Globalization Essay, Research Paper

THE LIMITS OF GLOBALIZATION

Nowadays one of the most commonly used terms is globalization. But what does globalization mean? Does it mean dissappearing borders, a common trade unit, no tax in trade abroad, political awareness across the world, or, in extremes, even interfering with other countries’ domestic affairs?

In some ways globalization may be useful in creating a common sense of “world citizenship”, but useful to what extent? What are the possibilities, advantages and risks of such “world citizenship”? Are the United Nations and the European Union, stepping stones to globalization?

Disappearing borders, in the economic meaning of the term can most clearly be seen today in Europe. The European Union restricts taxes on trade between members. Taking a step further the EU have decided on a common currency, the “Euro” , which became available at the beginning of 1999. This currency may economically be more functional but what aboutnational pride? All trade units display a country’s well known heros or great personalities of them that the citizens respect for. How are the citizens going to respond to this kind of change time will show but nobody can say European countries are not nationalistic. There is a strong evidence on the contrary. One example is world war II, which started in the middle of Europe- -considered then the most civilized part of the world- because of Germany’s belief in its national superiority. This unfortunate development took place just half a century ago.These European nation-states may seem to be getting along well for the time being because of fairly smilar economic levels but what will happen if one country’s economic level drops or gets much better than the rest? Would the better ones pull up the worst to keep up with them or would those countries-having the best economy- want to carry the rest on their shoulders?

Besides its economic ups and downs globalization has a tremendous effect on cultural values. World has a cultural diversity in itself. Every nation every country has its own traditions values practices of cultural activities. These create a diversity which every part of the world can be pointed out by their own characteristics. By the beginning 20th century with the effects of industrialization and common usage of communication devices and transpotation becoming faster and more comfortable economy started to play the most important role in a state’s political policies. Trade became one of the main incomes of the countries and trade required close interaction between countries and decisions were started to be taken to ease traders by governments. This attitude of governments have led economic affairs to shape up cultural practices of states. As the cultures were revised by economy, stronger economies emposed their cultural practices to the weak ones. This if not stopped will continue until cultural erosion destroys cultural diversity over the world.

“The export of Western commodities, values, priorities, ways of life. In a process of unequal cultural encounter, ‘foreign’ populations have been compelled to be the subjects and subalterns of Western empire, while, no less significantly, the West has come to face with the ‘alien’ and exotic culture of its ‘Other’. Globalization, as it dissolves the barriers of distance, makes the encounter of colonial center and colonized periphery immediate and intense” (1995:108).”

“The current century has seen a magnitude of rise and fall of political power and economical, political, social and structural changes, which without doubt have influenced any society’s culture that was touched. From the imperial ages early this century, Europe in particular has seen the decline of the colonial power, the democratization and communization, the rise and fall of totalitarian, nationalistic and socialist regimes, and their decline. Europe has also experienced the fall from economic and political superpower, in a century that was for a long time been best characterized as the USSR-USA century. Equally Asia has been struck by fundamental changes: from the imperial China to the communist China, the rise of the Tiger Economies, the Vietnam war, the Korean war, the independence of India, the Iran Iraq war, the Gulf war,… to name just a few.”

Since economy plays the most important role or is the main criteria in a

country’s prestige and power; economically strong states started to have more power on international affairs. Such strength of some countries have led them to interpret the term globalization as their right to interfere with weaker states’ domestic affairs. The most recent event we could observe about this issue was the attack of the US to Iraq on Ramadan -the religiously important month of Muslims. The reason and aim of the bombing were explained by the US Foreign Affairs Minister, Ms. Albright, exactly as “We -as the US- will do what is needed for Iraqi people to get what they deserve as better life standarts.” This statement could be interpreted in two different ways that are very far away in meaning from each other. It could either be viewed optimistically as US really cares about the future of Iraqi people and want to do something good for them. Or a pessimistic approach could be such that: US sees itself as the judge of the world and decide what is good or bad for everyone. The second approach is not the majority believe its right but this is still a failure of interpretation of globalization, travelling overseas to bomb.

“During the time this Commission has been at work, we have witnessed the currencies of Europe held hostage by forces of speculation themselves out of control. Powerful economies confronted each other on the threshold of trade wars, while marginal ones collapsed. There was ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, a ‘failed state’ in Somalia, and genocide in Rwanda. Nuclear weapons lay unsecured in the former Soviet Union, and neo- Fascism surfaced in the West.”

Caring about the whole world and not just the territory one lives in is the starting point of the idea: “World Citizenship”. If we are living in the world we have to be aware of what’s going on around us and if possible do something for the better of the world. This may include environmental issues as well as political ones. However, world citizenship must not be understood as forgetting national and cultural values of one’s own and only care about the whole. If interpreted like this the idea of world citizenship also becomes a threat to cultural diversity.

“Formally the equivalence can be so stated: nationalism has as a central political demand the establishment of a state on a territory, exclusive of other states on that territory, populated by a group formed by involuntary membership of an inclusive category, usually “descendants of past inhabitants of the territory”. Normative globalism seeks a state with planetary territory, and a monopoly of that territory, paralleling the monopoly claim of nationalism itself. [5] All humans would belong to that state (as citizens) by reason of being human and/or inhabiting the planet, without any choice in the matter. In its central claim normative globalism is equivalent to nationalism: it is semantically correct to describe it as a form of nationalism.”

As a result globalization may be useful in economic affairs but the limits shoul be drawn concisely that it does not threaten cultural diversity and nationalism. Governments shoul take special care against cultural erosion and stop resmbling of cultures with the effects of ecomonics.

Communications and Culture Transformation

Cultural Diversity, Globalization and Cultural Convergence

Project presented to the European University, Barcelona

June 1998

http://www.stephweb.com/capstone/3.htm

Political and socio-economical changes

CNN Special Report-Press Meeting on the issue of Bombing Iraq

Our Global Neighbourhood

The Report of the Commission on Global Governance

Chapter Seven — A Call to Action

The Next Steps http://www.cgg.ch/ch7.htm#Summary of Commission Proposals

World-nationalism: normative globalism as

pan-nationalism

http://www.diagonal.demon.nl/world.nation.html