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MINORITIES IN UKRAINE: MOTIVATION AND FORMS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITY OF NATIONAL-CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

In this article the author makes an attempt to analyze a range of contradictory issues that arise in social practice based on the own results of surveying ethno national communities in the territory of post-Soviet Ukraine. Having considered various motifs of either participation or non-participation of minorities in the activity of ethno national organizations, the main factors influencing social activity of minorities in social life and their connection with life plans, self-identification and its type have been determined. The need to match the suggested form of the organization of activities with the interests and demands of the audience, which today are very diverse, settles the case study. The article proposes the analysis of internal and external reasons of conflicts occurring at different stages of community development. The role of ethno national organizations, as an element of civil society, the influence of state ethno national policy and degree of democracy inside organizations have been described.

The article presents personality of minorities typology on the basis of the degree of their activity, internal structure of ethno national communities at local territorial level is disclosed. Recommendations on involving new, currently passive members to the community into the activity of ethno cultural communities and organizations were given.

The results of the research can be applied at the stage of elaboration of community development plans for ethno cultural organizations and can be used for the course of Ethnopolitics, Ethnosociology and Ethnoculture. Certain methodological conclusions may be of help for the development of state ethno policy in Ukraine. The article clarifies problems and aspects related to a polycultural society.

Keywords: minorities, ethnocultural organizations, forms of participation, motifs, identification type

Times are changing very quickly. The era, when society was divided into split and distanced strata that had different rights, lived separately, married and prayed in their own communities, are in the past.

In our mixed postmodern society the differences inside a group may be larger than the intra-group ones, as it was indicated in the comparative study of identity of Portuguese in Germany and in Portugal² and is confirmed by the data of our study “Transformations of identity of ethnic minorities in Ukraine at the post-soviet period”³.

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² *Institute Superior de Ciencias do Trabalho e da Empresa*, “Portugal British Journal of Social Psychology” 2001, p. 114.

³ Qualitative study by L. Chernova, *Transformation of ethnic identity in post-Soviet period*, conducted by the author in six regions of Ukraine (2009–2014) by the method of M. Barret, adapted by the author. It makes 336 recorded leitmotiv semi-structured interviews with 28 main ethnic minorities groups. Methodology and theo-

Ethnic identity is rather often shifted to the periphery, but does not disappear completely. National (civil-political), professional, confessional etc. identities become more significant. Various identities are no longer as related to each other as they used to be. Therefore, the existence of just formal signs are not enough for the explanation of the behavior and attitudes of the individual today. This issue requires a more careful consideration.

In this article, the author aims to analyze the range of controversial issues that arise in social practice, based on the studies on Ethnic Minorities and their Organizations in Ukraine, conducted by him in 1993–2014⁴.

Issue 1. Why have the minorities kept their identity and not assimilated entirely, (especially the representatives of the so-called "ancient minorities"), if they have been living in the territory of Ukraine for centuries and were rather dispersed? The answer seems obvious: it is due to the activity of ethnic communities and their structures. But everything is not as simple as it may seem. The representatives who have certain purposes and motivation create communities and organizations. People from the minority groups become (or not) participants in their work and recreate them (or not) with their activity. Here, the emergent effect takes place. Their relations become mutual: minorities, whose activity creates their community, and organizations whose support strengthens their ethnic identity. But the motivation of these actions may be different.

Issue 2. Why are there not one but several organizations of one ethnic group at a certain territory (as well as at the national level), especially when this ethnic group is rather small? Why do not these organizations unite and are often in the state of conflict with each other? The response here cannot be reduced to political reasons only, or to the struggle for power, ambitions expressed by the leaders of these structures etc. These factors have a major impact but do not exhaust the agenda. They do not make it impossible to explain why certain people trust certain organizations and members of the group prefer other organizations, and remain there even after the change of the leader. What is their choice based on? Moreover, there are people who attend various organizations in the same time.

We again face the problem of motivation behind, a hidden problem of identity.

Evidently, those ethnic minority communities exist because people have a need for them. They satisfy a range of needs, mostly social ones, namely: confer the status, provide a sense of security, sense of belonging, "unconditional acceptance", respect and many others.

Issue 3. What motivates people to seek collective identities, why are not they happy enough with personal identity "I am me" in our "individualized society"⁵? Why do they need these roles and masks?

retical results were published in the article L. Chernova, *Basic mechanisms of identity construction nat. minorities of Ukraine in the post-Soviet period*, "Kulturologichny News. Naukova-teoreticity schorichnik Nizhnoi Naddnipyrianshini" 2012/29, p. 169–176.

⁴ L. Chernova *Prospects for the revival of the Jewish communities in Eastern Ukraine*, Prism, Dnepropetrovsk 1996; L. Chernova, *Etnonatsionalni teritorialni gromada yak yelement Gromadyanska for Civil Society*, "Kulturologichny News NAUKOVO-teoretichny schorichnik Nizhnoi Naddnipyrianshini" 2007/19, p. 161–163; L. Chernova, *Etnonatsionalni teritorialni gromada yak ob'ekt sotsiologichnogo doslidzhennya, Metodologiya, teoriya that practice sotsiologichnogo analizu Suchasnyj suspilstva*, Vip. 16, HNU, Harkiv 2010, p. 480–484.

⁵ Z. Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, Columbia University Press, Columbia 1998

Perhaps, feeling the distance from the majority in overt or latent forms, formal and informal relationships (such as "you are not like us", "you're good but ...") the minorities are beginning either to search their own circle or create it. The need to be part of "WE" means to have own place in the world. E. Fromm (1968) regarded it as innate. However, my point of view is that it is formed in the process of socialization and interaction and belongs to primary social requirements of a personality.

Issue 4. What should ethno-national organizations need in order to become attractive and interesting for each of their groups in the era of total globalization, migration and dominance of mass culture?

"Then, strangers can only unite among themselves?" asks Julia Kristeva in her paper *Étrangers à nous-mêmes* (1988). "However, it's not that simple. As we have to take in consideration each phantasm inherent to a person: domination/ pushing aside: the fact that you are stranger does not mean that you do not have a stranger inside, and the faith, weakened in its origins, wakes up suddenly in the country where you come to, in order to create your identity out of all things around, and let it be even more exclusive than the one you have already lost ..."⁶

The point is that the loss of former identity imposes a psychological trauma and forces to search for a new identity. Such loss was experienced by all people of the post-Soviet countries, and the one experienced by "the Russians in Ukraine" was the most painful as overnight from the titular nation, the dominant ethnic group, they turned into a minority. E. Hobsbawm wrote: "People are seeking the group which they might belong to persistently and for a long time, in a world where everything is moving and nothing is reliable"⁷.

Then, our discourse puts a new question: why are not all the representatives of a minority involved into the activity of national-cultural public organizations? Y. Kristeva explains these trends by the example of religion, however in my opinion, this interpretation can be spread over all other markers of identity. "Here, the religion of the abandoned ancestors appears in its essential cleanliness, and it seems that you protect it better than those who remained "there" [*Historical Homeland – expl. by Ch.L.*]"⁸.

It is a well-known phenomenon. Persons, who have recently been converted, see themselves as more significant, fundamental and fanatical ones, they are intolerant to newcomers or those, who, according to them, are not so careful with the manifestation of their origin or belonging to the community.

In my latest survey the respondents being asked: "Is there a difference between you and your congeners living in the "country of Exodus" gave the following answer: "We are more of Greek (Polish, Jews, Hungarians... etc.)", "we have a stronger feeling of our ethnic identity being in the minority", "they have already forgotten what it means to be ..." - under the influence of globalization..."⁹.

However, among young people there more and more persons who have fragmentary or constructed identity. Here is the quote from the interview with a woman, aged 26, journalist, 3 eastern ethnoses in the ancestry, born in Kazakhstan, grew up in the Republic of Tatarstan (Russia), now lives in Ukraine: "Our family was Soviet, but our grandmother

⁶ Quoted by J. Kristeva, *Sami sobi Stranger's*, pereklad ukraïnskoyu Z. Borisyuk, Vidavnistvo Solomiï D. Pavlychko "Basis", Kiev 2004 [Original: J. Kristeva, *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*, Fayard, Paris 1988, p. 34.

⁷ E. Hobsbaum, *The cult of identity politics*, "New Left Review" 1996/217, p. 40.

⁸ J. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁹ See 2.

(from the Volga's tatar people) used to say that I was a Muslim. I never considered myself anybody, because my mother never told me anything about God. And then, when at the age of 15 I came here (Dniprodzerzhinsk city, Ukraine), I went to kostel and later I was baptized in the Catholic Church. **I simply met people who were interesting to me, I felt well with,** and then later it led me to belief... Actually, I am probably cosmopolitan. **But I want to associate myself with someone. And so, perhaps there is a certain conflict, I cannot understand who I am.**"¹⁰.

It helps to understand why minorities fail to feel their unity with all their tribesmen. "Here" in Ukraine the distribution follows various signs: demographic, social, cultural, spiritual. Other identities come into competition or displace ethnic identity (multiplicity of "I-images" in the postmodern society)¹¹.

Therefore, it explains the existence of several separate local as well as national communities and minority organizations: Polish, Greek, Georgian and others. They are divided on the basis of their function and purposes: secular and religious, women and youth, welfare (for the poor) and business associations (for the rich), socio-political and recreational, creative and entertaining, open and closed.

Skepticism and irony of the world's leading researchers (Hobsbawm, Bouman, etc) on the topic of identity, that replaced forms of political activity and class solidarity, are related to their disdain and underestimation of the role that everyday life plays in the society as well as the influence of attitudes in social relations. If there was no need for these organizations, they would not have existed.

National, cultural organizations of ethnic minorities appeared in post-soviet Ukraine from below, as a result of amateur activity performed by local leaders. They rarely come into conflict with each other because each one has its audience. Such organizations may unite in the future at a certain stage of national communities' development and create Associations, Unions or Federation of organizations (which can be observed with certain ethnic groups in Ukraine during last 5–10 years). They cooperate, coordinate and plan common activity but do not merge into one big organization because the interests of their members vary considerably. This Union may be called "Joint United Community "all-of-all", but in reality be rather symbolic, digital, umbrella organization.

That is another matter when ethno national organizations of minorities "are mounted" on top as branches, local offices of national or international structures out of political reasons. Forms of their activity are almost the same. They have different sources of financing thought and compete among themselves for recognition from the population and the authorities. This is the most common trend of ethnic groups that have small-scale funding and programs of cultural exchange and support from historical Homeland (Hungarians, Polish, Jews, Germans, Moldovans, Greeks etc.). It can actually become a major factor of the internal conflict inside the community and outside the society.

Besides, the conflicts between local leaders in the organization at a certain stage of its development are possible, if the organization is not governed democratically. Old leaders do not want to give up their posts to new and ambitious young leaders for a long time. If in a community there is no change of the power and there is absence of dialogue, stagnation and mummification of the organization or the separation of dissent of alternative

¹⁰ See 2.

¹¹ R. Jenkins, *Social identity*, Routledge, London 1996.

structures. But over time, when these conflicts are resolved, organizations will unite again after "the leader of the past years" leaves its post.

The main forms of activity implemented by national communities in Ukraine are very similar. They are reduced to the cultural and educational forms in the field of leisure and religious activity, if it is different from the religion of the majority. Some of the largest in number and most organized communities also have their own educational, charitable structures and media (not necessarily in the language of this ethnic group).

In the constituent documents of ethnic organizations of minorities the main aim is defined as preservation of ethno-national culture and protection of rights of a minority group. Preservation of culture is connected with the preservation of language, which also has its own problem.

If you ask people who have little in common with the problems of minorities regarding their main motive that encourages participation in the activity of these organizations, their answers will most likely be as follows: "to communicate with their co-nationals in their own language". Meanwhile, my research and studies of other sociologists in Ukraine show that there are significant differences in motivation, needs of minorities and their implementation.

First of all, well-known linguistic assimilation of "old minorities", especially those living dispersed. Secondly, not all representatives of minorities wish to revive the language of their ancestors, some groups have already lost almost 99% of it (e.g. Yiddish, Karaim, Swabian language). But nonetheless, they actively attend events and communicate with each other in Russian or Ukrainian languages. Apparently it is because they have other motivation. For them, communication in itself is important, especially for elderly lonely people with victim type of identity.

In addition to this, minorities who have not lost their language, are not in need of organizational forms of voice communication or in passing it on to the descendants. These are either the representatives of the "diaspora groups", "recent immigrants", or the representatives of some "old minorities" living in compact and small settlements, where they make up a significant share of the population. They have all the opportunities to do so in their microenvironment.

Individuals often carefully study their lost language if they have migration plans or intentions to study on various free-of-charge programs or planning partnership in business or cultural spheres in the historical Homeland. They have certain goals in life as well as personal interests.

This is only a small group of minorities, who really want to "return to the roots" for ideological reasons, or to preserve the language for descendants. In this case there are also discrepancies between needs and suggestions. For example, Greeks of Azov region (Greeks-Hellenes, Greeks-Urumlars) regretted that the majority of language educational projects are aimed at acquiring mastering Greek language, while the language of their ancestors and few of its speakers is either ancient Greek or Urumlar. The same problem is observed with the Germans who brought and preserved over the centuries dialect languages of ancestors, which is considerably different from the modern German language.

Not all minorities feel the need to study culture and history of their ethnic group through programs of organizations. Some are already well aware of it (graduates of national schools, "recent immigrants"). Others do not have knowledge but do not experience need in educating themselves, the third group chooses home-based forms and digital

learning. In other words, diversity and individualization of cultural "immersion" helps extend the range of organization's supporters, if they considered them in their activity.

This is also true of circles, creativity studios, child development, youth and women's clubs. At first, newcomer's main motive is "curiosity" and "engagement" rather than profound cognitive interest. As long as it is satisfied, a person may lose interest and reduce its participation, or vice versa.

Our latest study found that inhabitants of compact settlements of minorities (Greek, Bulgarian) may not be aware of their participation in the work of national organizations, because they perceive national cultural events, festivals, concerts as the work conducted by local authorities or a club, and do not divide territorial and ethnic communities.

If an organization in its activity reduces personal development to the sphere of leisure to folklore only, then this approach narrows the range of opportunities. Persons who failed to find self-realization beyond ethnographic folk culture can go to other leisure groups and clubs of general direction.

The second extreme point in the work of ethnocultural centers, especially when children and young people are concerned, lies in programs aimed the development of aptitudes (sports, handmade, art) without ethnic flavor. Then, the only motive of their visit is connected with the absence of fees (current situation in most minority organizations of Ukraine). This creates consumeristic and utilitarian "client" attitude to the community and its organizations (service sector). Motivation of self-realization is a very powerful factor of participation, however, it can be easily distorted and reduced to the utilization of services, when it has nothing to do with solidarity, loyalty or unity. It creates "identity masks"¹², which are easily changed from situation to situation.

Empirical studies show that "professional ethnic leaders" who have an essential (original type of identity) or identity of cultural choice are the "core" of national cultural organizations of Ukraine. Their share is approximately 1–3% of the demographic cohort of minority in a particular territory. The second group are "Activists" who attend regular events and festivals in the structure of a community. They usually either demonstrate victim type of identity or follow their cultural choice. Their share is around 10–25%. The third group is comprised of the "Interested" with fragmented or super-ethnic identity. They constitute 25–45% of the population. They visit selected activities that are of interest to them. People with nominal identity are not integrated, they do not contact with organizations – around 25–65% depending on the type of communities, length of stay in the country and the nature of settlement (dispersed/compact).

Thus, the need to be a member or participate in the activities and programs of certain ethnic organizations of minority is not shared by all representatives of the minority living in this locality. That is because their needs and motives, expectations and interests do not coincide with what is offered by ethnic-national organizations or ethnic identity does not matter much for them. Significant potential for attracting new members persists today. In my opinion, the value ranges between 10% and 50% depending on the area and community type.

Activity and forms of participation depend on the type of identity that minorities demonstrate. The need to be protected is experienced by the individuals who have a victim type of identity. For them, participation in populous events such as festivals, memorial

¹² R. Jenkins, *op. cit.*

rallies etc. is of utmost importance. Not all members of given ethnic group share similar motive, but only those who have had personal experience of victimization and are experiencing discrimination. The larger the community is, the safer they feel. But some of them want to show this solidarity among their closed circle rather than in public. This phenomenon is called "ethnomorphism". Hence, they choose closed forms of social activity, closed organizations which is perceived by the majority as threat or separatism.

Recently in Facebook during a discussion of the factors causing conflict in Donbas, an anonymous author wrote the following: "Things called markers of identity such as the language, history, culture must stop being the subject of politics. As this brings separatism into the politics of virtually any country". Yet, I disagree with this thought. Language, history, culture are the basic foundations of identity. If we do not intend to build the country of "uniformity and unanimity", they should become the subject of policy, fine-weighted deliberate cultural ethnic policy and public dialogue. They should not be used for manipulation with situational purposes (such as elections). The factors of conflict are the subconscious fears expressed by both sides, insufficient knowledge of culture, history and religion of each other create the image of an enemy, give birth to mutual misunderstanding or unwillingness to hear or know. But the "Other" is not a "Stranger" or "Enemy". And ethnocultural diversity is the key to successful and effective development of Ukraine like any other modern country.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The basic reasons that encourage minorities to participate in institutional forms of activity by their self-determination are: "return to the roots", "cultural self-realization", "security and social assistance", "social status" (professionals and retirees), "communication". But the main motive is "feeling of unconditional acceptance and belonging to "WE", "self-identity preservation" in this changing world.

2. Participation and activity of minorities depend on their status, place in the society, history in this country, but most importantly the type of individual identity and intention to save it.

3. The success of the ethnic-national organization and the number of its supporters depend on the coincidence of programs and forms of its work with the needs, demands and interests of the local minority and the style of community management.

4. In today's individualized society, people have very differentiated motivation and interests, that are difficult to generalize on the basis of formal ethnic features which, in turn, complicates the work of ethnic-national organizations.

5. Complex and diverse system of needs and motivation to participate in the activity of cultural and national organizations of minorities cannot be properly explored with the help of traditional quantitative methods. It should be surveyed and the changes must be traced with the method of case studies, qualitative research.

6. Organizations should be aware of what the minorities want and they seek and change forms and programs of their activity, respectively. Moreover, important democratic models of a community allow ordinary members of the community the opportunities to take the initiative, to influence decision making process in the organization and availability of the space for self-realization.

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MNIEJSZOŚCI NA UKRAINIE: MOTYWACJA I FORMY UCZESTNICTWA W DZIAŁALNOŚCI ORGANIZACJI NARODOWO-KULTUROWYCH

W artykule autorka podejmuje próbę analizy sprzecznych problemów, które pojawiają się w praktyce społecznej na podstawie własnych wyników badań etnicznych wspólnot narodowych na terytorium postsowieckiej Ukrainy. Biorąc pod uwagę różne motywy uczestnictwa bądź jego braku w społecznej działalności etniczno-narodowych organizacji, ustalono główne czynniki wpływające na aktywność społeczną mniejszości w życiu społecznym i ich związku z planami życiowymi oraz samoidentyfikacją. Na podstawie studium przypadku opisana została potrzeba dopasowania zaproponowanej formy organizacji działań do zainteresowań i potrzeb odbiorców, które dziś są bardzo zróżnicowane. W artykule zaproponowano analizę wewnętrznych i zewnętrznych przyczyn konfliktów występujących na różnych etapach rozwoju społeczności. Omówiono rolę etnicznych organizacji krajowych jako elementu społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, wpływ państwa i polityki krajowej oraz stopień demokracji wewnątrz organizacji.

W artykule przedstawiono typologię mniejszości na podstawie stopnia ich aktywności, jak również wewnętrzną strukturę etnicznych wspólnot narodowych na lokalnym szczeblu terytorialnym. Zaszeregowano również postępowanie w przypadku przyjęcia nowych członków do społeczności etnicznych oraz organizacji kulturowych.

Wyniki badań mogą być zastosowane w opracowywaniu planów rozwoju portalu dla etnicznych organizacji kulturowych i mogą zostać wykorzystane do rozwoju etnopolityki, etnosociologii i etnokultury. Pewne wnioski metodologiczne mogą być pomocne w rozwoju etnicznej polityki państwowej na Ukrainie. W artykule poruszono również problemy i aspekty związane z wielokulturowością społeczeństwa na Ukrainie.

Słowa kluczowe: mniejszości etniczno-kulturowe, formy uczestnictwa, motywy, rodzaj identyfikacji

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