

Intercultural Communication and Dialogue of Ethnic Cultures in the Context of Digitalization of Society

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the influence of cross-cultural communication tools, especially digital technologies, on the dialogue of ethnic cultures, and it analyzes the ethnopolitical concepts of multiculturalism and ethnopluralism. Using the concepts of U. Kimlik, Ch. Kukutas as an example, an attempt is made to identify the philosophical foundations on which multiculturalism strategies are based. When considering the concepts of ethnopluralism, the philosophical basis of which is the axioms of the free society of P. Feyerabend, the questions that need to be resolved are revealed. The article considers the prospects for the impact of the digital revolution on culture and its ethnic components through the study of the levels of interaction between ethnic identity and digitalization of society. The dialogue of ethnic cultures is analyzed from the point of view of information flow. It is concluded that the strategy of multiculturalism in a digital society is losing ground and giving way to ethnopluralism.

Keywords: intercultural communication, digital society, ethnopolitics, multiculturalism, ethnopluralism, ethnic identity, ethnic culture, dialogue of cultures

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the digitalization of society, we observe the process of ethnocultural revival, which is determined by the interaction of global culture and local cultures. At the same time, a dynamic balance of global culture is combined with local traditional cultures of ethnic groups, nations, national-state formations, and the so-called glocal culture is being formed. In its space, innovations are being actively processed, intercultural communications are expanding, the possibilities of dialogue of ethnic cultures, their interaction and interpenetration are increasing. The problem of ethnocultural revival is relevant both for the core (developed countries) and for the countries of the periphery and semi-periphery.

Considering the relationship between the digitalization of society and national and ethnic identity, it is possible to trace the specifics and qualitative features of interethnic contradictions and conflicts. Contrary to expectations, the processes of European unification do not remove the problems associated with the search for national identity, and recently they have

actualized the problems of regional identity. The growth of migration flows with all the difficulties of adaptation leads to a situation when Western European states become multi-ethnic, and increasingly often face interethnic contradictions and conflicts on their territory.

The multiculturalism strategy in many countries has been accompanied by government policies of "affirmative action". For example, presidential decrees in the United States of the 1970s provided for the imposition of certain quotas for African Americans and Hispanic Americans on admission to higher education and on hiring. The argument in favor of "positive discrimination" was the need to compensate for past social injustice against a number of ethnic and racial groups.

In the process of the formation of the European Union, a declaration was adopted at the 1993 Council of Europe summit that provided for the addition of the European Convention on Human Rights with measures to ensure the rights of ethnic minorities. The declaration was supported by the European Union at the 1995 session of the European Parliament.

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II. CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURALISM

The problems of interethnic contradictions and conflicts, adaptation of migrants to a new environment, cultural identity and the rights of ethnic minorities determine the increased interest of researchers in this problem field, contribute to the formation of ethnopolitical concepts in a digital society, which study, among other things, the problems of cultural and national identity. Historically, multiculturalism became the first significant ethnopolitical concept.

One of the concepts of multiculturalism is the concept proposed by W. Kymlicka. Members of ethnic communities in it appear as responsible individuals who "need to be given the opportunity to live a life that they consider acceptable to themselves, provided that it does not harm other people. It is necessary to protect their culture, as it provides a choice". [1] At the same time, for some reason, the fact is ignored that the processes of intercultural and interethnic interactions presuppose dialogue, respect and knowledge of the culture of other ethnic groups, including the titular nation. At the individual-personal level, the conditions for the fruitfulness of the dialogue will be the following: a high degree of adaptation of migrants, knowledge of the language of the titular nation as a prerequisite for the formation of cognitive and communicative competencies [2].

In a digital society, as mentioned above, the formation of a glocal culture takes place. This concept initially appears as a theoretical justification for the policy of multiculturalism, which is actively pursued both at the state level and by social movements and international organizations. Thus, UNESCO, as part of the development of theoretical aspects of the policy of multiculturalism, oversaw the work of Ch. Inglis, Director of the Multicultural Research Center of the University of Sydney and President of the Committee on Ethnic Racial Relations and Relations of Social Minorities of the International Sociological Association, which is called "Multiculturalism: a new policy of responses to differences" [3]. It should be noted that most of the research on ethnopolitics in the mainstream of multiculturalism falls on the 1990s, on the eve of the growth of migration movements and changes in the cultural space in the context of the digitalization of society.

The strategies of multiculturalism are based on certain philosophical foundations presented in the works of W. Kymlicka, J. Rawls, S. Benhabib, C. Taylor, O. Hoeffe, R. Le Coadik, J. Habermas. These authors define multiculturalism as the strategy of adoption by representatives of "cultural hybrids" and ethnic minorities of the language, value system and cultural norms of the titular nation. There are varieties of "hard" (in the case of complete high adaptation up to the loss of national identity) and "soft" (acceptance of

basic values and language within the required limits while maintaining their own national identity) multiculturalism.

Russian studies in the field of understanding the relationship between the digitalization of society and the strategy of multiculturalism, as well as ethnic identity are presented by the works of L.V. Skvortsova, A.V. Nazarchuk, A.I. Kuropyatnik, N.N. Pokrovskaya, V.A. Tishkova, A.A. Borisova, L.M. Drobizheva, M.V. Tlostanova. In the understanding of these authors, multiculturalism appears as a meaningful and developed ethnopolitics, expressed in a systematic response to the emerging cultural and ethnic diversity in the modern world. This is such ethnopolitics that includes educational, linguistic, economic and social components, as well as specific institutional and informational mechanisms. Initially, multiculturalism appears as a policy and practice of providing equal opportunities and rights to ethnic, religious and other communities, later the socio-philosophical theory of multiculturalism is formed. This theory is based on the idea of a dialogue of cultures, fruitfully developed by M.M. Bakhtin, M. Buber, V.S. Bibler and other authors [4], [5], [6]. In modern research, there is a gap associated with the analysis of informational aspects of ethnic revival, the study of the impact of digital communications and network communication on the formation of ethnic identity, national identity, interethnic contradictions and conflicts. The mass media and publications only state the broad possibilities of the "netocracy" to manipulate conflicts; there is no socio-philosophical analysis of the tendencies of interethnic contradictions and dialogue of cultures in the digital space.

The strategy of multiculturalism implies the creation of effective mechanisms for the inclusion of ethnic minorities in political activity through the creation of opportunities for taking responsibility, the development of the political segment of ethnic mentality. Based on the principles of freedom of choice, equality and partnership, the policy of multiculturalism, according to the researchers of this strategy, should lead to integration, while maintaining the uniqueness and ethnic originality should lead to mutually beneficial interaction and cooperation.

In the concept of Ch. Kukutas, a classification of approaches to the problem of cultural diversity is proposed, on the basis of which the differences of political regimes are distinguished according to the degree of their reaction to the existence of ethnocultural communities. Thus, according to Ch. Kukutas, an open society is more tolerant than one in which people have limited contact with only a few cultures. Confidence and a high degree of assessment of one's own positive group identity serve as the basis for increasing and intensifying intercultural communications, for the

formation of the necessary competencies for this [7]. According to the researchers, understanding and accepting others requires respecting one's own culture, being confident in its valuable and positive meaning, and engaging more often with others. S. Benhabib interprets multiculturalism as a mosaic phenomenon, describing a conglomeration of rigidly delimited closed cultures, and political actions and strategies cannot level these differences.

At the same time, there are concepts of ethnopoltics that do not always coincide with the strategy of multiculturalism for their reasons. Thus, Ch. Taylor argues that a person has a fundamental need for social recognition not only as an individual with universal human dignity, but also recognition of his identity inherent in a cultural and ethnic community. "Therefore, the policy of equality, which emphasizes the importance of the individual and equal rights, must be supported by a policy of differences, the purpose of which is publicly and legally, that is, on a legal basis, to give everyone the opportunity to preserve cultural identity" [8]. This raises the question of complementing multiculturalism with ethnic autonomy of migrant communities. At the same time, in the conditions of information and communication interactions, on the one hand, the possibility of uniting community members on an ethnic basis increases, and on the other hand, intensive interactions and communication within ethnic groups reduce the level of adaptation and lead to the formation of isolated self-sufficient closed communities. Social subjects included in such associations prefer the values of traditional culture, do not want to master the language and culture of the titular nation, and at the same time are not satisfied with their position in the social structure of society.

III. THE CONCEPT OF ETHNOPLURALISM

The social reality of a digital society forces us to agree with those authors who are in scientific opposition to the strategy of multiculturalism (S. Huntington, S. Zizek, V. S. Malakhov and others). In their opinion, the growth in the number of interethnic contradictions and conflicts testifies to the reluctance of representatives of ethnic groups to give up their own identity. At the same time, it is noted that this turn is more characteristic of declared intentions than for real politics. In many countries, the intentions of multiculturalism have not even been declared.

The concept of ethnopluralism is replacing the strategy of multiculturalism in a digital society. The previously dominant ideas of multiculturalism fade into the background. This does not exclude the possibility of recognizing the values and significance of intercultural dialogue and mutual tolerance along with the value system of national cohesion. If the turn towards assimilationism was directed towards the interior of

multi-ethnic countries, then "from the point of view of the foreign policy image, the demonstration of their readiness and ability to guarantee the right of citizens to choose their cultural identity still remains more productive. It is no coincidence that international legal documents (in the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities) contain a formulation on the prohibition of forced assimilation" [9].

In the information space and the network environment, representatives of various ethnic communities really have equal rights and opportunities, and since the language of communication is changing towards its simplification and symbolism, the virtual space in its essence appears as a field of ethnopluralism. Therefore, it is advisable to turn to the analysis of the concept of ethnopluralism, on the basis of which interethnic interactions are built in a digital society and intercultural communications take place.

The philosophical foundation of the concept of ethnopluralism is the axioms of a free society by P. Feyerabend. Considering the processes of interaction of traditions and innovations, personality and society, the peculiarities of ethnic interaction in conditions of freedom and pluralism, P.Feyerabend puts forward the following axiomatic postulates:

- "Traditions are neither good nor bad - they just are." Therefore, a representative of his culture should perceive his traditions as they are. For a representative of a foreign culture, foreign traditions should have the same right to exist as his own traditions. The conclusion from this axiom is the following: both cultures have absolutely identical rights to their existence.
- "Some tradition has desirable or undesirable properties only in comparison with another tradition, that is, only when viewed by participants who perceive the world in terms of their inherent values."
- "Each tradition has its own ways of attracting supporters, when assessing the historical process, one can rely on not yet formulated and even not expressed practice." If the rules of tradition are not formulated, individuals follow the attitudes associated with the tradition of practices. By participating in changes or passively observing them, individuals themselves change with them" [10].

P.Feyerabend believes that the communication of individuals adhering to different traditions is based not on forced, but on free interaction. P.Feyerabend only postulates the axioms of ethnopluralism, but does not answer the question: how can the bearer of his own tradition (one local culture) realize an understanding of

another's tradition (another local culture) while maintaining his own ethnic identity.

The traditional opposition of East and West is currently acquiring new features, since it is shifting from the sphere of cultural misunderstanding into the sphere of economic, political and ethnocultural rejection of the values of a foreign culture. T.Ishida's work examines the problems of intercultural interaction between Western and Eastern civilizations on the example of China and Japan [11]. For Eastern cultures, in which the significance of the individual was initially perceived as insignificant, the concepts of "civil society", "freedom", "democracy", "human rights" appear to be absolutely empty and alien. Linguistic problems arise when translating these terms into Japanese and Chinese. When the Japanese scientist T. Fukuzawa published his book «The Situation in the West» in 1986, he had to write a special preface in which he warned readers not to understand selfishness and self-will by the term "freedom". The word "freedom" entered the political vocabulary of the Japanese and Chinese only in the 20th century, in the era of the defense of political movements.

In both Eastern and Western civilizations, social subjects are focused on myth-making, through which one of the fundamental human needs is realized - the need for one's own identity. Another culture as the reality of strangers can be perceived as a phenomenon that calls into question their culture, that is, identity in its subjective manifestations. Therefore, ethnic cultures can enter into conflicts even in the absence of specific reasons causing hostility: simply because they are different. Consequently, the main ethnic conflict is a conflict of differences in ethnic cultures, as well as a clash of ways of realizing human needs. One of the options for overcoming differences in interethnic contradictions and conflicts is the dialogue of cultures and social subjects.

Along with the previously indicated philosophical concepts of the dialogue of cultures, sociological and ethnopolitical research contains the concept of interactions between social subjects, one of which is G. Blomer's "symbolic interactionism" [12]. The interaction between the subjects appears as continuous dialogues, during which people evaluate, interpret each other's certain intentions and react to them. Significance is acquired not only by actions and deeds, but also by intentions, motives. When subjects attach importance to any object, then it becomes for them the personification of meaning, a symbol or a collection of signs.

The strategy of multiculturalism in a digital society is losing ground and giving way to ethnopluralism. Within the framework of ethnopluralism, the problem of dialogue between cultures, ethnic groups, individuals acquires particular relevance, and with the expansion of the information space, the conditions and opportunities

for increasing the effectiveness of the dialogue change. In the space of intercultural communication and dialogue of cultures, contradictions in the relations of participants in interethnic contradictions and conflicts are revealed not only from the side of content parameters, but also from the side of semiotic-symbolic parameters of the difference in sociocultural expectations and preferences. This perspective of the study of interethnic contradictions acquires relevance and significance in the light of the digitalization of society and the formation of a virtual space.

IV. ETHNIC IDENTITY AND DIGITALIZATION OF SOCIETY

Considering the prospects for the impact of the digital revolution on culture and its ethnic components, it is necessary to turn to the study of the levels of relationship between ethnic identity and digitalization of society, to identify the relationship between the intensity of interethnic contradictions and conflicts in different regions and the level of development of digital technologies.

If we turn to the analysis of interethnic communications in the virtual space, that is, at the universal level, we can find that digital technologies are modifying not only the local ethnic cultures themselves, but also the dialogue of these ethnic cultures. At the special level, that is, the development of local ethnic cultures, in the process of the digital revolution, three foundations of local ethnic cultures are changing. From the standpoint of the territorial area of the local ethnic culture, the digital revolution replaces its "ethnopluralistic space" with universal cyberspace. From the point of view of changing the ways and methods of management, the culture of the information society can be opposed to traditional ethnic cultures, which carried an element of coercion. In the culture of the information society, social actors are focused on what is in the nature of innovation and consumer stereotypes. The third basis for the change in local ethnic cultures is a change in their language and methods of interethnic communication.

In the relationship between ethnic cultures and the outside world, two streams of information are involved in the process of information exchange. The vector of the incoming (incoming) information flow is directed from the outside, that is, into the ethnic culture from the external information field. The vector of the outgoing information flow is directed from the ethnoculture to the external information field.

The incoming flow of information can be characterized by the following features: scope, time, direction of information movement. The scope is understood as the number of subjects of ethnic groups that receive incoming information. Time in this case

characterizes the period during which a certain ethnic culture stores and uses information. The direction of information movement will determine the transfer of information between structures of the same social level (horizontal direction) or between structures of different social levels (vertical) [13].

The less information the ethnic culture has on this issue, the theoretically it should accept more external information. However, each ethnic culture is unique, and its information capacity is determined not only by the technical level of the culture, but also by its traditions. The information capacity of each ethnic culture is different and it is associated with the problem of information barriers. Let's highlight the following types of information barriers:

- geographical: the completeness and reliability of the information received depends on the distance between the ethnic group that receives the information and the ethnic group that creates the information;
- historical: the reliability and completeness of information for the time separating this or that event and the message about it;
- political: some information can be destroyed by political power;
- economic: lack of funds prevents the dissemination of information;
- linguistic: difference in languages;
- traditional: how the incoming information relates to the traditions of the ethnic group that receives it.

In the case of different information capacity of ethnic cultures, these ethnic cultures variably evaluate, assimilate and use the incoming information. If the traditions of two ethnic cultures are different, then with the same amount of incoming information for these ethnic cultures their information flows may differ. The processes of assessing, assimilating and using information coming into ethnic cultures are largely determined by the social structure of ethnic groups, the interests of local political elites and the problems of glocal culture. This trend starts to become dominant in the digital society.

Traditions and value orientations of ethnic cultures determine the flows of not only incoming (incoming), but also outgoing (outgoing) information. The volume of information directed outside the ethnos and its content can be controlled by the political and economic elite, in accordance with whose interests it either reflects the traditionality of its ethnic culture, or can be glocalized, convenient for other ethnic cultures and global culture as a whole. Modifications of traditions, as a rule, appear as a result of changes in the social

structure of an ethnic group in response to changes in the socio-political conditions of its existence.

The transition from closed local cultures to glocalized cultures is not a rejection of the norms and values of a particular ethnic group, determined by social space and time, but a transition to global values, taking into account their own uniqueness. As a reaction to the growth of changes, certain mechanisms of protection against destruction of value systems of local traditional cultures and adaptation to new communication conditions are gradually being developed.

There are three levels of interconnection between ethnic identity and digitalization of society. At the first universal level of interrelation between ethnic identity and digitalization of society, the preservation of the uniqueness of ethnic cultures does not lead to the erasure of differences between them, their subordination to some kind of artificial mega-culture (for example, a virtual computer culture with a single language). In the event of the formation of such a mega-culture, some less developed cultures can dissolve in the semiotic space of the virtual world. This type of communication field is dominated by stereotypical general assessments, general norms of behavior and communication, that is, the most accessible and simple components.

At the second special level of the relationship between ethnic identity and digitalization of society, there arise the preconditions for a possible dialogue of ethnic cultures, mutually enriching communication, which initiate the emergence of new sources of development. The communicative and semantic conditions of the dialogue between ethnic cultures are changing, the possibilities for personal self-improvement are increasing, social subjects and national elites are changing.

At the third individual-personal level of the relationship between ethnic identity and the digitalization of society, an individual being a representative of an ethnic group, as a result of the expansion of information and communication capabilities, receives grounds for adaptation to the conditions of global and glocal cultures, does not confine himself to the narrow framework of a locally limited traditional ethnic culture. At this level, new personality competencies arise and are formed - cognitive, communicative and creative, opportunities for educational and professional improvement and personal self-realization expand. An individual gets the opportunity to express himself fully, without leaving the space of ethnic culture, but taking part in the deployment of a global culture. As an example, it should be noted that the number of people working in the remote access system, freelancers, is growing all

over the world, and the distance learning system is being improved.

V. DIALOGUE OF ETHNIC CULTURES

The impact of digitalization on all aspects of the life of an ethnic group leads to changes in the forms and methods of updating the dialogue of ethnic cultures, which entails consequences in almost all spheres of social life, including the field of international relations. Modern digital technologies qualitatively change not only the processes of domestic political life, but also transform interstate relations, modify the role of international organizations, social movements, financial groups, criminal elements and individuals. Research and consideration of the significance of such new factors in modern international relations as information warfare, political and communication manipulations in the modern world are becoming part of the process of developing foreign policy decisions. The use of historical and cultural memory and the ethnic pluralism associated with it contributes to the formation of fundamentally different decision-making systems that focus on the preservation of ethnic uniqueness, and also create various options for dialogue between cultures and ethnic groups. The basis of such dialogue is the mechanism of communication, interethnic interaction, through which the connection between cultures is realized and a common communication field is created. At the same time, intercultural communication can be carried out both at the international, interethnic, and individual-personal levels. Moreover, even if communication occurs between individuals, it is not completely individual, since the person himself is a product of the socio-cultural environment and the process of socialization.

The communicative and informational function of local ethnic cultures is realized through language as a symbolic form of storing and transmitting information about cultural norms, values, traditions and cultural history. As a sign system, language functions in accordance with certain rules and norms, it is a living substance of ethnoculture. In the information era, like all other components of the social system, language also undergoes changes [14]. That is why semiotic and sign-symbolic approaches are used in cultural studies.

According to these approaches (Yu.M. Lotman, U. Eco, E. Cassirer), in the space of culture, ideal or material formations that have certain meanings and are a means of conveying meaning act as signs. It can be both material objects, body movements, various kinds of spiritual formations that have meaning and significance for social subjects. To paraphrase E.Cassirer, we can say that culture is a symbolic universe of communications. The dynamics of culture appears as a process of information exchange, expressed in the form of certain signs-symbols that

convey meanings, images and meanings. In intercultural communication as a dialogue, understanding of another culture is a must. It implies not only the perception of the results of awareness and knowledge of what the sign system gives, but it also assumes a deep penetration into all cultural levels, immersion in its field, getting used to culture, which presupposes certain competencies of social subjects.

The dialogue of local cultures of ethnic groups is realized in a special communication environment - the information field (S.A.Arutyunov) [15]. In the absence of such a field, dialogue is not possible, and the culture is relatively closed. Historical experience testifies to the existence of a number of cultures (Japanese, Chinese), the dialogue with which became possible for Europeans much later than with other ethnic groups. At the individual-personal level, a hermeneutic problem arises, and it is associated with the interpretation of the meanings of the sign system of another culture, and the attempts of interpretation in the absence of dialogue only led to the introduction into a foreign cultural environment of the meanings and images of one's own culture.

Dialogue of cultures is one of the most important conditions for interethnic communications, it includes various levels of implementation, and the success of this dialogue is always associated with the competencies, values and aspirations of social actors [16]. Knowledge of a foreign culture is based on one's own culture, and of one's own culture through a foreign one by adapting these cultures to each other, which contributes to the desire for a new dialogue.

The growing ethnic contradictions and conflicts, the difficulties of dialogue in this area are largely determined by the disproportionality in the prevalence of digital technologies. In most developing countries, full Internet connectivity with all available services is not universally available. For example, much of rural Africa still does not have a direct Internet connection. Half of all personal computers in the world are concentrated in the G7 states. The digital revolution of the Third World countries, in addition to cultural factors, also depends on economic factors, such as weak infrastructure, lack of necessary investments in education and training.

VI. CONCLUSION

As a result of the analysis of ethnopolitical concepts of multiculturalism and ethnopluralism, carried out in the article, it can be concluded that the strategy of multiculturalism in a digital society is losing ground and giving way to ethnopluralism. Within the framework of ethnopluralism, the problem of intercultural communication and dialogue between ethnic cultures is acquiring particular relevance, and with the expansion of the information space, the

conditions and opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of such dialogue change.

The dialogue of ethnic cultures is one of the most important conditions for interethnic communication, it includes various levels of implementation, and the success of this dialogue is always associated with the competencies, values and aspirations of social actors. Cognition of a foreign ethnic culture occurs through one's own culture and one's own culture is understood through another culture by adapting these ethnic cultures to each other, which contributes to the desire for their new dialogue.

In the context of society digitalization, the formation of glocal cultures is uneven, depending on the degree of digitalization of ethnic communities, which appears as a constraining factor in the dialogue of ethnic cultures. The growth of intercultural communication in a digital society requires a revision of strategies for resolving interethnic contradictions and conflicts and their philosophical justification.

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