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GLOBALISATION OF VALUES. ETHICS, EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN AN INTERCONNECTED WORLD

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of globalisation on value systems, focusing on ethical, educational and cultural dimensions. Globalisation is not only an economic or technological process, but also a complex and profoundly transformative reality that is continuously shaping the moral, spiritual and cultural contents of contemporary society. Through the rapid spread of information, population mobility and economic interdependence, globalisation is not only leading to a redistribution of resources, but also to a reconfiguration of the fundamental values underlying collective identities. This paper explores the major tensions between the global trend towards the universalisation of a set of values - such as human rights, individual freedom, equal opportunities - and the resistance of cultural pluralism, which asserts the legitimacy of local traditions, religious specificity and alternative perspectives on the common good. In this context, education takes on a crucial role, being seen not only as a tool for adapting to global reality, but also as a critical space for reflection, filtering and conscious assumption of values. Moreover, it highlights how schools and educational institutions can function as laboratories of axiological discernment, preparing individuals not only to live in an interconnected world, but also to preserve their moral autonomy and cultural roots. The study thus proposes a nuanced reading of the phenomenon of globalisation, going beyond the clichés of neoliberal optimism or cultural pessimism, emphasising the need for a balance between global openness and fidelity to authentic local values.

Keywords: globalization; ethics; education; culture; pluralism; identity;

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, with its multidimensional complexity, influences the economic, political and axiological foundations of society. The process of global interconnectedness brings with it an intense circulation of ideas, norms, cultural and educational models. However, this value mobility poses serious challenges: which values become dominant? How to maintain the balance between moral universalism and cultural diversity? What role does education play in this context?



1. THE DYNAMICS OF GLOBALIZATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF VALUES

1.1 Defining the concept of axiological globalization

Axiological globalization is the process by which values, norms and ethical conceptions circulate, are transformed and are taken up or challenged in a global framework. This phenomenon involves the rapid dissemination of information and the gradual internalization of ethical principles considered "universal", such as human rights, gender equality, religious tolerance, environmental protection or individual freedom. Global axiology is not a homogeneous and stable construct, but rather a debating arena in which values compete, negotiate or synthesize. In this context, axiological globalization is perceived as a characteristic dimension of cultural globalization, going beyond commercial or political aspects. It affects individual and collective consciousness, influencing public discourse, educational policies and cultural orientations. At the same time, it provokes reconfigurations of identity in relation to traditional ethical models, sometimes generating tensions between global and local values.

1.2 From local traditions to global moral codes

Before globalization, communities structured their moral codes on their own religious, mythological or philosophical foundations. Values were transmitted through informal education, rituals, symbols and the moral authority of elders or spiritual leaders. But globalization has accelerated the shift from these local traditions to standardized forms of morality, conveyed through mass media, social networks, international education systems and global bodies (e.g. UN, UNESCO or the Council of Europe). This transition does not mean the disappearance of traditional values, but a reconfiguration of them in relation to new standards of global coexistence. Thus, many communities face moral dilemmas about the compatibility between religious norms and new concepts of social justice, personal autonomy or diversity. In some cases, there is cultural resistance to these new values, interpreted as external impositions. At the same time, emerging global moral codes are emerging, integrating elements from several cultures and religions, giving rise to a transnational type of ethics, where concepts such as global solidarity, collective responsibility or the ethics of sustainability become essential references for new generations (Küng, 2004, pp. 43-55).

1.3 The impact of new technologies on the formation of collective consciousness

Digital technologies, in particular the internet, social networks, streaming platforms and artificial intelligence, play a decisive role in shaping the new global collective consciousness. These tools transmit information and actively participate in its construction. Recommender algorithms, information filters and the influence of content creators contribute to the formation of dynamic axiological spaces, where ideas about the good, justice, freedom or dignity are negotiated and reformulated in real time. At the same time, there is a risk of the fragmentation of moral consciousness through the emergence of "value bubbles" - informationally closed communities in which rigid ideologies or anti-universal narratives prevail. Thus, technology becomes both an opportunity for strengthening a global participatory ethic and a challenge through the radicalization of moral discourse and the excessive relativization of values. The formation of a moral conscience in the digital age requires not only access to information, but also the development of critical thinking, capable of filtering, discerning and assuming values in a responsible way. Education and culture need to adapt to this new context in order to provide young people with clear points of reference in a constantly changing world (Bauman, 2011, pp. 111-126).

2. TENSIONS BETWEEN ETHICAL UNIVERSALISM AND CULTURAL PLURALISM

2.1 Human rights and cultural relativism

Human rights are often presented as a cornerstone of global ethics, providing a universally valid normative framework, regardless of cultural, religious or political context. The proclamation of the Universal Declaration of human rights (1948) marked a pivotal moment in defining a post-war global ethic based on the intrinsic dignity of the human being. However, the application of these principles has also generated controversy about what some authors call "moral imperialism".

In many cultural spaces, human rights are interpreted through local grids, rooted in religious traditions or collectivist philosophies that prioritize the community over the individual. Thus, certain norms on freedom of expression, gender equality or sexual orientation are perceived as in conflict with traditional values. This fuels tensions between what are seen as universal ethical norms and respect for

cultural diversity. Cultural relativism argues that values and norms should be understood in their original context, without being subject to external judgments. This school of thought rejects the idea of a universal moral standard, advocating instead a pluralist approach in which each culture affirms its own value system. This raises the question: is a genuine dialogue between ethical universalism and cultural relativism possible without either side feeling threatened or delegitimized?

2.2 Global ethics. Between moral consensus and ideological hegemony.

The global ethics initiative, promoted by theologians, philosophers and religious leaders such as Hans Küng, seeks to identify a set of fundamental values shared by the world's great religious and philosophical traditions: respect for life, justice, honesty, solidarity, care for creation. This project is intended to provide a common moral basis for living together in an interdependent world. However, there is a risk that this global ethic will be perceived not as a genuine consensus, but as an ideological hegemony exercised by the cultural or economic power centers of the Western world. The values promoted by international bodies, NGOs or global media platforms are sometimes perceived as instruments of axiological standardization, to the detriment of cultural particularities. This tension has been visible in international fora, where African, Asian and Middle Eastern countries have challenged the application of "global standards" on sex education, family definition or religious freedom. Global moral consensus thus runs the risk of becoming apparent if it is not matched by a real effort to listen, negotiate and recognize otherness (Küng, 1998, pp. 91-154).

2.3 Challenges for countries with strong religious traditions

States where religion plays a significant role in shaping the collective consciousness, such as Orthodox Greece, Islamic Iran or Hindu India, face major challenges in relation to the ethical universalism promoted by globalization. On the one hand, these states are actively engaged in international economic and cultural exchanges; on the other hand, they are called to harmonize their own religious norms with global values on human rights, minorities or freedom of belief. In some cases, this tension generates social polarization, identity conflicts and controversial reforms. Religious education, for example, becomes a battleground between modernization and conservatism. School curricula, policies on women's rights or the regulation of public discourse reflect an ongoing effort to negotiate between fidelity to tradition and openness to universality (Taylor, 2003, pp. 107-121). In this context, interreligious and intercultural dialogue, the training of specialists in comparative ethics and the strengthening of a pedagogy of otherness become strategic imperatives. Only through an inclusive and flexible framework can states with strong religious traditions participate constructively in the construction of an ethically pluralistic but cohesive world.

3. THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN TRANSMITTING VALUES IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

3.1 Education as a space for axiological negotiation

In a world characterized by an intense circulation of ideas, values and cultural models, education becomes a tool for the transmission of knowledge and a privileged space for axiological negotiation. In this context, school is no longer just a vehicle of national culture, but a place where local and global values enter into dialog, confrontation or even tension. The school curriculum becomes a field of debate on which values are considered "essential" for the formation of new generations: patriotism or cosmopolitanism, religious tradition or critical secularism, tolerance or identity affirmation? Teachers are thus faced with a twofold challenge: on the one hand, to respond to the requirements of national education policies; on the other, to mediate pupils' contact with a much wider world of values specific to globalization. In this respect, education is called upon to become a deliberative space where pupils are encouraged to reflect critically on values, to distinguish between ideologically imposed norms and internalized beliefs, and to develop a responsible personal ethic that is also open to intercultural dialogue.

3.2 Comparative analysis of education policies (Eastern vs. Western Europe)

A comparative analysis of education policies between Eastern and Western Europe reveals significant differences in the way values are integrated into education systems. In Western Europe, educational policies tend to emphasize inclusiveness, cultural diversity and education for democratic citizenship. There is an increased emphasis on critical thinking, human rights education and collaborative learning in a pluralistic framework. In contrast, many Eastern European countries, although reformed after the fall of communist regimes, retain a stronger emphasis on strengthening national identity,

transmitting traditional values and a form of civic education rooted in the local historical context. In some cases, there is resistance to certain global models of education, perceived as being at odds with the national or religious ethos of the society. This difference also reflects deeper socio-political dynamics. While the West promotes a type of normative universalism, the East expresses a concern for the continuity of values that define collective identity. Both directions may have virtues and limits, but what is essential is the development of educational policies capable of promoting a balanced dialog between the universal and the particular, between tradition and openness (Cucoş, 2024, pp. 112-125).

3.3 Global citizenship education and the risk of standardization

Global citizenship education is now a key concept in many education systems. Promoted by UNESCO and other international bodies, it aims to develop individuals capable of acting consciously in an interdependent world, where challenges such as climate change, economic inequalities or geopolitical conflicts require a global vision. This type of education aims to develop empathy, international solidarity and a sense of belonging to humanity. In practice, however, there is a risk that education for global citizenship can slip into a form of axiological standardization that relativizes local or religious values. The values promoted may sometimes reflect the cultural interests of a dominant group rather than a genuine consensus between different traditions (Andreotti, 2011, pp. 73-88). Also, in the name of globalization, certain essential themes, such as family, sexuality or spirituality, are treated in a standardized way, without taking into account the cultural sensitivities of different communities. In this context, it is important that global education be conceived not as an ideological imposition, but as a genuine openness to dialogue, pluralism and ethical discernment.

4. CULTURE AND IDENTITY UNDER THE PRESSURE OF GLOBALIZATION

4.1 National culture between resistance and adaptation

Globalization brings with it an accelerated circulation of cultural goods, ideas, symbols and social practices. In the face of this wave, national cultures face the dilemma between identity resistance and creative adaptation. On the one hand, there is the fear that globalization is diluting cultural specificity and standardizing expressions of identity; on the other hand, there is also a significant capacity to resemanticize and renew traditions in global contexts. National culture is often invoked as a bulwark of defense against "cultural globalism", but it is not only a question of opposition but also of negotiation. Some communities choose to adapt modern forms of communication (music, film, digital education) to keep traditional expression alive in a contemporary context. In this sense, national identity is not an immutable essence, but a dynamic process, capable of reaffirming itself through transformation and creativity. Total rejection of global influences can lead to cultural isolation, while uncritical acceptance risks eroding fundamental values. The current challenge is to maintain the balance between preserving specificity and actively participating in global dialog.

4.2 The phenomenon of cultural hybridization

One of the central phenomena in the age of globalization is cultural hybridization, i.e. the blending of elements from different cultures in new, syncretic forms. This can be clearly observed in areas such as art, gastronomy, clothing, but also in religion and education. Hybridization is not just mixing, but the creation of new cultural expressions that transcend traditional boundaries. Examples are numerous: Korean pop music (K-pop), combining American, Asian and European styles; fusion gastronomy; or religious rituals reinterpreted in diasporic spaces. Hybridization can be perceived either as an enrichment of cultural identity or as a symptom of a loss of authenticity. From an educational perspective, hybridization challenges the need for intercultural thinking, capable of understanding the complexity of identity processes and avoiding both cultural fundamentalism and absolute relativism. Globalization can no longer be thought of in terms of unidirectional influences (centre-periphery), but as an interactive network in which multiple cultural sources intersect and mutually transform each other (Hannerz, 1996, pp. 24-39).

4.3 Globalization of values through media and entertainment

Media and the entertainment industry play a key role in disseminating global values, helping to shape a transnational cultural consciousness. Films, TV series, digital platforms, social networks and video games convey life models, ideals, norms of behavior and even ethical guidelines. They can promote positive values (tolerance, social justice, solidarity) as well as consumerist, nihilistic messages or cultural

stereotypes. Within this framework, entertainment becomes a form of informal pedagogy, capable of profoundly influencing adolescents' and young people's perceptions of the world, themselves and others. The problem arises when these values are taken up uncritically, without an educational or cultural filter. This is why it is essential for schools and families to develop media literacy and axiological literacy, so that pupils can discern between what is authentic and what is imposed by the logic of the market or dominant ideology (Tomlinson, 2011, pp. 81-92). In conclusion, culture and identity are not passive victims of globalization but active factors that can transform and shape the globalizing process. Education, cultural policy and the media have a key responsibility in promoting a value pluralism that does not exclude identity roots but creatively integrates them in an interconnected world.

5. ETHICS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN AN INTERCONNECTED SOCIETY

5.1 Contemporary moral crises and the need for a new ethos

Today's globalized society is facing multiple moral crises, affecting all levels of public and personal life: from a lack of trust in institutions to the relativization of values in public discourse and everyday behaviour. Faced with cultural pluralism, economic pressure, massive migration and the digitization of social relations, communities have begun to experience a crisis of axiological coherence, affecting solidarity and collective trust. In this context, the need for a new ethos, i.e. a form of ethics adapted to global interdependence, is becoming increasingly clear. This ethics should go beyond local particularisms without denying them, and propose a framework of shared responsibility towards humanity and the planet. Philosophers such as Hans Jonas have emphasized that, in the face of new technical powers and the global impact of human decisions, we need to adopt an "ethics of responsibility", which is not only based on moral intentions but also on anticipating the consequences for future generations (Jonas, 1984, pp. 11-25). Responsibility in this sense is not just individual, but systemic, collective, transnational. It implies an ethic of prudent action, collaboration and care for the vulnerable. In a world where everything is interconnected, economics, ecology, technology, culture, any local behavior has global repercussions.

5.2 The ecological dimension of global ethics

Among the most urgent dimensions of global ethics is the ecological one. Climate change, degradation of ecosystems and overexploitation of natural resources have created a moral crisis of technical civilization, in which man has lost his sense of limits and communion with nature. In the face of these challenges, ecological ethics can no longer be a marginal field, but becomes a central component of human responsibility in the 21st century. This dimension implies a profound rethinking of the relationship between man and nature, in the sense of recovering the idea of "ecological solidarity". Traditional religious, philosophical or indigenous models can make a significant contribution to this axiological reconstruction by offering a holistic vision of life. Churches, in particular, have begun to take an active role in promoting ecological values, emphasizing the sacramental nature of creation and the need for a spiritual conversion towards nature. At the same time, public policies need to be based on ethical principles that favor ecological and intergenerational justice. Environmental education, responsible consumption and civic involvement in protecting the environment become key elements of the new global ethic (Küng, 2004, pp. 93-110).

5.3 Values education as a foundation for social cohesion

In a pluralistic and interconnected society, values education becomes an essential link for social cohesion. It is not just a question of transmitting a fixed set of norms, but of cultivating moral, critical and empathetic skills, capable of supporting dialog between differences and the assumption of civic responsibilities. School cannot remain an axiologically neutral space, but must provide the tools for orientation in the moral complexity of the contemporary world. Education for responsibility involves forming a conscience capable of discerning, acting and assuming the consequences of one's actions. It integrates dimensions such as digital ethics, ecological ethics, human rights, the culture of peace and global solidarity. At the same time, it must be contextualized, respecting the local and religious values of communities. Without a profound ethical education, globalization risks becoming a mere technical and economic process without soul. Through an education rooted in universal values and open to intercultural dialogue, globalization can contribute to the renewal of humanity and the building of a fairer and more cohesive world.

6. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND AXIOLOGICAL BALANCE MODELS

6.1 Intercultural and transnational educational models

In the face of the challenges of globalization, education systems are called upon to build bridges between cultures, develop intercultural empathy and educate citizens capable of living responsibly in a pluralistic world. In this sense, intercultural and transnational educational models are becoming increasingly relevant, not only as responses to diversity, but as expressions of a new global educational contract. These models entail integrating universal values – such as justice, solidarity, respect and human dignity – into the national curriculum, without eliminating the traditional or spiritual values of communities. Education must strike a balance between the roots of identity and the global horizon while stimulating critical thinking, dialog and reflective learning. Examples such as the UNESCO *Intercultural Competences* program or the educational initiatives promoted by the Council of Europe show that training for active and responsible global citizenship can become an essential component of the education of the future (UNESCO, 2013, pp. 8-17). It is essential that these models are flexible, contextual and participatory, reflecting the diversity of visions and contributing to building a global culture of peace, cooperation and equity.

6.2 Ethics and spirituality in global dialog

One of the often neglected dimensions of the globalization of values is the contribution of spiritualities and religious traditions to shaping a global ethic. In reality, spirituality provides a deep foundation of values, articulating the meaning of life, responsibility towards others and nature, and a relationship to a transcendence that goes beyond strict rational logic. In a world marked by ethical fragility and tensions between civilizations, dialogue between religions, but also between religion and secularism, becomes the key to a viable axiological balance. From this perspective, projects such as the Parliament of the World's Religions or Hans Küng's initiative for a global ethic propose a convergence of basic values between the spiritual traditions of humanity – non-violence, honesty, solidarity, respect for life – without invalidating the specific doctrinal values. Thus, spirituality is not an obstacle to the globalization of values, but can be an engine of an ethical, humanizing globalization, capable of providing roots, meaning and moral resilience in an age dominated by instability and fragmentation (Kuokkanen, 2010, pp. 3-15).

6.3 Towards globalization with a human face

In the face of a globalization often perceived as impersonal, technocratic and dominated by economic interests, the need for a "globalization with a human face" is becoming increasingly clear, one that puts the dignity of the individual, equity, social justice and environmental protection at its centre. Such a vision requires a reconfiguration of the current paradigm, in which human value prevails over exchange value and collaboration replaces destructive competition. This form of globalization requires not just institutional reforms, but a change of mindset, a sustained moral education and a revision of the development model. It implies the shared responsibility of political, religious, economic and educational actors to build a world in which diversity is a resource, not a danger, and progress is defined not only in material but also in ethical, spiritual and cultural terms.

In conclusion, the prospect of a viable axiological balance in a globalized world presupposes a conscious articulation between the local and the global, between reason and spirituality, between tradition and innovation. This is both a challenge and a unique opportunity for humanity to rediscover its moral coherence and common vocation.

7. RESULTS

Contemporary globalization tends to promote a set of values that are considered "universal", such as human rights, gender equality, freedom of expression, environmental sustainability and social justice. These values are often presented as the foundations of a civilized, equitable and cooperative world. In many cultural contexts, however, they are in tension or even in conflict with local traditions, religious norms or historical ethical patterns of a community. In some cases, the promotion of these values may be perceived as a form of cultural pressure or axiological neo-colonialism, leading to their reflexive rejection, even when their content is deeply humanistic. A major dilemma therefore arises: how can a balance between ethical universalism and respect for genuine cultural pluralism be maintained?

In the face of these tensions, education becomes an essential field of negotiation between the global and the local. School curricula in many countries today reflect a conscious attempt to balance

internationally promoted values with the specific cultural and spiritual identity of each nation. Educational curricula often include themes of global citizenship, ecology, human rights or diversity, but are obliged to integrate them in a context that does not exclude the community's own historical roots and values. Teachers, textbooks and educational policies thus become actors involved in a delicate process of axiological selection, adaptation and harmonization.

At the same time, we can see the emergence of an emerging form of "global ethic", a set of principles and values that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. These include concern for the environment, respect for human dignity, the fight against inequality, global solidarity and collective responsibility for the future. While this global ethic has the potential to unify humanity around common causes, there is also a risk that it can be formulated in a superficial, abstract or standardizing way, losing touch with the concrete realities of communities. In the absence of a deep dialogue with local traditions and wisdoms, these values can become empty slogans or be ideologically instrumentalized.

Within this framework, the major challenge for education, cultural policies and ethical reflection is to build bridges between global values and genuine value pluralism, without sacrificing the depth, coherence or relevance of local contexts.

8. DISCUSS

The globalization of values is an ambiguous and multidimensional process that poses both significant opportunities and profound challenges for contemporary societies. On the one hand, it fosters international cooperation, dialogue between civilizations and increased global solidarity, facilitating the building of bridges between different peoples and cultures. It promotes ideals such as human rights, equal opportunities, social justice or environmental protection, values that can contribute to a more harmonious and responsible coexistence worldwide. On the other hand, however, the same process can lead to a forced cultural standardization in which local identities, traditions and ethical systems of communities are ignored, marginalized or even overturned. This creates the risk of cultural hegemony where dominant values are imposed at the expense of genuine pluralism.

In this context, education plays an essential and strategic role in shaping a critical conscience capable of discerningly navigating between authentic values with deep anthropological and moral roots and those commercial, utilitarian or hegemonic ideologies that can camouflage themselves in discourses of universality. Education must not be a mere instrument for transmitting globalized values, but a reflective space where they are analysed, evaluated and contextualized. Thus, contemporary education systems must cultivate not only technical and intercultural competences, but also the capacity for dialogue, empathy and moral responsibility. The promotion of an ethic rooted in the inalienable dignity of the human person is essential to counter the superficiality or instrumentalization of values. Education thus becomes not just a means of adapting to globalization, but a transforming force that can steer this process in a humanist, inclusive and deeply respectful direction towards human diversity.

CONCLUSION

The globalization of values is an unshakeable reality, a complex phenomenon that is constantly redefining relations between societies, cultures and individuals. This reality, although inevitable, cannot be accepted without a critical analysis and a deep understanding of the context in which it manifests itself. It is not enough simply to mechanically or superficially take on board the values conveyed at global level, as there is a risk of cultural uniformization and loss of local identity. It is essential to integrate these values carefully and consciously into a coherent educational horizon, capable of linking openness to universality with fidelity to the spiritual and ethical heritage of each community.

Education must play a central role in this process, cultivating receptivity to global values and the critical, discerning and morally responsible spirit of each individual. In this sense, cultural and religious traditions should not be seen as obstacles to modernization, but as essential resources for a deep understanding of human values. Culture, ethics and education are not isolated entities, but must work together in a common effort to shape a global society that is efficient, interconnected and profoundly human, filled with meaning, solidarity and respect for the dignity of each person.

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