

SOCIAL FACTORS OF NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

Tendencies and contradictions of the development of national identity in Ukrainian society today are considered in the paper. Peculiarities of factors influencing its formation are shown. Dynamic changes of national identity indexes in Ukrainian society are analyzed. A conclusion is made about the necessity of achieving a permanent peace in this country as the cause of maintaining its unity.

Keywords: *national identity, national policy, ideology, contradictions, unifying idea, trust, distrust, vital comfort.*

У статті розглядаються тенденції і протиріччя розвитку національної самосвідомості в українському суспільстві в сучасних умовах. Аналізується динаміка змін показників національної самосвідомості в українському суспільстві. Обґрунтовується висновок про необхідність досягнення міцного миру в країні як умови збереження її цілісності.

Ключові слова: *національна самосвідомість, національна політика, ідеологія, протиріччя, об'єднуюча ідея, довіра, недовіра, життєвий комфорт.*

В статье рассматриваются тенденции и противоречия развития национального самосознания в украинском обществе в современных условиях. Раскрываются особенности факторов, влияющих на его формирование. Анализируется динамика изменения показателей национального самосознания в украинском обществе, обосновывается вывод о необходимости достижения прочного мира в стране как условия сохранения ее целостности.

Ключевые слова: *национальное самосознание, национальная политика, идеология, противоречия, объединительная идея, доверие, недоверие, жизненный комфорт.*

After the collapse of the USSR a situation typical for all post-soviet republics appeared when people realized their new status as citizens of independent state which was directly connected with the problem of national identification. Today 67,3%

of citizens are proud of such status: it's not an absolute majority but this indicator is tending upwards, the huge leap forward taking place in 2014. During the whole period of independence this index had been no more than 50% and last year (2014) it reached 60,7%. To be sure, the increase of this indicator was caused not only by anti-Russian rhetoric of Verchovna Rada, the government, of all Ukrainian mass media and ban of Russian TV channels, but also by unprecedented events taking place in this country: Crimea becoming a part of Russia and a real war in Donbas region which turned out to be so protracted and destructive. The war has markedly influenced the answers of Donbas residents to the above question, the contrast being evident: according to 2014 opinion poll only 18,2% of residents

Table 1

Dynamics of answers to the question: “To what extent are you proud of being the citizens of Ukraine?” (%)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	Donbas residents 2014
Not proud at all	7,9	9,3	5,1	5,0	11,3
Rather not proud than proud	14,1	15,5	6,0	8,5	13,9
Hard to answer	35,3	27,5	28,2	19,2	56,5
Rather proud than not	35,0	38,1	36,8	50,2	13,9
Very proud	7,7	9,6	23,9	17,1	4,3

were proud to be the citizens of Ukraine (*see table 2*). Unfortunately in 2015 poll such data are not available.

Table 1 shows potential contradictions in national identification of Ukrainian citizens, which can occur in social practices. Such contradictions may increase because self-consciousness is directed to the subjective word of a person who realizes and correlates the acts of consciousness in relation to himself (his “ego”). From the point of view of sociology, of great importance is the fact that identity formation process, including national one, is due to the influence of the whole complex of both objective and subjective factors. It is important to emphasize that

“consciousness develops autonomously i.e. independently, not always in agreement with social – economic trends”[1].

This fact must be taken into account in analyzing cause – effect relationships that determine national features of self-consciousness. We often forget that while assessing the processes and events taking place in that country we consider them as a consequence not taking into account the cause.

In forming and developing national identity it is very important for the majority of people to understand and to appreciate national program of political – economic development. But so far in Ukraine there is no clearly formulated ideology of post-soviet development. Nobody proclaimed capitalism as the main path of the development of the state. As a result, today we have 34,0% of citizens who are in search of their place in public life trying to adapt themselves to the current situation and 32,8% of those who don't want to adapt themselves and are looking forward to changes for the better.

Therefore, it's not surprising that according to the survey of 2014 there were more proponents of socialism than those of capitalism (15,7% vs 13,6 respectively). Unfortunately, in 2015 poll there is no direct question about the choice between two radically different paths of development of society (capitalism and socialism), but if we compare the figures indicating preferences in political spectrum, we should note that a portion of those supporting the left political direction (communist, socialist, social-democratic) was 23% in 2014 and 28,4% in 2015 respectively, no decrease among the supporters of communism noticed.

The amount of supporters of social – democratic process increased dramatically (15,2% in 2015 vs 9,8 in 2014) along with that of supporters of national – democratic processes (19% vs 14,1% respectively). It should be emphasized that the number of those who could not determine their position and those who claimed that they didn't understand these processes had decreased. In other words, society despite the significant presence of radical movements generally swung to the left.

Here we must admit the fact that Ukrainian society is rather polarized. It would be too easy to consider this difference in terms of external – territorial factor only: the West and the Centre against the East and the South-East. The reason for

such confrontation is not at all the difference in preferences of the electorate of the “orange“ and the “white-blue” politicians. This is only a consequence, the real cause having its roots in history. It’s a pity that our politicians during the whole period of constructing the new independent state have not understood that the agreement between the East and the West must be sought not only in language and culture which have mixed and assimilated greatly but in proper correlation of “Western” and “Eastern” mentality of Ukrainians and in seeking the common cultural values which could unite people as citizens of a single state.

In our opinion, if the Ukrainian top-ranking officials had followed the example of British government and after learning about the desire of certain part of the country to become independent hurried to Donbas not having the arms and mobilized army but the intention to negotiate, then the war could have been avoided and the agreement could be reached. However this didn’t happen and as a result we are having not only the destruction of infrastructure of the two previously economically powerful regions, but also the destruction of spiritual unity of one nation. This is a fatal path for any state, however for a state, which is seeking the way of its development in between the East and the West, the lack of spiritual unity is a catastrophic impasse. Therefore, the first step of the newly elected President of Ukraine must have been aimed at an immediate ending the war and establishing peaceful negotiations, which would be in line with his pre-election program. However, the president who was elected on May 25 presented his program of reforms “Ukraine 2020” not until September 28 in which he expressed hope that by 2020 90% of population would be proud of Ukraine and said that the conflict in Donbas could be resolved by dialogue. Time will show whether the President’s hope is realistic or not. Nevertheless, for the dream to come true it is necessary to have the idea, which could unite the whole society.

Monolithic cohesion of society can arise only when the President as the leader elected by the majority of people will formulate the idea uniting all strata of society. So far there is no such an idea declared and as a result one –fifth of the adult population (20,3%) showed the desire to leave Ukraine.

Appreciation of national political-economic program by the majority of people is the necessary requirement of its successful

implementation, but hardly can we discuss any program today when the problem of surviving has become the priority in Ukraine. Surviving is unlikely to become the uniting idea while about half of population (45,6%) have noted that today “it is impossible to tolerate our plight any longer”. Everybody is surviving individually, the main principle of society being “every man for himself”.

The lack of free choice of job, occupation, along with democratic rhetoric are forming cynicism, apathy and social pessimism in society. It is mainly fear and uneasiness that reign in society. The question – “what do you feel when you think about the future of Ukraine”, was answered in the following way – one fifth of respondents (20,9%) answered – fear, and 39,8% – anxiety (*Table 2*).

Table 2**The psychological state of the citizens of Ukraine**

State	Annual distribution of people’s estimation of their own feelings in connection with:			
	With the future of Ukraine, %		With your own future, %	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
Anxiety	44,5	39,8	40	36,6
Fear	23,6	20,9	18,2	20,8
Confusion	13,4	16,4	17,5	23
Optimism	23,5	22,9	24,7	26,6
Hope	48,8	44,1	48,6	40,5

Referring to the data over the period of two years the level of fear and anxiety has decreased among the citizens, but the level of optimism and hope has also dropped. It should be noted that Ukrainian citizens care more about the future of the country than about personal fate as well as they rely on future of the country more then on their own future. This fact shows the high level of their national identity. The rise of insecurity and fear leads to the formation of a normative ideal, focused not on the development, but on safety. The main task of risk society becomes maintaining its status quo, but the ruling elite forgets that the more uncertainty an ordinary citizen feels the greater is his desire to have a “strong hand” in charge of the state, which would reduce the level of risk,

and strengthen the weakening public order in society. Such trend is very dangerous... Democratic ideas are being increasingly discredited, rapidly losing their popularity among the masses. Therefore, actions of law enforcement agencies and institutions are becoming more and more significant. However, in this case it should be taken into account that the causes of social conflict may lie in incompatibility of interests and objectives of the relevant social groups, which at one time was referred to by Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons.

In many ways, the growth of social tension, a sense of anxiety and fear is reinforced by ever burning anti-Russian rhetoric of Parliament and Ukrainian media. Such “mobilization of patriotism” against Russia does not contribute to consolidation of society, primarily because it is not accompanied by a simultaneous increase of trust in society. Lack of trust to media and President is higher than 50% (51,1% and 55,6%, respectively); As for the top institutions of the legislative, judicial and executive authorities – the Court, Prosecutor’s Office, Verchovna Rada, the Government, the level of distrust towards them is more than 70% (!). A permanent source of tension in society since requiring independence is the different attitude to property: some groups believe that economy of Ukraine should be built on the basis of state property taking into account national interests (8,9%), others support only private ownership (9,5%); Some groups believe that state ownership should prevail in economic development (17,4%), while others think it should be the private one (9,5%). The same is true about the language problem – some believe that the Russian language should be given official status (25,8%, a fourth of the population, excluding the population of Donbas territory being at war), others are against it. These noticeable differences in the basic issues of reaching agreement in society, lead to the conflicts, which essentially weakens the polity. That is why the wisdom of political leaders is not to plant these groups on the opposite sides, creating a greater rift, but to draw out a course of development, which would unite them to perform the common tasks, that would unite these at first sight, different groups primarily because they live in the same country. It is unacceptable that more than half of the population (53,2%) said they are not satisfied with their position in society at the moment; It should be noted that this figure was not only the

highest over all the years of monitoring (!), but also significantly increased compared to the year of 2014 (42,4%)

It should be noted that vital comfort and its constituents such as – the level of uneasiness and the level of satisfaction unlike social wellbeing depends not only on meeting basic demands but also reflects the state of functional convenience and feeling of psychological satisfaction which is hardly relevant to global crisis situation.

Table 3

Will our life change for the better next year or it will not? (%)

	2014	2015
It will not change for the better	40,0	52,8
Hard to say	37,7	27,9
It will be more or less better	22,3	19,4

In such circumstances of social and political instability and complete disappointment, people hardly think about comfort of life, they mostly begin thinking about survival. The criteria and landmarks of comfort perception are changing, discomfort becoming the start point. The person do not appreciate the word “better”, the main point here being “not worse”.

In recent 2 years, expectations of life improvement among the Ukrainian population decreased significantly.

The portion of those who think that “it will not change for the better”, was (40,0%) in 2014, and(52,8%) in 2015 respectively. The portion of people who think that “everything is not so bad, you can live” was (5, 3%)in 2014 and (5,0%) in 2015. At the same time, the portion of those who think“, it is impossible to bear out plight any longer” was (45, 6%) in 2015.

Today in our society there exists the lowest level of hierarchy according to A. Maslow motivation theory[2], i.e. meeting physiological demands in food, water, home: and until we reach full satisfaction at this level, we will not be able to come to the next level – the level of security and confidence in the future. Today almost the whole Eastern Ukraine is living at the first level. Unfortunately, very soon we would speak about vital comfort of main part of population in Ukraine only in terms of meeting the first and partly the second levels of A.Maslow hierarchy i.e. life – saving demands.

Table 4

Which of the statements given below most closely corresponds to the situation in the country (%)

	2014	2015
Everything is not so bad, you can live	5,3	5,0
Life is hard, but you can bear it	45,1	42,7
It's impossible to bear our plight any longer	38,7	45,6
It's difficult to answer	10,8	6,7

Conditions of emergency and instability or stress factors make people change their attitude to objective features of life and comfort elements. People stop thinking about their job being good or bad but are happy to have any job at all.

Therefore, the authorities must focus main efforts to meet the first level of Maslow hierarchy on Donbas territory, i.e. the demands of Donbas people in life – saving necessities are to be fully satisfied.

Not until this process is completed can we speak about focusing on the second level of Maslow hierarchy, i.e. on the problem of security and confidence in the future.

References

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