

**Asim Peco**<sup>1</sup>  
Teaching Faculty  
Mostar  
pecoasim@yahoo.com

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## **Globalization and changes in the education system**

### **Abstract**

*The issue that is more or less current in all the areas of the globe, hence, an issue with a planetary character, should not remain on the margins of interest to the Bosnian intellectual or political elite. The public probably did not grasp the importance of all processes in which it is directly or indirectly involved without even realizing it. The consequences of countless processes will be recognizable only in ten years or more, yet they will, whether we like it or not, become a part of the social reality. By then it will be too late for major repairs if these and similar effects happen to be an obstacle to social development, hence, a timely and high quality analytical and critical approach to all processes that have become a part of reality of the Bosnian society is necessary. The text that follows is too small a space for a quality and more thorough elaboration of this social phenomenon and, therefore, I shall try to outline some important features regarding the globalization processes and education, which, certainly, deserve and require more analytical space. The text will, therefore, justify its purpose if it succeeds to arouse even a sporadic interest of those responsible for the social reality of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The relationship between globalization processes and education is multidimensional and in this way cannot be considered in all its comprehensiveness, thus the most important segments; economical, political, and informational-communicational changes will be determined. The Bologna process will be mentioned, but also the changes in culture and tradition caused by the globalization processes.*

**Keywords:** *globalization, transition, education.*

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<sup>1</sup> Professor at the Faculty of Teachers, University „Džemal Bijedic“, Mostar (BiH). E-mail: pecoasim@yahoo.com

## **Conceptual demarcations**

If the Latin term *globus* in one of its translated versions means the globe, then it is quite possible to interpret which social process is in question.

The term globalization has been present in the socio-political theory since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Truthfully, within the first decades, term globalization emphasized profound changes in the global economy while the politics and culture had been bypassed. Among sociologists, there is no clear consensus about what globalization is, but there is a general consensus surrounding the claim that globalization is a multi-dimensional lasting process associated with de-territorialisation and growing interconnectedness at the planetary level. Sociologists also agree with the fact that the cause of this social phenomenon is to be found within the dynamic development of information and communication technologies. Internet has become a global carrier of communications and exchange of information available to each individual user who has access to the internet.<sup>2</sup>

Owing to this method of information consumption, all the changes that are happening in the economy, politics or culture are becoming apparent. These and similar changes bring huge revenues to the owners of large corporations and as well as the government budgets. The changes are also evident in the global political sphere, accelerating contemporary globalization processes. Among the others we can single out the end of the Cold war, the fall of the Berlin wall, etc.

As we are inclined to suggest that these changes have accelerated the globalization processes, we can equally say that they are result of the same globalization process, which would indicate that there remains an unresolved dilemma of what are the causes and what are the consequences.

## **Changes in the domain of culture**

Can a man be a citizen of the world without losing his own cultural identity? The attitudes of socio-political theorists diverge at this point. Some of them, like J. Rifkin, believe it is possible if the local cultures are not endangered and unless the people do not consider their culture as the property that needs be defended.<sup>3</sup>

Quite debatable is the very understanding of a position of vulnerability of cultural individuality, which means that experience and understanding of this transformation process is extremely important in terms of whether the indi-

<sup>2</sup> See: Milan Pelc, *Scripture, books, pictures*, Zagreb: Golden marketing, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> See: Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Europe*, Zagreb: School Book, 2006; Miroslav Pelc, *Scripture, books, pictures*, Zagreb: Golden marketing, 2002.

viduality of the individual or the community is taken away, ceding the space to something “foreign”, or is it simply a voluntary and spontaneous acceptance of the different with unobstructed retention of own.

Recognizing the fact that the man of today lives with many different identities, the question of whether it is possible to simultaneously live two or more cultures with equal regard to all or whether the favoritism of one of the cultures would be obvious, remains open.

On a similar dilemma, U. Beck states that today’s life without limits, does not assume simultaneous renunciation of cultural individuality. Having the roots marks the connection of provincialism with experiential richness of the world citizens, which could become a common civilization denominator of heterogeneous societies in the world’s cultures.<sup>4</sup>

Among the scholars who do not show optimism towards the globalization process, but a distinct suspicion, even fear is N. Chomsky, who conceives a culture as a companion of economical and political power. Hence, this theorist presumes that Western universalism, among other things, will result in cultural imperialism.

It can be, therefore, stated that Chomsky’s point of view revolves in space around the dilemma of electing between the hegemony and survival, actually the question of whether the globalization is a choice or a necessity.<sup>5</sup>

Equally pessimistic outlook gives S. Huntington, who states that the religious diversity as an important part of cultural reality will be the fundamental cause of new social conflicts.

With a more thorough analysis of the cited standpoints, it is possible to find reasons for justification but also evidence for denial, and so it seems entirely correct to claim that social subjects, regardless of whether we are talking about individuals or institutions and organizations, have to be very careful in accepting or rejecting the globalization process. It is also certain, that the significant positive effects would only be recognizable in two to three decades. The process will certainly require a lot of skill, learning, ingenuity, honesty, trust and creativity, in order to tame and put in service to man, all the now dissipated globalization processes.

## **Changes in the educational system**

It seems quite reasonable to begin interpretation of interactive relationship between globalization processes and education, with a thinking of J. Stiglitz, who

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<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Rifkin, *European Dream*, Zagreb: School Book, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival*, Zagreb: Circulation Ljevak, 2004.

states that globalization reduced a sense of isolation that engulfed a large part of the developing world, and has provided many people in those countries with access to knowledge that reaches far and above the level of the wealthiest in any country in the world.<sup>6</sup> I have marked this relationship as an interaction because it really is so. It should, however, be said that the beginning of this relationship is more one-sided than mutual due to the fact that the national education has found itself on the road of globalization flows, not as a partner in a newly established relationship, but as a specific form of interference. The second dimension of this relationship which should be expressed through feedback effects could be expected a little later on when the first effects of impacts of globalization processes in education become apparent. The truth is also that the character, intensity and dynamics of this relationship depend largely on the political attitudes of national political elites, who create educational policy on the basis of defined political goals. The changes in the educational system primarily depend on the changes in economy, political life, information system and communications. Therefore, it is unrealistic to expect a quality change in the educational system without any changes in the mentioned segments of society, which are also governed by globalization processes. Thus, the quality changes in the economy provide the prerequisites for quality education. The changes in the political life of a certain social community which go towards ensuring political stability, human rights and multiculturalism surely assume the democratization of educational space. Computerization, modernization and a whole new way of communicating results in significant changes in the worldview of individuals and even entire communities. The mentioned factors contribute to modernization of education, faster and more comprehensive adoption of new knowledge and skills, establishing new types of educational systems, such as studying and distance learning. There remains, however, a very important question that requires a much wider and more open debate: whether it is a question of acquiring a qualitatively new knowledge or acquiring a new quantity of information?

### **Bosnian-Herzegovinian paradigm**

The specificities of Bosnian reality assumed the recognizable particularities of reflection of globalization processes within the area of education. If the principles of globalization are, among other things, de-territorialization and a kind of uniformity in terms of approaching the fundamental assumptions and conception of a common standard, then it would be logical to talk about the expected

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<sup>6</sup> Josef Stiglitz, *Contradictions of globalization*, Belgrade, 2002.

results of the aforementioned principles. However, in education within Bosnia and Herzegovina, entirely different processes are occurring. Instead of processes of de-territorialization, we are witnessing all the more accentuated confinement into national frameworks; rather than convergence in terms of conceptualizing the common basis, there are increasingly recognizable differences grounded in the principles of ethnicity. Therefore, the education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is at all levels still laden by national partitions which are the result of political concepts of national elites.

With full justification, we can talk about, almost entirely ethnicized schools and universities. It is not possible to talk about multiculturalism in education or education for multicultural reality because such and similar principles have been replaced by the ethnic. The novelty which globalization process has brought to education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the computerization and quick and effective communication, which is the technical-technological aspect of globalization, while the ideological framework has a distinctive national and even nationalistic coloring.

It is difficult, therefore, to expect that education in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the near future will become a part of the European and global educational network and that the Bosnian universities will become a part of the European university community.

Regarding the Bologna process and the implementation of the principles of the Bologna Declaration, everyone is already familiar with how that process had began in error and continues on its path by falling from one fallacy and mistake to another. The political leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina, constituted by semi-literate agitators, to whom an educational process is a complete mystery, adopted the aforementioned document motivated exclusively by the collection of political points. The same leadership did nothing to ensure the minimum requirements for successful implementation of the fundamental principles of the Bologna Declaration. Thus, in this segment also, we only declaratorily participate in globalization flows, while the social reality shows something entirely different.

### **Instead of a conclusion**

After presented facts, a logical question arises; what needs to be done in order to sporadically, at least, improve the state of education, and enable it to follow the unstoppable globalization trends?

We know that the quality of education and the character of educational policy are directly related to economical and political situation of a society so it

would be logical to start with changes in these segments of society. It is possible to make quality changes within education without thorough economical changes, but with an assumption that apolitical educational reality is in question.

Since education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is under direct and strong influence of politics it is almost certain that changes should be initiated within the political reality of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian society. This text cannot offer more concrete solutions about what and which kind of changes need to be made, but I hope it was able to identify and label the fundamental problems that impair the process of modernization and implementation of modern educational technologies.

As long as the insufficiently educated politicians conceptualize the educational system and educational policy it will not be possible to talk about education for a human, Bosnian-Herzegovinian citizen, a citizen of the world, instead, the national and even nationalistic education will continue.

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