

# **Enthusiasm and/or fear concerning globalization among post-socialist youth: The case of Hungarian university students<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

Globalization is one of the most frequently discussed economic, political, social and cultural phenomenon of the twenty-first century, however there are very few studies that seek to uncover how young people, the future generation of the globalizing world, perceive these processes. Most of the existing studies target attitudes toward the economic changes and youth in Western European societies. There has been no study to investigate the perception and attitudes of young adults in post-socialist countries; therefore the goal of the present research was to explore Hungarian university students' views. Altogether 103 respondents of two different majors (humanities and social sciences/economics) participated in the research. A closed-ended questionnaire including a semantic differential scale and a 4-point Likert-type attitude scale consisting of 30 items regarding the most common mentioned economic, political, cultural and environmental benefits and dangers of globalization was administered.

The analysis of the data revealed that while the participants consider the influence of globalization on Hungary large, they are neither fearful nor enthusiastic about its effects, however they considered their general impact slightly more negative than positive. Items expressing different aspects of globalization resulted in five factors: Decreasing Differences, Multiculturalism, Globalization as a Threat, Benefits of Globalization, and Cultural and Economic Hegemony.

University major proved to be a better predictor of the attitude towards globalization than gender. Students of economics evaluated globalization significantly as being more good, exciting and useful than students of humanities. They seemed to have a more definite and elaborated picture about what is needed for success in a globalized world in terms of skills. Economics students also had higher means in Factor 4 'Benefits of Globalization' and they evaluated the specific effects of globalization more positively.

## **Keywords**

globalization  
Hungarian  
university students  
attitude  
identity  
citizenship

## **Introduction**

Globalization, internationalization and cosmopolitanism have become key concepts of social sciences at the turn of the twenty-first century (Davies, Evans and Reid 2005). Philosophers,

economists, politicians, historians, sociologists and psychologists all have something to say about it (e.g. Fukuyama 1992; Huntington 1996; Schmidt 1998; Bauman 1998; Giddens 2000; Arnett 2002; Bhagwati 2004). While their views are diverse, none of them questions that globalization is one of the dominant social forces in the twenty-first century, and is inevitable and unstoppable.

According to Lieber and Weisberg (2002) globalization is the increasing global integration of economies, information technology, the spread of global popular culture, and other forms of human interaction. Globalization is a process by which cultures influence one another via trade, economic and financial interdependence worldwide, immigration and travel, telecommunication and information exchange. Young people in every part of the world are affected by globalization; therefore many young people now grow up with global consciousness (Arnett 2002). In the twenty-first century citizenship includes global citizenship and the internalization of global values (Reimers 2006).

There have been contrasting ideas and a polarized discussion about globalization, on one hand enthusiasm and on the other warnings about disruptions and dangers. Fukuyama (1992) had the pro-globalization stand that secularism, liberal democracy and free markets will reduce all tensions in the world. Giddens (1990) called globalization the corollary of modernity and praised the advent of a 'global cosmopolitan society' (Giddens 2000). Bhagwati (2004) argues that globalization, when properly governed, is in fact the most powerful force for social good in the world today. Supporters of globalization point out that when promoted with circumspection globalization can lead to higher, efficient output, lower prices and increased employment and more opportunities for entrepreneurship in all the countries involved (Sampatkumar 2007). Via globalization it is possible to build an integrated society where differences in race, colour, gender, religion, culture or nationality will not deny anyone the opportunity to progress and succeed (Sampatkumar 2007).

However, according to Bauman (1998) promoters of political and economic globalization seem to ignore its negative and dehumanizing effect, progressive spatial segregation, separation and exclusion. Anti-globalization ideas manifest themselves in demonstrations and organized protests. Many activists perceive economic globalization as an instrument in the hands of multinational corporations whose sole motive is to increase profits to the detriment of the freedom of the individual. Anti-globalization groups mostly consisting of young people claim that globalization leads to disenfranchisement, political and economic instability, wide disparities between developed and developing countries, and uneven distribution of wealth (Sampatkumar 2007). Multinational corporations infiltrate political life and exert undue influence on policymakers of nation-states, and national borders become insignificant due to transnational companies and economy (Sampatkumar 2007) and the state sovereignty becomes fragmented (Giddens 1991).

Another aspect of globalization is related to cultural differences (Huntington 1996). While there is a view that in the 'global village' all social, ethnic and racial divisions may disappear, there is more fear that globalization may lead to oppositions, clashes, prejudices and misunderstandings among different groups (Herman and Dimaggio 2007)

The globalizing world interconnects people from different cultural backgrounds and intercultural relations increase (Pieterse 2009). There are those who claim, like Bird and Stevens (2003) that national cultures are moving towards a certain degree of obsolescence. Due to the fact that production and consumption are operating at a global scale, and competition also functions at the world-wide level, the 'comparative areas' become reduced, dominated and dictated by the 'winners' of this process, and those who want to stay in

competition are forced into this framework (Fülöp 2008). Values of the global culture are based on individualism, free market economics, and democracy and include freedom of choice, individual rights, openness to change and tolerance of differences (Friedman 2000; Giddens 2000; Arnett 2002). All these are basic principles of the western democratic societies, therefore Pieterse (2009) claims that according to convergence principle globalization is a theory of Westernization or Americanization referred to as 'McDonaldization' (Ritzer 1993) or 'Disneyfication' (Lieber and Weisberg 2002).

As a counter-response to the homogenizing force of globalization many groups strengthen their ethnic, religious and national identities (Brown, Larson and Saraswathi 2002). Herman and Dimaggio (2007) question the notion of increasing uniformity and cultural imperialism as well. They argue that globalization evokes localization as its counterforce and in this counter reaction the experience of uncertainty and instability of a globalizing world plays a crucial role and increases the desire for stability and safety in the form of finding local niches for identity construction as globalization's counterforce. In other words, when the 'identity' and the self-respect of a group is threatened by a strong imposing culture, the group will start to emphasize the difference within the imposed dimensions not to be 'channelled' into an existing competitive framework in which losing is inevitable (Fülöp 2008).

The success of globalization may in the future be judged by the ability to maintain cultural distinctions while creating a new understanding of the global community (Sampatkumar 2007). It also requires combining local identity and identity linked to the global culture, or producing a kind of integration of different sources of identity into a hybrid identity that is a combination of a variety of cultural influences (Arnett 2002). More integrative processes are needed, called 'glocalization' (Robertson 1995) instead of mutually exclusive trends of homogenization or ethnic fragmentation. In the last decade hybridity has become a regular discourse in popular and mainstream culture and this is the leading paradigm in relation to identity issues connected to the process of globalization (Pieterse 2009). Global multicultural citizenship and a new class of persons who belong to an emergent global culture, the 'global melange' (Pieterse 2009) may be a constructive solution to this conflict (Bird and Stevens 2003).

### **Globalization in the post-socialist countries: the case of Hungarian youth**

In their large scale international research *GLOBALIFE – Life courses in Globalization Process* Blossfeld et al.'s (2005) basic assumption was that in a globalizing world, structural conditions and social norms provide less and less support in terms of choices and decisions for citizens and this results in an increasing uncertainty. In the case of young people this uncertainty is coupled with uncertainties of the developmental process of the transition from youth to adulthood (Arnett 2002). For post-socialist youth this double uncertainty has been intensified in the last two decades by the ongoing transitions of their society (Róbert and Bukodi 2005).

During the last two decades, since 1989, post-socialist citizens have had to face the challenges of not only adapting to the dramatic internal societal changes, i.e. the introduction of free market ideologies, competition, deregulation, privatization and democratic institutions, but also to the global society (Fülöp 2005). The collapse of the communist block made it possible in these countries to open up towards the West and accelerated dramatically the financial and economic interdependence with the international world. For Hungary and some other post-socialist countries, joining the European Union in 2004 was also a facet of the wider process of globalization.

By the end of the twentieth century, the market economy had stabilized in Hungary and as a result of this Hungarian young people nowadays grow up with an increasing global consciousness just like their Western European peers. English as the 'lingua franca' of the globalization process prevails as the most commonly spoken foreign language in the 15–25-years-old age group (almost 70 per cent) and is taught as a required subject from primary school (Szénay 2005). In terms of the Internet, 84 per cent of the Hungarian 15–29-years-old had access to it in 2008, but among university students this was 100 per cent (Ságvári 2009).

Globalization leads in all modern societies to a decline of the national character of the economy, but this process was especially dramatic in post-socialist Hungary. From international commerce restricted to the socialist block before 1990, by 1997 more than 65 per cent of the enterprises were partially or totally foreign owned (Róbert and Bukodi 2005). This means that a majority of those young people who nowadays enter the business world in Hungary will be employed by foreign/multinational employers and have to be able to meet the demands of this new type of global labour market.

### **Studies on attitudes towards globalization**

There are very few empirical studies on attitudes towards globalization in general among young people internationally. Globalization is a multidimensional process, in other words it is a social process that unfolds in multiple realms of existence simultaneously (Pieterse 2009). In spite of this, most of the studies addressed these aspects separately and with mainly an economic aspect (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006; Bhagwati 2002). Coopers & Lybrand (1997) conducted an extensive research on values among more than 1,200 business students from 30 of the world's leading universities in ten countries on five continents in an attempt to capture the cultural aspects of globalization. They found that there is greater similarity in values and preferences among the students of such diverse parts of the world than differences. A great majority of the respondents (78 per cent) expressed an interest in working for a global company, were positive about working for a company in the international market (73 per cent) and wanted to work with clients from different countries. The survey provided evidence that a globalization of values is taking place today and within the business community an identifiable and homogenous group is emerging, that does not share common geographic location, religion, native language or national culture, yet they share a common set of values, attitudes and norms (Bird and Stevens 2003). They are members of the emerging global culture.

### **Goal of the research**

Psychological studies have rarely addressed globalization directly (Arnett 2002) and empirical studies among youth on the attitude towards globalization as a complex phenomenon are basically non-existent. There is also a lack of such studies with young people living in post-socialist societies within the European Union. Arnett (2002) calls this age group the 'emerging adults', meaning that they are mature and autonomous enough but are not yet committed to a definite way of life and open to new influences and have a vivid interest in global media, the leading edge of globalization. At the same time, this is the age group worldwide that has a crucial role in the future process of globalization.

Therefore the aim of the present study was to reveal Hungarian university students' perception, and attitudes towards globalization: if globalization is seen as a threat, or a source

of opportunities, and to what degree young people in a post-socialist society agree with the different views on the advantages and disadvantages of the globalization process.

## **Participants**

Participants were 103 university students. Based on studies indicating an attitude difference between students of economics/business and humanities/social sciences (Hainmüller and Hiscox 2006) students of these two different majors i.e. humanities/psychology and economics were included (see Table 1).

## **Methods**

An Osgood Semantic Differential task was used to investigate the evaluative aspect of the attitude towards globalization in general. It consisted of four different opposite terms and a 7-point scale in between them.

A questionnaire consisting of different types of closed-ended questions, an attitude scale and an evaluation scale were administered after this task. The closed-ended questions were related to identity, influence of globalization, symbols of globalization, and the perception of necessary qualities to be able to be successful in a globalized world. A 4-point Likert-type attitude scale consisting of 30 items in which participants indicated their extent of agreement on each item was also administered. Items regarding the most common mentioned economic, political, cultural and environmental benefits and dangers of globalization appearing in the pro and anti-globalization literature were included. Finally, in an evaluation scale participants had to indicate in the case of each item if they consider the particular effect positive or negative.

## **Results**

### ***The nature of the influence of globalization in general***

In the Osgood-type Semantic Differential task respondents had to judge globalization along four adjective pairs using a 7-point scale. The adjective pairs and means are in Table 2.

Means of two of the four dimensions (good-bad and useful-harmful) differed significantly from the neutral evaluation (mean: 3.5) in the one-sample t-test ( $t(105) = 2.690$ ;  $p = 0.008$  and  $t(105) = 2.594$ ;  $p = 0.011$ ) respectively. Participants thought of globalization as a rather bad and a rather harmful process. These dimensions strongly correlated as well ( $r = 0.751$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ).

There were no gender differences in these dimensions. However, significant differences could be observed according to the major of the participant. Economics students believed that globalization is rather exciting (economics:  $M = 2.90$ ;  $SD = 1.47$ ; humanities:  $M = 4.02$ ;  $SD = 1.59$ ;  $F(1;103) = 13.853$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) rather good (economics:  $M = 3.38$ ;  $SD = 1.24$ ; humanities:  $M = 4.35$ ;  $SD = 1.39$ ;  $F(1;103) = 13.952$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) and rather useful (economics:  $M = 3.44$ ;  $SD = 1.09$ ; humanities:  $M = 4.25$ ;  $SD = 1.51$ ;  $F(1;98.261) = 10.203$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ). In terms of importance there was no significant difference found.

### **Different levels of identity**

Students had to put into rank order which identity (national, European, global) is the most and least important to them. National identity was considered the most important (67 per cent of the respondents) followed by European identity and world citizen/global identity being the

least important to an almost equal proportion of the respondents (19 per cent and 18 per cent respectively). There were no differences according to gender or study major of the participants.

### **The influence of globalization on Hungary**

Respondents had to indicate on a 5-point scale how much they think Hungary is affected by globalization (1: strongly affected to 5: not at all affected). The mean of responses was 2.0 (SD = 0.66) indicating that the respondents believe that Hungary is largely affected by globalization. There was no significant difference according to the gender or major of the participants.

### **Symbols of globalization**

Respondents had to indicate on a 4-point scale (1: very much; 4: not at all) how much they consider a list of items to symbolize globalization. Amongst all listed symbols of globalization, the Internet was considered to be the most expressive (mean = 1.3; SD = 0.62), while Oscars/Academy Awards was judged to be least expressive (mean = 3.2; SD = 0.85). All symbols are listed in Table 3 in descending order of expressiveness.

Significant gender difference was present in only one item: according to males Bill Gates symbolizes globalization significantly more than according to females ( $p = 0.002$ ). Students of economics regarded the Internet ( $p = 0.014$ ), the Olympic Games ( $p = 0.039$ ) and UNICEF (economics:  $p = 0.041$ ) to be stronger symbols of globalization than humanities students reported. While supermarkets ( $p = 0.004$ ) and Hollywood ( $p = 0.044$ ) were considered to symbolize globalization more among students of humanities.

### **Qualities needed in a globalized world**

Among the eighteen listed qualities that can be considered necessary to be successful in a globalized world, IT skills (mean = 1.66); Knowledge of languages (mean = 1.7); Education (mean = 1.75) and Learning skills (1.77) proved to be the most important, while Unscrupulousness (mean = 2.67), Selfishness (mean = 2.64), Money-hunger (mean = 2.62) and Patriotism (mean = 2.60) as the least important (see Table 4).

Gender difference was present in one item. Selfishness was regarded by females to be significantly more needed than by males ( $p = 0.031$ ).

Students of economics considered ten qualities significantly more important than students of humanities (see Table 5).

Students of economics, both males and females, considered some characteristics as highly important (mean < 1.5) in a globalized world, while students of humanities did not attribute high significance to any characteristics (no mean under 1.5 and only one characteristic in the case of each gender has the mean under 2.00; openness in the case of male humanities students (mean = 1.78) and IT skills in the case of female humanities students (mean = 1.95). Female students of economics considered cooperativity as a highly important quality in a globalized world, while male students regarded competitiveness as well as cooperativity as a very important requirement (see Table 6).

## Effects of globalization

In the 30-item attitude scale participants had to consider the economic, political, informational, ecological and cultural effects of globalization and indicate to what extent a statement is true or false on a 4-point Likert-scale (1: strongly disagree; 4: strongly agree).

The statement that had the highest mean of agreement was: 'Because of globalization it is important to nourish national traditions and make people aware of national cultural values' (mean: 3.73), indicating that the respondents consider it important to strengthen national identity as a reaction to globalization.

There were two items in which gender differences could be found. Men agreed more with the statement: 'As a result of globalization the significance of nation-states will cease and national identity will diminish.' ( $F(1;100) = 6.454$ ;  $p = 0.013$ ), as well as with: 'Globalization blurs cultural differences and makes the world uniform.' ( $F(1;100) = 8.282$ ;  $p = 0.003$ ).

In ten out of 30 statements students of economics and humanities differed significantly. In eight statements students of economics reached significantly higher means. These referred to the decreasing significance of national boundaries, increasing competition, scientific progress, knowledge of other cultures, broadening international opportunities and information flow, importance of national culture, and cooperation among nations. There were only two statements: 'Through globalization the capitalist view of life becomes general' and 'Environmental pollution is the result of globalization' with which humanities students agreed more. Exact values and test statistics are in Table 7.

A maximum likelihood factor analysis was conducted with the 30 statements. After direct oblimin rotation 5 factors were identified that explained 49 per cent of the total variance (see Table 9). The factors were named as follows: Factor 1: Decreasing Differences; Factor 2: Multiculturalism; Factor 3: Globalization as a Threat; Factor 4: Benefits of Globalization; Factor 5: Cultural and Economic Hegemony. The factor structure can be seen in Table 8.

Gender difference was present in Factor 2 'Multiculturalism', males having higher means than females (males:  $M = 0.47$ ;  $SD = 0.81$ ; females:  $M = -0.13$ ;  $SD = 0.79$ ;  $F(1;87) = 9.414$ ;  $p = 0.003$ ).

In terms of major, students of economics produced significantly higher means in Factor 4 'Benefits of Globalization' than students of humanities (economics:  $M = 0.25$ ;  $SD = 0.87$ ; humanities:  $M = -0.25$ ;  $SD = 0.87$ ;  $F(1;88) = 7.537$ ;  $p = 0.007$ ).

## Evaluation of the effects of globalization

In order to measure not only the structure of the attitudes, but also its evaluative nature in addition to indicating the agreement with each statement, respondents had to evaluate each item if they found the particular effect it describes good (1) or bad (2). The most positively perceived effect of globalization (mean between 1.01 and 1.10 [4 statements]) was its effect on scientific progress, becoming aware of national culture, getting to know other cultures, and broadening international opportunities. The effects that were considered the most negative (mean between 1.90 and 1.99 [11 statements]) were in connection with homogenization (Americanization, minor and national cultures and cultural differences disappearing), with cultures becoming more distant and people becoming alienated, with terrorism, environmental pollution and the increasing gap between poor and rich and one part of the world being exploited by the other.

In terms of gender differences females regarded it significantly more negative that: 'As a result of globalization the same products will be sold everywhere' ( $p = 0.19$ ). Among students of humanities this particular effect of globalization was seen as significantly worse than among students of economics in the case of seven statements, while students of economics considered it significantly worse in only one. Exact values can be observed in Table 9.

In the evaluation of each item, whether it differs significantly from indifference (mean = 1.5) was also tested. Neutral items were excluded (4 items), and a scale for positive statements (Positive Statement Scale, 12 items, Cronbach alpha = 0.721) and a scale for negative statements (Negative Statement Scale, 14 items, Cronbach alpha = 0.836) was created. There was no significant difference between the positive and negative statements in the whole sample according to the paired samples t-test. However gender difference was found in the Negative Statement Scale, males ( $M = 2.90$ ;  $SD = 0.46$ ) having larger mean than females ( $M = 2.64$ ;  $SD = 0.51$ ;  $F(1;91) = 4.371$ ;  $p = 0.039$ ). Difference was also found according to major. Economics students ( $M = 2.93$ ;  $SD = 0.36$ ) had higher means in the Positive Statement Scale than students of humanities ( $M = 2.69$ ;  $SD = 0.44$ ;  $F(1;94) = 9.160$ ;  $p = 0.003$ ). There was no gender and major interaction, male students of economics as well as male students of humanities had significantly higher means in the Negative Statement Scale.

## Summary

Hungarian university students' general evaluation of globalization was more negative than positive. According to the Semantic Differential Scale they considered globalization rather bad and harmful and they were rather neutral in terms of its importance and its being exciting or boring. At the same time they considered the effect of globalization on Hungary large. Hungarian (national) identity was the primary identity they indicated followed by European and world/global identity. Symbols that were believed to symbolize globalization the most were related to technology (the Internet), economics (multinational corporations, Euro) and regions (United States, European Union) while the least significance was attributed to symbols representing the global media (CNN, HBO), culture (Hollywood, Oscar/Academy Award) and sports (Olympic Games). The most important qualities Hungarian university students regarded to be necessary to be successful in a globalized world were cognitive in nature (IT skills, knowledge of languages and learning skills) and the least important were those emphasizing national identity and patriotism and negative characteristics like money-hunger, selfishness and unscrupulousness. Items expressing different aspects of globalization resulted in five factors: Decreasing Differences (Factor 1), Multiculturalism (Factor 2), Globalization as a threat (Factor 3), Benefits of Globalization (Factor 4), and Cultural and Economic Hegemony (Factor 5).

The evaluative aspect of the attitudinal structure reflected a balanced position. Participants' evaluation of the different effects deviated neither toward the positive, nor toward the negative from the neutral view. The most positively perceived effect of globalization was its impact on scientific progress and the most negative its potential contribution to social inequalities.

On one hand, respondents strongly agree that due to globalization national identity strengthens i.e. the main effect is not homogenization but differentiation and they consider this process very positive. At the same time national identity and patriotism are not seen as the



pragmatically most useful qualities to be successful in a globalized world, cognitive and social skills are believed to lead more directly to competitive advantage.

There were no major gender differences in the evaluation of globalization in general, in the estimated extent of its effects on Hungary and in the preferred identity (i.e. Hungarian/national). Male and female participants also estimated the significance of symbols the same way, except for Bill Gates, who was considered a stronger symbol of globalization by males than by females. There was no difference in estimating the necessity of different characteristics needed to succeed in a globalized world but in the case of selfishness, which was considered a necessary quality to be successful significantly more by females. There were also just slight differences regarding the different effects of globalization. Men believed more that due to globalization nation states will cease and that globalization contributes to uniformization. However, females regarded it more negative that as a result of globalization the same products will be sold everywhere. Men agreed more with statements on multiculturalism (Factor 2) and had a higher mean in the Negative Statements Scale than females.

While data showed no major gender differences, university major proved to be a better predictor of the attitude towards globalization. Students of economics evaluated globalization significantly more good, exciting and useful than students of humanities. While both groups considered the effect of globalization to Hungary equally large, globalization itself had a rather positive connotation among students of economics and a rather negative one among students of humanities. Students of economics considered the Internet, the Olympic Games and UNICEF stronger symbols of globalization than students of humanities, while students of humanities did so in the case of Hollywood and supermarkets. Students of economics considered several qualities significantly more important to be successful in a globalized world than students of humanities. They seemed to have a more definite and elaborated picture about what is needed for success in a globalized world. Female and male economics students attributed high necessity to IT skills, knowledge of languages, education, learning skills and cooperativity. In addition to this male economics students besides cooperativity considered competitiveness as highly important as well. No quality was considered highly necessary by humanities students. Economics students also had higher means in Factor 4 'Benefits of globalization'. This positive attitude was strengthened by their significantly higher means in the Positive Statement Scale.

## **Discussion**

While globalization is a major and probably most relevant driving force of the twenty-first century, there are basically no studies that aim to reveal how young people perceive and evaluate it as a process that happens at multiple levels i.e. in its complexity. There have been studies to reveal attitudes towards the economic effects of globalization, also there are many studies about its cultural effects i.e. intercultural encounters, perception of migration, etc. or perception of the environmental effects of globalization, but these levels have not been addressed simultaneously.

The collapse of the socialist block at the end of the 1980s meant among other things that millions of young people were suddenly exposed to free communication with the rest of the world in terms of free information flow, travel, exchange of ideas etc. Globalization came to them not gradually, but in the form of a 'cultural shock'. There have been no studies in the post-socialist countries aiming to reveal how present day 'emerging adults' view globalization after more than two decades of the transition to market economy, democracy and freedom of information exchange.

Therefore the goal of this study was to reveal the attitudes of university students of different majors toward different aspects of globalization in a post-socialist country, Hungary. The results showed that among the participants of the study globalization is not seen as a major threat, but there is no enthusiasm about it either. Hungarian university students tend to see both the positive and the negative consequences of globalization; they have a slightly negative, but more or less realistic and balanced view. In a recent study on attitudes towards economic globalization among adult Chinese, Lee et al. (2009) found that respondents considered the effect of globalization on China more positive than negative and highly educated respondents had a more positive attitude. They explained this with the position of better educated people in the society as they have more opportunities to capture the benefits of economic globalization.

Some argue that it is not the educational level that counts, but much more the level of economic knowledge. Walstad and Rebeck (2002) found that higher levels of economic knowledge among surveyed individuals have large positive effects on support for free trade and trade openness that is a key factor in economic globalization. Hainmueller and Hiscox (2006) also claim that economic knowledge and exposure to economic ideas and information that students of economics gain through their education may play a key role in shaping their attitudes toward a more positive view of economic globalization. In this study, students of economics with an expected higher position and higher income in the Hungarian society had a more positive – however not enthusiastic – view on globalization than the students of humanities. This is in line with previous studies with university students, in majors outside economics (i.e. English, comparative literature, sociology) that indicate more remorse toward free trade and a capitalist competitive market (Bhagwati 2002).

Wolfe and Mendelsohn (2005) argue that it is not the economic knowledge and interest that is responsible for the difference in attitudes toward trade liberalization, but different values and ideology. In their Canadian study they found that irrespective of educational level those who trust multinational corporations and the market, who like the United States etc., are more likely to support globalization. Ohmae (1996) asserts that in the twenty-first century people will salute the corporate flag, not the flag of the nation. The future work context in the case of Hungarian economics students will be global market driven and with a high probability that they are going to work for a joint venture or a foreign owned company, therefore their more positive attitude toward globalization is an adaptive preparation for their future life context. It seems that students of economics are more aware of the requirements of the globalized world in terms of qualities and are better equipped in terms of their attitudes and expectations to meet the challenges it creates.

In the present study gender did not prove to be a major factor in determining attitudes towards globalization, however, men evaluated the different aspects of globalization altogether more negatively than women. Although attitudes toward globalization as a multilevel process were not investigated, attitudes toward international trade as an economic aspect of globalization have been researched extensively. These studies show just the opposite relationship. Burgoon and Hiscox (2008) found that women were significantly less likely than men to support increasing trade with foreign nations. This gender gap existed only among college-educated respondents though. They suggested that the differences among men and women in exposure to economic ideas and information i.e. men being more exposed, may be the source of the gender gap in attitudes toward trade. Results of the present study do not confirm this as male respondents with an economics major also had a more negative view on globalization, however, not on its economic aspects. This can be explained by Gidingel's (1995) argument that the significant gender gap in relation to free trade can be explained by

different values, with men relying more heavily on economic considerations, such as their belief in the market, and women on social ones, such as their commitment to the welfare state. Hungarian male economics students may have more social concern than their western counterparts

The participants of this study were highly educated young adults of a post-socialist society. It would be very interesting to extend this investigation to a different age and professional groups and to other countries within Europe and outside Europe to gain a picture of the similarities and differences. Also political views can have a mediating effect on attitudes towards globalization, and this should be investigated in a forthcoming study. It should be also acknowledged that the present study cannot provide a comprehensive analysis of Hungarian young adults' attitudes towards globalization. Further examination is needed as a large body of research shows that increased education tends to lead to more tolerant, cosmopolitan views of the world (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006). These findings also raise issues with respect to the role and possible competitive disadvantage young people who do not continue into higher education will perhaps have in an increasingly globalized market.

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