GLOCALIZATION VS. MULTICULTURALIZATION OF POP-MUSIC: THE REVIEW OF PUPILS SONG SELECTION WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL PROJECT SILVER

Andrej Naterer, Pedro De Bruyckere

The article examines the elements of glocalization and/or multiculturalization tied to a selection of popular music, researched during the international project Silver. The project focused on developing an innovative didactical approach in discussing values with the application of popular music and was developed by an international team of partner organizations from Belgium, Estonia, Slovenia, Turkey and Sweden. The results of pre- and post-tests of musical preferences show a great variety of examples of glocalized and multiculturized media products, particularly of musical industry. Data gathered during the international students mobility is presented, analyzed and interpreted according to the definitions of glocalization and multiculturalization. Results regarding music selection and values point to the significance of the socio-cultural background of the audience in particular with respect to the language and overall trend of increasing cultural homogenization in the field of popular music.

**Keywords:** glocalization, multiculturalization, Silver project, popular music, music, musical preferences, values

**Globalization, glocalization and multiculturalization**

The present modern world that we live in cannot be understood in any other way as global and terms like “modernization”, “globalization”, “transnationalism” or “cosmopolitanism” tend to describe the processes of unification, that are clearly impossible to overlook, ignore or evade. Aside from lack of universally accepted definitions (Roudometof 2005), ideological charges and contentiousness (Khondker 2005) that these terms bring, the processes that they describe are clearly evident in many aspects of our everyday lives.
In the broadest sense of the term, globalization could be understood as “… economic integration that is apparently taking place in the world through the increasing flow of capital and trade” (Khondker 2005). However, the process clearly exceeds the domain of economy. Robertson, one of the early users of the term particularly emphasized the cultural dimensions of globalization and perceived it as “taking place both at the level of human consciousness as well as in terms of cultural connectivity and complexity” (Khondker 2005, 182).

However, interactions within the global system, although producing some levels of uniformity, do not entirely materialize as sameness. “Lifestyles do not have entirely global or entirely local characteristics – they are glocal” (Eriksen 2009, 352). According to Global Modernities the concepts glocal and glocalization are “formed by telescoping global and local to make a blend” (Featherstone and Robertson 1995). The core of the concept was derived from Japanese farming technique (Khondker 2005) and/or business practice (Robertson 1995) and denotes mutual influences between the global and the local (Eriksen 2009, Cho and Latta 2010).

Global media, although having the early strategy “to reap rewards of cultural homogenization”, were one of the first segments to recognize the full potential of targeted glocalization (Cho and Latta 2010). Global media corporations with their news and music television channels were particularly successful in reaching relatively large audiences, which they achieved mainly by taking global programs and broadcasting them in local languages. MTV didn’t stop by opening a pure European franchise in 1987, but also developed or bought now channels which target 26 European regions. However, the language was not the only element subjected to translation, for other levels of socio-cultural participation soon followed. This seem to be most evident in the domain of popular culture, particularly music, which according to Condry acts as “one of the battlegrounds for power in media.” (Achterberg et al., 2010). At the moment the battleground seems to be dominated by U.S. pop-culture industry (Oduro-Frimpong 2009; Achterberg et al. 2010 and others). But since glocalization is a two-way process, this can hardly be understood as an onslaught of media corporations or even as cultural colonialism. According to Chang (Khondker 2005) the process includes ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors or ‘exchanges’ of power between global and local
actors. Therefore it is quite consistent in contemporary world of popular culture and music for us to be facing highly localized TV programs, like MTV Adria, MTV Korea and MTV China on the one hand (Khondker 2005), and local consumers/performers, like Slovenian or Croatian rappers, as localized versions of Eminem and Lil’ Kim, on the other. Both, global and local actors form their actions and identities through mutual effect, without any obvious dysfunctions on group levels and cognitive dissonance on individual levels.

The increasing emergence of cultural diversity can also be perceived as a trend of multiculturalization. According to Crane (Achterberg et al. 2010), the core of the concept of multiculturalization consists in various cultural flows, originating from around the globe, coexisting side by side within one and the same cultural space. The process of multiculturalization erodes the distinction between core (dominant) and peripheral (dominated) cultures and can be understood as tendency of cultural syncretism, where various aspects of different cultures blend into a new culture (Rex 1996 in Achterberg, et al. 2010). This seem to be the case in contemporary pop-culture, not only in Europe (i.e. Achterberg et al. 2010), but also in Africa (i.e., Oduro-Frimpong 2009), Asia (i.e., Cho and Latta 2010) and elsewhere. The application of new cultural elements does not result in cultural imperialism and preserving traditions does not mean retraditionalization of society. Many authors show (i.e. Maduna 2009; Oduro-Frimpong 2009 and others), that on an individual level, gaining new identities consequently does not result in repersonalization of an individual.

Project Silver enabled us to monitor musical preferences of participating pupils and students. Musical preferences exhibited examples of localized elements of different global music genres, ranging from content, lyrics and musical compositions to visual and auditive production and representation. It is the purpose of this paper to outline and analyze these elements and to analyze the processes of glocalization and multiculturalization within our target population.

Methodology and the project Silver

Silver is an acronym for Sounds Identifying Learner Values in Europe. The Silver project (141858-2008-LLP-BE-COMENIUS-CMP) has received Community funding in the form of a grant from the Lifelong
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Learning Programme. The project aimed at establishing a scientifically tested didactical approach to discuss values with pupils in various settings by teaching them to analyze popular music. It applied a unique theme-discussion based approach with the help of structured cooperative learning groups.

The consortium included 5 partner countries and 6 partner organizations: Arteveldehogeschool (Belgium, Flanders), Dokuz Eylül Universitesi (Turkey), University of Maribor (Slovenia), Andragoški Zavod Maribor - Ljudska Univerza (Slovenia) and Högskolan i Gävle (Sweden). Project target group were pupils (N=1001), age from 10 to 25 (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (total)</th>
<th>Percentage (total)</th>
<th>Gender (valid)</th>
<th>Age (valid)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>17,2</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>20,4</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>17,2</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>29,3</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>15,4</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During first two years of the Silver project (October 1, 2008 - September 30, 2010), an international multidisciplinary team comprising experts in English, Music, Didactics and Sociology the five partners worked with different pupils and teacher trainees to identify and test different approaches and best practice in this area. In the first project year the approach and methodological instruments were formed and locally tested. During the second project year, Silver actively involved 72 trainee-teachers in a three-week international mobility period using music to promote the discussion of value “courage”. Pupils were presented with pretest and preliminary tasks and were amongst other asked
to pick a song of their choice that in their opinion corresponds to the value of courage. The pretest also acquired the information on musical preferences and perceptions tied to the value of courage and the approach developed in the first project year was applied in the classroom. Immediately after the application of the approach the posttests of similar format and content was applied in order to gather information on the deviation of the dynamics of musical preferences and perceptions of the value of courage.

From the data gathered through pupils preliminary tasks a song list about the given value was compiled, which included data on song title, performing artist and country of origin. Secondary research activities included qualitative analysis of the content, lyrics, production and visual representation.

**Data presentation**

Data for the analysis was gathered through project preliminary tasks and pre- and post- tests for target population during the second project year. The analysis was organized as a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative approach focused on the elements of variety of song selections of the pupils, origin of performing artists and language used in the song, while the qualitative approach examines content of the song, musical composition and visual representation.

Table 2 shows the diversity of selection of the songs within the pupil population. There are immense differences with regard to the uniformity of choice among students from different countries. Among Turkish students almost 11 students on average chose the same song, whereas in Estonia and Belgium this ratio is close to 1, meaning that, in average, almost each participant chose a different song. Within the compound sample, about 2,3 participants on average chose the same song.
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Table 2: Song selections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Pupils (total)</th>
<th>Songs (total)</th>
<th>Domestic songs</th>
<th>Songs per pupil</th>
<th>Pupils per song</th>
<th>Number of students per domestic song</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0,82</td>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>7,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0,42</td>
<td>2,4</td>
<td>14,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,09</td>
<td>10,9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0,21</td>
<td>4,7</td>
<td>22,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0,75</td>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>14,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0,43</td>
<td>2,3</td>
<td>15,6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 shows the shares of foreign and national artists performing the songs selected by the project target group. The highest percentage of domestic performers (7 songs, 21.21%) can be found among songs selected by Swedish pupils. Among 168 song titles selected by Estonian pupils, there were 139 (82.74%) titles by foreign artists and 29 (17.26%) by domestic performers. Slovenian pupils selected in total 73 song titles, with 61 (83.37%) foreign and 12 (16.43%) domestic artists. Belgian pupils selected 130 titles, 118 (90.77%) of foreign and 12 (9.23%) by domestic artists. Selection of songs by Turkish pupils had no domestic artists since all the 27 songs were performed by foreigners.

Graph 1: Domestic and foreign songs selected by pupils
The most common language from the selection of the songs is English. From the titles selected by Belgian pupils there were 115 (88.46%) songs sung in English among which 10 out of 12 domestic artists also performed in English, 2 performers performed in local language. Among 73 songs selected by Slovenian pupils there was 60 (82.19%) song performed in English and 12 (16.43%) in Slovenian. Similar distribution can be found among Estonian pupils which selected 132 (79.35) in English language and one of the songs from the domestic artists was also performed in English, while the rest of domestic performers performed in Estonian. 26 (78.78%), together with one (3% of total and 14% of domestic) song from domestic artist, selected by Swedish pupils were performed in English while 5 domestic performers performed their songs in Swedish. In addition to being entirely foreign all of the songs selected by Turkish pupils were also performed in English.

The qualitative research of domestic songs, particularly of contents, musical composition and visual representation indicates relatively high influence of global popular culture, mostly the one broadcasted by MTV:

Informant 12, 20 years old, PUM participant, Slovenia:
“… we [in Maribor, Slovenia] have at least 5 or 6 channels like MTV, everything from MTV Adria to local stations broadcasting music… and everything is the same – it’s crap. Sometimes when I watch TV, I cannot tell whether I’m watching English, German or Slovenian performer. It’s like some sort of weird paranoia – all their songs are the same, they act in a same way and they all look the same! Why are people watching this? And what’s even worse is that young generations like it!”

Apart from language, there is no immediate evidence of globalization. Domestic songs across the selection of the target population hardly exhibited any particular cultural or national characteristics on any of above mentioned levels. It seems that contents, musical compositions and visual representations of selected songs were transferred to the local level relatively directly and in accordance with mainstream music production, preferred by this specific population across the globe.

A.N., interviewer:
“What kind of music do you think your peers in other countries, Sweden or Estonia for instance, like? What do they listen to?”
Informant 27, 19 years old, PUM participant, Slovenia:
“… I think it’s same all over the place. It’s either MTV or YouTube. If you like MTV stuff then you probably watch MTV. Even if you don’t watch MTV, if you watch YouTube or something else, you get the same stuff. Swedish, German, English… it doesn’t matter, no difference… I think we all like same stuff.”

Research regarding the main focus of the project, namely the relationship between music and values show other important findings. Firstly, there is a positive relation between music evolution (pre-test vs. post-test) and value evolution indicating that more open-minded one becomes to musical types, the more open-minded one is towards the value. Secondly, there is a negative relation between age and value evolution, indicating that the younger a pupil is, the greater the effect of the approach in increasing open-mindedness towards the value. And thirdly, there is a negative relation between the number of languages and both music and value evolution, indicating that the more languages a pupil knows, the lower the chance of them becoming more open-minded towards musical styles or towards values because of the approach. These findings generally support the assumption of music and values being connected, but more specifically, they also point to the significance of the socio-cultural background of the audience in particular with respect to the language.

Discussion
The picture on selection of songs emerging from our data presents relatively high polarization of diversity between song selections from Sweden and Turkey (21.21% vs. 0%), while in Estonia, Slovenia and Belgium the diversity of selection did not vary greatly. The reason for this distribution is likely to be found in size of national market on the one hand and it’s development and elaboration on the other. Within Silvers frame of reference in the sense of the extent and historical presence, the Swedish market emerges as the biggest and the most developed one. This could explain the relation between diversity between selections of Swedish pupils and pupils from other participating countries. However, the question of absence of any diversity within Turkish population remains. From the qualitative and quantitative data gather during
the international students mobility (March 2010) we can indisputably conclude, that Turkish pop-music scene is both extensive and elaborated and could in this respect be easily compared with pop-scenes from other participating countries. The issue of the diversity must therefore be tackled from the inside, within the limitations of the Silver project, the approach and the classroom.

One of the key elements in elaborating the explanation is the language of the project. The partners within the Silver project developed all the materials in English and these were forwarded to partner organizations and in many cases even to the pupils in English. Another influential element were the instructions regarding preliminary tasks which were general, asking pupils to choose a song and did not specifically direct their attention to cultural background, language or origin and nationality of performers to keep them as open as possible. Within the classroom, the specificity of the selection of Turkish pupils could also be influenced by the fact that the application of the approach was carried out exclusively in classes of English. While in other partner countries the classes within which the application of the approach varied (from sociology to storytelling) across the national population, the classes in Turkey remained the same, English. Working language in all classrooms, subjected to Silver approach was English, which probably also had an impact on the selection of songs. It could therefore be assumed that the Turkish pupils, receiving preliminary tasks, pretest and posttest, instructions, directions and nevertheless the whole class in English, limited their own song selections to English.

Selection of songs could also be influenced by the level of the group homogeneity. The evidence for this interpretation could be found in qualitative and quantitative data gathered during the international students’ mobility (March 2010), where students presented their national curricula. When compared to other participating countries Turkish national curricula exhibited great level of managed and intended uniformity, i. e. in school uniforms, pupils singing national anthem and others. Whole educational techniques, practices and procedures are evidently more structured and uniform in comparison to practices in other partner countries and can therefore greatly influence cohesion and uniformity of pupil population.
The issue remaining is attached to the question of glocalization and/or modernization. The evidence pointing to glocalization of music within our target population and among comparable populations of other researchers (i.e. Oduro-Frimpong 2009; Achterberg et al. 2010 and others) is immense. Achterberg and others offer two opposite yet both plausible interpretations. Either is the increasing emergence of glocalized music in European countries the result of appropriation “of successful American popular music formats in such way that it has rendered national success and hence driven out American hit-records and pop-artists from the charts”, or “the rising popularity of national popular music indicates an increase in neo-nationalism”, an anti-global reaction to the international hegemony of American popular music (Achterberg et al. 2010).

While addressing the issue of motivation, the issue of manifestation remains unformulated. Where is clear and observable difference between music formats motivated by “successful American popular music” and music formats as neo-nationalistic or “anti-American” reaction? The answer is not an easy one, for elements pointing in either one or other direction can range anywhere from the explicit lyrical contents, to subtle musical themes and variations. However, both positions, if they are to be productive, require relatively high level of homogeneity within the group of their representatives on the one hand, and high level of focused and directed actions on the other.

The songs by national artists from the selections of Silver pupils are performed in national languages and are produced mostly by national producers, which all together could be understood as reaffirmation of local identity. Authors (Lubbers 2008; Achterberg et al. 2010 and others) have already shown, the popularity of national music to be strongly related to “neo-nationalistic and chauvinistic attitudes and to increases in electoral popularity of populist parties which endorse a strong focus on national identity and national boundaries” (Achterberg et al. 2010). But the same domestic songs within our selection exhibit hardly any other particular national and cultural characteristics, apart from language, which would lead us to the “neo-nationalistic”, “anti-global” or “anti-American” motivations of performers and producers. On the other hand, since selected songs appear to be relatively popular within the target population, the aspect of appropriation of successful global, mostly American popular music is immense and more than evident. Deducing
from this interpretation, within the music preferences of Silver target
group population we are witnessing the process of multiculturalization
rather than glocalization.

Our conclusion is therefore partly concurrent with the one formed
by Achterberg and others (Achterberg et al. 2010), but it does not point
to a rising cultural neo-nationalism, for it is realized as a serious of
appropriations of elements of globally successful examples, which by
definition points to the processes of multiculturalization. Local popular
music selected by Silver pupils, performed by local artists and pro-
ducers, motivated by the success of international pop-culture stars and
fueled by mass media, local demand and openness of young consumers,
must therefore be perceived as materialization of cohabitation of local
and global elements and ideas.

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