რიფსიმე რამაზიანი – ასოცირებული პროფესორი, ვ. ბრიუსოვის სახელობის ერევნის სახელმწიფო ლინგვისტური უნივერსიტეტი, სომხეთი

Hripsime Ramazyan – Associate Professor, Yerevan State Linguistic University after V. Brusov

The Metamorphosis of European Identity or Demythologisation of a Construct

Modern societies, formed primarily as multi-unit entities in ethnic, confessional, and cultural senses, face the problem of integrating communities of other cultures, thus offering and testing various integration models based on the specifics of particular EU countries. This process has complicated immeasurably due to the unprecedented inflows of migrants, who have headed to the European continent from the countries of the Middle East and Africa in recent years. Against this background, the debate on the possibilities of integrating new inflows of migrants and, correspondingly, the prospects for their adaptation in the social and political space of the host countries of the European Union has been actualised with a new vigour. Otherwise, there is a danger of rupture of the entrenched interconnections and solidarity of people in a unified political space within the European nation-states.

The process of integration is complicated by new trends in the globalising world, in particular, what Michel Foucault and Anthony Giddens called "decomposition of space and time" (Гидденс 2003: 217-235; Фуко 1999: 286-376). New foreign cultural models of the community, legal and religious models of migrants, often contradict the established social and cultural norms of the majority. As a result, the situation of "cultural incompatibility" arises, and "a certain disintegration potential" is activated.

Consequently, habitual identity in this or that socio-cultural space (determined by cultural and historical traditions, the established style and way of life, behavioural models of the representatives of the titular nation and other objective factors) undergoes transformation.

Under the influence of the other cultural identities, including ethnic, religious, and group identities, a new identity of the political community is shaped in the host society. At the same time, there is a tendency to unify the concept of identity. According to some analysts, "the national state, in its essence, has become a monopolist or, at least, a key player in the policy of

identity formation. Different identities have not been eradicated within a state. They continued to exist latently, potentially preserving their political resource" (Тимофеев 2015: 2).

The difficulties in assimilating so quantitatively powerful and diverse (non-inscribed) migrants in the social landscape of European countries are largely due to both formal (level of education, as well as cultural styles and models of life) and civilizational characteristics. On the other hand, a lack of desire to be integrated in the community of European countries appears with a clearer insistence. Ethnic and religious communities in some countries persistently promote their traditional cultural values, symbols, rituals and norms, insisting on their legalisation and acceptance. The idea of the modern Canadian theoretician Charles Taylor is quite indicative in this respect. "Thoughts that a human being must suppress her own otherness in order to fit into the dominant majority, whose mode of life in a given society is recognised as the only normative, is gradually eroding. Feminists, cultural minorities, homosexuals, religious groups – they all insist that this dominant political principle should be adjusted in order to accept them, and not vice versa: they must adapt to the norms of the dominant culture" (Tailor 1999: 279).

Social practice confirms that the modern national state, generally, presumes the inclusion of not only its citizens, united by a common culture, historical roots, etc., but also people *living* in a national state as representatives of another culture and another historical memory. "The *Other* should in a specific – in fact, hierarchical – way be a part of *Its Own*. This preservation of *the Other* in *Its Own* is the principle on the basis of which national states are formed (Péter Niedermüller). They are not aimed at the absolute rejection of *the Other*, but at its obvious displacement. To deepen this gap, the nation puts on the position a "heavy artillery", like "culture", "memory", and "identity" (Файхтингер 2007: 33). According to researchers, the appeal to historical memory and identity, the accentuation of national culture not only does not contribute to the process of European integration, but rather deepens the split and disunity between European and non-European cultures, supporting nationalistic sentiments. The danger of the latter is becoming very visible for Europe today, as recent events in Poland show.

The approach, which recognizes that modern societies are no more considered as simply a product of history, seems more constructive. Modern societies assert their identity through the denial of the past. This new type of identity, based on "diversity", on a distinct cultural orchestra,

corresponds to a new type of nation; a multifaceted and changeable identity that is based on necessity and a new way of living together.

The process of formation of all-European consciousness also has a regional dimension. Citizens of Western European countries, identifying themselves as Europeans, do not consider citizens of new, Eastern European countries, as such. Generally, the former ones relate the notion of "Europeanness" to the basic European values, such as freedom, the rule of law, democracy, human rights, whereas in the new countries of Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, values are reassessed, together with actualisation of the ideas of sovereignty, national culture, and national revival. Meanwhile, for the core countries of the EU, the countries of "Old Europe" this process took place centuries ago.

As part of the development of integration processes, the EU policy, on the one hand, is aimed at building citizens' supranational all-European identity. In parallel to this, the policy of adaptation of migrants "is carried out exclusively within the framework of their inclusion in the national context. That is, while the Frenchmen were taught that they are Europeans, migrants from the Maghreb countries were taught that they are Frenchmen" (Казаринова 2014: 44). Under the increasing activity of other cultural communities, which oppose their basic values to the European ones, there are growing tendencies of internal fragmentation, disunity of societies of European countries, and increasing social tension.

It should be noted that the decisive role in changing the vector of such disintegration tendencies, the deepening of which creates a conflict situation, is assigned to social institutions and among them, especially to the education system.

The notion of European identity, even with its all amorphousness and uncertainty, is a very "mobile" construct, which includes a number of components, such as regional, national, etc. "The identities, however, are understood not as deeply rooted notions: they are rather "unstable identification points", joints or knots formed within a ramified discourse, in a dialogical connection between similarity and difference within a specific correlation of forces" (Файхтингер 2007: 34). Identity is no longer seen as a once and for all immanent entity, an inalienable attribute of an individual or group: "The ontological, essentialist understanding of identity, where the preference is given to permanence, stability, and sustainability, has left its place to existentialist and nominalist understanding, accentuating attention to its mobility, variability, and dynamism" (Филиппова 2010: 18). However, the attitude of Europeans to

national identity, compared to the notion of European identity, as studies show, continues to noticeably dominate in the minds and perceptions of citizens of the EU countries. These studies confirm that "the historical and national specifics of the EU member states are so "overlapping" the centripetal craving for all-European self-awareness that it is impossible to speak of its existence as of a developed phenomenon..." (Хахалкина 2014: 56). At the same time, the results of the Eurobarometer research, aimed at identifying the empathy of citizens of European countries with Europe, do not show any positive dynamics. Thus, the results of Brexit evidenced that Britain has remained for three decades consistently "deaf" to the efforts of the European Commission to form an identity. After the UK, Greece is leading among other "Euro-sceptic" countries and, as the 2013 European Commission report suggests, similar scepticism is relevant for the Republic of Ireland, the Republic of Cyprus, Estonia, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic (Eurobarometer 2013). And if the general situation, reflected in the Eurobarometer data, inspires optimism – that is, more than two thirds of the population of the EU countries feel belonging to the European and national consciousness, the remaining less than one third of the EU population, however, does not allow us to speak about the formation of the European identity.

The EU citizens consider more the European Union primarily as a single political space. In favour of this is the evidence of the expansion trend of the European Union to the East. Hence, political identity is quite justifiably assumed under the concept of "European identity", which quite organically fits into the context of modern European realities.

In contemporary world with all its global challenges, "The ship of the European integration sails into the open sea under a transnational flag". And to overcome the ethnocentrism, inherent in some European historiographers, it is important to remember that "there is no Europe without *non-Europe*" (Файхтингер 2007: 35).

The search for identity, which presumes "reconstruction of historical memory, national roots, and cultural origins, makes the task of building a New Europe, the formation of all-European collective consciousness even harder, simultaneously making the revival of nationalism in European countries real and dangerous". The foundation of identity does not need a national corset. While the main actors in the process of building a new Europe will not be substantially separated from the methodical nationalism, formed in the 19th century, the constructing logic of the national principle will be favourably heard in Europe. To eliminate this danger, it is necessary to create a series of analytical "memory projects", the purpose of which

will not be the "excavation of roots" (Файхтингер 2007: 37). The destructiveness of this approach is obvious, as it is equally obvious that "the most abundant and instructive places of excavations are concentrated, perhaps least of all, in traditional national states within the European Union, but rather in places that have been long perceived as points of intersection of cultures, where the East and West, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism have been colliding..." (Файхтингер 2007: 37). Thus, today when about a quarter of the population of the most developed countries of Europe is of immigrant origin (Triandafyllidou 2011), the formation of the European identity based on the principles of European exclusivity (which presumes cultural traditions, symbols, and historical memory) is futile. Today, the European Union is facing the most serious challenges, such as migration, separatism and, as a result, the revival of nationalistic sentiments. It seems much more constructive for the EU integration policy to understand that the existing differences, cultural and ethnic, constitute an integral part of the emerging new European identity. And if one ignores transnational tendencies in the modern rapidly changing world, and continues to search for "landscapes of memories", constantly appealing to them as to something unchanging and determinant, the revival of nationalism in certain European countries threatens to unexpectedly turn into a whole European chorus.

History has the property of repeating itself.

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