

**GLOBALIZATION AND THE METAMORPHOSIS OF IDENTITY
/ GLOBALIZATION AND THE "FATE" OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES***

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Abstract. *The paper analyses the cultural aspects of globalization in the contemporary world, as a new form of acculturation, interrelation and metamorphosis of national cultures and identities. It especially focuses on the research of the changes in the national and regional identity in the context of European integrations in the Balkans, the relation between national and European identity, as well as the "fate" of national identities of small nations in the conditions of globalization.*

Starting from the hypothesis that the geocultural paradigm plays an important role in the understanding current and future processes of the transformation of personal and collective identities in the global age, the paper addresses the given topic by combining results of the relevant contemporary theoretical and empirical research. Thereby, it pays special attention to the Balkans and the sociological research carried out (in Serbia, Macedonia and Bulgaria) by the Institute for Sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, within the maroproject entitled "The Culture of Peace, Identities and Interethnic Relations in Serbia and in the Balkans in the Eurointegration Processes" (2006/2010).

Key words: *globalization, identities, acculturation, national identity, geoculture, the Balkans.*

THE JANUS-LIKE FACE OF GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is an objective historical process connected to the development of new technologies and the structural production forces of scientific, technological and information revolution. As such, it is setting the path for the future development of a postindustrial civilization. However, because of the antagonistic division of social power, it has a Janus-like face in the contemporary world: there is both the developmental and emancipatory side of it, on the one hand, and the enslaving one, on the other. The global empiri-

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cal data show it to be a predominantly asymmetrical process in the form of monocentric globalism, i.e. of the domination of the megacapital of the countries of the world centre at the global market, exerting its influence in the countries of the semiperiphery and the periphery. In that sense, this process influences not only economic development but also the political sphere and culture. Namely, the countries of the world semiperiphery and periphery are forced to accept the neoliberal concept of dependent modernization, which produces the phenomenon of peripherization of economy and society, and the establishment of dependent culture and satellite status.

The forces of the *third wave* (A. Toffler) have the power not only to contract time and space, but also to significantly influence the metamorphosis of our culture, the modes of acquiring knowledge, the life style... It is in such a context that changes are taking place in the language culture of the contemporary world, and in the formation and metamorphosis of identity. We are witnesses of the processes of modernization as well as of radical standardization, codification, quantification and technization of language and of a mass use of foreign words and expressions. The number of Anglo-Saxon words (anglicisms) is increasing as well as of those that come from the field of information technologies, bringing about various forms of reductionism - the effacement of the playfulness of language, its hybridization and new forms of uniformity; in a word - the culture of dependence and the phenomenon of language and cultural colonialism (P. Viorilo).

Today we live in a world in which there are over 6000 languages and even more numerous families of dialects, in a world undergoing the processes of suppressing the languages and the cultures of small nations, and of their dying away. Researchers write that dozens of languages die away every year, which means the disappearance of the cultures of certain ethnic groups and their unrestrained assimilation.¹ And no matter how much such a state of affairs is justified by the reasons of modernization, globalization and the renewal of liberal imperialism, it should be pointed out that we should respect the culture of differences if we do not want the future of man and of mankind to be similar to the "Orvellian and the new animal farm". To paraphrase F. Mayor, tomorrow will already be late for the UNESCO to pass a resolution on the protection of the small language and culture reservations of small nations and civilizations, as archeological value from the past and from the history of mankind.

Contemporary mankind needs a developed consciousness about the importance of multiculturalism and interculturalism, of the *dialogics of culture* (E. Morin) and of the partnership of different civilizations, as prerequisites of the culture of peace, globalization of understanding and solidarity among different nations. In that sense, in addition to opening up towards the world culture, learning foreign languages and modernization of national languages, one should work on the cultivation and preservation of the authentic national language tradition, because it preserves identities of a nation. That is especially important today when the patterns of cultural colonialism and cultural hegemony get renewed through the processes of asymmetric globalization and monocentric globalism, as expressions of the action of unbridled megacapital.

¹ See: Dejid Kristal (2003), *Smrt jezika [Language Death]*, Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd, p. 97-126.

While respecting the cultures of the major nations (in the West, in the East, in the North and the South), we should also work on the preservation and development of the languages of national cultures. This is especially valid for the Balkans as a region representing an ethnic cocktail of nations, civilizations and cultures.

The *university* has a great *responsibility* in securing a place for the disciplines engaged in national history, language and national cultures in the Bologna process, and in not allowing the given topics to get subjugated to the heteronomous goals of unification and standardization, i.e. of cultural hegemony. The knowledge of the English language is as important today as the knowledge of Russian was in the near past or as the knowledge of Chinese might be important in the future. But that does not mean that national languages should be allowed to decay, to be destroyed and marginalized. I must remind the reader that the emerging pseudoelites of the comprador and limpenbourgeoisie not only in the Balkans but also elsewhere are often more than willing to do exactly such things in the name of dependent modernization and political correctness. But serious institutions, such as universities, which are not only educational institutions but also centres of the spirituality and culture of a given nation, its major national asset, have the responsibility to preserve and further develop the national language, because in the future nations will be distinguished primarily on the basis of their geoculture and not political geography and military power (which was the case in the past), or geoeconomy (as it is the case today).

The great English poet *Thomas Elliot* wrote in his book *Towards the Definition of Culture* that the culture of a nation developed on the basis of two processes of communication: a) the communication with the universal achievements and values of mankind, and b) on the basis of respect for and development of what is the most valuable in national cultural history and tradition. This truth must be taken into consideration when creating a modern concept of cultural policy and model of reform of the young generations' education. That also applies to language and to the research of the place and role of national cultural identities in the development of a nation.

ON THE DESTINY OF THE IDENTITIES OF SMALL NATIONS IN THE CONDITIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

Globalization has led to the expansion of the phenomenon of mass planetary cosmopolitan culture and the formation of the *society of spectacle* (Gitebor), to McDonaldization and glocalization of world culture. That also means suppressing authentic values not only of the elite culture but also of local cultures of small nations and ethnic communities. It is against such a background that the new processes of acculturation, interculturalism, but also of assimilation and cultural imperialism, have arisen. And just as the sovereignty of national states is today heavily influenced by the external agents of globalization (the TNCs) and internal separatist movements, so the cultural and national identities of social groups are faced with the impact of the processes of McDonaldization, on the one hand, and retribalization, on the other hand. In connection with that, *Benjamin Barber* in his book *Jihad versus Mc Donald's World*, among other things, talks about the unfavourable position of the identity of social groups between the two given extremes, namely fundamentalism and globalism. "While Jihad has adopted the bloody politics of identity, the McWorld demand bloodless economy of profit. The one who belongs to the McWorld is

a consumer. The one who searches for the centre of identity belongs to a tribe. A citizen is neither of the two. How, then, can democracy exist without citizens?"² A similar evaluation of how the identity and sovereignty of the citizen gets compromised in the contemporary world is to be found in the latest book by Z. Baumann entitled *Current Contemporaneity* (2008), in which the given author claims that the current processes of social Darwinization of the world bring about the creation of an egotistic individualized subject that suppresses the civil concept of equality and democracy.

In the conditions of globalization, and under the influence of the global mass media and global mass culture, new forms of acculturation are emerging: the McDonaldization of cultures, hybridization, transnational forms of cultures. Globalization takes the form of glocalization, i.e. the reverse influence of local cultures on global processes. This reverse influence is hard to achieve because of the antagonistic system of the division of power and because of the global media having a monopoly on and dominance in the public space, creating symbolic violence and cultural hegemony.

As opposed to the postmodern cultural identity, which was ethnic and organically closed, as an expression of, among other things, a certain type of community and automatic solidarity that ruled, the cultural identities of cultural groups in the contemporary world are open, pluralist, and multi-layered because they reflect the modern times. As the French sociologist E. Morin said – they express the dialogics of cultures, intercultural processes in the conditions of social modernization, organic solidarity and globalization.

This emerging and *hypothesized identity* (Z. Baumann) of social groups in the contemporary world is not an expression of abstract cosmopolitanism and insistence on the citizen (i.e. of empty generalizations, or as old Hegel would say, of the unordered consciousness in which the general gets alienated from the individual and the particular), but is an expression of the unity of the national, the international and global – universal values.

Small nations, such as the Balkan ones, and their elites in the conditions of globalization, have special responsibility in promoting national identity and culture. It is the culture that is their greatest treasure, a proof of their existence in the past and of their having a long future.

In the future, social development of mankind, a new division of labour and global economy, and the processes of scientific and technological progress, will make the borders become transparent, i.e. will render the borders be no obstacle any more to global mobility. In that sense, it will only be the culture (or, as E. Wallerstein puts it – the geoculture), that sets us apart from the others in the totality of mankind, i.e. what will set nations apart from the other ones will no longer be military or technological power, nor geopolitics, but the values of the human and cultural capital (knowledge, the grey matter, human resources). That is why F. Nietzsche was right to say that education is the policy of the future of a society, and why Jacques Delors in his book *Education – A Hidden Treasury* wrote: One of the primary functions of education is to enable mankind to take control over its own development.

Small nations (it is only their demographic, geographic and economic status that I have in mind here) from the countries of the old and the new global and European periph-

² See M. Pečujlić, *Globalizacija – dva lica sveta* [*Globalization – Two Faces of the World*], Gutenbergova galaksija, Beograd, 2005., p.138.

ery (such as the Balkan nations today, regardless of whether they are in the EU or are supposed to join it in the future) must create an autonomous model of cultural policy so as to preserve and develop their cultural identity. In addition, they must develop different forms of cooperation (cultural and other) so as for the Balkans to become a geospace of peace, stability and development rather than a powder keg that foreign powers (either those from the West or the East) can ignite any moment.

Historical experience teaches and warns us that whenever the Balkan nations did not want to consider their neighbours their brothers, they, as a rule, got foreign rulers (in the form of the great powers), effectively becoming protectorates. It is time the redefinitions of the past on the Balkans got exchanged for a dialogue on cooperation and development of a common future, fully respecting thereby the independence of each nation and its cultural particularities.

The results of our empirical research on cultural and ethnic relations in the Balkans (in Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia in 2004 and 2007) have shown that the interviewees consider the conflicts in this geospace to have emerged because of the vested interests of the great powers as well as that it is in the culture that they see a bridge and a factor contribution to cooperation and integration among the Balkan nations.³

It is time the Balkan elites developed consciousness about the importance of the development of and advancement in the regional identity, the closeness of the Balkan cultures and common interests of the Balkan nations. It is also time the given elites reaffirmed the ideas of the pan-Balkan project (first expressed at the First International Balkan Conference held in Delfi, Greece, in 1931) under the slogan *the Balkan to the Balkan nations*.⁴ I would say that that is a precondition for the development of sound relations in the Balkans, which is as important as the processes of European integrations, and which the Balkan nations must strive for unless they want to become puppets of the new (Euroatlantic, European and other) power centres, a geospace of dependent societies and new colonies.

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Languges and cultures of different nations penetrate one another in the conditions of globalization particularly intensively, with multiculturalism rapidly changing into interculturalism and new phenomena of global transnational cultures. In such a context, small nations can preserve their culture through their creativeness, and not through archexoticism and folklore. In a word, it is through new means of cultural creativity and through communication and cooperation with other cultures and civilizations that national cultures get developed and enriched. Therefore, they should not follow the strategy of autism, isolation, retribalization, of "murderous identities", but should also not promote cloned McDonaldization, dependent modernization and conflict; instead, they should cooperate

³ See the following two proceedings: *Kulturni i etnički odnosi na Balkanu - mogućnost regionalne i evropske integracije* [Cultural and Ethnic Relations in the Balkans – Possibilities of Regional and European Integrations], Filozofski fakultet, Institut za sociologiju, Niš, 2006, and *Kvalitet međuetničkih odnosa na Balkanu i evrointegracijski procesi* [The Quality of Interethnic Relations in the Balkans and European Integrations], Filozofski fakultet, Institut za sociologiju, Niš, 2008.

⁴ See the proceedings entitled *Prva balkanska konferencija* [The First Balkan Conference], Karnegijev fond, Beograd, 1931.

and actively participate in contemporary culture. It is only the unity of cultural tradition and modernity, and cultural innovation, that can contribute to the variety of cultures, to a pluralist face of contemporary mankind, as a community of equal citizens, nations and civilizations.

In the Balkans, history has always been larger than its geography, and patriotism has often been dressed in military uniform, serving thereby the bloody harvests of the god Mars. Instead of the policy of redrawing borders, what we need today is a new policy of the culture of peace, active peaceful coexistence and cooperation, sound creative competition of its nations and citizens. We need interpenetration of related cultures and their mutual enrichment. It is time the ghosts of history (*N. Berdyaev*) got exchanged for a clear direction of the Balkan nations and new generations towards the challenges of the contemporary world and of the future.

GLOBALIZACIJA I METAMORFOZA IDENTITETA / GLOBALIZACIJA I "SUDBINA" NACIONALNIH IDENTITETA

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Autor u radu razmatra kulturne aspekte globalizacije u savremenosti, kao novi oblik akulturacije, prožimanja i metamorfoze nacionalnih kultura i identiteta. U svom razmatranju on se posebno fokusira na istraživanje promena u nacionalnom i regionalnom identitetu u kontekstu evrointegracijskih procesa na Balkanu; na odnos nacionalnog i evropskog identiteta, kao i na "sudbinu" nacionalnih identiteta malih naroda u uslovima globalizacije.

Polazeći od hipoteze o značajnoj ulozi geokulturne paradigme za razumevanje savremenih i budućih procesa transformacije personalnih i kolektivnih identiteta u globalnom dobu, autor – problematizaciju teme svog rada – razmatra kombinujući rezultate savremenih teorijskih i empirijskih istraživanja ovog pitanja. U interpretaciji, autor čini poseban osvrt na Balkan i sociološka istraživanja, koje je sproveo Institut za sociologiju Filozofskog fakulteta u Nišu (na prostoru Srbije, Makedonije i Bugarske), u okviru realizacije ciljeva makroprojekta "Kultura mira, identiteti i međuetnički odnosi u Srbiji i na Balkanu u procesu evrointegracije" (2006/2010).

Ključne reči: *globalizacija, identiteti, akulturacija, nacionalni identitet, geokultura, Balkan*