Nation's Historical Past under Multicultural Conditions

Mariia A. Abysova, Olha P. Antipova, Oleg V. Pavlyshyn, Serhii V. Bondar

Abstract: *The research issue is the historical past of the ethnic group as the most important component of social consciousness, which determines the social life practices and serves as the basis for the solidarity in society and the ground for its purposeful development. A wide range of concepts concerning the attitude to the historical past as one of the most important components of collective goal setting, in particular, theories of mentality, interpretation of texts and conflict of interpretations, historical hermeneutics, and conceptual models of history are investigated. It has been proved that the concepts of the single picture of ethnological history disappear under the influence of the multicultural characteristics, when the exclusive right of historical evaluation and interpretation is lost, and the changing set of situationally significant fragments becomes a priority. It is revealed that in the conditions of pluralism of thoughts and ideas caused by the emergence of non-state social actors, enhanced migration flows, increased communication opportunities of the society and internationalization of higher education, the appeal of social actors to their historical past in order to support their social and cultural borders and to forecast new social projects is complicated. A number of objective and subjective factors of disorganization of national history memory are stated in the research*

Keywords: *Ethnos, historical consciousness, history, identity, multiculturalism, nation, social memory.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of multiculturalism (cultural pluralism) has been debated for recent decades in everyday life, in the media, and among scholars. At the same time, the interest to it does not diminish, since this phenomenon directly or indirectly affects the majority of the Earth's population, causes transformations in the spheres of economy, politics, culture, household activities, significantly modifying the consciousness as well as the psyche of people. Cultural diversity is perceived as the constituents of independent cultural units presented in society, which are defined by similar structures-qualities, but differ in their semantic manifestations. Much has been said and written about the phenomenon of multiculturalism, but it remains under-researched, as there has been not revealed the full range of its consequences for individual regions and for humanity in general, which confirms the urgency of the issue.

The article is aimed at exploring the factor of appealing to the past in the context of socio-cultural pluralism. The realization of the goal implies the consistent fulfillment of the following tasks: 1) to establish the key factors for the transformation of the picture of history, in particular, the historical consciousness of the ethnic group in the context of multiculturalism; 2) to identify objective and subjective factors of the national historical memory disorganization.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUNDS

The philosophical and scientific publications of recent years have outlined a wide range of concepts ranging from the eschatological predictions of the devastating "clash of civilizations" in the multicultural world, grounded by Toynbee [1] Huntington [2], to rather optimistic viewpoint as for creating a harmonious society in European countries, in particular. At the same time, despite differences in assumptions, supporters of different concepts are unanimous in that the problem of understanding and managing cultural diversity at the regional, state or local and even a single individual level is now one of the most difficult one. This is primarily due to the attitude towards one of the most important components of the collective goal setting, namely the historical past. Without comprehending the past, it is impossible to understand the current reality, to build projections of the future based on the positive and negative historical experiences of previous generations, to reconsider the existing differences in order to gain useful experience.

Scientists who devote their works to the research of the collective memory phenomenon draw their attention among the wide range of concepts to the issue of attitude to one of the most important components of collective goal setting, namely the historical past. It is interpreted as a socio-cultural phenomenon that has a significant impact on the international and national arena and can be based on the conflicts experienced by the nation, serve as a reflection of both internecine strife and genocide, political violence, terrorism, the influence of despotic regimes [3]. It can be also interpreted as a factor of cultural identity [4] or understanding of the past that is produced and perceived collectively [5].

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Retrieval Number: D9720118419/2019©BEIESP
DOI:10.35940/ijrte.D9720.118419
Journal Website: www.ijrte.org

9409

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These interpretations are correlated with the position of other researchers who believe that, because of passing through the historical memory of the nation, politicians promote contemporary interests, popularize the foundations of ideology by making a historical assessment of the past [6].

The findings of these scientists correlate with the findings of researchers on the principles of historical continuity of generations [7] which reinforces the opposition to integration [8] despite the active desire to preserve collective memory and to cherish historical experience [9]. The key concepts of the analyzed resources make it possible to argue that the collective memory of the nation can be both a significant factor in the consolidation of the nation for its purposeful development and a factor of the ethnological history single picture disappearance under the influence of multiculturalism.

The theory of mentality; the theory of texts interpretation and conflict of interpretations; theoretical development of conceptual models of history; and the concept of historical hermeneutics also lay in the theoretical basis of the research. Particular attention is paid to the block of works in the field of world citizenship which served as the basis for the logic of considering transnational identification.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Humanity as a biological species is not a homogeneous social group because each culture implements a specific set of social practices of a particular community. According to [10], cultural diversity arises when the territorially concentrated and from the very beginning regulated cultures are included to a larger state. The author calls these incorporated cultures national minorities. The nation appears here as a historical community; it is more or less institutionally structured, occupying a specific territory with a separate language and culture. Multiculturalism is also the result of individual immigration. Such individual migrants are often united into free ethnic communities. However, immigrant groups are neither a nation, nor they have their own territory. Their difference from other cultures and uniqueness is proclaimed and manifested mainly in private life, in particular, in associations that arise spontaneously and are compatible with institutional integration with the dominant culture [10].

In the multicultural era, intergroup contacts with members of another ethno-cultural society are generally the norm rather than the exception. Although considered a progressive phase of social development, it marks a dangerous stage in state-building. Scientists predict that immigration, accumulation and intergroup relations will determine the connection of all future leaders, government officials and more. At the same time, the notion of culture is becoming increasingly blurred, given the multiplicity and intertwining of social identity resulting from the transnational movement and the transfer of values [11], [12].

A multicultural society is not harmonious in nature, and it is quickly becoming contentious. The ethnicity and nation as subjects of politics, having their own understanding of interests, seek to retain their identity, which forms the basis of centrifugal trends. Their main characteristics are, for the most part, the desire to support themselves as separate communities within the majority culture and the demands for different forms of autonomy or self-government. Being the objects of state policy, ethnicities and nations are subject to integration with other ethnicities and nations. This provides the essence of centripetal tendencies without which national unity and territorial integrity of the state, stability of the political regime, and successful resolution of economic, social and political problems are impossible.

Both trends of social development imply the appeal to the historical past in order to confirm the legitimacy of the stated choice. At one time, British researcher Smith [13], searching for the answer to the question "Why do all the regimes make their young study some history at school?", finally came to the conclusion: "Not to understand their society and how it changes, but to approve of it, to be proud of it, or to become good citizens of the USA, or Spain or Honduras or Iraq. And the same is true of causes and movements. History as inspiration and ideology has a built-in tendency to become self-justifying myth" [13, p. 53].

Defining a key function of historical consciousness, Barg [14] notes, that it is an orientation of society in time and space, based on long-term ("existential") information, which accumulates three temporary projections of society (its genesis that means the "genealogical" past; its "obvious" present, namely worldview, conception of the world and its place in it; and its historical future in the form of the goal setting) [14, p. 5].

Against this background, collective recollection of the events from the past is relevant and in demand only when it is in keeping with the current structure of group interests and meets the prognostic needs of the community.

In our article, historical consciousness in the context of a nation should be defined as information and ideas that exist in the environment of people who belong to a particular community or ethnic group, or have a relatively significant spread among it in the form of well-established thoughts on origin, historical path, and the historical path of the nation, its present status as a certain result of this path, its position and place in the world, as well as the prospects for the development.

The basis of such thoughts and ideas is usually the historical memory of the nation which has three large groups of carriers: 1) production tools and tangible results of labor that are often summarized in the concepts of the "material culture" and the "second nature"; 2) objective social relationships that are ultimately based on industrial relations; 3) a language in a broad sense.

In his daily life, every person at the everyday level of historical consciousness deal with history both through material culture (for example, using instruments of labor inherited by previous generations) and its spiritual component (appealing to traditions, rituals, etc.). If the formation of individual memory is usually based on self-regulation (often unconsciously or weakly controlled by the person); then collective memory is adjustable and managed.

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Each new generation, given its specific historical circumstances, is constantly faced with a choice: what heritage that lost its immediate practical value should be forgotten, and what from the preserved should be used but already in a new capacity. The contradiction arises because there is a need to assign as much of the social heritage as possible to ensure a stronger historical continuity, and at the same time because of the impossibility of total preservation and complete possession of this heritage. In the purely practical context, it is impossible to capture and preserve all the memories and life experience of generations coming out from the historical arena. This problem is of particular relevance in modern society, where the scientific and technical activities of mankind lead to a total cluttering of social space, forcing the next generations to almost destroy what remained from the past.

In addition, the experience of the past is not straightforward: some events are more vivid in the public memory than others because of the power of influence they have on the fate of the nation, the remarkability of the figures involved in it, or the deliberate impact on historical consciousness. Thus, there is a problem of prompt inclusion of an object into social memory on the basis of a careful selective approach.

In this context, it is appropriate to update the issue of symbolic places of memory (in the broadest sense) common to Europe or much of it, since culture-specific symbols have a profound effect on intergroup and political relations [15], and thus, they influence the formation of the nation's historical past. For this purpose, let us turn to the European Memory Sites project, where the authors identify three criteria that must be met by any European memory site: "Firstly, European places of memory may be such phenomena that at the moment of their birth in the minds of contemporaries were gaining European scale... People at the end of the XVIII c. felt and experienced the pan-European character of the Enlightenment or Classicism, which formed and heightened their sense of belonging to the same culture and cultural community. Secondly, such phenomena should promote a sense of European community... The key role in this context is played by realization that communication and perception processes must be analyzed differently from accessing national memory places. Thirdly, such a memory place should be important not only for the Western as well as the Eastern part of the continent, because one-sided historical research need to be corrected" [15, p. 9].

Considering the problem of the significant past of the nation, it should be noted that tribal, class, and religious identities with the key counterbalances such as "we – they", "familiars – strangers", "friends – enemies" being once identified, were replaced by the national identity closely linked with the state in the Modern Era. It was the period of the establishment of the nationalist picture of the world. Within its framework, nations began to be perceived as legitimate units of the political organization, and the "nationalist view" of society, politics, law, justice and history gained the popularity. Today's researchers quite logically claim that nowadays instead of being naturally connected to the nation people are creating an experience of the national identity, basing on the imaginary community of other members who are distant in time and space [16].

It is worth noting that the formation of the nation's historical consciousness mainly requires the conscious efforts of the state, political and intellectual elites, enabling members of society to unite in a common empathy. Unlike archaic, non-literate, communities with an involuntary form of memory that did not involve purposeful memorization, preservation and reproduction of information, publicly and nationally-organized societies deliberately invent and use artificial signs. All sign systems both written and others can be defined by the concept of a "document". A document is the result of purposeful fixation of information to transmit it in time and space. Documents were purposefully created as tools for information conveying and operational management and as means of restoration and reconstruction of images from the past in the public consciousness.

A society achieves true mastery of its own memory only when it moves from spontaneous accumulation of retrospective information to conscious accumulation of it in specially created depository institutes. For centuries, the archives-libraries, private repositories have been converted into an extensive network of national libraries, archives, museums, private and corporate repositories. At the same time, the differentiation of functions at these institutions by formal and substantive features still continued. Due to the deliberate selection and organization of retrospective information at the depository institutions, memory and thus the historical eyes consciousness of the society becomes an instrument of national development, ensuring the internal and external legitimacy of the state, political mobilization and consolidation of the society. According to [17], the establishment of historical ties between the people is also facilitated by the commemoration of public anniversary dates, which is a kind of emphasis on shaping a sense of the collective past. Undoubtedly, the historical connections and emphases that are formed in social culture are usually easier to detect than those that may act in the minds of ordinary members of society [17].

National memory lays a set of symbols and signs immanent only to a particular stable and historic community of people. It is this nucleus that performs the ethno-differentiating or divisive function (thanks to the "we – they" antithesis, the creation of ethnic stereotypes, the opposition of its community to all similar communities). At the same time, it plays an ethno-integration role, uniting the members of the ethnic group, even if, given their historical fate, they have been scattered throughout the world. The ethnonym that is the name of the ethnic group is an example of such a symbol. The ethnic community includes anyone who considers this name as his own. The name of the nation may change due to the disintegration of former ethnic communities and the formation of new ones or due to the migration of nations.

These linking symbols, connecting people and creating a collective community through the bond of generations, make the national-ethnic community a deeply integrated social collectivity.

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Since this knowledge successfully contributes to solving the problems faced by individuals and society, they are beyond doubt. But when the principles of constituting such a resource are destroyed, society becomes disordered; the typifications and the prospects that emerge from them enter a zone of disorientation with a growing conflict atmosphere. This is a characteristic of social transformation. Having lost a single communication and corporate core, different entities are based on different goal setting and defining, which inevitably leads to a conflict of interest.

Since ethnicity always has a complicated structure, historical events may acquire alternative estimates. As a result, the actualization of historical events in the new conditions is determined by the dominant ideology and needs of current socio-political practice. In order to be up-to-date, retrospective information emerges from long-term memory, being transformed and reproduced in the current public consciousness. Any event or a national history phenomenon in the form of historical knowledge is actualized in the mass consciousness through a compulsory history course at school, mentions in fiction, cinema and journalism, specialized mechanisms of influence used by politicians, ideologues and media. Actualization can take the form of reproducing a document in a publication or an object in a museum exhibit, as well as the reproduction of an architectural monument on the streets of a modern city, and more.

Acceptance and sustained entry of national influences into the culture of an ethnic group even in a substantially redesigned form or their rejection and oblivion obey certain laws. And the criterion here, first and foremost, is the conformity to the "spirit of the nation" and its ethno-cultural values.

In addition to the natural aging of information carriers, factors that lead to their disorganization of social memory include: the destruction and dispersion of information carriers due to natural disasters, wars, the decline of the culture level, revolutions, as well as the ideological struggle, in particular, political one which, according to modern researchers [18], determines the social hierarchy. Although the factors outlined are not equivocal, their destructive effects lead to the loss of entire layers of retrospective information in the society's memory. In the history of mankind, there are known cases of public amnesia, which is total or partial forgetting of cultural and historical experience, loss of skills for its reproduction.

At present, the national type of memory is affected by the disorganized influence of several factors. Some of these are related to the active involvement of new social actors into the historical process, which have not previously played a significant role in society, and which now describe the historical process by shifting the meaningful center to their own side. Thus, according to [19], Europeans merely "pretend the existence of Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and so on".

Today, social and cultural communities of a fundamentally different type are successfully competing with closed national-state authorities. Researchers point to the "withering away" of the nation-state, and to a radical change in the principles of the world modern political order and the construction of political projects of the future "network society", "the global democratic empire" led by the US [20],

"a global civil society", "a global citizenship", or a "cosmopolitan state" [19], or "a society of plurality, that is a res-commune" [21].

Factors for the emergence of new-type communities include acceleration the historical development pace and increased amount of information in generations' activity. Such an acceleration of the change pace leads to the fact that past experience is stored as memory but loses its significance for the younger generation's real life.

Network structures limit and often negate the distribution of cultural patterns, forms, and modes of communication by belonging to national territories. In today's information economy, a grand leap in the development of world transport and communications technologies, network structures become the most competitive, most adaptive and dynamic form of social relations, social self-organization and cultural interactions. Enormous opportunities for mutual assistance, social contacts, "bypassing" of state control make network structures one of the main drivers of global migration. In connection with the diminishing importance of national and territorial boundaries in the context of social interactions, as well as for the designation of new configurations of relationships formed by emigrants, immigrants and those who remained at their motherland, researchers have introduced the concept of the "transmigrants" [22], [23] and the "transnational communities" [24].

Unlike multiculturalism, the essence of which is to proclaim the equality and self-sufficiency of different cultures, transculture is a new model of cultural development main purpose of which is the human right to be free from one's own culture in which an individual was born and formed as a person. According to transculturalists' point of view, there is quite powerful dependence of the individual on the original culture. Even leaving its original cultural environment, the individual remains a hostage of the traditions, the language of the native culture. Individuals who have managed to distance themselves from the former culture are in one way or another exposed to the new cultural environment. Only a small number of people, if they change their "innate" cultural environment into a new cultural space, are able to remain independent of any of them. Accordingly, transculture distinguishes a new aspect of cultural development that extends beyond the national culture.

Given that communication and communicative interaction rather than social hierarchies play a key role in this process, a feature of the modern transculture is the ability to change the world faster than the policy of multiculturalism does it. Contemporary transculture, being outside the state, can create its own social space on a legitimate or illegitimate basis, with the "network morphology" at the core, it has real and virtual (the Internet) equivalents without restrictions in time and space. In this space, there are corresponding connections and institutions, relationships and conflicts.

A new phenomenon that distinguishes transculture from the processes of internationalization of previous epochs is the emergence of new cultural spaces, namely spaces of global communication, resulted from the strengthened intercultural connections [25].

These include the cultures of new stratums of society as the creative class, the overstratum of intellectuals, virtual collectivities, and the stratum of the "new individuality".

In addition, in the twentieth century, such factors as the involvement of the greater proportion of the population into public life, the liquidation of illiteracy among the adult, the development of fixation techniques and the dissemination of information (audio, visual, digital, including through the Internet, etc.) have led to the fact that all people are somehow involved in the formation of social memory. The new information space is a convenient platform for social memory restoring, as well as for enhancing social sharing and cultural interaction in real time [26]. It becomes true, that there is now no family where any of its members would not have recently been fascinated by the desire to reconstruct as closely as possible the hidden circumstances of the origin of his family. Genealogical research updating is a new and rather massive phenomenon.

Unlike the objective factors of the disorganization of historical consciousness and memory described above, subjective factors are associated with the new position of the individual in the modern society. The position of the individual implies a certain metamorphosis, because unlike the previously formed types of individualization, when the individual was rigidly "tied" to national links and forms, in modern conditions he is able to move from a nationally defined biography to a self-created one. To do this, he needs an active behavioral model that allows him to move from a typical biography specific to a particular state or civilization to the one directly constructed by him. With this approach, the social determinants that invade the individual's life become "external variables" that can be mitigated, circumvented, eliminated by selecting their own biographical construct. Thus, non-standard forms of teaching, work, communication, and leisure activities, caused by globalization processes, lead to the "transformation of socially assigned biography into the self-created one" [19].

The so-called individual differences in cognitive flexibility can be considered as a significant factor of disorganization. In particular, current researchers claim, "Individual differences in cognitive flexibility may contribute toward ideological thinking styles that shape both nationalistic attitudes and personal sense of nationalistic identity. … Emotionally neutral "cold" cognitive information processing and not just "hot" emotional cognition may play a key role in ideological behavior and identity" [27].

It is appropriate to give a quote from the Beck's work. Exploring the issues of new identification, he operates the concept of the "globalization of biography", "Transnational polygamy in the context of habitat, a polylocal marriage with different habitats belonging to different strata are the entrance gate of globalization into private life leading to the globalization of biography" [19].

The loss of European political unity, which has always been based on national values and the biography of the globalizing individual, has led to an increase in the popularity of right-wing and radical right-wing parties and movements that are gaining more and more political weight. Despite the relatively small number of public supporters today, they have a considerable electoral potential among those who wish to join them for cultural reasons.

IV. SCIENTIFIC NOVELTY

It is established that in a multicultural society, in the context of the loss of the exclusive right of historical evaluation and interpretation, the single picture of history disappears, and its place is taken by a set of constantly changing situationally significant fragments. This leads to an increase in the role of the interpretative component, an intensification of semantic uncertainty and a conflict of interpretations.

V. CONCLUSION

The cultural diversity of social life actualizes the issue of appealing to the historical past of the nation, giving rise to objective and subjective factors in the disorganization of national historical memory. Objective factors are associated with the geometric progression of historical knowledge resources, the improvement of means of access, and the increased interpretation of factual material. Subjective factors are related to changes in the consciousness of an individual who begins to articulate the purpose of history in a globalized dimension. Given the complexity of the social picture and the blurring of the multicultural society's contours, the importance of appealing to the past will increase. Understanding the historical process at the level of everyday consciousness will play a more significant role in the processes of forming both group and personal identities of social subjects, which may well be the subject of further scientific exploration.

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