a scapegoat and argumentative weapon with multiple "uses" in order to justify their failure in solving socio-economic and cultural national problems.

The social dimension - the world has become a "global village", the innovative communication networks at long distance (chat, e-mail) being added to traditional communities (such as the family) and especially to the younger generation, which is more responsive and more willing to accept the new, be it good or bad, without making the difference.

The economic dimension - it is mostly on the first place, motivated by the enormous increase in trade and direct investments, globalization of financial markets, integrated production at transnational level, transnational corporations. Thus, the competition at local and regional level disappears, including between countries and regions, which means the end of national economies.

The environmental dimension - some environmental problems, such as global warming, the ozone hole or cutting rainforests, illustrate most impressively the phenomenon of globalization, because in this case it is clearly about global issues that require a comprehensive approach. Obviously, in the environmental field there are problems at regional and local level, even if they have a character that sometimes goes beyond borders, such as pollution of rivers.

There are situations that do not belong to a particular national space. For example, the survival of some small island states (Tuvalu, Maldives, Seychelles, etc.), that set up together the AOSIS organization, being most seriously threatened by the steady growth of the sea level, depends on the behaviour of all the people in the world and especially those in ultra-developed industrialized countries.

The spiritual dimension of life - includes churches, particularly the Catholic Church, which, in their dialogue with the representatives of political and economic systems of globalization cannot forget that the Old Testament social life was based on social justice and the precepts of the New Testament on love. Abuses practiced in many modern societies have been the subject of criticism of most Christian Church authorities, who emphasized that the deviation from the social justice and Christian love is a lack of respect to God.

The cultural dimension – is also found in Hollywood productions that can be viewed all over the world, and the "Americanization" of the world culture is an undeniable fact, while regional and local cultures are in danger of dying because of this.

The most frequently cited causes of globalization are: the development of top technologies, the increase of international trade, the decrease of transportation costs, the increase of transmission speed, the end of the Cold War, migrations, liberalization and the climate changes.

A central role is played by technical and technological innovations, mainly those in IT and communications. The globalization of financial markets, the transfer of unimaginable amounts in seconds around the globe would not be possible without this technology, nor integrated production at transnational level.

The incredible impetus that trade has had, another defining element of economic globalization, is due, not least, to the rapid decline of transport costs, goods being able to be transported much cheaper and faster. This can be seen particularly in the service sector: for example software products or databases can be transmitted in seconds from one part of the world to another.

The end of the Cold War was also often indicated as one of the causes of globalization. If in the conflict between East and West, the world was divided into two parts that maintained few relationships between them, this limitation - the "Iron Curtain" - fell in 1989/90. States belonging to the "Eastern bloc" opened toward the world market. More and more countries trust democracy and the market economy the fundamental organizing principles. In these circumstances, the state's role in globalization tends to minimize. If a few decades ago, the state represented the main actor of the international economic relations and the regulator of the national economic activity, today, the state has lost this role in favour of transnational companies.

Among the most important consequences of globalization we can include: *cultural globalization*, *social dumping*, *the division between rich and poor*, *the omnipresence of uncontrollable multinational companies and the environmental degradation*.

Daniel Bell (1997) stated that "nations are too small for the big problems and too big for the small problems". Global problems such as the greenhouse effect cannot be solved at the level of a single state, just like local problems, such as those in the educational and cultural system, cannot be solved by global solutions.

Both the environmental damage and the unfair distribution of social benefits had existed long before the debates on globalization started, but these problems have deeply worsened because of globalization.

Globalization does not mean that everything can be easily produced in any location. But globalization can be instrumented as an argument, respectively as a supportive element in favour of leaving a particular country.

The application of neoliberal policies in globalization is harmful, because they do not attempt at a counteraction of its negative effects. The error consists in adopting a neoliberal attitude for this phenomenon and the presentation of a proposal for the dismantling of state enterprises, such as the abandonment of the state intervention and the state disengagement from its traditional areas such as culture and education.

We might say that "we are witnessing the transition from a world where cultural isolation predominated to a world where intercultural factors dominate, from an era characterized by the cultural autonomy of isolated, traditional groups, into an era of generalized interrelationships and communication" (Lederc, 2003, p. 10).

Indigenous *cultural modernity* reveals centralized features, possibly discriminatory and exclusive, militating for the assertion of an ideal of cultural unity by which its membership or affiliation to a paradigmatic model is to be always asserted. The pre-modern Romanian unity conferred by language and the Christian culture, especially a culture of orality, was admitted by the state. Unlike other cultures, the pre-modern Romanian culture was supported by the leaders of the Transylvanian School and its learned followers, and modern culture became active mainly within the relatively recent state, accomplished after 1918. Today Romania, too, due to the development of communications, including the Internet, has entered the era of cultural mixture, the English language imposing itself not only in IT and communications, but also in the business (see: businessman, barter, broker, dealer, marketing, management, dumping, know-how, trend, etc.). Both British English language and its American version are gradually imposed, being a threat to linguistic diversity. We may speak about the so-called cultural imperialism and about a hegemonic culture that is not essentially a culture, but rather responds to the vital needs of physical and mental comfort, sometimes exaggerated and not infrequently heading towards subculture.

There is a risk of adopting an artificially built culture, un-historical, timeless and without memory. The virtual super-communication is causing a loss of landmarks, a loss of identity of the individual, a departure of his own ego. (Teodorescu, 2009, p.40).

We wonder if a harmonious cultural diversity is not much more viable, or rather a harmony in cultural diversity as it is the still Blue beautiful Planet, which offers us a variety of ecosystems, each with its specific charm that do not exclude, but rather complete each other.

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