



Interaction of cultures and diplomacy of states

Vladimir Ivanovich Fokin ^a, Sergey Sergeevich Shirin ^a,
Julia Vadimovna Nikolaeva ^{a,*}, Natalia Mikhailovna Bogolubova ^a,
Elena Eduardovna Elts ^a, Vladimir Nikolaevich Baryshnikov ^b

^a Department of International Humanitarian Relations, Saint Petersburg 199034, Russian Federation

^b Modern and Contemporary History Department, Saint Petersburg 199034, Russian Federation

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 3 January 2016

Received in revised form 25 April 2016

Accepted 3 May 2016

Available online 26 December 2016

Keywords:

clash of civilizations

cross-cultural cooperation

cultural diversity

public diplomacy

soft power

ABSTRACT

The process of intercultural interaction is described using the theory of civilizations from which two mutually exclusive conclusions rise. The first one states that civilizations will inevitably clash, with one culture becoming universal for all the rest as a result. The second one tells about the inevitable synthesis of civilizations along with preserving their diversity during the development of their cooperation. In the first way, the US foreign policy is dominated by the idea of the universal importance of Western culture for the rest of the world, which is embodied in J. Nye's concept of "soft power". US public diplomacy uses "soft power" to convince people that the leading role of the USA may provide progress for the whole of humanity. Another way is cross-cultural cooperation. This approach is implemented by UNESCO. It comes from the universalism of human civilization, which is based on the diversity and cooperation of cultures. This diversity is considered as a source for development, providing it with mutual enrichment.

© 2016 Kasetsart University. Publishing services by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Introduction

Since ancient times, relations between peoples have occupied a significant place in the life of society and of individual states. Communication between people and exchanges in various areas based on the diversity of human civilization have made a powerful source of development in historically evolved societies. Ethnogenesis, the formation of nations, nation-building, the development of national cultures, and an effective economy—all of these are closely linked with international relations. All peoples and countries are entangled in a dense branching network of diverse interactions that affect all aspects of human life. This

becomes particularly evident in the context of contemporary globalization based on the development of a single world market. Today, we observe a dramatically increased objective necessity in the theoretical conceptualization of international relations, in the analysis and prediction of occurring changes and their impacts, which change rapidly peoples' everyday lives and social communities. The process had been evolving throughout the 20th century and has accelerated in this century. Continuous development of the means of interaction between people, the steady expansion of their forms, and the reliability and stability of communications have provided virtually unlimited opportunities for the international exchange of scientific and technological achievements, ideas, and artworks. The interaction of cultures has become almost unmediated and has involved in its orbit vast segments of the population, developing links at various levels, from elite to mainstream. The process of cross-impacts between cultures has

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: mollycat@mail.ru (J.V. Nikolaeva).

Peer review under responsibility of Kasetsart University.

deepened. Migration flows have become large-scale. The democratization of international relations and the public desire to influence the development of world order came as a response to the secret diplomacy that had led to the unleashing of World War I. The increased disastrous effects of wars in the industrial era, especially after the development of weapons of mass destruction, have only increased the peoples' mistrust of the ability of politicians to prevent global catastrophe. The massive anti-war movement in the 20th century has become a crucial factor that determined the foreign policy of states in the second half of the 20th century. Another important factor of democratization in the system of international relations has been the desire of large segments of the population to put an end to human rights violations, absolute condemnation of war crimes against the civilian population, racism and the total dictatorship at the Nuremberg trials, the rapid development of national liberation movements striving for the right of peoples to national self-determination and independent development, combating discrimination, racism, and xenophobia.

The explosive expansion of the number of international relations actors at the world community level has triggered globalization processes that have increased the peoples' interdependence. The increased impact of public opinion on foreign policy and on shaping the world order has caused a reciprocal desire of states to exert influence on stereotyping foreign policy in the mass consciousness.

Today, the problem of correlation between the processes of intercultural and interstate interactions and the search for cross-links and interdependencies between these processes requires conceptualization and philosophical generalization.

The main objective of this article was the analysis of US cultural policy in the field of diplomacy and international relations and the exploration of the preconditions and peculiarities of its development starting from the first half of the 20th century to the present day.

The novelty of this research consists in the following: 1) to give a general framework of the US conceptual approach to the foreign policy organization in the sphere of intercultural communication. 2) to compare the US public diplomacy strategy with the politological concept of the clash of civilizations, proposed by the US politologist, S. Huntington.

Literature Review

Over the past decades, the ideas about the interaction of peoples' cultures based on the so-called civilizational theory in the modern interpretation suggested by Samuel Huntington (Huntington, 1993) dominated the public consciousness. Pursuing the liberal line, Samuel Huntington in the late 20th century confirmed the inevitability of a clash of civilizations based on religious differences. In the context of globalization and based on some geo-climatic and socio-cultural preconditions for the global leadership of the Anglo-Saxon race, he proclaimed the universality of Western culture, the "chosenness of the American nation". The core of S. Huntington's concept goes back to the concept of Arnold Toynbee (Toynbee, 1961), the renowned

English historian, who created the theory of closed-up, local civilizations based on religious unity. Toynbee believed that history is a process of a clash of the Western and Eastern civilizations, which are fundamentally different by nature. The Western civilization is humane and productive; it ensures the progress of human civilization. The Eastern civilization is marginal and counterproductive. Their battle will inevitably lead to the spiritual victory of one of the civilizations and the establishment of a single civilization with a common culture. The victory of the West over the East has been long viewed by Europeans as a historic "mission of the white man". The confidence in the victory of the West was based on the conviction of the universality of Western culture and its exceptional features that had brought huge material superiority to the West. These representations were embodied in the liberal picture of the interaction between civilizations and the role of personality in history. Religion was regarded as the most complete manifestation of features of cultural development of various peoples. In contrast to Freud's views, the sociality of a person within the new liberal theory was not attributed to the suppression of his innate principles by the society but was rooted in this individual, that is, "designed" in his natural being. A human's sociality was also determined by the type of culture, the type of civilization, which was established in a particular society. This predetermined civilization type was regarded as an inevitable invincibility of cultural diversity. The World history was represented as the development of local, non-linked and closed-up civilizations (Toynbee, 1961; Weber, 1935). The Christian religion, in its Western forms, was regarded as the most favorable ground for the development of society, because it had been based on Greco-Roman traditions, which provided to the Western world leading positions in the sphere of material culture. It was argued that human nature has nothing in common with the divine and has to be limited to what is given by nature. In this version of secular humanism, the main source of inspiration was the ancient tradition, the "Apollo soul", whose ideals were harmony, the sense of measure, and the bounds of possibility. Europe was declared as not only the bearer of the Christian monotheism and the creator of the "German ideology", but as the successor of the ancient paganism and its "clarity of vision", that is, the understanding that any good will can bring as much damage as evil, unless it is enlightened. At the same time, the authors of the concept seemed to forget that the revolt of Prometheus was not only a symbol of technological progress, but also a revolutionary practice; that the heroic ethics of the ancients had no taboo against a murder and demanded expediency, at its best, rather than human solidarity in this matter. Finally, it was forgotten that Christianity originated from the Eastern religions and in opposition to the ancient world. This is why the objectivation of secular humanistic values is still relevant in liberalism.

Attempts to find the humanistic content of an exit from the crisis affecting society have been undertaken in the philosophy of existentialism. The works of M. Heidegger, K. Jaspers (published at the turn of the 1920s–1930s), J.-P. Sartre and A. Camus (in the 1930s) formed the existential concept of personality. Total voluntarism, perceived as an

objective, development trend, comes into collision with the free choice of a human, with the capability to remain oneself in a tough historical situation, to retain one's essence beyond the understanding of mind and to realize one's destiny. Resistance to the historical trends in human behavior is seen in ecstasy by Heidegger, in an adventurous act by Sartre, and in the rebellion of a man by Camus. The manifestation of human nature is considered more extensively by Karl Jaspers. He finds resistance to the totalitarian trends in the economic, political, and cultural life of people. This allows him to create a more optimistic picture of the historical development, which he regards as the process of the return of Western civilization to the "bosom of the East", in which the achievement of material prosperity, as the basis of the societal life, is replaced by the pursuit of self-actualization. He views the extension of human rights, liberation of labor, continuously developing system of spiritual values, and philosophical belief as the basis for a person to return to that person's essence and for humanity to return to its unity, which was lost during the separation of Western civilization from the global one. K. Jaspers considers the process of interaction and mutual influence of Western and Eastern civilizations to be beneficial for the personality (Jaspers, 1932). In this interaction, Jaspers sees the solution to one of the most intractable problems of existentialism: the correlation between freedom and arbitrariness. Of these, one can be hardly distinguished from the other in public life, which creates a difficult dilemma: either formal rationalization of the bureaucratic society—leaving no room for freedom, or the revolt against reason—destroying the society itself. Jaspers for himself solves this problem through the synthesis of the existential inner freedom of an individual, which comes from the East and the external regulatory function of the mind, coming from the West (Jaspers, 1949). In the synthesis of the cultures, K. Jaspers envisioned the prospect of interaction between civilizations.

Depending on how politicians realize the process of interaction between cultures, the state diplomacy is built, aiming to ensure these processes. A relatively coherent concept for this part of the foreign policy is suggested in the USA (Tsvetkova & Antonova, 2015). US public diplomacy is built relying on the strategic objectives of their foreign policy. Within the contemporary system of international relations, the USA claim to leadership in the modern world should be such kind of leadership that would allow them to rebuild the modern world in accordance with the views of the American establishment. For this purpose, the absolute authority of the USA should be established not only in the military and political but also in the social and moral spheres. US ideals—in the way they are interpreted by the presidential administration of the USA—should become the ideals of mankind. Thus, they proceed from the concept of universalism of culture of Western civilization. The objectives of US public diplomacy are formulated on the same basis. It is not by chance that the term "soft power"—described by the imperative "you can't do good without using your fists" and fitting in the foreign policy strategy since the days of Presidents Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush Sr.—has become so popular in recent years. "Soft

power" in this construct stands for "good". In the theory of international relations, Joseph Nye is a practitioner of the neo-liberal theories. In the early 1990s, he proposed and developed the concept of soft power in his monographs "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power" (Nye, 1990) and "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics" (Nye, 2004).

Referring to the essential content of the process, we should address the formula of power shaped by the founder of the German historical school of law, L. von Ranke, in the 19th century; to be an authority, the power must rely on the authority of force and the authority of power (Ranke, 1834, 1836). In other words, it should be based not only on coercion but be respected, too, and only in this case is it a full power. Therefore, the USA, when striving to realize a single-pole, world power authority, should care about strengthening respect for its policies worldwide.

Materials and Methods

To perform such conceptualization and generalization, we should raise the issues of the evolution of cultural interactions in the 20th century related to the development of the means of human interactions, the democratization of international relations, and the increasing influence of public opinion on foreign policy, to critically evaluate the theoretical bases of the universality of Western civilization, to provide the general characteristics of the conceptual approach of the United States of America, as a leader of the global system of international relations, and to build their foreign policy in the field of cultural interactions. In fact, under the US hegemony in the world cultural process, we need to correlate the US public diplomacy strategy with the political concept of a clash of civilizations.

Our hypothesis is that US public diplomacy, which achieves spectacular results at the present stage, can lead to the aggravation of the essential contradictions inherent in the relations between civilizations, destroying the space of cooperative interaction between the cultures. This hypothesis needs to be tested and the recommendations for tools to address the emerging contradictions in the intercultural dialogue are formulated.

The authors have analyzed the main concepts and scientific works in the field of diplomacy and international relations such as "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" (Huntington, 1993), "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics" (Nye, 2004), "A Study of History" (Toynbee, 1961) and others. The key diplomatic skills and tactics applied by the USA in conducting a dialogue with different countries on the global stage have also been analyzed and compared.

Results and Discussion

US public diplomacy is an essential tool for shaping a unipolar world, as important as the military and economic potential of the USA. The power of this authority has been proved during the collapse of the USSR. Similar views have been espoused by US politicians from the events associated with the "velvet revolutions" in Eastern Europe, the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the "color revolutions" in the post-

Soviet space, and the “Arab spring”, among others. US public diplomacy has played its important role in all these events.

However, the public can not only be a passive consumer of a government's attempts to control its behavior but can also use actively the state capabilities in international communication. Thus, in the context of foreign cultural policy, the state uses cultural connections for the development of national scientific and technological potential and indirectly to cope with economic development and gain political influence through this process. The USA doesn't need to create an image of a leader, as some people think. This image appears in peoples' minds not as a result of foreign policy performed by the Department of State but owing to the real success in the economy and the development of a consumer society and in science. It is created through the efforts of Hollywood and show business, which are encouraged by the entire US society, while the Department of State just exploits this potential of American culture, and hardly effectively. Many countries use the potential of their cultures in international cooperation, to varying degrees, aiming to ensure national modernization and strengthen their role in the system of international relations. However, perhaps, only the USA rely on a deeply developed ideology and set very ambitious tasks. It should be acknowledged that their capabilities in this area are quite powerful.

US public diplomacy usually sets pragmatic and short-term political objectives with the main goal being to ensure the leading global position of the USA at any given moment. In spite of declarations, political partners to the US institutes that implement US public diplomacy are often non-democratic but rather reactionary, nationalistic, and ultraconservative forces prone to violence and terrorism. They appeal to the citizens of the USA through their ability to take decisive action and do not display the delicate characteristic of the representatives of the national culture, as well as the commitment to eternal spiritual values. The ideals are thus sacrificed to the specific interests of the current US administration. The results of public diplomacy efforts are numerous cases of destabilization of the international situation, violence, terrorism, and military conflicts. Therefore, US public diplomacy does not make the world a more comfortable, stable, and secure place. It generates terrorism, revolutions and the rise of military anxiety in the public mind, attuning it to war, which is further materialized into actual violence in various parts of the world.

Under these conditions, US public diplomacy, while reaching short-term interim results, leads inevitably to aggravating the essential contradictions inherent in the relations between civilizations. This destroys the space of cooperative interaction between the cultures. Proneness to conflict not only increases “along the fault lines separating civilizations”, as assumed by S. Huntington, as conflicts in conditions of globalization arise also within societies belonging to different civilizations, since there are no mono-ethnic states nowadays. The increasing overall instability is always fraught with a global conflict, which may emerge independent of the subjective will of individual politicians.

Modern researchers have split into supporters and opponents of this view. Today, hardly anyone hesitates about the humanistic content of Eastern religions and cultures; discrepancies arise only from their interpretation. Understanding cultural history as progressive movement is a common feature of all universalistic concepts. In the course of this process, perfection of the human spirit, cognition of the world, and artistic creation of the “second nature” takes place. History of culture appears here as a kind of a ladder, which humanity is ascending—it leads forward and upward.

By the end of the 20th century, we had revealed that our perception of the socio-economic structure as the basis of international contradictions is inadequate. Capitalism and socialism proved to be only different forms of industrial society, representing cultural rather than economic opposition: the West is materialism, activity, individualism, and freedom of an individual, and the East is spirituality, contemplation, collectivism, and obedience to authority. On the other hand, studying the history of Western and Eastern cultures will inevitably lead us to the observation that the materialism and rationalism of the West have always coexisted with sustainable idealistic tradition in its religious, philosophical, scientific, ethical, and esthetic cultural forms. The creative nature of the geniuses of ancient culture, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, modernism, and postmodernism is irrational. Moreover, materialism is not always regarded as a virtue in the West. Materialism is considered worthy of respect when consecrated by high spiritual aspirations. The value of personal freedom is also not always universal in the West. Unlimited activity and business for the sake of business lead to a loss of the humanistic spirit of activity in the West. The person turns into a standardized product. One's self-worth and uniqueness are destroyed. Self-esteem of the West as a bulwark of personal freedom is, perhaps, explained by the ideological need of the Westernization of the modern world. Naturally, the inception and development of democracy is associated with the West. Its subsequent enrichment with individualistic, liberal values has also occurred in the West. At the same time, in Western reality, from ancient to modern democracies, the backbone maxim is a community, affiliation of a person to the state or social stratum, and unconditional belonging to the Western civilization. Obedience to authority is no less typical for the West than for the East. The most striking examples of totalitarianism are found in the history of Western political culture: the Inquisition, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the Jacobin Reign of Terror, Nazism (which has been conquered only together with the East), and finally, the conformism inherent in modern Western society and the leading role of mass media in shaping public opinion.

The evolution of Eastern culture largely coincides with the development of characteristic features of Western culture and in some ways is ahead of them (in chronological order or by the degree of impact on society) and even explains their genesis. The universality of the global cultural process is revealed in the common features inherent in all cultures. They include education, labor, physical culture, rituals, systems of kinship, language, and much more.

The commonness of all national cultures is as well revealed in the fact that within each society an elite culture, folk culture, and mass culture can be distinguished. In addition, subcultures that identify features of the cultural life of specific social groups can be distinguished within each national culture. The presence of cultural diversity is a natural result of the presence of different types of perceptions and views on the environment. Cultural diversity exists not only at the global level but within civilizations of common cultural type and conjoint human races. It proves the conviction that multiculturalism is not an indicator of differences in human creative ability but mainly reflects different approaches to the subjects under human impact in various conditions of life.

The modern scientific view on culture comes from the empirically obvious plurality of cultures (Erez & Earley, 2011), their qualitative individuality, and uniqueness (Liu, 2012). Today, we cannot speak about culture as something uniform and homogeneous, with no separating boundaries and features specific to each nation. Nowadays, each culture enjoys the right to independent existence and development. Cultural studies uphold the principle of the equality of all cultures, eliminating not only any ethnocentrism, but also any claim to leadership by any single culture (Kane, Jacobs, & Hawkins, 2015). Culture by its nature is not monist but pluralist, this being the prevailing mental set in current cultural studies. Under conditions of cultural pluralism, a people's interest in their history, culture, and their cultural history has increased significantly. This interest reflects the recognition of a deep connection between the destiny of the people and the destiny of their culture.

Negative attitudes towards other cultures that are observed presently in public opinion in different countries represent a certain contradiction in the process of contemporary cultural integration, creating obstacles to international cultural cooperation. A culture-based conflict has social and psychological preconditions. First, it is a natural human reaction to the collision with the unknown and the unusual, which are perceived as threats because of the fear of the unknown. Second, it is a natural human reluctance to modify a traditional lifestyle under rapidly changing modern conditions, which bring not only comfort but also inconvenience. This could create additional complications in the context of global development and the formation of a multicultural society.

Conclusion

The general description of the conceptual approach of the United States of America to building its policy in the field of interaction between cultures and the correlation of the US public diplomacy strategy with the political concept of a clash of civilizations provide us reasons to conclude that US public diplomacy, while reaching short-term interim results, leads inevitably to aggravating the essential contradictions inherent in the relations between civilizations, thus destroying the space of cooperative interaction between

cultures. Overcoming these contradictions in the practice of international relations is possible by relying on the principles developed through international cooperation and enshrined in the UNESCO documents.

The principles of international cultural cooperation between peoples in the second half of the 20th century have received wide international recognition and have been embodied in the Declaration of Principles of International Cultural Co-operation adopted at the 14th Session of UNESCO General Conference in 1966 (UNESCO, 1967). The Declaration proclaimed the equality of cultures, their equal value, as expressed in their uniqueness, the need for mutual respect of cultures and peoples, and the inadmissibility of discrimination. The need to preserve cultural diversity as a basis of the development of human civilization and to secure its future in the broadest sense has been reconfirmed in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001 (UNESCO, 2002). These Declarations are internationally recognized documents that provide a basis for formulating the foreign policy of states in the area of interaction between cultures and state diplomacy, aimed at the formation of interactions between peoples in the humanitarian sphere. They can be used as generally accepted criteria to characterize the diplomacy of states in this area.

Conflict of interest

None.

References

Erez, M., & Earley, P. C. (2011). *Culture, self-identity, and work*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Scholarship Online.

Huntington, S. (1993). The clash of civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), 22–49.

Jaspers, K. (1932). *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter.

Jaspers, K. (1949). *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*. Zürich, Switzerland: Artemis.

Kane, M. N., Jacobs, R. J., & Hawkins, W. E. (2015). Beliefs about safety and religious and cultural diversity. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 41(5), 622–641. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2015.1057356>.

Liu, M. (2012). Same path, different experience: Culture's influence on attribution, emotion, and interaction goals in negotiation. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 22(1), 97–119.

Nye, J. (1990). *Bound to lead: The changing nature of American power*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Nye, J. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. New York, NY: Public Affairs Group.

von Ranke, L. (1834). *Die römischen Päpste in den letzten vier Jahrhunderten. Band 1*. Berlin, Germany: Duncker und Humblot.

von Ranke, L. (1836). *Die römischen Päpste in den letzten vier Jahrhunderten. Band 2*. Berlin, Germany: Duncker und Humblot.

Toynbee, A. J. (1961). *A study of history. Vol. XII. Reconsiderations*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Tsvetkova, N., & Antonova, I. (2015). American cinema in France and the USSR: Constructing two models of cultural influence in open and closed societies. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 17(4).

UNESCO. (1967). Declaration of the principles of international cultural co-operation. In *Records of the general conference: Fourteenth session, Paris, 1966. Vol. 3: Resolutions* (pp. 86–89). Paris, France: Author.

UNESCO. (2002). *UNESCO universal declaration on cultural diversity*. Paris, France: Author.

Weber, A. (1935). *Kulturgeschichte als Kultursociologie*. Leiden, Germany: Sijthoff.