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THE NEOSTRANGER PHENOMENON: TO THE PROBLEM ABOUT TRANSFORMATION OF IMMIGRANT'S ADAPTATION PRACTICES IN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SPACE OF EUROPE AND RUSSIA

KEYWORDS: Neostranger, worldview, immigration, socio-cultural space, integration, heterotopia

ABSTRACT: Spatial heterotopy of modern space contributes to the emergence of new communicative patterns in the field of „own – other” contacts. But the persisting traditional ethnic stereotypes conflict with the changing socio-cultural realities. In this article the authors analyze the problem of preservation culture from Stranger. In this regard serious questions raise. These are: *what* do we keep – either the traditional culture with its internal code or the culture as a whole; *what* and *from whom* do we protect – either the traditional culture from globalization challenges, or „our own culture” from the Other; and, at last, *how* do we protect it – either carefully saving from innovations or actively breaking all traditional forms clearing away the road for innovative development? Anyway rhizome world view becomes the factor that significantly complicates adaptation of NeoStranger into the receiving societies. It demands theoretical comprehension of a new strategy of cross-cultural communication in modern trans-cultural space.

1. Introduction

The leading significatum of the modern age is globalization which is treated as a linear process starting from the certain center and aiming at formation of the uniform interconnected world with high permeability of national borders, raising intensity, volume and pace of cultural interactions. Such „cultural transformation” (Robertson 2003, 56) sets the aim of modeling the „global space”, but the forms of changing and the ways of such process are a rather debatable question.

Any country is a coexistence of various cultural worlds with special ethnic history, confession and everyday culture. But besides cultural differentiation there is differentiation on the individual level caused by educational systems, social experience, and ways of self-realization. Therefore if we consider culture as the specific form of life in a certain spatial coordinates relying on the historical tradition forming system of values and the corresponding type of the personality it is possible to claim that such culture turns the regional social life into integrity. In this case the culture acts as a basis for the analysis of the changes in the modern world.

The main task of globalization is the formation of Culture for “dialogue of cultures” (Melikov/Gezalov 2014, 25) in order to create the transcultural space, but different level of sociocultural development and worldviews don’t promote or strongly complicate the creation of such space where global tendencies of social development and local features of cultural dynamics may coexist and interact peacefully. It is a long process which is based on the overcoming the national, regional and even professional cultural isolation and creating new way of life – „on exit from the own culture and at the intersection with the culture of strangers” (Epstein 1995, 23).

2. Material and methods

As the research is connected with a problem of formation of transnational space, it is necessary to analyze in short the globalization process according to the anthropological approach where in order of importance „globalization” is identified with the concept of „transnational stream” (Eriksen 1993, 179).

The priority of the Western scenario of globalization causes the worsening of contradictions between local and global levels when instead of cultural unification we can watch cultural heterotopia which originates from national and regional cultures (Foucault 1994; Kimlicka 2001; McMichael 1996; Fedotova 2005; Bauman 2004; Romanova, Yakushenkov and Khlyshcheva 2013; Khlyshcheva 2015) implemented in the idea of the glocalisation accumulating and synthesizing current trends of globalization and localization (Morita / Robertson 2003). Today the project of „a cosmopolitan alternative” (Benhabib 2003; Waldron 2000) according to which it is possible to choose „cultural fragments” from a huge variety of ethno-cultures without understanding these cultures and without feeling our dependence from them is extremely popular. The modern world is a „kaleidoscope of cultures where people freely maneuver among various cultural traditions” (Waldron 2000, 236).

This idea corresponds with the „postmodern” form of a multicultural discourse offered by the Russian researcher V. S. Malakhov (2007, 156). It approves the „otherness” which is shown only in vestimentary and alimentary culture without

touching the bases of everyday life, but adding an exotic element in it. Such attitude towards cultural diversity becomes one of the main reasons in emergence of a new form of „newcomer”, i.e. Neostranger whose adaptation in heterotopy world is a large problem.

Monitoring and description of transformation dynamics of the forms „Another – the Stranger – the Neostranger” is carried out on the basis of structural and functional approaches. The main task is identification and comparison of the basic specific characteristics confirming transgression adaptation the practices directed to integration of migrants into the receiving society.

3. Discussion

3.1. The phenomenon of Neostranger as the destabilizing factor

Cardinal changes in the socio-cultural worldview are caused by the processes of globalization increasing migrant flows, bringing their cultural patterns to host country. Increasing complexity of assimilation tendencies, constant changes in social and political life, local ethnic and religious conflicts, postmodern tendencies of understanding reality inevitably lead to rethinking of the worldview. A clearly distinguished policy of presumption of the traditional idea from the destruction of the structure exists there; this policy proposes a radical alternative to closed and static linear structures with stringent axial orientation.

However, attitude to an alien culture is connected with the world view established in a particular society, so the “own” and “stranger” opposition has its peculiar content in each case. The Stranger is usually considered as representative of other ethnic groups whose lifestyle is different from the traditions and lifestyle of major ethnic groups of the region. Arrival of the Stranger (ethnic, economic or political) to a rather homogeneous space creates various points of bifurcations that can become uncontrollable.

In essence, it is a clash of fundamentally different types of culture: traditional and post-modern. Traditional world model is constructed vertically and has a clear structure. Thus, it provides for “stable” existence of society in which “the energy of connectivity of elements exceeds external influences” (Morina 2011, 17). There are no compromises in traditional culture, so everyone who is outside this culture is positioned as „other”, the “stranger”, and “profoundly unacceptable” (Romanova/Khlyshcheva /Yakushenkov 2013, 15). In the paradigm of postmodern the world changes dramatically. Knowledge, Space, and Time lose their sacredness and “the alien” is identified with “the strange” becoming just “a different cultural experience” (Khlyshcheva 2016, 108). Providing as much as possible space for the intercul-

tural and inter-ethnic dialogues becomes essential. However, the dialogue hasn't actually taken place as liberal values are unacceptable for all traditional systems.

In other words, if the Western world has already entered a Post-national stage and according to the concept of evolution development continues to deem alien culture only as traditional that should adapt to post-industrial society as a result of the contact as the latter type of society is more advantageous, the immigrants coming from Asia, Africa, and Latin America hold a different opinion. Many societies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America still endure the period of „etnization”, i.e. consider the nation from the point of view of an ethnic factor, and such understanding leads to clash of cultural worlds that have different level of civilizational development. Real desire to keep cultural originality promotes preservation of many cultural forms which do not correspond to development of post-industrial society.

However, attitude to an alien culture is connected with the worldview dominating in a particular society, so the “own – other” opposition has its peculiar content in each case. But it is possible to reveal also the general: if earlier cultural difference was mainly „the external fact” (transient contacts), in modern society the cultural difference turns into internal problem. To live in „cultural whirlpool where one's own culture can “dissolve „in other”, (Wieviorka 2004, 179), is quite problematic. However, it is own culture that usually serves as a rigid criterion, benchmark on the development scale of comparison with “others”.

Primordialism approach to the understanding of „ethnicity” remaining in the scientific discourse (especially evident in Russia) is the destabilizing factor during communication process because first of all everyone notices ethnoconfessional signs. The stranger is usually a representative of one's ethnic group or religious confession with a lifestyle that is inherently different from the traditions and lifestyle of major ethnic groups of the region.

Appearance of such stranger (ethnic, economic or political) in a relatively homogenous environment creates different bifurcation points that can eventually become uncontrollable. The main difficulty in this case is the opinion that ethnically various individuals can't belong to one culture. That's why in most cases today's society is deemed not as a cultural singularity, but as a complex of ethno-cultural and ethno-confessional communities that need to search for a compromise („salad bowl” model).

This is not to say that “mixing cultures” is a new issue that appeared in the late 20th – early 21st centuries. The process of mixing cultures has been taking place throughout the history and the Stranger has become a peculiar construct necessary for self-identification. The border between “own” and “stranger” is volatile and this cultural border environment predetermines direct contacts of several cultures, and it leads to changes in the borderline and criteria for self-identification of cultures. Contacts of cultures characterized by different level of civilization development introduce a special difficulty but evolutionary opportunity at the same time.

Demanding the workforce industrial societies have opened „doors” for migrants of developing countries that mainly represent other cultural traditions, stereotypes, and behavioral patterns. Such difference doesn't in fact promote a uniform community.

The most distinct difficulties of the adaptation process can be observed in everyday life as every culture first and foremost represents certain schemes of daily routine: specific skills and habits, typical interaction, and behavioral patterns. Not all cultural practices can peacefully co-exist in one territory without creating points of tension. The very difference in value systems led to emergence of closed ethnic communities where immigrants try to preserve their habitual lifestyle as long as possible.

This illusionary preservation of their “world” makes immigrants excluded from the cultural life of society. Moreover, the reality shows that it is impossible to preserve one's own culture on “the alien land” (Thranhardt 1992, 150); in any case it'll be deformed and turn into “a version of the culture of origin country” (ibidem).

However, the capacity of migrants to adapt is defined not only by the conditions that the government creates, but by the readiness of migrants themselves to integrate into this society. Reconsideration of a worldview is a marker of modern era. Even traditional cultures, as a rule, the most resistant to changes, are forced to change their views due to globalization processes when “the Stranger” is identified with “the other” becoming just “a different cultural experience” (Wieviorka 2004, 19) with a hybrid identity.

Multicultural practices assumed that recognition of the equality and uniqueness of all cultures would automatically lead to overcoming chaos and disintegration, ensure inner world by means of strengthening of the principles of tolerance and ability to coexist with foreign culture groups and individuals. But not all cultural minorities are ready to change to the extent the receiving society social policy requires them to.

Lately the society has been facing the phenomenon of “reactive” multiculturalism (Malakhov 2007) when ethnic minorities actively promulgate the return to their previous identity. For example, there are more and more „Asian” hostels, „color” discos, and cafe the entrance in which for “whites” is actually forbidden. In other words, what before was the external negative characteristic of the group today becomes the positive self-characteristic of the same group.

Meanwhile, the host societies themselves have promoted preservation of traditional values of ethno-cultures. Recognition of all cultures as unique always contributes to the preservation of many cultural forms that do not comply with the development of postindustrial society. In such situation it is possible to ask a question of admissibility limits of preservation of traditional culture where demonstration of ethno-confessional differences doesn't promote social integration, but closes the representatives of such groups in a narrow framework of traditional thinking.

In fact, it is a construction of a certain simulacra which are not correlated even with traditional ethnic patterns.

Immigrants groups have a peculiar marker in modern space of large cities (for example, the Uzbek, the Tajik, the Moldovan in Russia are engaged mainly in building, natives from the Caucasus – in trade, Kazakhs, Koreans are engaged in agriculture, etc.). Such simulacra based on the certain preservation and reproduction of ethno-confessional traditions when ethnic identity becomes more important than national values are artificial and can't solve the real problems, but lead to tension in the relations of minority-groups. Though it is much more necessary not to position one's own „specifics” and not to create „the disorder inappropriate and rapprochements incompatible” (Foucault 1994, 34), but search for „contact” in order „to define a common space for us and others” (Foucault 1994, 35). However, serious difficulties arise here due to the steady patterns of the traditional worldview.

Today's immigrant isn't similar to „predecessor” who tried to become a part of new society. A new type of “neostranger” aspires to revive ethnic and religious traditions of “the ideal fatherland” of their ancestors in the country where he is going to settle firmly. Neostranger comes from beyond the norms and ideals of the host country are alien to him. He doesn't seek to fit into society opposing his own culture to the culture of his „new homeland” (Romanova/Yakushenkov/Khlyshcheva 2013, 109).

It enters a serious imbalance into the developed system of cultural identification and breaks cultural parity. However, if the „stranger” is „unknown and can be mastered by per analogiam” (Waldenfels 1999, 154) the „neostranger” doesn't have even the possibility of interpretation.

That's why for overcoming the failure situation the reality must be “recognized” with the modern amendments or retelling again creating new contours of the made habitable space. Otherwise we can meet the situation of „a passive prepatience” that means a lack of possibility of active reaction to the events. To return a possibility of active influence, „it is necessary to appear in the interpreted space again” (Waldenfels 2004, 89).

3.2. Adaptable mechanisms of Neostranger: the comparative analysis

As it was noticed before, the phenomenon of „neostranger” escapes understanding, so the Western society proposes to separate it, brings it out of the framework of liberal values and leaves it to its own devices cultivating its traditional practices. Efficient mechanism of incorporating the “neostranger” into society has not been developed yet. Even the “spatial proximity of migrants doesn't guarantee their full acceptance in group or community and the internal status, nationality or membership in culture isn't an indicator” (Ilcan 1999, 248).

Closed immigrant communities represent the Call to host society. And despite the fact that many countries by the middle of the XXth century had already had some experience in developing of adaptation mechanisms for the newcomers faced with mass migration from the countries of Asia and Africa the Western societies recognized the ineffectiveness of previous methods. Such methods were not effective to the “neostranger”.

As a result, the researchers started to talk about the occurring revaluation of European values and the process of Islamization of the West. Islam turned into an identification marker. Islam confession becomes a symbolic border inside the European countries population. Contemporary Islam cannot be just as a form of religiosity, if we understand religiosity as the faith in God. The phenomenon of the rise of Islamism should be interpreted as a form of identity policy. In the current situation there is a fear of political domination of Islam in the West: as the more there are Muslims in Europe, the higher the possibility that European way of life and values will be ousted by non-European originating from Islam world countries is. We can argue for a long time about true scale of the Islamization of Western Europe, but the depth of the process is worth understanding.

Thus, the state support of ethnic group and demonstration of their ethno-confessional differences restrains social integration. Eventually, the cultural diversity transformed from “characteristics of equality of all cultures” into the practice of preservation of cultural differences that makes closer cultural groups and generates artificial borders between them.

4. “Neostranger” in Russia: general and special

Russia has its own “neostranger”, too, but it is quite specific because Russian immigration is differs from Western options. In Russia ethnic diversity, due to the vast territory, natural differences, and state policy towards a heterogeneous population, has existed for centuries and the general identity of the inhabitants of the country was provided in past by citizenship to the tsar and Orthodoxy, and by Soviet patriotism later. Historically, Russian territory was understood as Russian statehood that’s why the inhabitants were perceived as „Russians” and ethnicity was manifested mainly everyday.

Today, the model of Russian socio-cultural space (Khrapov, 2016) contains contradictory and often conflicting development options: Orthodox-Slavic (Eurasian), Buddhist, Turkic, Muslim, etc., demonstrating the relationship of two cultural models – the West and the East. The process of land accession was accompanied by the assimilation and development of „local” cultures. Such a way demonstrated the specificity of Russian society: the „mosaic of localities” where Slavic and non-Slavic

peoples lived together. The advantage in numbers and absence of danger of ethnic doom led to the fact that it was the Russians who easily perceived other people's customs in their own cultural space. Such supreme openness led to an interesting phenomenon which researchers define as „the blurring of ethno-character” (Kostina/Gudima 2007, 42).

The spatial factor has largely determined the Russian poly-cultural model¹ where various cultural worlds coexist under the auspices of the Center with their special ethnic histories, different confessional affiliation, differing levels of economic development, etc. The population of such „worlds” becomes the carrier of various „cultures” – ethnic, regional, and all-Russian which creates certain conditions for „overcoming ethnic contradictions due to supranational identity and regional self-identification of people of different nationalities” (ibidem2).

However, within the collapse of the Soviet system in the 90s of the XXth century the factor of „ethnicity” became the only efficiently functioning institution. Therefore the problems of cultural self-determination were reduced to ethnic self-determination which hampered the formation of civil society. There was an active displacement of the Slavic population from non-Slavic republics to Russia, then refugees from the Caucasus appeared, and finally Russia got labor migration from the post-Soviet republics of Central Asia, the North Caucasus, Moldova, and Ukraine.

The „first wave” of migration was distinguished by an insignificant cultural distance since the visitors were mostly residents of the former Soviet Union republics who had common knowledge systems. That's why their adaptive capacity to integrate into host social system was much higher than the ability of immigrants from Asia and Africa. In other words, the migrants were not Strangers though the certain cultural distance takes place. Within the separation from the USSR each ethno-culture has its own ethnic codes which began to „be discolored to national colors” (Khlyshcheva 2014, 280-285). The migrants from these republics self-absorbed through their language and cultural symbols are incapable and even do not try to fit into the existing system of the host country creating a fertile ground for inter-ethnic clashes.

Besides, the low educational level of today's immigrants plays a negative role in cultural contacts and makes it very difficult to adapt to Russian conditions both on the labor market and in the everyday culture. According to the statistics in 2017, the residents of the following countries typically migrate to Russia: Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Armenia (Migration in Russia, 2017).

¹ There are certain differences between the multicultural and poly-cultural models: the first is a response to the contemporary migration processes and aims at the rapid regulation of social relations in the host countries proclaiming the need to preserve the cultural values of immigrants; the second is a marker of the historical ethnic mosaic of a society that has evolved over the centuries and passed the test of time.

The specific of Russia is in cultural confrontation not on the basis of religion or ethnicity, but „on the principle of “own” as a representative of the ethnos traditionally residing on this territory regardless of his religious affiliation and the newly arrived „alien”. At the same time, a certain paradox is manifested when „culturally remote” settlers who successfully managed to „fit” into the order of the host country local residents stop noticing and accepting but „culturally close” immigrants who could not integrate into the life of the community, ignore, and try to get rid of them” (Malakhov 2001, 158).

„Old” ethnic groups living historically in the territory of a certain region differ in their language, culture, and „experience” of living in the province, but one way or another they all lived side by side for centuries. During this time, common traditions of intercultural interaction developed there. Immigrants of the 90s are far from such traditions, that is why they are perceived by the population as „different” and relations with them are projected through the prism of “own” – “others” (Mukomel 2005, 61). As a result, the situation becomes similar to what is happening in Western world where different cultural worlds which are not ready to make contact with each other get together.

Another specific feature of migration in Russia is seasonal migration (mainly from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) when seasonal workers go to Russia in spring and return home in late autumn. Such migration has a number of negative consequences for the host countries. Firstly, it contributes the growth of the “shadow” economy. Secondly, such migrants are not adjusted to adaptation. Thirdly, there is an outflow of money from the country. At the same time, the burden on the servicing of such migrants and their families rests on local social institutions (e.g., education, health)².

In addition, the qualification of these migrants is estimated by the local population extremely low. This is evidenced by interviews conducted in Russian cities (Moscow, Volgograd, Astrakhan, etc.). Many locals consider that migrants are needed only as a “work force” in the streets (janitors, garbage collectors, etc.) and service personnel in shops, cafes, and offices. Most respondents, in general, tend to the fact that migrants are not needed at all.

Such attitude is confirmed in the „Handbook of the labor migrant” (2011) where visitors are depicted in the images of a paintbrush, roller, broom, and trowel (very nice, but still tools!). Of course, not everyone is so critical. According to the results of interviews carried out by the author 40% of respondents agree with the fact of residence and work of visitors, but almost all stress the need of migrant’s adequate behavior. For this purpose, “A collection of recommendations” was prepared for migrants in Moscow in 2017. There by way of comics the heroes of Russian fairytales

² Today, every third patient of the maternity home is a foreigner from the CIS countries (mainly from Central Asia) (See: Migrants go to give birth in Russia: 200,000 rubles for a child are paid by Russian citizens. NTV channel news. (2013). And in Russian schools, while preserving the current migration policy in the near future, one third of all pupils will be children of migrants.

(Three Warriors, Snow Maiden, Vasilisa the Wise, Kupava, Kaschei Immortal and others) explain to migrants the rules of behavior in Russian capital. The purpose of this text is the successful integration of migrants into Russian society but visitors have small knowledge of the language of the host country and would understand a little in the proposed book. Like Western migrants the ethnic communities in Russia differ in terms of professional preferences. Visitors from Azerbaijan, Dagestan, and Chechnya are more socially mobile than the local population, and therefore actively fill the niches created in a market economy. In building sphere especially demand Tajiks and Uzbeks ready to work for pennies. Migrants from the Caucasus create closed communities which are very tight for interaction with the external environment. The voluntary segregation of such communities of ethnic migrants is the „deliberate strategy of adaptation to the host society” (Mukomel 2005, 62) demonstrating the low level of readiness of the migrant community to integrate in the local community. Of course, it is a factor that increases social tension.

Analogous to Western countries Russia faces the problem of illegal migration mainly from the Central Asian region, Ukraine, and Moldova. The most migrants don't have any official invitations. Illegally arrived citizens cause a lot of problems. Alertness is also caused by immigrants' behavior which is not consistent with the norms and traditions of the host society. Hence, the growing desire of residents to fence off such settlers appears. In addition, the informational construction of the negative image of „strangers” has a significant influence on the mass consciousness and does not contribute to cultural dialogue.

Meanwhile, the transformation of the world view is a mutual process that affects migrants and native population of the host societies. Common values are formed on the basis of “civilian education, common social institutions, common experience of people who live together and face the same challenges in the same place on the Earth” (Malakhov 2002, 267).

5. Conclusion

So, the modern world has fixed a spatial heterotopy, evidently manifested in the dichotomy of “Own” – “Other”, but it is very important to see how this „strangeness” is overcome. The dominant characteristic of frontier territories is the high mobility of large groups of people carrying new forms of cultural and social contacts. Therefore, the communication process here is primarily aimed at the practical contact of representatives of different cultures the effectiveness of which is determined by many factors, such as: 1) the adaptation level to the culture of recipient party; 2) the equal rights of cultural minorities and majority culture; 3) the right of free secession from the group when person is not automatically assigned to

a specific cultural, religious, and linguistic group only on the fact of its birth. The latter reason seems to be one of the most significant though difficult to achieve.

Ethno-cultural simulacra based on the obligatory preservation and reproduction of traditions are artificial and can't solve real problems of adaptation. When people with different cultural traditions coexist within a single society it is rather important to find common norms of behavior, language, and holidays as well as the correlation of state and local authority, rights, and duties of individuals and communities. It is not easy to solve these problems because representatives of ethno-cultural groups are not ready to easily change their behavior and way of thinking.

Intercultural interaction is complicated by the ethno-cultural stratification of society. The ethnization of social relations and the politicization of everyday conflicts come to the confrontation of „our” and „another”.

Only with the help of adequate coexisting mechanisms the concepts „own” and „other” can become culture-forming ones because the contact with another culture inevitably leads to overstepping the limits of the established norm and expanding the range of interaction. The modern frontier is not so much dividing as uniting, „suggesting through a clash to come to constructive cultural dialogue and interaction” (Romanova/Yakushenkov/Khlyshcheva 2014, 74). For the rapprochement of cultures, the most important are „the level of national self-awareness and the capacity for self-realization” (Furman 1999, 8). Either the success or the failure on the way to the inclusion of new members in society are determined by a variety of objective and subjective factors the most important of which are employment or unemployment, the level of education, the necessary professional qualifications, decent housing, the absence of explicit and hidden discrimination in access to workers places, etc. If these problems are not solved, no multicultural rhetoric would bring the effect desired.

The society cannot be stable unless the civil identity based on the understanding that you are a citizen of a particular country is formed. Therefore, the ability of one people to master the achievements of another not substituting their own is one of the main indicators of the viability of his culture. Thus, a common human culture develops. It is unified but at the same time diverse.

Russia has adaptation mechanism for immigrants (e.g., the Russian language tests have been developed, the social security tax has been calculated, and the benefits have been determined). However, these mechanisms are not always implemented consistently. Immigration processes must be given a managed and civilized character. All that we use belongs to the „cultural kaleidoscope”, but not just to one ethnic culture. Therefore the choice of a person can not be determined by the ethnic origin. In this context, the very notion of a „separate culture” disappears. Waldron calls this phenomenon a „pluralistic culture” (Waldron 2000, 239).

The cultures of a democratic society should be cosmopolitan, participating in cultural exchanges, and taking alien cultures as not the worst and not the best

ones, but simply as „the other” which must be understood for a peaceful dialogue (Kymlicka 2001, 289). But there are great difficulties owing to steady patterns of traditional world view on this way. That’s why the theoretical analysis of the existing contradictions in the worldview of different cultures is needed. This reveals the root causes of cultural confrontation and determines the necessary measures to overcome it.

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