



1st EMUNI Research Souk 2009 (EMUNI ReS 2009)
The Euro-Mediterranean Student Research Multi-conference
Unity and Diversity of Euro-Mediterranean Identities
9 June 2009

Understanding and Fostering Cultural Diversity

DWAIKAT, AMJAD S.

Address (EAST., NABLUS, PALESTINE):

E-mail: ADWAIKAT1@HOTMAIL.COM

ABSTRACT

Today's cultural diversity is the outcome of thousands of years of human interactions with nature and relations among humans who have different cultures, beliefs and patterns of life. Therefore, we need to transfer this invaluable heritage to upcoming generations. The correct employment of this heritage through common understanding, concrete passion and brotherhood will be a safety valve for true dialogue which will be a base for better life. The main challenge in the 21st century is how to consolidate culture of peace, human rights, and freedom based on mutual trust and respect. The main dilemma for some countries is the lack of communication and common understanding with other nations and accordingly, this has become a necessity and inevitable. In conclusion, people could not live in isolation because the world is becoming a small village due to the state-of-the-art technology, advanced communications and international cooperation which will definitely motivate cultural openness and dialogue.

Key words: Cultural Diversity , Dialogue, Cultural Convergence

Introduction

The essential challenge confronting humanistic and cultural studies in this age of globalization is how to reconcile conflicts among cultures. As the integration of world cultures continues in earnest, we are witnessing the affirmation of identities in the many cultural systems of the world. This paradox of the affirmation of identity in era of globalization deserves serious attention particularly because of its potential for degenerating into crisis. Social upbringing of human should exceed the local culture to be released and reacted with international human diversified cultures. This truth is the most important feature of the 21st century, which will integrate nations and cultures into a single universal culture, with its own nature, dynamics and mechanisms, and keep the special features of local cultures.

The crisis that most societies facing is the ability of building a culture bridge that facilitate and make the reaction and social ties between local culture and international cultures, establishing this bridge is an essential thing today for human and culture. No culture, group or individual can live alone because of the technology advancement in communications and transportation. Cultures have a deep effect on different social systems, the cultural factors are essential and important in shaping societies, groups, and individuals. We have different cultures and each one has its own features and aspects. Cultures react and intercommunicate historical experience, we found that each culture has it own featur, that why we have hetrogenious cultures, and these differences not only among cultures but also among groups, individuals within the society.

Culture is acquired and is a result of social and humanetarian interaction, it has a accomodation dimension. The diversity of cultures is natural phenomenon inherent in human societies, as the quotes from some cultures and interacts with each culture and the underlying foundations and the platform determine the characteristics and distinctive features and its evolutionary path within the context of a special proceeding to their domestic laws that control its origin and movement, its rise and decline. Cultural diversity comes from the difference comes from the cultural and geographic environment, this diversity among nations become inherent in the blood of every member of the nations. Therefore, we have to accept cultural diversity, which in turn leads to the need for a cultural dialogue, which must necessarily lead to cultural consensus for the best of all.

1.1 Cultural Diversity:

Diversity is a fundamental aspect of all societies that concerns differences between individuals and differences between groups. The existence of multiple identities, values, cultures and faiths within a society challenges individuals and groups to cultivate mutual understanding in order to engage in cooperative interaction and experience cultural enrichment. Without mutual understanding, differences may generate conflicts that, when managed with violence, lead to considerable violations of fundamental human rights. The past decades have seen a rise of interest in the cultural dimension of diversity. This has resulted in increasing awareness of the cultural diversity, and the recognition of the crucial role that it plays in sustainable development and human well-being worldwide(1).

The UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2002) defines Culture “as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.” Cultural diversity is considered to encompass “all communities in the world, each of them with their own identity determined by ethnicity, history, language, religion and art”. It “widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.” Cultural diversity may be understood as, but not limited to, diversity in: practices, ways of living together, value systems, knowledge, languages, artistic expressions.(2)

There are numerous terms that are used to describe different aspects of what we understand when referring to cultural diversity, such as multiculturalism, cultural pluralism, interculturalism, cultural fusion. Any effort to develop methodology for assessing cultural diversity and to identify existing approaches of cultural policies has to register differences in the choice of scope from one country to another. (3)

The problem of diversity is at the same time a problem of understanding, or the lack of translation of ideas, notions, dilemmas. Above all it is the issue of our openness or closedness towards what is foreign, different from our way of understanding reality. The diversity has thus an enriching aspect, is not only a fact, but also a phenomenon changing our lives, influencing our existence and having a positive effect. Above all, one must learn how to recognize diversity, reach its cultural specificity. A better

understanding any cultures is needed to strengthen the existing initiatives and promote innovation, to ensure human well-being through conservation and promotion of cultural diversity.(4)

1.2 Cultural Dialogue & Technology:

I see something of merit in McCorquodale and Fairbrother's claim that: "... globalization is part of a ever more interdependent world where political, economic, social, and cultural relationships are not restricted to territorial boundaries or to state actors and no state or entity is unaffected by activities outside its direct control. Developments in technology and communications, the creation of intricate international organizations and transnational corporations ... have profoundly affected the context within which each person and community lives, as well as the role of the state." The cultural dialogue is an aspiration that many institutions want to foster nowadays, because it is a social value to be promoted in our pluralistic and increasingly interconnected world.

Dialogue between cultures, the oldest and most fundamental mode of democratic conversation, is an antidote to rejection and violence. Its objective is to enable us to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world, to develop a sense of community and belonging. Everything at the beginning of the twenty-century atheist and although we all live in the global village calls for the reaffirmation of the specificity of culture and to create a means to understand each other in individual privacy and to implement the model, and understand the world in their quest for some kind of troubled common global culture, but this calls for the initiation of self-understanding is an internal flight path is determined by the parameters of knowledge, reflection and education and the practice of self-criticism. (5)

The world is fast changing into a global village due to advances in information and computer technology, In cross-cultural interactions, people should consider and understand the cultural background of each other in order to have successful interactions. Today, human life is an industrial life, Which is governed by technical relations. The Evolutionists introduced technology as the major component of culture and put the other components at second place holding that all the components of culture are affected by technology. (6)

Technology is not changing culture. Simply put it changes it by controlling. Technology is the predominate medium by which we are increasingly getting things done. It is in this way that technology shapes culture. If you look at technology as a content, then culture shapes technology. But, if you look at technology as a process, then technology not only changes culture but it changes it in a very particular direction. (7).

Technology does not distinguish between information and knowledge, much less information and wisdom. (8)

When digital culture is concerned, It has the potential of promoting and enhancing intercultural dialogue but it also carries the risk of fuelling a fire that already broke out. The positive aspect implies fast, undisturbed and all embracing informing, for example, of the majority on the minority culture. Yet, the negative side can inflict great damage, for instance, by allowing chauvinistic and hateful texts inspired by prejudice and authored by people who hide their identity to appear on the internet. The problem is that anonymity, unfortunately, doesn't compel to responsibility. The meaning of intercultural dialogue depends on understanding of cultures and of wider social contexts in which they exist and develop.

As cultures themselves, the intercultural dialogues have always existed, but in the second half of the 20th century they have acquired new social meanings and interpretations particularly grounded in globalization processes, expansion of migrations, development and wide spread of new information and communication technologies and intensive redefining of cultural identities. In reality, intercultural dialogue is about individuals who communicate in different ways and different areas. As individual cultural choices and individual cultural identities change rapidly, the future of intercultural dialogue depends on the overall ever more globalized social settings and on cultural developments that indicate the fading away of anthropological interpretations of cultures and their new, technologically and individually based diversification. Technology has fundamentally changed the way we create, distribute, access and participate in culture and the way we build and share knowledge. Access to culture, cultural participation and cultural cooperation is heightened and facilitated through digital technologies. (9)

1.3 Cultural Convergence:

Culture has various meanings to various persons and various countries. It is a study of perfection. It is knowing the best of everything and propagating such knowledge to the posterity. It is seeing the things as they really are and making truth prevail over everything. It is doing good to others, loving the neighbors, correcting the mistakes of others, clearing the confusion and reducing the miseries of mankind. It brings peace of mind and helps mankind to achieve spiritual perfection. In short, it refines mind, behavior and activities of men. Culture is taught to the people through classics, painting, music, dance, drama and literature. It is disseminated to all people through art. Every country has an independent culture of its own. These cultures put together into a single whole form the world culture. Which will create a cultural convergence.(10)

The word convergence refers to the trend toward each other between any numbers of items. Convergence is commonly used today for the integration of technologies, global standards, and entertainment patterns. In our case, we are describing the trends of disparate cultures to integrate and at the same time, retain their unique characteristics. The perception of the static cultures was true; perhaps on the past, which was where the transformation is often slow, and when the friction between the cultures is limited. Now, setting new standards for knowledge and to gain this knowledge, and the work within a few years to inform our behavior, communication, and all this is an important cultural marking. The results of this modernity did not leave a small spot of the globe without falling, and all contemporary cultures are the product of engagement with the process of modernization of this giant, which continued over the centuries. (11)

Mueller notes that the economic imperatives that have resulted from contact and interdependence of the global community is now faced the distinct practices and diverse as the standards of different cultures. Of course, the fact that human beings seek to make the required updates is organized as possible in rolling inherited. And practices have not changed when needed, and then follow the criteria in this more slowly, but the culture changes among young people are generally easier and more acceptable than among the elderly. (12)

Conclusion

The world today needs to achieve cultural harmony, which is the introduction to the harmony in other fields which leads to “Joint Culture Market”, which makes international heritage available for all, and tied the linkages among human civilization on the bases understanding each other, simply, international culture is the expression of deep construction for social sense, it increases the knowledge of different cultures in its national features and discover the linkages with international culture.

We should duplicate our efforts to encourage cultures dialogue in order to achieve the spirit of forgiveness, peace, love, cohabitation among nations and fosterage human values, because this issue is supported strongly by religions that have an important effect on cultures . Achieving effectiveness and deeper dialogue among cultures needs expansion by establishing international forums located in different sites around the world, based on creative ideas from parties that have the same interest, like universities. Their efforts should be concentrated on cultural dialogue and cohabitation; this will facilitate cultural understanding and convergence, fostering humanity linkages integrates nations. It is an important that culture dialogue should be based on mutual respect among cultures and protect equity principles, and be a motive factor in orders to deepen forgiveness, cultural cohabitation and security. So, the psychological effects still affect in unconscious way in the past, present and future of nations, to achieve our goals we should release the acceptance of others and dealing with cultural diversity as a modern requirment for survival.

Cultural dialogue is that mutual inventive among nations, cultures and civilization, it allows each nation to understand others cultures. Today, each nation needs cultural dialogue because it is an important way to show other nations their cultures which mostly have a heritage of thousands of years.

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