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East and West: Different Geographies of Thinking and Their Implications for Actual Problems of Today's World

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Abstract. *Although the current globalization eliminates and blurs the differences between cultures in different regions of the world, different inclinations and preferences in thinking between East and West, historically grounded cultural specificities and different hierarchy of values play an important role in the approach to solving current problems of our time. Differences in perception of the world in relation to its surroundings, organization of human relations, emphasis on socio-economic aspects and models of management of public affairs between East and West are so great that we can talk about different geography of thought. This is particularly the comparison of Western culture and Confucian East Asian societies. It is reflected not only at the individual positions, but at system approaches that are a kind of form of identification of the collective consciousness of these cultures. In some cases these approaches and perception are contradictory and can be compared in terms of «versus» oppositions. It includes topics such as individuality vs. community, holistic vs. reductionist solutions, social order vs. revolt, responsibilities vs. rights, pragmatism vs. ontological beliefs, conflicting vs. complementary perception of the world and other concepts. The work seeks to contribute to the understanding of these divergent concepts and help bridging model approaches between the two spheres of civilization.*

Keywords: *Confucianism, incubators of Western and Eastern thought, key concepts of interaction, “Truth seekers”, “Way seekers”, “Homo Ethico-Politicus”, “Homo Spiritus-Religiosus, governance schemes.*

Introduction

Conceptual differences in the perception of the world between East and West have historical roots. They are expressed in different hierarchies of value systems, different forms of human interaction with its surroundings, in divergent ideas about the organization of human relations, in a model of government approach to solving common problems, and in statesmanship. Some differences are so striking that we can talk about the different geography of thought.

General comparison of Eastern and Western culture includes many disciplines, such as philosophy, psychology, archeology, sociology, political science, history, economic structures, business practices, and more. Many differences between East and West can be traced through the various corridors of views, for example – how these differences developed, what were their thought incubators, what are the main tendencies in thinking and differences in key concepts of relationships, how these concepts are reflected in the schemes of governance and in practical approaches to solution of the current problems facing the world today.

The main objective of the study is not to bring fully exhaustive comparison of Eastern and Western cultures, but to examine some of the important aspects of traditional Confucian values in modern societies of East Asia and to contribute to the understanding of thought inclinations of the current East Asian countries and their impact on the approaches to solving today's world problems.

1. Basic definitions

The nature of the study needs to define the basic concepts of East and West and some terms that are relevant for understanding the work.

“East” and “Eastern” are the terms referring, from a cultural point of view, to countries affected by Chinese Confucianism, namely China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam and with regard to business aspects also to strong Chinese communities in South East Asia. In other words, the East is defined as a summary of societies and social groups, sharing Confucian values. They are called “Confucian Asia”.

“West” or “Western” are the terms referring to European and North American cultures that have been dominating international order in the modern history from the time of colonization. Their values are based in the socio-economic sphere on democratic principles: rule of law, individual rights, market economy, and in the field of philosophy on ontological approaches. The cultural orientation of the West is based on Judeo-Christian values and on the Greco-Roman heritage.

“Confucianism” is a term denoting the essence of Chinese tradition. It is understood beneath current Chinese philosophy and associated with the person of Confucius (approximately 551-479 B.C.) and his followers - Mencius (approximately 371-289 B.C.) and Xun Zi (approximately 313-230 B.C.). Confucianism is not a religion; it does not possess belief in gods and avoids metaphysical and ontological questions. It is a code of ethics, fostering civic cult and scaling moralistic properties useful for the state. Confucianism created a variety of legal and philosophical schools and introduced a powerful formalism into a society, as well as rituals and model of government with a vertical structure of subordination. Each entity in this “social mechanism” is clearly earmarked by civil position and responsibilities that are crucial for the functioning of the whole. The individual has first and foremost the obligations and not the rights, individuals must sacrifice their interests for the benefit of the whole. Individual freedoms and interests are secondary. Confucianism with Taoism and Buddhism represent a harmonious unit of three basic teachings in Chinese history of thought. Within this “triangle” Confucianism and Taoism are syncretic and highly complementary.

2. Geography of thinking as one of determination factors

The development of early culture depends strongly on physical environment, such as climate, fauna, flora, water resources and topography.

Some of key contrasting characteristics of East and West can be traced back to the very beginning of Western and Chinese cultures, during the Ice Age and the following Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. While China was situated in low latitude with abundance of fauna and flora, Europe was covered by ice sheets throughout the Ice Age. Nature conditions started to form different modes relating to nature, family, community and different patterns of behavior and living in those relevant regions.

Geographic confinement was another important factor. Chinese culture essentially developed in isolation, thousands kilometers from the two cradles of Western civilization. Vast distance and difficult terrains separated China from the West and it has persisted until the Silk Road was opened two thousand years ago. This was in sharp contrast with the development of ancient civilization around the Mediterranean, where open communication and cross-cultural exchange were common [18, p. 35].

3. Thought incubators and thought inclinations

3.1. GREECE: “TRUTH SEEKERS” AND TRADITION OF PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS

The Western thinking was born in the Greek thought incubator [10, p. 1]. The Greeks were seeking truth via explicit knowledge. They thought deeply about thinking itself and pondered the “what” questions – what is the truth, what is world made of, what is real. The tradition of the debate itself acted as a key institute. Critical attitudes to authorities were common, loyalty of students to the teacher remained only while his reputation lasted. Open disagreements and questioning of teachings authorities were common practice. Reputation was obtained by reasoning with rivals and not through the position in the administration.

Early Greeks rejected empirical experience of non-casual character, non-rational way of thinking and recognized nothing less than rational, analytical, logical and explicit. The central question of the Greek philosophers was to find the durability and stability (the unity, the being, the whole), necessary for understanding of the universe with its ever ongoing changes (plurality, birth and termination of cases).

There is a strong ontological aspect in the Western thought. Greeks with their perseverance and insistence in search for truth through logical procedures adopted ultimately idealistic dualism as an important philosophy of life and the religion that has lasted thousands of years in various forms. As a result, the western approaches and preferences become more abstract, theoretical, atomic, rational, seeking substance of things. It was only after Enlightenment that more inclusive perspectives on thought were opened. Even then dualistic thinking continued to affect the Western attitudes.

In terms of methodological approach, Western thinking is analytical with inherent reductionist procedures and anatomical analyzes on elements of the whole in order to understand the whole through its components while solely relying on logical procedures. The humanity must be highly grateful to early Greeks for their immense contribution in the field of mathematics, science, philosophy and political science.

The Roman Empire continued on the Greek civilization and further developed Greek arts, literature, philosophy, adapted the Jewish ethical system, the new Christian religion, absorbed Babel astronomy and astrology, the cultural elements of Persia, Egypt and other Eastern civilizations. The Romans created the Greco-Roman synthesis, a rich mix of cultural elements that formed two millennia Western tradition.

3.2. CHINA: “WAY SEEKERS” AND TRADITION OF MEMORIZING CLASSIC WORKS

Institutional framework of Chinese thought birth was completely different. In China, the authority of Confucius was accepted as an axiom, as a Canon, as the eternal truth that cannot be questioned. Official Confucian classics prestige was enormous, although medicine, astronomy and mathematics deserved also considerable status. Education was in this context the issue of conservation, interpretation and appreciation of classical texts and in addition to that – the way to a career in the ranks of well-paid administrators and provincial councilors to the supreme ruler and ministers [11, p. 133–135]. The authority was not achieved through the institution of public discussion, as in ancient Greece, but by the position in the administrative machinery, into which the scholar was positioned based on the results of state tests. These examinations were based on memorizing Confucian Analects – the ability to reproduce, understand and to interpret the text – but not going into thinking beyond the content of the text.

The Chinese long accepted the fact that the only constant in the world is the change. This was for them the apparent reality and they were seeking the way to accommodate this phenomenon. The Chinese did not asked questions “what” is the essence of the world, They were not preoccupied with the goal of providing rational accounts of reality but raised “where” questions – where is the Way of the harmony with the Nature in order to get the effective functioning of the society.

Eastern thinkers considered the thinking not as a process of abstract reasoning, but more as an activity whose immediate result should yield into practical use to society. In contrast to the Greeks they sought to understand the world more through experience than seeking explanations of the world finding theories that stands behind it. For them the reality was a concept based on a concrete observation and an empirical knowledge of the world was a kind of experiential know-how.

There is absence of ontological imperatives in Chinese mind. Chinese thinkers do not perceive any “Being” or “One” behind the reality, only Universe – the phenomenon that is universal and omnipresent. Chinese wisdom has no need for the idea of God. There is only an ever-changing processional regularity. This inclination of considerations caused the Chinese approach and orientations of thoughts tend to practical solutions and correlations.

Chinese thought is neither analytically nor theoretically inclined but rather very pragmatic. Chinese mind has no tendency to theorize. What are typical for it are considerations in terms of respective analogies, and it is prone to see things contextually, through more feminist than muscular eyes. It is avoiding abstract concepts, exclusive formal logic is not her stronghold, rather is synthetic than analytic and showing a lot of intuitive and instinctive aspects. Therefore Chinese attitudes and thought preferences tend to be practical and correlative.

In opposition to the Western reductionism Eastern thought is a holistic, pays more attention to the context, to the connections and coherence. It is interested in understanding the whole complex in its context, not through its elements. The whole is in Chinese thinking more than a summary of its components while relationship among elements are so complex and complicated that even through the deepest analysis of these elements (reductionist method typical for the Western thinking) it is impossible to understand the complex whole.

Chinese thought manifests tolerance for contradictions and conflicts, and unlike prevailing majority of the Western philosophy schools it does not perceive the “opposites” (positive pole vs. negative pole) as incompatible standing against each other, but as complementary and interdependent variables. In other

words, he is looking for integrity and solutions in practical life in which two opposites can exist in symbiosis.

Based on thinking inclinations the study distinguishes Western philosophers as “Truth seekers” and Eastern thinkers as “Way seekers” [18, p. 14]. The contrast is significant. Different thinking approaches affected worldviews and key relationship concepts in both cultures.

4. Key Concepts of Interactions: Homo-Ethico-Politicus vs. Homo-Spiritus-Religiosus

Understanding the differences in thinking between East and West needs to be based primarily on the different system approaches of the man with his environment/nature and man's relationship with man. These differences manifest themselves in a variety of contradictory concepts, for instance holistic vs. reductionist approach, perceptions of opposites in conflicted vs. complementary way, consciousness factor vs. face protection, communitarian vs. individualistic approach, order vs. revolt in society evolution, rule of law vs. kinship relationship in public affairs, people's obligations vs. people's rights, pragmatism vs. ontological thinking, formalism vs. straightforward behavior, high context vs. low context perception, substance vs. object as well as different role of the trust, justice, harmony in the governing schemes of society and some other differentiating principles.

4.1. HUMAN – NATURE RELATIONSHIP (ONTOLOGICAL QUESTIONS)

Relationship with Nature is foundational and acts as a backdrop for finite relationships for the civil society.

Western culture, in searching for answers to the most fundamental question of human existence and the relationship between man and nature, emphasized the concept of “separation” of mind from body resulting in the separation of man from nature. Traditional Western view of human nature was heavily influenced by the religion. Western worship of spirit has not paid enough critical attention to the interpretation of human nature and only Post-Enlightenment period brought the changes.

In contrast, the East considered the man as a whole, as an embodied microcosm of the universe, a part of the nature, instead of a spirit being. The fundamental was the endeavor for harmony of relationship in the nature as well as in the society. That is why the relationship between man and nature was conceptualized by “Tao” – “The Way”. It serves a similar role as the Gods of the West in the sense of relationship between man and nature but the East focused on the question of human nature instead of ontological issues.

Harmony in the concept of Tao can be best explained by the principle of polarity “Yin – Yang”, which explains these two poles as two complementary factors, standing for all movements of the nature. Western culture, unlike the East, characterizes polarity not as two complementary, but as two separate opposing factors. Such vision of reality greatly influenced the Chinese conceptualization of values and determined the approach to many aspects of life, including social institutions. This makes the Confucian worldview more organic and harmonious, preferring ethics of social relations instead of seeking supernatural phenomena, spirituality and religion. Mankind is considered simply as an integral part of the nature.

In contrast to the East, transcendent questions in the Western thought are stretching almost through the entire Western history and the issues of the creation of the universe and search for “Creator” of nature were formalized in the institution of religion.

If to compare the difference between East and West approaches concerning the relationship of the man and nature, the difference is that Tao is a concept of harmonization of the man and nature while God is above nature and by this standing, in a certain sense, separates humans from nature.

The perception of these differences between East and West are of paramount importance for organizing the relationships in civil society in Chinese and Western cultures.

4.2. HUMAN – HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS (INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS)

4.2.1. The Role of Ethics in Confucian Society

Confucian people's relations are totally different from the Western world. East seeks to instill ethics in human relations for the maintenance of the order in society without any institution of supernatural being and without religion. On the other hand, the West and Christianity with the concept of the law of God and the faith in the afterlife bring to their civilization theological character [3, p. 31].

The centerpiece of the concept of human relations of the East is the role of ethics in Chinese society. The basis of this ethics is the moral integrity of every person, including the ruler of the country. The appeal

to the concept of morality and the duties behavior of every individual in the vertically hierarchical social bonds is a control element management of public affairs. This provides the key to understanding the high objectives of Confucianism, relationships among people, between individuals and families, as well as between the individual and society. Each of these relationships mimics Regulations of Universe.

The basic unit in ancient Chinese society, in contrast to the West, was a family, rather than individual. The family is the most important aspect of a person's life in the East, the foundation of one's identity, one's morality, and the source of the meaning of the life. The ideal Confucian "Six Relations" (ruler/subject, parent/child, husband/wife, older/younger brother, teacher/pupil and between friends) are considered the basis of all social connections. Three out of six are found within the family that is a kind of testament to the importance of family in Confucian society.

Confucian world, society and the state are modeled as an extension of the family. Governance of the state follows this model – the leader functions as the father, the head of the family, and all citizens as his children.

Suppression of individual interests to the interest of the group is the natural moral ethics of Confucianism. The Chinese do not understand the emphasis of individual freedoms, they understand only the interest which requires a functioning unit, to which everything should be subordinate. The society is seen as an analogy of the human body. This works only if every human body-organ performs its duties properly. Once the body organs begin to function without control (analogy of expression of individual freedom) the human body as a whole will collapse. Therefore the first and foremost duty in Confucian society is to harmonize relations by implementation of the obligations of all individuals and groups within the established hierarchy relations. The interests of individuals have no place in such society, only the interests of groups and higher units. This is the essence of ethical principles of Confucianism. Therefore, the concept of individual human rights in Chinese society is considered by Chinese as a foreign element, «imported» from the West and despite the gradual modernization of China it is still considered that it «does not fit» the so-called Confucian tradition.

4.2.2. The Role of Consciousness in the Western Culture

Code of Ethics in the Confucian society was the determining factor, and the adherence to prescribed rituals fulfills in this regard an important function. Society life represents a set of rules and expectations of behavior of each subject according to established rules. Who swerved from this prescribed model of social interaction, was losing his face in front of others. Confucian society can therefore be described as "a culture of saving face" or as a "culture of shame" because the general pressure to comply with the Code of Ethics was so large that its failure to respect amount to shame.

The West, whose civilization values are based on Judeo-Christian traditions, was building a long-term spiritual Institution and within this institution the "culture of conscience" based on spiritual approaches. Moral and ethical code of society was based on responsibility of the conduct in the sight of God, who controls everything and sees everything. It meant the appeal to the observance of morality institution in front of the Supreme Creator who will judge the actions of individuals in the end, and not the appeal to respect moral code measured by other members of society. No shame in front of others, but conscience before God has become a determining factor in the behavior of the individual and the religion became an institution that had this man's relationship with God to cultivate and to guard. Regardless of whether one is alone or in the eyes of others, in both normal and problematic situations, this spiritual approach preached the man always to appeal to his/her conscience and to ask whether it is right what he conducts. His conscience as a God's hand is a communication tool with an invisible God to whom the man will confess his/her acts.

History shows that despite these concepts proclaimed by East and West, their ideals passed through periods of deep crisis and both cultures in implementation of their ideals they slipped into deformation scales. What is important, however, is that thought preferences of both cultures resulted in two very important and highly topical issues that East and West still perceive in cardinal different way.

The first is the relationship to freedoms and rights of the individual, the other issue relates to questions of correlations.

The essence of the difference in respect of individual freedoms is that Chinese society in general emphasizes the obligations of individuals, while the West emphasizes his rights.

In matters of correlations the Western culture is looking for differences between the body and mind, the existence and non-existence, the individual and society, the society and state, the man and nature. The Chinese culture strives to seek coexistence, integrity, unity, harmony, mutual respect of all things in nature and finding connectivity between the past, present and future.

Chinese mind along the way tended to look for the ideal in the past, so for example, its architecture, in principle, copies the past buildings and is not as diverse as architecture of Western culture, which is highly diverse and rich in architectural styles, reflecting the future oriented mind through innovation attitude. One can also see beyond that a kind of Confucian effort of Chinese society for the preservation of society and stability and rejection of social changes, while in Western culture there were in opposite way, the social movements that have become the driving force of progress.

Taking into account the characteristics of the intellectual orientations, Confucian society can be described as a community of *Homo Ethico-Politicus* and Western societies as *Homo Spiritus-Religiosus* [2, p. 114].

5. Implications for the problems of today's world

5.1. SOCIAL PROGRESS IMPLICATIONS (HARMONY VS. REVOLT)

There are different traditions of laying emphasis on the phenomenon of freedom and harmony between East and West, which has an impact on the stability of society and the processes of social movements.

A revolution is a kind of anti-thesis of harmony [13, p. 7]. It replace the old world with new orders and new elites.

The West has passed its history by a number of painful revolutionary social changes that destroyed the old social order, and brought new progress. In the West there is a tradition of thought that a harmonized conflict relations and forces represents a development of specific risk because it limits the creation of new things and overall social progress.

Confucian culture in contrast to the Western concept are focusing on harmonious order of society, preferring stability to social changes, which represents the core of their social interests. History of Confucian countries shows that Confucian societies, while have experienced wars and uprisings, they rarely went through revolutionary system changes of the society. The system was strongly conserved through mechanism of harmonized relationships that allowed hardly any social movement in terms of removing the old system and its replacement by a new structure of social relations.

In terms of socio-economic values the West has gradually transferred to the building their societies "based on law", while the East maintained formal Confucian values with social management basically "based on relationships." [17, p. 12–13].

Eastern societies created a vertical structure of governance with emphasis on the obligations of individuals, while Western societies, on the other hand, started at a certain stage of their social development to promote horizontal equality of individuals with emphasis on the protection of individual rights, including economic ones.

These concepts significantly determined the choice of governmental mechanisms, tools of maintain social stability, but also forms of economic development, the formation and evolution of the market, the cost of doing business and a number of important developmental phenomena, such as the role of civil society, the factor of trust, the size of business units, preferences for basic or applied research, the transfer of scientific knowledge and the like.

5.2. BUSINESS CULTURE IMPLICATIONS (FORMALISM VS. STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS)

Signs of Confucian culture in business interactions are so wide that this issue should be given separate studies. For illustration, it should be noted, at least some signs of Confucian values in the wider context of life of the South Korean society, which is a typical example of practical reflections of Confucianism in modern business environment.

The most important factor in the management of the South Korean society for all its members is sharing the same values. To support this goal the large and medium Korean companies organize for their employees training camps including education for discipline and loyalty.

In all areas of society, including the business community, there is strong hierarchy, austere formalism, career advancement is possible only with increased age, people's interaction avoids showing directly negative attitudes, strict subordination is at every social level and in most cases the responsibility is associated with collective decisions.

Korean business culture differs from Western business approaches from the first moment of interaction. Koreans tend to identify themselves as members of the group and from the very beginning they show efforts to find points of contact (kinship, school, hometown, college). They construct their identity typically in relation to people with whom they have close ties, and tend to worry when they feel isolated. This is in stark

contrast to Western businessmen for whom individuality plays a high role in constructing their identity [16, p. 21].

The pride is often a question of people's own perception, but with "saving face" in the Confucian concept is all about how others perceive that person. There is probably no person in the world who would not attempt to protect his/her pride, but Koreans consider the pride and preserving their face as extremely important [16, p. 56]. In this respect they keep a certain social distance also in the business interaction, a typical feature of Confucian business culture that the West sometimes confuses with the coldness of the person.

One of distinctive traits of Koreans is their ability to unite and bring private sacrifices to the benefit of the country. Korean vitality of unity and of the joint work is unique when being compared to many advanced nations that favor individualism and this kind of cohesion is reflected especially in times of crisis. Koreans, for example, were able to carry out individual collections of gold to help the country to pay off debt and redeem the restrictive measures of the IMF in the year 1988. Employees of companies in case of company's financial difficulties even return their salaries to contribute to the revitalization of the company. In such cases, the Koreans put the state/country to the level of their family and they perceive it as a common goal. This is a very different professional and business approach compared to Western companies.

Ambitions for education are particularly strongly rooted in the mentality of the South Koreans and the level of competitiveness for better social status through education has achieved enormous scale. Even the parents of their children compete over which of them gets on better schools. Children are under social pressure forced constantly learning even during their leisure time. The most widespread complaints of Korean children are the lack of sleep. Expensive private tutoring of children in order to excel over others are taken even late at night. Children are literally exhausted. The pressure of expectations of good study results is so great that in case of student's failure of admission to the university, it is not uncommon for students to go for suicide. South Korea is the country with the highest suicide rate in the world (more than 14,500 per year).

5.3. GLOBAL AFFAIRS IMPLICATIONS (CLASH VS. COEXISTENCE OF CIVILIZATIONS)

In 1993, an essay entitled "Clash of Civilizations?" was published on the summer issue of "Foreign Affairs", USA, by Samuel Huntington and in 1996 the book "The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order". Huntington's hypothesis is that the fundamental source of conflict in the new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future [6, p. 22]. This theory was discussed and criticized in all aspects by many scholars.

Huntington's observation is insightful in certain cases, such as Palestinian – Israel conflict, Kosovo conflict or even the Iraqi War a Syria War, where some cultural (religious and ethical) elements catalyzed the outburst of wars, though we should see in these wars also a contest for the strategies of power politics. Huntington's hypothesis reflects to certain extent also today's reality of growing tension between the Western and Muslim worlds in the form of the war against the extreme/radical interpretation of Islam (ISIS) and in the form of mutually growing anti-sentiments in both parts of these cultures while calling into question compatibility of values between them.

Human history has recorded enough cases of clashes caused by cultural or religious differences among states, nations, or regions. On the other hand, we witness a lot of geopolitical battles and economic competition around the globe. Nevertheless, in view of the general tendency of history, we find that the development of civilizations among different states, nations, and regions, should be dominated by mutual absorption and convergence.

Clash of civilizations theory is reflecting some trends in today's world but hardly can fit the present global situation, nor will it be the future perspective of mankind. Instead, the "coexistence of civilizations" should be the only outlet for human society and future goal we should strive for.

Perhaps, a clearer picture of our age may be built on the idea of the "New Axial Age" (pivotal age), proposed by German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883 – 1969). According to his theory, around 500 B.C., great thinkers appealed almost simultaneously in Ancient Greece, Israel, India, and China, and they contributed their original ideas to the solution of the problems which are of great concern to humankind. Distinctive cultures were then formed which, after more than 2000 years of progress, have become the principle part of human intellectual wealth. Until today mankind has lived by what happened during the Axial Period, by what was thought and created during that period [8, p. 7].

Judging from certain evidences we may draw this conclusion that in a certain sense, the current development of world multiculturalism might become a new leap forward. Now, we have entered the Information Age when a great leap forward in human society is just happening. Because of the economic globalization, integration of science and technology and progress of information network, different regions all over the world are tightly connected, and local cultural progress could no longer be independent as they once were in the Axial Age 2000 years ago. Instead, they will be developed in the midst of discords, conflicts, and through mutual influences or mutual absorptions [21, p. 297].

At present, human society is standing on a historic turning point and every nation or country should seriously reexamine its own culture in the historic perspective. The cultural tradition is a reality *de facto* for every nation or state, especially for those nations and states with a long history. Cultural tradition has crucial influence on contemporary human society, for it is deeply rooted in the hearts of its people, forming a spiritual prop of this particular nation or state.

Perhaps the twenty-first century would be dominated by four principle cultural systems: Euro-American, East Asian, South Asian, Islamic. Each of the four cultures has a long tradition and a population of over a billion. Different cultural traditions would subsist in this New Axial Age, each with a population too large to be eliminated and thus in the long run, the coexistence of civilizations is predictable.

To achieve this goal we must have some self-knowledge. The self-understanding of each culture is undoubtedly limited and the cross – cultural studies are necessary to provide us with a more comprehensive view of our own culture.

Conclusion

Historical and linguistic factors have caused that the Chinese culture, which originated Confucian system of governance, was one of the most poorly understood and sometimes even completely misunderstood cultures in the West. There is still a lack of public awareness in some Western countries about the Confucian system as well as about implications of the Confucian thinking inclinations in today's world. These issues belong to a group of important social topics that become more apparent in the process of globalization, and that are reflected in positions on international relations, on basic aspects of governance and on perceptions of democracy and attributes of individual rights and freedoms.

The comparison of systematic values between East and West is facing a number of problems of inter-cultural communication including the articulation of the terms and concepts that have no equivalent in another culture. This comparison process, however, enriches our world view with new dimensions and promotes the necessary knowledge how qualitatively relevant and important is to perceive the contrasting issues between East and West for solving actual problems of today's world. The comparison of systematic values of different cultures at the same time teaches us a deeper understanding that the long-rooted inclinations of thought are an essential form of cultural identification that, despite today's modernization and globalization trends, are able only to a slow change.

Usability of this approach is of particular importance when addressing global challenges, where East and West need each other, in the inter-regional relationships where both parties need to perceive the background of the other, and above all in the knowledge that the world is not flat but varied, diversified and that, in building our modern societies, we can mutually learn from each other on the millennia accumulated wisdom and experience. In addressing today's actual problems, this knowledge is even more important, because it is forcing the partners to a deeper perception of different properties and thus to a greater respect while seeking realistic approach acceptable to both sides.

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Восток и Запад: различия в «мыслительной географии» и их следствия для актуальных проблем современного мира

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Аннотация. Хотя современная глобализация элиминирует и размывает различия между культурами разных регионов мира, однако расхождения в мыслительных склонностях и предпочтениях между Востоком и Западом, исторически укорененные культурные особенности и различные иерархии ценностей продолжают играть важную роль в подходах к решению актуальных современных проблем. Различия между Востоком и Западом в восприятии мира, в организации отношений между людьми, в постановке социально-экономических акцентов и в моделях управления общественными делами настолько велики, что мы можем говорить о различных «мыслительных географиях». Особенно ярко это проявляется при сравнении культуры Запада с конфуцианскими обществами Восточной Азии. Различия отражаются не только в частных случаях, но и в системных подходах, которые представляют собой своего рода форму идентификации коллективного сознания культур. В некоторых случаях подходы и восприятия являются противоречивыми и могут быть описаны в терминах полярных оппозиций. К их числу относятся такие противопоставления, как индивидуальное vs. общее, целостные vs. редукционистские решения, социальный порядок vs. бунт, обязанности vs. права, прагматизм vs. сущностные убеждения, конфликтное vs. взаимодополнительное восприятие мира и других концептов.

Автор в своей работе вносит вклад в понимание этих расходящихся концептов и способствовать наведению мостов между двумя цивилизационными сферами.

Ключевые слова: конфуцианство, инкубаторы западной и восточной мысли, ключевые концепты взаимодействия, «искатели правды», «искатели пути», “Homo Ethico-Politicus”, “Homo Spiritus-Religiosus”, схемы правления.

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¹ Нижеследующий список литературы назван автором Библиографией, поскольку содержит ряд публикаций, на которые в тексте статьи нет ссылок. — Прим. ред.

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