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Social Aspect of Development of the Bulgarian Ethnogeographic System of the Ukrainian Danube

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Abstract: Based on the concept of ethnogeographic systems developed by the author, a study was made of the specifics of the social aspects of the life of the population of the ethnogeographic formation of the Ukrainian Danube with different ethnic composition of the population. In one of the most multi-ethnic regions of the state, where Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Russians, Moldavians, Gagauzes and others live compactly, the rights of the population to observe and develop the ethnic identity of the population are respected. Each community is characterized by a peculiar approach to preserving the ethnic identity of the population. The author conducted a sociological study, the results of which determined the characteristics of interethnic tolerance of the population and the ethnic-language situation in the region. The current stage of development of the Bulgarian diaspora of the country is characterized by the intensification of ethnocultural and ethnopolitical life. The activation of the revival of the culture and traditions of the Bulgarians is associated with the activities of the Association of Bulgarians of Ukraine. Her activities are aimed at reviving the language, traditions and culture of the Bulgarians. Bulgarians take a more active part in the political life and processes of state administration and local self-government. An ethnosociological study showed that Bulgarians of the interfluvial region are characterized by a proud attitude to their own ethnonym, stratification of the population by income level, 100% use of the mother language in everyday life and a relatively high level of knowledge of Ukrainian and Russian. The negative impact on ethnic self-identification of representatives of the main communities of the region has a socio-economic factor. This is especially clearly manifested among the descendants of the Transdanubian migrants, for whom identification with the inhabitants of a particular settlement is of great importance. Intensive inter-river ethnic processes are inherently ethno-evolutionary with clearly expressed intra-ethnic consolidation of almost all communities. The prospect of the development of EGS is associated primarily with the need to develop the labor-intensive sectors of agriculture and the processing of local raw materials.

Keywords: ethnogeographic systems, Ukrainian Danube, ethnic identity, ethnic-national population.

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Introduction

The Earth's population consists of many communities of different quality and scale, which interact with each other. Ethnic groups occupy a separate place among them. Gumilev L.N. introduces the concept of "ethnosphere" and defines it as a combination of all existing ethno-landscape communities - ethnoses and ethnocenoses (Gumilev, 1979). In fact, the ethnosphere is a combination of all ethno-landscape components - ethnic communities, the natural environment and the material world of people. As can be seen from the above definition, the ethnosphere coincides spatially with the anthroposphere.

From the point of view of social geography, ethnogeographic complexes formed on a particular territory should be considered in terms of territorial organization and spatial ordering of the components that form them. In order to be able to define ethnogeographic complexes through the prism of territorial organization, the concept of "ethnogeographic system" (EGS) was introduced. EGS is a form of spatial organization of life activity of ethno-national groups, formed by the peculiarities of material and spiritual culture, which is characterized by the originality of historical and geographical prerequisites of development, settlement, population reproduction, economy, the course of social, socio-political and ethno-cultural processes. The concept of EGS provides for the consideration of the territorial organization of each component as a subsystem, and their integral combination as an EGS.

The Ukrainian Danube region is one of the most multi-ethnic regions of the state. Five mono-ethnic types (Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Russian, Moldovan and Gagauz) of ethnogeographical systems are concentrated here (Todorov, 2017). Social aspects of life play an important role in the issues of functioning of ethnogeographical formations and, consequently, the preservation of ethnic identity. In the framework of this work, let us consider some of them.

Social life poses new questions to science, and sociological research can help answer some of them. This is especially relevant in the study of ethnic communities, where a person's belonging is determined by means of self-identification with a certain ethnonym. The program of ethno-sociological research conducted within the framework of this work was designed in such a way that it could be used to obtain information on various components of ethnic self-identification: religious affiliation, linguistic characteristics, ethnic tolerance and income levels of residents of settlements of different ethno-national types. In the process of ethno-sociological

research, questionnaire survey, interviewing and other methods of collecting primary information were used.

The majority of interviewed residents of the Ukrainian Danube region positively assessed the changes that have taken place over the past twenty years in the revival of their native language, ethnic culture and religion. The share of those who assessed positive changes in the revival of their native language was 93.9%, in the revival of ethnic culture - 90.2%, and in the revival of religion - 95.3% of the respondents. At the same time, the majority of respondents favored the need to continue the process of revival of the mentioned elements of the population's life activity, as well as the state language (69.0% of the total number), national rituals and traditions (93.0%). It should be noted that most of the interviewees identified ethnic culture with national rituals and traditions. The low level of support for the idea of development of local self-governance in the region at the level of ethnic community is explained, first of all, by the lack of historical experience of functioning of this type of self-governance.

Residents of the region practically did not feel any changes in the work of the local self-government system. In a situation when rural, settlement, city and district councils have no real leverage, first of all, on the socio-economic situation in the territory entrusted to them, such answers look quite expected. In the last five years the most urgent issue is the decentralization of power and administrative-territorial reform. The main problems are related to the lack of understanding of their essence.

The growth of ethno-national self-consciousness of the population is confirmed by the attitude to their own ethnonym. Thus, more than 98% of the respondents noted their proud or respectful attitude to their ethnonym. In the context of individual ethno-national groups, the share of those who feel proud of their ethnonym ranged from 82.6% among Ukrainians to 93.6% among Moldovans, and those who feel respect - from 4.3% among Moldovans to 19.6% among Ukrainians.

Christianity continues to be the predominant religion in the region (93.7%). The number of Baptist Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses is increasing rapidly.

The mother tongue is the language of everyday use for representatives of all major ethno-national groups of the interfluvium. The Russian language was mentioned as such by 6.5% of Ukrainians and 6.4% of Moldovans. Bulgarian was mentioned by 7.5% of Gagauz.

Russian language is widely spread in the region. It is spoken by 92.5% of Gagauz and 100% of Ukrainians. The next, in terms of the level of proficiency of the population, is the Ukrainian language. From 10.6% of Moldovans to 27.5% of

Russians know it. Such a result for the state language is achieved due to a relatively high level of its mastery by people aged 18-30 years old. Almost every fifth interviewed Gagauz (18,9%) knows Bulgarian. This is mainly due to the high proportion of mixed Gagauz-Bulgarian families living in Gagauz settlements. Among other languages that were categorized as “foreign” during the Soviet period of the region’s history, English, French and German stand out. Almost every eighth (1.2% of respondents) representative of the Bulgarian ethnos mentioned French as a language he knows. Historically, French is studied as the main foreign language in general education schools in Bulgarian settlements.

In the late XX - early XXI century there were changes in the indicators of ethnic tolerance of the population of the Ukrainian Danube region. Until the mid-1980s, the representatives of ethno-ethnic groups that the population of the interfluvium did not want to see in their families were exclusively the main communities of the region. In the absolute majority of cases, the representatives of the same ethnic community as the respondent were among those whom they would like to see in the family. The results of the ethno-sociological survey showed that the situation has changed dramatically. Thus, 90% and more of the total number of interviewed members of various ethno-national groups noted that they do not want to see representatives of the Negroid race, Caucasian linguistic family and Arabs in their family. Members of these communities in the family were opposed by 50.0, 17.4 and 23.9% of Ukrainians, 46.1, 19.3 and 28.4% of Bulgarians, 7.5, 67.5 and 12.5% of Russians, 44.7, 19.1 and 27.7% of Moldovans, 44.7, 13.2 and 41.5% of Gagauz, respectively. At the same time, the share of the region’s population that would like to see representatives of the main ethnic communities of the region in their composition has significantly increased. In the whole interfluvium region, only 7.5% of respondents would like to see people of other ethnicity in their family (Todorov, 2008, pp. 170-190).

Let us highlight the general characteristics of ethno-national groups of the Ukrainian Danube region, identified in the process of sociological research. The population feels positive shifts in the revival of ethnic culture. They support the continuation of this process. The majority of the population is satisfied with the consideration of ethnic interests by the authorities. Orthodox Christianity remains the main religion. The working rural population receives incomes that do not allow them to develop fully. Against this background, the Bulgarians of the interfluvium stand out:

- the highest proportion of people who are proud of their own ethnonym;

- the use of the mother tongue by all members of the community in everyday life;
- the second indicator of the population's proficiency in Ukrainian and Russian among communities that are not native speakers of these languages;
- stratification of the population by income level, which is expressed in the combination of a large proportion of people with both high and low income, received both in cash and in kind.

Forecasting of regional processes is an integral part of the complex process of managing the development of the territory. The analysis of demographic processes is the basis of any socio-economic planning. The reproductive parameters of the population have a direct impact on the nature and intensity of their economic activity, and through it, on the course of social processes. The nature of population reproduction, its intensity, distribution in time, structural changes in the future are determined by a complex set of factors. Demographic processes are characterized by great inertia and are determined by socio-economic, environmental and other factors. They display the conditions of existence of the population. The demographic perspective is largely determined by the current age-sex structure of the population.

Socio-environmental and ethnic factors affect society and the demographic behavior of its individuals in complex and simultaneously. Falling living standards and quality of life, deteriorating health, loss of effective control over mortality can lead to a "jump-like" decline in life expectancy, which will contribute to a significant deterioration of the demographic situation in the region (Topchiyev, 2005, p. 213).

In the near future, the population's orientation towards small families will remain. Socio-economic conditions of life and the lack of clear programs for overcoming the crisis do not allow us to assume that in the next decade the population of the Ukrainian Danube region will revise its demo-reproductive positions, significantly increase the birth rate to the level of 3 - 4 children per family and enter the trajectory of the expanded type of population reproduction. Significant decrease in the birth rate in 1994 - 2005 will lead in the next 15 - 20 years to small contingents of persons who will marry in the second half of the 10s of the XXI century. The base of population reproduction will "narrow". There are also no sufficient grounds to expect a significant migration inflow of population from other regions of Odeshchyna or Ukraine, which could compensate to a certain extent the negative natural population growth.

The age structure of the population in the short term will be transformed towards a decrease in the composition of children and adolescents and an increase in working

age people and pensioners. The share of people aged 40 and above will increase, which will have a negative impact on the quality of labor resources in the region.

Taking into account the reasonable variant of demographic processes development and the peculiarities of the current socio-economic situation, we will emphasize the main, in our opinion, direction of rural settlements development in the short term. In the next 5 - 10 years, the peculiarities of rural development will be determined by a further decrease in the population, which will not solve the problem of employment of residents of rural settlements. According to experts' estimates, 25-30 people are needed for effective economic activity of a medium-sized basic farm (2 - 2.5 thousand hectares). The current number of people working in agriculture is rather a form of social responsibility of enterprise managers to their fellow villagers and has no economic justification. This circumstance negatively affects the cost of agricultural products. In this situation, we see the solution to the problem of optimizing the territorial organization of the population's life activity in two aspects. First, there are great reserves for intensification of agricultural production and development of related industries. The development of viticulture and food industry in rural areas will stimulate an increase in the level of employment. Secondly, we can continue to ignore the spontaneous pendulum labor migration of the rural population.

Establishing order in the sphere of agricultural production is another factor in preserving the self-sufficiency of the EGS of different ethno-national types. On the one hand, it is the main means of production in agriculture, and on the other hand, almost all ethno-national groups of the interfluvium have ritual festivals associated with the land and the results of agricultural production. It is necessary to complete the agrarian reform, ensuring the rights of rural residents to freely dispose of land, create socio-economic prerequisites for the return of qualified personnel to peripheral rural settlements, and effectively influence the pricing policy in the agro-industrial complex. Its development is complicated by the lack of purposeful state policy in this sphere. The state is actually not engaged in regulating the size of production and supply of basic agricultural products, protection of domestic producers (Fateev, 1994, p. 107).

The intensive development of natural population loss processes and peculiarities of economic activity in modern conditions negatively affect the level of self-sufficiency of ethno-national rural councils. There is a predominance of mortality over birth rate and out-migration of residents. It was predominantly rural settlement that ensured the preservation of ethno-national groups' traditions.

The projects of integration of the Danube-Dniester interfluvium into the national communication space will not give the expected results without solving the geopolitical problems. In any case, it cannot finally solve the problem of communication of the studied region with the rest of the state. According to point 1.2 of the additional protocol to the Treaty between the two countries, the transferred area is the property of Ukraine on the territory of the Republic of Moldova (Dodatkovij protocol, 2006).

In order to preserve the transit potential of the Ukrainian Danube region and to translate it into places in real logistic chains, it is necessary to move from declaration to intensive development of its transport infrastructure. Creation of infrastructure elements, the necessity of functioning of which is of primary nature, is envisaged within the framework of the “Program of Integrated Development of Ukrainian Danube region for 2004 - 2010” (the period of validity of which is regularly continued). These activities should stimulate the integrated development of the region. In a situation when the Moldovan side is intensively developing its infrastructure, the Ukrainian state is limited to declarations of intentions.

The development of social and industrial infrastructure will not give the desired success without solving the problem of optimizing the territorial structure of the economic complex of the region. It is necessary to zonize the territory of the interfluvium into areas that can be most effectively used in one or another sphere of economic activity. The problem of determining the legal status and mechanism of utilization of the coastal zone (including protected lands) is of particular relevance for the Ukrainian Danube region. It should be noted that in the above-mentioned Program of Integrated Development of the Ukrainian Danube region there is a clause on the development of a mechanism to regulate the legal status of the coastal zone of Kiliya and Tatarbuniar districts as a part of the resort areas of local importance. Completion of the construction of the Danube-Black Sea ship route as a factor of revival of the economic potential of the Danube port-industrial complex, development of social and industrial infrastructure, primarily in the peripheral part of the region, effective use of resort and nature protection areas should ensure “balanced regional development and effective use of the region’s resources” (Ischuk, 2002, p. 157). The implementation of these measures should ensure the region’s transition to sustainable development, which will be determined by the balanced development of all components of the social integrity of the interfluvium.

Rationalization of the territorial organization of society should order the socio-economic components of the landscape envelope. This is particularly relevant in the

context of the ongoing transformation of life activities of the population of Ukraine. The territorial organization reflects the spatial combination of components of life activity of the population and has a multilevel structure (Topchiyev, 2001, p. 122). Administrative-territorial structure is a derived concept from the territorial organization of society and embodies its ordered functional and managerial structure. When reforming the management system of interfluvial territories, it is necessary to take into account the following main factors:

- 1) close mutual location of the centers of modern administrative-territorial districts of the central part of the region (Artsiz, Sarata, Tarutino, Tatarbunary);
- 2) communication isolation of Reniyskiy rayon;
- 3) impossibility for other rural/ urban settlements to perform administrative functions at the regional level;
- 4) low level of transport infrastructure development.

In the Soviet Union, administrative-territorial division was a powerful lever of purposeful influence on the territorial organization of society, and through it on all components of life activity of the population. The more fragmented is the system of administrative-territorial division, the harder it is to “turn on” the economic levers of sustainable development of its structural components. However, a simple mechanical increase in administrative units will not lead to an improvement in the quality of life of the population. Local budgets should have their own sources of revenue generation (Stechenko, 2000, p. 190).

The prospect of stabilization and further socio-economic development of the Ukrainian Danube region is closely connected with the implementation of measures envisaged by a number of sectoral, regional and state programs. The region needs to create new and modernize existing elements of transport, production and market infrastructure. Without this, its integration into the all-Ukrainian communication space is impossible. Taking into account that the interfluvial area is a unique socio-cultural and socio-natural integrity, it is necessary to develop rural and green tourism, which, combined with recreational functions of the territory, will bring significant financial revenues.

Ethno-national groups are more stable than social communities. However, they are also subject to dynamics. Changes in the various components of an ethnos are conditioned by the general course of its socio-economic and socio-political history.

This is expressed in the peculiarities of their own existence and interaction with other ethnic groups.

In modern ethnology, self-consciousness is the main feature by which ethnic groups are differentiated. Ethnic self-consciousness of people is manifested through the realization of their ethnicity and the opposition according to the scheme “us - them”, “our own - alien”. Ethnic self-consciousness (in ethnology “ethnological self-consciousness” is considered) includes the idea not only of one’s own community, but also of other ethnic groups. Ethnic processes are conditioned by the course of socio-economic and cultural development of society.

The processes that lead to changes in certain parameters of ethno-national groups are very diverse in their essence and in the degree of impact on certain components of ethnic groups. Depending on the nature of transformation of the ethnic system, all processes can be divided into ethno-evolutionary and ethno-transformation. The first category includes processes that lead to changes in some parameters of the ethnic system without questioning the very fact of its existence. The second category includes processes that entail a change in the ethnicity of a certain human community.

In modern ethnology, self-consciousness is considered as: 1) awareness of belonging to an ethno-national group as a socio-economic and political organization; 2) awareness of the uniqueness of one’s community, its material and spiritual culture, and awareness of the place and role of ethnos in the system of interethnic relations; 3) understanding of the place of an ethno-national group in the modern world (Sadokhin 2002: 147). The second and third provisions of this thesis are addressed with varying degrees of success by national-cultural associations. The situation with socio-economic prerequisites of ethnic self-identification of an individual is much more complicated.

The experience of inter-ethnic interaction in the inter-river area also provides for the concentration of settlements with different ethno-ethnic structure of the population within one rural council. During the Soviet period of history, institutions were established in almost all centers of rural councils that provided daily and episodic services to the population. All of them were built according to a typical plan and in most cases were designed for a greater workload than that which is maximally possible with the current age-sex structure of the population.

The life activity of the main ethno-national groups that form mono-ethnic settlements on the territory of the Ukrainian Danube region in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is determined by the following main factors:

- a) decrease in population size and deterioration of the age structure of the population;
- b) transformation of socio-economic life activity, which led to the actual reduction in the number of jobs in agricultural production and uncontrolled labor migration;
- c) activation of ethno-national self-organization of communities.

In practice, ethnic self-consciousness manifests itself in self-identification of people with a certain ethno-national group through recognizing its ethnonym as one's own. Ethnic identity is formed in the process of socialization. It is known that ethnyonyms can exist in several variants and in different taxonomic levels. Thus, Bulgarians of the Ukrainian Danube region self-identify with ethnyonyms of two levels. On the one hand, they realize themselves as members of the Bulgarian ethnos ("Bulgarians"), and on the other hand, they identify themselves as residents of a particular locality ("Kubeytsy", "Vaisaltsy", "Pandakliytsy", etc.).

Let us consider the impact of modern socio-economic processes on the preservation of ethnic identity by Bulgarians of the Ukrainian Danube region and the prospects for sustainable development of the EHS with their compact residence. After the rural residents of the USSR received passports, the level of interethnic contacts increased significantly. This led to a decrease in the role of endogamy in the social life of the descendants of Zadunaisky migrants. The share of children born in mixed marriages increased. Accordingly, the share of children who had phylogenetically stable ethnic consciousness decreased. Intensive migration caused an increase in the number of Bulgarians and Gagauz outside the area of their settlement. The commonality of territory is not an obligatory factor of ethnos reproduction. However, it is one of the determining factors of preserving the material and spiritual culture of ethnic communities. It is about both living on the same territory and its natural conditions.

Settlement in a multi-ethnic environment contributes to the smoothing of differences between different dialects, which can be observed in an ethnos consisting of several ethnographic groups. Thus, the authors of the Atlas of Bulgarian Dialects distinguish the following Eastern Bulgarian dialects: North-Eastern (Mizian), Balkan and Thracian dialects (Markova, 1984; Markova, 1991).

Modern socio-economic processes have a much greater impact on the self-identification of the population. Spontaneous labor migration, according to experts'

estimates, has led to a 30-50% decrease in the number of available population in various rural settlements. In the case of Bulgarians, it is mainly men who go to work. Women stay at home with their children. This somewhat alleviates the problem of raising children. Such intensive labor migration negatively affects the prospects of revival of traditional elements of material culture. The culture of an ethnos is a reflection of the historical path traveled by the community. Further development of modern socio-economic processes may lead to qualitative changes in ethnic traditions.

There is a replacement of spiritual culture, which is the result of historical development of ethnic communities and may differ in the context of different social groups, by professional culture. Taking into account that people mainly learn auxiliary working professions while earning money, such a replacement cannot be called a progressive development of ethnic culture.

The state policy towards ethno-national groups, under the given form of their existence, determines the time of preservation of historically acquired elements of material and spiritual culture by ethnic groups.

Let us note the main problems and prospective options for the development of Bulgarian EGS of the Ukrainian Danube region:

- significant socio-economic “oppression” is experienced by the population leading a rural way of life, with which most elements of material and spiritual culture are associated not only with Bulgarians, but also with the majority of other ethno-national groups of the interfluvium;
- there is an inversely proportional relationship between the intensity of migration of the population and its identification with the inhabitants of a certain settlement: the more people are forced to look for seasonal work outside the settlement of residence, the smaller the share of those who self-identify with the ethnonym of this level;
- modern socio-economic processes have a negative impact on the self-identification of the population;
- intensive ethnic processes in the interfluvium are ethno-evolutionary in their essence with clearly defined intra-ethnic consolidation of almost all communities;
- to minimize the negative impact of the socio-economic factor it is necessary to develop labor-intensive branches of agriculture and processing of local raw materials in rural settlements.

Taking into account the above review, we can make the following conclusions, which reflect the impact of social aspects of life activity of the Bulgarian population of the Ukrainian Danube region in the context of preserving their ethnic identity.

The modern stage of development of the Bulgarian diaspora of the country is characterized by the intensification of ethno-cultural and ethno-political life activity. Activation of the processes of revival of Bulgarian culture and tradition is connected with the activities of the Association of Bulgarians of Ukraine. Its activities are aimed at revitalizing the language, tradition and culture of Bulgarians. Bulgarians take a more active part in political life and in the processes of state administration and local self-government.

The ethno-sociological research conducted has shown that Bulgarians in the interfluvium are characterized by a proud attitude towards their own ethnonym, income stratification, a 100 per cent use of the mother tongue in everyday life and a relatively high level of proficiency in Ukrainian and Russian.

Socio-economic factor has a negative impact on the ethnic self-identification of the representatives of the main communities of the region. This is especially clear among the descendants of the Transdanubian settlers, for whom identification with the inhabitants of a particular settlement is of great importance. Intensive ethnic processes in the interfluvium are ethno-evolutionary in their essence, with clear intra-ethnic consolidation of almost all communities. The prospect of development of the EGS is connected, first of all, with the need to develop labor-intensive branches of agriculture and processing of local raw materials.

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