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Ethnocultural Education as a Factor of the Spiritual Security of the Russian Polyethnic Society

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Abstract

The article is based on the idea that in the setting of multiculturalism of the Russian society, the escalation of ethnic conflict is fraught with grave risks to the territorial integrity of the state; therefore, there is much tension around the issue of ensuring the spiritual security of the Russian society as a key factor in preserving the national sovereignty and cultural identity of the Russian Federation. The analysis of ethnocultural education as a social institution and sociocultural space of the socialization of an individual has made it possible to suggest that it has the potential to ensure the spiritual security of the Russian society, particularly in regard to interethnic relations. The authors conclude that the continuity of traditions, the interaction of ethnocultures, their sustainability and renewal in the dynamic changes of modern society is comprehended through ethnocultural education, which allows preserving the heritage of local cultures within the context of the nationhood of the Russian Federation. Hence, ethnocultural education serves as a factor of the spiritual security of the Russian multicultural society, ensuring the continuity of reproduction of historical traditions of long-term cohabitation and cooperation of various ethnic cultures in the common cultural and political space of the Russian Federation, having a beneficial effect on the harmonization of interethnic relations and paving the way for the sustainable development of the Russian society.

Keywords: Ethnocultural education, Spiritual security, Russian society, National identity, Nationhood of the Russian Federation.

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Introduction

The actualization of the issue of the spiritual security of the Russian society is largely associated with a severe mental and moral crisis which is manifested in the development of antisocial phenomena, rampant corruption and crime, spread of the extremist ideology among young people. Such negative phenomena are indicative of the loss of common goals and ideals in the development of society, the destruction of axiological and ideological grounds for the integration of citizens of the country. Spiritual crisis consists in the sociocultural disaccord of the Russian society, which is manifested in the loss of common cultural senses, the absence of the unified national and cultural identity of the peoples of the Russian Federation. Disintegration in spiritual sphere is accompanied with a growth in general social strain in the society which was caused by the increasing and, in point of fact, catastrophic social differentiation of the population. All of this leads to a sharp ideological polarization of the society, spread of radical sentiments, especially in regions with a broad range of unresolved social and economic problems.

The ideological vacuum that has developed in the post-Soviet period is filled with a growing number of local (ethnic, religious) identities that form the axiological and ideological attitudes of an individual, enhancing the significance of ethnocultural boundaries between people. This situation is fraught with a threat of disintegration of the society on the basis of ethnic and religious factors, a deep spiritual disunity of the peoples of the Russian Federation.

In the setting of multiculturalism of the Russian society, the escalation of ethnic conflict is fraught with grave risks to the territorial integrity of the state. Hence, there is much tension around the issue of ensuring the spiritual security of the Russian society as a key factor in preserving the national sovereignty and cultural identity of the Russian Federation. It appears that one of the institutions that are able to revive historical traditions of intercultural cooperation of various peoples and convey common ideological imperatives is the institution of ethnocultural education. In our opinion, it is the ethnocultural format of modern education that is able to build a certain set of competences that promote the successful adaptation of an individual in the multicultural environment of the Russian society.

Therefore, the study of ethnocultural education as a factor of the spiritual security of the Russian polyethnic society assumes special scholarly, social and practical significance.

Academic Literature Review

In the foreign scientific discourse, the range of problems associated with the ethnocultural education is generally viewed in the context of the problem of implementation of democratic values for various ethnic groups residing within the territory of Western countries. The advocates of a moderate stand regarding the introduction of the principle of ethnocultural sensitivity into the education come out for the preservation of the social diversity, but within the framework of the common national culture of the state⁶. According to the American Professor J. Banks, multicultural education is based on the idea of creating “unity from variety” (pluribus unum), in other words, “...creating the society of “various”, united by universal democratic values”⁷.

The concept of “multicultural education” is frequently used in the modern academic literature alongside with the concept of “ethnocultural education”. Moreover, this concept is used both in foreign and in Russian scientific and research practices.

⁶ Banks, J., *Cultural Diversity and Education: Foundations, Curriculum and Teaching*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001; Gollnick D. M., Chinn P. C. *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*. New Jersey, 1998.

⁷ Banks, J., *Cultural Diversity and Education: Foundations, Curriculum and Teaching*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001. P. 50.

Two principal approaches to multicultural education have been developed in foreign academic tradition. Within the scope of the first approach, multicultural education is viewed as a model which sets guidelines for the development of educational systems in developed countries⁸. This approach is based on the ideology of humanism, calling to the equal rights of representatives of various ethnic groups and satisfaction of educational needs. Within the scope of the second approach, multicultural education should be primarily understood as the institutional process associated with informative and axiological changes in the educational system that are intended to take into account ethnic, social and linguistic diversity in the modern globalizing world⁹. The process of institutionalization of multicultural education occurs through the inclusion of the following principles in it¹⁰: cultural pluralism, tolerant and respectful attitude towards other cultures; general equality and equality of rights, elimination of discrimination on racial, ethnic and other grounds.

Russian researchers stick to the multifaceted approach to multicultural education, its comprehension both as an idea, as a process, and as an innovative movement which "... provides equal rights and opportunities in terms of education to all racial, ethnic and social groups functioning in the society, through the comprehensive change of the educational environment in such a way as to make it respect their interests and needs"¹¹. This approach partly reproduces the concept of multicultural education which has established in the foreign scientific discourse, but is formed on other sociocultural grounds differing from those that are peculiar to Western countries.

The Russian authors directly address themselves to the topic of ethnocultural education in the context of problems of the dialogue of cultures¹², socialization of individuals in the multicultural society¹³, ethnocultural pedagogics¹⁴, interethnic interactions¹⁵, formation of civic identity in the context of ethnosocial inequality¹⁶. In spite of various aspects of the research, the authors point out that the multiethnic composition of the Russian population mounts challenges to the Russian educational system, which, on the one hand, should take into account educational needs of all ethnic groups, effectively securing the rights of ethnic groups to preserve their unique culture, and on the other hand, should preserve the territorial integrity of the state, preventing the spread of xenophobia, extremism and separatist sentiment in society. The understanding of this fact actualizes the problem of ethnocultural education as a factor of ensuring the

⁸ Garcia, R. L., *Teaching in a pluralistic society: Concepts, models, strategies*. New York: Harper & Row, 1982; Gay, G., *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2000.

⁹Baptiste, H. P., *The multicultural environment of schools: Implications to leaders* / L.W. Hughes. The principal as leader. New York: Merrill/Macmillan, 1994; Bennet, C. I., *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999;

¹⁰ Bennet, C. I., *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999.

¹¹ Palatkina, G.V., *Multicultural education: equal opportunities and equal rights*. News bulletin of Voronezh State Pedagogical University. Pedagogical Sciences. 2015. No. 2. p. 35.

¹² Melikov, I.M., Gezalov, A.A., *Dialogue of cultures and dialogue culture: conceptual framework*. *Voprosy Filosofii*. 2014. No. 12.

¹³ Chupalova, D.G., *Factors of implementation of multicultural education in elementary school*. Current issues of elementary level of education: Collection of works of the regional research-to-practice conference dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the FNK. Makhachkala: Dagestan State Pedagogical University, 2004.

¹⁴ Baklanova, T.I., *Ethnocultural pedagogics: issues of the Russian ethnocultural and ethnoartistic education*. Saratov: Vuzovskoye Obrazovaniye, 2015.

¹⁵ Lebedeva, N.M., *Socio-psychological consistent patterns of acculturation of ethnic groups*. *Ethnic Psychology and Society* / Under the editorship of Lebedeva, N.M. M.: Staryi Sad Publishing House, 1997; Soldatova, G.U., *Psychology of ethnic tension*. M.: Smysl Publishing House, 1998.

¹⁶ Drobizheva, L.M., *Civic identity and grounds for solidarity of the Russian society in the context of ethnosocial inequality*. *Sociology and society: social inequality and social fairness* (Ekaterinburg, October 19-21, 2016). Proceedings of the V All-Russian Congress of Sociologists / Editor in Chief - Mansurov, V.A. M.: Russian Society of Sociologists, 2016.

spiritual security of the Russian society. What is more, it is embodied in the doctrine of the nationalities policy of the Russian Federation¹⁷ that stipulates a set of objectives such as enhancing the unity of the civic consciousness and spiritual commonality of the Russian nation under the conditions of preserved ethnocultural diversity of the country.

The subject of spiritual crisis in foreign scientific discourse is viewed in the context of problems of dehumanization of the contemporary society¹⁸, social anomie¹⁹, imitative nature of the social adaptation²⁰, cultural trauma²¹, identity crisis²². The authors call attention to such negative trends in spiritual sphere as depreciation of traditional values, ideological disorientation of an individual, simulation nature of the social reality, breakdown of stable systems of sociocultural regulation.

Spiritual security is treated in the Russian scientific and research practices as a factor of the preservation of national sovereignty and cultural identity of the Russian Federation²³, as a state of society, contributing to its creative cultural and civilizational development²⁴, as a system of relations between the subjects of social life, providing supportive environment for the intellectual development of the society²⁵. These studies provide us the opportunity to treat spiritual security mainly as one of the elements of the national security system of the state. However, spiritual security is not just an element of the national security system, but is in itself a rather complex system that covers various spheres of social life: cultural, religious, ideological, etc. Besides, the system of spiritual security also includes the spheres which are conditionally related to it: political, economical, social sphere, sphere of interethnic interaction. It entitles us to treat spiritual security as multifaceted social phenomenon which provides proper functioning for all social institutions of the state.

At the same time, the academic literature is lacking for studies dealing with the analysis of the potential of ethnocultural education in ensuring the spiritual security in multicultural societies which are manifested today in virtually all modern states due to globalization trends and historical processes.

The understanding of the role of the educational space in the formation of a personality who is able to live and carry out professional activities in the multicultural environment is beginning to take shape in Russian sociology today.

¹⁷ Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 1666 "On the Strategy of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation for the Period through to 2025" of December 19, 2012 <http://base.garant.ru/70284810/>

¹⁸ Mannheim, K., *Diagnosis of Our Time*. London: Trubner & Co, 1943.

¹⁹ Merton, R.K. *Social Structure and Anomie*. P. Sztompka (ed.). Robert K. Merton on Social Structure and Science Chicago, 1996.

²⁰ Baudrillard, J. *Simulacres et simulation*. Paris: Editions Galilee, 1981.

²¹ Shtompka, P., *Cultural trauma in post-communist society (Article Two)*. *Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya*. 2001. No. 2.

²² Bauman, Z. *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2004.

²³ Vozmitel, A.A., *Topical theoretical, methodological and practical issues of spiritual security*. *Sotsialnaya Politika i Sotsiologiya*. 2008. No. 2 (38).

²⁴ Khadzharov, M.K., *Global sociocultural processes and spiritual security of the Russian Federation*. *Gazette of the Orenburg State University*. 2015. No. 3 (178).

²⁵ Vereshchagina, A.V., Samygin, S.I., Shevchenko, O.M., *The System of Integrated Safety and Security of the Contemporary Society and the Main Aspects of National Security of the Russian Federation Against the Background of New Challenges and Threats*. M.: RU-SCIENCE, 2016.

Methodology

The institutional approach serves as a methodological basis of ethnocultural education, as it makes it possible to identify its features and function under the conditions of increasingly complicated multicultural structure of contemporary societies.

The institutional approach in sociology has gained momentum in the papers of the American sociologist S. Lipset, according to whom, "it is social institutions that provide guarantees of sustainability, constancy of relations between people, building a stable structure of various forms of collective life; if it were not for social institutions, it would be impossible either to meet the most important social needs or to guarantee the well-handled process of collective activity"²⁶. This approach opens up a new opportunity for the study of ethnocultural education as a social institution which carries out certain activities and functions in the multicultural society.

The institutional approach in the Russian sociology is analyzed in the papers of Kirdina, S.G.²⁷, Radayev, V.V.²⁸, Kalugina, Z.I.²⁹ etc. These sociologists point out that daily living activities of the society are ensured through the operation of certain reproducing structures (institutions) which pave the way for the sustainable development of the social system. According to Kirdina, S.G., it is the institutional approach that makes it possible to identify "stable micro- and macrostructures of social interactions - from social practices to basic institutions"³⁰.

The institutional approach to education is analyzed in the studies of Mikeshina, L.A.³¹, Sheregi, F.E.³², Nedzvetskaya, E.A.³³, Laptev, V.M.³⁴. According to authors, institutional peculiarity of education consists not only in its ability to maintain stability of the social system, but also its innovative development with imperatives of our time in mind.

When it comes to ethnocultural education, sociocultural approach³⁵ is conceptual as well, as it makes it possible to view education not only in the context of sociocultural processes, but also as a space of sociocultural interaction which forms axiological and prescriptive attitudes in individuals determining the models of their social behavior. Thereby, education represents the cultural space for creation and conveyance of values, symbols, ideals that are intended to regulate social relations³⁶.

²⁶ Lipset, S., *Social Structure and Social Change. Approaches to the Study of Social Structure*. N.Y. 1975. P.32-33.

²⁷ Kirdina, S.G., *Sociocultural and institutional approaches as the basis of positive sociology in Russia*. *Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya*. 2002. No. 12.

²⁸ Radayev, V.V., *New institutional approach: building a research scheme*. *Zhurnal Sotsiologii and Sotsialnoy Antropologii*. 2001. Vol. IV. No. 3.

²⁹ Kalygina, Z.I., *New age - new challenges: institutional approach to the study of transformational processes. Social path of Russia in the process of implemented reforms*. Novosibirsk, 1999.

³⁰ Kirdina, S. G., *Sociocultural and institutional approaches as the basis of positive sociology in Russia*. *Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya*. 2002. No. 12. p. 30.

³¹ Mikeshina, L.A., *Hermeneutical senses of education*. *Philosophy of education. Collection of scientific articles*. M., 1996.

³² Sheregi, F.E., *Sociology of education: applied studies*. M., 2001.

³³ Nedzvetskaya, E.A., *Education as social institution: specific character of management*. *Gazette of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Sociology series*. 2003. No. 4-5.

³⁴ Laptev, V.M., *Revisiting the methodology of the social research of the modern educational system*. *Gazette of the Chelyabinsk State University*. 2007. No. 16.

³⁵ Sorokin, P.A., *Man. Civilization. Society*. M.: Politizdat Publishing House, 1992.

³⁶ Gerasimov, G.I., *Education as a phenomenon in the system of sociocultural interaction: contradictions of transformation*. *Kultura. Nauka. Integratsiya*. 2014. No. 2 (26); Kolesnikova, E.Y., *Sociocultural function of education: modernization issues*. Rostov-on-Don: Publishing House of the North-Caucasian Scientific Center of Higher School, Southern Federal University, Academy of Pedagogical and Social Sciences, 2011.

Hence, these methodological approaches make it possible to treat ethnocultural education as: a) social institution which regulates interethnic relations in the society; b) sociocultural space exercising the function of socialization of an individual and formation of his/her ethnocultural competence, including knowledge, skills and abilities of successful intercultural communication and adaptation of an individual in the multicultural space.

Results

Ethnocultural education is one of factors that are able to ensure the spiritual security of the Russian polyethnic society. Conflict-free functioning of contemporary multicultural societies is only possible on the basis of: a) sustainability of the multicultural environment within the framework of a particular social space; b) communication principles of existence of the multicultural society³⁷. The first aspect emphasizes the need for stable relationships in a complex heterogeneous society, while the second aspect draws attention to the dynamic nature of the interaction of entities in the multicultural environment.

It is assumed that the Canadian and American versions of the policy of multiculturalism aimed at depoliticization of ethnic diversities existing in a common political space is an example of a successful solution to the problem of stabilizing the multicultural environment in the contemporary world. The implementation of this policy serves to resolve the problem of the integration of immigrants into the host society. In this respect, multiculturalism is a “watered-down version of adaptation of immigrants which is expressed in the form of “restrained integration”, which implies preserving the culture of the national majority and the adoption of new minority groups acting within the framework of common civic identity that impedes mental de-bordering of the national culture of the state”³⁸.

However, it should be noted that multiculturalism is not an unconditional “recognition of cultural differences, but rather a kind of compromise agreement between the state representing the majority culture and minorities – only if the last-mentioned observe certain conditions, first of all, recognition of the national-state structure of the country...”³⁹. The sustainability of the multicultural society is achieved through achieving a certain balance between cultural diversity and national political unity.

That said, the policy of multiculturalism which is being implemented in certain Western countries is assessed ambiguously. A number of researchers call attention to the fact that despite the declared right to cultural diversity, in the real world the policy of multiculturalism comes down to the exclusive inclusion of immigrants into the Western value system, which actually serves as an instrument of political integration of ethnic groups with different culture⁴⁰.

We emphasize that the policy of multiculturalism which provides relative stability to the multiethnic society has its national peculiarities; therefore its extrapolation to Russian reality will not yield the desired result. This is due to significant differences in the institutional environment of the Russian state and Western countries associated both with historical factors and with contemporary trends.

Communication relations serve as another basis for integration of the multicultural society, since they, according to researchers, form the transcultural space which emerges as a consequence of the symbiosis of new cultural and political interactions. Communication relations can become the basis of the

³⁷ Malkovskaya, I.A., *Communication sign. Discursive matrices*. M.: Editorial URSS, 2004.

³⁸ Kuropyatnik, A.I., *Multiculturalism: The issues of social stability of multiethnic societies*. St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University, 2000. p. 47.

³⁹ Shchedrina, O.V., *Can there be a multicultural model of integration of migrants in Russia? Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya*. 2004. No. 11. p. 70.

⁴⁰ *Multiculturalism and transformations of post-Soviet societies*. Under the editorship of Malakhov, V.S. and Tishkov, V.A., M.: Institute for Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2002.

sustainability of the Russian multicultural society, since they are mostly based on informal social institutions, being implemented directly in the area of interpersonal relations.

The efficiency of intercultural communication as a method of interaction of representatives of different ethnic cultures within a single Russian state is associated with historical, ideological and sociopsychological factors. What is meant here is that interethnic relations in the Russian cultural tradition are conditioned by such factors as duration of cohabitation and cooperation of the peoples of the Russian Federation; Soviet legacy of the theory and practice of the ideology of internationalism; peculiarity of the Russian mindset, in which ethnical identity holds a prominent place in the hierarchy of cultural values⁴¹.

Therefore, interethnic relations in the Russian multicultural society are harmonized more through immediate skills of intercultural communication than through legal regulation, paving the way for fruitful interaction of representatives of various cultures.

Intercultural communication skills are formed through ethnocultural education which simultaneously represent social institution and sociocultural space, within the framework of which special sociocultural competence is formed which provides an individual with the means of successful functioning under the conditions cultural diversity of the contemporary world.

The need for the formation of the ethnocultural competence is driven, in the first place, by the growth in ethnical, cultural and faith-based variety within a single state; in the second place, it is driven by the intensity of intercultural relations in an age of globalization; in the third place, it is driven by the necessity in the resolution of conflicts between ethnical and civic identities; in the fourth place, it is driven by the establishment of efficient interethnic interaction in the society.

This resulted in the changes in the educational paradigm in the 21st century, namely the inclusion of the ethnocultural component into the content of the modern education and the formation of the ethnocultural competence in students. According to experts, “negative consequences of globalization processes and international communications can be compensated through the introduction of the ethnocultural component in the public consciousness. The formation of civilized ethnocultural consciousness must become one of the objectives of the educational system”⁴².

The analysis of the academic literature has shown that the ethnocultural competence in broad perspective is the ability of an individual to carry out successfully activities in the multicultural society. The substantiation of the concept of the “ethnocultural competence” makes it possible to treat it as a degree of acquired knowledge, skills and abilities by a person which help him/her to appropriately assess the specificity and conditions of interaction with representatives of other ethnic groups, to find optimum forms of cooperation with them with a view to maintaining the climate of consent and mutual trust.

Three basic components are emphasized in the structure of the ethnocultural competence — cognitive, axiological and motivational, and behavioral⁴³. The cognitive aspect includes knowledge of values, norms, and traditions of one's own and other cultures, understanding of the significance of cultural and civilizational diversities, knowledge of the rules of verbal and non-verbal communication.

The motivational and axiological aspect determines attitudes towards one's own and other ethnic groups, the desire to gain knowledge about the representatives of another culture, recognition of the presence of

⁴¹ Suprunova, L.L., Multicultural education. M.: Akademiya Publishing Center, 2013. p. 13.

⁴² Afanasyeva, A.B., Formation of the ethnocultural competence in the system of higher pedagogical education. News bulletin of the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia. 2007. No. 30 (8). p. 78.

⁴³ Soldatova, G.U., Intercultural competence as an integral characteristic of a person. Poverkh Baryerov: Chelovek, Tekst, Obshcheniye. M.: Smysl Publishing House, 2006.

another value system, and intention to enter into interaction judging from the position of ethnocultural universalism.

Behavioral component implies the willingness and the ability of an individual to get involved in the interethnic interaction which is supported both by the understanding of one's own cultural identity and the acceptance of the cultural otherness of other people. The researchers point out that the behavioral component of the ethnocultural competence includes “proficiency in adapting the behavior to peculiar properties of another culture; skills which contribute to the manifestation of non-verbal responses suitable to the culture; ability to control feelings and emotions, and adjust the level anxiety in the intercultural interaction”⁴⁴.

For multiethnic Russia, it is extremely important to gloss over potential contradictions among various ethnic groups it consists of. Ethnocultural education which is oriented towards the formation of a new competence can become one of efficient instruments of ensuring the conflict-free interethnic interaction in the multicultural space of the Russian society both at the level of everyday life and at the level of professional activities. The need for such competence is conditioned by historical and contemporary trends of development of the Russian society associated with the long-term cohabitation of various ethnic groups in the territory of the Russian state and expansion of the intercultural interaction as a consequence of dispersal movements.

Conclusions

The analysis of ethnocultural education as a social institution and sociocultural space of the socialization of an individual has made it possible to suggest that it has the potential to ensure the spiritual security of the Russian society, particularly in regard to interethnic relations. Being the space of socialization of an individual, education has a well-targeted effect on the emotional, rational, and pragmatist components of the structure of a personality, forming its spiritual and moral guides as well as behavior patterns.

There has been a significant deformation in the system of spiritual reproduction of the society in the course of the years of reforms in the contemporary Russian society, which is associated with the violation of cultural succession, sociocultural disaccord of the society, actualization of local identities. The institution of ethnocultural education can to a certain degree serve as a means for overcoming these negative phenomena.

Education has always been the major factor of spiritual and moral development of the society; the implementation of ethnocultural component in it promotes successful integration of a personality into the modern multicultural space. The continuity of traditions, the interaction of ethnocultures, their sustainability and renewal in the dynamic changes of modern society is specifically comprehended through ethnocultural education, which allows preserving the heritage of local cultures within the context of the nationhood of the Russian Federation.

Hence, the ethnocultural education serves as a factor of the spiritual security of the Russian multicultural society, ensuring the continuity of reproduction of historical traditions of long-term cohabitation and cooperation of various ethnic cultures in the common cultural and political space of the Russian Federation, having a beneficial effect on the harmonization of interethnic relations and paving the way for the sustainable development of the Russian society.

⁴⁴ Kupavskaya, A.S., Development of the ethnocultural competence of a teenager through the social-psychological training: synopsis of the thesis of the Candidate of Psychological Sciences. Moscow, 2008. p. 24.

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