The problems of Cultural Interaction and Intercultural Dialogue Actualization in Modern Ukrainian Society

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Abstract – The article deals with the problem of actualization of cultural interaction and intercultural dialogue in current conditions in Ukraine. The basic approaches to development of these cultural assets in society were clarified. Civic potential of cultural heritage was found that reflect the long history of the historic environment and it is a condition for its sustainable democratic development.

Key words – culture, dialogue, youth, diversity, identity, heritage.

I. Introduction

Culture in the contemporary world is the vector which provides a human with new knowledge, sense and purpose for existence, the feeling of world in which we live, contributing to acquirement of social capital, exercising the projection of future. Democratic culture is a way in which we observe a new model of society, which is based on stable development. The sights of history and culture is a source of historic experience of generations, which contain diverse information about the development of society in the past, promoting the spiritual development of personality, forming stable feeling of belonging to local community.

II. Part 1. Diversity and search for identity in multicultural society

A characteristic feature of the modern social development is ambivalence of civilization processes, which forsee, on the one hand, the development of social unification tendencies (the phenomena of globalization, close international cooperation in various spheres, mass migration process, etc.), and on the other hand, - the aspiration of an individual for preserving his/her own national identity and uniqueness. These processes play an important role not only in the world politics, but also in everyday life. We face an increasing diversity of points of view, values, meanings, ways of organizing activities.

Diversity envisages the awareness of own identity and perception of identity of another person. In the present multicultural society the socio-cultural perspective is closely connected with the feeling of identity. The problem of identity, individual and social choice under the conditions of diversity is actual for Ukrainian society.

Cultural diversity of society, on the one hand, forsees, positive perception of the uniqueness of cultures, of national-cultural differences, and on the other hand - the search for common value coordinates stimulating a constructive social dialogue, cooperation of various ethnic and confessional communities in a multicultural environment. The peculiarities of national composition of the population of Ukraine is its multicultural origin. Multiculturalness reflects cultural and national diversity of the Ukrainian society, promotes recognition of the right of all people to preserving, developing and enriching their cultural heritage, contributes to bringing up in them mutual understanding, respect and tolerance, ability for intercultural dialogue.

Cultural diversity, in particular, multietnicity and multiconfessionalism have strong historical roots in Ukraine. The dialogical character of the Ukrainian culture is conditioned by its geopolitical situation which gives scientists the reason to mention its borderline character in the context of its existence “between East and West”. In particular, Natalia Yakovenko states that “the space which is nowadays the territory of Ukraine has been divided for many centuries by permanently shifting internal borders: between language and ethinical groups, states, religions, political and cultural systems, areas with different economical systems. It made if a strongly pronounced contact zone with an extremely diverse range of socio-cultural phenomena.” “The territory of Ukraine, due to its geographical position at the junction of Eurasian Steppe and two bodies of European (“Byzantine” and “Latin”) cultures, is really “the crossroads” between Asia, the Orthodox and “Latin(Catholic)” Europe (Yakovenko, 2002)

Natalia Yakovenko has chosen a figure of Cossack which is significant for the Ukrainian history as an illustration for the thesis “Ukraine - Asian South/East”: “As a Christian hero he defends the “European” world, but his head is adorned with an old Bulgarian hairdo (a shaved head with a long strand of hair), he wears eastern clothes and he lives among military realia which had been transferred from nomadic Turkic Steppes” (Yakovenko, 2002).

At the same time, we consider right Olha Hnaiyuk’s opinion that the concepts of Europe and Asia, West and East mean much more than usual geographical terms, “they are too often attributed, even in scientific works, to possess valuable notions (e.g. Europe = democracy/ civilization/ individualism, Asia = despotism/ barbarism/ collectivism). That semantic excess plays an organizational role in constructing the notion of the Other/ Stranger who does not accept the values of a certain community…it is an “othering” which accompanies formation of stereotypes, it also allows proving domination over the Other/ Stranger” (Hnativyk, 2005).

As a result of these and other reasons, in multicultural society in Ukraine there arise problems connected with the youth’s disability to interact productively with representatives of other peoples and nationalities. Multiculturalness in the Ukrainian society is accompanied by a number of challenges, one of the main among which is an individual’s self-identification; unpreparedness of a considerable part of the society to make a conscious and responsible choice in the conditions of social and cultural diversity.
III. Part 2. Intercultural dialogue role in democratic society

The above-mentioned give us understanding that the problems of cultural interaction and intercultural dialogue play a considerable role in the modern social and scientific discourse of Ukraine. In modern philosophy the dialogue of cultures is considered as interpenetration of various cultures’ meanings in the process of interaction with the aim of transforming senses, meanings, concepts. Cultural dialogue foresees realizing by an individual cultural diversity, finding out peculiarities of the Other culture, positive perception of differences, tolerant attitude towards the Other, mutual influence and enrichment in the process of cognition (Bilchenko, 2007).

The new meanings of culture appear in the process of communication, which occur in common places, in the social space. Active character of cultural communication is carried out during the dialogue which has the purpose to shape, preserve, translate and develop cultural norms, values, knowledge and senses, promoting integration, social consolidation, which is important social request. It promotes the cognition and popularization of cultural heritage, values, meanings envisage the development of programs, which aim at dialogue and cooperation, involvement of local communities (individuals, public officials, business, cultural activists, civil society), search for new forms of presenting cultural products, familiarization with the social space of city.

The important task in modern socio-cultural conditions is teaching individuals through applying the all-accepted, socio-moral norms and principle as regarded to certain situation, providing them with the instrument which works in different problem situations and in different cultures. The development of tolerance, skills of constructive dialogue should be the object of the attention of cultural institutions under the conditions of present multicultural society. The detection of positive influence of different cultures during the process of cognition, critical analysis and open discussion of vulnerable and controversial questions promote overcoming of social biases and stereotypes.

The contemporary social institutions strive to shape the answers on social challenges, offering means for understanding and realization by young people the complex interconnections of historic past, shaping the vision of their future and the role, which they can play in social life. During the process of cognition and shaping of valuable attitude of individuals to the problems of cultural heritage, young people have the opportunity to get the stable feeling of belonging to the society by learning to make independent decisions, making prudent choices, anticipating the development of society in the future.

Conclusion

Thus the problem of actualization of intercultural dialogue as socio-cultural asset is viewed in the context of search of effective instrument for ensuring peace, prevention of conflicts, conciliation and understanding in Ukrainian society. Fundamental is mutual understanding of human values, following human rights, promoting respect for cultural diversity. Cultural abilities can provide the stable development in diverse society, influence through the cultural participation – realization of tolerance, empathy, feeling of belonging, trust, solidarity, social capital.

References