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Ethnic Consciousness: Personal Sense and Signs of Ethnoidentity

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This article is devoted to the analysis of essence and structure of ethnic consciousness.

In modern ethnology has been widely accepted idea that ethnic self-awareness is the major ethnoforming factor. According to the author, the essence of ethnos consists in that value which has for ethnophors their ethnicity.

The ethnic self-awareness should be considered in unity of its main components. These are: sense of feeling of the ethnic belonging, expressing specific character of an ethnic community; signs of ethnic self-identification and psychosemantics of ethnic feeling – its personal sense. The major ethnoforming factor is recognition of value of blood-relationship ties, which signs are: ethnonym, language, cultural community, etc. These cultural phenomena act as the signs indicating a community of an origin that doesn't belittle their value as force consolidating ethnic communities.

Mentality or national character doesn't belong to signs of ethnoidentity, firstly, owing to the semantic uncertainty; secondly, because concerning many ethnoses idea of features of national character is the result of an external assessment.

Psychosemantics of ethnic sense is its emotional content, a place in system of values of this individual, correlation to the motivating sphere. The feeling of love and attachment as manifestation «We-motivation» is more preferable in comparison with a pride, as manifestation of motivation of self-affirmation.

Keywords: ethnos, ethnic identity, signs of an ethnic origin, psychosemantics of ethnic sense, motivation of ethnoidentity.

In a modern scientific and publicistic discourse a problem of essence of ethnos and ethnic identity continues to remain actual.

Many researchers proceed from conviction of impossibility to understand essence of ethnic relation out of the analysis of meaning, which in it is put by subjects of the ethnorelations. National consciousness as an ethnoforming factor is attached great importance in world ethnology. According to A.I.Bochkarev, «a

question about what everyone calls his people, nation, tribe, in what he sees his difference from neighbors, but the main thing – what meaning each person puts in an answer to this question – this is the problem of ethnic diagnostics not solved still» (Bochkarev, 2008: 45). It seems that it is a problem not only diagnostics, but also the essence of ethnic relations. It doesn't mean that the answer to a question about meaning of ethnic origin lies on a surface ordinary

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consciousness. The subjective psychological reality, as it is known from experience of development of psychology and sociology, isn't transparent neither for practical, nor for reflective consciousness and ethological knowledge is constructed on the same methodology as other humanitarian theories.

The cultural studies paradigm is still dominated in an approach to definition of essence of ethnos. «Modern science – writes V.A. Tishkov, – considers ethnicity as a «sense of belonging to a group of people who are different from others by culture» (Tishkov, 2005: 167). Usually a set of distinctive features includes self-name of group, language, historical myth, religion, some features of material and spiritual culture (In the same place; Lebedeva, 1999: 18).

It's necessary to make an important clarification to this characteristic: historical myth represents a myth about common origin of group. In this case, essential feature of ethnos which, in our opinion, the idea and feeling of relationship is, is included in a set of distinctive features.

1. Meaning of a sense of an ethnic origin or essence of ethnos

It's universally recognized that availability of own name is obligatory feature of ethnos, having important ethnoconsolidating value, but different meaning is attached to this value. There are different interpretations of the question: what is the nature of the relations, which are designated by this own name. Y.V. Bromley is one of the leading domestic ethnologists, he considered that ethnonym is an external reference and culture, language et cetera are behind of its. Y.V. Bromley considered recognition of relationship as the main ethnoforming as manifestation of biologization approach (Bromley, 1983: 45).

Certainly accessory to a certain culture is an important factor, and in some cases it gains

paramount importance. It is known that many ethnic Germans who were living in Russia for a long time, considered themselves as Russian people. However in such situations the fact is important that not individual, but a family, and, as a rule, rooted in Russian culture in several generations became a part of Russian culture. But the most important thing when evaluating this kind of evidence is that the ethnic origin essentially is the dynamic characteristic. If you use metaphor language, the ethnos is not blood, but «voice of blood». A sense of ethnic community of personality is no more not less stable than the sense of family identity.

Lapidary and, in our opinion, exact definition of ethnos belongs to S.N. Bulgakov. In his opinion, national is spiritual-blood-relationship ties (Bulgakov, 1992). This formulation isn't about addition of two factors – cultural and natural, but about spiritual sense of blood ties, about sacrality of the relationship. Endoetnonim indicates and fixes these ties.

The name of the people makes one semantic number with a patrimonial name – with a surname. Extent of identification of the personality with a family and with ethnos undoubtedly, different. Though there are individuals, for whom the family name is the same empty phrase, as the name of the nation.

Ethnicity can be transformed, change its original meaning under the influence of certain historical circumstances. So, in process of expansion of limits there was a sacralization of the Russian state. «Russian ceased to be the ethnic characteristic and became state: everything that serves prosperity of the Orthodox state, is Russian» (Lurye, 1997: 276). However, hardly it is possible to speak about complete substitution of sense of identity, at least, at household level.

Spirituality of idea of blood relationship about which S.N. Bulgakov speaks, is a cult of memory of the ancestors, which is a universal cultural

value. The antiquity in itself has sacral meaning for the person. Why is a bunch «ancient means sacred» formed in the mind – is other question, but its existence doesn't demand proofs. As to its relation to a problem of ethnic consciousness, it's not obviously and needs explanations.

The idea of ethnos as blood-relationship ties was discussed and exposed to criticism in many researches. It's much written about subjectivity of criterion of relationship, its dependence on random factors. It does matter, that the degree of relationship doesn't give in to the strict account, though real breakthrough is carried out last time in this area. But it's not the point. Possibilities of measurement is a problem of a science, instead of that reality in which the science is engaged. Effectiveness of criticism of the theory of relationship, in our opinion, is reduced by the fact that any of other signs of ethnos doesn't possess most definiteness.

Opponents of the idea of relationship as the main ethnoforming ties resort to such argument: if people don't know about the biological relationship, it doesn't influence the relations between them. That in itself is true, but thus proves nothing. It so happens that relatives don't know about the relationship and don't form a family group. But whether it is possible to deduce the statement from this fact: «the family isn't a community based on the blood relationship»? If people don't know about the historical relationship, it means that there's no one certain ethnos. But in some cases, they know, and this number contains so many units, how many the people exist on Earth.

The relations of relationship aren't so simple, as those who isn't inclined to give to them ethnoforming value, probably, consider. Two families became related, it means that the following generation will have common genes. For this generation this affinity has just spiritual character, «bloodness» contains in it, so to speak,

potentially. This is not the unique example of that the reality of our selfness exists in the present only potentially, as reality of the represented future. The same applies to ethnos. Initially far, subsequently they can become related and form new ethnos, such as, Brazilians, Cubans, etc. The existence of these peoples doesn't undermine idea of blood relationship, as it sometimes seems. The process of ethnogenesis goes constantly, and it is accompanied by unstable identity, an abundance of «floating» ethnoconsciousness, that creates both practical (psychological) and theoretical difficulties.

For some reason when speech about ethnos as related community, counterarguments are derived not from the actual relations of people, their psychology or speech practice, but from the «academic» situations: how to define degree of relationship in ethnos, whether it is possible to establish genotypic similarities, etc. In quite specific situations people need an analysis of the genome for establishment relationship in the solution of family problems. So why accuracy in establishment ethnic relationship should excite us? Certainly, this problem represents scientific interest, but it is not necessary to put sense of the human relations in dependence on its decision.

The value of ethnic origin for the man is a value of his roots. In contrast to the biological term «ontogeny» designating borders of individual human life, «biography» means that human life doesn't begin with the birth moment, but continues as a fact of the biography of his parents and primogenitors. And only in this semantic continuum the feeling of the immortality among the subsequent generations is possible. So we see the spirituality of blood-relationship ties. Vocabulary indicates about the psychological community of family and national ties and that fixes these relations: «relatives», «people», «homeland».

2. Signs of ethnic identification and self-identification

The ethnic consciousness is a complex system including the main substructures, which are:

- meaning a sense of ethnic identity (in a translation into language of ethnology is an essence of ethnos);
- signs of ethnic identification and self-identification;
- psychosemantics of ethnic sense.

The community of language, territory, economic life, mentality, traditions, etc. – these realities which are usually treated as ethnoforming factors, in our opinion, are the signs of ethnic self-identification indicating the relations of relationship. Belonging to any ethnos is the fact of consciousness of the individual that, of course, doesn't mean randomness of ethnoidentity. Man needs signs of his nationality, the signs by which he could judge himself as a representative of a certain ethnos. The primary sign of ethnoidentity is for the individual ethnic origin of his family.

The important sign role belongs to national language though many researchers note its uncertainty as a sign of an ethnic origin. In fact, the person cannot speak in language of the nation, that doesn't prevent him to identify himself to this ethnos. However it's essentially important that national language exists as language on which relatives speak, or it existed as language of ancestors.

These notions – not always distinct and verbalized – is only symbols of deeper, but less realized value what «relationship ties» is. The meaning so-called «a territorial sign» is same. The common place of residence isn't important in the present, but in the past, as a sign of the general origin, the general historical destiny. Though in the present the aspiration to compact accommodation is natural for an ethnic community.

In some cases the choice of a nationality depends on the factors which are not concerning

to system of ethnoforming indications. In families where parents have a different ethnic origin, children can make a choice between two identities, for the reasons known only for them one. Equally as they can change the ethnic origin or divide it between several cultures (Tishkov, 2005: 167).

Signs of an ethnic origin can operate in system, but can – and separately. In different circumstances, their relative importance varies. Sign character of language, cultural traditions, etc. doesn't exclude that they have independent consolidating value. There are bases to allocate in system of indications of ethnos more and less stable components (Koptseva, 2011).

Some authors carry a mentality of a nation or national character to indications of ethnos (Khomutov, 2003: 269). We think that it is not necessary to consider this formation as one of signs of ethnoidentity which are language, cultural traditions, etc. The matter is that the concept of national character is quite uncertain (Kon, 1971). The special mentality is inherent not in all ethnoses equally that is defined by historical destiny of ethnos and what ethnoses with it cooperate. Not casually ethnologists prefer to speak not about character of the nation, but about the ethnic stereotypes existing concerning various different ethnic formations (Stepanov, 1999; Pochebut, 2012). The concept «stereotype» contains uncertainty of its objective and subjective relatedness.

There are still reasons for which the national character should not be attributed to ethnoidentity factors. Even close ethnoses, which are the Scandinavian people, tend to be ironic in relation to each other (Gundelach, 2000). Hardly truly to consider that, say, Swedes include those stereotypes which are expressed in the jokes which are released to their address by Danes or Norwegians in the complex of ethnic indications. And in case of a critical

spirit in relation to character of the own ethnos, the effect «I'm another matter» considerably proves. Conversation that Russian badly behave abroad, usually assumes that speaking, being Russian, doesn't carry this criticism to himself. As a rule, it has the bases to consider, because negative image is created on the basis of behavior of minority of people. If the individual identifies himself with positive features (real or imagined) of his ethnos, it shows personal sense of his ethnoidentity.

3. Personal meaning of ethnoidentity

Like other psychological structures, the ethnoconsciousness of the personality accepts various individual values in dynamic (intensity) and in content (psychosemantics) aspects. Psychosemantics of ethnic sense is its emotional content, a place in system of values of this individual, correlation to the motivating sphere – everything that it's possible to generalize in concept «personal meaning of ethnoidentity». The personal meaning is understood as the relation of the subject to the world. A form of its manifestation may be a «emotional coloring of this or that object, extramental precepts» (Petrenko, 1997: 50).

Ethnic senses are emotions and moods expressing the relation to actually ethnic reality, commitment to national values (Platonov, 2001: 106).

The dynamic aspect of a complex of ethnoidentity in usual social conditions has small values of size. There are researches in which it is shown that similarity of a personal orientation creates between people closer relations, than their same ethnoidentity (Okoneshnikova, 1999: 221). In the conditions of the conflicts, wars and other social shocks intensity of national senses increases sharply.

Psychosemantics of ethnoidentity, in our opinion, reveals a role (value) of ethnoidentity in

system of personal motivation and regulation of activity.

Accessory of any social community satisfies certain needs of the individual and shows, on the one hand, meaning of identification with group, with another hand – individual structure of his motivational sphere. A sense of ethnic relationship can be means to satisfaction of all requirements inherent in the person, but more it is connected with motivation of safety, need for accessory certain «We» and with motivation of self-affirmation – «I-motivation». The least valuable, from the point of view of moral criteria, the option of personal meaning of ethnoidentity is a personal self-affirmation. When the ethnic sense gives to the person feeling of own importance at the expense of belonging to great (rich, ancient, original, etc.) national culture. In this case emotion of pride is prevailing.

The personal meaning of ethnoidentity is presented by the relation senses of national love and pride. Pride – the feeling lifting us over other people. It means comparison, attention emphasis on own advantages, the jealous relation to another's successes. In contrast to the pride, love is the feeling which is not demanding rational justification. Power of maternal love doesn't depend on advantages and perfection of the child and if depends, it's not maternal love, but something absolutely other. I love my people, not because it's better, stronger, etc., etc., but because this is my people – such position more humanly and more difficult to stay on it. Other more is peculiar to people: to consider that the events in the culture is naturally and to operate that members of your group were the winner. The list towards pride easily leads to nationalism, but «the nationalism is how patriotism is reprehensible» (Bulgakov, 1991: 183).

As researchers note, in many cultures there is a tendency of an identification national and state (Ryan, 1995: 3). It is possible to assume that

one of the reasons of this phenomenon consists in understanding of importance of patriotic education, as in the case of military conflict people should protect the state, not relatives. It is thought, this, apparently, pragmatical argument, not quite works, as qualities of the defender of the fatherland are quality moral, they depend not only and even not so much on ethnoidentification, how many from values of fidelity, honor, advantage formed in a family.

Conclusions:

1. Basic elements of system of ethnoconsciousness are: the meaning of sense of ethnic origin, expressing specifics of an ethnic community; signs of ethnic self-identification and psychosemantics of ethnic sense, its personal sense.
2. The main ethnoforming factor, according to the author, is the consciousness and emotional experience of blood-relationship ties. A semantic core is not

the blood relationship as that, but idea of relationship, value of the family kinship relations.

3. Indications (signs) of an ethnic community are: ethnonym, language, religion, cultural community, etc.
4. The mentality or national character doesn't belong to signs of ethnoidentity. Firstly, owing to the semantic uncertainty; secondly, because concerning many ethnoses idea of features of national character grows out of an external evaluation.
5. Personal meaning of ethnoidentity is manifested that as what means of satisfaction of requirements belonging to an ethnic community serves. The sense of national pride manifests motivation of self-affirmation, a sense of love and affection – the motivation of accession. The ability to protect the interests of the nation depends on moral qualities of the individual.

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Этническое сознание: личностный смысл и знаки этноидентичности

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Статья посвящена анализу сущности и структуры этнического сознания.

В современной этнологии получила широкое признание идея о том, что этническое самосознание является основным этнообразующим фактором. По мнению автора, сущность этноса состоит в том значении, которое имеет для этнофоров их принадлежность к этнической группе.

Этническое самосознание следует рассматривать в единстве его основных компонентов. Таковыми являются: смысл чувства этнической принадлежности, выражающий специфику этнической общности; знаки этнической самоидентификации и психосемантика этнического чувства - ее личностный смысл. Основным этнообразующим фактором является признание ценности кровнородственной связи, признаками которой являются: этноним, язык, культурная общность и т.п. Данные культурные феномены выступают в роли знаков, указывающих на общность происхождения, что не умаляет их значения как силы консолидирующей этнические общности.

К знакам этноидентичности не относится психический склад, или национальный характер, во-первых, в силу своей семантической неопределенности; во-вторых, потому, что в отношении многих этносов представление о чертах национального характера является результатом внешней оценки.

Психосемантика этнического чувства – это, его эмоциональное наполнение, место в системе ценностей данного индивида, соотносённость с мотивирующей сферой. Чувство любви и привязанности как проявление «Мы-мотивации» является более предпочтительным по сравнению с чувством гордости, как проявлением мотивации самоутверждения.

Ключевые слова: этнос, этническая идентичность, знаки этнической принадлежности, психосемантика этнического чувства, мотивация этноидентичности.
