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The Political Affiliation of Russian Minority in Ukraine and Belarus

Bakalářská diplomová práce

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OLOMOUC 2011

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podpis

V Olomouci dne 15. dubna 2011

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Introduction

The Belavezha Accords, signed on December, 8th 1991 by the heads of three Soviet Socialist Republics meant the end of USSR and formalized the independence of all of its former member-states. Simultaneously, it started the process of redefinition of interethnic relations. The status and role of ethnic minorities, especially the Russian minority, in the newly established states were discussed a lot during the 1990's whereas today this topic has lost its attractiveness for researchers. However, the influence of Russian minority remains one of the most important factors in forming the current and future politics of these successor states, especially in the light of their possible membership in international organizations and closer relations with the West.

Independent Belarusian and Ukrainian states were created after the dissolution of USSR. As these nations have historically had close relations with Russia, one of the biggest challenges in Belarusian and Ukrainian politics after the declaration of independence became the issue of connecting with the rest of Europe. The Russian identity and its influence played a significant role in both of these states and after declaring independence Ukraine and Belarus were at the beginning of the way to (re-)create their own national identities. The willingness to initiate this process and its success influenced the future political and social status of Russian minorities, the necessity to organize them and try to reshape the politics according to their interests. Moreover, both of these countries are closely connected with and dependent on Russia in economic terms. Thus, for Belarus and Ukraine a turn to the West would mean the weakening of their relations with Russia, which can come at a high price both politically and economically. On the other hand, especially after 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the EU has drawn closer to Ukraine and Belarus and can now offer new opportunities for its neighboring countries within the framework of

European Neighborhood Policy, which includes Belarus and Ukraine. However, Russia still considers Belarus and Ukraine to be within its sphere of influence and there is the possibility that it will try to affect the future direction of these states. Thus, Ukraine and Belarus are facing a number of choices. Should they preserve the connection with Russia from its past or change the direction and turn into pro-Western countries? Can they apply for EU or NATO membership? And can Russia in some way influence the choice of Ukraine and Belarus? There are a lot of important facts that should be taken into account when analyzing the current situation in Belarus and Ukraine, like regime itself, civic society or the economic situation. Among these one of the important factor politically remains the presence of significant Russian minorities in both countries as well as the issue of Russian and persistent Soviet identity.

To analyze this topic it is crucial to know the attitudes of Russian community, which means to know their geo-political orientation (whether they favor EU and NATO membership, some form of a Union with Russia, the option of unification on the post-Soviet space etc.), and also the level of their assimilation – the language they use, identity they adopt, social status, religion, region they live in and the later mentioned process of redefinition of interethnic relation because after the breakup of the Soviet Union large Russian communities found themselves in the successor states of USSR and their status of being a majority in the USSR changed into being the minority in the newly established states. Moreover, the breakup of the USSR brought the intention of each successor state to define its own identity that would be different from the Russian one and thus necessitate the formation of a coherent minority politics with respect to minorities, the Russian minority being the biggest one. The role of Russians in post-Soviet states is highly dependent on redefining its new identities, the political leadership's attitude toward Russia and the West. The process of creating the new identities is based on defining them as non-

Russians. This fact is very important. We can say that many Russians still do not consider themselves to be a minority (which is a reflection of old “Soviet” identity) but the leaders of Ukrainian, Estonian or Latvian nations do. In many cases, the political leadership of successor states representing the majority considers Russian minorities to be a part of Russia, not the part of their own states, thus precluding them from a possible integration in the newly created societies and giving them no other chance than to maintain their connection with Russia. On the basis of this fact we can say that the states where the Russian identity is still predominant and the political leaders stress tighter connections with Russia than with the West, create the political milieu that is Russian-disposed and the organizational structure for Russian minority is missing or it is not such developed as in the states with pro-Western orientation where the Russian identity was replaced by the new one.

This paper deals with the role of Russian minorities in Ukrainian and Belarusian politics after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, with particular attention given to the impact the Russian minorities exercise on the politics of the two after year 2000 and argues that because of Belarusian and Ukrainian internal political situation- Lukashenka’s regime in Belarus and the non-consolidated democracy in Ukraine- and traditional ties with Russia and the role of large Russian minorities play a crucial role when deciding about the future of these countries. The central research goal of the thesis is to find out the role of Russian minorities in Belarusian and Ukrainian politics. In order to do so, we will answer the following research questions that will help us to understand the current status of Russian minorities in Ukraine and Belarus and their political importance: What is the present position of Russian minorities in Belarus and Ukraine? What is their attitude towards their residence states? Is there any way how could they influence politics and do they need to? Are there any signs of their mobilization or creating organizational structures?

Ukraine and Belarus shared the great part of their history. Both unsuccessfully tried to establish independent states at the beginning of 20th century and both were Russified during the Soviet era. This is a period long enough to expect the similarities in the cultural stereotypes, use of language or economic situation. Moreover, both proclaimed their independence after the breakup of the Soviet Union and have the experience of building the new state and what is even more important for our research both faced the same issues when dealing with the creating of their new national identity and the Russians who remained in these newly established democracies. Thus, the conditions for the Russian minority in Belarus and Ukraine were and still are similar. For this reason we use comparative method and our decision is even more backed up by the fact that Russian minority is supposed to come from one homeland which is Russia. Thus we can expect similar starting position of Russian minorities in both countries.

The theoretical part of this work is based on the model of ethnic bargaining that was presented by Erin K. Jenne in her article *A Bargaining Theory of Minority Demands: Explaining the Dog that Did not Bite in 1990s Yugoslavia* and later in her book *Ethnic bargaining: The Paradox of Minority of Empowerment*. This theory is designed to explain the minority claim-making within the ethnically divided society. The theory works with the tripolar model defining as three basic actors, involved in the process of the ethnic bargaining, the majority, minority and the third actor which is called the “lobby actor”, The basic characteristic of Jenne’s theory is that the minority in the host state claims concrete demands. We give special attention to the factors the can cause the initiation of the ethnic bargaining. We describe and explain these factors that serve us as the base for the analysis of the status of the Russian minority in Belarusian and Ukrainian societies. The theory of ethnic bargaining will help us to understand the importance of the Russian minority in terms of Belarusian

and Ukrainian politics because by using this theory we will explain the capacity of Russian minority to mobilize itself and start claim-making.

Due to the specific status of Russian minority in Belarus and Ukraine and the similar historical development of those countries the comparison is possible. The comparison will show whether the same starting position of Russian minority in Belarus and Ukraine results in the same footing of the Russian minority within the Belarusian and Ukrainian societies. We expect that the results of this research will confirm our assumption that Russian minority does not perceive itself as the subordinate group. This implies that they do not consider necessary to organize themselves or to put forward claims. However, they dispose of capacity to influence political or social relations. We formulate the following hypothesis. The potential for Russian minority's mobilization and thus the initiation of the process of ethnic bargaining is higher in Ukraine than in Belarus, because the level of support for majority (Ukrainian) identity in Ukraine is higher than the respective level in Belarus.

The analysis is based on the sources that researched the minorities and diasporas in the Former Soviet republics and because the breakup of the USSR aroused the interest among the scholars about the possible effects of creating new societies, the variety of resources which are dedicated to the forming minorities, including Russian minorities, in post-Soviet era can be found. The formation of Russian minorities and its history after the dissolution of the Soviet Union is based on the literature from 1990' and also the latest books and newest research covering this field were used. The analysis of recent situation in Ukraine and Belarus is based mainly on the newspaper and journal articles. The book I would like to mention here is the book *Identity formation: the Russian-speaking populations in the near* written by David D. Laitin.

There is lack of recent English sources dedicated to the influence of Russian minorities in post soviet republics, limited number of Russian sources and

prevails the literature that describes the minorities in general without concerning the political aspect. As the example we can mention the work of Bernd Simon and Bert Klandermans *Politicized Collective Identity, Cognitive and affective experiences of minority and majority members: The role of group size, status, and power* by Markus Lüthen and Bernd Simon or *the article Power and Status differentials in minority and majority group relations* written by Itesh Sachdev and Richard Y. Bourhis. All these research papers represent the social-psychological approach to the minority and majority issue.

The first chapter of this work presents the theory of ethnic bargaining described by Erin K. Jenne. The analysis of this theory is also included. The special attention is given to the explanation and description of the conditions that need to be completed to observe conditions that cause the initiation of the ethnic bargaining process. The second chapter is focused on the Russian minorities in Belarus and Ukraine. We will focus on their proportional representation in the society, the language they use, the perception of their identity and the identity of the host state as well as the character of the host state's identity. This data serve as the background for the comparative analysis of status of the Russian minority.

1 Erin K. Jenne's ethnic bargaining theory

The goal of this chapter is to describe the ethnic bargaining theory of Erin K. Jenne. Firstly the definition of the ethnic bargaining is presented and the basic characteristics are explained. Secondly we draw attention to some of the problematic aspects that should be answered before we start the proper analysis. The first suggestion concerns the definition of minority and majority group. The second suggestion concerns the importance of the group identification and adopting the group identity. Finally the implication between the group mobilization and the importance of the group identity will be discussed.

The ethnic bargaining itself is defined by Erin K. Jenne as 'the modes and practices by which minorities negotiate with the majority over the group's claimant status to the state institutions', where 'the opportunity structure is itself a potent motive for group radicalization'. The ethnic bargaining starts when minority begins to demand concrete claims under the proviso that there exists a political opportunity structure. By political opportunity structure Jenne's means 'elements in the environment that impose certain constraints on political activity or open avenues for it'.¹ According to her theory the necessary condition for the emergence of the ethnic conflict is the minority mobilization.²

The Jenne's theory of the ethnic bargaining works with the model based on the interaction of three actors - majority, minority, and lobby actor. At the beginning we will focus on the definitions that Jenne presents in her book: "Majority is a group that exercises political dominance in the state, even if it is not in the numerical majority and minority is an ethnic group that is

¹ Jenne 2007, 10-14.

² Jenne 2007, 39.

numerically inferior to the politically dominant group in the state or de facto sovereign unit.³ Finally, there is the third actor that plays decisive role in the Jenne's model of ethnic bargaining and it is the lobby actor. The lobby actor 'may be powerful state, organization, interest group or military alliance that intervenes or threatens to intervene on behalf of the minority against its host government.'⁴ Jenne emphasizes that influence of the lobby actor on the minority claim-making is greater than the influence of the majority.⁵

At first it is essential to know when we can distinguish the ethnic majority and minority group within the society and to determine the moment when ethnicity starts to play such important role that it can influence or even dominate the political agenda is fundamental because; the fact that we can distinguish the majority and minority group within the state does not necessarily mean that we will observe the interaction between those two segments. They can simply live alongside each other without any particular relationship developed between them.

There are various examples on how to define the majority and minority using different criteria and we should be aware of such diversity. The most common are the definitions that explain the majority and minority taking into account their size or number of members included. For example Kristin Henrard works in her paper with the definition of minority that is, among the others variables, based on numerical criteria. 'A minority is a population group with ethnic, religious and linguistic characteristics differing from the rest of the population, which is non-dominant, numerically smaller than the rest of the population and has the wish to hold on to its separate identity.'⁶ But there are also definitions that use as criteria power and/or social status. 'Such definitions assign low-status or relatively powerless groups a minority position and high-status or

³ Jenne 2007, 14.

⁴ Jenne 2007, 97.

⁵ Jenne 2004, 738.

⁶ Henrard 2001, 43.

relatively powerful groups a majority position, even when the numerical relation is balanced or reversed.’⁷ For example H. Tajfel and J. C. Turner work with this type of definitions. They use terminology ‘dominant’ and ‘subordinate’ group instead of using the concepts of ‘majority’ and ‘minority’.

We propose the argument that there is significant difference between these two ways of how to define majority and minority. The definitions based on the numerical criteria describe the structure of society in numbers. In other words, according to these definitions we can distinguish numerically superior and inferior segments, but they do not explain the relation between them. Nevertheless, we should not confuse the definition based on the numerical criteria with the size of the minority or majority group. On the contrary, the definitions based on power and/or status criteria allow more detailed insight in this problematic because they explain the mutual dependence among the segments of the society.

Based on this we can conclude that Jenne defines the majority and minority groups on a different basis. Her definition of majority is based on power or status criteria; however, the minority is explained by using the numerical criteria. She says that the majority is politically dominant but does not have to be numerically predominant; on the other hand, she affirms that minority is always numerically inferior to the politically dominant group. We argue that such definition could be confusing because if the possibility that majority is not numerically predominant group exists than the minority can be numerically larger than majority. Based on her definitions of majority and minority it would be problematic to classify the relationship between the black and white populations in South Africa because there we can observe the situation when white minority ruled against the black majority.⁸ The definition of the minority

⁷ Lücken and Simon 2005, 397.

⁸ Bourhis and Sachdev 1991, 20.

should be specified and both definitions should take into account the same criteria.

The Jenne's theory is based on the premise that two or more segments defined on the basis of ethnicity already exist in the society and such segments are highly aware of their diversity. Nevertheless, we should also consider the difference between the situation when the minority, due to the internal and external circumstances, understands its identity as to be different from the majority one, and the situation when the members of the minority group do not accept the status of minority group. The first case mentioned above illustrates the situation when strict line between the identity of majority and minority is already evident and the assumption is that both groups, majority and minority, are aware of their uniqueness and feel the need to protect it. The explanation of the second scenario can be that the impulse to make the difference between the minority and majority, or between 'them' and 'us', is not necessarily reciprocal. It can be initiated unilaterally by the majority. It implies the necessity to question the prerequisite of the group membership and self-identification with the group.

The social-psychological approach can be helpful in defining membership. '[...] the essential criteria for group membership, as they apply to large-scale social categories, are that the individuals concerned define themselves and are defined by others as members of a group.'⁹ According to this definition the necessary condition for the group emergence is the self-identification of the individuals with the group identity and the recognition of such group by the other actors. However, Pål Kolstø argues that 'the members of minority group may see themselves as clearly "rooted" in the land, while the members of the majority culture would be unwilling to accept this claim'.¹⁰ Or, for example, the results of Crawford Young's research in the Congo, mentioned by David D.

⁹ Tajfel and Turner 1986, 15.

¹⁰ Kolstø 1999, 608.

Laitin in his book, illustrate the situation when the Bangala tribe was forced to accept the minority's status by other actor. This tribe did not exist as a group until the Belgians recognized local boundaries.¹¹ The important role of outside actor in the intra-ethnic conflict also accents David D. Laitin in his book *Identity formation: the Russian-speaking populations in the near abroad*. He says that 'if the national homeland is powerful enough, it might provide sufficient security to the national minority that the minority would not deem it necessary to rush into conflict before the window of opportunity closed'.¹² Based on these examples we can that the outside actor can have a great impact on the forming and defining the minority group and we argue that the individuals do not have to identify themselves with the group identity to be treated by the host state as part of such group. This is also confirmed by Jenne statement: '(...) the salience of ethnicity can be expected to rise when a minority's host government and/or lobby actor send credible signals of nationalist intent. If, for example the host government and lobby actor are engaged in a conflict over the minority's status, individuals will be more likely to mobilize on an ethnic basis.'¹³

Finally we focus on the minority's group mobilization and the claim-making because Jenne considers the mobilization to be the necessary prerequisite to the development of the ethnic conflict. The minority mobilization requires its active participation in achieving its demands. Then, we assume that the individuals will mobilize on ethnic basis only when they will assume group identity. In other words, the mobilization will be observed only when the ethnicity salience is raised and the mobilization is the first condition to be fulfilled before we can observe the claim-making. To make claims a certain level of organizational structures is required within the mobilized ethnic minority's community because the claims they demand are collective, not

¹¹ Laitin 1998, 334.

¹² Laitin 1998, 328-329.

¹³ Jenne 2007, 48.

individual. In other words, the minority acts as a unit and the existence of the decision-making and/or representatives is highly probable. 'It may be that political independence is only sought by highly compact groups, because of the fact that dispersed groups are insufficiently integrated-both economically and politically-to make credible claims for statehood.'¹⁴

In regard to the concept of the model based on the participation of three actors we can also mention the works of other scholars. For example, Bernard Simon and Bert Klandermans present the similar way how to classify the intra-social relation in their article *Politicized Collective Identity*. Their model is based on the assumption that the power struggle exists among the segments of the society and also works with statement that at least three actors are involved in the social conflicts. 'Typically, the following three parties are likely be involved: two antagonistic parties or groups, one of which may be an elite or authority, and the general public (or representatives thereof) as the third party, which each of the two antagonistic groups tries to control or otherwise enlist for its own particularistic interest.'¹⁵ However, this model is based on the presumption that lobby actor involves after the power struggle between the majority and majority has already been developed. Simon and Klandermans say that at the beginning there is awareness of shared grievances, the external enemy is blamed for the group's predicament and the compensation is demanded by the minority group. If the demands are not granted the minority group can seek the third actor to be involved in the power struggle and becomes fully politicized.¹⁶ On the other hand, Jenne's theory is based on the argument that the signals of nationalist intent are sent by the host state and lobby actor can raise the salience of ethnicity and thus increase the possibility of the minority group mobilization. This means that the lobby actor plays its role even before the demands of the minority are presented. Thus, we should

¹⁴ Jenne 2004, 734.

¹⁵ Simon and Klandermans 2001, 322.

¹⁶ Simon and Klandermans 2001, 324.

not underestimate the importance of the lobby actor because its willingness to support the minority group can result in the reinforcement of the difference between the ethnic minority and the host state. However, we argue that the presence of the lobby actor can only raise the salience of the ethnicity, not initiate the bargaining process. Its presence and willingness to act on behalf of the minority group is not the principal reason of the ethnically motivated division of the society. The principal cause of the division of the society on the ethical principles is the relationship between the majority and minority group.

The following analysis is based on the results obtained by the scrutiny of the Jenne's ethnic bargaining theory. In our case, the minority is represented by the ethnic Russian minority; the majority is represented by the ethnic majorities of Ukraine and Belarus. As we discussed above, the interaction among those actors and their attitudes involves in the formation and perception of minority group status. Primarily, we observe the perception of ethnic Russian minority identity within the society of Belarus and Ukraine and its self-identification. We consider those variables to be fundamental for development of the ethnic bargaining and minority's claim-making. Based on the conclusions we made about the definitions of the majority and minority group, in this paper we will work with both types of definitions. The definitions based on the numerical criteria will show us the numerical representation of Russians in the Belarusian and Ukrainian societies. The second type of definitions we will analyze is the relationship between the Russian population and the host states.

2 Analysis

The analysis deals with the status of Russian minority in Belarus and Ukraine. We will focus primarily on the following factors: the numerical representation and territorial composition of the minority, its language and identity. We consider these variables to be fundamental for exploring the status and the role of the Russian minority for the following reasons: the numerical representation and territorial composition describe the size of the minority group in comparison with titular group and its possible ability to mobilize. We share the following theoretical assumption laid down by Jenne: (...) the larger the minority is relative to the state, the greater the minority's ability to exit or alter the state framework.¹⁷ Another important thesis, stated by Taras Kuzio, which we will build upon, is that only in the regions with strong ethnocultural identities have the potential for such type of mobilization.¹⁸ However, those two variables do not suffice to present a comprehensive explanation of the status of the minority. For this reason we include language and the identity issue, which are central to forming the group identification. After dealing with this issue, we will continue with analyzing the host state identity. There we consider primarily the self-perception within the majority group and the perception of the minority group. The overall goal of this chapter is to provide the background for the following comparative analysis.

¹⁷ Jenne 2004, 734.

¹⁸ Kuzio 2003, 435.

2.1 Ukraine

According to the 2001 census the Russian population forms the largest ethnic minority group in Ukraine. They represent 17.3 percent of the republic's population. To compare it, in 1989 Russians represented 22.1 percent. Ukraine is divided into 24 regions (oblasts), one autonomous republic- Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and 2 special status cities- Sevastopol' and Kyiv. Russians form majority in Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in the city of Sevastopol', in Kyiv and in 22 regions they represent the second largest ethnic group, and only in two regions- Zakarpatti and Chernivtsi- the Russians account for the relatively low representation (2.5 and 4.1 percent). The regions with the largest Russian population are Donetsk, Luhans'k, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, and Zaporizhzhia.¹⁹ All of them are situated on the eastern part of the country.

The first fact to be observed is the language. The language is usually the first and one of the most important factors of the identification of individual or group identity. As Reeta Toivanen says: 'Language is not just a natural feature of minority groups, it is also a way in which environmental expectations contribute to form a group's identity; as in the case, for instance, in which minorities are expected to speak an "ancient" mother tongue, which they wish to preserve for future generation.'²⁰ Based on this we can expect that the language the Russian minority use will be one of the features that will distinguish the minority group from the majority.

The percentage of those whose mother tongue is Russian totals 29.6 percent of the population. Comparatively with the data of previous census this index has decreased by 3.2 percentage points. Almost ninety-six percent of the ethnic

¹⁹ All-Ukrainian population Census'2001.

²⁰ Toivanen 2007, 103.

Russians (95.9 percent) living in the Ukraine consider Russian as their first language.²¹ However, the Russian language is not restricted to the ethnic Russian community. ‘(...) the Russian language remains the language of international and interpersonal communication for a large part of the Ukrainian society.’²² This is in contradictory with the fact that Ukrainian Constitution adopted in 1996 defines the Russian language as the language of the minority because great number of the Ukrainian residents considers their native language Russian. ‘Nearly a quarter of ethnic Ukrainians (23%) specified the Russian language as their native in 2010.’²³ Here the problem with connecting the identity with language comes. In the case of Ukraine such approach will result in considering the Russian speaking ethnic Ukrainians to adopt the Russian identity and then the Russian identity would be in majority. We can find the explanation of such linguistic situation in Anna Fournier’s work: ‘(...) the shared language use is taken as evidence for the existence of an extended (or East Slavic) identity that includes Ukrainians.’²⁴ Thus, with regard to the linguistic situation we can conclude that there is no clear boundary between the majority and minority identity. The analysis of the self-perception of the Russian minority and majority-ethnic Ukrainians and their mutual relationship follows.

The research conducted by L. W. Barrington, E. S. Herron, and B. D. Silver brought relevant results concerning the Russian minority self-perception. In Ukraine very small percentage of the respondents claimed to be part of a national minority (18.8 percent).²⁵ This implies that most of the Russians living in Ukraine do not think about themselves in terms of being a member of the minority group and there are various arguments that support this statement. ‘The size of the group, its influence, long-standing residence and strong beliefs

²¹ All-Ukrainian population Census‘2001.

²² Ursulenko 2011, 2.

²³ Ursulenko 2011, 8.

²⁴ Fournier 2002, 418.

²⁵ Barrington, Herron, and Silver 2003, 298.

in Ukraine being a part of Russia's civilizational space led in the past, and continues to lead, many representatives of this group to refuse to accept minority status and to claim to be an integral part of a majority group that they describe as being constituted jointly by the Ukrainians and Russians.²⁶ The same explanation offers for example Taras Kuzio underlining the importance of the shared identity: 'Opinion polls in Russia since 1992 have consistently shown that a majority of Russians see Ukrainians and Belarusians not as separate ethnic groups but as somehow "Russian" (...).²⁷ The main reason why Russians do not accept the minority status is that they see no difference between themselves and the Ukrainian population. They perceive their identities to be equivalent. Stephene Shulman calls this shared identity Eastern Slavic identity: 'The main competitor to the Ethnic Ukrainian national identity is an Eastern Slavic one. This ethnic identity envisages the Ukrainian nation as founded on two primary ethnic groups, languages and cultures—Ukrainian and Russian—that are unified by their being embedded in common historical and cultural space.'²⁸ It appears from this that the Russian minority identifies itself with the Ukrainian territory but not with the Ukrainian identity. In other words, they identify themselves with the territory, not with the ethnic group. Anna Fournier writes that Russians living in Ukraine do not identify themselves with the Russian nation but with the Soviet identity and she argues that its identity is rather territorial or imperial than based on ethnicity. She says: '(...) supra-ethnic identities such as the "East Slavic" or "Soviet" identities (i.e. ones that allow for the expression of the both Russian and Ukrainian elements) are common among Russians, especially in Eastern Ukraine. This kind of self-identification contradicts the notion of Russians as an ethnic group wishing to

²⁶ Protsyk 2008, 6.

²⁷ Kuzio 2003, 433.

²⁸ Shulman 2004, 39.

maintain strong boundaries with the local culture in view of an eventual return to the homeland'²⁹

The existence of the East Slavic identity can also affect the level of active social and political participation of the Russian minority because with the identity the political views and values can also be shared. The existence of the East Slavic identity can impede the mobilization of the Russian minority. As we said above it is based on the territorial identification, hence it weakens the importance of ethnicity among the Russian community. 'One explanation for the weakness of the Russian nationalism in the former Soviet Union, and therefore the inability of Russians outside Russia to mobilize, is the lack of an ethnocultural base.'³⁰ The same S. Shulman describes: 'Soviet cultural identities in eastern-southern Ukraine and Crimea have greater adherents than ethnic allegiances and cross-cut among ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Russians making it difficult to mobilize along ethnic lines.'³¹ This leads to the fact that the low level of political or social organization among the Russian minority should be expected. If the Russian minority does not perceive the difference between them and the ethnic Ukrainians they will probably not feel the need to be represented in the society as an ethnic minority. For example Oleh Protsyk mentions and explains the absence of the Russian minority parties in the following way: 'Among the few political parties established by ethnic minorities, the Russian minority parties have been the most prominent. Their electoral performance, however, historically has proven rather poor, which reflects a stable pattern of ethnic Russians' voting for mainstream political parties but is also a function of the high degree of fragmentation among political parties appealing to the ethnic Russians.'³² On the other hand, we can also observe the intentions of the Russian minority to defend its language and

²⁹ Fournier 2002, 416.

³⁰ Kuzio 2003, 435.

³¹ Kuzio 2010, 292.

³² Protsyk 2008, 17.

identity. For example the announcement to hold a referendum on autonomy for the Donetsk region as the reaction to the political situation in 2004 when opposition supporters kept up the pressure to overturn the result of the disputed presidential poll (the charges of separatism were introduced against two eastern Ukrainian leaders: Viktor Tykhonov and Yevhen Kushnariov) or the attempts of numerous regions in the east and south of the country, including Kharkiv and the Crimean capital Sevastopol, to unilaterally raise Russian's status to that of an official language at the regional level during the year 2006. However, such mobilization of the Russian minority is rather sporadic and question is whether we can consider such mobilization as the example of the salience of ethnicity. Dominique Arel says: 'Russian-speakers claim this status, not because they are prevented from speaking their language in public — the use of Russian, to the contrary, is nearly hegemonic in South-East Ukraine — but because this status would give them the symbolic confirmation that they *count* as much as Ukrainian-speakers from the Center-West in Ukrainian politics.'³³

As we discussed in the theoretical part, the formation of the ethnic minority group can also be influenced by the attitudes of the host state. For this reason we also consider the way the majority group—ethnic Ukrainians—view the presence of the Russian community. In order to do so we will firstly need to understand the way they perceive and define their own identity. Stephen Shulman describes the substance of the Ukrainian identity: 'The ethnic Ukrainian national identity is based on the notion that Ukrainian and/or ethnic Ukrainian culture and language should be the dominant integrating forces in the Ukrainian nation-state.'³⁴ To compare it with the self-perception of the Russian minority based on the shared Soviet identity, the self-perception of ethnic Ukrainians is based on the awareness of the particularity of the Ukrainian identity. The notion of the singularity is based primarily on the

³³ Arel 2006, 40.

³⁴ Shulman 2004, 38.

language: ‘For most nationalist-oriented Ukrainians, the survival and development of their language is the cornerstone of the nation-building project in their country. While Ukrainians may have a unique mentality and world-view, their distinct language is the most concrete cultural marker distinguishing them from their Slavonic neighbors.’³⁵ In fact, ethnic Ukrainians and Ukraine as the host state delimitate the boundary between the majority and minority. ‘The Ukrainian state (i.e. through language laws) draws an ethnic boundary between Russians and Ukrainians. In so doing the state encourages the development of a Russian ethnic identity (vs. perpetuating a linguistically dominant Russian identity that extends into its ethnic Ukrainian population).’³⁶ This is supported by the argument of Scott Romaniuk which describes the Ukrainians nationalist’s view of Russian community: ‘Ukrainophone Ukrainians maintain a distinct ethnopolitical discourse that focuses their perceived rights as a so-called “indigenous” people, which subsequently portrays Russians as outsiders, or in a more traditionally colonial perspective, as “settlers”.’³⁷ The following question is whether such attitude of the Ukrainian state and Ukrainian nationalists can change the self-perception of ethnic Russian minority. Dominique Arel explains: ‘The *Regionals* [The Party of Regions is successor of the Communist Party which gains support among all of the South-East], repeatedly claimed that a national government ought not to exclude half of the state, in the territorial sense of the term. This argument has never appeared credible to the Orangists, who are loathe to recognize the legitimacy of their opponents in the Party of Regions, suspected of having perpetrated reprehensible acts in the Kuchma era.’³⁸ This argument illustrates that the Soviet identity seeks to be recognized within the Ukrainian state and emphasis the awareness of its distinctiveness form the Ukrainian identity. Moreover, this example shows that behavior and attitudes of Ukrainian state

³⁵ Shulman 1998, 290.

³⁶ Fournier 2002, 430.

³⁷ Romaniuk 2008, 65.

³⁸ Arel 2006, 39.

can provoke the interaction between the Ukrainian and Soviet identity. We can see that the boundary between the Ukrainian identity and the Soviet one is important because it plays its role in the realm of politics.

The Russian community in Ukraine forms the numerical minority. As we discussed above, the ethnicity does not play decisive role in self-identification process of the Russian minority. Most of the ethnic Russians identify themselves with the Soviet identity that is based on the identification with territory. However, the ethnicity is important for the self-identification of Ukrainians. This implies that, for Ukrainians, ethnicity matters and it is fundamental for explaining the relation between them and the Russian minority.

2.2 *Belarus*

Russians form the largest ethnic minority in Belarus. They represent 8.3 per cent of total population. We can observe the moderate decrease comparing it with the data from 1999 census (3.1 percentage points less than in 1999). The data considering the regional representation of Russian community are not presented because Russians are geographically dispersed through the country.³⁹ In all of the six regions (Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk, and Mogilev) and in Minsk City too, most of the residents consider Belarusian as their mother tongue. Nevertheless, the majority indicates as home-spoken language Russian.⁴⁰ Both, Belarusian and Russian are the official languages of the country.

The majority of Belarusian residents indicate as home-spoken language Russian. The preference of the Russian language in everyday communication is also illustrated by the fact that Russian is, along with Belarusian, official language and by the percentage of the voters that supported reintroduction of the Russian language in the referendum held in 1995 and the reintroduction gained support of 83.3 per cent of voters.⁴¹ One of the possible explanations of the predominance of the Russian language is the historical experience. Thus, according to Biaspamiatnyk: ‘The assimilation of Belarusians in the 19th and 20th centuries in fact has ruined the linguistic border and left the Belarusian people ethnically unprotected from Eastern influence. As a result nowadays the Russian language dominates in public life, education, mass-media, advertising, etc.’⁴² The second possible explanation could be the identification of the

³⁹ Minorities at Risk Project. *Assessment for Russians in Belarus*.

⁴⁰ Population Census, 2009.

⁴¹ Ioffe 2003a, 1014.

⁴² Biaspamiatnyk 2007, 62.

Russian and Belarusian languages with different social status. ‘The issue of the Belarusian language was of particular importance for the nationalist camp because it was still regarded by all too many as a rustic, peasant vernacular which naturally yielded to Russian as a person assumed a higher social position and was refined by an urban way of life and education.’⁴³ A similar example was mentioned by Gribov and Popko: ‘By the mid 80s the language situation in the BSSR was as follows: Russian-speaking towns and Belorussian-speaking rural areas. There were no Belorussian-speaking schools, professional or technical schools in towns. Higher education establishments of the Republic were Russian-speaking too.’⁴⁴ The fact that most of the people living in Belarus use Russian as the language of the everyday communication rises the assumption that the language is not distinctive trait of ethnicity between the Belarusians and Russians. Firstly, the Russian is language of the majority. Secondly, there is no concurrence between the Russian language and the identity of Russian minority because the language does not serve as the differentia among the majority and minority. We assent to the Mikalai Biaspamiatnykh argument: ‘(...) the Russian/ Belarusian linguistic dichotomy indicates rather social than ethnic diversity.’⁴⁵

The research focused on the titular identification of Russians in the former Soviet Republics conducted by E. Poppe and L. Hagendoorn shown that the titular identification of Russians in Belarus is stronger than in other countries included in the research (Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Moldova).⁴⁶ Russian community therefore should be more rooted in the Belarusian society than in those other countries and less aware of its different minority group identity. Such argument is supported by the survey considering the tendency of the ethnic Russians to represent themselves as national minority done by

⁴³ Ioffe 2003b, 1260.

⁴⁴ Gribov and Popko 2007, 69.

⁴⁵ Biaspamiatnykh 2007, 62.

⁴⁶ Hagendoorn and Poppe 2003, 781.

Barrington, Herron, and Silver in 1998. According to this survey in Belarus very small percentage of the respondents claimed to be part of a national minority (9.2 percent).⁴⁷ These data show that most of the Russians living in Belarus do not accept the minority status. The following question considers the identity the Russian community adopts. Barrington, Herron and Sliver say: ‘In Ukraine and especially in Belarus most ethnic Russians are not made aware of their distinctive “Russianness” on a daily basis.’⁴⁸ Based on this we can assume that ethnic Russians do not differentiate between themselves and the titular group. The results of an independent public opinion survey presented by Liudmila Volakhava help us to illustrate the situation ‘(...) over 64 per cent of the polled defined themselves as relate to Belarusian culture vis-à-vis 13.6 per cent of respondents who appeared to associate themselves with Russian cultural space, while 13.3 per cent with the Soviet, and mere 8 per cent with the European cultural framework.’⁴⁹ In general, the Belarusian population, no matter their ethnicity, tends to identify itself with Belarusian Soviet cultural space. This fact is also supported by the Taras Kuzio: ‘There is, however, no developed Russian sub-culture: the mi-grants' cultural values became merged with those of the various strands of Belarusian culture that exist to form what can be considered a Belarusian Soviet culture sui generis, in which russification was a key formative element. The same can be observed for the political behavior of the ethnic minorities.’⁵⁰

Regarding the Belarusian identity, we can observe some difference between the Eastern and Western parts of Belarus. ‘In western Belarus, Belarusian tradition and language has been better preserved and there is therefore a greater degree of nationalist opposition to Lukashenka. (...) The eastern part of the Belarusian state differs significantly. A mere 25% of the population here lives in villages,

⁴⁷ Barrington, Herron, and Silver 2003, 298.

⁴⁸ Barrington, Herron, and Silver 2003, 299.

⁴⁹ Volakhava 2010, 38.

⁵⁰ Kuzio 2000, 533.

70% or more of the inhabitants of which are above pension age. This has a direct consequence on voting patterns, with a persisting loyalty to the communist past and its socio-political values and symbols.’⁵¹ But generally, the Belarusian identity is considered to be weak and in process of building. As one of the most important causes for the weakness of the national consciousness Peter K. Laustsen considers the integration in Soviet Union. ‘Belarus was, during that time, exposed to a massive and all-embracing *sovjetization* and *russification*. The goal was to create the Soviet Man - *homo sovieticus* with a common identity for all inhabitants from Estonia to Kazakhstan, from Vladivostok to Kaliningrad.’⁵² The most of the scholars associate themselves with this is argument and offer it as one of the possible explanation of the predominance of the Russian language and the weakness of Belarusian identity. Because of the historical circumstances we can expect that the Soviet identity predominates at the expense of the Belarusian one. Thomas Ambrosio says: ‘From the elimination of its cultural elite under Stalin, to its rapid urbanization, as well as the russification and de-ethnization of communist ideology, Belarusian national identity was the most ‘Soviet’ and pro-Russian in nature.’⁵³ According to Taras Kuzio this Soviet identity is dominant up to this day. He considers it to be the consequence of the character of internal politics. ‘Even today, the Soviet Belarusian identity—which President Lukashenka has promoted since 1994—is stronger than the Belarusian ethnocultural one.’⁵⁴ This implies that Belarusians do not identify themselves with ethnicity but rather with territory. This assumption is supported by the argument of Mikalai Biaspamiatnyk: ‘The interrelation of Belarusians over Eastern ethnic border discovers the phenomenon of their “locality” (the equivalent to the Belarusian “tuteishast”) versus Russians as migrants. Belarusians were born in this land which is their homeland, their motherland. A strong feeling of adherence to the

⁵¹ Kuzio 2000, 533-534.

⁵² Laustsen 2003, 70.

⁵³ Ambrosio 2006, 417.

⁵⁴ Kuzio 2003, 432.

land of birth constitutes the main feature of the present day ethnic identity of Belarusians.⁵⁵ Moreover, this statement says a lot about the attitudes of Belarusians towards Russian minority. We have already mentioned that the Soviet identity prevails, but this does not necessarily mean that this shared identity implicates that Belarusians do not feel actual difference between themselves and the Russians living in Belarus. Biaspamiatnyk argues that Belarusians are aware of the difference between them and the Russians, but the fact they share the language and religion impedes the reinforcement of such differences: ‘Belarusians do not identify themselves with Russians; though ethnic similarities between both peoples exceed differences. Common religion and language make the very problem of Russian-Belarusian differentiation questionable.’⁵⁶

There are various possible explanations of the weakness of Belarusian identity. We have mentioned the historical consequences and the character of the domestic politics. Liudmila Volakhava mentions some of the factors that can explain the predominance of the Soviet identity: ‘(...) the Russian media dominating Belarusian media space together with intensive labor migration flows from Belarus to Russia (mainly Moscow), a large number of mixed marriages, the growing influence of Moscow patriarchy etc. could be named among the most powerful stimuli pushing the Belarusians’ self-identification process in the Euroasian direction.’⁵⁷ Besides the cultural and language issue there is also the economic dependence on Russia that could serve as the explanation. ‘As for evident Russian orientation of Belarus which we can see after the formation of the Belorussian State it can be explained both by an economic dependence of Belarus on Russian resources and by the language and cultural closeness of the Belorussian and Russian nations.’⁵⁸ And Stephen

⁵⁵ Biaspamiatnyk 2007, 62.

⁵⁶ Biaspamiatnyk 2007, 62.

⁵⁷ Volakhava 2010, 39.

⁵⁸ Gribov and Popko 2007, 72.

Shulman mentions the importance of the foreign politics in forming the national identity: ‘(...) state has the ability to influence the course of ethno-cultural competition by thwarting or simulating cultural exchange with the outside world. Through foreign policy government leaders can manipulate the cultural characteristics and national identity of their state.’⁵⁹ At the beginning of its independence Belarus established the close relationship with Russia. ‘Lukashenka, who came to power after elections in 1994, campaigned on Soviet nostalgia and support for reintegration with Russia. In 1995, he held a referendum restoring the Soviet-era flag and state symbols, as well as making Russian an official language.’⁶⁰ The fact is that we can observe the intentions of Lukashenka to promote the closeness among the Belarusian and Russian states and his primarily goal is to preserve the Slavic identity. ‘The quasi-restoration of Soviet values of communitarianism and collectivism through mechanisms such as compulsory week-end work-days (subbotniki) is indicative of the attempt to preserve an overall system of common values in the absence of a national (or cultural) alternative. This has considerable appeal amongst the elderly, a large demographic group and an important support base for ‘Lukashenkism’⁶¹

We can consider the Russian minority in Belarus rather numerical minority than the minority in terms of power, primarily because of the fact that Russian minority do not accept the minority status. Ethnic Russians do not see the difference between themselves and Belarusians because of the shared Soviet identity. The Belarusian identity is rather territorial than ethnic and it is overshadowed by the dominant Soviet identity. Nowadays the Belarusian identity is too weak to raise the salience of Russian ethnicity within Belarusian state. As Grigory Ioffe mentioned in his article ‘All Belarus watchers agree that

⁵⁹ Shulman 1998, 288.

⁶⁰ Ambrosio 2006, 417.

⁶¹ Kuzio 2000, 535.

there was never a Russian community in Belarus that would in any way detach and position itself against the cultural mainstream. There is none today, when in all the other post-Soviet states ethnic Russians have organized themselves into cultural associations and sometimes separate political parties.⁶²

⁶² Ioffe 2003a, 1022.

3 Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis is based on the data concerning the Russian minority in Belarus and Ukraine obtained in the previous chapter. We argue that the comparison of these two countries is possible because of the fact that the historical background of those two countries is similar and thus Russian minorities in Belarus and Ukraine find themselves in similar conditions. Belarus and Ukraine are former Soviet Republics. Their population was Russified and numerous groups of ethnic Russians lived in their territory. These ethnic Russian groups used to identify themselves with the territory of USSR. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the independent states provoke the necessity of rethinking this territorial Soviet identity because the intentions to (re)build the national consciousness emerged among the newly independent successor states.

Firstly we examined the territorial composition and the size of the Russian minority group. Despite the fact that in both countries we can see a slow decrease in the share of the population identifying with ethnic Russian community, Russian minority still forms the largest minority group in Belarus and Ukraine. In terms of the size of the minority group; the Russian community is larger in Ukraine. In both countries, we can observe the territorial concentration of the ethnic Russians. In the case of Ukraine most of ethnic Russians live in the South-East. The fact they represent the larger ethnic group within the host state territory and that they are territorially concentrated raises the assumption that the presence of the minority and the capacity to mobilize itself could matter. However, regarding data presented in the previous chapter we do not observe the mobilization within the ethnic Russian minority in Belarus. In the case of Ukraine we can observe the occasional mobilization (the language and separatists demands in East-South), however such mobilization is

based rather on the shared Soviet identity that dominates there. Moreover, the territorial composition and size of the minority group does not explain the status of the Russian minority within the state of Belarus and Ukraine because those data do not provide information about the real importance of the Russian minority.

Secondly, we focused on the language issue. The data show that the Russian language prevails in both countries in interpersonal communication. However, most of the ethnic Ukrainians and Belarusians consider the language of their nationality to be their mother tongue. Based on this observation we make conclusion that in both countries the language cannot serve as the distinctive feature between the majority and minority group because both groups prefer Russian for interpersonal communication, thus there is no direct connection between the language used in everyday communication and ethnicity. On the other hand, we should not underestimate the importance of the language issue. Dominique Arel argues that there is the correlation between the native language and the nationality: 'The fact that a great many Ukrainians for whom Russian is their preferred daily language identify with Ukrainian as a native language is an important trend, suggesting a certain degree of attachment with their nationality (...).' ⁶³ The conclusion we can make on the ground of this argument is that, Belarusians and Ukrainians, despite the fact that most of them use Russian in everyday communication, are aware of their Belarusian or Ukrainian nationality. In other words, they perceive their singularity in terms of the nationality. The important fact, relating to the language situation in Belarus and Ukraine, is that in Belarus there are two official languages, Belarusian and Russian; meanwhile in Ukraine only the Ukrainian language acquires the status of the official language and the Russian language is defined as the language of the minority group. According to this statement Russian language is considered by the ethnic Ukrainians to be circumstantial in

⁶³ Arel 2006, 25.

comparison with Ukrainian and those who speak Russian are a priori included into the minority group. To make a conclusion on the language issue, the fact that Russian minority speaks mostly Russian does not mean that they want to distinguish themselves from the titular group and that they use it as a demonstration of its ethnicity because Russian is used also by ethnic Ukrainians and Belarusians. On the other hand, on the grounds of the fact that Ukraine defines Russian language as the language of the minority, we can make the conclusion that Ukrainian nationalism is aware of the presence of the ethnic Russian minority on its territory, whether the boundary between the identity and regarding the situation in Belarus, the bound between the ethnic Russians and ethnic Ukrainians is probably more precise than in the case of Belarus. To deal with this assumption we need to consider is the identity of groups, minority and majority.

The Russian minority in both countries does not accept its minority status; mainly because of the fact that they do not make difference between them and the majority. The ethnic Russians see themselves to form the Ukrainian and Belarusian state along with titular groups, they claim themselves to be equal. However, they do not identify themselves with the identity of the host state neither with today's Russia. Their identity is based on the territory rather than on ethnicity. In other words, the Russian minority still identify Ukrainian and Belarusian states with the territory of Soviet Union that was common to all the nations living within its borders. According to the data presented in the previous chapter the minority in Belarus is strongly identified with the titular group compared to the ethnic Russian minority is in Ukraine. The difference is that ethnic Russians in Belarus identify themselves with the Belarusian soviet identity whether the Russian minority identity in Ukraine is Soviet identity. This also supports the fact that in Belarus the differences between the ethnic Russians and Belarusians are less important than in Ukraine. The conclusion is that ethnic Russians in Belarus and Ukraine do not think about themselves in

terms of ethnic minority. The last think to be considered before we can appreciate the status of the Russian minority in Belarus and Ukraine is the host state attitudes towards the minority and its own identity.

The Belarusian identity is weak and most of the Belarusians identify themselves with the Soviet identity. It means they share the identity with the majority of ethnic Russian minority. On the other hand, the Ukrainian identity is explained in terms of its uniqueness and singularity. The strict bound between the identity of ethnic Ukrainians and the identity of others, including Russians, is determined. The ethnic Ukrainians consider the Russians to be minority group within their territory. Thus, the majority opinion about the status of the minority and the strength of the titular identity prove to be significant when evaluating the status of the minority group. Based on the previous analysis we can conclude that the ethnic bargaining is more likely to develop in Ukraine than in Belarus because there is the boundary between the majority and minority group more evident.

Conclusion

This paper deals with the political affiliation of the Russian minority within the territory of Belarus and Ukraine. The work is based on Erin K. Jenne's theory of ethnic bargaining. Special attention is given to the factors that cause the initiation of ethnic bargaining. The description and explanation of these conditions serve the purpose of explaining the Russian minority's status in Belarus and Ukraine and its potential for mobilization and claim-making. The character of the host state's identity is defined as the fundamental factor that is involved in shaping the relationship between the majority and minority in Belarus and Ukraine.

The Russian minority in both states is the largest ethnic minority concentrated along the east borders of the states. Among the Russian community in Ukraine and Belarus prevails the identification with the Soviet identity. This Soviet identity is based on the identification of the ethnic Russians with the territory. It helps to explain the fact that Russians do not make difference between them and the titular group on the basis of ethnical diversity because the fact that they lived together within the territory of USSR contributes to reinforcement of their confidence in the similarity between them and the titular group. The observation of the self-perception of the Russian minority supports this argument. Data show that ethnic Russians do not adopt the minority status.

The observation of the language issue shows that the Russian language is predominant in interpersonal communication in both countries, no matter the ethnicity of the speakers. Based on this we made the conclusion that Russian minority does not perceive language as a distinctive feature of its minority identity. However, language plays its role when defining the identity of ethnic Ukrainians. For ethnic Ukrainians the language is the fundamental distinctive feature of their identity. We can say that the Ukrainian identity is based

primarily on the Ukrainian language. Thus, the language, for ethnic Ukrainians, is also the distinctive feature between them and the identity of the Russian community. This is supported by the fact that Russian language is defined as the language of the minority. This implies that ethnic Ukrainians distinguish between those who speak Ukrainian and Russian. The problem is that a great number of Ukrainians also speak Russian. This leads to the conclusion that, rather than conflict between the Ukrainians and Russian minority, we observe the clash between the Ukrainian and Soviet identity. However, the fact that most of the ethnic Russians adopt the Soviet identity means, that the clash between the ethnic Ukrainian identity and ethnic Russian community within Ukrainian territory is also present.

In Belarus the situation of Russian minority differs in various aspects. The ethnic Russians do not see the difference between them and the titular group. The data show that the identification with the titular group is stronger than in the case of Ukraine. The main difference we can observe regarding the linguistic situation and the identity of the host state. The Belarusian language, rather than ethnical boundary between the titular and minority group, illustrates the social difference between the speakers of Belarusian and Russian languages. Thus, the language is the distinctive feature neither of the minority group nor of the majority group. The Belarusian identity is nowadays too weak. Most of the Belarusians identify themselves with the Soviet Belarusian identity as well as the ethnic Russians do. Thus, neither the ethnic Russians nor the ethnic Belarusians make difference between them and the other group. In Belarus, there is no strict line between the identity of the ethnic Belarusians and ethnic Russian citizens in Belarus as in the case of Ukraine.

The comparative analysis shows that the character of the identity the host state adopts in Belarus and Ukraine is important for explaining the status of the Russian minority in those states. Despite the fact that the starting position of the Russian minority in Ukraine and Belarus were almost identical, today's

status of the ethnic Russians in those two countries differs. This is caused primarily by the character of the host state identity. The ethnic Ukrainians define their identity by stressing the importance of Ukrainian language. Thus, they delimitate the boundary between their identity and the identity of ethnic Russians. The fact that most of the Belarusians identify themselves with the Belarusian Soviet identity rather than with Belarusian identity causes that the Belarusian identity is nowadays too weak to raise the ethnicity awareness among the Russian minority group.

The hypothesis formulated at the beginning of this research paper was confirmed. The conflict between the majority and minority and, thus ethnic bargaining, is more likely to develop between the Russian minority and majority in Ukraine than in Belarus. However, the fact that the Russian minority in Ukraine and Belarus do not adopt the status of the minority, and that in both states the identification with Soviet identity, that is based on the territory identification prevails, means that the ethnicity does not play the decisive role in the today's societies of Ukraine and Belarus. The future development depends on the way how the relationship between the Russian minority and ethnic majority groups in both states will be evolved. In Ukraine the future development depends on the fact whether the awareness of the difference between the majority and minority group will be reinforced or turned down. The reinforcement could cause the raise of the ethnicity; the weakening can result in the assimilation of the Russian minority. Both scenarios are possible. In Belarus the future development depends primarily on the question whether there is potential of the Belarusian identity to compete the Belarusian Soviet identity.

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Abstract

This paper deals with the status of the ethnic Russian minority in Belarus and Ukraine. It is based on Erin K. Jenne's theory of ethnic bargaining, which explains the logic of ethnic bargaining in ethnically divided societies by interaction among three actors - majority, minority and lobby actor. In our study we use Erin K. Jenne's tripolar model of ethnic bargaining paying special attention to the conditions that cause the initiation of the ethnic bargaining process. The description and explanation of these conditions serve the purpose of explaining the Russian minority's status and its political affiliation within the territory of Belarus and Ukraine. We focus on the current situation in both states with respect to the character of the Russian minority, the host state majority and the relationship between those two actors. The data concerning the territorial ethnic composition of the country, size of the minority group, its identity and self-identification as well as the host state identity and its attitudes toward the Russian minority are presented and serve as the background for the comparative analysis. This paper argues that necessary condition for the initiation of the ethnic bargaining process within the ethnically divided society is the awareness of the strict bound between the identity of the majority and minority group. The degree of the awareness of such diversity is highly dependent on the way the host state perceives and defines its own identity.

Abstrakt

Tato práce se zabývá postavením ruské menšiny v Bělorusku a na Ukrajině. Práce vychází z teorie „etnického vyjednávání“ (Ethnic Bargaining Theory) Erine K. Jenne. Tato teorie vysvětluje podstatu a charakter interakce mezi etnicky rozlišnými skupinami. Vychází z předpokladu, že vyjednávání je ovlivněno vztahem mezi třemi aktéry. První aktér je reprezentován etnickou menšinou žijící v rámci daného území, druhý etnickou většinou/státem v jehož rámci se menšinová skupina nachází. Třetím aktérem, který je zapojený do vyjednávání mezi dvěma předchozími aktéry, je tzv. lobby actor. V první řadě je představen model etnického vyjednávání. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována podmínkám, které jsou předpokladem pro zahájení vyjednávání mezi etnickou menšinou a většinou. Popis a vysvětlení těchto předpokladů slouží k následné analýze postavení ruské menšiny v Bělorusku a na Ukrajině a zhodnocení jejího případného politického vlivu. V potaz jsou brána zejména data týkající se charakteru a povahy identity jak ruské menšiny, tak etnické většiny daného státu. Práce vychází z předpokladu, že nutnou podmínkou k zahájení vyjednávání mezi etnickou menšinou a většinou daného státu je uvědomění si odlišností, které existují mezi identitou menšiny a většiny. Míra uvědomění si odlišností existujících mezi těmito dvěma skupinami závisí především na tom, jak je definována a přijímána identita většiny.