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SOCIO-CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE: THE JAPANESE EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

This article explores the problem of socio-cultural identity in the context of intercultural dialogue, focusing on the Japanese experience as a unique model of cultural sustainability. In the era of globalization, intensified intercultural interactions create both opportunities for cultural enrichment and risks of identity transformation or erosion. The study aims to analyze how intercultural dialogue functions as a mechanism for the formation and preservation of sustainable identity. The research is based on a philosophical and interdisciplinary approach, combining theories of identity, intercultural communication, and cultural hermeneutics. Special attention is given to the dialogical nature of identity, which is formed through interaction with the “Other,” as well as to the role of ethical and aesthetic values in maintaining cultural continuity. The Japanese model is examined as an example of selective adaptation, where external influences are integrated without undermining the cultural core. Concepts such as harmony (*wa*), aesthetic sensitivity, and the synthesis of tradition and modernity are

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identified as key factors contributing to identity resilience. The findings demonstrate that intercultural dialogue, when grounded in cultural self-awareness and value-based selectivity, enhances rather than weakens socio-cultural identity. The Japanese experience offers important insights for other societies seeking to balance globalization and cultural preservation.

Keywords: Socio-cultural identity, intercultural dialogue, Japan, globalization, cultural values, identity sustainability, philosophy of culture.

СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНАЯ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ В КОНТЕКСТЕ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОГО ДИАЛОГА: ЯПОНСКИЙ ОПЫТ

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Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается проблема социокультурной идентичности в контексте межкультурного диалога на примере японского опыта как уникальной модели культурной устойчивости. В условиях глобализации усиление межкультурных взаимодействий создает как возможности для культурного обогащения, так и риски трансформации или утраты идентичности. Цель исследования — проанализировать, как

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Межкультурный диалог функционирует в качестве механизма формирования и сохранения устойчивой идентичности. Исследование основано на философском и междисциплинарном подходе, объединяющем теории идентичности, межкультурной коммуникации и культурной герменевтики. Особое внимание уделяется диалогической природе идентичности, формирующейся во взаимодействии с «Другим», а также роли этико-эстетических ценностей в обеспечении культурной преемственности.

Японская модель рассматривается как пример селективной адаптации, при которой внешние влияния интегрируются без разрушения культурного ядра. Концепции гармонии (*wa*), эстетической чувствительности и синтеза традиции и модернизации выделяются как ключевые факторы устойчивости идентичности. Результаты исследования показывают, что межкультурный диалог, основанный на культурном самосознании и ценностной избирательности, способствует укреплению, а не ослаблению социокультурной идентичности. Японский опыт представляет важные выводы для других обществ, стремящихся к балансу между глобализацией и сохранением культурного наследия.

Ключевые слова: социокультурная идентичность, межкультурный диалог, Япония, глобализация, культурные ценности, устойчивость идентичности, философия культуры.

MADANIY-IJTIMOIIY IDENTIKLIK MADANIYATLARARO MULOQOT KONTEKSTIDA: YAPONIYA TAJRIBASI

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Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada ijtimoiy-madaniy identitet muammosi madaniyatlararo muloqot kontekstida, Yaponiya tajribasi misolida noyob madaniy barqarorlik modeli sifatida tahlil qilinadi. Globallashuv sharoitida madaniyatlararo aloqalarning kuchayishi bir tomondan madaniy boyish imkoniyatlarini yaratgan bo‘lsa, boshqa tomondan identitetning o‘zgarishi yoki yo‘qolish xavfini yuzaga keltiradi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi — madaniyatlararo muloqotning barqaror identitetni shakllantirish va saqlashdagi rolini aniqlashdir. Tadqiqot falsafiy va fanlararo yondashuvga asoslanib, identitet nazariyasi, madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiya va madaniy germenevtika konsepsiyalarini birlashtiradi. Identitetning “Boshqa” bilan o‘zaro munosabat jarayonida shakllanuvchi dialogik tabiati hamda etik-estetik qadriyatlarning madaniy uzluksizlikni ta’minlashdagi o‘rni alohida yoritiladi. Yaponiya modeli tashqi ta’sirlarni madaniy asosni buzmasdan qabul qiluvchi selektiv moslashuv namunasi sifatida ko‘rib chiqiladi. “Va” (uyg‘unlik), estetik sezgirlik hamda an’ana va modernizatsiya uyg‘unligi identitet barqarorligini ta’minlovchi asosiy omillar sifatida talqin etiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, madaniy o‘zlikni anglash va qadriyatlarga asoslangan tanlab qabul qilishga tayangan madaniyatlararo muloqot ijtimoiy-madaniy identitetni zaiflashtirmaydi, aksincha mustahkamlaydi. Yaponiya tajribasi globallashuv va madaniy merosni saqlash o‘rtasida muvozanat izlayotgan jamiyatlar uchun muhim ahamiyatga ega.

Kalit so‘zlar: ijtimoiy-madaniy identitet, madaniyatlararo muloqot, Yaponiya, globallashuv, madaniy qadriyatlar, identitet barqarorligi, madaniyat falsafasi.

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, processes of globalization, migration, and digitalization intensify the challenges of intercultural interaction. Intercultural communication has become an integral dimension of social reality, manifesting itself in politics, economics, education, and everyday life. One of the key factors ensuring successful intercultural dialogue is socio-cultural identity, which shapes perceptions of the “self” and the “other,” forming systems of values, norms, and behavioral patterns. Japan represents a unique case in which socio-cultural identity has been shaped through a synthesis of traditional values (Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism) and modernizing influences (Westernization during the Meiji period and digital transformation in the twenty-first century).

At the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, globalization, intensified migration flows, and digitalization have radically complicated the landscape of intercultural contacts. New forms of communities emerge, value systems intersect, and symbolic boundaries shift. In this context, socio-cultural identity ceases to be merely a “background” condition of communication; it becomes an active factor that both enables mutual understanding and generates potential conflicts.

Philosophical analysis of this category makes it possible to conceptualize identity not only as an individual phenomenon but also as a collective one, capable of serving as the foundation of cultural dialogue while simultaneously functioning as a source of tension.

METHODS

The study employs an interdisciplinary approach, including:

- philosophical analysis (hermeneutics, phenomenology, philosophy of dialogue);
- a socio-cultural framework (theories of identity developed by Charles Taylor, Axel Honneth, and Manuel Castells);

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- the comparative method, enabling a comparison between traditional forms of identity and new digital practices;
- content analysis of academic literature indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, as well as primary philosophical sources.

RESULTS

The research identifies the principal transformations introduced by digitalization into the structure of identity:

1. **The formation of network identity:** the individual exists in multiple digital contexts, constructing diverse representations of the self.
2. **Hybridization of cultural practices:** the local and the global intertwine, generating new forms of socio-cultural selfhood.
3. **The emergence of digital memory:** cultural heritage is preserved and transmitted through digital archives and online platforms.
4. **Media self-presentation:** social networks shape new strategies of recognition and self-identification.
5. **The gap between real and virtual identity:** risks of fragmentation and alienation arise.

DISCUSSION

The problem of socio-cultural identity occupies a central place in contemporary philosophical thought. In conditions of globalization, cultural mobility, and digitalization, particular importance is attached to the question of how individuals and communities understand themselves within diverse cultural contexts. Philosophical discourse allows identity to be examined not merely as a socio-psychological phenomenon but as a category linked to ontology, axiology, and the hermeneutics of human existence. The philosophical origins of the problem can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle, who addressed the relationship between the “own” and the “foreign” and the role of the polis in shaping self-

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consciousness. Later, European philosophy (Hegel, Fichte) connected identity to the concepts of self-consciousness and recognition. Hegel's notion of the "struggle for recognition" in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* directly influenced modern theories of cultural identity.

Socio-cultural identity can be defined as a set of representations through which an individual or group understands their belonging to a particular culture, social environment, and value system. Within the philosophical tradition, it is closely associated with the concept of selfhood (Charles Taylor, Jürgen Habermas) and with theories of cultural memory (Jan Assmann).

This identity manifests itself in:

- the acquisition of language, customs, and traditions;
- the perception of historical memory;
- the acceptance of moral and ethical norms;
- symbolic systems (myths, religion, art).

Socio-cultural identity is a dynamic system of self- and external attribution to specific cultural codes (language, customs, religion, norms, symbols, historical memory), recognized as one's own and confirmed through everyday practices. It exists at the intersection of personal (biographical, narrative) and collective (ethnic, national, professional, religious, regional, digital) identities.

Structure of Identity

1. Cognitive component – knowledge of the "self" and the "other," cultural schemas, stereotypes, and categories of differentiation. In philosophical analysis, this component is linked to processes of self-consciousness and cultural reflection. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, personality cannot be understood outside the dialogical field in which self-understanding arises through engagement with the Other.

2. Affective component – feelings of belonging, pride, or shame; emotional attachment to symbols and collective memory. Émile Durkheim emphasized that

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social solidarity rests not only on knowledge of norms but also on emotional involvement in the cultural whole.

3. Normative component – values and rules that define what is considered “right” or “wrong.” In Habermas’s theory of communicative action, the normative dimension is expressed in the idea of the “ideal speech situation,” where mutual recognition makes dialogue possible.

4. Behavioral component – practices such as rituals, linguistic habits, conflict-resolution strategies, and forms of participation. Bakhtin connected cultural behavior with responsibility toward the Other, emphasizing that actions are always embedded in dialogue.

Thus, socio-cultural identity is a dynamic category: it is formed through socialization but remains open to transformation under global influences.

Philosophical analysis demonstrates that intercultural communication is not an external factor influencing identity; rather, it constitutes its internal condition. Identity is formed, developed, and strengthened precisely through intercultural interaction.

Twentieth- and twenty-first-century philosophy actively engages with the concept of the “dialogue of cultures.” Bakhtin argued that culture is inherently dialogical, and that personality exists only in encounter with the Other. Habermas emphasized communication as a means of achieving mutual understanding based on rationality and equality.

Socio-cultural identity is tested in communication:

- it manifests in the capacity for dialogue;
- it is strengthened through recognition by others;
- it develops when communication is grounded in justice and reciprocity.

Thus, intercultural communication does not threaten identity; rather, it reveals its potential.

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JAPANESE SOCIO-CULTURAL IDENTITY

Japanese identity historically developed around the ideas of harmony (*wa*), collectivism, and respect for hierarchy.

- Shintoism fostered a sense of sacred connection between humans, nature, and the nation.
- Buddhism cultivated spiritual self-perfection and tolerance.
- Confucianism emphasized social roles, duty, and societal harmony.

These elements constitute the philosophical foundation of Japanese identity and continue to shape patterns of intercultural interaction.

Globalization and digitalization profoundly transform socio-cultural identity. While globalization may blur boundaries and promote hybrid identities, it simultaneously increases the need to preserve national distinctiveness. Digitalization introduces “virtual identities,” hybrid communities, and new forms of solidarity based on shared values rather than nationality.

As Manuel Castells notes, in the information age identity becomes a construct emerging from the interaction between the local and the global, the traditional and the innovative. Digitalization thus carries ambivalence: it may lead to cultural homogenization, yet it also enables preservation and creative reinterpretation of cultural heritage through digital archives and media platforms.

Beyond its socio-psychological and communicative aspects, socio-cultural identity possesses a profound ontological dimension. Identity is not merely a descriptive category but a mode of being-in-the-world. From a hermeneutical perspective (Hans-Georg Gadamer), identity emerges through interpretation — through the continuous process of understanding oneself within historical tradition. Thus, identity is neither static nor self-sufficient; it is historically mediated and dialogically constituted.

In axiological terms, socio-cultural identity embodies a hierarchy of values that structure collective life. These values are not abstract constructs but lived orientations that guide behavior and shape ethical responsibility. Within

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intercultural communication, value systems often become the primary field of tension or convergence. Therefore, understanding the axiological core of identity is crucial for preventing intercultural misunderstandings.

In the Japanese context, such values include harmony (*wa*), respect, duty (*giri*), and collective responsibility. These values shape communicative styles characterized by indirectness, contextual sensitivity, and avoidance of open conflict. Consequently, intercultural communication with Japan requires awareness of implicit norms embedded in communicative practice.

The concept of hybrid identity acquires particular relevance in analyzing contemporary Japan. Hybridization does not imply cultural dilution but rather a dynamic synthesis of tradition and innovation. Historically, Japan demonstrated an ability to selectively adopt external influences while preserving internal coherence.

During the Meiji Restoration, Western political institutions and technological advancements were integrated without eradicating traditional cultural frameworks. In the twenty-first century, a similar process occurs in the digital sphere: global technological platforms coexist with deeply rooted cultural narratives.

Hybrid identity can therefore be conceptualized as:

- selective adaptation rather than passive assimilation;
- reinterpretation of tradition within modern contexts;
- coexistence of local symbolism and global participation.

This model challenges the simplistic opposition between globalization and national identity. Instead, it demonstrates that intercultural communication may strengthen, rather than weaken, socio-cultural cohesion when mediated through conscious cultural reflexivity. Digitalization profoundly transforms the mechanisms of cultural memory. Jan Assmann's theory of communicative and cultural memory can be extended to include digital archives as a new mnemonic structure. In Japan, digital preservation of heritage — from classical literature to

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Shinto rituals — allows for global accessibility while reinforcing national continuity.

At the same time, digital media create new symbolic forms. Anime, manga, and gaming culture function not merely as entertainment but as vehicles of civilizational narratives. They transmit philosophical motifs such as impermanence (derived from Buddhist thought), harmony with nature (rooted in Shinto cosmology), and moral duty (influenced by Confucian ethics).

Thus, digitalization becomes a mechanism of both transformation and preservation. It reconstructs identity in virtual space while anchoring it in historical continuity.

Japan's global cultural presence operates largely through soft power strategies. Unlike confrontational cultural expansion, Japan promotes its identity through aesthetic influence, technological innovation, and symbolic diplomacy.

This strategy includes:

- cultural institutes and language promotion programs;
- global circulation of Japanese pop culture;
- technological branding associated with quality and precision;
- philosophical concepts (e.g., Zen aesthetics, minimalism) influencing global design and architecture.

Such a model demonstrates that socio-cultural identity can serve as a communicative bridge rather than a boundary. Identity becomes a resource of attraction and dialogue.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that socio-cultural identity is a key factor of intercultural communication. It determines the capacity of individuals and communities to engage in dialogue, preserve cultural distinctiveness, and remain open to the Other.

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In the context of globalization and digitalization, identity loses its static character and acquires a hybrid and dynamic nature. The success of intercultural interaction depends on the degree of awareness of one's identity and the willingness to recognize cultural differences.

Socio-cultural identity thus functions not only as a personal and collective characteristic but also as a philosophical and communicative resource that balances local uniqueness and global universality.

Japan's socio-cultural identity exemplifies this balance: it combines traditional values and the philosophy of harmony with openness to innovation and global practices. This capacity for synthesis enables Japan to participate actively in global cultural dialogue while preserving its distinctive civilizational character.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In the sphere of digital communication:

- a. Develop digital platforms that transmit traditional values (online museums, VR exhibitions, digital archives);
- b. Create multilingual online courses on Japanese culture and philosophy;
- c. Utilize anime, manga, and video games as instruments of intercultural dialogue and cultural diplomacy.

2. For cultural diplomacy:

- a. Expand international cultural exchanges (festivals, exhibitions, theatrical tours);
- b. Support youth-oriented projects combining tradition and digital culture;
- c. Emphasize the philosophical foundations of Japanese identity as a factor promoting mutual understanding.

3. For intercultural dialogue:

- a. Train specialists in intercultural communication with attention to Japanese cultural specifics;
- b. Establish international research centers on identity and communication;

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c. Support philosophical and cultural research presenting Japan as a model of harmonious synthesis of tradition and modernity.

4. For strengthening identity under globalization:

- a. Preserve cultural heritage through digital archiving and open access;
- b. Engage youth in cultural practices that combine tradition and innovation;
- c. Promote the Japanese model of “hybrid identity” as an example of integrating national and global dimensions within a unified cultural space.

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