

Globalization: a challenge for social coexistence

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Abstract

This article proposes a theoretical and methodological approach to the study of the issue of globalization, focused on its impact on social coexistence, from a psychosociological perspective aimed at analysing the processes influencing the way of living together in the contemporary world. This perspective of analysis is grounded in the field of the multidisciplinary approach of the psychology of coexistence, based on the theory of collusion formulated by Carli and Paniccia. It allows to identify several hypotheses to investigate in order to better understand the phenomenon of globalization and to define better strategies to deal with it, starting from conceiving globalization as a social construction produced by the interactions amongs three actors: the promoters and supporters of the present form of globalization, those who oppose themselves against them and those who undergo the effects of globalization in their everyday life, without being able to take up a definite position for or against it. This kind of approach to the study of globalization could be operatively translated through a study of discourses of "globalists", "anti-globalists" and of "who doesn't take part" through specific methodologies of discourse analysis psychologically grounded, such as the Text Emotional Analysis (TEA), developed by Carli and Paniccia.

Keywords

Globalization, social coexistence, psychosociological perspective, theory of collusion, social construction, psychosociology, action-research, Text Emotional Analysis (TEA), discourse analysis, no-global, alter-globalists, globalists, movements

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Introduction

This work arises from the general purpose of examining the globalization phenomenon as a matter of social coexistence from a psycho-sociological perspective (Barus, M. J., Enriquez E. & Lévy A. 2006) and it is focused on the analysis of psychosocial processes that influence the way of living together in the contemporary world. The wider theoretical and methodological framework of reference is represented by the field of the psychology of coexistence (Di Maria 2000, Paniccia 1992, Carli 1995, Salvatore 2006), based on the theory of collusion (Carli 1987, 2006). It constitutes a multidisciplinary approach that integrates the contributions of social, environmental, community and clinical psychology. In this perspective globalization and coexistence represent social objects which are collective elaborations produced through social interactions, on the basis of affective symbolizations (Matte Blanco 1975, Carli 1987, 2006) that organize knowledge and behaviour of who shares the same symbolic context of reference. From this perspective of study the coexistence is considered the result of interactions among three elements: the systems of belonging, the other and the rules of game and is based on two universal emotional modalities of social relations: the propensity to sharing with the other and the propensity to possess the other (Carli & Paniccia 2002, 2003). According to the theoretical model of neo-emotions formulated by Carli and Paniccia (2002, 2003), the second modality can assume the following several forms: to claim (i.e. making demand on the other in name of the role played in the relationship), to control (i.e. asking the friend to prove that he is a real friend), to distrust (i.e. living in a perennial situation of alarm, where the other is the object of one's "delirium"), to provoke (i.e. imposing one's own personal rules instead of shared rules), to oblige (i.e. blackmailing the other with the listing of his own sacrifice), to complain (i.e. involving a third party so as to re-establish the phantasmatic relationship that one feels is threatened with the person with whom one is complaining) and to worry (i.e. calling in a third person so that he will intervene with one no longer satisfies the expectations of the complainer). In these perspective (Carli & Paniccia 2002, 2003) the coexistence can be threatened by any form of denial of the three elements on which it is based on and many of the problematic issues related to the present forms of globalization can be explained just as one of these forms of denials (i.e. mediatization of interpersonal relationships, speeding-up of life pace, technological dominion over human person as denials of the system of belonging; xenophobia, racism, individualism and consumerism as denials of the other; precarisation of labour, financialization of the economy, gap between rich and poor, arbitrary political power as denial of "the rules of the game").

Hence, this perspective of study on the globalization aims to deepen the understanding of the models of relations between globalization and forms of social coexistence, in order to identify strategies for a more sustainable and accountable social development.

Theoretical and empirical framework

This specific perspective of analysis on the globalization can be developed on the basis of the three specific point of views arising from the literature related to the issues of globalization in the social sciences. The first concerns the theoretical and methodological framework of this perspective of studies on globalization and has been developed through the interaction among the following disciplinary approaches: the psychology of coexistence (Di Maria 2000, Carli & Paniccchia 2003), the psychosociology (Barus, Enriquez & Lévy 2006, Dubost 1987, Quaglino & Stella 2002), the action-research (Amado & Lévy 2002, Lévy 1985, Reason & Bradbury 2001, Lewin 1951), the theories of collusion and of analysis of the demand (Carli 1987, 2006, Carli & Paniccchia 2003, Paniccchia 1992, Salvatore 2006), the theory of social representations (Moscovici 1976, Farr & Moscovici 1984, Palmonari 2009), the Text Emotional Analysis (TEA) methodology of discourse analysis (Carli & Paniccchia 2002, 2003), the Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967, Tarozzi 2008) and the multivariate data analysis techniques (Benzécri 1981, Cipriani & Bolasco 1995, Reinart 1987, Lebart & Salem 1998). The second is focused on two disciplinary approaches: economic-political (Chomski 2003, Sen 1999) and socio-anthropological (Appadurai 1996, Bauman 1998, 2009; Beck 1999; Friedman 1994; Giddens 1990; Ritzer 1993; Robertson 1992) and allows to highlight some problematic aspects related to the issue of social coexistence, such as the multiplication and fragmentation of contexts of belongings, the ever-increasing contacts between the cultural differences, the experience of living in an eternal present, without connections to past and future time dimensions, the necessity to follow the pace of increasingly hectic life styles to grasp the opportunities offered by globalization (conditions created by the technological dominion of everyday life), the relational impoverishment of one's life (more and more "mediatized" and "depersonalized" relationships) and the increase of psychological pressure and of the sense of loss of control over one's life. The third focus is represented by a group of empirical studies on the globalization focused on the social representations and subjective experiences related to the globalization phenomenon. Two researches have been particularly thought-provoking. The first examines the social representations of the globalization and has been carried out in Greece by Griva A. and Chrysochoou X. (2009), on a

sample of social sciences students. It provides a structure of social representations organized into five factors (Globalists/modernizers, internationalists, transformationalists, multiculturalists and neo-liberal), highlighting the role of political position in the perceptions related to globalization. The second research is focused on the personal experience of globalization of the social actors involved in its processes. It has been carried out by Universities of Milan, Palermo, Teramo and Trento (Cesareo 2003), in four Italian regions (Lombardia, Trentino Alto Adige, Veneto, Lazio, Abruzzo and Sicilia). It lays emphasis on two variables that influence perception of the globalization process: the type of profession in relation to the globalization process and the role of local contexts. What emerges is a strong polarization between positive perception (globalization seen as an opportunity) of subjects actively involved in globalization, within International contexts and the negative perception (globalization as a risk) of subjects non directly involved in globalization, within contexts characterized by a strong local valence.

Hypotheses of study

On the basis of the theoretical-methodological perspective above described can be identified several hypotheses to investigate in order to better understand the phenomenon of globalization and to define better strategies to deal with it:

1. The globalization phenomenon is socially constructed through interactions among three actors: the promoters and supporters of the present form of globalization (political, economical and cultural hegemonies or so called "globalists"), those who oppose themselves against them (once called "no-global" or "alter-globalists") and those who undergo the effects of globalization in their everyday life, without being able to take up a definite position for or against it. In particular the first two actors define the lines of development of this phenomenon.
2. through their interactions these three social actors elaborate and promote different patterns of social coexistence, which need to integrate with each other in order to produce social development.
3. globalization is related to social coexistence because the changes it produces make ineffective the traditional systems of coexistence. This requires the elaboration of new models of coexistence based on an understanding of the ongoing processes and the development of social skills useful to deal with it.

4. psychosocial dynamics that are currently determining the social construction (Berger & Luckmann 1966) of the globalization phenomenon accentuate the propensity towards relationship models oriented to possessing the other and the denial of the fundamentals of coexistence (the systems of belonging, the other and the rules of the game). This may be read as a defence mechanism against the impotence caused by the fast changes occurring in the contemporary world.
5. The knowledge of cultural models that organize the systems of coexistence proposed by "globalists" and "anti-globalists" allow to identify development prospects of the current forms of globalization, in a perspective of common well-being, social justice and fairness, environmental protection and more generally of development of social coexistence systems.

On the basis of these hypotheses, the perspective of study proposed in this paper aims at reaching the following three main goals:

1. to identify the collusive dynamics that shape the patterns of social coexistence within the two groups object of this study, "globalists" and "anti-globalists", in order to better understand the globalization as a social process constructed through emotional representations of people sharing the same context.
2. to identify development prospects of social coexistence for these two groups ("globalists" and "anti-globalists") and to elaborate new rules of game useful to manage the globalizations processes.
3. to elaborate specific strategies and developmental paths aimed at orienting the processes of affective symbolization of reality and the emotional patterns of social relations towards more socially sustainable systems of coexistence.

All this taken into consideration, this project can be set in a framework of the methodological approach of action-research (Lewin, 1936; Lévy 1985, Reason P., Bradbury H. 2001).

Methods and Procedures

This kind of approach to the study of globalization could be operatively translated through a study of discourses of "globalists", "anti-globalists" and of "who doesn't take part" through the psycho-sociological methodology of Text Emotional Analysis (Carli & Paniccchia 2002), which allows to identify the collusive dynamics that organize relationships within a certain context, with regard to a specific social phenomenon (Carli

& Paniccia 2003). This methodology represents a grounded approach oriented to produce a grounded theory starting from the analysis of the textual data collected within the context of globalization. The analysis could be carried out on two corpus of texts constituted by articles, interviews, statements and speeches of key figures belonging to the three groups under examination ("globalists" and "anti-globalists", and who doesn't take part). The first corpus focuses on the texts produced from the main International Institutions leading the globalization process (i. e. World Bank, International Monetary Fund, WTO, OCSE, European Commission, Trilateral Commission, TABD Trans Atlantic Business Dialogue, World Economic Forum, et cetera), the second one is focused on the texts produced from the main organizations and movements standing against the current forms of globalization (i.e. World Social Forum, Attac, the Zapatistas in Mexico, the Latin American indigenous movements, Independent Media Center, Fairtrade, Via Campesina, Friends of the Earth, Third World Network, National Lawyers Guild, Occupy movement, the American Civil Liberties Union, movimento Sem Terra, slow-food, De-growth movement, Altro mercato, et cetera) and the third group is focused on the texts produced by people not belonging to the first two groups.

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