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## **HISTORICAL AND ETHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF ETHNIC PROCESSES IN UKRAINE AND MAINTAINING NATIONAL IDENTITY**

The revival of ethnic processes and nation building in the late 1980s – early 1990s in Ukraine was accompanied by the crisis and deterioration of the Soviet totalitarian regime. Thus, Ukraine may be identified as a post-totalitarian and post-colonial country, and the substantial renaissance of social, political, national, cultural, spiritual life are influenced by this fact.

This research aims to specify the role of historical and ethnological science in understanding the ethnic and language processes in Ukraine and strengthening the national identity. It contributes to the educational efforts in the universities and helps to improve students' competences.

The intercultural competence is becoming a key to the successful integration of individuals in Ukraine and the modern world, and requires coordinated actions of educators both secondary and higher education, based on the awareness of cultural diversity, ethnic and linguistic composition of Ukraine, recognition of the value of tolerance and intercultural approach with the respect to Ukrainian national culture [1]. The study of ethnic processes in Ukraine remains to be an important task of contemporary Ukrainian science, in particular history and ethnology. Modern Ukrainian scholars have made fundamental achievements in the comprehensive study of Ukrainian identity, language processes, ethnic and national structure in the country.

Ethnology gives methodological instruments, terminology and academic approach to understand the complexity of language and ethnic processes in Ukrainian history. As a specific branch of historical science, it studies the patterns of formation and development of an ethnic group as a self-sufficient social system. Ethnology

focuses on internal ethnic processes, the transformations of traditional culture, life, rituals, ethnic and language identity, and interethnic relations. As a result of the interaction of ethnology with other humanities, a number of new scientific fields have emerged including ethnohistory, ethnodemography, ethnogeography, ethnosociology, ethnosociolinguistics, ethnopolitics, ethnopsychology, ethnocultural studies.

In addition to its main scientific and educational function, Ukrainian studies has had quite important educational tasks not only in the past, but also today. Ukrainian studies directly affects the formation of national identity and consolidation of the current generation of Ukrainians, promotes awareness of Ukraine's European civilisational choice and the affirmation of European democratic values [3].

Ethnology provides a conceptual framework for the study of ethnic diversity within the Ukrainian society. The ethnic and national structure of society is defined as a set of ethnic communities within a single state: the dominant majority and ethnic minority groups including both the ethnic minorities and the representatives of distinct ethnic groups. In the context of Ukraine in the 19th and 20th centuries absence of its national state this structure included a dominant minority, a subordinate majority (mass ethnicity), and ethnic minority groups. Prior to Ukraine's independence, Ukrainians remained a mass ethnic group or subordinate majority, while Russians had the status of a dominant minority. The direct consequence of this situation was that Russians in Ukraine did not undergo language assimilation during the Soviet era, and vice versa, Ukrainians, although the majority of the population, were assimilated in terms of language [2, p. 46].

An ethnic minority is a group of people who differ from the main population by their ethnic origin: either by their nationality, language or religion; inferior in number to the main population group; not dominant in the country; demonstrating a desire to preserve their identity and their culture, traditions, religion or language; not consisting of recent immigrants or refugees; having deep roots in the country of residence (usually citizens of that country). Ethnic minorities are divided into separate groups according to their status, origin, territorial location and length of stay.

A national minority is a minority group whose ethnic core is located in another country. Some of them have had the status of dominant minorities in the past or are descendants of long-standing migrants. The national minorities are defined as entities of the citizens of Ukraine who are not Ukrainians by their nationality, numerically smaller than Ukrainians, manifest the sense of national self-identification and of community between them and freely maintain and develop their ethnic and cultural identity. The structure also includes regional minority, an ethnic group that does not have its own ethnic core outside its country of residence. Its ethnogenesis took place on the territory of its current territorial location. Whereas an emigrant minority is a type of minority group formed from recent immigrants and consisting mainly of migrants and their first-generation descendants.

In conclusion, ethnology and historical science have an extremely important place in contemporary Ukrainian studies. Research of Ukrainian national identity and the ethnic and language processes through the centuries contribute to the intercultural competence and awareness of all Ukrainians unity around the world, and the development of independent democratic Ukraine within Europe. Humanities and Ukrainian studies, including the History and Culture of Ukraine, Ethnic and Language Processes in Ukraine as well as regional cultural history (for example History of Culture of Sloboda Ukraine) as distinctive courses in the university educational process promote and improve cultural knowledge and intercultural competence. Ukrainian studies and education actively accelerate the formation of contemporary Ukrainian identity of the younger generations of Ukrainians, their adherence to European choice and liberal values.

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