

Globalization and Youth

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When do you feel like living in the global village rather than your home most? When you find yourself sharing the same clips on Youtube with ‘netizens’, when you can see McDonald’s wherever you travel to, or when you has just snatched up an iPhone or the latest album by Justin Timberlake soon after they are released from the headquarters miles away from you? Or when you were exhilarated about the election of the new icon Barack Obama, as if he is going to be your president?

For we live in this age of Globalization, everything seems easy, efficient and attentive to our needs, with the help of the Internet and other telecommunications. Globalization signifies the integration of economy, culture, knowledge, politics and socializing networks between people around the globe. In youngsters’ eyes, it features in better understanding of foreign cultures, leading to a world of less xenophobia and more friends of different races. Another characteristic is the foreign breeze blown into the daily routine of teenagers. The prevalence of American and European films, Japanese and Korean television series and foreign brand names speaks volumes for the penetrating power of Globalization, or in other words, for the demonstration of preference for ‘exotic’ things. So, most people would applaud the advance of Globalization, especially if they were asked this question while on Facebook, which extensively diminishes the world but magnifies the advantages of Globalization.

But do you feel likewise when the NASDAQ Index slumps, when oil prices rise, or when global warming sounds the alarm? Young people tend to concentrate only on the benefits of Globalization and are seldom aware that its negative implications and challenges are not far away from them as well. There should be no room for complacency or indifference. Instead, youth should face up to the changes and be well

equipped for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

First, don't get distracted by the overwhelming foreign products or trend. Admittedly, any country cannot make advancement without opening the gate to outsiders. However, blindly following suit only fosters a country's sense of inferiority and undermines the sense of belonging to our nation. Apart from appreciation of foreign culture, we cannot forget the inheritance and preservation of national culture. How to treat the traditional culture and western culture in the right way should remain as important and worthwhile meditation for youth. After all, a country will lose its identity without its own historical culture and customs.

Apart from futile worship, we need more absorption of others' essence and ideas, modification, localization and then application to local industries. Think more about why and how they can gain such a foothold locally, and any similar approaches for us to improve our own. For example, now Japanese cars have superseded the once booming U. S. car industries. This can be attributed to the former one's persistent quality improvement, and fundamentally, the lack of introspection and innovation of the latter one. Should the latter one have reflected more on the successful factors of the Japanese cars, the ending should be the other way round. Don't think this is none of our business. It is not just about economy, but attitude. When we prefer watching western movies and start ditching the local ones, have we ever thought about how to save the local film industry, like paying for tickets more, capturing others' skills and analyzing the taste of Hongkongers from the trend? What if we become a director in the future? Even if not so, we as responsible citizens, ought to shoulder more responsibility and not merely shrug off the local matter. How can we just let the moribund industry be annexed by the exotic ones? What if next time the victimized industry is 'more significant', like SME (small and medium enterprises) or a financial crux?

Second, identify tangible or potential crises and act accordingly

amid Globalization. Now more and more global elites will diffuse into local markets, a torrent of challenges is inevitable. We will encounter keen competition in employment, promotion, study, research and other fields. Don't take the things you boast about for granted, nor just bank on one expertise, because globalization literally means the sharing of property and prosperity (and recession). Facing such ordeals, what we are supposed to do is not to surrender, nor hold the illusion that foreign elites always prevail. Being self-possessed and self-driven will be the key to resolve any hardship. Again, it is the attitude that matters. As long as we are consistent with the principle of wrestling with challenges, Globalization should not be able to intimidate us.

Globalization takes both the role of opportunity and challenge. For the capable ones, it should be of one role — the former one. But at the same time, opportunities are only reserved for both well-prepared individuals and societies. Globalization, at best, is a kaleidoscope that never fails to raise eyebrows; at worst, you can assume it is a treacherous pitfall.

All in all, under globalization, youths have to reserve a place for self and own country and contemplate seriously on how to face up to the challenges. After all, Globalization doesn't necessarily mean all to be the same, but the same dream — all to be improved.