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INTERCULTURALISM IN KAZAKHSTAN: A RESPONSE TO THINKING ABOUT DIVERSITY

Abstract. This article defines the concept of interculturalism, explores its foreign applications, and outlines its primary structural components, all of which are based on data acquired through of comprehensive literature review of interculturalism. In addition, this paper considers answers to such problematic questions as "How important is interculturalism in the management of Kazakhstan's cultural diversity?", "What should be its main mechanisms?".

Түйін сөздер: *intercultural communication, intercultural dialogue, interculturalism, multiculturalism, globalization, migration, diversity.*

Жанар Накипбаева, Айгүл Садуақасова
ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ ИНТЕРМӘДЕНИЕТТІЛІК – ӘРАЛУАНДЫЛЫҚ ТУРАЛЫ ОЙЛАРҒА ЖАУАП

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада әдебиеттерді кешенді талдау нәтижесінде алынған мәліметтерге сүйене отырып, интеркультурализмнің мәні, оның шетелдік тәжірибесі және негізгі құрылымдық компоненттері анықталды. Сонымен қатар, осы жұмыста «қазақстандық мәдени әралуандылықты басқаруда интеркультурализмнің маңыздылығы қаншалықты? Оның негізгі механизмдері қандай болу керек?» секілді негізгі мәселелелік сұрақтарға жауап қарастырылды.

Keywords: *мәдениетаралық қарым-қатынас, мәдениетаралық диалог, интеркультурализм, мультикультурализм, жаһандану, көші-қон, әралуандылық.*

Жанар Накипбаева, Айгуль Садуақасова
ИНТЕРКУЛЬТУРАЛИЗМ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ: ОТВЕТ НА РАЗМЫШЛЕНИЯ О МНОГООБРАЗИИ

Аннотация. В данной статье, основанной на данных, полученных в результате комплексного литературного анализа, определено значение интеркультура-

лизма, его зарубежный опыт и основные структурные компоненты. Кроме того, в публикации рассмотрены ответы на такие проблемные вопросы, как «Насколько важен интеркультурализм в управлении казахстанским культурным разнообразием?», «Какими должны быть его основные механизмы?».

Ключевые слова: *межкультурная коммуникация, межкультурный диалог, интеркультурализм, мультикультурализм, глобализация, миграция, многообразие.*

Introduction

Shifting ethnic demography structure of Kazakhstani society and the escalating demand for new cultural codes; the increase in the number of conflicts involving representatives of different ethnicities and their frequent recurrence; the emergence of conflicts involving foreign workers and the increased risk of their escalation have revealed the need for new approaches and methods of managing intercultural relations in Kazakh society.

All these issues have led to the need to strengthen Kazakhstan's policy in the interethnic sphere. Especially after the recent intercultural conflicts, (Kordai conflict, conflict in the Uyghur district, conflict in Tengiz oil field, etc.), there is a recognized need for implementing novel measures that consider a rapid response algorithm, effectively address the root causes of protests and conflicts, and foster the development of stronger interethnic relations. In this regard, in 2020, the Committee for the Development of Interethnic Relations of the Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan was established for the development of interethnic relations, and the Institute of Applied Ethnopolitical Research was formed for the analysis, research and expert support of state policy in the field of interethnic relations.

In 2021, at the XXIX session of the Assembly, the first President Nazarbayev emphasized five principles necessary for the formation of state policy and a new identity of the nation in the coming years. One of these principles was the principle of "unity in diversity", which should be complemented by interculturalism. Although interculturalism was presented for the first time in this Session, it was officially spelled out in the Concept of Development of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan for 2022-2026, approved on September 15, 2022, with the support of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan K. Tokayev. The Concept defined interculturalism as one of the main principles for achieving its goal: 'The purpose of the Concept of Development of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan for 2022-2026 (hereinafter - the Concept) is to ensure the participation of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (hereinafter - the Assembly) in the development of state policy to strengthen social harmony and national unity based on the principles of Kazakhstani patriotism, civil equality, the unifying role of the state language, the idea of "unity in diversity", the permanent modernization of the nation, as well as the policy of interculturalism.

Several models of intercultural relations management have been discussed in Kazakhstan over the years, which have been called differently by different

scholars. One of the most discussed concepts was multiculturalism. However, this concept has not been officially indicated as a model for managing intercultural relations in any documented source. However, according to the Deputy Chairman of the Scientific and Expert Council of the Assembly, Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Professor Z. Shaukenova [1] the concept of interculturalism is described as a strategy for managing ethno-cultural diversity, a new paradigm of social integration of multi-ethnic states.

Interculturalism can be called "a new discourse in Kazakhstan's reality". Although politicians in the country mention this concept as one of the basic principles of nation-building, scientific research is still insufficient. Although this concept is mentioned in the Concept, there are still no clearly defined mechanisms for its realization and implementation in Kazakhstani realities. Therefore, the main purpose of this article is to formulate the concept of interculturalism based on international practices, clarify its basic principles, describe effective practices, and give practical recommendations for its implementation in the Kazakhstani reality.

Methodology

The methodological part of this article consists of comprehensive literature review of interculturalism. The topic of interest is interculturalism, methods of its study, as well as the experience and practice of foreign countries in its use. The literature review is based on the publications of foreign authors. The main source base was the National Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the online libraries of Turkey and Russia, Web of Science, Scopus, etc. Also was analyzed the legislative framework of the Republic of Kazakhstan, statistical data on individual ethnic groups of Kazakhstan, the content of the Concept.

Research results and discussion

Scientific works on interculturalism have been increasing since 2000, for example, 70% of all articles published in the period from 2000 to 2017 were devoted to the topic of interculturalism [2, p. 503]. Nevertheless, most scientists associate the period of development of interculturalism with the publication 'White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. Living Together as Equals in Dignity' [3] by the Council of Europe in 2008. Although the main concept in this work is "intercultural dialog", one part of the scholars considers it as a synonym of interculturalism and another as one of its elements. For example, Kastoryano [4, p. 2] notes that this work defines interculturalism as the basis of European identity. In addition, Cantle [5, p.143] concluded that intercultural dialog was the catalyst for the development of the concept of interculturalism, but interculturalism has higher requirements, it includes social, structural, and political processes in a broad sense.

According to Ted Cantle, interculturalism is a new concept that replaces multiculturalism. The concept of multiculturalism no longer enjoys political

or popular support, primarily because it has inadvertently reinforced the idea of a binary racialized divide within nations. As a result, the central focus of multiculturalism shifted towards making "accommodations" between the majority and minority groups, rather than nurturing a developmental process that encompasses the identity of all communities. In addition, the goal of interculturalism is to encourage the adaptability of identities, foster group dialogue, and create an environment conducive to the emergence of new blended identities. It also aims to cultivate a sense of belonging, encompassing a set of essential conditions for building an egalitarian and diverse society [5, p.141]. Bello V. [6, p. 23] also mentioned interculturalism as a new paradigm that replaces multiculturalism and helps to eliminate prejudices by integrating immigrants.

Zapata-Barrero presented interculturalism as a complementary paradigm to multiculturalism and national civic politics. The policy of interculturalism, in his opinion, is aimed at expanding the dialog that is absent in multiculturalism, overcoming the differences between different groups in society, forming connections and social capital, as well as citizenship [7, p. 7]. In this context, diversity is a privilege and a resource for building cooperation and rethinking a common social culture. According to Meer and Modood, while interculturalism is considered a distinct concept, it still remains an addition to multiculturalism. Nevertheless, the authors highlight several differences between interculturalism and other concepts, such as multiculturalism. Firstly, interculturalism is viewed as going beyond mere coexistence, as it places greater emphasis on interaction and dialogue. Secondly, interculturalism is perceived as being less 'groupist' or more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism. Thirdly, interculturalism is committed to promoting a stronger sense of unity, encompassing societal cohesion and national citizenship. Lastly, whereas multiculturalism may be illiberal and relativistic, interculturalism is more likely to lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices (as part of the process of intercultural dialogue) [8, c.177].

Taylor and Bouchard [9, p. 307] showed interculturalism as a policy that promotes harmonious relations between cultures based on intensive exchange. According to the authors, this policy describes an integration process that does not eliminate differences but rather promotes a common identity and a common culture [10, p. 286].

In addition, for Bouchard [11], Emerson [12], and Grillo [13] interculturalism is a new alternative ("third way") for societies choosing between assimilation and multiculturalism.

European researchers led by M. Emerson describe the process of interculturalism through the prism of avoiding excessive isolation and separation of ethnic minorities through their adherence to the values, history, and traditions of the host society [14]. In other words, compactly living ethnic groups socialize and adapt to the local community while preserving their cultural characteristics. This process contributes to the elimination of social distance between ethnic groups.

In addition, Zapata-Barrero R. and Mansouri F. conceptualized interculturalism as a political strategy aimed at conflict prevention and resolution, grounded in the approaches to diversity in the original global agenda. According to their perspective, dialogue-oriented interculturalism is undergoing refinement, particularly concerning peace, human rights, and political stability. This approach aims to facilitate shared visions, responsibilities, and dialogues between two or more groups, even when their relationship is distant, conflicting, or characterized by divergent views [15]. The authors note that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations University (UNU), the European Union (EU), and the Council of Europe (CoE) have contributed greatly to the development of interculturalism. According to scholars, these leading international institutions play an important role in translating key intercultural ideas into possible strategies and policies that promote the values of interaction, exchange, and respect.

In Kazakhstan, interculturalism as a new approach to the management of intercultural relations began to operate after the concept of the Assembly, approved on September 15, 2022, with the support of the President of Kazakhstan K.-J. Tokayev. Although short texts were published in the media during this period to popularize and elucidate the significance of interculturalism, it was only within academic circles - young scholars, under the guidance of Z. K. Shaukenova, display interest in delving into its analysis.

According to the Concept of the Assembly, interculturalism focuses on the search for interests that unite various cultures and the establishment of positive interaction between representatives of different ethnic groups. At the same time, the Concept emphasizes that interculturalism acknowledges cultural differences while rejecting the formation of closed cultural communities. It places utmost importance on ensuring equality for all citizens before the law as an indispensable condition. [16].

In addition, most foreign scholars in their works compared interculturalism with multiculturalism and tried to define its main elements and principles. At present, for the successful integration of interculturalism into the Kazakhstani context, it is crucial to rely on foreign experience, differentiate approaches, and consider the principles proposed by other nations. Therefore, this paper identified the structural principles and components of interculturalism and the boundaries of its understanding, which have been proposed, and analyzed by foreign scholars and political institutions.

Conclusion

After reviewing the scientific literature, interculturalism can be comprehended as a policy aimed at fostering relationships, interactions, communication, mutual respect, and understanding among different groups through the facilitation of intercultural dialogue. This approach involves emphasizing the values of the dominant group while integrating minorities, allowing them to maintain their distinct culture, history, and values.

The literature review allowed us to identify the basic principles and elements of interculturalism. These principles and elements can contribute to the formation of an intercultural environment and the development of interethnic relations in the country.

The first principle of interculturalism is openness. Openness is realized through tensions at certain points in time that prevents the formation of communities based on the concept of "otherness". As a result, people develop a positive outlook toward multiculturalism and polyconfessionality within society. They embrace diversity and globalization as inherent features of their community, accepting them without any apprehension or fear [5, p.143]; The second principle is the orientation towards intercultural relations, common national values, and meaningful exchange between individuals of different socio-cultural origins [17]. Thirdly, relations are built on the principle of "state-citizen" rather than "state-group" [18, p.256]. Interculturalism supports diversity but criticizes the prioritization of groups and collectives, thus preventing ethnic and religious segregation, and separatist tendencies among minorities [10]. The fourth principle is the orientation towards integration for the formation of a culture based on intercultural citizenship and common values [7, p.8]. The fifth principle is focusing on the culture of the dominant group. Interculturalism eliminates the cultural asymmetry in multiculturalism aimed exclusively at the ethnocultural minority [19, p. 7], which denies the unilateral policy of supporting social minorities. It is based on integration (language acquisition, involvement in professional activities, participation in the life of local communities and associations, etc.) as a set of mutual processes involving both representatives of minorities and the majority, the host population and immigrants [20]. Bouchard [21] in this context noted that while pursuing a policy of recognizing minority cultures and fighting against their discrimination, interculturalism considers the majority culture as the main vector of integration.

Elements of interculturalism: intercultural dialog, unity and flexibility of identity [22], interaction [14], mutual respect, understanding, social integration, submission to common values, intercultural citizenship [17], pluralistic thinking expressing sensitivity to ethnocultural diversity, and rejection of any discrimination based on differences [21, P. 440].

Bouchard [22, P. 5] emphasized that in the management of cultural diversity, there are no common solutions inherent in all societies. It is impossible to use the solution of another society to solve a problem in another society. According to him, any model is based on tenets and basic attitudes, but when it comes to connections and causes, each nation has to work out a formula for itself that is fully in line with its heritage, institutions, constraints, feelings, concerns, and aspirations.

In addition, the elements of interculturalism can also be understood through the 10 core dimensions of the Intercultural Cities Index. These dimensions encompass a broad spectrum of areas requiring intervention to create conditions that nurture positive relationships among individuals from diverse backgrounds, including

national citizens. These dimensions include the assessment of city functions through an "intercultural lens" (education, public domain, residential buildings & micro districts, public services and civic administration, business and the economy, art & sports); urban safety; mediation and conflict resolution; languages; media strategy; establishing an international policy for the city; evidence-based approach; intercultural awareness training; welcoming newcomers; and intercultural governance (including participation and representation) [15].

During the years of independence, Kazakhstan has successfully developed a robust political, legal, institutional, and managerial framework, ensuring and reinforcing social consensus and national unity. Until now, the main institution responsible for ensuring inter-ethnic harmony and unity in the country has been the Assembly. Upon analyzing the content of the Assembly's Concept, it becomes evident that it is also responsible for implementing the principles of interculturalism. This Concept takes into consideration both external and internal factors that impact inter-ethnic relations in the country, aiming to prevent conflicts and foster state policies focused on inter-ethnic relations through the Assembly's efforts.

However, this document does not define several issues necessary for the implementation of the principles of interculturalism:

- In the Concept of the Assembly, the turbulence of the world economy, the rise of geopolitical confrontations, the growing impact of the ethnic religious factor in modern international conflicts, the surge in migration flows, and the increasing number of refugees were noted as external factors affecting the development of interethnic relations in the country. Internal factors include changes in the ethnic demography composition of the country and the information field. It should be noted that this document does not encompass internal factors that have a negative impact on the development of the inter-ethnic sphere, such as the increasing population of Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs and the concentrated residency of certain ethnic groups;

- The importance of intercultural dialogue, which is a basic element of interculturalism, is not emphasized;

- Only ethnic groups have been identified as the target group. Nevertheless, for Kazakhstan, four social groups are of great importance in the regulation and development of interethnic relations: ethnic groups, immigrants, repatriates, and people moving from rural to urban areas. The creation of mechanisms to overcome the cultural shock that occurs when these groups come into contact with each other contributes to the improvement of not only interethnic relations but also intercultural relations in general;

- Almost all scientists who have studied interculturalism have noted that it is focused on real practical experience. However, the activities in the Concept plans mainly include ideological work (councils, meetings, training seminars, etc.).

Finally, based on the above conclusions, several recommendations are given that may be useful in the development of interethnic and intercultural relations in Kazakhstan:

- Development of intercultural dialogue and interaction in the local environment. This promotes harmonious intergroup relations [23]. Many problems arise when people do not come into contact with certain restrictions in the form of prejudices and stereotypes [7, p. 9]. Therefore, it is important to organize concrete practical events in the development of intercultural dialogue and interaction;

- Focusing the attention of ethnopolitics on ethnic-demography changes (the growth of the Kazakh population, an increase in the migration rate of the rural population to the city) can have a beneficial effect on the development of interethnic relations in the country. The introductory part highlights the current importance of the Kazakh people as a unifying core, necessitating the development of their values, culture, and traditions as a cultural model. By considering these needs in interethnic policy, there is a higher likelihood of reducing tensions among the population;

- Locals often see foreigners as an additional threat in the labor market, because they create more competition during a period of low demand [6]. However, for Kazakhstan, foreigners are investors, cheap labor, tourists, and highly qualified specialists who are not available in the country. Therefore, it is important that Kazakhstan does not limit itself to the development of interethnic relations, but builds a policy focused on foreigners who have arrived in the country;

- Formation of the positive character of cultural diversity through its interpretation as social capital. For example, Ted Cantle talked about the potential for using diversity as social capital. According to him, the joint work or communication of different groups will contribute to the development of professional and social networks.

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