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DIALOGUE OF CULTURES AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO TOLERANCE IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

World globalization processes and increasing immigration flows reinforce the importance of intercultural communication. The principle of solving the problem of intercultural interaction is tolerance, emphasizing cultural originality. However, if we only extol uniqueness and cultural differences, which can merely unite society, constructive communication will be initially impossible. The current tendency to identify social and cultural conflicts, and ethnicity to politicize and preserve the whole complex of traditional beliefs and practices is dangerous. Tolerance usually ends where an attempt on the cultural values of the host society begins. Therefore, a way out of this situation is the dialogue of cultures. Awareness of the multiplicity of cultures sets the task of forming a different attitude towards the “other-another”. The globalization process entails an obligatory transformation of cultural patterns. Such recognition predetermines the cultural dialogue, taking into account the processes of “hybridization” of culture, national and regional specificity, where the non-national is considered as valuable for the expansion of national mentality. Equal dialogue of cultures is not only respect for other's values, but a position that involves expanding the range of anybody's own value orientations through positive interaction with other cultures, enrichment with cultural and social experience. Both the meeting of different cultures and their interpenetration take place in the process of the dialogue of cultures, resulting in a change in the cultural patterns of the participants in the dialogue. Neither economic, or political and even cultural cooperation can change the picture of the world as deeply as cultural dialogue.

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1. Introduction

World globalization processes and increasing immigration flows reinforce the importance of intercultural communication. Different types of cultures coexist in modern space: traditional and innovative (postmodern), being different from each other in their picture of the world and level of civilizational development and, nevertheless, forced to look for points of intersection for interaction in various spheres (economy, politics, trade, cultural exchange etc.).

Existing cultural diversity implies recognition of another like other and cultural dialogue with him. But traditional stereotypes of national cultures that support their uniqueness are necessarily reproduced from generation to generation, conflicting with the changing social cultural realities of post-industrial world.

Ideally, globalization processes are aimed at creating a single cultural space based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and interaction of local cultures. However, differences in the ideological rationale of the surrounding world among nations make such cooperation very difficult, leading to diverse perception and assessment of the same event by representatives of different cultures. Not every ethnic group is willing to live in a “cultural whirlpool” and see “dissolution” (Veverka, 2004) of its traditional culture in a mass flow, since it is “its own” culture on the scale of values that serves as a criterion of the development level compared to “others”. Therefore, to create the society integrity, not only economic factors become important, but cultural and psychological, namely the level of national identity. A society cannot be stable without developing a sense of civic identity among its citizens.

2. Problem Statement

Globalization has given impetus to the processes of unification and diversification: cultural standardization is closely intertwined with cultural diversity. Moreover, cultural diversity is becoming the world market trend, increasing the demand for “exotic” and otherness, which do not interfere with usual life, but add diversity to it. This diversity requires a person to “tack freely among various cultural traditions” (Wadron, 2000), since life today represents “mixing, synthesis of cultural fragments” (Khlyshcheva, 2018).

The recognition of “another-other” calls for ethnic groups to transform the parameters of self-identification in favor of social equality, regardless of the ethno-confessional affiliation of individuals. The way of solving the problem of intercultural interaction is the tolerance principle, which implies “competence in the cultural and other heritage of people living nearby” (Kuropiatnik, 2000, p. 15).

“Tolerance” can be viewed as an ethical problem, as a mechanism for “restraining aggressive and hostile manifestations” (Vavilova, 1997), as a “tolerance of a subject in relation to another subject” (Petritskii, 1993, p. 23), as respect for a different lifestyle, beliefs, rituals. It assumes loyalty to other, another, alien. This is the respect for opinions and beliefs, the identity of representatives of different cultures and confessions. Main regulations of the tolerance principle in the cultural dialogue were declared by UNESCO on November 16, 1995.

Nevertheless, if we only extol uniqueness and cultural differences, not relying on common values, which can merely unite society, constructive dialogue will be initially impossible. The current tendency to identify social and cultural conflicts, and ethnicity to politicize and preserve the whole complex of

traditional beliefs and practices is dangerous. Not all traditional practices comply with the laws of host societies, many of them openly conflict with accepted norms of post-industrial countries; this heats the situation and does not contribute to internal dialogue. As a rule, tolerance “ends where the another’s attempt on cultural values of the host society begins” (McGhee, 2008, p. 50). Meanwhile, it is this problem that worries many western countries today, when not aliens, but indigenous population is clearly discriminated in favor of minorities.

The difference in cultural traditions is most pronounced at the household level, in everyday practices, where standards of behavior, criteria of correctness and incorrectness are clearly “prescribed”, and they are different for various ethnic cultures. Accordingly, the question arises how far one can go in upholding “his” values, even if they contradict the laws of the host country. It is clear that not only positioning of one’s own attitudes is necessary for a dialogue but searching for a compromise in order to develop common basis through which it would be possible to provide clear and comfortable social behaviour rules. General agreement is required not only on what language will be official and how to dress in public places, but also to divide one system of sociocultural space (government institutions, education, etc.).

3. Research Questions

Today, high population mobility has become common occurrence. Analysts consider mass movements from a province to capital cities, from poor countries to more economically and socially developed countries as characteristic features of a globalizing world. And cultural diversity contributes to the expansion of ideas about the world, conducing to the development of new ways of communication, interaction. When diversity becomes too strong, society begins to experience social tensions and breaks up into separate groups.

Governments of host countries are trying to attract immigrants to public life, but non-residents are not homogeneous and differ from each other not only in their ethno-confessional affiliation, but also in their professional skills, level of education, and desire to integrate into an “alien” society. It is necessary to form a new identity based on the recognition of oneself as a citizen of a given country. This is the so-called supranational identity, where freedom of leaving the ethnic group into the space of transculture exists. Since immigrant communities are still at the dominant stage of ethnocentric identity when ethnicity is consolidated through the affirmation and exclusivity, strict rules prescribed by social relations take place; there is no need to talk about free competition of different cultural traditions without forcible preserve of cultural stereotypes.

Culture cannot develop in isolation, it “lives in a dialogue” (Melikov, 2018) and therefore must admit other ideas about the world. Therefore, dialogue is an interpenetration of cultures (Melikov & Gezalov, 2014). Equal dialogue of cultures is not only respect for foreign values, but a position that involves expanding the range of own value orientations through positive interaction with other cultures, enrichment with cultural and social experience.

Both the meeting of different cultures and their interpenetration take place in the process of the dialogue of cultures, resulting in a change in the cultural patterns of the participants in the dialogue. Neither economic, or political and even cultural cooperation can change the picture of the world as deeply as cultural dialogue.

Interaction processes between cultures are complex, and therefore the dialogue implies the active interaction of equal subjects. However, the discrepancy between the cultural codes of the participants in the dialogue may cause a significant difficulty. Cultures differ in their understanding of the context, the degree of contextual dependence, and the use of hidden information that each transmitted message contains. Culture is the harder, the more it carries hidden information. And the higher the complexity of the culture is, the harder it is for the “alien” to correctly interpret what is happening and make the right decision.

Representatives of different cultures need to know the basics of another culture when communicating, understand its manifestations and focus not on what separates, but look for common basis of value categories.

Russian philosopher, historian of culture Bibler (1989) notes that intercultural communication creates a new general culture society, a special sociality, namely “a form of free communication of people in the force field of the dialogue of cultures” (p. 56). In this regard, the essence of “barriers” is important to understand in the way of communication and justify methods for overcoming them. According to Bibler (1989), “the ending century gave rise to an incredible synthesis of cultures, thereby posing the problems of their dialogue” (p. 65). The dialogue, being the main component of intercultural communication, implies “such a convergence of interacting subjects of the cultural process, when they do not suppress each other, do not seek to dominate, but are respectful, taking into account the characteristics of each culture” (Guzikova & Fofanova, 2015, p. 27).

“New cosmopolitanism” is closely associated with the discourse of globalization and cultural heterogeneity, proposed as a model of the new world by American professor of history Hollinger (1995). The main idea of the proposed model is “intercultural interaction” (Hollinger, 1995), which is based on the civilizational ideas of respect for human rights, but with an understanding of traditional origins of different cultures. It does not require indispensable acceptance of all existing traditions.

To date, such a holistic awareness of the processes happening in the world as a single entity has not been formed yet. Therefore, multiculturalism undertakes the task of integrating society. But even the theory already contains a certain contradiction, since the right to be different (a minority) negates the very idea of cultural equality. Political multiculturalism proclaims the forcible consolidation of cultural traditionalism, that is, it practically preserves the traditions and denies the right to further development. This leads to unhealthy competition and militant rejection of another.

Meanwhile, only acquaintance with other cultural experience can overcome isolation of ethno-confessional cultures, bringing the formation of multiple identities and new cultural forms to a new level. That is why dialogue is the only way for cultures to coexist in a globalizing world. Dialogue is “communication with culture, realization and reproduction of its achievements, detection and understanding of values of other cultures” (Romanova, Khlyshcheva, & Iakushenkov, 2015, p. 153), the possibility of relieving tension between minority groups and entire states.

Cultural dialogue brings cultures to a new way of understanding the world and the place that “own” culture occupies in this world. In addition, it is an opportunity to look at yourself through the eyes of others. In the world of cultural diversity, it is vital to build a dialogue that allows nations not only to coexist, but to effectively interact.

Understanding others and respecting for foreign cultural traditions does not come by itself, it must be learned. It is difficult to agree for the representatives of cultures who are at different levels of civilizational development. Nevertheless, it is necessary to negotiate, the world has no other way. Special scenarios of a “multicultural personality” freely oriented in an international environment were developed to adapt to new conditions; “multicultural individual” (multicultural personality), possessing the necessary traits to work in an international environment; transculture related to communication at the cultural frontier.

The transculture model was developed by Epstein (Berry & Epstein, 1999) as “the state of virtual belonging of one individual to many cultures” (p. 89). Such a person is “at the exit from his culture and at a crossroad with aliens” (Epstein, 1995, p. 15), therefore, he adapts easier to new conditions, is tolerant to cultural differences and open to constructive dialogue.

Boundaries separating cultures disappear in transcultural space. At the same time, cultural dialogue does not lead to confusion, each culture retains “its unity and open integrity, but they are mutually enriched” (Bakhtin, 2012). The diversity of cultures is similar to the variety of colors and shapes in a mosaic, so that the more colors and shapes it has, the brighter, richer and more beautiful the mosaic is. But with all the diversity, different cultures are united in their essence. And the unity of cultures is carried out precisely through their diversity.

However, the formation of such a space is a long process. Today we can only talk about transcultural diversity and universality as the heritage of one person. And the intersection zones of cultures are the most vulnerable points of stability of a multicultural society, neighboring with other territories and experiencing “migration pressure”. Life on such a territory is characterized by a complex interweaving of various identities (ethnic, social, regional, confessional, etc.), their “attraction - repulsion, commonality and difference of historical destinies, multi-directional value orientations” (Murzina, 2003, p. 8). The higher the degree of “diversity” is, the greater the risks of ethno-conflict situations, which complicates the cultural dialogue and limits the interaction of different groups of the population.

In modern world, when the problems of interaction between cultures are global, the cooperation of representatives of different countries and cultures and their constructive dialogue are necessary. Correlation of relations between countries, ethnic groups, national groups in order to maintain the unity and integrity of the social cultural structure is the main function of intercultural communication.

Globalization process entails an obligatory transformation of cultural patterns, leading to the recognition of “another as a different, but equal” (Robertson, 1998). Such recognition predetermines the cultural dialogue, regarding processes of culture “hybridization”, national and regional specificity, where the non-national is considered as valuable for the national mentality expansion.

The dynamics and manifold of sociocultural phenomena are interpreted through the diversity of sociocultural types, which must be coordinated with the cultural system of society. The hardest thing is to reach agreement on general standards of behavior, appearance, methods of communication, etc. We need general criteria according to which the practical contact of representatives of different cultures will be carried out.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim is to show the value and benefits of the dialogue of cultures in intercultural relations in comparison with the proclaimed principle of tolerance.

5. Research Methods

The authors used dialectic method as the main, which is required for any social and philosophical analysis. In addition, a systematic approach turned out to be valuable, making it possible to consider various aspects of intercultural communication as something unified and inseparable from the general cultural context, theories of structural functionalism and activity, a set of methods being specific to social philosophical research: historical and cultural, comparative historical, analogies, extrapolations, deduction.

6. Findings

Currently, identifying constructive trends in cultural dialogue is relevant to all countries. Awareness of the multiplicity of cultures sets the task of forming a different attitude towards the “other-another”, elaboration of the basis for evaluation of cultural and confessional traditions of different nations. The admission of a dialogue itself indicates the possibility of the interpenetration of valuable cultural elements.

In addition, the cultural contacts of nations did not begin today. The history tells about rich experience of intercourse of cultures with each other, therefore we should approach the problem dialectically in relation to world experience in the process of constructing dialogic forms.

The culture of any nation is contemporary and unique, and acts as part of human culture, adding diversity to it. A universal human culture is formed on this path of interaction between cultures, a unified and diverse at the same time.

In the modern world of ethno-confessional heterogeneity, cultural dialogue becomes more complicated and involves a larger number of participants. Therefore, the very course of the dialogue, as well as its result, depends on the specifics of the cultures involved in this process. Depending on the cultural distance and the type of culture, the dialogue can take place in both constructive and conflict forms.

Conflicts may be various. More often, they originate on a household basis, but can develop into a stable confrontation. The most dangerous conflicts are ethno-confessional wars, orange revolutions, which have a clear political tint, religious fanaticism, up to the conversion of others to the “true” faith and persecution of “dissenters”. Such conflicts have the character of uncompromising confrontation, last for a long time and are notable for their particular cruelty.

Today, the escalation of religious opposition is possible to observe not only between different trends (Christianity - Islam), but also within the same confession (split of the Church in Ukraine). Terrorism has become a business that brings a lot of money to those who guide these flows. A crisis of sociability is to the fore.

In modern society, dialogue between ethnic groups and even between religious faiths is no longer a leading one. Dialogue at the level of civilizations comes to the fore. Under the conditions when borders turn into a nominal element, the role of supranational associations (the UN, the European Parliament, etc.)

becomes important. Although it is too early to talk about the disappearance of national states, they still build their activities based on the civilizational features of the global world.

The problems of civilization dialogue were posed by an American political scientist S. Huntington, who predicted a conflict between the West and the rest world (Huntington, 2003). According to the researcher, conflicts go along “fault lines”, where civilizational conflicts are manifested both at micro level (struggle for power and natural resources) and macro level (confrontation of civilizations of different levels in the struggle for global influence). Civilizational conflicts are more dangerous than ethno-confessional and cannot be solved by the forces of one side. The union of two or several civilizations is necessary.

Strange as it may seem, ethnography is becoming a serious problem of the current situation. It is governed by the interests of political elites and leads to the reproduction of stereotypes of traditional culture in society, positioning the confrontation of their own and another culture, being not compatible with civilizational identity.

7. Conclusion

Cultural dialogue today is a civilization project initiated by western culture. Therefore, the urgent issue of the scientific research is the study of the diversity of ethno-confessional structures in cultures that do not fit into western picture of the world, with the view of identifying the very possibility of a dialogue between such diverse cultural entities. Primarily, such approach raises the need to emphasize not so much the uniqueness and differences of each culture, as suggested by multiculturalists, as the search for what unites these cultures, namely, the commonality, on the basis of which a constructive dialogue between ethnic groups, religious faiths and civilizations is possible.

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