



Main problems of education in the university in multicultural society: a view from the North Caucasus



B.S. Karamurzov
Rector of Kabardino-Balkarian state university



Contents

1

The first problem is one of principles of the university's activity as a promoter of intercultural dialogue in multicultural society.

2

There is a problem of the necessity to rest both on the universal and specifically national factors in the process of formation of multicultural society in Europe and in Russia.

3

Multiculturality and its problems throughout Russia's regions: the North Caucasus case.

4

The problem of how in the process of education to unite both the function of maintenance of collective identities and the function of forming abilities necessary for the person to participate fruitfully in intercultural dialogue.

5

The problem of interaction between education for intercultural dialogue and universal values of respect for the equal dignity of all human beings, human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles.




**The problem of principles
of the university's activity as a
promoter of intercultural
dialogue in multicultural
society.**



The first problem is one of principles of the university's activity as a promoter of intercultural dialogue in multicultural society.

- **The process of education aimed at the fostering of cultural diversity as well as social cohesion, civil equality and democratic participation should be preceded by the choice of the policy related to the role of the university in multicultural social environment.**

 **In the process of forming its scientific and educational policies in the North Caucasus Russian university can and should to rely on the assessment of two prerequisites.**

First

ideas of democracy, of the universal human rights and intercultural dialogue have been developed within the cultural matrix of modernity and are solidly based in societies, which have stepped over the threshold of irreversibility in the process of sociocultural modernization.

Second

in the course of the last two decades the status and functions of the classical university in the region have essentially changed. Its meaning and role in educational, scientific and cultural development of the republics in the North Caucasus unquestionably had grown.



Its social aspect (with economic dimension included)

the formation of:

- **scientific and educational opportunities**
- **opportunities based on professional qualifications**
- **informational and communicative opportunities**

for the effective and successful social activity of every young man in a contemporary information society, under conditions of globalization and in compliance with the goals of the country's modernization.

Russian universities in the North Caucasus have a mission

Its cultural aspect (with personality dimension included)

University must play a special role in solving the problems of socio-cultural modernization of the region on the basis of advanced synthesis of the values of the modernity and indigenous cultural traditions of the peoples of the region.

University should serve as a model for modern i.e. effective, multicultural, democratic and cohesive commonwealth, the space of rational dialogue of cultures.



The problem of the necessity to rest both on the universal and specifically national factors in the process of formation of multicultural society in Europe and in Russia.

Europe and Russia

Evidently true propositions that European society of last decades is becoming more and more multicultural, while Russian statehood space was historically formed as multiethnic reflect on both affinity and deeply ingrained differences between them.

- ❑ The process of the formation of the system of European nation-states had been interconnected with the expansion and consolidation of the principles of liberalism and democracy. The conflict between nationalism and authoritarianism, on the one side, and liberalism and democracy, on the other side, has reached its culmination point and had been resolved in the first half of the XX-th century.
- ❑ Russia, as well as some of other countries of Eastern Europe experienced dramatic collisions of the transition from the multinational states to national ones and from authoritarianism to democracy at the end of the XX-th century.



Three aspects of the Russia's transition to democracy at the end of the XX-th century.

First

it was historically unprecedented revolutionary transformation in economy, politics and social structure.

Second

it was specific politico-economic system in which indistinctness of procedures was accompanied by uncertainty of results, that led to enormous instability, even chaos.

Third

the crash of state socialism may be equally seen as a process of national liberation. So, national identities and nationalism occupied central place in the process of democratization.



So, activities aimed at the promotion of intercultural dialogue, while built upon common principles and goals, are conducted in each case within culturally and historically specific context.



**Multiculturalism and its problems
throughout Russia's regions:
the North Caucasus case.**



Actualization of ethnicity

Ethnicity in the North Caucasus

Correlation with the socio-cultural matrix of traditional society.

Distinction between “them” and “us” is represented as the borders of ethnic territories.

Appeals to historical memory as the factor of forming of the victim’s syndrome and delegitimation of state system.

Elements of psychological estrangement from the Russian state.



So, in the North Caucasus in current period simultaneously take place the heightening of the importance of intercultural dialogue and strengthening of the factors impeding its development:

First

Actualization of primordial, “ascriptive” forms of collective identities

Second

The growth of tension in interaction of traditionalist and modern elements of public consciousness

Third

Conflicts between groups on ethnic bases



The problem of how in the process of education to unite both the function of maintenance of collective identities and the function of forming abilities necessary for the person to participate fruitfully in intercultural dialogue.

 **University leadership in the North Caucasus**
if aiming to engender “intercultural intellectuals” must ask itself:



***Do we fully appreciate
complexities and
ambiguities of current
cultural situation?***



University leadership in the North Caucasus
if aiming to engender “intercultural intellectuals”
should find an answer:



***To the question on the
role of humanitarian
education in the forming
the identity of modern
person.***



University leadership in the North Caucasus if aiming at learning and teaching intercultural competences should identify:



In what degree humanitarian education can effectively influence the choice of life strategies by the youth.



Three possible life strategies



That of trying to limit the world by the walls of one's own home, of being confined within the tenets of one's national or ethnic culture, of being indifferent or even hostile to others' cultures

It's the strategy of being equally in one's own home and in the greater world. This strategy is based on knowledge and increase knowledge.

That of trying to catch up all novel and unusual, to try on indiscriminately various styles of clothes and styles of living, to change tastes, beliefs, political and any other orientations, to make change of impressions and variance of experience the end in itself




Knowledge occupies particular place within modern culture

In the treasury of every national culture and every civilization knowledge is the “freely convertible currency” preserving its value in every moment of time in every spot in the space of the modern world

Within every culture, economy or society knowledge is the source of innovations, moving force of development and progress




 **University leadership in the North Caucasus if aiming at learning and teaching intercultural competences should find an answer to the question:**



Doesn't the necessity have been ripened to turn humanitarian education up to restoring in new conditions and in renovating forms of the rationalist pathos of Enlightenment?



**Contribution of the University into
the solution of these tasks has to do
with the forming modern worldview
of the youth**

 **University leadership in the North Caucasus if aiming at learning and teaching intercultural competences should find an answer to the question:**




What's the due correlation between humanization of university education and its fundamentality?



The problem of interaction between education for intercultural dialogue and universal values of respect for the equal dignity of all human beings, human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles.



In the case of Russia in general and North Caucasus in particular one must think not about the growing multiculturalism in democratic society and legal state, but about the implanting human rights, democracy and rule of law in multiethnic and policonfessional social environment, which preserves powerful elements of traditionalism.



Ethnic nationalism is incompatible with the democracy and became the main obstacle on the way toward further democratization in some post soviet countries

This is because:

- A. Ethno-nationalism differentiates people by their inborn properties and thus:
- subverts the bases of democratic citizenship (individual liberty and equality of rights),
 - makes impossible functioning of democratic institutions on the bases of universality of constitutional and legal principles ;
-
- B. Extreme forms of ethno politics – i.e. discrimination, forced assimilation, ethnic cleansing and genocide – are in implacable contradiction with human rights



There are no as yet a well worked-out conceptions, which would be able not only to explain the current processes, but also to serve as a basis of the social concord on what would be an effective and satisfactory public policy in the North Caucasus.

One can explain this by the following:

- The lack of sufficient attention to the analysis of the cultural dimension of life of the aboriginal peoples in terms of their values, beliefs, morals, etc., that makes it difficult to “understand” them and to be realistic in evaluation of the possibilities and problems of modernization of local ethno social communities.**

- Over-generalized, undifferentiated vision of the region, which takes into consideration only its ethnic diversity and ignores its multidimensional complexity, as well as peculiarities of the historical experience and socio-cultural “individuality” of one or another people.**

- The absence of a reliable empirical foundation in numerous expert judgments: historical material on social and cultural evolution of peoples (not only political peripetias of their history) and representative sociological material, enabling to analyze “mass” social processes and the structure of actual public consciousness.**



Two groups of problems, which are of key value for the understanding both of the experiences of the transitional political period and general prospects for the North Caucasus region of Russia.

The first one is connected with the necessity of explaining the essential diversity of the patterns of the social and political development in various national republics of the region, although the character of the ethno political collisions and socio-economic problems being significantly the same in all of them.

First group

The second one concerns the necessity to assess (for each of the socio-cultural and political entities of the region) the availability or the absence, the degree of maturity and the specificity of structural conditions and prerequisites for the consolidation of the democratic regime.

Second group



The most striking is the lack of special researches of the second of two aforementioned groups, which embrace inter alias

Second group of problems

Problems of correlation between local (ethno-regional) identities of the population of the North Caucasus region and shared Russian civic identity, with respective consequences for the Russian state integrity

Problems of specificity of the structures of emerging civil society and political culture that is of the conditions, possibilities and limitations of broadly spreading and strengthening of values and norms of democratic civic culture



To overcome such destructive phenomena as separatism or religious extremism in the North Caucasus would become possible on the path of further modernization and democratization of local societies while upholding their cultural identity.



***What may be the position of
the University in this
process?***

It's a topic for discussion.





Thank You!

www.kbsu.ru