Intercultural environment as a competitive advantage of higher education system

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Abstract

The article discusses the development of a multicultural environment as a factor of improving the well-being context and competitiveness of the higher education system. The authors believe that the scale of what is happening today in the world at different levels leads to a substantial change in national structure of Russia. An extensive review of the Russian and international literature on multiculturalism is presented in the article. The concepts of interculturalism, polyculturalism and multiculturalism were reviewed. The authors also argue that the formation of the elite and the content of the state national policy are interrelated. We believe that it is the level of higher education institutions, the results of their research and technology development activities, determines not only their place in the international rankings, but also the dynamics of economic and innovative development of individual territories and entire countries. In the process of forming new paradigm to develop the role of higher education system, there are many factors which effect on this process especially in some countries like Russia and Belarus.

Keywords: intercultural environment, higher education system, international relations, institutionalization, human capital, polyculturalism, national policy

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1. Introduction

The relevance of the research topic is connected with the several factors, formation and action of which is due to the influence of both global processes and the specifics of domestic socio-economic, political, cultural and religious life. At this moment, in connection with intensification of international migration, Russia turned out the center of attraction of large masses of legal and illegal migrants, internally displaced people and refugees. External flows of migrants, superimposed on the flow of internal migrants have caused significant changes in the national and religious composition of the population as individual communities, and the whole regions of the country. High dynamics of changes have occurred in certain cases provoked the formation of acute ethnic and religious contradictions and conflicts.

Another important factor that attracted the attention to the problems of interethnic and intercultural relations in the Russian Federation due to foreign events that occurred during 2014. The events in Ukraine, the growth of the conflict between Russia and the West updated the search for an alternative system of a unipolar world. Over recent months, the mouth of the Russian leadership had made statements in which in varying degrees, it was suggested that there is needs to create a new system of the world order, in which Russia will play the role of an alternative center of the decision-making affecting the fate of the modern world. This claim requires not only high-profile and important applications, but also the promotion of new attractive ways for the international community to resolve the ideas of both socio-economic and political problems and the problems of organizing inter-cultural, inter-ethnic and inter-religious cooperation.

2. Review of intercultural environment in Russian education system

The country's leadership has repeatedly stated that the imposition of anti-Russian economic and political sanctions is not a reason for closing the borders, restrictions on entry and exit of citizens. Thus, it is believed that the development of cross-cultural relationships will continue to be one of the most important areas of public policy in Russia. The nature and scale occurring in the world population, migration, economic and political processes lead to changes in the national and religious composition of the Russian Federation in the direction of reducing the share of Russian (on a national basis) and Orthodox (in confessional basis) population and increasing the proportion of non-indigenous population professing Islam Buddhism and other religions.

However, in modern world, an increasingly acute struggle for human capital. Highly educated professionals, talented, creative and enterprising people are a valuable resource that can bring prosperity of not only individual regions or companies, and even entire countries for many years. Illustrative example in this respect related to the Russian immigrants who have made the proud and glory of the United States (I. Sikorsky, V. Zworykin, and I. Brodsky), Belgium (I. Prigogine), France (V. Kandinsky, R. Nureyev) and other countries. That is why modern national policy should be formulated in close connection with migration policy, and not only contribute to international peace, tolerance to national, racial and religious minorities, but also create favorable conditions for incorporation into Russian society of migrants from different national and religious group.

Almost all the world's educational and innovation centers are in fierce competition to attract to their walls the most talented and promising formed of students, teachers and scholars not only among the population of their countries, but also from other countries. In this fight, the winner is the one who can create the most conducive environment for these people. The high mobility of students and teaching staff, typical of the leading universities of the world, determines their place among the leaders in today's global ratings (THE, QS, ARWU) the best universities in the world. In this connection, it is extremely important to develop a paradigm of international relations for the development of the provisions of the state national policy that would ensure the creation of conditions for maximum comfortable life representatives for any national or religious minorities who come to Russia for education, artistic or entrepreneurial

activity. This requires giving special attention to higher education, which prepares future elite of Russia, personnel for research and innovation centers. The favorable situation in the sphere of international relations will be an additional attractive factor for coming to Russia talented students and leading scientists from other countries and, ultimately, a positive influence on the development of national universities, their movement in the direction of the top 100 world rankings.

The most important paradigm of ethnic relations must have two faces, one face recognizes the cultural majority as the basis of social interaction and the other side supports minorities, including immigrant. Therefore, Formation and application of such a paradigm of ethnic relations can create favorable conditions for intensification of educational and intellectual migration in Russia, and for the dissemination of this paradigm in the broader context of international relations in the modern Russian's society. Ultimately, the new paradigm of national policies will promote the sustainable advancement of Russia among the leaders of the modern world.

Far from being individual laws of the Russian Federation (The Law "On Education" (1992), program "Development of Education in Russia" (1994), the National Doctrine of Education in the Russian Federation (2000), the Federal Target Program "Tolerance and Prevention of Extremism in Russian society" (2001) in the field of education demonstrate the humanistic approach to education, but only partially formulate multicultural education goals: universal access to education, the adaptability of the educational system to the individual characteristics of students, the right to receive secondary education in their native language. Russia, as a multicultural society, is in urgent need to create a favorable multicultural environment in higher education.

The national education system today is one of the key factors in global competition. "The concept of long-term socio-economic development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020" dictates the need to create conditions in which the number of foreign students in Russia has increased significantly. Specifically, "The share of foreign nationals has reached 5% of the total enrollment of universities, and the income from their training is at least 10% of the funding for education" (Arefiev, 2014). It is just as actual with respect to competitive capable indicators in the evaluation of the university.

Introduce new international standards in the domestic higher education system is designed and federal project 5/100/2020 aimed to support entry into the leading position in the global rankings of the best universities World THE, QS and ARWU 2020 (Resolution…, 2013). Get a high school diploma in the Soviet Union for the citizens of many countries was prestigious because the Soviet higher education, primarily in technical studies, science was considered one of the best in the world (Arefiev, 2003; Ageev & Ageeva, 2015). Foreign nationals trained in the 2011/1012 academic year, full-time in 673 universities, including 283 universities of the Ministry of Education of Russia, 186 universities of 23 other ministries and agencies, 36 universities of the Federation and municipal and 168 private universities. In the connection with a sufficiently high flow of foreign students, there is the need to find ways to harmonize and formation of a multicultural environment in the system of higher education in Russia. In addition, because of increasing the competitiveness of Russian universities.

3. Results

In the current studies on the consideration of the problems of intercultural and interethnic interaction, it is noted that the socio-economic and political development of most of the countries and territories under the control action of a number of global trends, observance of which largely determines the economic and political status of these countries. One of the most important conditions for socio-economic growth of individual regions and countries is to ensure the functioning of three creative processes, innovation activity, entrepreneurship and internationalization (Audretsch, Sleuwaegen & Yamawaki, 1989). Among these processes, one of the most significant, important and, at the same time, painful, is the phenomenon of

internationalization (Vaillancourt, Brittain, Bennett, Arnocky, McDougall, Hymel, Short, Sunderani, Scott, Mackenzie & Cunningham 2010). Among other meanings, the term "internationalization" ascertains that large-scale and multi-stream of migrant workers, who have covered the modern world, is due to the expansion of transnational corporations, the globalization of labor markets and capital. Internationalization shows itself in changing the ethical, cultural, religious image of the population of many countries in the transformation of the existing structure and functions of social institutions. It is also the basis for the formation of a number of negative effects such as discrimination based on national, racial and religious discrimination, ethnic and religious conflicts, and so on.

However, quite significant consider a positive potential of internationalization in the economic sphere, which manifests itself in the expansion and intensification of the activity of the population in investment, business, scientific and technical activities. As the experience of several countries and regions of the world, creating favorable conditions for living and doing business attracts a significant number of highly qualified personnel, talented, educated and creative people. Cultural diversity of people living in such places is usually an additional favorable condition for the establishment of links with other regions of the world and pretends to attract knowledge, technology and capital for more intensive development (Kenny & Florida, 1993; Pogukaeva, Cognitive… 2015). R. Florida (2010) and A. Saxenian emphasize the influence of socio-cultural aspects, the "quality of place" to create an enabling cross-cultural environment conducive to the creative development.

Internationalization, manifested in increased migration in the modern world, problematizes the state policy in the sphere of international relations. With regard to immigrants, local, national, racial or religious minorities formed several basic approaches to the state national policy - a policy of assimilation, segregation, and multicultural approach. Multi-cultural approach recognized the optimal organization in matters of intercultural and interethnic interaction in the developed world over the past few decades. However, in the face of rising conflicts on ethnic and religious grounds in the late 1990s - early 2000s in Western Europe and the United States regarding the effectiveness of this approach, there was some doubt. Even in 2004, the current German Chancellor Angela Merkel expressed the view that failure to construct multi-cultural society (West-Pavlov, 2013). Over the next decade, the problem in the field of intercultural and interethnic relations not only did not get their permission, but an increasingly compounded periodically escalated in the form of disorder and outbreaks of violence. In these circumstances, creates a need to find new approaches to the organization of international cooperation, which would have changed the situation.

Institutions of higher education in the United States and in other parts of the world today are made of culturally diverse student and faculty populations. This cultural pluralism makes such models of the pluralistic democracy. As such, the application of the core principles of the global perspective of multicultural education in the teaching and learning practices among diverse populations at these institutions is more important now than ever. Most institutions of higher education have become models of the communities in which they are located, and as such have become pillars for academic excellence, models for multicultural competence in society, and models for an interdependent world, as well as models for equity and democratic values. Currently, a considerable number of studies in which criticizes the use of multicultural approach to ethnic and religious minorities in the developed world (D. B. Levi, B. Parekh, M. Wieviorka, S. Vertovec, C. Wessendorf). In addition, there are new ideas and approaches to the regulation of intercultural and interethnic interaction such as "Inter-culturalism" and "Polyculturalism" (Parekh, 2002; Vertovec, Cohen, 2002; Wessendorf, 2013).

Interculturalism was included in the discursive space of a few decades ago - at the end of XX century. Since that time, Interculturalism coming to be seen as an alternative to multiculturalism within a liberal democratic political system. However, its uniqueness or superiority of a long period has not been convincingly presented (N. Meer, T. Modood, D.B Levi). Only relatively recently become interculturalism nominated as a fundamentally different paradigm on the background of multiculturalism. In this case, one of the principal features of interculturalism extends the presence of the dual position:

1) Recognition of the cultural majority as a fundamental.

2) Recognition of the presence and support for minorities, including immigrants (Meer, & Modood, 2014).

Multiculturalism as a category used to describe the intercultural interaction, is a scientific revolution only in the early 2000s. Scientists working in South Africa used the term "polyculturalism", to describe the transformation of the situation of ethnic, racial interactions are deployed in the country after apartheid (West-Pavlov, 2013; Pogukaeva, Trust… 2014).

Despite a certain elaboration of the term, it is still difficult to trace a clear distinction between the terms "interculturalism", "polyculturalism" and "multiculturalism". We can only say that the criticism of the organization of international and intercultural cooperation, as well as the principles of the formation and implementation of the state national policy in developed countries updated the search for alternatives to multicultural approach has personally demonstrated their weaknesses and shortcomings candid. The processes of internalization have an impact on the changing role of fundamental social institutions of society, and especially the education system. A key element of modern education is the higher education system. The role of higher education as a major provider of human capital through the process of teaching is well known and understood. We studied the role of education in forming national policy.

Although Russian society and the government in the Soviet period of its history were out of direct control of the socio-economic and political discourses that unfold in the West, however, the national policy of the USSR is of particular interest for foreign researchers. In foreign studies indicate that the national policy of the USSR focused on assimilation, although in educational institutions in the republics of the USSR and the study of the national languages (N. Grant, B. Taylor).

In modern foreign research institutions of higher education is considered an important element of the National Innovation System (NIS) (B. O. Lundvall, C. Freeman). G. Etzkowitz, L. Leydesdorff in the framework of the "triple helix" indicates that the interaction between universities and NIS appears as through research and development, and through scientific and educational activities. For high schools, harmonization of interethnic and intercultural interactions becomes important from several points of view, especially:

1) Higher education institutions develop human capital, so important for them to generate the best possible climate and conditions for intercultural and interethnic cooperation for the realization of its mission;

2) Universities are business entities (G. Etzkowitz, J. Dzisah, F. B. Peterman, D. Harms, R. Girard), so it is important to create conditions for the development of the most adventurous part of college graduates, regardless of their ethnic, religious or cultural affiliation;

3) Development of knowledge-based rooted in the universities that create and regenerate the human and intellectual capital, which is the source of development. In this connection, it becomes an important mission of higher education institutions in the formation of elites in the development of the representatives of these elites certain values and goals that define their relationship to the different national and religious groups.

The higher education system plays an essential role in the reproduction of the national elite. Formation of the elite and the content of the state national policy are several aspects of mutual intersection (Wright C. Mills, V. Pareto):

1) The evolution of meritocracy researchers in the UK, France, Germany and the United States, focusing on the business and political elite, came to the conclusion that the expansion of the boundaries set elite (members of different races, cultures, ethnic groups) promotes economic development (Crouzet);

2) Universities contribute to the horizontal and vertical social mobility that promotes innovation and social development. Formation of common values and goals in the field of

intercultural and interethnic interaction helps to activate social mobility (Wright Mills, Etzkowitz, Dzisah & Crouzet).

3) "The norms, values, attitudes and ethics that tertiary institutions impart to students are the foundation of the social capital necessary for constructing healthy civil societies and cohesive cultures - the very bedrock of good governance and democratic political systems. Through the transmission of democratic values and cultural norms, tertiary education contributes to the promotion of civic behaviors, nation building and social cohesion" (Kenny & Florida, 1993).

Generally, higher education is seen to encourage more pluralistic, open societies. Empirically this can be seen through the data retrieved via the World Values Survey, which shows that whilst globally nationality is fundamental in shaping values within countries, higher education can have a significant effect on changing values (Wieviorka, 1997). This is based on the premise that teaching methods encourage debate, critical thinking, meritocracy, and a diversity of views, which will broaden horizons, encourage tolerance and help to develop positive leadership skills (Florida, 2010). It is thought that higher education institutes help instill values of good governance and democracy in students promoting positive citizenship. Education is thought to have this effect by improving individuals' economic means and cognitive skills, whilst broadening their values and social connections (Vaillancourt et al., 2010).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Formation of new paradigm of international relations, the organization of intercultural interaction must take into account the shortcomings existing approaches - the policy of assimilation, segregation and multiculturalism - and provide them to overcome. The most important role in the realization of this mission can and should belong to the Russian higher education institutions. A number of reasons determines this circumstance as:

1) Further socio-economic development of Russia is impossible without the implementation of strong technical and technological breakthrough, the transition to innovative development;

2) Innovative development of Russia is impossible without creating a base for conducting advanced research and development activities;

3) Scientific and technological breakthrough in Russia is possible due to improvements in human capital, training and education of advanced scientific and engineering personnel;

4) Preparation of the new frames corresponding to modern requirements possible in the integration of educational and research activities, creation of educational and innovative world centers;

5) The formation of advanced educational and innovation centers in the modern world - a complex problem, which is associated not only with the search for material and financial resources, but also to ensure that the process of human resources, acting as students, teachers, scientists, technologists, investors.

Fedotova further stresses the power of external factors in her case study where she links recent curriculum reforms in Russia to the "exchange of researchers, students, and the penetration into the Russian educational process of contemporary programs, textbooks and issues" (Modood, 2014). These flowed from co-operation with western universities and funds provided by foreign foundations (for example, OSI, MacArthur Foundation) and international exchange programs.

This era of reforms and modernization also saw the institutionalization of such new disciplines in Russia as political science, sociology, cultural anthropology, management, marketing, public administration…etc. What is also interesting in the Russian case is how their advocates and architects present curriculum reforms. For Adamsky for instance (Modood, 2014), the overall goal of the current modernization of higher education project is primarily the

"entering of Russia in the global market of education". In Belarus too, changes were in no small measure externally initiated and oriented, particularly in newly established private institutions, whose attractiveness is largely determined by the "partial westernization of the curriculum which allows the University's students and graduates to be easily involved in exchange programs" (Jamie, 2005).

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