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CULTURE AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION

1. Introduction: nation and nationalism in the contemporary world

If we asked which of social problems of the contemporary world attracts the attention of the observers of the social scene to the greatest extent, the problem of nation would be in the focus of attention. We can talk here about two processes taking place at the same time, namely:

1. processes of integration transcending the national and state scale, and
2. eruption of ethnic and national conflicts.

The indicator of the former can be the growing role of all kinds of supranational organizations from industrial corporations, to the United Nations and its agencies to the European Union. National states which have emerged recently aspire to the membership of those organizations.

At the same time, however, growing national and ethnic conflicts are something which absorbs the attention. The outbreak of World War I between multinational empires proved that national (state) interests were more important than class solidarity. Nazism and World War II raised again a question about a role of nationalism and its worst type chauvinism in stimulating human masses to action. For social consciousness Holocaust was more significant than extermination of millions of Armenians by Turks after World War I.

As a result of the collapse of the multinational empires - after World War I and II there emerged many national states. It is a paradox that it did not stop but intensified ethnic and national conflicts. The collapse of the communist system resulted in their further escalation (Caucasus, former Yugoslavia).

We should also mentioned here processes of the rebirth of national aspirations and separatist tendencies in traditionally stabilized societies such as Belgium, Spain, Great Britain.

All this raises again a question about significance of national divisions for functioning of contemporary societies. Which processes are dominant at present: of integration or disintegration? Is it possible to find factors which stimulate social integration?

The present paper is an attempt to present the process of nation-formation in Poland and analyse those factors which influenced this process.

2. Nation and nation-building process in the sociological perspective

Nation, as many basic analytical categories in sociology, is a concept burdened with a sin of ambiguity. An agreement concerns only the statement that it is a type of community. Controversies start when it is necessary to determine its constituting distinctive elements differentiating it from other communities. In fact, in this case it concerns a definition of elements making up group ties. There is no agreement if such properties as common territory and language, which seem inseparable from the concept of nation, are necessary for its emergence, although nobody questions their importance for formation of national ties. Therefore, what are the factors that constitute the nation? There are two traditions here.

The first one is linked with analyzing nation in political categories assuming that basically we can talk about a nation meaning citizens of a national state. Perhaps it is connected with misunderstanding stemming from content similarity of the terms 'nation' and 'people'. In this case nation would be an ethnic category with its own distinctive cultural characteristics (a language, culture, tradition) and nation (citizens of a state) would be political category ('people'). Nation/people would be treated as an agent of history, an agent of political actions, a source of legitimation of authority.

The second tradition stresses rather a cultural than political aspects of national ties. It refers to common history, tradition, shared symbols and values. The nation in this theory is a community of culture. This approach is represented by Znaniecki (1990) and Gellner (1983), although for Gellner a community of culture is formed within the organizational framework of a state.

Certainly, it does not mean that analyzing nation in terms of a political community leads to depreciation of its cultural factors. Similarly, the cultural option does not neglect political aspirations and characteristics of nations.

It seems that both components are important in sociological analysis of nation-formation processes. Perhaps there is some truth in the theories pointing to an evolution of national communities from "eth-

nic" nation as a cultural community to "political" nation as a cultural-political community.

However, there appears a question concerning the issue when we can talk about nation. What conditions must be satisfied so that an ethnic group could become a nation?

If nation is meant as form of some social group, then its objective features allowing to distinguish it from other groups must be accompanied by consciousness processes, group (national) identification, feelings of national "identity". The meaning of the term "identity" taken from psychology and psychoanalysis can be limited to the problems of attitudes and ethnic representations reflected in stereotypes, prejudices, and primarily in ethnic and national self-identification of individuals belonging to various cultural groups (cf. Kloskowska, 1992: 132). However, it does not exhaust a problem of a form and content of national consciousness. It has not only its individual, psychological dimensions. There exist such properties which turn our attention to processes which can be analysed beyond an individual level.

Individual attitudes are socially determined. They are shaped in socialization process, whose important element is value internalization. Values accepted and put into practice are subjects toward which certain actions are directed. Although there is individual motivation beyond each of them, their sources are most often outside an individual, in reality surrounding him, in group models of behavior and social norms guarding realization of the most important group values.

Therefore, national identity analysed as something beyond the individual level would have the following aspects:

1. group value system,
2. a set of group symbols and meanings, i.e., group cultural code allowing to perceive oneself as a member of a group and, what is more important, to perceive in a specific way social reality and members of other groups,
3. group normative system, usually with legal sanctions (when we talk about national state)
4. a set of identification attitudes with values and symbols.

It seems that we come to the core of the problem. Irrespectively of the adopted theory of nation - a political or a cultural community - in order to stimulate community ties and individual attitudes of identification with a community, there must be present a set of values, symbols and norms, i.e., a cultural component. There must appear a system of repre-

sentations not only of individual nature about features of one's own group, its origins, development and place in the world. "A national community must exist as a represented community" (Kloskowska, 1992: 133).

There appears a question, when and under what circumstances such a type of "a represented community" emerges. Its certain elements can already be found on the level of isolated tribal communities with homogeneous culture. Representations of a community can be found in myths, especially those referring to the group origins, its totemic ancestors, ways of social and natural reality perception and a place of a group in it.

However, a modern nation is different from a tribal community in many respects. It is not isolated, it is not so culturally homogeneous, it is much more socially differentiated. It is a product of transformation processes of global society. We can basically agree with Gellner that it is a community of an industrial society (Gellner, 1983). It is also a result of a process of forming consciousness of belonging to a global community, identification with a wider territory, with symbols very often different from those which were typical of a local community. Formation of nation and national consciousness consists also in transcending group barriers, formation of new types of social bonds and in this way entering new, very often different spheres of symbolic culture.

"Uniting ethnic groups into nations often took place through imposing culture because of military and political domination. The principle of Augsburg peace treaty, referring to religion can be paraphrased extending it into a domain of national culture: *cuius regio eius natio* (...) (Kloskowska, 1992: 133). This process had two aspects. The first one, when a new standard of national culture was created in multi-ethnic society. In that case a dominant group exerted cultural violence toward other ethnic groups. The second aspect concerned a situation when a standard of national culture formed in a society which has homogeneous ethnically. Here also a process of imposing a cultural standard on other social categories by elites took place. The result of those processes was formation of such culture, such a set of symbols and attitudes which had some form of legitimation. I think, it is hard to imagine such a process of formation of a legitimate standard without its being supported by a social institution, whose function includes culture transmission. To make this process effective socialization process in a family and a local community was not enough. A global institution was necessary. This institution was school.

3. Mechanisms of nation-building process: a Polish case

It stems from the remarks presented above that the following factors are important for the process of national integration, i.e., formation of a national community:

1. nature of society (state, regional community) in which nation-formation process takes place,
2. a type of culture aspiring to "legitimate standard" - one's own or somebody else's,
3. nation-formation functions of elites - nobility, bourgeoisie, inteligentsia,
4. nation-building functions of global institutions: churches, school, associations and political institutions.

The Polish case and nation-building process taking place there can be an excellent, almost model-like illustration of impact of all those factors. Poles as an ethnic group were exposed to various cultures: universal Christian culture, German, Russian, Byzantine and Eastern, primarily Turkish culture. It is difficult to speak about ethnic homogeneity of the medieval society and we should not extend so much into the past the beginnings of Polish nation-building processes, as it is attempted by some historians. Later, from the fifteenth to eighteenth century Poland was multi-ethnic society where the processes of colonization of Lithuanian and Russian elites - aristocracy, nobility and bourgeoisie, took place. In the late eighteenth century, after the first partition the Commission of National Education, the first ministry of education in the world introduces into whole school system - also in Lithuania and Ruthenia - Polish language as a language of instruction. It can be treated as a colonization measure.

The collapse of the state as a result of Poland's partitions by her neighbors took place at the time when Europe nation-building processes gathered speed. Further impetus was given by the French Revolution giving the political character to national community. Nation-building processes are accompanied by a process of building civil society, which can be best seen in revolutionary France and Prussia. Then Poles incorporated to three foreign state organisms had to look for others than political factors of national integration, such as social elites - "nobility (gentry) nation", Catholic Church, historical tradition and a set of symbols referring to the past state sovereignty.

The role of social elites in formation of a national community is a rule difficult to overestimate. They are usually creators of legitimate

culture, they define its standard. They create those representations of a community, including national mythologies. Polish national culture, especially its core has nobility-intelligentsia origins. However, its basic core, a value system, symbols, a way of nation perception and its role comes from the nobility culture, taken over and cultivated by intelligentsia. It has its advantages and disadvantages. Culture of educated classes includes universal elements typical of other national cultures. A danger lies in the fact that imposing a cultural standard on other categories accustomed to their traditions, custom and habits, their way of reality perception can inhibit a process of building national consciousness of those groups, especially peasants. Polish tradition and history created from the intelligentsia perspective.

I mentioned above that an important role in the nation-building process is played by global institutions. Their role is to awaken national consciousness. They often appeal to nationalism as a mechanism of collective action. It is a technique used by political parties. It refers not only to multi-ethnic but also to ethnically homogeneous societies. It is a technique of focusing on a real or imaginary enemy. In Polish tradition attitudes toward neighbors were marked in such way. In common consciousness there appeared negative ethnic stereotypes of German, Teutonic Knights, Jews, Russians, Ukrainians, Cossacks, Tartars, Turks, which were intensified by literature written to raise spirits. Political parties appealed to such representations.

We should mention significance of two global institutions: Catholic Church and school. The former one was during partitions a center of not only religious but also of national identification. A Pole was a Catholic, a Prussian occupant - a Lutheran, a Russian occupant - an Orthodox. Religious identification allowed to differentiate one's own people and foreigners. Church and parish became a center of national education, a place where legally - apart from one's house - one could speak Polish officially. The prayer book was often text which served as a textbook for learning reading.

In the nobility tradition there was present not only religious tolerance which was enjoyed and cherished in sixteenth-century Poland, but also a myth of Poland as 'ramptars of Christianity' with her role of holding back pagans (Turks). Hence in a national stereotype of a Pole his Catholicism, attachment to the 'religion of fathers', attachment to symbols of ritualized religious practices became almost inseparable, leading to the connection a Pole-a Catholic functioning until today. Per-

haps this religious aspect present in the national culture standard and national consciousness was a factor which made easier processes of making folk masses, especially peasants, conscious of their national belonging.

The role of school and educational systems is not less important. It has to fulfill a specific function: co-creation of nation conscious of its agency. The question is if school is capable of realizing this function. Can school be a factor of social (national) integration in those processes, enabling to overcome tribal differences, remains of the epoch of empires? It is a question which should be raised although an answer to it requires further studies.

It is a curious fact that students of nation-building processes did not pay much attention to state and national systems of education participating in them. The object of their analyses was rather a role of political institutions, especially a state, social movements; they tried to define conditions in which ethnic groups become nations. They decided to stress importance of educational systems in forming political elites (Shils, 1965; Benda, 1968; Gellner, 1983). An exception was Chalasinski's research on processes of nationalization of folk masses, especially peasants and his hypothesis about role of school in this respect (Chalasinski, 1938, 1969) and M. Mead's (1961) research on school as a tool of young immigrants' acculturation.

In Polish conditions a role of school in forming national consciousness and integration is very important. It is connected with a specific situation of nation/people divided between three partitioning empires, incorporated into different cultural and civilization systems. Obviously, there appears here an important problem both theory and practice, how to understand a term of 'national integration' in the school context. School of partitioning powers was an instrument of integration. Its role was to integrate society - as a rule multinational - around common goals and overcome differences stemming from class, religious, group, ethnic (national) belonging. It is an excellent example of relativity of our thinking of social facts. School of occupants was not perceived by majority of Poles as a factor of integration but of disintegration. Imposing a foreign cultural standard, foreign language, foreign value systems, norm of obedience toward a partitioning state were to bring about loosening national ties, to destroy national consciousness of Poles, to make them citizens of state and finally - make them Germans, Austrians, Russians. This process can be called "imposed assimilation", imposed

because the object of this process of conscious influence did not want to undergo it and did not feel any need for assimilation going so far.

In the estate society a question of national integration basically did not exist, because ethnic and cultural differences were less important than estate or religious differences. Therefore, the Polish nobility found it relatively easier to recognize superior authority of other monarch so long as it did not violate its estate privileges. For a peasant state belonging, feeling of national ties was also less important than his material and legal situation (subjection to his master, duties to his master, etc.). It is possible that this estate model of society had some impact on a national program of communists who believed that class differences were more important than any others. A famous slogan "Proletarians have no country" referred to this way of thinking, which put a Polish peasant in position of an observer and not a participant of national uprisings, because from the estate perspective it was not his business. Communists also referred to a role of objective socio-economic conditions, defining conditions of the working class existence.

There appears a question, when, in what conditions school can be a factor intervening in the nation-building process. In my opinion, it is possible when school goes beyond "the critical point", the point of mass schooling, then its influence can be really universal. It is at the moment of introducing compulsory school. Now we should add a further, important condition. Compulsory school must be one's own national school. In Poland this condition was fulfilled after regaining independence.

However, before regaining independence there took place two, in my opinion important, facts: first, obtaining considerable autonomy by Galicia and following it education in a national language on a much wider scale (although school was de facto Austrian and not Polish). Secondly, on the territories of other occupants there developed forms of alternative education toward state German or Russian school. They were certainly a factor of national integration.

The goals of the alternative education functioning illegally and in secret as follows:

1. striving to keep national identity through patriotic education, teaching Polish language and literature, Polish history and geography, i.e., subjects that were forbidden in state German or Russian school,
2. education on elementary level of wide folk masses, especially peasants and workers as a core of nation and in this way enabling

them to understand national symbolic culture and continuation of their nationalization,

3. preparing specialists necessary for independent Poland, creating a group of modern Polish intelligentsia, core of struggle for the Polish nation-state...

As can be seen, the goal was to keep up and create essential elements of national consciousness. It was not only national education, but an attempt to integrate various social classes and groups, possessing contradictory interests, differing in cultures and perceiving the world, society and their place in them in a different way. The basis on which it could have been done was an idea of a nation and one's own national state. It may sound paradoxically, but measures of partitioning powers taken against Polish national tradition, history, culture etc., strengthened Polish integration processes.

In the inter-war period Polish school was used by the state authorities as an instrument of national integration. School helped to overcome regional cultural differences resulting from long-lasting belongings to foreign state and culture organisms. It allowed to introduce culture and national tradition to folk masses (peasants and workers), who were up till then on their outskirts. In this way, in my opinion school contributed to intensification of processes of nationalization of those categories. The necessary condition of this process was national, universal school.

During the Nazi occupation the underground school system fulfilled a function of national self-defense. Responsible for that were both authorities of the underground Polish state and masses of teachers conscious of their social role, who in this way realized norms of professional and group ethos. This type of activity was very important for processes of social and national integration. A certain indicators, although a bit imperfect of growing national integration and successes in this respect can be attitudes of Polish society during the Nazi occupation.

4. Contemporary problems: national culture at risk

The second half of our century is the time when the process of culture unification and universalization is growing, due mainly to modern electronic mass media. The world becomes MacLuhan's "global village". Monopolization and concentration of cultural goods production, absent before takes place. It becomes a threat to cultural identity of small and young nations, because it creates a danger of new, perhaps

more dangerous dependence on old colonial powers (cf. Carnoy, 1974, Wiatr, 1982). School was and still is an instrument of cultural transmission and introduction to symbolic culture. I wonder if in new, recently formed and still integrating national societies it would be possible to counteract universal contents and put stress on what is specific, national, and not foreign, in the educational process. Isn't it so that character of transmitted school knowledge strengthens those unifications and universal tendencies, whose main channels of transmission are mass media (Bourdieu, 1971; Horton, 1971), the more so that educational systems of developing countries are modeled on systems of former colonial powers or the most developed countries (eg. the USA in Latin America).

At the same time knowledge and technology also underwent a process of concentration and monopolization. That is why for new, developing states old colonial powers became models of their own cultural, educational, economic and political institutions. The system of education, apart from the mass media becomes an instrument of "cultural imperialism" using Carnoy's term, which becomes a considerable threat to national identity of new and smaller, weaker economically and politically nations (Wiatr, 1982).

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Културата и националната интеграција

Резиме

Соопштението претставува обид за прикажување на влијанието на теориските релевантни фактори врз процесот на конституирање на нацијата како таква на примерот на процесот на конституирањето на полската нација. Укажувајќи на општо теориската значајност на социостратификациската структура на општеството, типот на културата која се промовира како национален стандард, на функциите на елитите и на глобалните институции како, на пример, црквите, политичките институции, здруженијата и сл., авторот посочува на особено значајната улога на училиштето и образовниот систем во формирањето на полската нација. Социјалните и политичките прилики во кои се развивало полското општество и полскиот училишен и образовен систем ја условиле појавата на „алтернативното образование“ како најрана форма и механизам на процесот на национализација на масите, особено на селаните. Нагласувајќи ја улогата на елитите во тој процес, авторот посочува дека полската интелигенција ја извела културната матрица на одбраната од „наметнатата асимилација“ од полската благородничка традиција, а не од фолклорната или граѓанската традиција.