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Multiculturalism in democratic society: liberal freedoms, equality of cultures and the problem of recognition in Ukraine

Current integrative trends in the world's political and economical life effect socio-cultural development of different nations and [ethnic]cultural communities inside the multicultural (multiethnic, multiconfessional, etc.) [1] society. The number of countries involved in the processes of creation of various blocks and communities, appreciably grew in the last decades, and, as a result, there are appropriate shifts towards the formation of multicultural society. The study of the patterns of this influence can enable the forecasting of the future prospects of communities' development as well as preventing conflicts in intercultural relations not only at the level of daily practical relations in the society, but much earlier - during instructive and educational process.

The prevailing in the modern western literature viewpoint at multicultural issues reduces them merely to political dimension [A.Etzioni, Ch.Kukathas, A.Schlezingler (Jr.)], to the issues of the citizenship and minority rights [J.Habermas, W.Kymlicka, M.Walzer], or at least to inter-ethnic and inter-racial relations [Ch.Taylor, N.Glazer, J.Tamir]. To my opinion, these issues are important not only from the point of view of the politics, but, first of

all, from the point of view of sociocultural theories and tasks of educational system reformation.

In light of these tendencies and processes one should think about the future of Ukraine among the states and nations at the world level. I guess, it's too soon to make some forecasts whether entering international blocks will give Ukraine an opportunity to solve its internal and external problems. It's obvious, that this concerns not only the question about any benefits for Ukraine. Main problem is what will be the benefit for other European countries after we enter the European Community, and in the longer term - to other blocks of highly developed states.

The mainstream of modern world's cultural and social development is the strong integrative trend among the states and nations. The number of countries involved in this process is supposed to be constantly rising. In this case there exist several problems:

First, this process can go in positive direction only if there exist some "open" societies (in the meaning of the "openness inside" - confidence, sincerity and openness at the level of religious and ethnic relations in society).

Second, the integration of cultures comes across the problem of intercultural relations between the integrating nations.

Third, there exists a need to preserve the nations' culture from assimilation in such integrative process.

And the last, the danger of assimilation of the minorities' cultures still exists and it is the main obstacle for achieving the inner and outer openness.

These problems appear to be common for all the nations and states. So the full-blooded development of Ukraine also depends upon their positive resolution.

I suppose that resolution of the major problems of the social & cultural development of states can be achieved by providing multiculturalism in all spheres of the society's life.

The achievement by the states of such condition requires of them the important changes in ways, forms of life, managing and also in the social relations. Reality and consequences of this process will depend on both - objective and subjective – factors existing in those states and their peoples that will join to such blocks or communities of nations.

If we take into account the *objective* factors we may assume that the levels of economic, political and social development of the most integrating states can be in quantity and quality almost similar or at least comparable. But the *subjective*, spiritual and cultural aspect is even more important. When some cultural unit (e.g., a nation) is joining some territorial/regional and furthermore - global commonwealth, based on free and conscious choice of its people, the question of destiny of culture in such integrated unit remains on schedule. As for Ukraine, this problem is linked with prospects of its national state development and equilibrating in this process of national and universal foundations.

These problems are particularly important for the Ukrainian society in the context of understanding of the meaning of correlation between culture and identity (national in particular) during post-totalitarian/postcolonial time. The foundations of intercultural relations being formed now will determine all further sequence of events in the society. This process often takes on inconsistent features. On the one hand, the dominant culture is the influential factor of imperial hegemony. At the same time, the culture is one of the powerful factors of resistance to imperial influence in postcolonial societies.

But the paradox is that the liberated culture itself can become monistic, gaining the rhetoric and dominant functions of imperial culture. Therefore the postcolonial society being developed on democratic and liberal principles nonetheless faces not only social and political, but also cultural problems at the very first days of its existence.

We can hardly find now any state with homogeneous population (in racial, ethnic or religious sense). Therefore we can consider that there are no mono-cultural states in present. Even mono-ethnic communities can't be regarded as mono-cultural, as the representatives of an ethnic group can belong to different religious, confessional groups. They can obtain different ways of life, share some local traditions, customs, they speak different language dialects and so on. After all even the most homogeneous community appears under more detailed analysis to be an enormous socio-cultural conglomeration of various (and different) cultural movements, associations, counter-cultural groupings, age, professional, confessional subcultures, etc. And the ethnic minorities are also inevitably present inside this community.

Hence, the term "multiculturalism" can be used to characterize ethnic, confessional and cultural relations between the representatives of certain large communities within a state but we shouldn't reduce its meaning to these relations. It covers all range of spiritual interactions inside the society. By the way, they can be not only friendly or, at least, indifferent, but also intense, even aggressive. Is the society able in that case to make any futuristic forecasts about the consequences of its entry to global community?

In theoretical and practical aspects the "multiculturalism" is a term that defines all modern civilization formed as a complex system of cooperating and organic multicultural communities, which integrate or are already

integrated in it. Just the presence of multicultural features, that radically enrich the society in social and spiritual senses, is recognized as the main characteristic of the society of modern type.

At first sight, it seems that such understanding of multiculturalism leads to emergence of some new - multicultural - *monism*, if it pretends to be an adequate basis for understanding the modern society and civilization. How then in the context of formation and development of a *new* society (in symbolical, cultural, political senses) not to lose from the field of sight any, say, worldview orientations? But the content of cultural pluralism just consists in the fact that all of them (worldview orientations) may be developed, expressed and asserted in free way. It requires quite different level of the understanding such categories as freedom, necessity and responsibility. The removal of external control of behavior and activity of some social subject, that itself, working on the discretion, freely, can estimate itself as a criterion of its proper freedom.

Certainly, the subjects can be different. The societies may also differ from each other by the form of multiculturalism. One society, for instance, can be characterized by large, geographically concentrated ethnic groups that will result in specific forms of multiculturalism with predominantly political deviation, claims on the part of these ethnic groups and minorities about territorial or even national and state autonomy, etc. In particular, the majority of former republics of the USSR acquired such type of multiculturalism yet from the imperial times. Here the problem of minorities is very vexed. Disintegration of the USSR has caused processes of new migration of repatriates, refugees, and representatives of exiled peoples too.

In Ukraine this problem is not so vexed, though there are no causes for self-consolation. At least, it is stated by different authors that even despite

anti-Russian disposition in all former Soviet republics, in Ukraine the Russians are almost well integrated in social, political and economic processes and are not subject to any discrimination [2], whereas in other post-communist states the turn to national self-identification, culture, language has put the Russian population before the perspective to get the status of the citizens "of the second grade" or to lose the citizenship at all. The rights of national minorities in our country, including cultural rights, are protected by the legislation on national minorities, according to which the representatives of the latter have the right to free development of language, education of children in educational institutions with national (in parallel with state language) language of teaching. Now the Ministry of nationalities, migration and cults deals with minorities' affairs. Hence, the main problem for some regions of Ukraine at present is not the support and preservation of the minorities' rights, but "the satisfaction of requirements of not very numerous Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians in cities of Eastern and Southern Ukraine, who are deprived of schools, local press and TV in native language " [3].

Modern multicultural picture of Europe (to which Ukraine does belong now) is characterized by some new features, which were not peculiar to it ten years ago. In particular, they include not only the development of national, but also collective identity, revival of nationalist movements and ideologies, which share xenophobia, racism and national intolerance, development of religious fundamentalism, regional and other separatist movements. As a result of new consolidating processes (in which the peoples of post-totalitarian countries are also involved) there occurs the socio- economic and political constituting of the European Community and search of collective *European identity*, that, probably, in the long term will become a consolidating

factor for societies where the question of intercultural (not only interethnic) relations is very vexed.

We may say with assurance that one of the causes of division of society into majority/minorities is often the "minoritarian" (J.Deleuse, F.Guattari) [4] self-estimation of the representatives of some community, because the minorities in modern society may be defined and classified only in structural way. These are groups of people, who have recessive status because of the appropriate balance of forces, quantitative characteristics and laws, which define this status, opposing these groups to other groups within a social whole, like the minority is opposing to the majority. Therefore the minority situation of these groups can't be unequivocally appreciated as a consequence of discriminative policy of the state. Here may even appear the bilateral relation between "discriminative" behavior of the majority and "undervaluable" behavior of minorities owing to the historically generated complexes and stereotypes of the attitude towards other peoples and complexes of self-estimation, fault and expiation, etc.

Understanding of a multicultural society as such, where the communities with various ethnic sources and religious traditions can coexist independently from each other or merge in a single whole, losing thus their individual features, arises rather from misunderstanding of essence of the problem and neglecting the features of present stage of social development. The static sight on culture stipulates for the concept of "mosaic", where all communities are seen as placed on the surface and being motionless, without taking into account the interaction of individuals, groups and communities, as well as the conditions of their interrelation, which define the efficiency of interaction.

Any approach to sociocultural communities should be guided by the factors of their interaction, instead of examining them from the point of view of dichotomy (majority - minority, aboriginal population - newcomers). All these communities at the present moment make the unique multicultural community, create a common history, having and sharing at the same time their own (for example, - ethnic) history, language, religion and so forth. On the other hand, it would be wrong to give the absolute preference to the consolidating factors, as they can stimulate the identification of multiculturalism with notorious doctrine of the "melting pot", in which the various cultures should disappear, being dissolved in peculiar cosmopolitan ersatz culture.

It should be noted that in multicultural society each individual is capable to keep his own identity, in spite of influence from other cultures. *The analysis of basic socially important components of culture (cognitive, valuable, normative, emotional, behavioral, etc.) proves that in a multicultural society each individual may belong at the same time to several cultures* and that the representatives of "minorities" can be fully integrated in the society, keeping, at least at the beginning, the system of their own ethnic, cultural, mental, valuable and other specific nationally conditioned attributes.

Similarly, the misunderstanding of the contents of multiculturalism leads to reduction of all variety of multicultural relations within a society only to the relations between majority and minority or, otherwise, to the problem of socio-cultural status of minorities (already mentioned above).

In modern world the decentralization tendencies appreciably increased in the countries that until recently were excessively centralized. But it is impossible to stop any social shift at once. They find the response at the lowest structural levels of the society, at least in the form of the ambiguous

attitude to the "center". The stereotype of the attitude to the centralization of the state after declaration by Ukraine of its political independence was mechanically transferred on its own - already national state center. Especially it is obvious when the "old" elite takes over the helm of power in new society. Without it, certainly, it is impossible to reach the maximal effect of social and political efforts of a new leading level and to save the continuous heaviness of state traditions. However, not all representatives of the old elite are positively adjusted on sovereign development of the Ukrainian state, as well as not all strata of the population approvingly react toward this very way of social development and solving the problem of mutual relations between elites. Accordingly, the extreme consequence of this is the enthusiasm for the regionalism that is accompanied by new rise of nationalism and that does not stop only on the social self-affirmation of ethnic groups [5].

The religion is also important factor of the present stage of development of Ukraine in the multicultural context. Increase of social importance and weight of this factor is caused, in particular, by the dissemination in the country of the "alternative" religiosity, including east cults. Such phenomenon, taken into account with existing inter-confessional problems and tensions within the "traditional" for Ukraine Christianity, makes the *religious pluralism* a powerful factor of multicultural development not only in Ukraine, but also for the whole Europe. Even predominantly secular countries are compelled today to solve problems of religious life to define the place and role of religion in social and cultural sphere.

One of the ways to reach the multicultural condition, however, not ultimate, is **bilingualism**. It does not mean the compulsion of study and teaching in educational institutions equally with the Ukrainian state language the Russian as "a language of international communication". It is necessary

in educational sphere to associate the education in native language with education in state language. Then for ethnic Ukrainians it would be possible to study one of the most widespread languages in the region of ethnic minorities.

At the present time Ukraine, from the point of view of development of multiculturalism, faces a lot of tasks and unsolved problems, which must be solved for the purpose of full-fledged integration into commonwealth of the civilized European states. But just from the very beginning it is necessary to ***identify and investigate the causes of these problems***, to analyze the ways of their solution and to study and to weigh all possible consequences. These ***preliminary investigations*** should apply to the study of socioeconomic, political, professional status of the representatives of minorities, and finally - their representation both at regional and nation-wide levels. It is necessary also to find out the adequate correlation links between ethnic, religious, self-identification, origin, social status, educational levels of the minority representatives, to find out the parameters of social and political activity of different minorities, the presence of biases and stereotypes and to make some correlation.

The obtained data and parameters can give necessary information concerning priority directions of efforts in the field of multicultural development of a society, and also in elaboration of ways and concepts of multicultural education and in planning and realization of new researches in multicultural sphere. In particular, very useful may be the sociological researches of minorities' attitude toward official national and multicultural policy, public support of multiculturalism at various public levels and its changes with current of time. Another important problem of empirical researches of efficiency of multicultural development - analysis of changes of

social activity of minorities, their involvement in elective processes, in bodies of authorities, official institutions, justice, education, social services, financial and business circles and cultural sphere.

Certainly, the multiculturalism does not set itself as an object the leveling of all in racial and ethnic, linguistic and cultural, confessional senses or to hold the cultural life of a society under the rigid control on the part of the state. The sole purpose, which it pursues, is the equilibration of all cultural groups and minorities in the society and their representatives in all rights under condition of preservation of all ethnic and cultural features.

The notion of culture itself in such context is already thought in categories of spiritual interaction of various public groups and forces. Achievements and experience obtained in this issues by the foreign scientists and governments of Western democracies do confirm the need to apply efforts to multicultural development of Ukraine. In the realm of science it means to study problems and prospects, ways and possible consequences of this development.

Rather a significant experience of introduction of multiculturalism on liberal and democratic foundations exists in the USA and Canada, which are recognized as first multicultural states - not simply in the sense of diversity of the population, but in the way of managing this diversity. However, I must specify beforehand – not the copying, but the creative understanding of this experience as well as the positive experience of other countries will give Ukraine an opportunity to become a really democratic multicultural state.

Regardless of the fact that the multiculturalism is often associated with liberal and democratic principles of construction of a society, it should be noted, that even the liberal theory itself, which originates from the concept of the public agreement, has practically nothing in common with ideas of the

founders of this theory. Thus, J.Locke in his "Essay on the human reason" and in "The First treatise about government" speaks rather about political system, which does not meet the liberal ideal of "the welfare" at all. The Locke's model rather contains a set of procedural principles, which allow the state to keep neutrality within different citizens' concepts of welfare. By their content and form these concepts are derivatives from various cultures of these citizens. Therefore, when the state does not recognize these concepts, or even worse - ignores them - it breaks the principle of equality, and, consequently, the foundations of the civil society as such. By doing so, the state risks to collide with concepts of cultural identity and authenticity of citizens, to offend their civil dignity.

The responsibility of the liberal state consists in granting an equal recognition - in all senses - to the cultures of its all citizens. If it deviates from the role of the neutral arbitrator in order, for example, to protect some cultural forms (e.g., protection of French-speaking culture in English-speaking country in Quebec) [6], it risks to violate the rights of identity of those citizens, who do not belong to this culture, limiting thus their freedom in a morally unacceptable way.

The need of **recognition** in these cases is caused by existence of **connection between recognition and identity** (comprehension of ethnic, cultural, political and other belonging, up to fundamental attributes of belonging to the human race). But first of all, it is about cultural identity, which is defined by a set of norms of behavior, values and estimations, customs, language, which unite and distinguish one group of the people from another. The cultural identity is in direct connection with ethnic identity, though it can not be reduced to the latter, that defines the collective consciousness of ethnic group, in particular - minorities, about common origin, etc., however it

includes cultural aspects only in fragmentary, ethnocentric form. However, as it was mentioned before, our identity is concerned not only with recognition, but also with its absence both at personal level (minority complex) and with non-recognition by "neighbors".

Therefore the non-recognition or inadequate recognition can be harmful, and is a form of discrimination, forcing "another" to an unusable, humiliating way of living [7]. Moreover, the erroneous recognition is not only evidence of lack of appropriate respect to "another" or "others". It can cause serious emotional damage, up to formation in the man a mean and primitive feeling hatred against himself. Thus, appropriate (adequate) recognition is not simply a formal legal courtesy. It is one of basic vital needs of the man.

Therefore, the basis of a cultural diversity is an opportunity of formation and definition of proper identity and it is given to everyone equally. The need of equal recognition exceeds the bounds of a simple comprehension of potential equivalence of all peoples and this provides an adequate estimation of the level to which this potentiality has developed. From this it follows that in the majority of cases the principle of equal respect provides blind, and consequently - indifferent attitude to the people. On the other hand, we must recognize and even encourage "otherness", originality, and peculiarity. **As a consequence, it generates a danger of infringement of the principle of non-discrimination.** Blinded neutrality of policy of cultures' equalizing at closer examination appears as upholding or inheritance of this very predominant culture.

In particular, it is a question of **multicultural education**, upon which, strictly speaking, depends not only the direction of multicultural development, but also the possibility of such development in general. Almost all societies are inclined to try to reproduce their models [8], and they use to do it through

the educational system. However, the latter, in our opinion, is not capable to adhere unequivocally to the liberal principle of neutrality.

The point is that the education is developing and reproducing with the help of language, and the act of choice of a language of communication and teaching is not neutral, as this choice results in cultural dimension as domination of one “signal system”, language, culture over another[s] [9]. Can those whose language was not chosen agree with such choice?! However, to refuse such choice (that is to shift the choice of language of dialogue and, at the same time, the responsibility for it, on local cultural groups) means to put under threat one of the most reliable sources of support of the state structure as such. In the case with of Tailor’s essay it means the same as to grant various cultural minorities (not necessarily French-speaking) a chance to build “their own Quebec”, that is - several Quebecs on the same territory, on which by this time there will be no Quebec at all [10].

And even if we take into account the cultural neutrality in similar situations of such educational disciplines, as mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc., it should be remembered that these subjects make insignificant minority in educational process. The study of literature, art, history, social disciplines provides a cultural choice. By such choice in any case we do not mean, say, the study of separate sections of history of Russia under specific (negative) standpoint, as it would contradict school ethics. It goes rather about a choice concerning expediency of study of the Russian history in general, when there is a risk of subjectivism and falsifications in its analysis. The experience of the United States of America and Great Britain proves that this situation can be complicated even more by "compulsory" multicultural education [11]. The logic is simple: we live now in the

multicultural world, where all cultures are of equal worth, so the education must also make effort in celebrating cultural diversity. However, this celebrating exceeds the bounds of the simple recognition of diversity and provide concept of a priori substantive estimation. In other words, when glorifying, we confirm our own undoubtedly positive (far from neutral) attitude to the diversity (intentional section of evaluative judgment). If in the certain sense all existing cultures are equal (for example, they provide identity of their carriers), it yet does not mean their absolute equality in every respect for any nation or state and even more so it does not mean that the educational system should assert it.

Even when we assume the possibility of equivalent estimations, a priori approach to the study of cultural artifacts is unacceptable, as the estimation of the cultural importance a priori deprives the estimation in general of any essential contents, and consequently - of any value.

Therefore it goes rather about whether the survival of concrete culture can be recognized as legitimate purpose, whether the collective purposes are taken into account as legitimate grounding on legal and other levels of social policy. Hence, the initial stage consists in granting to cultures the equal rights to protect themselves within reasonable limits. The further logic of events will require the **recognition** of the equivalence of various cultures first of all for world culture, and consequently, not only granting them the possibility to survive, but also for comprehension of their cultural importance in general [12].

The cultural diversity and issues related to it can have various meanings in different countries of the world, depending on conditions of formation of ethnocultural landscape of each concrete society. USA, for example, - pioneers of multiculturalism - is a society, which has been

formed predominantly by the immigrants. And for many cultural (ethnic, racial, religious and the like) groups this immigration was not voluntary. Therefore, the evolution of intercultural relations, their understanding and, accordingly, the features of multicultural education in this country often sharply differ from multicultural problems, say, in England or France, where, at least, the majority of the immigrants voluntarily join the local dominant culture and, hence, bring in their part to its development [13]. The situation in the society and the needs for its change in Afro-Americans who are descendants of the slaves, and consequently live in the USA at least as long, as natives from Europe, unavoidably will differ qualitatively and quantitatively from the needs and situation of Afro-British or Franco-Algerians whose closest ancestors arrived to Great Britain and France respectively rather for economic reasons.

Therefore the neglect of latter and misunderstanding of features of inter-cultural relations can cause the situation where the problem of spiritual and cultural survival of any sociocultural unit will be on agenda, instead of the recognition of its equality with others. Eventually, the ***multiculturalism - in descriptive and normative sense*** - gives an opportunity to prevent and eliminate similar annoying consequences. However, as it can be seen, the multicultural theory itself having already some decades history of development, is still full of ***paradoxes*** and requires careful improvement to be effectively introduced in daily practice of intercultural relations in Ukraine. And this is a basis and impact for elaboration of our own multicultural theory, education and policy, that will take into account all existing - both positive and negative - world experience of multiculturalism.

And if in the political sense Ukraine does not face yet the problem of intercultural relations, it means that we still have chance and time to develop the multicultural theory and to integrate it in democratic new-built educational

system and, thus, to prevent from the aggravation of this problem and to avoid possible negative consequences.

Notes:

1. The concept of multiculturalism or cultural diversity in a society is not limited by multiethnic and multiconfessional features of its population, as when the matter is about cultural diversity in modern culturology, it means, first of all, the diversity of identities (including ethnic and confessional, racial, professional, age, genetic/sexual, etc.) that define sociocultural orientation of activity of their carriers.
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3. Striha M. Cultural policy of Ukraine: regional, ethnic and confessional aspects // Suchasnist.-1995.-Part 9.-P.77(in Ukrainian). **Also see:** Ukrainians In Search of Their Identity /by Taras Kuzio/ In: RFE/RL NEWSLINE Vol. 4, No. 193, Part II, 5 October 2000; The Russian Language in Ukraine: A Look at the Numbers and Trends /by Roman Solchanyk In: The Ukrainian Weekly, 5 March 2000
4. J.Deleuse and F.Guattari assume that the problem can be seen via "majoritarian" vs "minoritarian" systems of representation as well as through their social consequences. They believe that the minoritarian status is not determined because some quantitative features but because of existence of marginalized interests inside the society (e.g.: marginalized and minoritarian status of women in many patriarchal societies can exist even though women will compose the numeral majority within these societies).
5. As an example: taking into account the contents of the majority of speeches and general atmosphere, the international scientific conference "Regionalism. Multiculturalism. Cross-culture " (Alupka, Crimea, 1999) was devoted, first of all, to the problems of Crimean regionalism.
6. See: Bondaruk S.O. Multiculturalism in Canada: 20 years of trials-and-errors, or How not to invent a bicycle // Suchasnist.- 1996. - Parts 3-4. - P. 171-175. (in Ukrainian); Twenty Years of Multiculturalism: Successes and Failures / Ed. by S. Hryniuk. - Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1992.
7. Taylor Ch. The Politics of Recognition // Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition. - Princeton, N. J., 1994. - P. 25.

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10. Walzer M. Op. cit. - P. 101
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12. Taylor Ch. Op. cit. - P. 64.
13. Concerning a question about voluntary/forced minority's involvement into the "development" of dominant culture: in my previous papers published in Ukraine I have already given some examples of various historical doctrines of acculturation - from assimilation to mosaic and multiculturalism (see: Bondaruk S.O. Multicultural development in Ukraine: problems and prospects // Scientific bulletin of Volyn State University. - 1997. - 1 9; Bondaruk S.O. Multiculturalism in Canada: 20 years of trials-and-errors, or How not to invent a bicycle // Suchasnist.- 1996. - Parts 3-4.; Bondaruk S.O. Multiculturalism: cognitive aspects of definition // Scientific bulletin of Volyn State University. - 1998. - 1 10 – all papers published in Ukrainian).

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