

GLOBALIZATION

THE PHENOMENON AND THE INFLUENCE ON THE NETHERLANDS

This essay examines different aspects of globalization. The phenomenon globalization is to be taken in its rudimentary meaning. The phenomenon is analyzed from different viewpoints. Firstly, I look into the economical viewpoint. Economic globalization is probably the most well known. Secondly a technological viewpoint has been chosen which is mainly based on the phenomenon of unification. Another viewpoint is the philosophical and psychological one, which will mainly discuss cultural globalization. Finally, I will point out the effects and involvement of The Netherlands in relation to globalization.

Since the concepts of globalization and globalism are interpreted differently by different people, I will first clarify the meaning of these phenomena to me. The phenomenon globalization is build up of two parts, the ending –ization, which means ‘shifting towards’ and the beginning ‘global’ which means world-wide or mondial. Therefore the meaning of globalization should mean something like moving towards a worldwide scale. The term often appears in its economical context (e.g. in newspapers). This economical context is overemphasized, what often means it gets contextual descriptions (although not definitions) in dictionaries. A contextual description seems to be a bad point of departure; therefore I will come up with a rudimental definition that is hardly interpretation dependent. This essay will be using the following definition:

Globalization is the process of geographical unification.

Globalism has the same meaning but it is been used slightly more in a globalization sceptic context.

Looking at globalization on a national scale seems to be odd from a technical viewpoint, especially when you look at only one nation. Nevertheless, politics and institutions are often governing on national basis. Therefore I will describe the influence of globalization on The Netherlands, as well its influence on the world as a whole.

The most well known context of globalization is globalization in economy. According to IMF the term globalization refers to: “the upcoming economic interdependence of countries as a result of the geographical expansion of international goods, services

and capital flows which has been made possible by technological progressions and economic policies.” (IMF, 1997)

Sometimes, mainly by so-called anti-globalists, subjects like protection of markets (import fees) are considered to be part of globalism and therefore will lead to an even bigger gap between the rich and the poor countries. Actually the counterpart is true. Protecting markets is anti-globalism because you move against a world economy.

If you protect your market by means of import fees it is more difficult to sell the products on this market because of the extra costs that are to be made to import the goods from abroad. On some products, mainly food related, there is government funding which leads to a decrease in production costs. As a result these funded companies can sell their products on foreign markets for prices that are below the prices of the unfunded goods in those countries.

If you protect your own market and try to stimulate the economy in poor countries at the same moment then you act very inconsequently in my opinion. Globalization can be used as a tool to remove the trade barriers and give opportunities to the poor countries to compete on the international market. Moreover their chances of competition are good since labour is often cheap in those countries. This extra competitive force might lead to less prosperity in the richer countries of which The Netherlands is part of. On the other hand, according to the Dutch State Secretary for Economic Issues Frank Heemskerk, globalization will be good for the Dutch economy. In his opinion we might isolate our country when we do not take part in the forthcoming economic globalization (Heemskerk, 2007).

Another criticism on globalism (globalization) is that the big companies become too mighty. Because of their economic power they will gain political influence. Anti-globalists like to regulate the market to a high extent to create chances for small companies to compete with multinationals. Since globalization is about taking away barriers between countries there will be less influence on multinationals by the government of the individual countries. Nevertheless the European Union watches the multinationals and if it was up to me a global government will be constituted that governs about global issues. Since money is often the driving force for decisions it may interfere with principals of individual countries. Governments can for example want the big companies to come to their countries since this might be good for employment and in return they might give them some privileges.

Apart from the economy, globalization can be considered from a technological viewpoint. Technological globalization mainly refers to the unification of standards

and techniques over barriers. Doing things the same in different countries can be very useful and its importance is growing as a result of decreasing travelling and communication delays. It is much more efficient or cost-effective to do things in a similar manner. When you have the same power outlets everywhere in the world, you can use your devices all over the world without the need for an extra plug or converter. When we would drive on the right of the road everywhere on the world, there is no need to adapt/adjust to different behaviour. This will result in fewer accidents, less brain usage and therefore less cost for food or more energy to spend on more relevant things. It's the same for globalization of language and currency. The introduction of the Euro is an example of (partial) globalization; the introduction of Esperanto is an example of globalization of language.

From a philosophical and psychological perspective it can be argued that this unification leads towards a decrease in cultural diversity. Less diversity between countries is something that affects people emotionally when they are confronted with it because they have to change and probably think it will result in less identity. The loss of identity is for some years a major topic in The Netherlands. The topic is not always called by its name, but there are several things you can relate to this. For example the less friendly attitude towards immigrants in the last years or more specific the fear of losing the Christian identity. In general people tend to be too conservative as a result of short-term thinking or generalisation of problems. Although a majority didn't want the introduction of the euro, I bet that if you do a survey in 2020 on whether people regret the introduction of the euro that there will be a minority that agrees on that. Nevertheless people express their opinions now, by means of their vote or by means of a referendum, so democratic politicians should answer to the wishes of the majority of the people. It will probably always be a complaint that politicians don't act according to their promises on which they were elected.

Unification seems to be very effective from a technical perspective; from a cultural perspective views might be different. When cultures get better connected, by ways of transportation or by fast ways of communication cultures are to be exchanged. The exchange will lead to exchange of cultural habits, like eating Chinese food by Dutch people. In the end there might be the so-called global village where there is only one global culture left. Is this really a problem?

At first you might think it is not a problem, the transition goes smoothly and is driven by the people (that interchange) themselves, so it is probably what they want. Therefore people will probably not be less happy in this global culture. We can benefit the gains from uniformity (as a result of unification). So far unification

(tightly bound to globalization) seems to be beneficial in most of its aspects.

Diversity on the other hand has a positive intonation, we think of it as a good thing.

This is probably because people think that diversity is needed for not getting bored.

I think the majority of people are mistaken here, after a long and smooth

globalization process our interests and demands will be less diverse and therefore

easier to fulfil. But there is an important need for diversity. Diversity is a necessity

for evolution and for ontogenesis (the development during your life). We need to

explore diverse situations to develop adaptive skills. Adaptive skills are a main aspect

to human intelligence. Therefore globalization will lead to a less intelligent species.

Most of the discussed aspects relate to The Netherlands as well. As a country which

is one of the leaders in Europe when it comes to trade. I would prefer to stay in a

front position as a country by investing in knowledge and emerging economic areas

instead of protecting farmers that work in much more prosperity than their

counterparts in poor countries. Nevertheless as a democrat I am willing to follow the

direction that is chosen by the masses. What bothers me is that there seems to be

no direction at all; both protecting our markets and helping poor countries to

develop their economy are part of the government policy. This seems to be a topic

where the government don't wants to take a position between lowering the gap

between rich and poor countries (sharing prosperity) and protecting our prosperity

on the other hand.

The Dutch perform above average on several grounds; globalization might lead to

diffusion of this leading position and therefore it might harm The Netherlands. On

the other hand globalization is a world-wide ongoing process, The Netherlands is

highly dependent on the import of raw materials and on the export of goods, if The

Netherlands won't catch up it will loose this leading position even faster. If barriers

will be taken away our prosperity will decrease due to the lack of protection of our

position. The Netherlands are quite involved in globalization; markets were

expanded long before the term globalization was found out. Dutch people take

positions in international organizations and play a leading role in international

developments. "The Netherlands was among the first to acknowledge the

importance and potentials of European unification, being part of EEC6 in 1958"

(Hogenbirk & Rajneesh, 1999)

Depending on your position different attitudes can be taken towards globalization.

Dutch people that want to share wealth (socialists) should be pro-globalization and

people that want to be prosperous (in terms of wealth and culture) themselves or

want to live in a prosperous country should defend this position and should be

against globalization. The Dutch practise is mostly the opposite, the socialistic party

is against globalization and the liberal party (which has probably the more wealthy voters) stimulates globalization.

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