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Separatism as an Ethno-Political Conflict: Threats to Ukraine and Challenges for Poland

The purpose of the author's research is to consider the threats to Ukraine and Poland of separatism. The author defines the following tasks: definition of the concept of separatism, analysis of modern threats of ethno-political conflicts in the EU, Poland and Ukraine, etc. The article analyzes the peculiarities of autonomism and separatism manifestations as political conflicts. The peculiarities of political conflicts in the EU democratic societies, particularly, in the Republic of Poland are singled out. The examples of similar conflict situations in the EU are provided. The possible issues of ethnonational conflicts in the EU in the future are revealed. Author mention that separatism exists in the EU most often in the state of static balance. The necessity is proved to address the issues of community identification through the prism of dual identification. The article substantiates the importance of current favorable factors of regionalization in the EU to enhance identification and politicization of regional ethnic groups in the European countries, particularly, in Poland and Ukraine. In author view, the main features of separatism are presence of conflicts between different groups in the context of the identity plurality of the political structure, communities' intolerance of the concept of dual identity proposed by the central government, etc.

Keywords: ethno-political conflict, ethnonational conflict, regionalization, separatism, autonomy, politicization, kashubians, Ukraine, Poland.

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Сепаратизм як етнополітичний конфлікт: загрози для України та виклики для Польщі

Метою дослідження є розгляд загроз сепаратизму в Україні та Польщі. Автором поставлені наступні завдання: визначення поняття сепаратизму, аналіз сучасних загроз етнополітичних конфліктів у ЄС, Польщі та Україні тощо. У статті аналізуються особливості проявів автономізму та сепаратизму як політичних конфліктів. Виокремлено особливості політичних конфліктів у демократичних суспільствах ЄС, зокрема, у Республіці Польща. Наведено приклади подібних конфліктних ситуацій в ЄС. Виявлено можливі проблеми етнонаціональних конфліктів в ЄС у майбутньому. Автор зазначає, що сепаратизм в ЄС існує найчастіше у стані статичного балансу. Доведено необхідність вирішення питань ідентифікації спільноти через призму подвійної ідентифікації. У статті обґрунтовується значення сучасних сприятливих факторів регіоналізації в ЄС для посилення ідентифікації та політизації регіональних етнічних груп у європейських державах, зокрема в Польщі та Україні. На думку автора, основними ознаками сепаратизму є наявність конфліктів між різними групами в контексті множинності ідентичності політичної структури, несприйняття спільнотами концепції подвійної ідентичності, запропонованої центральною владою, тощо. Проаналізовано сутнісні ознаки етнополітичного конфлікту та виявлено, що походження сепаратизму є тісно пов'язаним з функціонуванням державновладних ієрархій, а його діаметральною протилежністю являються процеси інтеграції. Окреслено що основними ознаками сепаратизму виступають наявність конфліктності між різними групами в умовах множинності ідентичностей політичної структури, несприйняття спільнотами пропонованого центральною владою концепту подвійної ідентичності тощо. Обґрунтовується що у Європейському Союзі політичні амбіції малих етносів спрямовані швидше на ав-

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тономії, а ніж на сепаратизм, адже основна частина учасників етнічних рухів воліє мати культурну, соціальну й економічну автономію, й далі зостаючись у складі політичної та військової структури держави, до якої вони інкорпоровані. Підкреслюється що кашубська ідентифікація у Польщі більше не сприймається як неповноцінна чи малозначуща. Автор зауважує, що етнорегіональні відмінності в Україні мають різне походження і різну природу, а в їх основі лежить різний історичний досвід і сформовані на його основі культура і традиції.

Ключові слова: етнополітичний конфлікт, етнонаціональний конфлікт, регіоналізація, сепаратизм, автономія, політизація, кашуби, Україна, Польща.

Formulation of scientific problem and its significance. Current globalization trends in its inherent nature contradict ethnicity; that is why, they contribute to the increase in tension among ethnic communities concerned about preservation of their identity. Occasionally, it leads to a political conflict evolving the desire for autonomism or even separatism as effective protection from global merger in the modern world. Sometimes globalization trends are a good opportunity for a local elite to use a political conflict as a means of realizing political ambitions or satisfying economic interests. Considering the proximity of the border of Ukraine and Poland and Ukraine's declaration to become a member of the EU, consideration of common threats in the field of ethno-national conflicts is appropriate.

Analysis of the latest research on this problem. Analysis of the threats of separatism as an ethno-political conflict based on the experience of Ukraine and Poland is not frequent. In general, researchers focus on the study of separatism in Ukraine and analyze possible threats in Poland. However, a comprehensive analysis, taking into account the experience of both states, has not been carried out yet. The presence of a common border and the declaration by the authorities of Ukraine of joining the EU make such an analysis necessary for the security of both states in the future. Among the Ukrainian researchers studying the problem of separatism, it is worth highlighting: I.Stankevych, S.Sitarskyi, A.Ruban, N.Myrna, V.Iavir and other.

The purpose of the author's research is to consider the threats to Ukraine and Poland of separatism as an ethno-political conflict. Achieving the set purpose involves solving the following **tasks:** to analyze the concept of separatism as a political conflict; to consider the features of modern ethno-political conflicts in the EU; to consider the threats of the development of ethno-political conflicts in Poland; to investigate the Kashubian factor in the context of the threats of ethno-political conflicts in Poland; to outline the modern aspects of ethno-political conflicts in Ukraine.

I. Introduction

Political conflict as any other conflict is a certain type of social relations among individuals. But it should be emphasized that it is a conflict of a unique nature as, firstly, it arises and exists due to political and legal aspects of power and functioning in the social sphere; secondly, political conflict is characterized by involvement of not separate individuals, but social groups, sectors of societies, in fact, mass ones (although policy exists with the least interaction of two or more people, it, however, starts functioning to the full extent only at that level where thousands and millions of individuals act with their own interests); thirdly, a political conflict is practically the most socially important as its consequences are significant for all spheres of social life despite the desire of those who are not involved in politics[2].

The definition and interpretation of the phenomenon proposed by the founders of conflict resolution. Thus, the American sociologist and conflictologist, Lewis Coser claimed that political conflict is mercenary competition for the right to have a status in the society, power and resource potential. The aim of this competition is to eliminate each other by weakening a rival's competitive positions. Kenneth Boulding, the American sociologist of political conflict defined a conflict situation as "a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility of potential future positions, and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other"[3].

Political conflict as other types of social conflicts is a unique type of social relations concerning the phenomena of political power and its functioning in the society. Based on numerous descriptions of conflict, we can give a universal definition of this phenomenon: political conflict is confrontation and competition of political actors of power relations, which is caused by the difference in their political

[2] Станкевич І. (2007) «Політичний конфлікт та технологія його запобігання», *Вісник Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Серія: Філософія. Політологія*, №87-88, с. 72.
[3] Ibidem, p. 72.

values, views on the current state of affairs, interests in social relations and values in the system of functioning. It is a special type and a consequence of conflict interaction of two or more subjects (political parties, fractions of political parties, coalitions, political leaders, state entities, political institutions, separate ethnonational groups, etc.), which compete with each other for distribution of powers of authority and resource capacities.

Political conflict often performs both positive and negative functions. So one of its biggest negative function is that in the process of emergence, development and escalation of struggle for power resources, it can drastically weaken the political system of society, in which competing political actors clashed with each other. It means there can appear destabilization of the internal and external status, the defining features of which are socio-political uncertainty and other forms of political conflict consequences. The key positive function is that the conflict existing in the political system is a litmus test for society, power structures and political elites concerning contradiction and discrepancy in positions of certain subjects of a conflict situation. It encourages the understanding of a situation and the appearance of consensual ways of their overcoming and prevention in the future. The most important constructive functionality of political conflict is its ability to accelerate full-blown socio-political and political modernization. Also, it is often one of the means to clear disparities which definitely arise in the process of the political system development, provides new opportunities for development, new combinations of elements and upgraded structure of the socio-political sphere[4].

The society often experiences rapid development with accumulation of quantitative changes, but high-quality updates require updates, which are painful for the obsolete socio-political sphere. In this case, it is a political conflict that makes this quality change which is long overdue in a quantitative sense, but due to the conservative old elites or other factors of self-preservation of the old political system, it was hampered. One of the laws of dialectics proposed by Georg Hegel states that transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative ones both means transformation of qualitative changes into updated quantitative changes.

The scholars single out a number of fundamental theoretical approaches applied when analyzing the development of national movements leading to ethno-political conflicts:

a) neo-Marxist (which considers activation of ethnonational movement as a certain reaction to inequality of economic state in the conditions of the capitalist order);

b) modernization (which considers modernization as a phenomenon which changes the society in such a way that the nature of ethnonational identities changes itself);

c) cultural and pluralistic (which is based on the principle that an inter-ethnic conflict arises when the aims of different groups do not coincide, first and foremost, there are different values or social structures, but still groups try to exist in this society);

d) rationalist (which considers that an individual chooses their behavior pattern taking into account pragmatic benefits as well as negative and positive sides of such behavior)[5].

According to the Ukrainian scholar Oleksiy Kartunov, ethno-political conflict resolution is a complex process and requires a search for a new balance of interests which could be a compromise for all conflicting parties and could satisfy rivals[6].

The American researcher in conflict resolution Morton Deutsch argues that political conflicts in the state of law make constructive changes possible as a conflict prevents from stagnation, encourages interest in society, serves as a tool which may help solve problems and make decisions. It is the primary source of internal, personal and social updates. In his view, the main aim of political conflict is to be productive, to find a way for progress no matter how paradoxical it might sound.

Needless to say that a conflict possesses negative features as well. In particular, it can be seen when it leads to instability, disturbance in society, when society fails to secure peace and order a society strives for. Ethno-political conflict is negative when it manifests such elements as violence, terrorism,

[4] Сітарський С. (2013) «Політичний конфлікт та сучасні українські реалії», *Економіка та держава*, №8, с. 138.

[5] Рубан А. (2011) «Етнополітичні конфлікти: сутність та шляхи подолання», *Гуманітарний вісник Державного вищого навчального закладу «Переяслав-Хмельницький державний педагогічний університет імені Григорія Сковороди». Педагогіка. Психологія. Філософія*, №23, с. 415-416.

[6] Картунов О. (1999) *Вступ до етнополітології: науково-навчальний посібник*, Київ, с. 47-48.

war. Often, it is the ethnic separatism as a political conflict that acquires these features, first of all, because of the low legal culture of society[7].

The basis for contradictions is an opposition of identities on grounds of "friends" – "foes". At the same time, contradictions are confrontational in their nature based on unproductive radicalization of society without dialogue and communication. Separatism is also characterized by the presence of a political organization taking responsibility for implementing separatist aims.

II. Peculiarities of current ethno-political conflicts in the EU

According to most of the experts on this issue, the main principle for resolution of ethno-political conflicts in Europe is a common European identity. It includes the principle of ethno-pluralism, which combines a complex of nations and cultures united by common features, i.e. residence in Europe, membership in the EU, democratic states as a form of political regime, capitalism as a driving force behind economy, etc. Although the European identity takes into account the rights and interests of nations as separate ethnic structures and, in fact, provides for fundamental differences of Europe's nations at the cultural and spiritual levels, the proponents of the theory "patriotic constitutionalism" claim that the identity within the EU is considered as a complex of legal, political and moral aspects[8].

The high standards in the ethno-politics of the European Union's national states are the ones that contributed to the de-escalation of conflict situations based on the realization of the right to self-identification of the territorially compact ethnic groups of the EU. The flexible policy and legal framework of the European Union facilitated the dialogue between nation-states and regional ethnic groups. The hotbeds of separatism within the EU gained broad autonomies and support of the European institutions in solving key issues of co-existence within a nation-state.

The current political processes in the EU are characterized with the significant impact of two interpenetrating tendencies of the world development: globalization and regionalization. Regionalization is decisive in the context of the European integration processes, which requires the member states of the European Union to develop common approaches to regional development, to introduce relevant mechanisms for making and implementing regional policy at the supranational and macro-political levels. Regionalization in the EU is considered as a reaction from the central government to the local regionalism[9]. Regionalism is a phenomenon, which reflects the presence of appropriate administrative and territorial structures with their unique ethnic, political, social, economic and other features that can protect regional interests in the central institutions of the state[10].

During the Modern Times, when the society in its essence was still traditional, there appeared national self-awareness which has been preserved in the ethnic groups of the European Union till now and as a result leads to inter-ethnic and intercultural conflicts. The example is the Ulster conflict in Northern Ireland which goes back to the distant past when Ireland was conquered by the Anglo-Saxons. But the conflict proved itself to the fullest during the new times, particularly, at the beginning of the 19th c. when Ireland was legally but illegitimately subordinated.

In the Spanish version of separatism, ethnic identity is a set of perceptions on belonging to a particular regional group with common interests appearing due to co-residence, functioning of political institutions, etc. The processes of centralization and unification of the national state failed to disrupt the territorial identities of Spain – they maintain a diversity in the unity, within a single political space. Today the Constitution of the country, which legally secured the existence of the "state of autonomies", is consistent with its structure. By doing so, the political nation gave up the former formula of highly centralized unitarism after declaring the principles of unity and autonomy which balance one another. The basic law gave the provinces, which have a territorial, historical, cultural and economic community, the right to self-government, but even these progressive ideas of decentralization embod-

[7] Станкевич І. (2007) «Політичний конфлікт та технологія його запобігання», *Вісник Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Серія: Філософія. Політологія*, №87-88, с. 73.

[8] Логвінов А. (2013) «Самоідентифікація етнічних груп в етнонаціональних конфліктах», *Наукові записки Національного університету "Острозька академія". Серія : Культурологія*, №11(1), с. 186.

[9] Голуб'як Н. (2015) «Парадигма «нового регіоналізму» та європейської регіоналізації», *Актуальні проблеми філософії та соціології*, №4, с. 46.

[10] Мирна Н. (2013) «Сучасні тенденції регіоналізації та їх роль в європейських інтеграційних процесах», *Державне будівництво*, №1, Available from: http://www.kbuapa.kharkov.ua/e-book/db/2013- 1/doc/5/05.pdf (accessed 12 March 2024).

ied in the administrative subdivisions and political functioning of the state are not an absolute formula of rescuing the state from separatization processes[11].

In general, the political ambitions of small ethnonational groups in the EU aim at autonomism and separatism remains highly undesirable practice. The majority of participants of ethnic movements lean toward the cultural, social and economic autonomy remaining a part of the political structure of the nation-state in which they are incorporated. However, there are some exceptions, i.e. radical groups of these movements such as the ETA of the Basques, the SNP of the Scots that want to gain the complete independence from Spain and Great Britain. But at present these groups refused from radical inhuman ways of fighting and terrorist acts and other crimes are a thing of the past as well.

Matthias Bieri takes an interesting position on this issue. According to him, the establishment of new states within the EU is unlikely in the 21st c., but the movement for the sovereignty and independence of separate regions will for a long time remain a difficult question in the system "EU – nation-state – region". The researcher predicts massive growth in centrifugal tendencies in the EU, which will primarily show itself in movements for autonomy[12].

Interestingly, the movements of ethnic autonomism often recognize the probability and sometimes desirability of dual identity – ethno-cultural and political national. It is explained by the fact that they would like to see ethnic identity within the national state identity like the Breton ethnicity in France, the Galician ethnicity in Spain, etc. Thus, the dualism of historical and political memory (less frequently cultural) is recognized and is rather difficult to separate[13].

The elevation of ethnic nationalism among minorities in developed post-industrial countries is not surprising at all. It is worth remembering that we face the image of a humiliated and oppressed community and the centralized nation-state, its power elite are always blamed for this. In these cases, the state will never have opportuneness as a lenient attitude and minimization of interferences will be criticized just like flagrant interference.

The modern Catalan movement for separation, which is characterized by radicalization, also partly use dual identification (e.g. because of using the Castilian language, etc.). Considering this, the dualism of historical and political memory (less frequently cultural) is recognized and is rather difficult to separate[14].

III. Challenges for the development of ethno-political conflicts in Poland: the Kashubian factor

The important direction of current research on the study and prevention of possible ethno-conflict situations in the European Union is the analysis of activities of ethnic groups of nations having limited rights to self-government and any opportunity of self-identification, but they very much preserved the identity of their own material and spiritual culture, realize the necessity to preserve a language, customs and traditions of their ancestors. One of these groups is the Kashubian minority (from Kashubian *Kaszëbi*; Polish *Kaszubi*; German *Kaschuben*), who live on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea, in the area of the Polish city – Gdansk[15].

According to the 2002 census in the Republic of Poland, only 5,1 thousand people position themselves as Kashubians by nationality[16]. A number of researchers attribute this figure to the lack of possibility to choose both columns (Polish and Kashubian) in the 2002 census. Between 2002 and 2011, the Polish government had incomplete data on the actual size of the Kashubian community, as the figures obtained during the 2002 census were underestimated. And only after the 2011 census gave a per-

[11] Прохоренко И. (2012) «Национализм, сепаратизм, терроризм (Размышления над книгой С. Хенкина и Е. Самсонкиной)», *Общественные науки и современность*, №4, с. 174.

[12] Bieri M. (2014) «Separatism in the EU», *CSS Analyses in Security Policy*, №160, Available from: http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse160-EN.pdf (accessed 12 March 2024).

[13] Сміт Е. (1994) *Національна ідентичність*, Київ, с. 146-148.

[14] Мосора М. (2017) «Особливості сепаратизму в Європейському Союзі у контексті концепції «Європи регіонів»», *Прикарпатський вісник НТШ. Думка*, № 5-6, с. 155.

[15] Сегеда О. (2009) «Кашуби: дорога з небуття», *Народна творчість та етнографія*, № 4-5, с. 129.

[16] Raport z wyników Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2002. *Główny Urząd Statystyczny,* Available from: https://stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/raport_z_wynikow_nsp_ludnosci_i_mieszkan_2002.pdf (accessed 12 March 2024).

son the opportunity to choose a double identity, the world saw the real number of this community. Thus, according to the Central Statistical Office of Poland, as of 2011 there were 229 thousand Kashubians in the country. Of these, 213 thousand chose a dual, Polish-Kashubian affiliation, and 17 thousand identified themselves exclusively as Kashubians[17]. Another community – the Silesians, although the second largest after the Poles in Poland, in our opinion is less active in restoring and preserving identity today. The Kashubian community is becoming quite noticeable in Poland, and the tendency to be Kashubian is becoming popular.

A majority of the Kashubian community identifies itself with dual identity – Polish and Kashubian. In scholars' view, Olga Seheda, in particular, this situation gives grounds to doubt the Kashubian ethnic self-identification and creates the foundation for studying this nationality as an ethnic group as a part of the Polish ethnicity[18]. In this context, the Kashubian community can be defined as a "pseudoethnicity" ("pseudominority"). According to Kateryna Chernova, for a "pseudominority", any activity connected with politicization will be fake. Similar ethno-political speculations are of interest for certain political circles that will try to use the ethnic identification of a person exclusively for their own purposes[19]. On the other hand, there is an existing stereotype about the Kashubians as a separate ethnicity. The confirmation of that is the absolute preservation of their unique cultural, language, socio-economic and other distinctions of the community which can be rather difficult to interpret in the context of the Polish space unification.

Today, Kashubian is the only language in Poland that has the status of a regional language. This status was enshrined in Part 2 of Article 19 of the Law "On National and Ethnic Minorities and on the Regional Language" of January 6, 2005[20]. It is important that a significant part of the law concerns the use of the regional (Kashubian) language in public space[21]. It is important that the Silesian language does not have such a status, so the Kashubians received a more "favorable environment" for self-identification as a community than the Silesians.

Some Polish researchers call the Kashubian identity "hybrid" because, according to them, it is quite flexible. Thus, the Polish-Kashubian sociologist Brunona Synak in his research substantiated a number of types of identifications within the Kashubian community. An interesting type is the situation when people who know the Kashubian language and have Kashubian roots are ashamed to identify themselves as such, because they perceive their identity as less attractive, especially in economic terms. This type often chooses a more prestigious identity (often Polish or German)[22]. However, from our point of view, today, in the context of significant economic progress in the region compared to the rest of Poland, this type of "Kashubian identity" is outdated and irrelevant. And the thesis that Kashubians choose identity depending on profit has not paid off.

The Kashubians became an interesting tourist lure of the region, not least because of their cultural specificity and peculiarities of this group's identification. This interest was used by the Kashubians themselves whose organizations are more and more popularizing "kaszubskość" – the Kashubian language, culture and self-identification. Year after year there are more and more Kashubian festivals, picnics, regional meetings, city days, etc. However, the most important thing is that the Kashubian symbols, costumes, music, cuisine emphasize the community's identification. "Kaszubskość" is the fashion and is not perceived as "second class" any more[23].

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[17] Raport z wyników Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2011. *Główny Urząd Statystyczny*, Available from: http://stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/lud_raport_z_wynikow_NSP2011.pdf (accessed 12 March 2024).

[18] Сегеда О. (2009) «Кашуби: дорога з небуття», Народна творчість та етнографія, № 4-5, с. 132.

[19] Євтух В. (Ред.) (2003). Етносоціологія: терміни та поняття : навч. посібник, Фенікс, Київ, 179 с.

[20] Ustawa o mniejszościach narodowych i etnicznych oraz o języku regionalnym. *Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*, Available from: http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/prawo/ustawa-o-mniejszosciac/6492,Ustawa-o-mniejszosciachnarodowych-i-etnicznych-oraz-o-jezyku-regionalnym.html (accessed 12 March 2024).

[21] Bukowski Zb. (2016) «Prawny status języka regionalnego w Polsce na przykładzie języka kaszubskiego», *Czasopisma naukowe UKW. Studia z Zakresu Prawa, Administracji i Zarządzania*, Tom 9, p. 102.

[22] Kleina K., Obracht-Prondzyński C. (2012) (Red.) *«Społeczność kaszubska w procesie przemian : kultura, tożsamość, język»*, Warszawa: Kanc. Senatu, 242 s.

[23] Dołowy-Rybińska N. (2013) «Kaszubski dyskurs narodowościowy – spojrzenie antropologiczne», *Instytut Slawistyki Polskiej Akademii Nauk. Sprawy Narodowościowe*, № 43, p. 110.

In our view, coupled with the all-Polish movement of the region's popularization, the introduction of the Kashubian studies with support from the central and municipal governments in the educational institutions (the University of Gdansk) creates favorable conditions for enhancing the community's self-identification and improving the image of the central government in the Pomeranian region. It is obvious that in the 21st c., the Kashubian community, which in the 20th c. was eroded by the extremely centralized Second Polish Republic, the Soviet and Nazi totalitarian systems, is only getting on its way to politicization and framing of timely requirements and expectations from institutions of the political system of the Republic of Poland and the EU[24].

The peculiarities of the Kashubian identification makes it possible to talk about its exceptional flexibility which was formed in the extremely centralized states of the past generations. We do doubt the feasibility of using the term "hybrid" when referring to the Kashubian identification as the modern movement of the ethnic autonomism often recognize the probability and sometimes desirability of dual identity – ethno-cultural and political national. Today a rather similar situation is also observed in other EU states (Spain, France, etc.).

IV. Modern aspects of ethno-political conflicts in Ukraine: challenges of separatism

In our view, the process of ethnonational identification of the Ukrainian society is rather unique. Ukraine is a state with the unique characteristics of the ethno-political space. According to the 2001 All-Ukrainian Population Census, the ethnonational map of Ukraine consists of dispersed and compact groups. Considering this, we have every reason to speak about the probability of emergence of requirements for national cultural and national territorial autonomies which eventually can develop into broader requirements for self-government based on the passed way of ethnicity politicization. The biggest ethnicity is Ukrainian (titular), however, its discriminatory situation of the last centuries considerably degraded the prestige and status of the Ukrainian language, culture, history, etc. In recent years, we can observe positive tendencies of revival of the Ukrainian tradition in state-building, improvement in the control by the state over obeying the language legislation, educational process, etc. It was the role of the state that contributed to the revival of the Ukrainian tradition in the political processes, and the periodic control over obeying the legislation in this sphere will make it possible to level up its prestige. It should be mentioned that the main assimilative threat in Ukraine is the Russian ethnicity (we mean assimilation into the Russian culture and tradition). The regional aspects of the ethnonational map of Ukraine clearly stand out in the period of the main socio-political "shocks"; that is why, in our opinion, this issue requires thorough study and research[25].

The state of regulating ethnonational relations in the state is generally neglected. For years on end, the scholars have insisted on harmonization and updating the legislation in the ethnonational sphere according to the challenges of the time. In particular, they insist on approving the new version of the Law of Ukraine "On national minorities in Ukraine" of 1992 which is of a rather generalized political nature and characterized by declarativeness, absence of clear mechanisms for ensuring the rights of citizens belonging to national minorities, which, in its turn, provokes the processes of ethnicity politicization and increases ethno-cultural differentiation and division. They insist on improving the language legislation, which contains a number of contradictions and inconsistencies with the main law – the Constitution of Ukraine, which leads to deepening of the ethno-cultural division of the state and conflicts on the language grounds. They insist on updating antidiscrimination rules of law.

The Ukrainian political elites repeatedly postponed the solution of ethno-national problems far into the future giving the reason for current infeasibility and urgency to settle more important issues of the economic and political development of the country. It resulted in the fact that the problem was often solved in a certain period of the modern Ukrainian history in favor of one part of the society, which was certainly followed by the opposition and rejection by the other one. This state of affairs raises the problems of ethno-cultural misunderstanding and divided society. An important moment in this situation is that in the multi-ethnic society, the state must remain an impartial mediator who is to represent the interests of all groups of a heterogeneous society based on the norms and principles of the Consti-

[24] Мосора М. (2018) «Особливості сучасної політизації кашубів», *Вісник Прикарпатського університету. Політологія*, № 12, с. 289.

[25] Кривицька О. (2005) «Конфліктний вимір етнонаціонального розвитку України», *Політичний менеджмент*, №2, с. 25-26.

tution and laws of the state. Having an unquestioning monopoly in this sphere, absenting itself from these processes or acting for the benefit only for a certain group of population, the state will not be able to provide for implementing the project of a prosperous, powerful and multi-ethnic state[26]. That is why this issue should be crucial for the Ukrainian authorities to protect itself from possible ethnonational conflict and probable manifestations of separatism in the future.

We should agree with Professor Serhiy Teleshun who singled out among the possible reasons for separatism on the territory of Ukraine the following: absence of stable political development; presence of the conflict base in the ethno-confession environment; conflicts of regional elites; ethnonational conflicts on the regional scales of Ukraine aimed at discrimination and limiting access of certain ethnonational groups to power; upholding the rights and freedoms of ethnonational minorities on the part of radicalized circles and hidden (hybrid) intervention of the third parties in these conflicts; an attempt to change the area of compact location of some ethnonational groups; absence of secure information space of Ukraine and its regions, etc[27].

The Ukrainian scholars quite often emphasized that the political elites of Ukraine fail to find the optimal balance between national and regional motives and interests. Considering the position of one region at the national level automatically destroys the ethno-political balance in Ukraine, creates a conflict potential in regions. Creating and implementing the common and coherent policy in Ukraine encounters the obstacles of regional differences and contradictions as well as politicization. According to the researcher Kostiantyn Vitman, regional ethno-policy is a tool for the politicization of ethno-cultural contradictions and emergence of the ethno-political potential at the national level[28].

Ethno-cultural differences stratifying on the political intolerance of pro-European power, after the overthrow of the previous pro-Russian one which reflected the mood of the South-Eastern region, became preconditions for separatism. In Vira Yavir's view, if only these aspects had been in play, the separatism in the East would have ended in the first stage with the calls for separatism aimed at violating the collegiality of Ukraine, its territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability[29].

Today we observe all-encompassing confrontation and military operations, absence of dialogue and understanding. These realities would be impossible but for the active involvement and military intervention of the neighboring country – the Russian Federation.

Conclusions. In summary, some aspects should be emphasized:

Firstly, the analysis of essential features of ethno-political conflict shows that emergence of separatism is closely connected with the functioning of the state-power hierarchies and its polar opposite is integration processes. Separatism involves the desire of different communities for exit from the political structure by dramatically changing the political and legal status of the structure functioning based on the groups' awareness of their identity, which is followed by destroying the existing political structure and creating a new statehood. The awkward internal policy of the state structure becomes a catalyst of the conflict potential growth and manifestation of separatist tendencies within the structure. In our view, the main features of separatism are presence of conflicts between different groups in the context of the identity plurality of the political structure, communities' intolerance of the concept of dual identity proposed by the central government, etc.

Secondly, in the European Union, the political ambitions of small ethnic groups aim rather at autonomy than at separatism as the majority of participants in ethnic movements wish to have cultural, social and economic autonomy remaining a part of the political and military structure of the state they are incorporated in. Thus, at present self-identification is more and more often considered in Europe in the context of economic feasibility and pragmatism frequently outpaces nationalism. Separatism exists in the EU most often in the state of static balance which is caused, first of all, by the strengthening of the role of regions in the European institutions.

Thirdly, the Kashubian identification in Poland is not perceived any more as inferior or insignificant. It is important that the popularization of the Kashubian language, culture, identification results in

[26] Явір В. (2014) «Основні прояви сепаратизму в сучасній Україні», *Держава і право*, №64, с. 394.
[27] Денисюк С. (2015) «Терористичний сепаратизм в сучасній Україні: спроба теоретико–прикладного аналізу», *Гілея: науковий вісник*, №93, с. 343.
[28] Явір В. (2014). Вказ. пр., с. 392.
[29] Ibidem, p. 392.

indispensable awareness of otherness and lays the foundation for activating the politicization of the Kashubian community. In Poland the establishment of the unique status for the Kashubian language as a regional one became the basis for a consensus between the Kashubians and the "Polish space". However, it should be mentioned that the steps of the central government like these, on the other hand, contribute to the revival of the Kashubian culture and the strengthening of identification.

Fourthly, ethno-regional differences in Ukraine are of different origins and different nature. They are based on the different historical experience as well as the culture and traditions derived from it. These differences are also caused by geopolitical realities, peculiarities of economic systems, social stratification, etc. Besides, we should mention a purposeful influence of the regional elites on the formation of this or that "image" of the region, experience in the ethnicity politicization, etc. However, the absence of a clear strategy of forming a civil identity and ethno-cultural policy adapted to the problems of the regions transforms a territorial identity into an effective mobilizing resource of ethnic separatism in Ukraine. The direct participation of the Russian Federation is decisive in promoting separatism in the Crimea and Donbass as it provided financial, information, military support in the desire to withdraw from Ukraine under the ephemeral pretext of not recognizing the central government and led these processes.

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