

In a wider sense, globalization can be seen as a phenomenon that goes beyond economic processes, creating transformations in political, ethical, social and cultural fields. “Globalization can be thought of as the widening, intensifying, speeding up and growing impact of world-wide interconnectedness” (Held, 2002, p. 61).

In cultural terms, globalization increases cross-cultural contacts, but also the potential for ‘culture clashes’. It can also be discussed in terms of new forms of ‘global consciousness’. This awareness of a shared planet can be linked to development challenges or, more recently, environmental issues (such as global climate change) which are seen to be in need of global solutions (Askola, 2010, p. 103). However, the risk is to provide a global uniformity, which can be deceptive. The development of a global market for goods and services – through trade, foreign investment, capital flows – and increasing standards of living have not affected all regions of the world. Globalization is fragmented; it is an unequal and asymmetrical process,<sup>2</sup> leading to reactions against consumption patterns and standardized information. People turn to their cultural value that gives them identity; they assert their local values and return to past traditions.

New technologies provide facilities to implement the globalization process but modern technologies also create new challenges regarding the conservation of cultural heritage. Thus, people can regard modern technology as a risk: the risk of scattering their cultural identity that they want to assert for themselves.

**Is globalization diminishing the power of the state (or of public authorities) to guarantee the protection of cultural heritage, or is it merely changing the ways in which this power is exercised?**

To answer this question it is necessary to define what the state’s power to protect cultural heritage is.

The development of a system protecting cultural property stems from the value which an organized human community attributes to safeguarding objects and property that characterize its culture and history. These objects and properties act as vehicles for transmitting messages making it possible to identify that community, and through which the community identifies itself. The law is therefore required to lay down the criteria for recognizing cultural property, to give it a certain degree of permanency and guarantee the protection and transmission of this acknowledged heritage.

Community interest therefore takes priority over individual interests in guaranteeing this aim of protection and transmission. It takes the form of imposing obligations and servitudes on the private ownership of property and the possession and use of a particular cultural object. It strikes a balance between the power of the owner or