

Ethno-consolidating role of art in the sustainable development of cross-border regions

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Abstract. The article discusses the potential of art in the consolidation of society on ethnic grounds. This affects the sustainability of the development of regions, the results of the exchange of sociocultural experience between generations of culture carriers and, in general, overcoming serious socio-economic and sociopolitical problems.

Keywords: ethno-consolidating role, cross-border regions, interaction, ethnic consolidation

1. Introduction

As a rule, sustainable development of cross-border regions is associated with socio-economic or socio-political problems and opportunities of local territories. Meanwhile, the world order and international cooperation are impossible outside the sociocultural space and the spiritual life of a person and society. In addition, for cross-border regions, ethno-consolidating factors are of particular importance. They must ensure the unity of the ethnos and the transfer of their social and cultural experience to future generations. Since active educational, intercultural exchanges occur in cross-border loci, and with them the growth of migration flows of the population, the issue of ethnic consolidation in the host regions remains relevant. Art should be considered as one of such important factors. Also, art is a fundamental factor in the consolidation of society and ensures the sustainable development of cross-border regions.

In modern knowledge, a certain scientific discourse has been formed, within the framework of which the indicated problem is investigated. Preferential areas are Ethnology and Ethno-Art studies, as well as Social Sciences, revealing the ethno-consolidating features of cross-border regional development. Some authors specifically emphasize the need for a comprehensive and interdisciplinary study of the consolidating properties of art to strengthen the identity of a person and the ethnic uniqueness of society [1, 2, 3]. At the same time, the issue of using the potential of art in solving acute multi-ethnic conflicts and, in general, reducing social tensions remains the focus of scientists. In particular, Dunning T. and Harrison L. talk about it [4]. With regard to the consideration of various aspects of cross-border interaction of territories, many authors express judgments in favor of the political and international legal determination of such cooperation [5, 6]. At the same time, there are serious works that confirm the role of the spiritual life of a person and society (and art as its most important element) in the development of both the ethnic groups themselves and in the whole regions of their existence [7], [8].

So, the purpose of this work is to show how art can perform the most important ethno-consolidating function for the stable development of cross-border regions in a multipolar world,

multiculturalism, crisis manifestations in the economy and the dialogue of cultures, etc. At the same time, the emphasis is on identifying the features of preserving one's sociocultural identity and determining the prospects for preserving the original national traditions.

Based on the theoretical and practical analysis of the designated problem, the problem of understanding the role of art at the same time in stabilization and in ensuring the necessary dynamics of regional cultures during transboundary interaction is posed and solved. This task is formulated not only within the framework of the proposed work, but also in the knowledge system of the Sociology of Art [9], cultural sociodynamics [10], and Ethno-Art Studies [11].

2. Materials and Methods

Since the proposed work is dedicated to clarifying the ethno-consolidating role of art in ensuring the sustainable development of cross-border regions, empirical research at two levels becomes important. First, we consider the expert opinion of the administrative staff working in the institutions of culture, art, and education (cross-border regions of Russia: Altai Region, Altai Republic, Kemerovo Region, Kazakhstan: Pavlodar and East Kazakhstan Regions) (n=120). The choice of institutions was determined by their activities to preserve the ethnic traditions of the native culture. Second, we rely on empirical data of expert surveys of the officials of state authorities and local governments responsible for the implementation of regional and municipal programs for the preservation and development of ethno-national cultural heritage in the territories of the cross-border regions of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan (n=65). Thus, the article is based on the original empirical data of studies conducted in two levels or directions indicated above, covering the period of 2015-2017. At the same time, in the course of the work, the data of secondary applied research were used. The study was carried out at the Faculty of Sociology of the Altai State University (Barnaul, Russia), the material was collected for the study in the corresponding regions of Russia and Kazakhstan.

The use of applied methods of sociological research meets the objectives of our work, and the chosen methodology meets the basic requirements for the production of such research in terms of identifying specific methods, identifying their advantages in obtaining representative data. The selection of experts on a number of grounds is also important, which also meets the objectives of the work and the research methodology. The emphasis was placed on the participation of experts who are directly related to the assessment of the state of development of culture and art in specific territories. All the experts were able to differentiate the sustainable and unstable development of regions by this criterion, and they had sufficient professional experience to identify the ethno-consolidating function of art.

The proposed research methodology allowed identifying and analyzing the following indicators of the ethno-consolidating role of art in the sustainable development of modern cross-border regions: ways of ethnic consolidation of culture carriers in cross-border regions through traditional and original art, taking into account possible processes of assimilation of cultural values and norms, ethnic tension and conflict, dialogue of cultures and in multiculturalism; ensuring such consolidation for solving the tasks of sustainable socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural development of the region; assessment of the possibilities of transferring the experience of ethnoconsolidation of society through the phenomenon of art to subsequent generations of cultural bearers. This research direction is determined in accordance with the sociocultural approach, which constitutes the main vector of the research methodology.

3. Results

In the presented study, traditional art cultivated for centuries in the territory of transboundary regions is taken as the basis. But at the same time, this art is influenced by multicultural processes characteristic of the whole modern world. The question about the state of art and the whole culture in their territories was one of the first to be asked by participants in an empirical study. Opportunities or ways to preserve traditional and original art and the results of bringing innovative features of cultural dynamics through cross-border cooperation have been clarified. The position confirming the

difficulties in the socio-cultural development of the regions was predominant in both groups of experts. In particular, the Russian experts noted the everincreasing elitization of art, i.e. its inaccessibility to the population (28%), the local concentration of certain types of art, for example, decorative and applied (21%), insufficient financial support for the development of crafts and lost art forms (19 %). At the same time, it was emphasized that the possibilities for creative self-realization of a person in the system of higher education, school, and additional education increased (33%). The experts from Kazakhstan believed that the main problem affecting the state of culture and art in cross-border regions is the problem of assimilation of cultural values and norms associated with the systemic phenomena of globalization and modernization, as well as with naturally occurring cultural exchanges and dialogue of cultures in cross-border regions (54%). Such ideas about the state of regional culture and art made it necessary to ask a question about evaluating the potential of art, its various forms, traditional and new, in order to preserve the connection between generations of carriers of cultural values. Experts recognized the unrelenting socializing function of art (57%), while the Kazakh specialists drew attention to the ability of people to engage in art on a professional basis, which makes it possible to consider art a factor of employment and self-employment of the population (24%). When marking the social potential of art in cross-border regions on a scale from 1 to 10 (maximum rating is the highest potential), the first group of experts gave an average rating of 6, the second group came up with 3 (among Russian experts – 2, Kazakhstan experts – 4). As we can see, in general, a fairly high level of the social potential of art is recognized, which was associated with the following three factors: (1) Art as the wealth of the people; (2) Art as a sociocultural experience of generations; (3) Art as a way to preserve traditional values and norms.

The next part of the work was devoted to clarifying precisely the ethno-consolidating meanings of art. Theoretically, the ethno-consolidating role of art is determined by these three important circumstances: (1) whether there are opportunities to use the phenomena of art in solving some pressing social problems, for example, problems of social communication, social justice, etc.; 2) how much regional art retains its ethnic originality, and at the same time what is the share of borrowings from other cultures and active processes of globalization and modernization; 3) whether the art retains an effective mechanism for ethnic self-identification of individuals, as well as how this mechanism affect a person's commitment to sustainable traditions? [1, 12, 13]. And the need to clarify the fact concerning the institutional support of art as a factor of socialization, education of generations, familiarization with the values of native culture at the level of state and municipal programs of regional social and cultural development should be added to this. Moreover, such support should be not only now, but also in the future.

Analyzing the data obtained, we can argue that art is able to most effectively realize its ethno-consolidating potential in two cases. First, in the conditions of polyethnic society, when art is considered to be almost the only factor in the preservation of traditional values and cultural norms (61% of opinions from the general cohort of experts). Second, this potential is more characteristic of cross-border regions, because the probability of multiple assimilations, acculturation, systemic sociocultural dynamics of the type of globalization is high in such a loci. And this does not always have a positive effect on the state of social relations and the collective and individual life of a person, which means that the consolidating vector of development (70%) may be lost. The prevailing number of experts (86%) noted that traditional and original art would have a sufficient potential to consolidate a multi-ethnic society based on universally valid values and norms. The positions of such art are held by the need to transfer sociocultural experience to subsequent generations of cultural bearers, which minimizes the manifestations of conflicts on ethnic grounds, disunity of people about religious or other ideological positions and attitudes, etc.

The study also allowed to differentiate the sign of sustainable development of cross-border regions depending on the ethno-consolidating role of art. Obviously, art can hardly be considered as a leading factor in the stabilization of social and economic relations in the region, but ethnosolidation in society may well depend on traditional regional art. For example, the protection of ethnic monuments of culture and art, the development of centers for the support and study of native culture and language,

educational complexes containing methods of teaching knowledge about the region's original art contribute to strengthening the potential of art as a consolidating factor. According to experts from Russia (43%), institutional support for the preservation of traditional values and original art can be decisive in the subsequent unity of society. At the same time, the experts from Kazakhstan noted that the spiritual safety of the population must be ensured (39%) for the sustainable development of the region. More than cultural values and traditional art play an important role in this (53%).

4. Discussion

According to the results of our applied research, it has been established that the ethnoconsolidating role of art increases in the modern conditions of the development of the world under the influence of globalization and modernization processes. Meanwhile, the discussion of the following points deserves attention: (1) How does the leveling of the ethno-consolidating role of art depend on the specifics of the region(s)? Is it possible to assert that this role is increasing in the cross-border regions? (2) Does multiculturalism affect the state of the art as a factor in consolidating society on the basis of ethnicity? Or this consolidation is universal?

Based on the position of some researchers, in the basis of ethnic processes in any case, certain social ties lie [14], the gap of which may be associated with the rejection of traditional cultural values and norms. By the virtue of its spiritual nature and existing universal meanings, art should be considered as an important factor in the consolidation of society, including on the basis of ethnic characteristics.

The nature of art is not consistent with direct social influence or action. Art is always a delicate matter, which awakens certain emotions and feelings in every single individual [15]. On the other hand, art becomes the factor that ensures the interaction of different generations of culture carriers, despite the powerful processes of intercultural and ethno-political dialogue between peoples and nations. Because generations do not need to explain the meaning of art, they feel it at the level of spiritual being, the need for unity and following the values adopted in their culture. The study did not focus on this circumstance. Moreover, the empirical results recorded the possibilities of art in the education of tolerance for social transformations, patriotism, citizenship. Along with other factors, art is recognized as a tool for consolidating society. Perhaps not all authors share this position. For example, J. W. Berry and his coauthors [16] pay attention to the fact that the originality of culture is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain, since the impact of assimilation and acculturation results increases, which leads to the destruction of all links of sociocultural dynamics. This is reflected in art, education, as well as in the daily life. At the same time, the universal significance of art determines its inviolability, timeless nature, which means that it can be relied upon when it comes to the consolidation of society.

5. Conclusion

As a result of theoretical and empirical research of the indicated problem, we can formulate the following main conclusions. First of all, the process of ethnic consolidation of culture in the cross-border regions can be effectively implemented through the phenomena of traditional and original art. Second, the modern processes of assimilation of cultural values and norms, ethnic tension and conflict, dialogue of cultures (and the phenomenon of multiculturalism in general) can reduce the effect of art on the ethnic consolidation of society. However, they do not slow down the pace of intergenerational interaction, in which art has an important role.

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