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The identity of ukrainians and russians at the background of ethnic relations in the independent Ukraine (1991–2017)

The article is dedicated to analyzing the problem of formation and characteristics of Ukrainian and Russian identity at the background of ethnic relations in the independent Ukraine. The author revealed an array of problems that determine the confrontation of Russian and titular ethnic groups in Ukraine. The researcher argued that it is impossible to isolate the mechanisms of authentication and identity of Ukrainians and Russians in Ukraine, but instead it is useful to examine all the trends, which characterize ethnic relations in Ukraine, in depth.

Keywords: Russian minority, identity, Ukrainians, Russians, ethnic relations, Ukraine.

ІДЕНТИЧНІСТЬ УКРАЇНЦІВ І РОСІЯН НА ФОНІ МІЖНАЦІОНАЛЬНИХ ВІДНОСИН В НЕЗАЛЕЖНІЙ УКРАЇНІ (1991–2017)

У статті проаналізовано питання формування та особливостей ідентичності українців та росіян на фоні міжнаціональних відносин в незалежній Україні. Виявлено масив проблем, які детермінують конфронтацію російського та титульного етносів в Україні. Аргументовано, що не можна уніфіковано виокремлювати механізми ідентифікації та ідентичності українців та росіян в Україні, а натомість варто поглиблено розглядати усі тенденції, які притаманні міжнаціональним відносинам в Україні.

Ключові слова: російська меншина, ідентичність, українці, росіяни, міжнаціональні відносини, Україна.

National self-consciousness and identity of the post-Soviet societies profoundly influence politics and economy of the former USSR republics. The point is that the ethnical identity was formed together with two different, however connected aspects: its essence and contradiction. On the one hand, nationalists (as the representatives of their own nations' identity) offered specific proposals concerning the essence of the collective identity of the societies in their own countries. On the other hand, not all citizens of new (in due time distinguished after the collapse of the USSR) countries agreed on common priorities of the nationalistic movements. Actually, international relations in the post-Soviet countries often turn around one crucial question, whether the post-Soviet society and politicians accept manifestations of

nationalism. In this case, a key role in opposing the essence of the national identity was played by former communists. Therefore, one of the profound and major differences of the post-Soviet countries in the 1990-s was political and ideological connection within each of them among former communist and new nationalist elites. It was reflected in various forms: marginalization of communists by nationalists, prosecution and arrests of nationalists, cooptation of nationalists within the national parliaments, bargaining with nationalists or even merging and comparison with nationalists. That is why, such various types of relations revealed different stages and forms of social consensus as to the national authentic character of the new countries after the collapse of the soviet regime. In the case of Ukraine, they are largely, if not crucially, represented through the dichotomy of the Ukrainians' and Russians' identity, what makes a subject of the current research.

A range of scientific problems has been elaborated in the works by such scientists as D. Arel[1], P. D'Anieri[2], L. Barrington and E. Herron[3], S. Burant[4], J. Casanova[5], I. Ivanov[6], Z. Kohut[7], P. Kolstoe[8], P. Kubicek[9], T. Kuzio[10], I. Lozowy[11], P. Pirie[12], I. Prizel[13], G. Schopflin[14], S. Shulman[15], G. *Smith*[16], *R.* Solchanyk[17], O. Subtelny[18], A. Wilson[19], K. Wolczuk[20] and many

[1] D. Arel, *Ukraine. The temptation of the Nationalizing State*, [w:] V. Tismaneanu [red.], *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, Wyd. M. E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY 1995, s. 157-188.

[2] P. D'Anieri, *Nationalism and International Politics*, "Nationalism and Ethnic Politics" 1997, vol 3, nr 2, s. 1-28.

[3] L. Barrington, E. Herron, *One Ukraine or Many?: Regionalism in Ukraine and Its Political Consequences*, "Nationalities Papers" 2004, vol 32, nr 1, s. 53-86.

[4] S. Burant, *Foreign Policy and National Identity: A Comparison of Ukraine and Belarus*, "Europe–Asia Studies" 1995, vol 47, nr 7, s. 1125-1144.

[5] J. Casanova, *Ethno-linguistic and Religious Pluralism and Democratic Construction in Ukraine*, [w:] B. Rubin, J. Snyder, *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building*, Wyd. Routledge, London-New York 1998, s. 81-103.

[6] I. Ivanov, *The New Russian Diplomacy*, Wyd. Brookings Institution Press, Washington 2002.

[7] Z. Kohut, *History as Battleground: Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Historical Consciousness in Contemporary Ukraine*, [w:] F. Starr [red.], *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, Wyd. M. E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY-London 1994, s. 123-146.

[8] P. Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*, Wyd. Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1995.

[9] P. Kubicek, *Dynamics of Contemporary Ukrainian Nationalism: Empire Breaking to State-Building*, "Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism" 1996, vol 23, nr 1-2, s. 39-50.

[10] T. Kuzio, *National Identity in Independent Ukraine: An Identity in Transition*, "Nationalism and Ethnic Politics" 1996, vol 2, nr 4, s. 582-608.; T. Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building*, Wyd. Routledge, London-New York 1998.; T. Kuzio, *Ukraine under Kuchma*, Wyd. St Martin's Press, New York 1997.

[11] I. Lozowy, *The Popular Movement of Ukraine "Rukh" 1994: Statehood, Democracy, Reforms*, Wyd. International Relations Secretariat, Popular Movement of Ukraine Rukh, Kyiv 1994.

[12] P. Pirie, *National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine*, "Europe-Asia Studies" 1996, vol 48, nr 7, s. 1079-1104.

[13] I. Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine*, Cambridge 1998.

[14] G. Schopflin, *Nations Identity Power: The New Politics of Europe*, Wyd. Hurst and Company, London 2000.; G. Schopflin, *The Functions of Myth and A Taxonomy of Myths*, [w:] G. Hosking, G. Schopflin, *Myths and Nationhood*, Wyd. Routledge, New York 1997, s. 19-35.

[15] S. Shulman, *Competing versus Complementary Identities: Ukrainian-Russian Relations and the Loyalties of Russians in Ukraine*, "Nationalities Papers" 1998, vol 26, nr 4, s. 615-632.

[16] G. Smith, *Nation-building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identity*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998.; G. Smith, *The Post-Soviet States, Mapping the Politics of Transition*, Wyd. Oxford University Press, New York 1999.

[17] R. Solchanyk, *The Post-Soviet Transition in Ukraine: Prospects for Stability*, [w:] T. Kuzio [red.], *Contemporary Ukraine*, Wyd. M. E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY 1998, s. 17-40.

[18] O. Subtelny, *Russocentrism, Regionalism, and the Political Culture of Ukraine*, [w:] V. Tismaneanu [red.], *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, Wyd. M. E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY 1995, s. 189-207.

[19] A. Wilson, *Myth of National History in Belarus and Ukraine*, [w:] G. Hosking, G. Schopflin [red.], *Myths and Nationhood*, Wyd. Routledge, New York 1997, s. 182-197.; A. Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press, NY 1997.

[20] K. Wolczuk, *History, Europe and the "National Idea": The "Official" Narrative of National Identity in Ukraine*, "Nationalities Papers" 2000, vol 28, nr 4, s. 671-694.

others. Herewith, the analysis of the studies worked out by the abovementioned scholars gives us profound reasons to argue that all national peculiarities and social-political debates, caused by them, influenced formation of a wide range of political events in Ukraine in the early 1990-s and 2000-s, including those, which concerned the language, nationality, economic and political reforms, security and foreign relations. National identities became social facts of the countries and people's life in the epoch of the post-Soviet politics. That is the identity started being analyzed as an independent marker, which undergoes systematic analysis, aimed at studying the reasons for arguments, explaining institutionalization of these or other national minorities, as first of all it concerns division along ethnic lines etc[21].

Mainly, it was presupposed by the fact that Russian leaders of different periods eternalized the idea of Ukrainian-Russian close integration. The situation is supplemented by the fact that in 1991 Ukraine could not boast its continuous national self-identical history, and thus depended on the historical connections with the Russian authorities and identity[22]. It is quite notable, that the most distinctive feature of the Ukrainian history is its *regional divergences*, which eventually influenced the essence and contradiction of the Ukrainian national identity. In this case we speak about the diversity of the historical experience within Ukraine, on the basis of which were elaborated different interpretations of the Ukrainian national identity after 1991. Regional disputes over the Ukrainian national identity were the result of removing borders and changes of the institutional contexts, in the context of which Ukrainian nationalists, as well as soviet officials strived for achieving their cultural, economic and political goals. And only when a reformation period and publicity was initialized in the USSR, several the then and new Ukrainian organizations commenced mobilization to support aims, connected with the "survival" of the Ukrainian nation, or, in other words, to "unite" the symbols of the Ukrainian nation with specific projects.

The cornerstone of the Ukrainian national identity since the late 80-s – early 90-s of the 20th century is derived from the concept of the "Rukh"[23]. Ukrainian nationalists proved that Ukraine for a long time had been characterized by its national identity[24] and traced the political line of modern Ukraine back to the medieval Kyiv Rus. It put Ukrainian nationalists in direct opposition to Russia as to the "proprietary rights" on such historical events and this led to a political conflict between the countries[25]. That is why, in the Ukrainian nationalistic ideology Russia was mixed up in all Ukrainian nationalistic debates over the reasons of unsteady and incapable countries. Such "disputable" moments of nationhood also became a part of the

[21] R. Abdelal, *National Purpose in the World Economy: Post-Soviet States in Comparative Perspective*. – Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.

[22] M. Von Hagen, *Does Ukraine Have a History?*, "Slavic Review" 1995, vol 54, nr 3, s. 658-673.

[23] *The Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring "Rukh": Program and Charter*, Wyd. Smoloskyp, for the Ukrainian National Association, Baltimore 1990, s. 11.; I. Lozowy, *The Popular Movement of Ukraine "Rukh" 1994: Statehood, Democracy, Reforms*, Wyd. International Relations Secretariat, Popular Movement of Ukraine Rukh, Kyiv 1994, s. 21-22.

[24] J. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism, 1939-1945*, Wyd. Columbia University Press, New York 1963.

[25] P. D'Anieri, *Nationalism and International Politics*, "Nationalism and Ethnic Politics" 1997, vol 3, nr 2, s. 1-28.

historical memory of the Ukrainians[26]. As a result, Ukrainian nationalists offered to combine the idea of their nation with other specific goals. They stated that economic dependence on Russia carried a threat to the national security[27]. Nationalists persisted that Europe has a crucial significance for the essence of the Ukrainian national identity. That is why the platform for the foreign policy of Ukrainian nationalists, as A. Wilson believes, was a clear and summarized anti-Russian and pro-European vector/character of the further intentions of the Ukrainian people[28]. The nationalists' proposals concerning the content of the Ukrainian national identity were perceived by some Ukrainians, but denied and opposed by others. Consequently, since the 80-s of the 20th century the Ukrainian society in its collective identity was to be divided along regional lines, which was based on the historical divergences.

It was revealed in the fact that the nationalistic parties and their proposals of self-identity and political development were and still are quite popular in western regions, especially in Halychyna, as well as in the cities of central Ukraine, including Kyiv[29]. However, the east and south of Ukraine mainly (though the number has been decreasing over 1991-2017) oppose the nationalistic parties and support communistic and socialistic ones, as well as regionally-oriented parties, which do not agree with the nationalists' stress on the Ukrainian identity in opposition to Russia and pro-European vector[30]. That is why, the doctrine character in developing conceptions, which represent the population of eastern and southern Ukraine are embodied in several vectors, determined as following: *pan-Slavic identity*, rudimentary *soviet identity*, regional identity* (moreover, none of these vectors is in inner opposition to Russia)[31]. The idea that in fact the Russians and Ukrainians have much more in common than have any differences, that they are not "strange" to each other[32] has become fundamental for the three conceptions. Thus, any characteristic of eastern Ukrainians as "pro-Russian" is misleading. More accurate is a statement according to which the majority of population in eastern and southern regions of Ukraine is not against Russians. Eastern and southern Ukrainians do not try to join Russia as a new country or empire[33]. Historically, they just have a contrary vision towards what means

[26] Z. Kohut, *History as Battleground: Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Historical Consciousness in Contemporary Ukraine*, [w:] F. Starr [red.], *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, Wyd. M. E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY-London 1994, s. 123-146.; A. Wilson, M*yths of National History in Belarus and Ukraine*, [w:] G. Hosking, G. Schopflin George [red.], *Myths and Nationhood*, Wyd. Hurst, London 1997, s. 187.

[27] *Rukh, New Way for Ukraine*, Kyiv 1998.; *Ukrainian National Assembly, Economic Program of UNA*, Kyiv 1998.

[28] A. Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press, NY 1997, s. 173.

[29] T. Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building*, Wyd. Routledge, London-New York 1998, s. 152-160.; P. Kubicek, *Dynamics of Contemporary Ukrainian Nationalism: Empire Breaking to State-Building*, "Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism" 1996, vol 23, nr 1-2, s. 39-50.

[30] T. Kuzio, *Ukraine under Kuchma*, Wyd. St Martin's Press, New York 1997, s. 19-20.; I. Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine*, Cambridge 1998, s. 367-368.

[31] P. Pirie, *National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine*, "Europe-Asia Studies" 1996, vol 48, nr 7, s. 1079-1104.

[32] S. Shulman, *Competing versus Complementary Identities: Ukrainian-Russian Relations and the Loyalties of Russians in Ukraine*, "Nationalities Papers" 1998, vol 26, nr 4, s. 615-632.

[33] T. Kuzio, *National Identity in Independent Ukraine: An Identity in Transition*, "Nationalism and Ethnic Politics" 1996, vol 2, nr 4, s. 599.; R. Solchanyk, *The Post-Soviet Transition in Ukraine: Prospects for Stability*, [w:] T. Kuzio [red.], *Contemporary Ukraine*, Wyd. M. E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY 1998, s. 30-31.

to be a Ukrainian. D. Arel[34] stresses out that eastern and southern Ukrainians are less preoccupied with the thoughts that close integration to Russia may influence their identity, as they determine it equally both on the Russian culture and the Ukrainian one[35].

Therefore, the Ukrainian political spectrum in the early 90-s of the 20th century appeared to be too polarized concerning foreign policy. As a result of this, institutionalization of the Russian ethnic minority in Ukraine became a logical representation of preferences among Russian-speaking, but Ukrainian-ethnic as well as Russian-ethnic population of eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, which, according to the results of the elections (both presidential and parliamentary), supported those political forces and political leaders who were close to them. The factor, which influenced institutionalization of the Russian ethnic minority is also the absence in Ukraine of a strong centrist political position, and thus all civil and political debates were influenced by two oppositional and staunch arguments concerning the question how the Ukrainian nationhood, including its national idea after 1991, should be developed. And though immanently it is clear that political and economic integration to the EU and CIS is obligatory opposing principles, the Ukrainian government habitually was not able to choose its vector between these options. Herewith, I. Prizel supposes that the Ukrainian national identity, which was disputed at the regional level, led to formation of various agenda concerning the national question and was differently represented in different regions. Ukrainians admitted that their country is permanent; however they could not come to agreement as to the ways of achieving the aim of the nationhood[36].

Perhaps the most significant catalyst for institutionalization of the Russian minority towards the Ukrainian titular ethnos, as the experience has shown, became the notion of the "political or national myth". Myth has always been playing an important role in elaboration of national authentic character and formation of its national consciousness. Just through the myths ethnical groups reveal internal representations of their immanent traits, and by means of the myths occurs formation of the image and perception of an ethnical community in a concentrated, bright and crystalized form. Any political decision which concerns the international topics cannot be treated in isolation from the social-cultural and symbolical context, in which it is evaluated. That is why, G. Schopflin emphasizes that in this regard in most cases politics is imagined as a sphere, which is regulated by rationality, clear reflections of practical nature, which, supposedly, can be described by losses and benefits of the classical model. However, in fact the practice draws other conclusions[37]. Significant influence belongs to the myths: in this

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[34] D. Arel, *Ukraine. The temptation of the Nationalizing State*, [w:] V. Tismaneanu [red.], *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, Wyd. M. E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY 1995, s. 179.

[35] O. Subtelny, *Russocentrism, Regionalism, and the Political Culture of Ukraine*, [w:] V. Tismaneanu [red.], *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, Wyd. M. E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY 1995, s. 194.; S. Burant, *Foreign Policy and National Identity: A Comparison of Ukraine and Belarus*, "Europe–Asia Studies" 1995, vol 47, nr 7, s. 1125-1144.

[36] I. Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine*, Cambridge 1998, s. 371.

[37] G. Schopflin, *The Functions of Myth and A Taxonomy of Myths*, [w:] G. Hosking, G. Schopflin, *Myths and Nationhood*, Wyd. Routledge, New York 1997, s. 27.

sense politics, especially one concerning national issues is rather an aspect of totality of the cultural system. Each action arises in an extended cultural context. And here reveals symbolic nature of institutionalization in attempts to act on the side of national minorities[38]. Moreover, underlining drawbacks of rationalistic methods and approaches towards the analysis of the process of national feelings' formation G. Schopflin states that "there are certain aspects of our world, which cannot be embraced by simple rationality ...processes, ideas, values, mechanisms and others are hidden from an ordinary regime of evaluation"[39]. The scientist states that irreplaceability of the myth analysis lies in the fact that a myth and myth analysis is one of the ways to examine the concealed part of thinking, prejudice, superstitions. All this is a necessary part of the way, by which the communities determine their world[40].

Taking this into consideration, we insist that constructions of myths have several significant consequences for formation of motives and real actions of different national identities (peoples, minorities, ethnic groups): 1) national myths are psychological basics, composing of convictions, assumptions, prejudice and superstitions and also can be determined as a set of independent models of self-identification (this system has a substantial influence on the processes of elaboration of the Ukrainian national identity); 2) myths concerning Russia and Ukraine and their mutual comprehension and representation may influence elaboration of the Ukrainian national identity even more, than it can be comprehended by a rational analysis[41]; 3) national myths are always subjective in their character – that is why they do not create an objective reality. From this perspective institutionalization of the Russian ethnic minority lies in its contradiction of negative consequences brought by the Soviet regime.

The point is that, nowadays in the comparative ethnical and political science there is a dilemma as to the way of evaluating the processes in the post-Communist countries: 1) either as a "*nationalization of states*" (according to R. Brubaker); 2) or as a "*nationalization of regimes*" (according to H. Smith). In this case, the thing is how elites comprehend the process of focusing prioritized attention on "working out" national authentic character of major ethnic groups. From this perspective, applying of a mythological discourse referring to Ukraine is not directed only at evaluation of the biggest ethnic groups in the country, but it is also an attempt to minimize negative influence of historical and ethnical and cultural variables, which have been overlapping Ukraine since the imperial and soviet periods.

Over 25 year-long history of Ukraine it has been evident: that ways of applying mythological discourse and factors of national-state building do not correspond with the state building process in Ukraine within the terms "nationalization of the state". K. Wolczuk states that trying

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38   L. Holy, *The Little Czech Nation and the Great Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Social Transformation*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1996.

39   G. Schopflin, *The Functions of Myth and A Taxonomy of Myths*, [w:] G. Hosking, G. Schopflin, *Myths and Nationhood*, Wyd. Routledge, New York 1997, s. 19.

40   G. Schopflin, *Nations Identity Power. The New Politics of Europe*, Wyd. Hurst and Company, London 2000, s. 79.

41   G. Schopflin, *The Functions of Myth and A Taxonomy of Myths*, [w:] G. Hosking, G. Schopflin, *Myths and Nationhood*, Wyd. Routledge, New York 1997, s. 19-35.

to form the idea of celebrating "centuries-long desire and fight of the Ukrainian people for the independent state, the elites abstained from accentuating on ethnic-cultural and language differences between the Ukrainian and Russian ethnic groups"[42]. In this context it is necessary to insist on the fact that the elite is trying to highlight a dominant position of the Ukrainian majority. One of the reasons, explaining why Ukraine cannot be determined as a "nationalized state" lies in the fact that exact configuration of ethnic groups' components into the "Ukrainian people" still remains vague, and thus the position of the Ukrainian ethnic nation is not rising up. Besides, Ukraine has underestimated the importance of all actions aimed at implementation of language and cultural framework, which would lead to positive consequences. As a result, the Russian national minority was passively institutionalized, while the former despite embarrassing and poor policy pursued by the political elites in Ukraine received a chance to develop a bit distinctive display of a cultural and mythological essence.

Finally, one can observe significance of a strong negative correlation between the level of endurance, provided by the soviet regime institutionally, and social-cultural heritage on the one hand, while on the other hand one can speak only of the projects' prospects aimed at state building in post-Soviet Ukraine, which over 1991-2017 have been much more evident in eastern Ukraine in particular. Besides, quite notable is a positive correlation between the power of the pre-soviet values, and traditions and prospects of the state building, which are mainly inherent to western Ukraine. The determinants are also represented by strong cause-and-effect relationship between the level of democratic consciousness and adherence on the part of the Ukrainian people and possibility of successful national state building in Ukraine. At the same time the discourses concerning democratization and national state building in Ukraine are interconnected up to the point that is much lower than the indices, peculiar of neighboring countries. The reason is historical peculiarities of development of Ukraine as a part of different state formations, as well as a lack of independent state's experience and a lack of elements, which make the grounds for the national idea and set sights on fragmentation of a support base, aimed at national state-building[43].

From this perspective, institutionalization of the Russian ethnic minority in Ukraine has been taking place in accordance with a stage process (however to a lesser extent, than it concerns identification of the Ukrainian ethnos as titular), which was offered by G. Pridham. The researcher singles out four basic theories, due to which it is possible to evaluate post-Soviet transition: 1) functional; 2) transnational; 3) theories of genetic filling; 4) interactive[44].

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[42] K. Wolczuk, *History, Europe and the "National Idea": The "Official" Narrative of National Identity in Ukraine*, "Nationalities Papers" 2000, vol 28, nr 4, s. 689.

[43] V. Zaslavsky, *Nationalism and Democratic Transition in Post-Communist Societies*, "Daedalus" 1992, vol 121, nr 2, s. 97-121.

[44] G. Pridham, *Comparative Reflections on Democratisation in East-Central Europe: a Model of Post-Communist Transformation?*, [w:] G. Pridham, A. Agh [red.], *Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in East-Central Europe*, Wyd. Manchester University Press, Manchester-New York 2001, s. 1-24.

Functionalism due to the researched approach of institutionalization presupposes identification of necessity in economic, social and cultural paradigms and preconditions, which determine cross-regional, as well as cross-national development within the context of democratic changes[45]. *Transnationalism* puts a stress on a complicated complex of internal and external factors of institutionalization of a titular ethnos and national minorities. Genetic theories are elaborated on the basis of a political choice, what is more inherent to the processes of evaluating the Russian minority's acting in Ukraine: a principal display of it is the so-called "own uncertainty as to the democratic approach"[46]. Finally, *interactivity* of evaluation a given problem lies in comparing positions of identities towards changes of political regimes: in this case quite notable is a line between the titular Ukrainian ethnos, which to a greater extent has been striving for European integration and the Russian minority which holds the ideas of joining various pro-Russian interstate structures. Of principal importance here is a balance between economic and political tendencies, which are taken into consideration by the representatives of these or other identities[47].

Quite significant place in evaluating the influence of national myths on institutionalization of national minorities belongs to the first years of post-communist development in Ukraine. This period of dramatic and profound political-social transformations, which took place immediately after the collapse of the USSR was characterized by ideological and cultural vacuum, ambiguousness of values and ideas, feeling of social and cultural senselessness. Breakdown of a former set of ideas, social, political and cultural conceptions gave a birth to the vision of cognitive chaos and uncertainty. Atmosphere of ideological vacuum or ambiguity appeared to be a favorable ground for various political mythologies, which tried to fill in this vacuum. Post-communist area became a fertile field for public passion, fears, illusions and frustration. Old ideological confidence appeared to be "dead". And instead of them emerged new mythologies, in particular to ensure quick and satisfactory response for painful dilemmas. Political myths became an answer to the feelings of breaking-up, fragmentation and general mess of the post-communist stage of development[48].

In Ukraine the problem revealed in a failure to form that ethnocentrical myth, as correspondence of relations between the representatives of two biggest nationalities (Ukrainians and Russians) was at the level of latent impacts of the Ukrainian and Russian (as well as a political one) mythologies.

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[45] D. Rustow, *Transitions to democracy: toward a dynamic model*, "Comparative Politics" 1970, vol 2, nr 3, s. 343.

[46] G. Pridham, *Comparative Reflections on Democratisation in East-Central Europe: a Model of Post-Communist Transformation?*, [w:] G. Pridham, A. Agh [red.], *Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in East-Central Europe*, Wyd. Manchester University Press, Manchester-New York 2001, s. 7.

[47] O. Kirchheimer, *Confining Conditions and Revolutionary Breakthroughs*, "American Political Science Review" 1965, vol 59, nr 4, s. 964.; V. Zaslavsky, *Nationalism and Democratic Transition in Post-Communist Societies*, "Daedalus" 1992, vol 121, nr 2, s. 97-121.

[48] V. Tismaneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism, and Myth in Post-Communist Europe*, Wyd. Princeton University Press, Princeton-New Jersey 1998, s. 18.

One can name a number of approaches towards how the historical experience of Ukraine and Russia influenced formation of a competitive mythological discourse in modern Ukraine. One of the approaches is based on a fundamental *concept of "dissimilarity (divergency)"* and proves a key role of external influences and external perception as to strengthening of a group adherence and affiliation of certain communities and construction of their ethnical boundaries. Employment of the concept as to formation of the Ukrainian identity is a contrast of the authoritarian and "Asian" character of Russia, as well as arguments and requirements concerning democratic, demotic and "European" character of the Ukrainian people. Namely these grounds are used as a moral basis and explanation of necessity on the part of Ukraine to distance itself from Russia, if it wants to revive its identity[49]. In correspondence with the main principles of the approach, if Ukraine wants to strengthen its national idea it must enlarge and exaggerate its differences from Russia. Since the Ukrainian-Russian relations are marked with a long history/casualness of tense relations, the processes of cultural replication and mythological discourse must be estimated as the phenomena of general significance, if the aim is to delimitate "Ukrainian" from "Russian". That is why, G. Schopflin argue that the element of "divergency" is a source of legitimation of claims on "unity and moral dignity". According to him, the practice of choosing "divergent" allows ethnic communities to justify its authentic, unique and strong character. Thus the presence of an external object of comparison plays an important role in building external boundaries of the national states[50].

Instead of this the national myth of ethnic Russians in Ukraine is reduced to a traditional postulation of the principle of "brotherhood", according to which Russia is considered as a "big brother", while Ukraine – as a "small brother". From the point of view of the process of institutionalization of the ethnical minority the given principle is evaluated as determinative in formation of geopolitical priorities of a bigger part of population in southern and eastern regions of Ukraine etc. Besides, for the sake of objectiveness, as well as on the basis of methodological principles, it is necessary to state that formation of the Russian national minority's acting in Ukraine over 1991-2013 was grounded on combination of several fundamental approaches towards the phenomenon, which is called a process of national identity formation. The first one is the approach of "dissimilarity (divergency)"; the second one states that cultural and ideological features of cooperation with a former motherland (Russia) and a dependent community have impact on formation of national identities (the so-called *concept of cultural reproduction*), as a result of which one can trace formation of own cultural paradigm of the Ukrainians, which is not always comparable with the ethnic Russians' priorities; the third approach is a trick of manipulation with foreign political processes on the side of the political elites, which resulted in depreciation of the role of the Russians' factor in the process of establishing the Ukrainian

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[49] A. Wilson, *Myth of National History in Belarus and Ukraine*, [w:] G. Hosking, G. Schopflin [red.], *Myths and Nationhood*, Wyd. Routledge, New York 1997, s. 182-197.

[50] G. Schopflin, *The Functions of Myth and A Taxonomy of Myths*, [w:] G. Hosking, G. Schopflin, *Myths and Nationhood*, Wyd. Routledge, New York 1997, s. 19-35.

nationhood; the fourth approach describes a crucial role, played by Ukraine while forming the identity of the Russian empire and the crisis of this imperial identity in the Russian mythological discourse in relation towards the Ukrainian national authentic character. That is why, in each of the approaches, which are peripheral to the process of establishing the Ukrainian national identity, one can observe, on the one hand, weak but at least some displays of the Russians' politization in Ukraine.

However, it should be stressed that formation of *modern Russian identity in Ukraine* is quite a contradictory and complex-integrated process. First of all, one must take into account the determinants of a general scientific notion "Russian minority", secondly, pay attention to certain historical aspects of determining the first category in the format of "the Russian national minority in Ukraine". These processes, which to some degree are developing in parallel, have a number of stumbling stones. That is why, it is obvious that there is a necessity to analyze and study the whole complex of comprehension in this sphere, to come to a conclusion which correlates with the development of the Russian minority and its institutionalization in Ukraine.

Since the moment when the USSR republics declared their independence, the image of the soviet ethnic-cultural demographic situation has changed rather significantly. The point is that, the collapse of the USSR determined the regularity of the phenomenon of the Russian diaspora, as twenty-five millions of Russians found themselves distributed over the newly created countries, which immanently were assessed in the function and format of political motherlands of other nationalities (titular as to the Russians). That is why relocated Russians either had to return to the newly created Russia or respect original political identities, what in fact distinguish them as a new Russian diaspora from former soviet socialist republics. Much more acute problem, which emerged after the collapse of the USSR, was determination of relations, which presumably were to establish between new "ethno-cultural partners" within the former union republics, as well as between the Russians as the nation and the post-communist Russian Federation. Such specificity characterized any and all countries, which currently exist throughout the post-soviet territory, just in different extent and quality.

The collapse of the USSR stimulated the idea of "*sovereignty*" development, which challenged the old idea of the ethnic interrelation under the guise of "*sovietization*", and led to opening and recognition of new political (national) identities "in another dimension for evermore"[51]. V. Klyuchevsky focused attention on close relations between the state expansion and migration which was the main function of the process when "Russia colonized itself"[52]. And on the contrary, R. Pipes stated that V. Klyuchevsky ignored the fact that at the moment of colonization those regions were inhabited, that is why Russia was a colonizer of foreign lands

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[51] V. Shlapentokh, M. Sendich, E. Payin, *The New Russian Diaspora, Russian Minorities in the Former Soviet Republics, Wyd.* : M.E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY 1994, s. 40-41.

[52] P. Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*, Wyd. Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1995, s. 18-19.

and the Russians had unique relations with the minorities of the very colonies[53]. This perspective now is interpreted as a Russian myth or, according to G. Smith, as the Russian perception of an "imaginary community"[54]. And in its turn, a mythological point of view resonates with the Russian understanding of a modern flow of events in relation to the Russian neighbors, especially those, which are a part of the CIS.

Providing systematic relations with fixed value of political instrument had an impact on the fact that the Russian minority in "neighboring countries" was interpreted as a top-priority (as of Russian) "player", as well as prestige in the post-soviet world. Russophilian myths demonstrated and carry on demonstrating their power and stern, while at the same time they just alternate former "soviet" identity with a new monolithic Russian identity, where the important place belongs to the Slavic aspect of relations, which as the Russians persist must take place between the Russian and non-Russian republics. This factor was institutionalized by many Russian scientists to make former soviet republics closer to each other from the point of view of various national communities and dispersion of ethnic heterogeneity of the former Soviet Union[55]. That is why, among the factors which influence the problems of national identity within former soviet republics (in particular in Ukraine), "artificial fields" of minorities mostly concern the essence and role of displaced Russians.

However, the result was that at the dawn of Ukrainian independence and new national idea the soviet identity lost a chance to determine international relations and unite (in different forms) former soviet nationalities. Consequently, the Russians started establishing their positions abroad as national minorities or diaspora. Over the period after the collapse of the USSR the Russian population of diaspora finally faced a double choice – to stay in non-Russian countries in the form of a political minority or even opposition or to live the territories of non-Russian countries. As a result Russia wished to fill in the vacuum, created after the loss of the "soviet" identity and manifestations of irredentism, especially in the regions, where from the geographical and historical point of view Russians predominated, first of all we speak of the territories boarding on Russia (particularly it can be observed under V. Putin's regime, whose activity was and still is aimed at restoration of Russia's authority throughout Eastern Europe).

One of most conceptual questions, which contributed to a social crack in Ukraine after the collapse of the USSR, was a tripartite social and cultural division of almost all population in Ukraine into the Ukrainians-Ukrainophones, Ukrainians-Russophones, and ethnic Russians[56]. This division diversified the Ukrainian national agenda concerning foreign policy and influence on international relations. A determined attempt to puzzle out in this two-value division

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[53] R. Pipes, *Reflections on the Nationality Problems in the Soviet Union*, [w:] N. Glazer, D. Moynihan, *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Cambridge 1975, s. 453-465.

[54] G. Smith, *Nation-building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identity*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, s. 23.

[55] R. Khasbulatov, R. Sakwa, *The Struggle for Russia, Power and Change in the Democratic Revolution*, Wyd. Routledge, London 1993.

[56] G. Smith, *Nation-building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identity*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, s. 119.

as classification of identities of the Ukrainian nation meant to elaborate an approach towards each group on the basis of appealing to the notion of the "mother tongue". The sociological survey conducted in 1989, 64% of the Ukrainian population classified the Ukrainian language as their "mother tongue", while 9% of the ethnic Ukrainians classified the Russian language as the "mother tongue". On the contrary, 22% of the Ukrainians acknowledged "Russianness" from the point of view of ethnic affiliation and language. Such situation had an enormous historical tradition. Ukraine had been undergoing a seventy-year period of language and ethnic "merging" in the USSR epoch, when the Russians and Ukrainians got mixed in their everyday life. Many people in the society accepted and used both the Russian and Ukrainian languages as their mother tongues; the same situation was observed among the Russians, many of whom believed Ukraine to be their motherland or "homeland"[57]. Thus, even greater extent of uncertainty was created by means of an obvious "ethnic flow" in Ukraine. However, officially, the Russian diaspora, which inhabited or is still living in Ukraine, is just a minority, with the language, culture and social-political status, which are shifted towards the periphery of national and state interests[58].

The Ukrainians-Ukrainophones are the coordination groups whose ethnical-political discourse is focused on the unique and real rights of the country population and creates a political precedent for an area, named Ukraine. These Ukrainians are characterized by a scornful attitude towards the Ukrainians-Russophones and ethnic Russians and a strong protection of the indigenous population's rights. In the context of main structural principles of the Ukrainophones often are such notions as "indigenous population", "colonialism" and "Russification" (in its negative meaning), this group always stands for distinct nationalistic arguments in a law's favor. The community is situated away from the Russians due to their traditional European authentic character and all this became a firm foundation in the Ukrainian national discourse.

The Ukrainians-Russophones is a unique group in Ukraine, as they share general (common) principles with the Ukrainophones. The Russophones contribute to the principle of sovereignty, which appeared after the collapse of the Soviet Union, becoming a manifestation of neo-political identity[59]. They stand for the territorial rights of Ukraine from the point of view of traditional Russian "space", which was changed by compulsory russification, in particular within the frames of various projects of russification. At the same time, the Russophones do not deny the nationalistic approach of the Ukrainians or the existence of the Ukrainian "I",

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[57] S.M. Birgerson, *After the Breakup of Multi-Ethnic Empire: Russia, Successor States, and Eurasian Security*, Wyd. Praeger, Westport 2002, s. 102-104.

[58] V. Shlapentokh, M. Sendich, E. Payin, *The New Russian Diaspora, Russian Minorities in the Former Soviet Republics*, Wyd. : M.E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY 1994, s. 59.

[59] N. Diuk, A. Karatnycky, *New Nations Rising: The Fall of the Soviets and the Challenge of Independence*, Wyd. John Wiley & Sonse, Inc., New York 1993, s. 73-75.

their autonomous confessions work in parallel with the Ukrainophones' ones, stating that the former have real fundamental traditions in deep and long history[60].

With respect to the Russian minority in Ukraine the situation forms due to differences in Ukraine's and Russia's policies, concerning the velocity of social transformations[61] in each country. Both countries created social targets and expectations, which form congruous lines for each other. The Ukrainians-Ukrainophones support ethnical-political discourse, which is focusing on determination of the so-called "indigenous" population, which portrays Russians from outside or from a traditional colonial point of view as "settlers" or even "enemies". The consequences of this ethnical-political discourse are double: first of all they mean evaluation of long-term moral claims against the Russian diaspora, as to the rights officially obtained by the Ukrainians and Russians in 1991; secondly, we are referring to the potential of land invasion by the Ukrainians, which nowadays are predominantly inhabited by the ethnic Russians. However, the second influence corresponds to applying of the former one and leads to dangerous preconditions for formation ethnocratic reproaches.

Russian-oriented Ukrainians (Russophones) represent the counter approach, which positions the idea, that any nationalistic Ukrainophones, who support the first discourse, in fact are ethnical-political "foreigners" in Ukraine and an "artificial implant"[62]. Current discussion over the ethnic issues in Ukraine are based on the concepts of "group identity", "national revival", and "Ukrainian nation", comprehending that these terms describe people in Ukraine. Ukraine is a complex ethnic structure that represents one piece, which formerly played a part in extension of Russia before the collapse of the Soviet Union[63].

Eventually, current relations between the Ukrainophones and Russophones are one of the contradictory ideals, which preserve their own underflows. In particular, Russophones still conceive Ukraine as an appendix to the Russian Federation, inseparably connected with it. Therefore, there is a latent threat to the interrelation dimension of the Ukrainians and ethnic Russians, living in Ukraine, as the representatives of the "ethnic democracy", as it represents the elements of "ethnical reprisals.

The problem of identification of the Russian minority in Ukraine is a fact that the representatives of the minority often designate Russia as their "ethnocratic protector"[64]. On the other hand, Russian nationalism[65] is characterized by the element, which presupposes control over Russians, who identify themselves as the representatives of other countries. Thus, since the

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[60] G. Smith, *Nation-building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identity*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, s. 121-122.

[61] V. Shlapentokh, M. Sendich, E. Payin, *The New Russian Diaspora, Russian Minorities in the Former Soviet Republics*, Wyd. : M.E. Sharpe, Armonk-NY 1994, s. 59.

[62] G. Smith, *Nation-building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identity*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, s. 121-122.

[63] J. Billington, *Russian Transformed: Breakthrough to Hope*, Wyd. The Free Press, New York 1992.

[64] G. Smith, *The Post-Soviet States, Mapping the Politics of Transition*, Wyd. Oxford University Press, New York 1999, s. 67.

[65] S.M. Birgerson, *After the Breakup of Multi-Ethnic Empire: Russia, Successor States, and Eurasian Security*, Wyd. Praeger, Westport 2002.

1990-s Russia has been expressing great concern that among former soviet republics one can observe restoration of ethnocracy and, at least, strengthening of a political dialogue concerning renovation of ethnocratic states[66]. It was revealed in a rather acute form during the Crimea annexation in 2014 and military hostilities over 2014-2017. And in case of Ukraine the tendency is reflected as a result of incorporated influence of two poles – the Russian government and communities of the Russian national minority.

An obvious reason for such situation is that over the recent years Russians in Ukraine have been challenging Moscow to make the latter play direct and more effective role "in supporting" Russians, who conceive themselves as those "abandoned" by Moscow[67]. Russian foreign policy more and more pays attention to the "related ethnic community", which lives outside the Russian Federation. "Care for Russians" from the neighboring countries is integrated into modern Russian policy[68]. During V. Putin's regime Moscow has been demonstrating several sources of influence on the former republics aiming at defending Russian communities abroad. Firstly, it is a use of military forces. The second source of Russia's influence is energy and economics[69]. The third one is described by Russia's participation in regional organizations[70]. That is why, the fact that millions of foreigners, who have relations with the motherland, and are currently living in Ukraine and other former soviet republics, forms the mechanism of ethnic influence of Russia, when they create the impression that everything is focused on the ethnic-political problems following the pattern of former soviet republics.

On the basis of this, it should be emphasized that ethnic Russians in Ukraine are pursuing the goal of formation of their own identity, grounded on evaluation of their own history and its different stages. As a result, being institutionalized, Russians have not elaborated their united authentic character in Ukraine. It is embodied (over the period of 1991-2014) in several diversified variations: *little Russian identity* (starting with the period of the tsarist Russia) is mainly inherent to the population of southern regions of modern Ukraine and Kharkiv region, which historically correlates with Slobozhanshchyna), *soviet identity* (since the period of forming the conception of a "united soviet population") is predominantly characteristic of eastern regions of Ukraine (especially the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions), *east-Slavic identity* (originates from the times of the soviet predominance, however its biggest popularity achieved over the territories during the post-communist period) is peculiar of the majority of Ukrainian regions, where exist settlings of ethnic Russians; *Ukrainian identity* (in fact was embodied in the late 80-s of the 20th century, when appeared potential preconditions and possibilities to

[66] G. Smith, *The Post-Soviet States, Mapping the Politics of Transition*, Wyd. Oxford University Press, New York 1999, s. 60-67.

[67] C. Ziegler, *The Russian Diaspora in Central Asia: Russian Compatriots and Moscow's Foreign Policy*, "Demokratizatsiya" 2006, vol 14, nr 1, s. 103-126.

[68] G. Smith, *The Post-Soviet States, Mapping the Politics of Transition*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 1999, s. 67.

[69] R. Dannreuther, *Can Russia Sustain Its Dominance in Central Asia?*, "Security Dialogue" 2001, vol 32, s. 245-258.; J. Perovic, *From Disengagement to Active Economic Competition: Russia's Return to the South Caucasus and Central Asia*, "Demokratizatsiya" 2005, vol 13, nr 1, s. 61-85.

[70] I. Ivanov, *The New Russian Diplomacy*, Wyd. Brookings Institution Press, Washington 2002, s. 26-28.

create a new independent state) a little number of ethnic Russians became the adherents of this variant of the national ideology.

A specific place in this context belongs to the Crimea, annexed by Russia. There one can observe a *combination of mainly two identities –a little Russian identity and as soviet identity*. That is why in some scientific studies there is an idea that in Ukraine it is necessary to distinguish two groups of ethnic Russians – *namely Russians and Crimean Russians*.

Generally speaking, on the basis of the received data it is clear that in the independent Ukraine it is necessary to distinguish at least three (broaden) variations of institutionalization of the Russian minority: 1) "pro-little Russian"; 2) "pro-soviet"; 3) "mixed" (which is visualized in a permanent desire for integration with Russia – the Crimea). On the other hand, identity of the ethnical Russians in Ukraine always overlaps the problem of regional consciousness, what is the most characteristic of eastern Donbas and the Crimea. It means that politization of the Crimea Russian ethnicity decreases due to its pro-integration paradigm towards the autonomous character; however, politization of Donetsk Russian national minority increases due to a symbolic monolithic status to pro-Russian regionalism. In our case even of greater importance is a conclusion that regionalism in Ukraine[71], fragmentation of the society along language and ethnic lines, as well as institutionalization of the Russian minority (together with the Ukrainian titular ethnos) caused difficulties in formation of a conscious and consistent society. It can be extended by the obstructive influence of the soviet type of political culture and a huge, unmanageable and ineffective institutional foundation, which was inherited from the soviet past. Namely these factors must come into a focus of state and national building processes in the post-soviet Ukraine. On the contrary, the most significant place is preoccupied by the conception of the "Ukrainian people", which on the one hand is balancing between the Ukrainian and Russian elements of the population, and on the other hand does not solve it in a way within the context of further political and social-economic priorities.

In this regard it is possible to draw a clear conclusion, conformable with the ideas, expressed by J. Casanova that: the Ukrainian state must be classified as a nationalizing state[72] only in a narrow view of the notion. The point is that Ukraine, as a matter of principle, cannot avoid the necessity of state building in the sense of establishing a comprehensive political society (community). In this respect, it is necessary even to change the systematic conceptualization, proposed by J. Linz, concerning the categories "polis" and "demos"[73], as well as conceptual differences between the categories a "national state" and a "state-nation"[74] to the problem of applying the conception of a "nationalizing state" as in case of Ukraine. According to the scientist, Ukraine

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[71] L. Barrington, E. Herron, *One Ukraine or Many?: Regionalism in Ukraine and Its Political Consequences*, "Nationalities Papers" 2004, vol 32, nr 1, s. 53-86.

[72] J. Casanova, *Ethno-linguistic and Religious Pluralism and Democratic Construction in Ukraine*, [w:] B. Rubin, J. Snyder, *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building*, Wyd. Routledge, London-New York 1998, s. 87.

[73] J. Linz, *Plurinazionalismo e Democrazia*, "Revista Italiana di Scienza Politica" 1995, vol 25, s. 21-50.

[74] J. Linz, *Staatsbildung, Nationbildung und Demokratie*, „Transit" 1994, vol 7, s. 43-62.

"is not a nationalizing state in a strict sense of the definitions concerning absolute compari-
son (congruency – author) of its polis (as a people's community) and its demos (as a national
community)"[75]. Finally, another fundamental conclusion refers to diversity of political culture,
which determines politization of the Ukrainian titular ethnos and the Russian minority: con-
cerning the former we speak of an active type, aimed at democratic transformations; in case of
the latter one should state passiveness of its attributes.

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[75] J. Casanova, *Ethno-linguistic and Religious Pluralism and Democratic Construction in Ukraine*, [w:] B. Rubin, J. Snyder, *Post-Soviet Political Order:
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