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ON THE ETHNOPOLITICS OF MODERN EAST EUROPEAN STATES: CULTURALLY AND ETHNICALLY HETEROGENEOUS

SOME REMARKS ON ETHNOPOLITICS

In recent decades there has been an increase of interest in ethnicity and its meaning (that is ethnic revival) in the social and political life of states.[1] The ethnic factor in political processes is especially important in multi-ethnic states, where social and political conflicts can result from ethnic affiliation.[2]

Ethnopolitics refers to the relation between ethnicity and politics. Until now the discipline leading research on ethnicity has been ethnology (the anthropology of ethnicity), which concentrates on the culture, identity and self-determination of nations (peoples). More recently, it can be noticed that ethnicity has an ever closer relationship with social life, including politics. New (sub)disciplines have appeared that study ethnicity (such as ethnodemography, ethnosociology and ethnopolitical science). The political context of research on ethnicity refers to programmes and actions in the area of ethnopolitics. In the theoretical sphere, the necessity arises of developing ethnopolitical science drawing upon research methods both from political science and ethnology. In essence, ethnopolitical science refers to the fundamental categories of political analysis (such as political power, political systems, political culture, political conflict, political interests, political awareness and political socialisation) in which the subject of policy is made up of ethnic groups. It can then be accepted that ethnopolitical science is the theoretical foundation of ethnopolitics (German *Ethnopolitik*, Russian этнополитика). As a subdiscipline of political science it also makes use of the methodology and research topics of ethnology, dealing with the political conditioning of ethnic processes and phenomena, including

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[1] The concept of "ethnicity" was introduced into academic circles by D. Riesman. There are four directions of research on ethnicity in the literature, which are 1) primordialist; 2) instrumentalist; 3) constructivist; 4) functionalist. See: V. Ačkasov, *Ètnopolitologiâ*, St. Peterburg 2005, p. 30-32. Polish publications on ethnicity include: W. Konarski, *Etniczność jako wartość w polityce*, in: B. Kaczmarek (ed.), *Metafory polityki 3*, Warsaw 2005; J. Mucha, *Oblicza etniczności. Studia teoretyczne i empiryczne*, Kraków 2005.

[2] On the topic of national consciousness see: B. Zientara, *Świt narodów europejskich. Powstanie świadomości narodowej na obszarze Europy pokarolińskiej*, Warsaw 1985.

1) research on problems related to the formation and realisation of ethnopolitics; 2) the ideology and practice of ethnopolitical movements; 3) the dependence between ethnic membership and political behaviour; 4) the relation between the state and ethnic communities; 5) interethnic relations; 6) ethnocultural characteristics of state management and policy. Simply put, ethnopolitics is about the influence the power elite representing the country exerts on ethnic groups, whose political elite perform an "internal" verification of state ethnopolitics and undertake appropriate actions. It also concerns the mutual relations between these same ethnic groups. Essential for this analysis are then three categories in the field of ethnopolitics which can be treated as its subjects: 1) the state; 2) political elites representing the state on one hand and ethnic groups on the other; 3) ethnic groups. In terms of subject matter, ethnopolitics as a practical activity is made up of three interdependent components: 1) ethnicity, realised through ethnic communities in politics and social life; 2) ethnopolitical organs, comprising the entirety of organisational forms of social life and their political institutions including legal and political norms and also those formed by tradition and customs, that is ethno-social institutions; 3) ethnopolitical processes, including the political representation of ethnic communities within the organs of power, their participation in state management and political behaviour, the activity of ethnic socio-political organisations, nation building processes and language issues.[3] Also relevant is Krystian Gołaszczyński's definition, according to which ethnopolitics is

> a system [,] in which the most important element is the ethnic relations existing within socio-political processes that influence governments, politics, ideas, legal norms, institutional and party action and promote the development of harmonious ethnic relations within a multi-ethnic state on the basis of legal equality.[4]

In the literature there is also another term, ethnic politics, which Polish authors define as

> detailed state policy, dependent upon the creation and implementation by public authorities, with the participation of non-public entities, of specific actions undertaken and supported by a system of internal and international legal, institutional as well as conceptual and programmatic regulations, determined by its ethnic makeup as well as historical, cultural, political and socio-economic factors. Its purpose is the regulation of the entirety of ethnic relations within the state, the monitoring of the ethnic situation and the prevention of ethnic conflicts as well as their management and resolution. Activities in this area may lead either to extermination, exclusion or assimilation, or to the development of a national identity of particular minority groups and their inclusion in the decision making process.[5]

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[3] A. Wierzbicki, *Etnopolityka w Azji Centralnej. Między wspólnotą etniczną a obywatelską*, Warsaw 2008, p. 22; A. Wierzbicki, M. Karolak-Michalska, *Mniejszość rosyjska w etnopolityce państw Europy Wschodniej i Azji Centralnej,* Warsaw 2016, p. 27ff.

[4] K. Gołaszczyński, *Etnopolityka jako funkcjonalny element kształtujący system polityczny Republiki Zimbabwe*, Toruń 2014, p. 13.

[5] R. Zenderowski, H. Chałupczak, W. Baluk, *Polityka etniczna: próba teoretycznej konceptualizacji*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka etniczna współczesnych państw Europy*

The most frequently declared goals of ethnic politics, in the view of Radosław Zenderowski, Henryk Chałupczak and Walenty Baluk, include

1) enabling particular ethnic groups to fully participate in the political system of a given country – the process of ethnic politics creates individual and collective expressions of ethnicity in politics through the representation of ethnic communities in public institutions and participation in state management; the active search for ways to influence policy while simultaneously maintaining the ethnic integrity of the group makes up the essence of ethnopolitics;

2) the creation of conditions for cooperation between particular ethnic groups within ethnic politics is an activity that helps people belonging to different ethnic groups cooperate and is performed through spiritual and social attributes, such as culture, language, mentality, traditions and customs;

3) the regulation of relations between ethnic groups – ethnic politics regulates ethnic relations between the state and ethnic communities, as well as between the communities themselves;

4) reconciliation and harmonisation of interests – ethnic politics is the realisation of the interests of each ethnic community considering the specifics of their mentalities, ways of life, histories and cultural heritage independent of population size and the concentration or dispersion of residence;

5) preventing and solving ethnic conflicts, the protection of minorities and the strengthening of interethnic tolerance – ethnic politics is a solution to contradictions in the area of ethnic relations;

6) satisfying the needs and aspirations of particular ethnic groups – the goal of ethnic politics is to bring about the social, political and cultural aspirations of ethnic communities and particular citizens that belong to these communities;

7) the creation of the conditions for the development and maintenance of national identity, and also national renewal, for example after a period of forced assimilation – ethnic politics creates the conditions for the maintenance and development of ethnic communities;

8) the promotion and support for social and political unity (integrity) of the state (sovereignty) as well as of particular ethnic groups - ethnic politics strives for the consolidation of national unity, the observance of individual and collective rights and freedom;

9) the integration and assimilation of members of particular ethnic groups with the majority or titular nationality.

Środkowo-Wschodniej, Lublin 2015, pp. 93–94. "Ethnic/national policy" is one of the most important concepts essential for contemplating questions of nationality. It is a subject of research within political science and also partly within international relations. Ethnic and national minorities and ethnic policy aimed at them are analysed in terms of the determining factors of state behaviour in international relations. Ethnic policy is also a generator of ethnic conflicts whose reach often extends beyond the boundaries of particular countries.

Researchers stress that the above-mentioned goals of ethnic politics can be classified into two general categories: a) goals related to interethnic relations; b) goals focused on specific entities, such as, on the one hand, ethnic groups and on the other hand. the country in which they live.[6]

<div align="center">ETHNIC POLITICS IN PRACTICE</div>

Monitoring the situation of national and ethnic minorities[7] in particular countries of Europe, including Eastern Europe will doubtless be connected in further research with issues of nationality as will the development of ethnic politics in the region. Even now it is possible to state that historical and socio-political specifics affect and will continue to influence the introduction of solutions in the area of ethnopolitics. The countries of the European Union continually face new challenges, whether in the form of immigration by Syrian refugees, or the arrival in the EU of immigrants from Ukraine with an ongoing conflict in the Donbass region. It is worth adding here that in the face of the wave of Syrian refugees, the EU still does not have any kind of comprehensive idea for solving the crisis and (seemingly) tries to deal with only the most difficult cases. As an example, the introduction of border controls with Germany in 2015 was a reaction to chaos in the Munich train station and dramatic appeals by the city authorities in the media. Many public statements by Angela Merkel, in turn, reveal that she is counting on the Federal Republic of Germany being able to convince the remaining members of the EU to accept a "fair share of the burden". Meanwhile some German politicians are demanding financial punishment for those countries of the EU that oppose the system of compulsory quotas, which in turn creates an area of conflict within the EU.[8]

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[6] R. Zenderowski, H. Chałupczak, W. Baluk, *Polityka etniczna: próba teoretycznej konceptualizacji*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, pp. 48-50.

[7] Researching the concept "minority", it is possible to agree with J. J. Preece that at present there is no universal definition of "minority". The term "national minorities" is understood as referring to those who are citizens of a country and who are regarded as a nation. In general a "national minority" is made up of citizens of a given country who differ in terms of their ethnic background from the majority and identify with a nation organised into its own country. Recognising that "national minority" carries political connotations, researchers more and more frequently use the term "ethnic minority". "Minority" may mean being in an adverse or legally disadvantageous position. See H. Chałupczak, *II Rzeczpospolita a mniejszość polska w Niemczech*, Poznań 1992, p. 15; G. Janusz, *Zagadnienia teorii i praktyki grup etnicznych*, Lublin 1993, p. 32; J. Mucha, *Stosunki etniczne we współczesnej myśli socjologii*, Warsaw 2006, pp. 163-188; A. Posern-Zieliński, *Etniczność. Kategorie. Procesy etniczne*, Poznań 2005, pp. 66-68; J. J. Preece, *Prawa mniejszości*, Warsaw 2007, p. 24; Also see: K. Kwaśniewski, *Socjologia mniejszości a definicja mniejszości narodowej*, "Sprawy Narodowościowe" 1992, vol. 2; Other publications on this topic include J. Polakowska-Kujawa, *Migracje, mniejszości, nacjonalizm. Problemy teoretyczne i realia społeczne*, Warsaw 1994; A. Wierzbicki, *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce. Status prawno-konstytucyjny*, in: W. Jakubowski, T. Słomka (ed.), *Porządek konstytucyjny w Polsce*, Warsaw-Pułtusk 2008, p. 235.

[8] A. Ciechanowicz, *Uchodźcy: coraz większe trudności dla Niemiec*, 16.09.2015, https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2015-09-16/uchodzcy-coraz-wieksze-trudnosci-niemiec (12.10.2016).

Especially essential in the formulation of a country's ethnic policy toward a population entering it is the factor of identity and culture of the particular nations, which to a large extent corresponds with the identification or non-identification of particular groups with the new country of residence. A short review of the ethnic policies of Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova and Ukraine reveals a broad range of issues related to cases where more than one nationality live in a given country.[9] It can be clearly seen, especially in contemporary Ukraine, that neglecting the importance of ethnic politics in multi-ethnic countries can result in serious socio-political consequences, which translate not just into ethnopolitical conflict, but can also lead to the territorial integrity of the country being threatened (for example, the annexation of Crimea by Russia).[10] That is why it is so important to construct mature mechanisms that are adapted to the needs of a given country, which define the functioning of relations between the "titular nation" and the "non-titular nation(s)".

Of special importance for the construction of these mechanisms is knowledge of the conditions and determining factors of an intra- and international nature. Among the first group particularly essential are:

1) the ethnic structure of the country;

2) the time, circumstances and length of residence of ethnic, national, indigenous and migrant minorities in a given country;

3) the degree of socio-political organisation of minorities whether ethnic, national or migrant;

4) the degree of socio-economic stratification;

5) ethnic conflicts (their causes, scale and intensity);

6) state and non-state traditions as well as social attitudes related to multiculturalism;

7) the status of the titular nation or majority group enshrined in the constitution as well as other significant normative laws;

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[9] See G. Janusz, *Ochrona praw mniejszości narodowych w Europie*, Lublin 2011; *Этнополитическая ситуация в Крыму*, "Украина. Информационно-аналитический мониторинг" 2010, no. 11–12; В. Котихоренко, *Єтнічні конфлікті і пртотірічя в сучасній Україні. Політологічній концепт*, Kyiv 2004; Л. Бызов, *Контуры новорусской трансформации. Социокультуруые аспекты формирования современной российской нации и эволюция социально-политической системы*, Moscow 2013; W. Łysek, *Mołdawia między Wschodem i Zachodem*, 22.11.2012, http://www.kresy.pl (12.12.2012).

[10] In March 2014, the government of Crimea, fearing the Ukrainisation of the peninsula, unwanted by a majority of the residents, decided to conduct a referendum on joining the Russian Federation, preceded by a declaration of independence by the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (11 March 2014). In the referendum which took place on 16 March, 2014 with a turnout of over 80% of registered voters, about 97% voted in favour of joining Russia and on 18 March 2014, President of Russia Vladimir Putin signed an agreement with the leader of the Crimean parliament, the Prime Minister of Crimea and the Mayor of Sevastopol, which made Crimea and Sevastopol new members of the Russian Federation. *Referendum bez niespodzianek. Co dalej z Krymem?*, http://www.polskieradio.pl (29.03.2014).

8) the degree of specialisation of the entities (governmental and non-governmental agencies) creating and pursuing ethnic policy goals as well as the different levels of their functioning (for example, regionally);

9) national stereotypes and prejudice;

10) the ethnic distance between the majority and ethnic, national and immigrant minorities;

11) the political system of the country.

In turn, within the group of international conditioning factors for ethnic politics it is necessary to indicate:

1) the (multilateral) international legal obligations of the country;

2) bilateral relations with other countries in the context of national minorities;

3) policies of nation states that support co-nationals living outside the country;

4) the distance of the settlement country from the main population centres of a given ethnic or national group;

5) the coordination of ethnic politics with neighbouring states;

6) historical experiences with minorities at the international political level;

7) the internationalisation of ethnic issues in a particular country as an instrument of exerting influence on the government (with laws regarding minorities used as a pretext);

8) the geopolitical situation and border stability or changes.[11]

An analysis of the literature in terms of the conditions, entities, concepts and implementation of ethnic policy in the countries of Eastern Europe leads to the conclusion that there is a lack of synthetic description concerning attempts at achieving balance and building scenarios of potential measures that can be taken by the state authorities in this area. It is important to note that the dynamics of the processes on the one hand (for example in the Ukraine) and on the other the lack of reliable data (for example in Belarus) make it difficult to create complementary forecasts outlining the potential evolution of ethnic politics in particular countries, taking into account the impact had by different internal factors, including the evolution of the party system toward ethnicisation or de-ethnicisation of policy[12] or the socio-economic situation of the country.[13]

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[11] R. Zenderowski, H. Chałupczak, W. Baluk, *Polityka etniczna…, op. cit.*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, pp. 76-83.

[12] Writers on this topic include J. Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: a Conceptual Framework*, New York 1981; D. Zisserman-Brodsky, *Constructing Ethnopolitics in the Soviet Union: Samizdat, Deprivation, and the Rise of Ethnic Nationalism,* New York 2003; J. G. Kelly, *Ethnic Politics in Europe. The Power of Norms and Incentives,* Oxford 2006.

[13] From the author's observation it follows that deep scholarly reflection is required not only by issues concerning the current state and future development of ethnic policy in the countries of Eastern Europe, but also by phenomena such as 1) contemporary and historical determiners of ethnic policy in the countries of the region (systematic, legal, demographic or socio-cultural); 2 the functioning of the subjects of the policy being researched; 3) the assumptions of ethnic policy; 4) the actual functioning and realisation of ethnic policy as well as its results.

Table 1

Ethnic policy in selected countries of Eastern Europe – current state and prognosis

CURRENT STATE	PROSPECTS
BELARUS	
– In practice, very little in matters of ethnic policy depends on local government officials; – The Łukaszenko regime is conducting a policy of national assimilation and avoids ethnic conflicts and inhibits the externalisation of ethnic and cultural contrasts; there is no discrimination against any nationality and all of them, including Belarusians, undergo monitoring by the state apparatus; – The measure of Belarusian citizens' value, regardless of ethnic background, is their degree of loyalty to the government; – The activities of minority organisations are restricted if they are connected to foreign decision-makers or manifest autonomy in their actions without the agreement of the appropriate state institutions; – Belarusian authorities emphasise the construction of institutional forms of cooperation between legal organisations and the government; in practice these institutions have no effect on policy (they include the Consultative Inter-ethnic Council and national councils associated with departments of religion and nationality in regional offices);	– No change in the political system and no new entities, leaders or ideas in the area of ethnic politics is foreseen in Belarus; – There are no real prospects for changes to the Belarusian political system that could lead to a re-evaluation of ethnic policy; – The present model of ethnic policy will most likely continue; – There will be further stagnation in the area of legislation regarding ethnic issues; – Routine activities in the practical realisation of existing programs are likely;
LITHUANIA	
– Ethnic policy has not been clearly outlined in any document; – Relations with minorities are determined by Lithuania's national state interests; – The recognition of international standards of minority protection by Lithuanian authorities was opportunistic in nature and served as a tool for the advancement of state goals; – Lithuanian authorities ascribe ever less importance to the defence of minorities and are not interested in the regulation of their legal status, which is shown by the lack of any law regarding minorities (the previous law expired in 2010); – The activities of the government and its local agendas concern areas related to the daily life of minorities and their participation in Lithuanian society: 1) changes in the population size of national minorities (reduced, among other ways,	– Lithuania will continue assimilatory policies toward minorities; – The mechanism hindering assimilatory policies will be the continued social and political activities of national and ethnic minorities, especially in local government and parliamentary activities; – The situation of the Russian minority in Lithuania will depend on Russian policy toward the ethnic Russian diaspora; – Policy regarding the Polish minority will be affected by the evaluation of historical events, aspirations for maintaining national identity as well as relations with Poland; – It seems very unlikely that Lithuania will modify its current ethnic policies in the direction of European norms;

as a result of assimilation); 2) changes in ethnic relations (for example extensive colonisation in the areas inhabited by minorities); 3) property, with state authorities reprivatising both land in the countryside and real estate in Vilnius; 4) language, as the use of Lithuanian is obligatory and bilingual signs have been removed under penalty of law; 5) in schooling the authorities are pursuing an increase in the number of students in Lithuanian medium schools at the cost of schools conducted in minority languages;	– There is a tendency to limit the activities of national minorities and to accelerate assimilation policies which are officially defined as integration policies;
MOLDOVA	
– Moldovan authorities are attempting to further the development and protection of national minorities; their activities, however, are not comprehensive in nature; on the one hand, there is government willingness to improve the country's ethnic policies, while on the other hand, a lack of effects in this area can be observed; the government has not formulated a program which would respect the rights of linguistic national minorities and instead propagates the national language; – Actions to strengthen the position of the Russian language by the communist authorities led to an increase in unrest in society and has deepened the division between Romanian speaking and Russian speaking residents of Moldova; – Language problems are used to create divisions among the population; – The primary problems are the implementation of laws for national minorities as well as the limited participation of non-Moldovans in public life; the problem of teaching minority languages in schools and offering education in these languages (apart from Russian), the availability of textbooks and an insufficient number of teachers; – There are limited operating funds for the Interethnic Relations Office and other institutions dealing with minority issues; – Divisions in Moldova are still strong and difficulties with integrating minorities can partly be blamed on Moldovan authorities; the social integration of the non-titular population does not allow for the improvement of the economic and socio-political situation of non-Moldovans; this makes the formulation of the Moldovan political nation more difficult;	– Over the next few years the ethnic politics of Moldova will maintain its basic characteristics, although each political party in the government will carry out its own particular program; – Positive changes could be achieved due to economic factors such as reforms stemming from the process of European integration and EU development aid; this could lead to an increase in wealth in Moldova and enable authorities to earmark funds for the development of non-Moldovan culture and identity, encouraging minorities to integrate with Moldovan society; – A balanced language policy is needed, which would take into account the interests of all minorities as well as the titular nationality; – The exploitation of divisions in linguistic and ethnic identity for political goals will continue to impede the formulation of a long-term coherent plan for the integration of minorities; without a plan for general national integration the political effects in this area will be weak;

UKRAINE	
– The model of ethnic politics in place until 2014 was based on the rule of a unified state, in which the formulation "Ukrainian political nation" dominated; this was based on a civic society integrated around the "idea of the state"; democratic legal solutions were accepted for this purpose for the realisation of ethnic policy; – The degree of satisfaction of national minority needs, the development of their organisational structure as well as the elaboration of forms of cooperation with state organs can be counted among the successes in the area of ethnic policy in the period 1991-2014 (until the outbreak of the conflict in eastern Ukraine); – The area of ethnic relations in Ukraine was not without problems: factors that generated conflict (such as the Crimean problem, Russian-Ukrainian bilingualism or the status of the Russian population) increased after Ukraine obtained independence; – The events of 2014 (the escalation of separatist sentiments in Southeast Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the outbreak of a pro-Russian rebellion in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions) revealed the effects of and threats resulting from the lack of due attention by Ukrainian authorities with regard to ethnic policy; – The present situation in Ukraine is characterised by the actualisation of attributes of ethnicity, the opposition between the interests of the centralised state and the aspirations of political forces in favour of federalisation and national-cultural autonomy; the national status of the Ukrainian and Russian languages and the pro-Russian orientation of the population in the East and South of Ukraine; – The creation of the optimal conditions for the harmonious development and co-existence of the various populations that make up Ukrainian society is the principle goal of state ethnic policy.	– Taking into account the annexation of Crimea, it can be predicted that the country will take a cautious attitude to questions of national-cultural autonomy; – Mechanisms will be created to counter tendencies toward decentralisation and broadening separatist sentiments and movements; there will be a need to elaborate new ethnopolitical principles for those resettled from Crimea; – Solutions in the area of ethnic policy are required in the southern and eastern regions of the country in order to overcome anti-Ukrainian sentiments as well as to counter the pro-Russian orientation of part of the citizenry; ethnic policy should be directed toward the neutralisation of the gravest threats that contain ethnic factors; – A change in language policy and an evolution in the direction of broadening the areas of usage for minority languages at the local level is likely while the status of Ukrainian as the state language will be maintained.

Source: Author's analysis on the basis of E. Mironowicz, *Polityka etniczna Białorusi*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka etniczna współczesnych państw Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej,* Lublin 2015, p. 147-148; A. Bobryk, Z. Kurcz, *Polityka etniczna Litwy*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, pp. 277-284; M. Kosienkowski, *Polityka etniczna Mołdawii*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, pp. 320-327; D. Paprocka, *Gaugazja w kontekście procesu integracji Mołdawii z Unią Europejską,* in: B. Piskorska, M. Kosienkowski (ed.), *Mołdawia i Unia Europejska: od współpracy do integracji*, Lublin 2014; N. Teres, A. Jakubowski, *Polityka etniczna Ukrainy*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, pp. 523-529.

Discussions in the region more and more often lead to the opinion that ethnic politics is an unusually important element in the realisation of basic state functions in the countries of Eastern Europe. Researchers also stress that the idea of ethnic politics in Eastern Europe above all serves the building, rebuilding and strengthening of the majority national identity of a given country while satisfying the needs of other national and ethnic minorities living within its borders is only an afterthought. There is also an idea that ethnic policy is a sign of the degree of openness and democratisation of the system of modern politics in the countries of Eastern Europe. Equally interesting seems to be the idea that the long-lasting economic crisis in which some of the countries of the region find themselves in may result in a revival of older national disputes along with prejudice and negative stereotypes and ethnic conflicts with the use of force in various degrees as well as serious "irritations" in bilateral relations.

As an example, the authorities of Belarus proclaim that in that country there are no grounds for the appearance of national, racial or language conflicts. They claim that the ethnic situation is stable and conflict-free and the primary goal of the country is the maintenance of this status quo. An important tool in carrying out this ethnic policy is the so-called national ideology, pursued from 2003, which defines the idea of the Belarusian nation comprising not only Belarusians (the majority) but also Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians, Jews and Tatars as "children of one Fatherland". Independent sociologists and political scientists, in turn, define the "national ideology" as utopian and serving as a justification for an authoritarian system of government.[14] Eugeniusz Mironowicz notes that along with the appearance of the "national ideology" at the beginning of the 21st century, the idea of "national and ethnic minorities" began disappearing from the legal system. They were replaced with the term "ethnic communities" and the idea that Belarus at present has neither national minorities nor a titular nation in the European meaning. Instead, there are only "ethnic communities", of which the largest is Belarusian, and together these communities make up the Belarusian nation. The official language of mass media and daily communication of a large majority of the "Belarusian nation" is that of the Russian "ethnic community" which makes up about 10% of the population. This is an effect of conscious political policies by the Belarusian government, which under slogans touting the equality of all ethnic communities and a free choice model of cultural development eliminated the Belarusian language from public life along with all the elements that could serve to construct a Belarusian national identity.[15] "Belarusianness as traditionally understood – as an ethnic, cultural and language community comprising a nation is defined by the government as nationalism, which needs to be fought against will all available methods in every space of public life".[16]

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[14] E. Mironowicz, *Polityka etniczna Białorusi*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

[15] The current model of ethnic politics in Belarus was built in 1995 when the regime of Alexander Lukashenko cut itself off from the parliamentary system and began centralising authority around the office of the President. See E. Mironowicz, *Historia państw świata XX wieku. Białoruś,* Warsaw 2007.

[16] E. Mironowicz, *Polityka…, op. cit,* in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, p. 100; On the topic of national minorities and ethnic politics in Belarus also see: T. Gawin,

The current ethnic policy of the Republic of Lithuania, on the other hand, as shown in the research of Adam Bobryk and Zbigniew Kurcz is, to a significant extent, both a reflection and consequence of the fate of the Lithuanian nation and their country. At the turn of the 1990s, an ethnic mobilisation took place, inspired by Lithuanian national activists and taken up by the Lithuanian population. Rivalries concerned equally the symbolic content, cultural heritage and resources of social memory as well as the possibility of ownership, enrichment and holding high positions at the cost of minorities whether they have lost their privileged positions (Russians) or are seeking to regain theirs (Poles).[17] Researchers in the area stress that the marginalisation of the place and influence of national and ethnic minorities has brought the Lithuanian population measurable gains and has become at the same time a contributing factor for identifying with the Republic of Lithuania as their own country.[18] This is backed up by observation of the Lithuanian political stage upon which parties that differ in other ways are united in their attitude toward minorities, especially the Polish minority.[19]

Also interesting in the area of Eastern Europe is the ethnic policy of Moldova, where the question of the national identity of the titular nation is one of the principal problems of the country.[20] It turns out, in the research of Marcin Kosienkowski, that the level of ethnic politics in Moldova is rather high as reflected in, among other questions, differences in the identity of the nations living there,[21] the large percentage of minorities in the population (20-30%), the acquisition of an electoral structure by political forces, the memory of ethnic conflicts resulting in, among other effects, the loss of control of Transnistria and finally in seeking integration with the EU, which

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Zwycięstwa i porażki. Odrodzenie polskości na Białorusi w latach 1987-2000, Białystok 2003; T. Malewicz, *Związek Polaków a stowarzyszenia mniejszości narodowych*, in: Z. Winnicki, T. Gawin (ed.), *Polska mniejszość na Białorusi. Związek Polaków na Białorusi w 20-lecie działalności*, Białystok 2010; Cf. T. Szyszlak (ed.), *Kwestia romska w polityce państw Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej*, Wrocław 2001.

[17] For a broader take on the topic see: W. Misiak, Z. Kurcz, A. Sakson (ed.), *Z pogranicza na pogranicze w świetle teorii i wyników badań*, Wrocław 2005; Z Kurcz, *Mniejszość polska na Wileńszczyźnie. Studium socjologiczne*, Wrocław 2005.

[18] The most important factors in the ethnic policy of post-independence Lithuania were the law on national minority, the relation of the state language to those of national minorities, the orthographies of proper names, the education of national minorities, reprivatisation and political representation by minorities in local governments and parliament.

[19] A. Bobryk, Z. Kurcz, *Polityka etniczna Litwy*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, pp. 239-240; See also M. Kosman, *Z polsko-litewskiej przeszłości. Studia i szkice*, Warsaw 2012; K. Buchowski, *Litwomani i polonizatorzy. Mity, wzajemne postrzeganie i stereotypy w stosunkach polsko - litewskich w pierwszej połowie XX wieku*, Białystok 2006; E. Kuzborska, *Sytuacja prawna mniejszości narodowych na Litwie w kontekście międzynarodowych i ponadnarodowych standardów ich ochrony,* Warsaw 2012.

[20] See I. Jóźwiak, *Między Rosją a Rumunią – koncepcje narodu mołdawskiego*, "Etnografia Polska" 2007, notebooks 1-2; D. A. Zabarah, *Nation and Statehood in Moldova*, Wiesbaden 2011.

[21] It should be mentioned that these divisions were strengthened and given greater visibility by the crisis in Ukraine in 2013-14. Part of the Russian-speaking population of Moldova openly supported and support Russian actions despite the fact that the realisation of the Ukrainian scenario also threatened the country in which they were living. A. Andrievskij, *Russkoâzyčnye Moldovy: svoi ili čužye*, 28.04.2014, http://www.ava.md (11.05.2016).

requires respect for human rights, including those of national minorities. It should, however, be noted that a high ranking in terms of ethnic policy does not mean that the measures taken are effective. It is worth adding that the ethnic policy of Moldova is often inconsistent in nature which is a result of the government usually being made up of coalitions whose members have different views on questions of nationality.[22] Specialists in the area of ethnic policy in Moldova also indicate that part of the government insists on a solution to the problem of Moldovan identity and a definition of the political Moldovan nation in accordance with European values and the common pursuit of integration with the EU. This does not appear to be an optimal idea since European integration is only supported by a little less than half the population, while among minorities themselves support is decidedly lower. Anti-EU feelings are inspired and incited by Russia. For many representatives of national minorities the EU is negatively associated with economic crisis and a lack of ideas for solving the Syrian crisis connected with the wave of refugees. Research also points out that the ethnic policy pursued by the central Moldovan government in the areas under its control is especially important in the context of settling the conflict over Transnistria.[23]

In the question of ethnic policy issues in the modern states of Eastern Europe, the gaze of scientists and researchers is drawn ever more frequently to Ukraine. It seems that the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation as well as armed conflict in the Donbass region has definitively brought an important stage of Ukrainian ethnic policy to an end. Its essence was reconciliation between all ethnic groups based on universal principles of the rule of law. In conditions of ethnic conflict and threats to Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, this policy has taken on a special importance and significance. Its main goal has become the neutralisation of ethnic separatism, the rebuilding of peace and overcoming ethnic divisions as well as including minorities in socio-political life.[24] Now, new and serious challenges stand before Ukraine, such as the rebuilding and stabilisation of the political system including national safety, the defence of sovereignty and territorial integrity and the normalisation of relations with neighbouring countries.[25]

It is worth adding here that the ethnic and cultural situation in Ukraine is not the one traditionally found in many countries of coexistence between a dominant "titular

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[22] M. Kosienkowski, *Polityka etniczna Mołdawii*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, pp. 286-287; Also see: B. Zaniuk, *Linie podziałów politycznych w Republice Mołdawii – aspekt tożsamościowy*, in: M. Kosienkowski (ed.), *Spotkania polsko-mołdawskie. Księga poświęcona pamięci Profesora Janusza Solaka*, Lublin 2013.

[23] M. Kosienkowski, *Polityka…, op. cit.*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, pp. 326-327; K. Całus, *Gaugazja: rosnący separatyzm w Mołdawii?*, "Komentarze OSW", 10.03.2014, http://www.osw.waw.pl (17.05.2015); M. Kosienkowski, *Naddniestrzańska Republika Mołdawska. Determinanty przetrwania*, Toruń 2010; Other writers on the conflict in Transnistria include P. Oleksy, *Mołdawski nacjonalizm vs. naddniestrzańska państwowotwórczość. Przesłanki społecznej mobilizacji w konflikcie naddniestrzańskim*, "Sensus Historiae" 2013, no. 2; Z. Cierpiński, *Przyczyny konfliktu w Naddniestrzu*, in: P. Adamczewski (ed.), *Konflikty na obszarze byłego ZSRR*, Poznań 2009.

[24] See M. Riabczuk, *Dwie Ukrainy*, Wrocław 2005.

[25] N. Teres, A. Jakubowski, *Polityka etniczna Ukrainy*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, pp. 481.

nation" and numerous "afflicted" minority cultures and subcultures. Instead, there are two dominant cultural traditions speaking Ukrainian and Russian, respectively and with overlapping territories. The mechanisms of domination of these two traditions are oppositional. Practices associated with speaking Ukrainian are rooted in the traditional peasant culture and in many public spheres (education, media, the exercise of power) they exist or are enforced by state actions. Russian speaking practices, however, in many spheres exist and are dominant thanks to market functioning as next to Ukraine is the significantly larger and multi-dimensional Russian market.[26]

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Observation of the ethnic policies of Eastern European countries which underwent far-reaching political changes in the final decade of the 20th century, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, leads to the conclusion that due to the internal and external conditions of these countries, some of them have expanded the subjective and objective nature and range of their ethnic policies taking into account those addressed, which include, apart from national and ethnic minorities, the titular nations and diasporas. This applies especially to those countries which obtained or regained independence and whose political elites have a feeling that their sovereignty is under threat – countries with different ethnic compositions, incompletely formed titular nations and numerous compact and well-organised populations of co-ethnics, especially in adjoining countries.[27] It should be added that particular countries of Eastern Europe, based on their specific situations and making use of different concepts of government have undergone partial or complete transformations.[28] Some of them (for example Lithuania) have achieved numerous successes while others (such as Belarus and Ukraine) still face basic problems related to their socio-political and economic transformations.

In summary, ethnic policy, understood in categories of public policy addressed to national and ethnic minorities living in a particular country is an unusually important element of the internal and foreign policy as well as the political and cultural identities of all ethnically and culturally heterogeneous countries in Eastern Europe.[29]

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[26] N. Honczarenko, M. Kusznariowa, *Szkoła inszuwannia*, "Krytyka" 2001, no. 4, p. 20.

[27] R. Zenderowski, H. Chałupczak, W. Baluk, *Polityka…, op. cit.*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, p. 94.

[28] For more on this topic: H. Chałupczak, M. Pietraś, P. Tosiek (ed.), *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w procesach transformacji i integracji. Wymiar polityczny,* Zamość 2010; R. Zenderowski (ed.), *Europa Środkowa: wspólnota czy zbiorowość?,* Wrocław-Warsaw-Krakow 2004.

[29] On the topic of percentage of those belonging to the titular nation in particular countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the 20th and 21st centuries see: R. Zenderowski, H. Chałupczak, W. Baluk, *Polityka…, op. cit.*, in: H. Chałupczak, R. Zenderowski, W. Baluk (ed.), *Polityka…, op. cit.*, p. 12ff.

ABSTRACT

This article presents an analysis of the status of ethnopolitics in several Eastern European countries, namely Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine and Moldova. The first section explores the concept of "ethnopolitics", which concerns the relationship between ethnicity and politics. It shows that the main objectives of ethnic policy can be classified into two groups: 1) those relating to inter-ethnic relations; 2) those targeting specific entities (ethnic groups and the state in which they reside). There is an examination of ethnic policy in practice in different countries of the region, revealing the determining factors and conditions it operates under at the intra- and international levels. The current state of ethnic policy of selected countries in the region and the potential future development of these policies is described. Ethnic policy in Eastern Europe emerges as an extremely important element of the basic functions of the states in the region, including the central construction, reconstruction and strengthening of national identity. What is particularly important, ethnic policy, understood in terms of public policy addressed to national and ethnic minorities living a country, is a central element of domestic and foreign policy, and the political and cultural identity of all heterogeneous ethnically and culturally countries of Eastern Europe.