

COM 325 Intercultural Communication /Fall 2025

Dr. Chen

Midterm Essay: Continuation vis-à-vis Change: My Dialectical View on Multiculturalism

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“Things fall apart; the center cannot hold” (Yeats, 2024, p.19), is a quote that captures the sense of discomfort and feelings of apprehension that globalization inflicts upon cultures across the world. In *Communication Between Cultures*, globalization is defined as “the critical driving force that is fundamentally restructuring the social order around the world” (Trask, 2010, as cited by Samovar et al., 2013, p.67). Some countries have given in to the weight of globalization and have tried to embrace it, while others see it as a danger to culture and a threat to national identity; few nations have taken such a strong and resistive stance, as Russia has. In recent decades, the Russian state along with the Orthodox Church have become fixed on recentering “traditional values” to shield and protect the nation from cultural homogenization and western moral decline (Stepanova, 2022; Girinsky, 2023). Russia’s strong defense of tradition reinforces national unity, social cohesion and creates a sense of stability; yet its resistance creates the risk of cultural stagnation and limits growth. Lasting cultural endurance will require adaptive process; transforming these traditions to ensure they are adjusted to endure and remain relevant within a global era.

In chapter 2 of *Communication Between Cultures* Samovar et al. (2013) clarify there are multitudinous components that construct culture, but there were five primary defining aspects that differentiate one culture from the next: religion, history, values, social organizations and language. Centuries of invasion, authoritarian ideologies, and other adversities have shaped the Russian collective; creating an anti-outsider perspective that equates preservation with survival (Samovar et al., 2013). Globalization can result in the fragmentation of cultural identity, and the disruption of social cohesion (Astafieva, 2016). Almazov (2001) explained the globalization was alienating Russian children from their national culture, we can gather from this rigid form of thinking that this anti-western stance is a defensive tactic done out of fear. This perspective is furthered by Ponarina (2011), who argues that globalization is more like western cultural imperialism and has resulted in erasing cultural differences. The threat of globalization plays

into the Russian's historical distrust of outsiders, and their preservation of their land and culture. Russia's preservation of culture is viewed as vital to the nation's sovereignty and stability; it can be seen in the policies implemented by the state that further a shared and unified cultural identity (Voronina, 2017). The Russian Orthodox Church lies at the center of identity, intertwining faith with the Kremlin's idea of "spiritual bonds" creating an ideology built on religion, nationalism, and anti-western ideals (Stepanova 2022, Stoeckl, 2023, Malinova, 2014). Other defense tactics can be seen within politics; the concept of "русский мир" (Russian world), is linked to leader Vladimir Putin who created a state-funded foundation with the purpose of preserving and promoting Russian language, heritage and culture (President of the Russian Federation, 2007). From outside perspectives this may appear as rejection, or resistance, but to Russian's cultural security is a form of national security.

Even with a strong defense of cultural preservation such as Russia's, change is inevitable; as noted by Samovar et al. (2013), cultures are consistently adapting and rarely remain fixed. While Russia might believe that it's holding strong against globalization, realistically shows the merge of preservation and adaptation. Russia has always engaged with globalization on its own terms, Kukartseva and Dzhavid (2020) explain it as a selective or negotiated globalization wherein the nation accepts global media and technology but rejects the hegemony. Linguistic trends show that globalization persists; Russian youth have started to adapt, creating English-Russian hybrid slang (Polyglottist Language Academy, 2025). Small adaptations such as these don't erase Russian identity, it shows cultural negotiations, accepting global influence yet retaining cultural structure. Terzić and Kovalev (2024) describes Russia's historical relationship of adapting foreign influence and using cultural values to redefine it, accepting outside influence while still preserving one's cultural foundation. Culture must be recognizable to those around it, by refusing to adapt it could risk becoming history, lacking participation but being preserved. Chumakov and Gray (2016) maintain that globalization is inevitable, universal condition, requiring engagement to "think globally, act jointly." Globalization doesn't

mean the end of Russian identity and culture, it compels it to transform, redefine and adapt to fit with the changing global space.

Cultural endurance relies on adaptability, the coexistence of remembering and reinventing, continuation and transformation do not have to be opposing forces. We can expand on Samovar et al. (2013) view of culture being dynamic with Fang's (2012) Yin-Yang framework: opposites can sustain one another rather than destroy; collectivism and individuality, reverence for the past and technical modernity, engagement without surrender. Traditional yet global, the falcon and the falconer can adapt to a new horizon, the center can learn to move with the gyre. Russia fears the cultural changes that come from globalization, they act out of fear to preserve it, holding onto it tightly; but without adapting enough to remain meaningful the culture cannot endure.

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