Social and Psychological Foundations of Ethnic Separatism in the Southern Caucasus

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ABSTRACT

The formation of ethnic peculiarities depends on the forms of communication with the system public relations. The main reason for the different psychological characteristics of ethnic groups and peoples of the world is that the natural evolution of the human species happened differently in different regions of the world. This, in turn, led to the formation of various psychological characteristics, various types of thinking. It is known that there is a close connection between the style of human thinking, character and other peculiarities with climate, natural environment, which also leads to differences in psychological peculiarities of ethnic groups. Ethnic groups start distancing from each other, when objective conditions are created for ethnic separatism.

Key words: Ethnic separatism; South Caucasus; peoples of the South Caucasus; psychology of ethnic relations; psychological foundations of ethnic separatism

INTRODUCTION

The life of human society is directly related to its social structure, including the division into ethnic groups, each of which occupies a specific place in the region and the world at large in the process of its historical development.

The history of how various ethnic groups in the South Caucasus were formed is complex and not fully studied. It is known that a modern Armenian people formed on the basis of ethnic dilution and medley of a relatively small (I. Dyakonov, 1968) Indo-European group, the speakers of the Proto-Armenian language, in the massif of Hurrians, Urartu and the Semites, as well as medley with the autochthonous Indo-Europeans – the Luvians but with preservation of the Armenian language. Researchers attribute the beginning of ethnogenesis of modern Armenians to the end of the II millennium BC, when the settled Mushki started to closely interact with Luvians and Hurrians, and the end – to the 6th century BC, when the process of merging of these two ethnicities into the Armenian people was completed (I. Dyakonov, 1968). In addition to the historical realities, the formation of ethnic consciousness was influenced by the political system of the society, state formations, the system of international relations.

The nature of the problem, the social and psychological foundations of ethnic separatism, was largely affected by the regional relationship between countries, including the leading ones: Russia, Iran and Turkey. The other two major ethnic groups living in that territory – the Azerbaijani and Georgian ethnic groups, also have ancient origin, complex history of development and formation. The researchers write that "the Azerbaijani as a nation formed as a result of a long historical development, gradual consolidation of local ancient tribes (Albanians, Udine, Caspians, Talysh, etc.) with the ecdeadic Turkic-speaking tribes – the Huns, Oguz, Kipchak etc., and, according to the scientific view, the replacement of indigenous languages by the Turkic spoken language here occurred in the 11th – 13th centuries. In turn, the Turkic tribes were quite varied in terms of their ethnic components, combining a variety of other, somewhat more ancient tribes, which later participated in the ethnogenesis of not only Azerbaijanis, but also a number of other Turkic-speaking peoples. We must assume that the ethnic history of Azerbaijan attributes a significant mark to the tribes of Kara koyunlu (Black Sheep Turkomans) and Ağ Qoyunlu (White Sheep

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Turkomans), settled in South Azerbaijan, which in the 15th century included "Azerbaijani lands south of Quba" (S. Gajiyev, 1990).

As for the historical roots of the Georgian people, the researchers note that "the Georgian ethos was formed from related (Kartvelian) and unrelated elements, and its territory was expanded by the assimilation of other tribes, mainly of Caucasian origin." Moktevany Kartlisay indicates that Kartvelians, not Bun-Turks, chronicled as Iebusei tribes, are the most ancient inhabitants of the left bank of the Kura. The latter are mentioned in the Bible as one of the Canaanite tribes. The manuscripts of Kartlis Tskhovreba describe the mythical "family tree" of the Kartvels going back to Targamos, one of the sons of Biblical Japheth. They also list children of Kartlos – the "ancestor" of the Kartvels: Kahos, Kuhos, Dzhavahos and others. These names in fact reflect the names of the historical regions of Georgia and thus present an attempt to justify their origin. However, the names of other areas have preserved older meanings, or perhaps even pre-existing ethnonyms, regardless of whether they were related to Kartvels" (A. Novoseltsev, 1972).

The Georgian people are believed to be "formed on the basis of three closely related tribal groupings: the Karts, the Megrelo-Chans and the Svans (Peoples of the World, 2007). The process of formation of the Georgian nation ended in the 6th – 10th centuries (Georgians - article).

In addition to these largest ethnic groups, the South Caucasus is home to numerous ethnic groups with their own language, lifestyle, place of residence, ethnic identity. The processes of moving of large groups of peoples were interrelated, all this, in turn, depended on the relations between the countries and regions. Historical fates of peoples living here, largely depended on the stronger state formations, on campaigns and invasions, on the religious factor and were largely influenced by political and economic factors.

First of all, let us remind you that ethnic identity is associated not only with economic and socio-political factors, but also with a conscious attitude towards the world, which includes historical memory (this is a complex concept, which includes mental perception of a person and the world), values and standards of the social institutions, part of which the socio-ethnic group is. Hence the notion of identity. E. Toffler, exploring issues of identity, wrote that "at the present time ... millions of people are searching for their identity or some magic solution that would help them regain their identity, that would instantly give a sense of intimacy or ecstasy, would lead them to the state of "higher" consciousness." Many have lost their "Me", their identity, despite the fact they had a chance to choose from a sufficient range of possible sources of identification with anything or anyone (E. Toffler, 2004).

G. Kuliev in his monograph (G. Guliyev, 2002) wrote extensively about the development of memory, based on self-identification. Archetypal properties of are mentality of great interest in terms of relationships that are built between the peoples living in the same region, including the South Caucasus. The author once wrote about this: "The collapse of the Soviet Union became a point of reference of the newest history of the Caucasus, in which a prominent role was played by cultural and geopolitical factors as invariant parameters of the original Caucasian paradigm. Its originality was predetermined by geographic location of the region, due to which it was involved in all the world's civilizational and religious streams. This landscape circumstance has played an important role in the formation of a heterogeneous socio-cultural space of the Caucasus, provoking consciousness to find archetypal holistics of the Caucasus" (G. Guliyev, 2002).

Social and psychological peculiarities of development of the South Caucasian peoples are related primarily to the economic and spiritual foundations of life. If in the Middle Ages and in modern times it was ruled by communal relations, their preservation was largely contributed by religion. Numerous small and large ethnic groups, intertwining of their destinies, both under the influence of internal conditions and external circumstances, contributed to the formation of different directions of their historical development. Natural conditions, such as the relief, climate, geographical zone, and so on, became the basis for the development of a special mentality, their own mental structures on which the identity, primarily ethnicidentity, was built.

As written in the encyclopedic dictionaries, "the representatives of Transcaucasian ethnic groups are endowed with a highly developed and a keen sense of national pride, self-esteem and self-respect, greater commitment to national traditions and habits, ethnic family solidarity and responsibility, explosive emotionality, increased sensitivity to other people's actions and judgments, a pronounced drive to self presentation, great independence, activity and initiative" [2].

It is known that the existence of every nation is connected not only with certain socio-political factors, but also the peculiarities of the spiritual life. This, above all, its folklore. There is no such ethnic group, even if the roots are distant and not clearly visible, which would not have its folklore. The deepest layers of folklore lead to ancient myths. The long way, which all forms and examples of folk tales have come, has been reflected in their genre characteristics, forms of expression of the socio-psychological characteristics. The perception of folklore of a particular ethnic group should therefore be attributed to psychosocial and mental peculiarities, because folklore works (among other factors) form the
image of people, their features and qualities. This is due to the fact through folklore one can determine the ethnicity of the people, their views on life, customs, traditions, and the overall lifestyle.

As such succinct description of the ethnic peculiarities of the Azerbaijanian people, the researchers cite the following lines of a folk song:

Let the whole burden and challenges
Go to mountains and rocks.
To the birds in flight,
To the dead trees
To the fruitless bees,
To old spiteful hags
To a gray wolf

Receive a gift from Hızır (Hızır is an ancient god: I. B.). (Göyər, səmanim, Göyər, 1993).

Here, the old and the obsolete echoes with the eternal, something that does not age and is the basis of eternal life. Such tales, spells, intertwined with life, customs, rituals, all manner of life in general, impose a significant imprint on the minds of people, on relationships with other nations and ethnic groups. It is known that our ancestors had complex relationships with the natural environment. Many of the secrets of nature were deified; there were many elements of anthropomorphism. As a result, through folklore, attempts were made to influence it, find causes and effects of sometimes non-existent, but merely alleged links.

The formation of the world was also associated with the efforts to understand complex being, on the basis of which to new mental structures of thought developed, spells should be the first and foremost of them. Through them, people have been trying to understand the world, influence it, which was reflected in the social and psychological aspects of manifestation of the will and emotions. There were spells against disease, natural disasters, wars, to make work easier, fulfill desires, and so on.

Similar examples can be found in the self-consciousness of other ethnic groups living in the South Caucasus.

It's obvious that "two successive waves of "sovereignization" of the Transcaucasian former autonomous republics of the Soviet Union gave rise (and continue to, from time to time) to a set of unresolved and often impossible-to-resolve problems that any attempt to generalize the experience accumulated over the years of increasing conflicts, and even more so, the historical analysis of inter-ethnic relations in the South Caucasus bogs down in a sea of conflicting and often hopelessly perverted facts: it is difficult to imagine a more ungrateful task than identifying the "right" and the "wrong" in a given confrontation, whether it's Karabakh, Abkhazia or Ossetia (D. Buyaner, 2005).

As can be seen from the previous statement, the formation of ethnic groups, including the so-called "title" groups, the names of which are reflected in the state name, was complex and quite distant from us, therefore it is difficult to determine the ethnicity of a people. However, the potential of the ICT has now expanded, involving data on DNA, analyzing language systems, which all together gives an indication of the degree of closeness of a particular ethnic group. However, a "privileged" position of a particular ethnic group stimulates the origination of separatism.

This is the political side of the issue, however, we are interested in the social and psychological background in the manifestation of separatist tendencies in the relations between the peoples of the region. Both parties are interrelated because in the historical consciousness of each of the people living here, perceptions of their own mentality evolved over a long time, but the basic idea of self-identification occurred in the period of capitalist development. Before analyzing the manifestations of social and psychological foundations of ethnic separatism, let us briefly describe the very notion of separatism.

Separatism (Lat. Sepaiatus – separate) is a theory, a policy and practice of separation part of the territory of the state to create a new independent state or gaining a very broad autonomy, which leads to a violation of the state's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders and, as experience shows, can be a source of acute interstate and international conflicts. However, it is obvious that the causes of separatism are very often associated with a gross violation of human rights, as well as the rights of peoples, ethnic, racial or religious groups (minorities) (http://www.onlinedics.ru/).

Thus, we are talking about basic human rights and freedoms that are not being properly granted. Consequently, this has to do with political priorities that define the relationship between the peoples both within the country and abroad. Claims on the living conditions are aggravated by the ideological expansion of the major ethnic groups. There is a distortion of historical truth, or its gray areas, which cannot be clearly interpreted, are analyzed in favor of certain political interests.

The perceptions of own ethnicity, are therefore closely linked to the political priorities. For example, the genealogy of the royal families of the European countries is closely linked, sometimes in the most peculiar ways. Nevertheless, a representative of each country identifies himself with the ethnic group of the country, adopting its priorities, standards of thinking, values and standards of
social institutions of the country. The same thing happens at the level of separate ethnic groups. Some factors should be emphasized that can bring together, or, alternatively, distinguish ethnic groups, which are sufficiently close by origin and live practically next door.

First of all, these are religious beliefs, affiliation with a particular faith. The formation of monotheistic religions contributed, on the one hand, to the strengthening of ties and a positive image of a particular ethnic group, on the other hand, to disunity. An example of such a development is precisely the South Caucasus. Here ancient beliefs were replaced by Christianity and Islam. In Christianity prevailed Monophysitism (Georgian and Armenian Church), in Islam both branches were developing – Sunni and Shiite. Other branches of Christianity have spread to a very small extent, for example Catholicism, Judaism is developed to a certain extent. Religious conflicts in most cases have a formal aspect of expression as they are backed by political contradictions.

It is worth mentioning the historical memory of past confrontations, quarrels, insults, persecutions, which transformed into archetypes and the knowledge about real events, legends, myths, anecdotes, etc. In addition, we know that certain propaganda, including subversive actions, are carried out by certain political structures, all of this has, so to speak, stuck in the public consciousness at the level of public opinion. Stereotypes about peoples are formed also spontaneously as a result of a certain public diplomacy.

Ethnic Psychology also contains factors associated with language processes. The linguistic identification is also important to strengthen the concepts of own ethnicity. Each ethnic group, speaking their own language is thus protecting its purity, supporting it in practice through communication. However, the reduction of the number of native speakers leads to the formation of the feeling of insecurity, a sense of "minority" that affects ethno-separatist aspirations.

Thus, the objective circumstances of a particular ethnic group's development lead to the desire of self-defense resulting in a so-called separatism. On a psychological level, this is a feeling of anxiety which turns on protective mechanisms related at the level of ethnic separatism with displacement, substitution, opposition (based on practical psychoanalysis). Certain attitudes are also developed here (both a steady state of readiness to perceive, act, think and feel anything in such a dependent way to achieve a particular purpose) (T. M. Newcomb, 1972). The problems of self-perception are also relevant to the issue of the psychology of ethnic separatism. It is important to remember that this disturbs the balance of personality, and the process of group reinforcement of individual motives and attitudes, particularly in the context of group conflict and group solidarity, plays a role here as well; this is also called group communication; where a sense of belonging and its stimulation is also important, although a sense of separate identity should not be lost (T. M. Newcomb, 1972).

There is also the concept of dissonance in the behavior of individuals and groups, which is manifested on the ethnopsychological level (when there is a discrepancy between what a person knows, what he/she believes and what he/she does) (L. Festinger, 1957). Attitudes that are formed both within ethnic groups and at the level of individuals are manifested also at the level of ethnic psychology. We are aware of the ratio of attitudes and reference groups (H. H. Kelly, 1952). On ethnopsychological level we must also consider the level of social frustration, which is determined on the basis of proven techniques developed by psychologists.

We should note that work in these areas is complex and currently has a fragmented character. At the least, such developments have not yet been conducted regarding this problem. From the materials collected on the basis of observations, individual facts, statistical studies, we can conclude that the formation of hostility, hatred, contempt, arrogance against certain ethnic groups, or, alternatively, a sense of humiliation, contempt for their own ethnic group, and exaltation of the opposite side (this happens quite often) occurs, when the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens are violated. This happens also when two ethnicities are being artificially sickened. Such work can be performed by international political groups, skillfully using social networking, social discontent, while fostering social tensions in the right direction.

Socio-psychological stereotypes that have evolved over the centuries in the peoples who live here, are very different. In the history of their relationship there have been periods when all the Caucasus belonged to a single state formation, then these relationships were built on a common basis, under the control of the ruling authorities. However, in the periods of growing centrifugal forces, when each nation received an opportunity to develop independently, self identification was accomplished on other standards, as a result the growth of self-consciousness completed in the pursuit of sovereign development. Obstacles on this way resulted in the formation of separatist tendencies, some of which became the expressions of nationalism, xenophobia, chauvinism, including the social and psychological levels. These national sentiments were expressed through a certain dissonance in the expression of feelings and emotions, a state of frustration, a sense of inferiority. On the other hand, feelings of contempt, arrogance, hatred to the titular nation were fostered.
It should be noted that the separatist tendencies already started to build up back at the establishment of capitalist production relations in tsarist Russia and were expressed in the growth of social discontent and social tension. The opposition was especially strong between the different ethnic faiths, particularly between the Muslims and the Christians. It was used by certain political forces both inside and outside the state. Until today, the separatist tendencies take place, certain political conflicts, which are controlled by external political forces, have been put to sleep. In such circumstances, the relationships between peoples, in spite of centuries-old experience of peaceful cohabitation, became strained, all the while the search for the "enemy" is happening, the nations are seeking for what's their "own" and what's been "borrowed" by others, the historical picture of autochthony is being constantly distorted and questioned. The growing distrust causes the loss of the so painstakingly acquired social capital.

As a political event, separatism is based on a number of social and psychological qualities, the formation of which is based on the mental qualities of the people, historically formed in the territory of their residence, as well as on the distribution of resources and the resulting political and social development of the region, all the peoples living there.

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