

Cultural Ties in a Globalization World: The Threats and Challenges

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Abstract: This article describes processes of interaction of cultures in the conditions of globalization, concept of cultural globalization, the reasons and essence of this phenomenon. The authors notes positive and negative sides of process of globalization of cultures, problem of preservation of cultural diversity in the world. The authors pay particular attention to the preservation of cultural diversity in the world. The article noted the contribution of international organizations (UNESCO, Council of Europe, the World Network for Cultural Diversity) in the preservation of cultural diversity in the world. In this article indicated the challenges and threats of globalization for cultural exchange, conclusions are made about the future prospects of globalization cultural relations.

Keywords: culture, cultural ties, cultural globalization, multiculturalism, preservation of cultural diversity

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1. The impact of globalization on cultural exchange

Contacts and relationships between cultures arise from a wide variety of reasons. In modern conditions, the rapid development of intercultural exchange occurs in different areas of human life: art, education, science, tourism, sports, economic, military, political cooperation, personal and business contacts, etc. The geopolitical, social and economic changes on a worldwide scale, which occurred in recent years, have led to the migration of peoples, unprecedented in its scope. Travelling for business, scientific, educational and other purposes were intensified; the international tourism started to develop rapidly. As a consequence, intercultural communication became much more active. As the result of these processes, more and more people overcome the cultural barriers separated them before. New cultural phenomena, new cultural ideas and shapes are formed, the borders between own and foreign cultures disappear, and new trends and authors of cultural exchange appear.

The reasons for increasing activation of intercultural relations are quite different, but they include the most important ones, which, in our opinion, are the following: development of mass media and communication; expanding opportunities for intercultural exchange; dramatically increased necessity of intercultural contacts, caused by significant migration processes; the intensification of economic and political cooperation and therefore the cultural contacts; finding ways and means of solving global problems of modern age [8, p. 32-33].

It should be remembered also about the opportunities that a global Internet network provides, which creates conditions for direct efficient communication with representatives of foreign countries and cultures. Due to the increasing openness of the world and the development of new technical means of communication, the representatives of different cultures obtain the ability for communication, active exchanges, as well as new knowledge and understanding of each other's culture.

Another important factor activating intercultural communication is globalization with its tendency to close relationship and interaction between the cultures. Globalization affects almost all the spheres and aspects of modern life. It is characterized by the processes of interaction between peoples and countries overcoming the state and national barriers, the active exchange of information of a scientific, economic, political, cultural, domestic and other nature.

There are traditionally significant differences between cultures in the means of interaction with bearers of other cultures. However, globalization eliminates these differences. The result of new intercultural relations caused by globalization was a widespread availability of direct contacts with other cultures, which was not previously possible.

2. The concept and essence of cultural globalization

Some experts, taking into account the features and comprehensiveness of contemporary global processes, started to talk about the phenomenon of “cultural globalization” which is a process of integration of individual national cultures in a single global culture based on the development of vehicles, economic relations and means of communication. It is expressed in expanding cultural contacts, assimilation of cultural values and the “overflow” of people from one culture to another. In the modern sense, the term “cultural globalization” appeared in the late 80s of the XX century due to the problem of rapprochement of nations and the expansion of cultural contacts of the peoples in the process of their intercultural communication [9]. The concepts of global culture and cultural globalization were considered in detail in the works of R. Robertson, P. Berger, E.D. Smith, S. Huntington and others.

Many researchers also link the process of cultural globalization with Westernization processes, i.e., the expansion of Western individualistic cultural values and norms among the predominant part of the world’s population, or Americanization, i.e., assimilation of American cultural models. Anyway, the main causes of globalization of culture should be regarded as open borders for cultural influence and the growing cultural communication based on the activation of inter-cultural contacts.

Under the influence of globalization a certain common, unified cultural standard or sample is formed, which destroys the diversity of traditional schemes of life, customs and cultural identities. Cultural globalization catalyzes the processes of displacement of one national cultures with the other or turning them into international ones. Many researchers regard such processes as the loss of national cultural values, which represents a significant threat to the modern society.

3. Globalization and the problem of preserving cultural diversity

The preservation of cultural diversity in the modern world became one of the major problems facing humanity. It is no coincidence that many international organizations proclaimed the preservation of cultural diversity as one of its most important tasks. The problem of cultural diversity firmly established in a number of key spheres of UNESCO's activities. Cultural diversity is regarded by the organization as the main condition of cultural enrichment, the preservation of moral and ethical values. Maintaining the cultural diversity is necessary to combat against poverty and achieve sustainable development, it promotes the dialogue between civilizations, cultures, respect and overall understanding.

The main document of UNESCO on world cultural diversity issues was the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted in 2001. The Declaration of content is determined by four main issues: diversity and pluralism, cultural diversity and human rights, cultural diversity and creativity, cultural diversity and international solidarity [5].

In the development of the most important provisions of the Declaration on Cultural Diversity in 2009 UNESCO prepared the report "Investing in cultural diversity and dialogue between cultures" [4]. It notes the importance of cultural diversity for the resolution of global problems, calls for active cooperation to achieve common positive results.

The protection of cultural diversity, the preservation of the culture of peoples – all this is being actively discussed in the Council of Europe. In 2008, the "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue" was approved, which represents the study of the experience of European countries for the purpose of population of the cultural dialogue, reduction of tension and achievement of understanding. The White Paper accumulates the European approaches to cultural diversity; it provides a large number of recommendations to countries on the implementation and facilitation of the development of intercultural dialogue. Particular attention is paid to different approaches to the problems of cultural relations. Multiculturalism has ceased to be an adequate policy. The Council of Europe proposes to replace the concept of multiculturalism with the concept of intercultural dialogue, which is based on the principle of creation of a dialogue on the basis of equal dignity and shared values [6].

At the same time, the European Union declared the “Year of Intercultural Dialogue”. The main objective of the project was to maintain the cultural diversity of European countries and to promote the development of intercultural dialogue within the EU and beyond. The events that took place within the “Year of Intercultural Dialogue” contributed to the promotion of ideas of cultural diversity and dialogue between cultures, and attracted the attention of a wider audience to the problems of the dialogue development. A positive aspect was the involvement of young people and focus on activities, primarily on a younger audience.

The World Network for Cultural Diversity is also engaged issues of preserving cultural diversity in the world, which brings together artists, cultural figures. They see their purpose to deal with cultural homogenization caused by the process of globalization. Now the organization has 500 members from 70 countries. The organization projects are carried out in different spheres: music, films, publishing, crafts, copyright, and many others. For example, in 2003, together with the International Union of musicians the workshops for African musicians were held in the countries of South Africa [2].

4. Threats and challenges of globalization for cultural relations

Indeed, globalization holds the possibility of loss of cultural identity. However, it is not quite so, because on the other hand, globalization contributes to the enrichment of national cultures with new, previously unknown cultural patterns. As the result of intensified cultural exchanges a lot of people obtained an opportunity to get acquainted easily with the cultural achievements of other nations. For example, in an international study conducted in the early 2000s only 19% of surveyed Italians, 24% of Germans, 27% of British people and 33% of the French said that American popular culture, music, TV, films represent a serious threat to the cultures of other countries in the world [7. p. 115]. At the same time, they noted that they would not want to lose the opportunity to get acquainted further with these cultural patterns.

Therefore, the processes of globalization of culture should not be assessed from one side because they simultaneously lead to the emergence of new forms of culture and lifestyle. This mix of cultures is observed not only in the life of individuals, it is increasingly becoming a feature for entire societies and states.

Conclusions

Current trends in cultural globalization also open up new forms of culture, based on the close relationship between the economy and culture, which leads to economization of culture or culturalization of economy. This interaction has led to the formation of a vast sector of cultural industry including printing, music publication and cinematography, audio-, video- and multimedia production, computer games, CD and DVD discs. Currently, it is one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy and trade, which amounts to 7% of the total gross income [3]. The notion of cultural industry for the first time was introduced by the representatives of the Frankfurt School, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in his “Dialectics of Enlightenment” [1].

Cultural globalization is a dialectical process that involves both integration, universalization and differentiation, both conflicts and cooperation, both absorption of cultures and cultural exchange. And all this, in our view, creates the conditions for the internal development of culture in general.

The process of cultural globalization, as well as the associated process of interpenetration of cultures, is inevitable. In terms of active cooperation between countries with different cultural values it is necessary to develop new principles of intercultural exchange which should be based not on imposition of one culture to the bearers of other cultures, but the principle of equal international dialogue when all its participants are equal and have mutual respect for the cultural identity of each other. The principles of dialogue between cultures and civilizations, equal cooperation and interaction between cultures should become the hallmarks of contemporary cross-cultural exchange.

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