



PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE HARMONY BETWEEN NATIONAL AND UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 28 th July 2026 Accepted: 26 th August 2026	This article explores the philosophical foundations of harmony between national and universal human values in the context of globalization. Through conceptual and comparative analysis, it examines cultural identity, human dignity, historical memory, and intercultural dialogue. The study argues that genuine harmony requires preserving national traditions while respecting universal human rights and cultural diversity. It also highlights the influence of globalization and digital communication on cultural values, emphasizing dialogue, mutual respect, and shared responsibility as essential principles for maintaining this balance.
Keywords: globalization, national values, universal human values, cultural identity, philosophical anthropology, cultural diversity, human dignity, intercultural dialogue, Uzbekistan, ethical pluralism	

Globalization has expanded the speed and scale at which people, symbols, technologies and institutions encounter one another. An individual may participate simultaneously in family customs, a national educational system and international digital communities, each of which presents its own moral vocabulary. Under such conditions, the relationship between national and universal human values becomes a philosophical question about the meaning of belonging, the legitimacy of moral norms and the possibility of solidarity across differences. The central issue is not whether cultural exchange should exist, because it already constitutes a condition of contemporary social life; the issue is how identities can remain intellectually and ethically meaningful without becoming closed to the claims of others. The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity connects respect for cultural differences with the framework of human rights, indicating that these concerns should be approached together rather than in isolation [1].

National values may be understood as historically transmitted orientations expressed through language, collective memory, customs, artistic forms, social obligations and ideas of a good life. They are national not because every citizen interprets them identically, but because they participate in a shared cultural history and public sphere. Universal human values refer here to ethical principles that claim relevance to all persons regardless of cultural membership, including dignity, freedom, non-discrimination, justice and peaceful cooperation. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides an internationally recognized articulation of equal dignity and basic rights [2]. Yet neither category is

philosophically simple: national traditions may be contested internally, while agreement on abstract universal principles does not eliminate disagreement about their interpretation in practice.

The purpose of the article is to clarify the conceptual conditions under which these two dimensions can reinforce each other. Its research questions concern the meaning of harmony, the philosophical limits of cultural relativism and homogenizing universalism, and the possible contribution of education, institutions and cultural policy to productive coexistence. The focus on Uzbekistan is relevant because its constitutional preamble explicitly refers to both national and universal values, and the constitutional text addresses respect for the languages and traditions of the nationalities and ethnic groups living in the country [3]. This provides an institutional reference point for interpreting harmony as a continuing public task rather than a completed achievement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The article follows a theoretical, qualitative design. Its primary documentary materials are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, selected UNESCO declarations and conventions, the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan [1–7]. It also draws upon major philosophical works associated with recognition, interculturality, cosmopolitanism and social identity [8–13]. These materials are not treated as interchangeable kinds of evidence: legal and policy documents establish formally articulated principles, while philosophical texts supply interpretive approaches and conceptual



distinctions. The analysis makes no statistical inference about public attitudes in Uzbekistan or other societies.

Three analytical procedures are combined. Conceptual analysis separates the meaning of value, identity, universality and cultural continuity; comparative interpretation examines points of contact and disagreement among philosophical positions; normative analysis asks whether proposed forms of cultural protection are consistent with individual dignity and the rights of others. The scope is intentionally limited to the philosophical and institutional logic of harmony. Because no interviews, surveys or field observations were conducted, the conclusions are conceptual propositions open to further empirical investigation rather than verified descriptions of prevailing social behavior.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first result of the analysis is that harmony requires a distinction between universality and uniformity. A universal moral claim concerns the equal standing of human beings; uniformity requires them to adopt the same symbolic practices or social customs. These propositions are not equivalent. A community can preserve distinctive forms of greeting, celebration, language use and intergenerational care while respecting the equal worth of those whose cultural biographies differ. Conversely, appeals to a single allegedly global way of life may weaken the very cultural diversity through which people develop knowledge and self-understanding. UNESCO's 2005 Convention identifies the protection and promotion of diverse cultural expressions and the conditions for their interaction as public objectives [4].

The second result is that cultural identity is best interpreted as a relation between inheritance and interpretation. A person enters a historically constituted world of meanings but does not simply repeat it. New experiences, ethical disputes, migration, education and technological change alter the ways inherited practices are understood. Charles Taylor's account of recognition helps illuminate why cultural identities cannot be dismissed as superficial preferences: misrecognition may affect a person's relation to self and community [8]. However, recognizing identity does not entail granting every inherited practice immunity from criticism. Respect for persons provides a reason to take traditions seriously and simultaneously a reason to examine practices that undermine dignity or exclude vulnerable members.

The third result concerns the necessary but limited role of universal principles. Universalism can offer common language when people disagree about

religious beliefs, heritage or political traditions. Internationally articulated rights can protect the conditions under which plural cultural identities flourish. Yet universal principles risk appearing abstract or imposed if they are detached from the historical experiences through which communities make moral sense. The philosophical challenge is therefore one of translation in a broad sense: societies must explain why basic norms such as dignity and fairness matter in terms intelligible within their own intellectual languages, without reducing their validity to any single cultural origin.

The relation between particular identity and shared ethics can be described as a two-level structure. At the first level, particular histories supply the narratives, attachments and concrete obligations through which people learn moral responsiveness. At the second level, universal norms enable critical evaluation of those same attachments when they affect persons outside the community or disadvantaged groups within it. The two levels are mutually corrective. Particularity prevents moral reasoning from becoming indifferent to lived context, while universality prevents context from becoming an unlimited justification for exclusion. Harmony is achieved provisionally when both levels remain open to reasoned criticism and reciprocal learning.

An important philosophical objection arises from cultural relativism, according to which moral standards cannot be assessed apart from the cultural settings that generate them. Its strength lies in warning against ethnocentric judgments and in emphasizing the diversity of meaningful ways of life. Its weakness emerges when differences are used to deny the possibility of criticism across cultural boundaries or to silence dissenters within a community. The opposite error, an unreflective universalism, can treat one historical experience as the required pattern for every society. Kwame Anthony Appiah's treatment of cosmopolitanism is especially useful because it emphasizes obligations to strangers alongside legitimate attachments to particular ways of life [9].

The search for harmony is consequently not a search for a perfectly neutral cultural standpoint. Every participant in dialogue speaks from historically formed assumptions. Hans-Georg Gadamer's account of understanding underscores the significance of tradition and the possibility of revising initial horizons through encounter [10]. Applied to globalization, this insight suggests that meaningful communication cannot be reduced to the transmission of information. It requires listening to how others organize their experience, testing interpretations against counterarguments and



acknowledging the limits of one's assumptions. Intercultural dialogue is thus not merely a ceremonial expression of tolerance but a disciplined ethical and intellectual practice.

In this connection, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity is especially significant because it rejects any opposition between diversity and human rights: cultural diversity cannot appropriately be invoked to infringe internationally guaranteed rights [1]. This principle provides a usable criterion for evaluating competing claims. A cultural institution or educational practice contributes to harmony when it protects meaningful difference while maintaining access, participation and respect for individuals. An apparent cultural defense becomes ethically doubtful when it prevents people from speaking, learning or participating on equal terms. The criterion is normative; assessing its implementation in a particular setting would require evidence beyond the present study.

Globalization also creates asymmetric relations of cultural visibility. Some languages, artistic industries and communication platforms have greater means of circulating their content than others. For this reason, formal openness to cultural exchange does not automatically guarantee equal opportunity for cultural expression. The 2005 UNESCO Convention highlights the link between culture and development and calls attention to the environment in which diverse cultural expressions may flourish [4]. Philosophically, this shifts the analysis from individual attitude alone to the institutional distribution of voice. Supporting translation, cultural archives, local publishing and accessible education may be understood as ways to make intercultural reciprocity more substantive.

Language deserves particular attention because it is simultaneously a practical instrument of communication and a medium of collective memory. The acquisition of international languages can broaden educational and professional opportunities, while sustaining a national language preserves access to literature, historical knowledge and distinctive forms of reasoning. These aims need not be in conflict. A genuinely plural educational approach treats multilingual competence as an expansion of intellectual capacity rather than as evidence that local cultural knowledge has become obsolete. It is equally important that the preservation of a state language coexist with respectful conditions for the languages and traditions of different communities, a principle articulated in Article 4 of Uzbekistan's Constitution [3].

An additional dimension concerns the interpretation of collective memory. Historical narratives can support dignity and civic belonging by connecting

persons to achievements, hardships and cultural creativity. Nevertheless, memory becomes socially constructive only when it leaves space for complexity, internal plurality and scholarly criticism. National heritage is not a single unchanging story. Cultural landscapes contain exchanges with neighbors, multilingual intellectual traditions and the contributions of different social groups. A dialogical understanding of memory recognizes these intersections and avoids portraying mutual cultural influence as a loss of authenticity. In this respect, openness to the world may reveal the historically interconnected character of what is now called national culture.

Uzbekistan offers a particularly pertinent setting for this conceptual discussion. The preamble to the Constitution adopted in 2023 declares adherence to national and universal values, while also invoking human dignity, historical cultural heritage, and interethnic and interfaith harmony [3]. These formulations should not be mistaken for empirical proof that every ideal is already realized. Their importance for the present argument is that they articulate potentially complementary public commitments. One concerns the preservation and development of historically situated collective life; the other concerns the equal status and fundamental rights of individuals. Their relationship must be interpreted through consistent policy, open discussion and institutional accountability.

Cultural safeguarding provides a concrete area in which the two commitments can meet. The 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognizes practices, expressions, knowledge and skills transmitted and recreated by communities, while placing safeguarding within a framework of mutual respect and sustainable development [5]. This perspective avoids treating heritage as a museum object isolated from living people. It also suggests that communities should play a meaningful role in the interpretation and transmission of their practices. A festival, oral tradition or craft is more sustainably protected when its bearers are recognized as active contributors rather than passive exhibits.

Education is a second central arena. If schools teach only abstract universal principles, students may perceive those principles as detached from their home communities. If schools teach only an idealized national past, students may lack tools for understanding the moral claims of other societies and the diversity within their own. The United Nations 2030 Agenda, especially Target 4.7, links education for sustainable development with human rights, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity [6]. UNESCO's 2023



Recommendation on education for peace and human rights likewise provides an international frame for joining inclusive education with mutual understanding [7]. These documents support a balanced orientation rather than a uniform curriculum imposed without local interpretation.

Within higher education, philosophical reflection can develop this balance by examining the meanings of freedom, responsibility, social justice and tradition across intellectual traditions. Classroom work can compare a familiar ethical concept with analogous and contrasting arguments from other societies; students can distinguish reasonable disagreements from violations of basic dignity. Such activities require careful pedagogy because the aim is not to rank civilizations on a simple scale or to romanticize every inherited practice. It is to cultivate the intellectual habit of explaining one's reasons and reconstructing the reasons of others. The philosophical achievement is an increased capacity for judgment under conditions of plurality.

Public institutions play a parallel role. Museums, libraries, cultural centers and universities can provide spaces for informed discussion, preservation and mutual interpretation. UNESCO's 2015 Recommendation on museums and collections emphasizes their relevance to cultural transmission, learning and intercultural dialogue [11]. In philosophical terms, these institutions help convert abstract respect into social practice. Yet institutions must remain attentive to representation: which communities are included, who determines the meaning of an artifact and whether educational access is available to different groups. Inclusion is therefore not an ornamental addition to cultural policy but part of the ethical conditions of credible preservation.

The relationship between national and universal values also bears on civic responsibility. Respect for one's own community and responsibility toward humanity can coexist because the objects of obligation differ in scale rather than necessarily in moral worth. A person may have special duties to family, neighbors and fellow citizens while accepting duties not to harm strangers and to cooperate on shared problems. Martha Nussbaum's discussion of cosmopolitan education illustrates the philosophical importance of looking beyond narrowly bounded identities, while allowing continued debate about the form and limits of patriotic commitments [12]. Harmony here is neither rootlessness nor exclusive loyalty; it is the capacity to order multiple obligations without denying the humanity of outsiders.

Environmental responsibility clarifies why universality cannot be reduced to cultural similarity. The effects of environmental degradation can cross political and cultural boundaries, making cooperation necessary even where understandings of nature and social welfare differ. The 2030 Agenda explicitly recognizes both the cultural diversity of the world and shared responsibilities for sustainable development [6]. National traditions of stewardship may supply compelling motivations for ecological responsibility, while international cooperation provides the coordination needed for problems that local communities cannot resolve alone. In this area, locally grounded ethical imagination and globally oriented obligation are complementary resources.

The discussion yields a five-part analytical framework. The first principle is human dignity as a non-negotiable standard for the evaluation of social practices. The second is cultural plurality, which recognizes legitimate differences in memory, expression and ways of life. The third is dialogical reciprocity, requiring participants to listen, justify and revise their claims. The fourth is critical continuity, through which inherited practices are preserved in reflective rather than rigid forms. The fifth is shared responsibility for institutions and problems crossing community boundaries. These are proposed analytical principles synthesized from the philosophical and documentary sources discussed above, not an existing official index or a tested measurement scale.

This framework also identifies two warning signs. The first appears when protection of national identity is used to prohibit legitimate internal disagreement, thereby transforming heritage from a shared resource into an instrument of exclusion. The second appears when universal values are described as if they demanded the disappearance of linguistic or cultural difference. Both errors are forms of reductionism: one reduces persons to their supposed collective identity, and the other reduces the plurality of human experience to a single institutional or cultural pattern. A more defensible position evaluates particular claims in context while retaining standards that protect the agency and dignity of individuals.

Several limitations qualify the analysis. The documents considered describe norms and aspirations rather than observed implementation; philosophical works offer interpretations rather than directly comparable survey data. Moreover, the meaning of a national value changes across historical periods, regions and social groups. A future empirical study might explore how educators, students, cultural practitioners or different generations understand the relation between tradition and universal dignity. Comparative



case studies could then investigate whether educational dialogue and inclusive safeguarding practices achieve the aims articulated here. The present contribution lies in clarifying the concepts and proposing a defensible structure for such research.

CONCLUSION

The harmony between national and universal human values is a dynamic process based on mutual respect, cultural identity, and shared ethical principles. National values preserve historical traditions, while universal values promote human dignity, justice, and equality. In Uzbekistan, constitutional principles and international cultural instruments provide a foundation for balancing these values. Achieving this harmony requires intercultural dialogue, education, cultural preservation, and openness to global cooperation. Further empirical research is needed to assess the practical effectiveness of these approaches.

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