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I. THE DIALOGUES OF CULTURAL WORLDS: RUSSIA – WEST–EAST

The Development of UNESCO Dialogue Models and Their Inclusion in the Cultural Policy Strategies

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Abstract

The article analyzes the development of the UNESCO's dialogue models and their incorporation into the strategies of cultural policy both in European Union and in Russia. The text explores common values as means of intercultural interaction associated with the new paradigms of thinking, the core of which is the philosophy of dialogue. The author claims that the genuine rapprochement of cultures is possible only in a situation of peace, justice, and mutual respect based on the observance of human rights, democratic participation in society, and fostering a sense of global responsibility.

Keywords: dialogue, UNESCO dialogue models, cultural policy, intercultural interaction, democratic values, global responsibility

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1. Introduction

The first years of the XXIst century were marked by an increased interest in cultural policy. This is largely conditioned by the global reactions to the contradictions of globalization generating both positive and negative trends that manifest themselves in interrelationships and interconnections of modern sociocultural, political, and economic processes [7]. There are a number of contradictory processes at work: global and regional economic and financial markets functioning as centers of development on every continent; the establishment of foundation for strengthening Eurasian associations and for developing new inter-regional alliances within the dynamic geopolitical context; the loss of stable reference points within the unified socio-economical space; and others. All of these processes increase the pressure of general cultural and civilizational challenges: social and economic inequality; illegal migration and social destruction; reduced opportunities for meaningful and active participation in cultural

How to cite this article: O. N. Astafieva, (2018), "The Development of UNESCO Dialogue Models and Their Inclusion in the Cultural Policy Strategies" in *Facets of Culture in the Age of Social Transition: Proceedings of the All-Russian Research Conference with International Participation*, KnE Engineering, pages 1–7. DOI 10.18502/keg.v3i8.3594

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life, for universal fair and good quality education and life-long learning, and for the gratification of cultural and spiritual needs.

2. Factors Influencing the Choice of Cultural Policy

Unprecedented benefits obtained by some nations as some sort of a 'globalization rent' continue to diminish the chances for other nations to progress quickly in their civilizational development; this creates a cumulatively increasing threat to international security [8]. The warning signs that the risks accompanying any geopolitical processes are systemic in nature, inspired intensive discussions at the turn of the century about common conceptual foundations for cultural policy (e.g., within the European Union) [2, 6, 9]. On the one hand, the trajectory of this policy is to increase convergence between nations, on the other hand, the need to acknowledge differentiation is obviously important: different social processes have different speeds and directions (the consequence of the 'Multi-speed Europe' policy). The dynamics of cultural processes clearly indicate a tendency toward universalization – despite the rhetoric on the importance of preserving cultural diversity, material and non-material heritage, developing tourism and creative industries that facilitate cultural life in urban areas and provide better opportunities for local communities. At the same time, experts believe that political incompleteness of the European Union may be explained by the difficult challenges of finding a balance between regional and national, and between national and pan-European, interests. An unresolved question of common European identity remains highly relevant to the search for common values, without which a community regularly faces serious stability challenges both in the situations of internal conflicts *within* nation states, and during the negotiations of geopolitical challenges within integrative unions.

The question of common values is the question of the forms of intercultural interactions, which throughout the last decades has been tied to the development of conceptual, methodological, philosophical and anthropological principles of the ontology of dialogic communication. However, these problems are not relegated to the field of academic research: they foster the new paradigm of thought centering around the philosophy of dialogue.

The importance of the questions of intercultural communications is based on a number of challenges that are global in character and depend on a wide range of various factors. The integrative tendencies are obvious: by the early XXIst century, strengthening economic ties reached their high point resulting in the establishment of the global

market, creating the system of political conglomerations, and developing forms of transnational and local interactions. It seemed that the positive tendencies of understanding, interconnections and interrelatedness were well under way, providing a vector for sustained global development. However, as in any highly complex system, these processes were accompanied by the slowly 'ripening' geopolitical challenges and sociocultural contradictions typical for the early period of the 'global disintegration' of humanity, whose 'eruption' and 'fault lines' we are witnessing today.

It is obvious that this scenario forced reevaluation of the ideas concerning the survival of humanity and has profoundly influenced their reception. This is also the cause of the changing attitudes towards intercultural communication, which is no longer seen as a purely theoretical problem. Moreover, increased international tensions influence culture as a whole, changing the interpretations of history and cultural memory, language and lifestyle. The central goal here is to ensure equal access to cultural diversity, active participation in cultural life and self-realization through individual creativity [3], compulsory education that translate knowledge, competencies, values and attitudes 'to establish sustainable and peaceful societies, including through global citizenship education and education for sustainable development [5]'.

Therefore, the question of choice in cultural policy, with its models of intercultural communication and various forms of interaction, becomes particularly important for the nation states in contemporary world. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) constantly has on its agenda questions of civilizational and cultural dialogue, and of cultural policy, which could foster contacts and long-term cooperation in different spheres under the new and changing social conditions. These issues are discussed also taking into account the geopolitical processes, economic crises and other dynamic sociocultural factors, which do not diminish the speed of risk growth and do not eliminate the potentially growing threats, thereby creating intercultural tensions that could, potentially, lead to serious civilizational confrontations.

It is generally accepted that, when cultural interaction happens not under the conditions of free development, but within the context of complex geopolitical discourse that imposes alien values, lifestyles and behavioral models and restricts the language, this leads to irreversible, and sometimes tragic, consequences. Historical experience confirms that, whether such phenomena take form of 'compulsory cultural assimilation' (when one culture possesses military or political dominance over the other), or of 'voluntary borrowing' that happens under positive social attitudes, they create a complex trail of consequences that may become apparent only years later [4, pp. 501–503]. The earliest consequences of the socio-political determinism are the symptoms

of cultural crisis and of the pressure to change national and social identity. They are caused, first, by the elite's demand for a new worldview and for the restructuring of the historical memory and, second, by the chosen cultural and civilizational trend that corrects the tendencies of socio-cultural institutes. Cultural policy becomes the main instrument used to realize these objectives. It influences both the general national development strategy, and the everyday practices of its citizens' social order and existence, which at present narrow opportunities for the self-realization of individuals, social groups and society in general.

3. Evolution of the Ideas of Dialogue

Under the globalizing conditions, cultural dynamics and the increasing opportunities for cultural interaction have created a demand for the new communicative strategies, extended the use of dialogic and polylogic models in various spheres (cultural, religious, ethical, aesthetic, etc.) and increased the need to develop strategies to support and stimulate positive communicative processes.

The studies of sociocultural dynamics within the context of ultra-rapid geopolitical, technical and technological changes, which have been conducted by modern social sciences and humanities, have created a discussion space focusing on the problems of how we develop the tools for institutional regulation of an intercultural dialogue that provides integrative and stabilizing influence for the society.

The majority of modern nation states today increasingly become multi-ethnic and multi-religious. Under these conditions, the states use their cultural policy tools to represent their cultural dialogue strategies, aligning them with the universal ideas and concepts approved by the global community.

Cultural policy concepts used by the states to facilitate and enrich intercultural experience, are based on dialogic principles, which are utilized in strategic planning and practical solutions, as well as in operation of international and intercultural institutes that foster a cultural dialogue. It is worth noting that, despite the fact that culture forms the basis of communications and society and, as a core of human capital, is integrated in almost all socio-economic processes, today, faced by the increasingly complex socio-political situations, geopolitical and economic transformations, it remains under-appreciated, and its resources – underutilized. Consequently, the value of dialogue strategy as an opposition to the isolationist and disintegrational strategy is not realized, since the role of culture in reducing ethnic and religious tensions is underestimated. At the same time, culture (language, religion, etc.) is increasingly seen as a

demarcation border between 'us' and 'them', therefore helping to define the direction of socio-political processes.

Therefore, in our opinion, the turn to the dialogue strategy is necessitated by the need for a governmental system to choose the models that could conceivably match the scale and dynamics of culture under the conditions of globalization, as well as its social challenges (widening communication gaps, inability to achieve civil consensus between different social groups and political parties, and the struggle between the local and the global cultural ideals, models and lifestyles). The relevance of dynamic models can be achieved by filling the general scheme with analytical assessments that determine the philosophy of dialogue that would be most suitable for today's cultural processes within the context of its fundamental principle of 'unity in diversity'.

Throughout the past decades, the 'dialogue' concept in UNESCO documents has evolved. From the theoretical viewpoint, this evolution increasingly widened its content, while in practical terms, dialogue strategy within a new cultural policy was accepted by a number of states: from acknowledging the importance of 'unity in diversity' and 'tolerance' to a 'path to dialogue', 'culture of peace', 'dialogue among civilizations'; and later to the support of the initiatives aiming to promote 'intercultural and interreligious dialogue', building 'bridges between cultures' and, finally, to the international plan of 'bringing cultures closer together'. This, in turn, facilitated the changes in governance principles and tools used to solve the most difficult challenges of our era of globalization and social transformations: addressing the vitally important need to find new points of rapprochement between cultural diversity and universal values. In other words, today the core of the concept of dialogue is the extension of rights and opportunities for current and future generations to facilitate exchange, communication and collaboration despite cultural, religious and national barriers. The goal of intensified interaction is to use initiatives and projects in education, art and cultural heritage, as well as information and communication technologies (ICT), in order to strengthen humanistic potential of the intercultural dialogue.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, we would like to say that, by interpreting dialogue as a process based on the acknowledgement of cultural diversity, adherence to the values of liberty, equality, love and social integration, we wanted to stress the fact that genuine cultural convergence may only happen in a situation of peace, justice and mutual respect based on the observance of human rights, democratic participation in society, and

fostering a sense of global responsibility. The most important tasks facing us today are: integrating principles aimed at fostering discourse of social coherence under multicultural conditions and facilitating dialogue for sustainable development together with its ethical, social and cultural aspects.

The search for dialogue, therefore, is connected not only to the choice and promotion of a concrete model of intercultural communication through the national cultural policy strategy, but also to the 'personal choice and responsibility' of every dialogue participant. These are the democratic principles and internalized ethical attitudes towards the culture of interaction that manifests itself as an individual's capacity to engage in the dialogue with the 'Other', despite their differences and diverging interests.

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