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2nd World Congress of Administrative and Political Sciences

Transformation of cultural policy in the context dichotomy "East - West"

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Abstract

The West and the East is an eternal opposition. If the East was represented in a number of historical researches as the area of general prosperity, erudition and enlightenment, or it was accented in the spirit of stagnation, slavery and poverty; that on the other hand the developed superiority of the West in the XIX and XX centuries in the technical and economic and strategic terms generated the illusion of the "inferiority" of the Eastern world in the minds of the certain circle of the European intellectuals that grants them the right of familiarizing the "inert" East to the benefits of civilization. Especially the view of the separate western and not only the western politicians unconvincingly represents that the eastern type of civilization, especially Muslim's, during contacts with other civilizations and cultures finds the imperial tendencies to other sociocultural societies.

Actually the East in ancient times and at present time did not represent and does not represent itself as monolithic whole, moving in one eschatological direction. Therefore, it is necessary here a such scientific and historical understanding which approves the civilized approach in modern conditions which based on ideas of "cultural pluralism", on recognition of respect for any cultures and faiths, on need of refusal from any advantages of this or that culture and consequently, denials from europocentrism and orientcentrism. The concept in an assessment of relationship between West and East at full respect the various ways of development of these regions has to dominate according to which the final road of history conducts to rapprochement, and finally to formation of uniform world civilization.

1.   "West" and "East" Concepts in Globalization Context

However throughout all last century (XX century) the relations of the Western and the Eastern countries had as though one-dimensional character: the poor and backward people of the East looked towards the West in search of ideas, development and management models. Therefore no wonder that the belief deeply took roots in the West as if its mission in Asia, i.e. in the East, consists in learning, directing, and ruling. First of all, it is necessary for identification the essence of considered problem to understand the settled ideas about East and factors of its traditional backwardness. Here it should be noted that the West had generally mythological and legendary representations about the East. Such approach was integrally combined with formation of negative attitude to the East and Asia.

Many were interested with issue of the West and the East. But only Gegel gave its true philosophical generalization, by the way, in general the first in the history of culture and, according to some researchers, the only thing on extent of penetration into merits of case.

The feature of Gegel's vision towards the problem of the East in a world history context is connected with his understanding of human essence as the essence universal, possessing as the spirit carrier "the absolute right to development". [1]

According to the French researcher M. Yulen, "the special concept of the East was created by Gegel, where the East appears as a source which is finally expelled from our culture, as a remnant, as a something ineffectiveness, as a historical deadlock which needs to be studied with only purpose in order to avoid". [2]

As K.S. Gadzhiev writes the modern East represents the whole complex of sociocultural, national and historical and cultural areas, such as Middle Eastern Arab-and Turkic-Muslim, Middle Eastern Iran-Turkic-Muslim, Central Asian Turkic-Muslim, east Asian Buddhist and Shintoistic, Confucian-Indian, Indian - Buddhist and Muslim, and so on. Each of these worlds, both according to the internal basic characteristics, and on relationship with the Western world has their features and demands the corresponding treatment. For all that the approaches prevailing in the West to the East are defined by ideas ascending still to Gegel of passivity, of lethargic and of inability of east mentality to social, technological and to other forms of progress. [3] Modern authors, about the factors which promoted the modernization of a number of the Asian countries, are looking for not in them, but outside, focusing attention only for roles out of exogenous factors, impulses from the outside, a revolution phenomenon from above, a dominating role of superstructures institutes.

Modernization of the East began from the XIX century as a social transformation of society and has been associated with the globalization of the historical process, where the social transformation of various societies, of different countries was included in a specific global process. Especially the XIX century polarized the world into two parts: the western (capitalist) and non-Western (non-capitalist). The dominant polarization of the West was an active influence on the world of traditional East in order to convert it to its own image and likeness. "Sh. Eisenstadt said historical modernization is the process of change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from the XVII to XIX century and then spread to other European countries, and in the XIX and XX centuries to the South American, Asian and African continents". [4]

However, the East was not only a passive object impact in this process. For the East clash with the West led to the need for perception, adapting many elements of Western civilization. This was pointed by distinguished Indian thinker and humanist Sri Auro-Bind Ghosh: "... When the culture that has fallen into a state of passive existence, sleep, congestion, faces or, even worse, gets a direct impact from the "awake", active, highly creative culture and finds itself opposed to its young and productive energy, sees its enormous success and the development of new ideas and formations, as the first instinct of life will be of course, to adopt these ideas and forms, to borrow them up to imitation and reproduction, in order to enrich itself, and in some way to gain all the benefits of these new forces and capabilities". [5]

At the end of the twentieth century in Western academia was the prevailing opinion that the West is now, "the only civilization which has significant interests in all other civilizations or regions, and also has the ability to influence on policy, economy and security of all other civilizations or regions". [6, p.115]

American political scientist S. Huntington takes the middle by describing the two polar perspectives of the development of civilization in the twenty first century- the overwhelming power of the West and vice versa, its decline due to the economic and demographic decline, unemployment, huge budget deficits, reduced work ethic, social disintegration, drug abuse and crime. He considers that "the West remains as number one in respect of power and influence as well in the XXI century. However gradual, inevitable and fundamental changes also take place in balance of the power between civilizations, and the power of the West in comparison with power of other civilizations will decrease further... The most significant increase in power accounted for by Asian civilizations (and will continue onward), and China is gradually drawn as a society that is likely to challenge the West in the fight for global domination. These shifts in the balance of power between civilizations are, and will lead to the revival and growth of cultural self-confidence non-Western societies, as well as to a growing rejection of Western culture". [6, pp.117-118]

Today's reality is that the East has already become equal-Great to West bearing structure of the international community, and its role will increase in the XXI century. What is more actually several centers grow ripe (India, China, Japan) in the East including the numerically growing group of smaller but highly dynamic newly industrializing countries (Korea, Singapore, Malaysia) able to compete on an equal basis, both among themselves and with the West, if not in whole, with leading its powers.

2. East and West in the context of cultural globalization

Cultural globalization problems are most interestingly presented by social anthropologists and cultural studies scientists. Their opinions concerning a phenomenon of globalization are rather inconsistent. The author's opinion is that the concepts of U. Gunners and Sh. Eisenstadt represent the greatest interest.

Thus, Gunners developed the theory of global ecumene as a region of constant cultural interaction, exchange of information and transfer phenomena of one culture to another language.

As Gunners suggest that the culture globalization process can be developed in four main areas: the scenario of "mature", or globalization without Westernization, the scenario of "global homogenization", implying total domination of Western culture in the world; scenario "suturation – saturation" acting as one of versions of similar unification; the scenario of "peripheral corruption", involving the expansion of Western culture in the process of adaptation in the periphery. [7]

In the view of the authors, the most preferable are the scenario of "maturation" or globalization without Westernization. There are an equal dialogue and exchange of information by numerous peripheral cultures in global ecumene. Thus metropolis acts as the stimulators recovering development of the periphery and promoting enrichment of local cultural values. But in its turn peripheral cultures actively interpret the introduced ideas, significantly modify a cultural stream and by that effect on culture of the mother country. [7]

Nowadays culture is born that tends to hold all human universes within its borders, to connect, to bring the West and the East, to create an aesthetic prototype of universal community hoped-for future centuries. Utopian dreams in this art merge with the mythical and poetical images of original unity of mankind "to the confusion of Babel". This circle of artistic and philosophical quests includes, for example, theatrical experiences of Jerzy Grotowski, Maurice Béjart, and Peter Brook. Back in 1971 Brook put the performance "Orgast", one of the most exciting experiences of theater universalism, on the ruins of Persepolis, once destroyed by Alexander the Great, among the naked rocks shined with huge bowls with fire, the cyclopean tombs of the ancient Persian kings and the ruins of biblical antiquity, from the origins of civilization where the archaic East met with antique West. Performance's text put together the fragments of "Prometheus chained", "Persians", the ancient Zoroastrian spells, with scenes from the "Fury of Hercules" Seneca. Aeschylus's Ancient Greek language, Seneca's rhetorical

Latin mixed up with "Avesta's" dark set phrases and the main thing is, specially for this case, with language which created by modern English poet Ted Hughes and received the name "Orgast". In contrast to the "classical avant-garde" the 60th years, Hughes and Brooke did not break off with the word, did not declare war to it, but sought to renew and clear it, returning the word to its foundations and principles, to original ritual inseparability of words and gestures, words and actions, words and things. They tried to call from the collective memory of mankind "parent language", common to all cultures and which has a strong magical power. Returning back to the archaic origins of civilization was subject to search for ways of universal unity - despite the obstacles separating culture. Brooke was able to translate into the language of the slender aesthetic forms. Brook was able to translate into language of harmonious esthetic forms, the spiritual searches of the European vanguard animated by seductions of a theatrical messianism. The again created myth became irresistibly powerful theatrical metaphor in "Orgast".

Of course, in practice the desired synthesis, or rather, in this case - the symbiosis is produced by the most difficult quest, if produced at all. Here the point is not only in natural difficulties of the pioneers, but also in the fact that the formation of the World Theater inevitably complicated by the disease, sometimes by the sharpest, by the processes of integration endured today in all spheres – from policy and economy till culture. At a time when all over the place even in wealthy countries of Europe – the nationalist movements are awakened in the forms almost a terroristic when the disintegrative tendencies properties become more apparent, the ideas of "universality" are beginning to seem noble for many, but unfounded illusion which is overturned by a course of real history.

Conclusion

The influence of Eastern religions and philosophy to the West, the influence of Western political, cultural and economic phenomena and to the East - the most - the increasing development of international communications and electronic communications - have transformed the dialogue between cultures and civilizations into indisputable reality of public life. These changes gradually went beyond public relations and penetrated more deeply into our lives.

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