

3. Межкультурная коммуникация

УДК 620.9-047.645

Понимание различий между многокультурными и кросс-культурными сообществами

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Аннотация. Целью данного исследования является теоретический обзор и сравнительный анализ характерных черт многокультурных и кросс-культурных сообществ, поиск черт сходства и различия.

Ключевые слова: многокультурный, кросс-культурный, сравнительный, межкультурный

Understanding the Differences Between Multicultural and Cross-cultural Societies

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is a theoretical review and comparative analysis of the characteristics of multicultural and cross-cultural communities, the search for traits of similarity and difference.

Keywords: multicultural, cross-cultural, comparative, intercultural

The present article endeavors to provide an overall review of two concepts widely applicable when describing today's globalized world. With the societies becoming increasingly diverse and at the same time interconnected, the terms "multicultural" and "cross-cultural" have become used interchangeably to describe societies that are made up of people from different cultural backgrounds. The two terms bear a great many similar features, but they also have distinct semantic meaning that are important to understand.

The first difference comes from the construction of the words. The etymology of the word "multicultural" carries the prefix "multi-" that derives from the Latin word "multus" meaning "many" or "much" [10]. It is used to indicate the presence of many or several things. "A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics" provides the examples of words that use the prefix "multi-": multilingual [2, p.214] as the use of two or more languages; multiplexity [2, p.216] as the network of people linked by multiple ties.

The word "cross" has several meanings but here, it is used as a prefix that refers to something that is produced by combining two or more different things [10]. Some examples of words using the word "cross-" are: cross-checking as comparing different sources [10]; cross-functional as involving people from different departments or areas of expertise [11].

It is clear that both words "multi-" and "cross-" convey the idea of combining or bringing together different elements. The prefix "cross-" also emphasized the creation of something new or diverse. In order to understand the difference better, it is worth exploring more deeply into the semantics of the two terms.

"A dictionary of sociology" gives the following definition of multicultural society linking it to pluralism: "a society characterized by cultural pluralism" [4, p.434] meanwhile plural society is "treated as synonymous with multicultural society" [4,

p.498] and is recognized as consisting of “different linguistic, ethnic, religious, or racial groups and communities”. This concept of multiculturalism has a long history as there has always been a mixture of nations throughout the history, and the author describes it pretty well in his book “Multiculturalism: Roots and Realities” [5, p.ix]: “If we see the world from the perspective of many cultures and histories, we are in a better position to understand the past and the world today.” The first country to have a formal policy of multiculturalism was Canada in early 1970s. This was the result of the growing cultural diversity of the country [6, p.26] and the developments in the communities of immigrants.

Rattansi A. highlights the elements of integration within multiculturalism [6, p.27] meaning people coming from different cultural backgrounds to live in the same community. It is crucial to understand that the “concepts of race, class, culture, gender, and ethnicity are the driving themes of a multicultural approach” [5, p.ix]. As long as the ethnic identity is concerned, it is worth mentioning that one of the core distinctions of a particular ethnicity is the language: “Language forms a central aspect and symbol of ethnic identity” [2, p.101]. Language plays a vital role in shaping cultural identity and social integration. In a multicultural society, people are encouraged to use different languages to foster a more tolerant society.

Kymlichka W. defines multiculturalism as the “celebration of ethnocultural diversity, encouraging citizens to acknowledge and embrace the panoply of customs, traditions, music, and cuisine that exist in a multiethnic society” in her book “Multiculturalism: Success, Failure, and the Future” [7, p.5]. A significant feature of a multicultural society is that there is a strong tendency to maintain the cultural identity and practices. However, this has negative consequences as it may lead to tensions and conflicts within the groups or if a particular cultural or subcultural group feels marginalized or discriminated against. Kymlichka W. draws attention to the fact, that in a multicultural society, there may be some level of segregation between different cultural groups [7, p.6]: “Multiculturalism may be intended to encourage people to share their customs, but the assumption that each group has its own distinctive customs ignores processes of cultural adaptation, mixing, and *mélange*, as well as emerging

cultural commonalities, thereby potentially reinforcing perceptions of minorities as eternally ‘other’”. For example, different ethnic groups may live in different neighborhoods, attend different schools, some industries may be dominated by workers of a particular ethnicity. This segregation [8, p.392-393] can lead to a lack of understanding and communication between different cultural groups, which may result in stereotypes and prejudice [6, p.32]. The most well-known example of multicultural segregation is racism [8, p.396].

On the other hand, cross-culturalism refers to the comparison of different cultures and their practices, values and beliefs. The key to cross-cultural understanding lies in its psychological aspect as it is described by the authors [9, p.2], “... notice two important elements of the definition. This is a comparative field. Any study in cross-cultural psychology draws its conclusions from at least two samples that represent at least two cultural groups.”

A Dictionary of Sociology supports the concept of cross-culturalism as a comparative field as cross-culturalism falls under the scope of comparative sociology, [4, p.102] “where a sociological analysis is ... comparative, this usually involves the study ... across nation-states, ... Much of what is normally is normally referred to as comparative sociology is perhaps more accurately described as cross-national research.”

The development of cross-culturalism, just as multiculturalism, has been an ongoing process for centuries, and it relates to social anthropology which “grew out of a curiosity with other culture” [4, p.605]. “Similarities or differences between cultures were explained by the spread of influences from some cultures or by the movement of peoples”. The fact of migration and increase in communication between nations triggered high attention which cross-culturalism received in the 20th century with the growth of globalization as the researches state [8, p.6]: “Mounting immigration, urbanization, international employment, study abroad, and ease of foreign travel are facilitating contact between people with different racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.” The writers also add that “globalization has resulted in a quantum increase of cross-cultural marriages” [1, p.126]. According to these sources, cross-

culturalism refers to the study and comparison of different cultures, as well as the exploration of how people from different cultures interact and communicate with each other. The aim of it is to provide people living in a multicultural society with the knowledge of how to interrogate and interact successfully with due respect for diverse cultures.

Understanding cross-culturalism involves the definition of acculturation – the process of adapting to a new culture while maintaining one’s cultural identity [3, p.699]. Successful acculturation requires individuals to develop cross-cultural skills, including the ability to adapt to and tolerate cultural differences. In a cross-cultural society, people may come from different cultural backgrounds, but they interact, live together [1, p.7], study [1, p.83], and work together [1, p.189] on a daily basis. For instance, in a workplace such as an international school that hires individuals, school that hires individuals from different parts of the world, i.e. teachers from different cultural backgrounds to work together towards a common goal. A cross-cultural society may not place a significant emphasis on cultural identity but it recognizes the importance of cultural awareness in order to find ways to understand each other and work together effectively.

It is worth noting the main disadvantages of both concepts which themselves are another core distinction between multicultural and cross-cultural societies. As it was mentioned above, multicultural societies celebrate diversity and support the maintenance of cultural identity, however, this experience may lead to segregation and social exclusion [4, p.213].

Alternatively, cross-cultural concept advances the idea of convergence of cultures, which, undoubtedly, enriches societies and our civilization in general, but at the same time, heightens the risk of the loss of cultural identity as people adopt practices and mentalities from different cultures. This process is called “assimilation” and it [4, p.26] “has been criticized for exaggerating the importance of the values of the dominant group, and for neglecting the ability of ... subordinate groups ... affect the values of the dominant group and thereby create a melting-pot culture...”, a phenomenon when immigrants from various cultural backgrounds form “new hybrid

social and cultural forms” [4, p.407]. Here, the advocates of multicultural societies are concerned with how much the cultural diversity may be affected by cross-culturalism, as it is stated in 1966 by the British Home Secretary Roy Jenkins [6, p.28]: “I do not think we need in this country a ‘melting pot’, which will turn everyone out in a common mould... I define integration, therefore, not as a flattering process of uniformity, but cultural diversity, coupled with equality of opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.”

As a summary, the distinction between a multicultural society and a cross-cultural society is not just a matter of semantics. Even though both types of societies promote cultural exchange, the key differences show practical values of how people communicate with each other, what ideas are driven in the societies and what social structures are developed. Understanding the differences between multicultural and cross-cultural societies is especially relevant to creating an integrated society where people from all cultural backgrounds can thrive. This can be achieved only with taking the best from both concepts – cultural diversity and tolerance on one side, and intercultural understanding and collaboration on the other side.

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