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Problems of ethno-cultural intolerance in the European Community in the 21st century

Abstract: The relevance of this study was determined by the problems of ethno-cultural intolerance in the European community of the 21st century, the roots of which have been growing since ancient times and regularly led to xenophobia and political conflicts. If Western European societies have already passed the stage of tolerance formation and can show a sufficiently high level of tolerance, then Eastern European peoples are still quite insensitive to openness and klironomical understanding of traditions, culture, art, and cultural heritage of other communities. To some extent, the Russian-Ukrainian war is also defined by the phenomenon of ethno-cultural intolerance, associated with political intolerance affecting the former. The subject of the study was the phenomenon of ethno-cultural intolerance in the modern technologically advanced European community. The object of the study was the European community, which is experiencing strong ethno-cultural fluctuations at the beginning of the 21st century. The purpose of the study is to identify the main problems of ethno-cultural intolerance in the European community in the 21st century. Empirical, logical, historical, and comparative analysis were applied to achieve the purpose and solve the study tasks. The research used materials of prominent scientists and researchers in the field of tolerance, xenophobia, ethnic identification and culturalism, as well as official documents of the European Union, UN, and UNESCO. The authors identified three main problems of ethno-cultural intolerance in the European community in the 21st century: 1) weak practical application of theoretical documentary developments in the field of tolerance, which leads to a dichotomy; 2) weak definition of criteria for ethno-cultural tolerance, which includes klironomical views on culture, art, traditions, and cultural heritage of other peoples; 3) the desire of some European states, in particular, Eastern European states, to fundamentally associate ethno-cultural intolerance with political intolerance, creating an erroneous idea of the unity of views of a citizen of the country, which can facilitate the influence on his worldview and its management.

Keywords: tolerance, intolerance, ethno-cultural intolerance, xenophobia, culture, cultural heritage, klironomical view.

Introduction

Intolerance is a lack of respect for practices or beliefs other than one's own. This includes rejecting people we consider different, such as members of a social or ethnic group other than ours, or people who hold a different political or sexual orientation. Intolerance is a universal human quality. It can also be said that intolerance is, on the one hand, the inability to accept beliefs, feelings, behaviour that are different from our own; on the other hand, it is also

unwillingness to grant equal freedom of expression to another person. A variant of intolerance is categorical – harsh value judgments, labels. Irony and sarcasm coexist with categoricity.

The relevance of this study was determined by the problems of ethno-cultural intolerance in the European community of the 21st century, the roots of which have been growing since ancient times and regularly led to xenophobia and political conflicts. The last 30 years of European history have been marked by two regional wars, the genesis of which is also laid in the increased potential ethno-cultural intolerance of certain segments of society. If Western European societies have already passed the stage of tolerance formation and can show a sufficiently high level of tolerance, then Eastern European peoples are still quite insensitive to openness and klironomical understanding of traditions, culture, art, and cultural heritage of other communities. To some extent, the Russian-Ukrainian war is also defined by the phenomenon of ethno-cultural intolerance, associated with political intolerance affecting the former.

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The purpose of the study is to identify the main problems of ethno-cultural intolerance in the European community in the 21st century.

Based on the purpose of the study, the following tasks were identified:
- determine the difference between the phenomena of xenophobia and intolerance as factors of modern society;
- analyse the problems of modern interpretation of the ethnos in the aspect of culture;
- determine some indicators of ethno-cultural intolerance of the European community;
- list the main problems of ethno-cultural intolerance in the European community in the 21st century.

Empirical, logical, historical, and comparative analysis were applied to achieve the purpose and solve the study tasks.

The research used materials of prominent scientists and researchers in the field of tolerance, xenophobia, ethnic identification and culturalism, as well as official documents of the European Union, UN and UNESCO.

Xenophobia and intolerance as factors of modern society

Xenophobia is considered to be fear and rejection of everything alien, flowing into hostility to unusual customs, cultures, and people (*Oxford Standard English Dictionary, 2004*). Although phobias, as a rule, belong to the field of psychiatry, it is still not completely clear whether xenophobia can be considered a mental disorder. It is not recognised as a disease, is not included in the World Health Organisation and is considered a social problem. However, some experts believe that xenophobic prejudices in a pathological form can be considered as signs of a delusional disorder (*Jefferson, 2022*).

According to some theories, ethnic biases are formed from the desire to identify with a certain social group. Other communities begin to be viewed as hostile, and attacks against them become an act of self-affirmation. In this case, a person seeks to join a "successful" group,

appropriates its collective achievements and begins bullying outsiders. This process is similar to the mechanism of school bullying. The development of xenophobia in children is closely related to the influence of the environment – first of all, the family.

There is no universal list of xenophobic behaviour markers. The manifestations are individual for each person. However, several typical features can be distinguished, e.g.:

1. Fear when meeting with "strangers", i.e., a person may refuse an apartment that suits him in all respects if a neighbour turns out to be of a different nationality or get out of a subway car when someone whom he identifies as a representative of another faith enters it.
2. Refusal to interact with anyone because of their origin or appearance.
3. Comments about the appearance or clothing of people from other cultures, including jokes about the sound of foreign names and words.
4. Avoiding a collision with an "alien" culture, e.g., refusing to go to a restaurant with a certain food or watch a movie or TV show of foreign origin.
5. The belief that "all the best is ours," and other cultures are jealous.

There is a widespread viewpoint that tolerance is inherent in an open society, and actualised in the assessment of ethnic distance is the lot of a closed, traditional, or authoritarian society (*Barth, 1969a*; *De Vos, 1997*; *Herskovits, 1972*). It is enough to accept the values of postmodern society, and tolerance will displace intolerance and the negative ethnic distance that accompanies it. However, there are many examples that there are manifestations of everyday xenophobia and racism in an open society, although legal authorities and public opinion, brought up in the spirit of tolerance from childhood, immediately react to them there.

Intolerance is a profile form of xenophobia, since intolerance involves rejection of someone else's, but often without the effect of fear. Psychological discomfort is more present than fear in the phenomenon of intolerance. If xenophobia often provides for a rather harsh or radical form of protest, then intolerance is most often expressed in a soft or hidden form. Intolerance rarely takes a radical form. Usually, radicalism manifests itself on the basis of years of accumulated discomfort, catalysed by some kind of marker event, which in a separate case can be presented as an insignificant or curious case. However, in a series of constant events or a multi-year large-format background of intolerance, such a case acquires the effect of detonation. Then the political community declares the incident a fact of xenophobia.

Since intolerance is the opposite of the phenomenon of tolerance, it also needs to be viewed through the prism of human activity. Consequently, intolerance can be presented in several forms according to its genesis:

1. Ethnic or national intolerance is the rejection of a person by his belonging to any nation. This type of intolerance can potentially develop into an ethnocide in the transition to a radical form of intolerance. Ethnic intolerance in a mild form exists on a large scale and is often associated with historical conflicts in the relationship between the two nations. A mild form of this form of intolerance can be observed, e.g., in the relations of the aborigines of Great Britain or Ireland to immigrants. The reason is a rather closed image of the formation of society for many centuries, associated with an island location. In the 21st century, ethnic intolerance in these nations is gradually taking the place of tolerance due to the globalisation of society. However, a significant part of the age-old aborigines and nationalist-minded segments of the population continue to show ethnic intolerance in a mild form. Cross-

border ethnic intolerance manifests itself in a mild form, e.g., between the French and the British, although it is intensively dissolved, but still persists, being a residual form of complex political relations between the two countries in the history of Europe of past epochs. Ethnic intolerance also arises or increases during political disagreements between countries, which is manifested, e.g., in many Ukrainians towards Russians because of the military actions of the Russian army on the Ukrainian Republic's territory.

2. Social intolerance is the rejection of social foundations. this type of intolerance is often incorrectly associated with an ethnic form of intolerance. However, social intolerance is focused precisely on the foundations and rules of life of another nation's representatives. If a representative of another nation accepts the rules of life of the local population, then social intolerance weakens or disappears altogether. At the same time, ethnic intolerance may not manifest itself at all, because the aborigines are either not sensitive to national differentiation by appearance or language, or are quite tolerant due to centuries-old neighbourhood with them. Russians, e.g., have been living side by side with many peoples of Eurasia for many centuries, so social intolerance among Russians is rather weak and manifests itself to a greater extent only to the foundations of the peoples of Middle East, East, and Southeast Asia, which are almost unknown to them in the history of the nation. A reverse example is the situation with tolerance to the everyday life of East Asians in the United States. Americans for several generations have shunned East Asians, e.g., Chinese immigrants who seek to preserve their rules of life, and expect them to "socialise" in the form of "Westernisation". A certain proportion of these immigrants do not want or cannot Westernise and break away from the roots of their society, as a result of which they form their own subcultural communities, and sometimes entire territorial formats. In Europe, due to intensive globalisation within the territories of the European Union and short distances, which in the modern technological world are not a problem for migration, social intolerance among European peoples towards each other is decreasing. However, the crisis in the Middle East has exposed the problem of social intolerance of Europeans towards Asian migrants, who make up the middle and lower classes of societies. These migrants have an extremely low level of socialisation and an extremely high level of commitment to their national and confessional foundations. Mutual social intolerance has reached a high level in Europe, although, of course, this problem is being solved at the level of the European Parliament by the tolerance program.

3. Political intolerance is the rejection of political and related ideas of another person. This type of intolerance is unfairly ignored and veiled by the right to one's own opinion. However, political intolerance is an extremely dangerous form of human hostility and discomfort. A person's political beliefs are formed by education, upbringing, environment and the media. These beliefs can change over the course of a person's life. Political beliefs do not know borders and differences in ethnic groups. They leave their mark on the psychological state of a person. Consequently, political intolerance can be acutely manifested during political events, for example, party elections, presidential elections or military conflicts. Political intolerance can lead to human casualties, because it is easily aroused and supported by media tools – television news, social networks, social channels, bloggers. For 30 years, Ukrainians, e.g., have been forming political intolerance towards

Russia – different peoples, different cultures, different histories. This led to the fact that a significant part of Ukrainians did not associate themselves with Russians in any hypostases by 2020, but opposed them, although the history of Ukraine and Russia is closely connected with the formation of the Ukrainian regional entity as part of the Russian Empire in the second half of the 18th century.

4. Cultural intolerance is the rejection of the cultural parameters of another people or community. On the one hand, cultural intolerance does not form outright radicalism, but is limited by prohibitions on another culture. For example, in Ukraine, after the beginning of the military annexation of its territory by Russia in February 2022, a large number of decrees have already been issued on renaming topographic names and transferring to the archive monuments of not only Soviet figures and heroes of World War II, but also pre-revolutionary figures of the Russian Empire who were not born on the territory of modern Ukraine, are even prohibited to publish the works of pre-revolutionary writers and poets. On the other hand, cultural intolerance can lead to the phenomenon of outright barbarism and vandalism – the demolition of monuments and commemorative busts, memorials, historical buildings. The barbaric activity of the Islamic State in Syria has become an example of vandalism and an extreme form of cultural intolerance already in the 21st century. However, a radical form of cultural intolerance has been characteristic of humanity throughout its history, since the era of the most ancient civilizations (*Buychik, 2021a*). Cultural intolerance can also turn into a form of cultural genocide, or ethnocide (*Shaw, 2007*).

Thus, intolerance is an integral part of a person's worldview. Intolerance can have an easy and radical level of its manifestation. Unlike xenophobia, the cause of intolerance is not fear of someone else, but a feeling of some discomfort from the presence of someone else, hostility, so only a radical level of intolerance can later transform into xenophobia and lead to human casualties. Intolerance usually leads to hidden and veiled social tensions and, as a result, sometimes turns into political decisions to separate people according to one of the forms of intolerance, e.g., ethnic characteristics, social characteristics, political beliefs, or belonging to a culture and cultural heritage, i.e., klironomical outlook (*Buychik, 2019*; *Buychik, 2021b*).

Problems of modern interpretation of ethnos in the aspect of culture

An ethnicity or an ethnic group is a grouping of people who identify with each other on the basis of shared attributes that distinguish them from other groups. Those attributes can include common sets of traditions, ancestry, language, history, society, nation, religion, or social treatment within their residing area. The term ethnicity is often times used interchangeably with the term nation, particularly in cases of ethnic nationalism, and is separate from the related concept of races (*Barth, 1969b*; *People & Bailey, 2010*). An ethnic group does not always have the opportunity to ensure its self-determination and rise to a nation, e.g., Kurds or other national minorities. Similarly, several ethnic groups can form one nation, e.g., Switzerland. The term ethnic group was first recorded in 1935 (*Cohen, 1978*). It was entered the Oxford English Dictionary in 1972.

A problematic issue in the definition of ethnicity remains the source of group identity for determining membership in such a group. To date, there are usually several types of geneses, among which it is necessary to distinguish:

1. The ethno-linguistic source emphasises the commonality of language and writing. This genesis, e.g., defines the East Slavic peoples as a common ethnos or ethnic group, since they are united by Cyrillic writing, a common language ancestor and, consequently, writing. According to this combined feature – the Slavic group of languages and Cyrillic script – Bulgarians, Serbs, Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians belong to one ethos or ethnic group. However, if to consider the concept of "Russians" or "Ukrainians" as part of an ethnic group, then several separate ethnic groups can be distinguished within them by dialects and national minorities, which makes it extremely difficult for the final definition of an ethnos for the East Slavic peoples.

2. The ethno-national source emphasises the commonality of the state structure and, as a consequence, the sense of national identity. This usually refers to multinational states with a titular nation, e.g., Austrian citizens as Austrians, or without a definition of a titular nation, e.g., US residents as Americans. Usually, the ethno-national genesis is an instrument for the transformation of ethnic intolerance into a significantly high level of tolerance and, consequently, social stability. However, sometimes artificial agglomeration of peoples on a territorial basis brings the opposite effect. Ethnic intolerance grows and is suppressed by political instruments until the moment when intolerance turns into xenophobia, as happened at the stage of the political collapse of Yugoslavia. The results of this collapse are still being felt in ethnic conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, and Srpska Republic.

3. The ethno-cultural source emphasises the commonality of culture or traditions. This parameter is the most controversial, because even the relative unity of cultural heritage cannot guarantee the definition of a common culture. Peoples settle geographically and move throughout the history of mankind. Often the same people in adjacent territories have different influences of border cultures, and then unite on an ethno-national basis, but with a different set of cultural heritage. According to the history of Ukraine, e.g., modern Ukrainians are united by a single ethno-cultural source in the format of Kievan Rus, which became the basis of the entire Russian State (*Andrushchenko et al., 2002*). However, if to briefly trace the ethnography of the territory of modern Ukraine, it is determined that the Eneolithic and Neolithic period is represented by Tripolie, Srednestogovskaya and a number of other cultures; in the 7th century BC, the Scythians, an Iranian-speaking people from Central Asia, displaced the Cimmerians from the Ukrainian steppes; about 200 BC the Scythians were displaced by the Sarmatians (*Magocsi, 1996*); 3rd century AD. the Goths moved from the northwest to the territory of Ukraine; after the invasion of the Huns, hegemony over the current territory of Ukraine at the end of the 5th century passed to the Slavic tribes of the Ants and Sklavins (*Haak, 2015*); the northwestern regions of modern Ukraine became the birthplace of the Slavs, i.e., the Glades, Drevlyans, Northerners, Buzhans, Tivertsy, Volynians and others; in 882, Prince Oleg of Novgorod captured Kiev, moving the capital of Russia there (*Kievan Rus, 2001-2007*); In the 13th-14th centuries, the lands of modern Ukraine were divided between the Moldavian Principality and the

Hungarian Kingdom; in the 14th and 15th centuries, the northern and central part of Ukraine was part of the Lithuanian Principality (*Rowell, 1994*); in the 16th and 17th centuries, the western and central part of Ukraine was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Plokhy, 2017*); during the 15th and 17th centuries, the eastern part of modern Ukraine was already part of the Russian State; in the 18th century, the territory of modern Ukraine was divided between the Russian Empire (east, center and south) and the Habsburg Empire (west) (*Magocsi, 2018*); In the 19th century, the Ukrainian people were officially defined as an ethnic group within the Russian Empire, declared their own language on a par with the state, and Ukrainian cultural identity was determined. Consequently, in the territory of modern Ukraine, when defining Ukrainians as the titular nation of the state, Lithuanian, Polish, German, Tatar, and Russian cultures exerted their influence on the culture of the local population of certain regions. Therefore, the ethno-cultural parameters of Ukrainian culture do not coincide with the ethno-national parameters, which led to a certain degree of intolerance of various regional representatives of the titular people and national minorities for a long time.

Thus, the problems of modern cultural interpretation of the ethnos make it difficult to correctly understand cultural identity and, consequently, serves as a reason for historical, political, and social manipulations that lead to an increase in the level of intolerance from a light and veiled level to a radical level of its manifestation in the 21st century. Ethno-cultural intolerance increases against the background of political intolerance, which leads to the provocation of acts of inhumanity under the slogans of unity of peoples and ethnic groups that are close in culture.

Ethno-cultural intolerance as a negative phenomenon in the European society of the 21st century

Ethno-cultural intolerance is still a reality in the world community of the 21st century. Political decisions taken at the State and supranational level do not solve this problem so effectively as to neutralise its impact on society as a whole. According to fundamental international documents and charters, culture, art, cultural heritage, and sport are outside politics, i.e., political and ethno-cultural intolerance are officially delimited, ethno-cultural intolerance should not arise on the basis of political or social intolerance. Consequently, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania did not have the right to refuse to grant social asylum to migrants from Syria and Ukraine (*European Social Charter, 1996*; *Benelhocine, 2012*), the IOC could not initiate the exclusion of Russian and Belarusian athletes from the Olympic movement and strongly recommend that they be excluded from sports competitions of certain sports (*Olympic Charter, 2020*), Turkey did not have the right to change the status of Hagia Sophia from a cultural heritage monument to a mosque (*Erdem, 1997*; *Son dakika..., 2020*) under pressure from UNESCO and the UN; UNESCO was also supposed to influence Kyiv's policy of gradually banning Russian culture in Ukraine in 2015-2022.

Also, the European Union has got into a difficult situation on the formation of ethno-cultural tolerance among the peoples of Europe. The military conflict in Ukraine, which is already developing into the Third World War, has exposed extremely strong ethno-cultural contradictions between the peoples of European countries. Some countries of the European

Union pursue a policy of outright socio-cultural protectionism. Some countries promote socio-cultural introversion, demonstrating overt or veiled intolerance to other cultures, but not lobbying for the promotion of their culture in Europe. Thus, in those countries, political intolerance is demonstratively associated with ethno-cultural intolerance, which in such a symbiosis has a fairly high chance of transforming into xenophobia.

European Council on Tolerance and Reconciliation created *Concept for a White Paper on Tolerance*, *A European Model Law for the Promotion of Tolerance and the Supression of Intolerance*, and also *Promoting Tolerance and Fighting Intolerance*. 16 November 1995, UNESCO's Member States adopted a *Declaration of Principles on Tolerance*. Despite the fundamental documents that are designed to form tolerance as a criterion for human communication of the 21st century, the process itself actually almost does not work. According to statistics, the TOP 10 countries whose residents are least tolerant of migrants consist of European countries:

Macedonia – 1.47,

Montenegro – 1.63,

Hungary – 1.69,

Serbia – 1.80,

Slovakia – 1.83,

Israel – 1.87,

Latvia – 2.04,

Czech Republic – 2.26,

Estonia – 2.37,

Croatia – 2.39.

The percentage of citizens of many European states is extremely low in tolerance, e.g., for Muslim culture:

Czech Republic – 12%,

Lithuania and Belarus – 16%,

Latvia – 19%,

Hungary – 21%,

Estonia and Ukraine – 25%,

Romania – 29%,

Moldova – 30%,

Greece – 31%,

Bulgaria – 32%,

Poland – 33%,

Russia – 34% (*Figure 1*).

Statistics show that intolerance is still more pronounced in Eastern European countries, including ethno-cultural intolerance, which creates a greater risk of outright xenophobia and interethnic claims.

Thus, ethno-cultural intolerance is a negative fact of the European society of the 21st century. The problem of this type of intolerance lies in the complex ethnic geography and history of political migration for many centuries. However, the main role in the era of globalisation is played by supranational associations, which have the right and duty to approach the issue of

tolerance not only formally legally, but practically and to control the results of the policy of tolerance.

Discussion

In the course of this study, both theoretical and practical issues of the emergence and diversity of intolerance as a form of human worldview were raised. Consequently, further development of the theoretical basis for determining the forms of intolerance and their interrelationship is required.

Also, as a further development of the topic, it is proposed to consider the mechanisms of practical leveling of the phenomenon of ethno-cultural intolerance among representatives of the European community as an extremely harmful and shameful phenomenon of the 21st century.

Conclusion

Thus, in the course of the study, the main problems of ethno-cultural intolerance in the European community in the 21st century were identified:

1. Weak practical application of theoretical documentary developments in the field of tolerance, which leads to a dichotomy – there is a fairly format activity to develop the values of modern European society at the official level, but there is a huge failure in the policy of education tolerance, which is also supported by some countries at the domestic political level, at the household level.
2. Weak definition of criteria for ethno-cultural tolerance, which includes klironomical views on culture, art, traditions, and cultural heritage of other peoples. This problem is in the scientific plane and requires special systematic attention from leading universities and research centers to create a set of monographs, textbooks, and practical notebooks on ethno-cultural tolerance.
3. The desire of some European states, in particular, Eastern European states, to fundamentally associate ethno-cultural intolerance with political intolerance, creating an erroneous idea of the unity of views of a citizen of the country, which can facilitate the influence on his outlook and its management. However, this contradicts the fundamental principles of tolerance defined by the European and international community.

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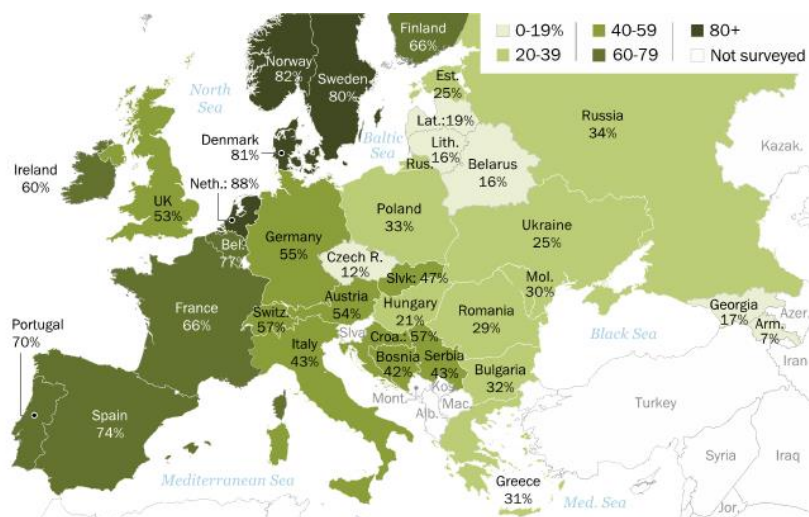
Appendix

Figure 1. Vast differences across Europe in public attitudes towards Muslims (% who say they would be willing to accept Muslims as a members of their family)