

National Research University Higher School of Economics

As a manuscript

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**The Projects of Nation-building in (sub)ethnic communities of Central
Eastern Europe**

SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

for the purpose of obtaining academic degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

Academic Supervisor:
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Moscow, 2022

Research design

Research problem statement. The national policy and ethnic relations in the region of Central and Eastern Europe is a well-developed and popular research area in the social sciences. There are a hundreds of monographs and thousands of articles on national identity and language policy among most ethnic and cultural groups of this region. However, the specificity of national construction and the transformation of ethnic identity in groups that traditionally were considered as sub-ethnic or ethnographic groups of titular ethnic communities often remain outside the researchers' scope. Nevertheless, the emergence and revitalization of organizations or groups of activists that require a revision of the ethnonational canons established in the region and the recognition of a certain sub-ethnic groups as separate peoples or ethnic / national minorities, as well as the rapid growth of citizens that demonstrate alternative national identities, demands the special research.

The political bias of the scientific classifications of ethnologists and anthropologists demonstrates how the state sought to legitimize the including practice of small ethnic groups into its own national project and to claim the traditional regions of such groups. The history of national policy of Central and Eastern Europe of the twentieth century includes many stories of this type. Thus, as a result of the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919, the young Polish state got access to the Baltic Sea (the so-called "Polish Corridor"). In the work of the classic of Polish ethnography Jan Fischer, published ten years later, we can find: "Kashubians, faithful to their native language, have saved the access to the sea for Poland. From here comes the easily understandable interest of Germans to dispute the polishness of this population. It contradicts the scientific evidence demonstrated by our scientists".¹ The cultural and linguistic affinity of the local Kashubian population served as the evidence of their classification as Poles, and therefore as the justice of the inclusion of strategically important coastal territories into Poland. Without any changes this logic was reproduced immediately after Second World War. An active campaign was launched in Polish press to portray the Slovins and Kashubians as ethnically related communities of the Poles.² It have should justify the acquisition of the vast western territories from which the Germans were evicted. As various studies show,³ the discursive appropriation of Ruthenians, that were successively described as the Ukrainian ethnographic group, also served as the important argument during the annexation of Transcarpathia by the Soviet Union. All this shows the importance of ethnonational classifications in the politics of the states of the region. Today ethnic

¹ Fischer, A. Zarys etnograficzny województwa pomorskiego. Toruń: Instytut Bałtycki, 1929. – s. 11.

² Mastalerz-Krystjańczuk M. Kaszubi-Słowińcy w świetle publicystyki polskiej z lat 1945-1959 // Słupskie Studia Historyczne, 2003. - Nr. 10. - s. 203.

³ Pad'ak V. Zníženie statusu rusinskeho jazyka na úroveň dialektu ukrajinčiny ako základ jazykovej politiky ZSSR na území Podkarpatskej Rusi (Zakarpatska) / Rusíni na Slovensku: súčasné postavenie a historické kontexty vývinu. Prešov: Združenie inteligencie Rusínov Slovenska, 2008. – s. 58-59.

activists representing these small ethnic groups are increasingly joining the struggle for ethno-national redefinition. They produce a specific national counter-discourse aimed at recognizing their communities.

Literature review

The ethnic and national identity of the sub-ethnic communities has its own tradition of scientific study, rooted in the middle of the XIX century. The first researchers who tried to analyze it were ethnographers and linguists who put to the question who the Kashubians, Ruthenians and Silesians were - independent nations or specific parts of other ethnic groups: Germans, Poles and Ukrainians.

Thus, Kashubians and Silesians have been the subject of investigations of Polish and German scientists for more than a century. The first scientists that studied the specifics of these communities in the second half of the XIX century were such historians, ethnographers and folklorists as Jan Karłowicz, Krzysztof Mrongowiusz, Alexander Hilferding, Stefan Ramułt, Baudouin de Courtenay. de Courtenay, despite the fact that in his works he consistently calls Kashubians as a people, generally admits: “In political life, Kashubians go hand in hand with Poles, they feel themselves like Poles, and want to be Poles”.⁴

By 1920-1930 the Polish school of ethnography has been developed a detailed classification of local ethnic and ethnographic groups, among which we can distinguish Polans, Great Polans, Mazovshans, Gurals, Masurians, Pomors, Slovins and others. Even the first generation of systematizers (A. Fischer, J. Bystron, S. Pomyatowski), trying to fit the Kashubians and Silesians into the general classifications of ethnic systems of Poland, indicated their greatest specificity and maximum cultural remoteness from the Poles in comparison with other ethnographic groups.

Despite the suggestion of some German ethnographers to consider the Kashubians as a separate West Slavic people with their own culture and language (for example, Friedrich Lorenz and his work “*An Essay on Kashubian Ethnography*”, 1929), this approach was marginalized in the Polish scientific world. For example, J. Kamocki emphasized the good preservation of specific cultural features among the Kashubians and Silesians, as well as their ideas about ethnic distinctiveness from other Poles. He explained these features by the long absence of a significant group of intelligentsia in the region that could act as national agitators and bearers of Polish national ideas.⁵ As an object of powerful assimilative influence the Kashubians and

⁴ Бодуэн-де-Куртенэ И.А. Кашубский «язык», кашубский народ и кашубский вопрос. Ст. 1. СПб: Тип. В.С. Балашева, 1897. – с. 93.

⁵ Kamocki J. Zarys grup etnograficznych w Polsce // *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio Historia*, 1992. - s. 103.

Silesians until the end of World War II were forced to combine more than one identity.

In the post-war period the study of the ethnic specificity of the Kashubians and Silesians was strictly regulated by the communist authorities of the Polish People's Republic, who shared the ideal of a mono-ethnic state. The persecution of Kashubian and Silesian activists, ideological censorship in the media and an unspoken prohibition on publishing works that could mention alternative national design projects among these communities led to a long pause in the tradition of the scientific study of Kashubians and Silesians. Even the censuses of this period did not contain the issue of ethnicity. Only in the late 1980-s – and early 1990-s. it was possible to publish the first studies that could help to judge the number of Kashubians and Silesians living in the country, the situation with their culture and the characteristics of their ethnic identity.

Such studies have contributed to increasing interest among scientists in minority ethnic groups of the region. Many articles and monographs have appeared that address a wide range of issues related to the Kashubian and Silesian identities, the institutionalization of the Kashubian and Silesian ethnic movements, the status, functioning and codification of the Kashubian and Silesian languages. Some attempts have been made to formulate universal models, which can describe the complexity and diversity of ethnic and national identities of these groups. Such attempts include the concept of binary identity of Brunon Synak, presented in the work *“Kashubian Identity: Tradition and Change”* (1998). The essence of this concept is that most Kashubians can conflictlessly combine two identities - Kashubian and Polish, which manifest themselves in different contexts (Kashubian - in the regional and family, Polish - in the common national). Both identities emotionally feed each other, and the transition between them is carried out depending on the context. This concept has become quite popular among Polish ethnosociologists and it is actively used in works on the Kashubian and Silesian issues. However, the data obtained as a result of my field study of the Kashubian and Silesian ethnic movements, conducted in 2018, cast doubt on the universality of this model.

According to preliminary data, it is much more appropriate to use alternative models, also presented in the literature, to describe the entire complex of ethno-identification of Kashubian and Silesian activists. Thus, Nicole Dolowy-Rybinska distinguishes the “Bavarian model”, which describes the Kashubians who tend to consider themselves as a linguistic and cultural group of Poles, and the “Catalan” model, which describes the preferences of those Kashubians who consider themselves as a separate people or nation with their own language and culture. We can notice that gradually this model is gaining ground in Polish anthropology. With slight variations

we can find it in the works of Monika Mazurek⁶, as well as in the publications of Andrzej Sakson⁷, specializing in the ethnic identity of the Masurians and Varmyaks. Based on studies of sub-ethnic activism, it can be assumed that a similar typological model can be supplemented by other examples both from the context of Polish ethnopolitics and from the whole region of Central and Eastern Europe. Strong trends towards the "Catalan" model can be found in modern Silesian, Ruthenian, Moravian, Bunev and, possibly, Zemaitian ethnic activism. The Bavarian model can be used to describe Latgale, Vyrus, Polesia (Poleschutsky), Masurian, and Gural ethnic regional movements. The groups of first category are characterized by the alternative national construction projects and face the great difficulties in public demonstration of their identity.

The specialists involved in the Silesian ethnic minority also analyze issues of modern ethnic identity, methods and forms of its manifestation in the region. Among the researchers in this field, we can mention Marja Szmeja, Małgorzata Myśliwiec, Robert Geisler. More actively, researchers turn to the history of the Silesian national movement, the attempts to get a regional status to the Silesian language and the reception of Silesian activism by the state. Such scientific focus can be explained by the fact that the modern Silesian movement in Poland is much more politicized than Kashubian. Silesians have managed to create a number of organizations and political parties that actively call for the achievement of political autonomy for the Silesia region. This contributes to the actualization of political preferences and strategies among the people who identify themselves as ethnic Silesians. The most important works in the study of the national movements of Silesia are the publications of Dariusz Jerczynski "*Silesian National Movement*" (2006) and "*History of the Silesian People*" (2013), as well as Tomasz Camusella "*On Silesia and Nationalism*" (2008), "*Construction of Nationality in Central Europe*", 1880-1950. *Modernity, violence and belonging in Upper Silesia*" (2016). We should note the work of B. Karch, "*Nation and Loyalty in the German-Polish Frontier. Upper Silesia, 1848-1960*" (2018). The interconnection of ethnic activism and academic activity makes us especially cautious of a number of popular scientific works in this area. First of all, this refers to the works of D. Jerczynski and T. Camusella.

The political history of Rusyns (Ruthenians) is distinguished by a somewhat better degree of scientific study. There are a number of works devoted to the practices of national agitation among the Ruthenians of Subcarpathian Rus and Eastern Slovakia. One of the most famous researchers of Ruthenian nationalism is the modern Canadian historian of Ruthenian origin, an active participant in the Ruthenian revival of the 1990-2000-s. Paul Robert Magocsi. He wrote the work "*Historical*

⁶ Mazurek, M. *Język. Przestrzeń. Pochodzenie. Analiza tożsamości kaszubskiej*. Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski, 2010. – 405 s.

⁷ Sakson A. *Ślązacy, Kaszubi, Mazurzy i Warmiacy: między polskością a niemieckością*. Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 2008. – 435 c.

Introduction to Subcarpathian Rus", *"The Shaping of a National Identity Subcarpathian Rus', 1848-1948"*. The most sophisticated study of the competition of various national projects among Ruthenians, as well as an analysis of the Ruthenian national movement, belongs to Kirill Shevchenko and is presented in a number of his articles and monographs, among which should be mentioned *"Rusyns and interwar Czechoslovakia. On the history of ethnocultural engineering."*

Unfortunately, most of the works focused on Ruthenian issues analyze the development of Ruthenian activism in only one country of their residence, without any suggesting of a wide comparative context. So, among important works on Slovak Rusyns, it is necessary to mention *"An Essay on the History of Carpathian Rusyns"* by Stanislav Konečný, *"Rusyns: History, Present and Prospects"* by A. Duleba (Prešov, 2006), on Polish Rusyns - *"Lemki. Ethnic group or people?"* by Ewa Michna and *"Lemkovina in the Second Rzeczpospolita: Political and Religious Issues"* by Yaroslav Moklak, as well as on Ukrainian Ruthenians - *"Rusyn separatism. The nation formation in vitro"* by Lyubomyr Belei.

Among the important works focused on the analysis of national policy of Rusyns, we can note a several dissertations of recent years, for example *"The Role of the Greek Catholic Church in the Formation of Ethno-National Identity of the Rusyns of Slovakia (1919-1938)"* by Dronov M., as well as *"Rusyns in the Ethnic Policy of the Countries of Central and Southeast Europe"* by N. Kichera.

An important source for such study is the monographs on general history of ethno-national policies of the countries of the region. Thus, the most useful works for this thesis were: *"National Policy in the PRL"* by E. Mironowicz (2000), *"The People in Polish Sociology and Ideology"* by J. Kurczewska (1979), *"Approaches to Solving the National Question in Interwar Czechoslovakia"* by S. Gabzdilova and A. Simon (2014), *"National Policy in Slovakia after 1989"* by S. Šutaj (2005).

The main **research question** of this work was formulated as: "What is the specificity that defines the construction and spread of the alternative models of ethnic identity and perceptions of national distinctiveness in communities traditionally described as (sub)ethnic or ethnographic groups, promoted by ethnic activists in Central Eastern Europe?"

We assume that activists representing the sub(ethnic) movements in this region constantly face with a powerful discourse of non-recognition, produced both by the ethnic majority, to which these groups were assigned by academic or political tradition, and by the state that mostly represents the interests of this majority. With the purpose to legitimize the status of their groups as separate peoples or stateless nations, such activists have to challenge the canons of ethno-national classifications established in the region, as well as to rethink old and construct new symbolic social boundaries.

The aim of this study

Based on the description of the varied nation-building practices within Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian (sub)ethnic movements to conceptualize the phenomenon of (sub)ethnic activism as an important component of national policy and interethnic relations in the modern region of Central and Eastern Europe.

To reach this aim the following **goals** were put forward:

1. To reveal the significant scientific descriptions and classifications of the Kashubians, Silesians and Ruthenians based on the conceptual approaches of "subethnos" in modern scientific literature;
2. To identify the main demographic characteristics of the Kashubians, Silesians and Ruthenians, the specificity of their settlement, and to characterize the legal status of the Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian ethnic groups in all states of residence;
3. Based on the legal status of the Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian ethnic groups to describe the variety of the ethnic/national identity dilemma faced by members of these communities;
4. To analyze the research literature on the history of Ruthenians, Kashubians and Silesians, and describe the prerequisites for Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian (sub)ethnic activism;
5. Based on the analysis of the ideological programs, national declarations and memorandums of ethnic organizations, as well as speeches by ethnic activists and regional politicians, to reveal and characterize a set of activists' practices of ethno-political mobilization and related practices of symbolic politics that are significant for (sub)ethnic activism's growth;
6. Based on the data obtained during the field work and by semi-structured interviews to identify and analyze the discursive and performative practices of (sub)ethnic activism influencing the construction of the ethnonational boundaries.

Chronological Framework of the research

The focus of the study is on post-communist practices of national construction in the ethnic groups of Central and Eastern Europe. It allows us to engage as possible informants both activists and politicians who stood at the origins of the "ethnic revival", and those who periodically joined or continue ethnoregional movements today. Nevertheless, the work draws on historical material that will help us trace the origins of the Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian ethnic activism to the middle. XIX century or the era of the "Spring of Nations". Special attention to the ideology of the first Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian national agitators, as well as the historical roots of the modern ethno-demographic picture of Kashubia and Silesia, can us gain a deeper understanding of the behavior, slogans and demands of modern ethnic

activists who seek recognition of their communities as ethnic or national minorities at the state level. Special attention was paid to the history of the national policy of Poland and neighboring countries of the twentieth century.⁸

Methods

To achieve the aim of this work we have used a number of qualitative methods of social research: interview, included observation and discourse analysis.

All ethnic communities, which have been chosen as the object for our research, have the experience of alternative nation building, but in the twentieth century they all were assigned the definition of an ethnographic group. In our research we apply the strategy of focused comparison⁹. For such comparison we have chosen several aspects in all cases: current and desirable legal status, ethnic and national discourse of members of these communities and the strategies of ethnic activism and boundary work by ethnic activists.

For collecting a data, we have carried out a field study in Pomeranian and Silesian Voivodeships of Poland, as well as in Eastern Slovakia and Transcarpathian Ukraine. During this work we conducted a series of depth semi-structured interviews¹⁰ with representatives of the Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian ethnic activism, as well as included observation during public actions these communities (Kashubian World Congress, March for the Autonomy of Silesia, etc.).

In total, we conducted 63 interviews, of which 45 with representatives of the Kashubian, Silesian, and Ruthenian ethnic organizations, as well as persons engaged in the ethnoregional activism. Looking for the first potential informants, we turned directly to the organizations that represent these ethnic groups (Kaszëbskô Jednota, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, Stowarzyszenie Osób Narodowości Śląskiej, Związek Osób Narodowości Śląskiej, Śląska Ferajna, Ruch Autonomii Śląska). Then the "snowball" method helped us gradually to expanded the circle of interviewed activists. In the course of the work, 18 non-activist interviews were also conducted. It made possible to fix the reception of the position and behavior of activists in the ethnic groups that they represent. The presence of several groups of informants: Kashubians, Silesians and Rusyns, as well as activists and non-activists, allowed us to conduct analytical triangulation as a method of verification of

⁸ Mironowicz E. *Polityka narodowościowa PRL*. Białystok: Białoruskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, 2000. – 284 s.; Chojnowski Andrzej. *Koncepcje polityki narodowościowej rządów polskich w latach 1921-1939*. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1979. — 262 s.; Gabzdilová S., Attila S. *Prístupy k riešeniu národnostnej otázky v medzivojnom Československu*. Komárno: Univerzita Selyeho, 2014. – 198 s.; Вегеш М., Фединець Ч. (ред.) *Закарпаття 1919-2009 років: історія, політика, культура Ужгород: Ліра, 2010. — 721 с.*

⁹ George, I., Bennett, A. *The method of structured, focused comparison* // In: *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. MIT Press, 2005 – p. 67.

¹⁰ Семенова В. *Качественные методы: введение в гуманистическую социологию*. М.: Добросвет, 1998. — с. 105

preliminary research results.¹¹ We showed our informants anonymous fragments from previous interviews, and tried to capture their reaction. This method proved to be especially effective in explaining of the differences in the legal recognition of Kashubians and Silesians in Poland.

The central method of analysis of interview materials, publications in the national press, programs of organizations and texts of speeches is discourse analysis. By discourse, we mean a special way of communicating and understanding of the world (or some aspect of the world).¹² From the possible varieties of discourse analysis, we selected a critical discourse analysis (CDA), the principles of which were developed by Teun Van Dijk¹³ and Fairclough¹⁴. CDA emphasizes the discursive nature of power relations: in every speech act we can distinguish the ideas about how the world, society and culture are structured. The principles of CDA suggest that discourse is not performed out of the context, and cannot be understood without it. This forced us to pay special attention to intertextuality, referring to other discourses that informants demonstrate in their narratives and behavior.

Data sources

The work is based on the analysis and interpretation of previously published studies on the topic of identity and ethno-regional activism among Kashubians, Silesians and Rusyns, private conversations with experts (historians, sociologists and sociolinguists), as well as unique material collected during our field work, among which can be distinguished : 1) interview texts; 2) photo and video archive. The study also includes: a) various statistical and reference materials (mainly the publications of statistical offices in Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine, b) people census results, c) ethnopolitics legislations; d) the statutes, programs and ideological declarations of ethnic organizations, e) the publications in the national press; and f) the speeches of activists and regional politicians recorded by the author during the included observation of public actions.

Material collection and the field work

The field work was carried out during 2018-2019 in Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine. During four expeditions the author has managed to visit the Pomeranian and Silesian Voivodeships of Poland, the Košice Region of Slovakia and the Transcarpathian

¹¹ Ковалев Е.М., Штейнберг И.Е. Качественные методы в полевых социологических исследованиях. М.: Логос, 1999. - с. 317.

¹² Филлипс Л., Йоргенсен М.В. Дискурс-анализ. Теория и метод. Харьков: Гуманитарный центр, 2008. — с. 18.

¹³ Тён А. ван Дейк. Принципы критического анализа дискурса // Социоллингвистика и социология языка. Хрестоматия. Том 2. / под ред. Н.Б. Вахтина. СПб.: Издательство Европейского университета, 2015 – с. 439-483.

¹⁴ Фэрклоу Н. Политический дискурс в прессе: аналитическая схема // Социоллингвистика и социология языка. Хрестоматия. Том 2. / под ред. Н.Б. Вахтина. СПб.: Издательство Европейского университета, 2015 – с. 484-506.

Region of Ukraine. The total time spent in the field is 12 weeks. The Kashubian part of the study was carried out on the territory of the central-northern part of the Pomeranian Voivodeship, where Kashubians historically live. This region of Pomerania is called Kashubia (kash. Kaszëbë). The author managed to visit all three historical subregions of Kashubia: northern Kashubia (Kash. Nôrdë) (Pucki, Wejherowsky powiats), central (Kartuzski, Lemborski powiats and Gdansk), as well as southern (Koscierzski, Chojnicki powiats). In total during the field work author visited about two dozen settlements in which activists lives, or significant events for the community took place. Among these settlements we distinguished as major urban centers of the region: 1) the agglomeration of Tricity (Gdańsk, Gdynia, Sopot), Słupsk; 2) medium-sized cities and powiats' centers (e.g. Wejherowo, Kartuzy, Kościerzyna, Reda, Rumia, etc.); 3) small towns and villages, centers of gminas' (Brusy, Hel, Jastarnia, Dziemiany, Żukowo), as well as small villages (Trzepowo, Kęblowo, Dzierżążno and others). The work in various regions of Kashubia was the initial goal of the study, since it was important for us to fix the possible diversity of opinions among informants who live both in urban centers and in remote places, in ethnically homogeneous communities (for example, in the Dziemiany gmina 97% of population are ethnic Kashubians, in the Kartuzy - 91%, in Brusy - 82%, in Jastarnia - 81%)¹⁵, as well as in the places of historical Kashubia, where the indigenous population and ethnic Kashubians today constitute a minority (for example, the city of Pruszcz-Gdański - 8%, Słupsk - 3.5%).

The Silesian part of the work took place in a number of powiats in the central and southwestern part of the Silesian Voivodeship, where the majority of the population which defined their nationality as Silesian in the last census is concentrated. Basically, we worked in large: Katowice, Bytom, Chorzów, Zabrze, Bielska-Biała and small urban centers of the Voivodeship: Żory, Pszczyna, etc. Such fieldwork strategy is explained by the fact that, unlike the Kashubians, the majority of Silesians (71.6%) are residents of medium and large cities.¹⁶

We also made two trips to the neighboring Opole Voivodeship, where in the cities of Opole and Kendziesin we managed to establish contacts and conduct several interviews with representatives of Opole Silesians (12% of the total number of Silesians in Poland). Work among Opole Silesians made it possible to record the difference with which informants regard the general Silesian movement in Poland, issues of regional autonomy, the German heritage of Silesians, and linguistic activism. Interviews with Ruthenian activists took place in the town of Michalovce (Košice Region, Slovakia), as well as the cities of Uzhgorod and Mukachevo in Ukraine.

¹⁵ Mordawski J. Geografia Kaszub. Gdańsk: ZKP, 2018. – s. 48.

¹⁶ Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2011. Struktura narodowo-etniczna ludności Polski. Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2015. – s. 50.

Basically, the field work focused on interviewing ethnic activists and observing the public actions of communities. For example, we were able to conduct an included observation at: 1) World Congress of Kashubians, which took place on July 6, 2019 in the southern Kashubian city of Chojnice; 2) March for the autonomy of Silesia (Katowice, July 13, 2019); and 3) commemorative practice of Kashubians during a pilgrimage trip to the Piasnicki forest (Wejherowski powiat). The material collected during such events allows us to explore how new ethnic traditions¹⁷ are constructed today and how they can influence the formation of group solidarity and ethnonational identity of the members of the studied communities.

Contribution to the subject field

The ethnographic status of Kashubians, Silesians and Ruthenians has affected the situation, when these communities have not been perceived as a subject and participant in minority policy of the state. This fact complicates our understanding of identity changes in these ethnic groups.

Without deep and comprehensive study of sub-ethnic activism we cannot analyze the changes that have occurred in the phenomenon of Central European nationalism over the past several decades. This work is intended to fill the gap in the political science literature on national policy and interethnic relations in several states of Central and Eastern Europe. An analysis of several most active and developed ethnic movements in the region (Kashubian, Silesian, and Ruthenian) will allow us to conceptualize the phenomenon of sub-ethnic activism and take it into account as an important component of the Central European national policy of recent decades. A number of analyzed positions can be used for political forecasting of similar ethnic movements in the region and beyond. The work also makes recommendations that will minimize the radicalism of sub-ethnic activism in Central and Eastern Europe, and make the system of interethnic relations in the region less conflict.

Statements to be defended:

1. In the region of Central and Eastern Europe we can distinguish about ten ethnic communities, traditionally regarded as sub-ethnic or ethnographic groups, that claim the national recognition. The level of ethnopolitical mobilization among these communities varies considerably. While most of these ethnic groups have achieved only limited success in realizing some linguistic rights, the others have already formed consistent movements and groups of activists seeking recognition of their communities as ethnic or national minorities, as well as obtaining regional political autonomy.
2. The political history of the Kashubians, Silesians and Rusyns includes the experience of regional activism, which could be considered as the traditions of

¹⁷ Hobsbawm E., Ranger T. (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. - p.3.

national movements that have not finished, however, with the creation of their own national states or political-territorial autonomies.

3. The states of the region consistently demonstrate their unwillingness to recognize and satisfy the political and cultural demands of activists representing the communities described as ethnographic or sub-ethnic groups of titular nations. The only demonstration of an alternative ethnic / national identity, contrasting with the traditional and expected norm for such communities, is firmly identified with political disloyalty to the country of residence. However, as the results of the field study shows, the separatist sentiments among Kashubian, Silesian and Rusyn activists are practically absent or supported by a narrow number of followers.

4. Activist practices of ethnopolitical mobilization aimed at the constructing and strengthening the ideas about ethnic / national distinctiveness among the members of their groups. Such practices reveal itself in a creation and spreading of a specific discourse about national recognition, the invention of "new traditions", the codification of literary standards for ethnic languages, as well as campaign during people censuses and the construction of a special ethnic landscape designed to visualize the border separating these ethnic groups from their neighbors.

5. Among the ethnographic groups of Central and Eastern Europe the struggle for the national recognition is taking place under the slogan of linguistic activism. The standardization and development of literary norms of minority languages is often perceived by ethnic activists as a possible step towards the further achievement of a legislative status "ethnic / national minority". This allows us to consider linguistic activism as the leading nation-building strategy among (sub)ethnic groups.

Work approbation

With the purpose of approbation of the research results, the author has addressed several scientific conferences:

1. The international scientific conference "Ethnic and the National Dimensions of the Multiculturalism and Multilingualism". February 26, 2019. Saint Petersburg.
Vasiukov O. "I just don't feel myself like a Pole: the articulation of ethnicity and language activism among Kashubians and Silesians".
2. The international conference "Anthropology, Folklore Studies and Sociolinguistics". March 29-30, 2019. Saint Petersburg.
Vasiukov O. "The people who has survived by some miracle": the national discourse of Kaszëbskô Jednota".
3. The international conference "Ethnic and the National Dimensions of the State". February 6-7, 2020. Saint Petersburg.
Vasiukov O. "Regional language community: the study on Kashubian ethnic identity".

4. The international scientific conference of young scientists “Topical Issues of Ethnology and Anthropology”. November 17-20, 2020. Saint Petersburg.
Vasiukov O. “Kashubians as regional linguistic community: the problem of language shift”.
5. The conference “Loyalty, Nationality, and Citizenship: Between the Imperium and the Nation”. February 4-5, 2021. Saint Petersburg.
Vasiukov O. “The alternative Polishness: Kasubian National Discourse”.

In the course of work on the research, several scientific articles have been published in journals approved by the Higher School of Economics:

1. Vasiukov O.D. The movements for recognition: politicization of sub-ethnic groups in Central and Eastern Europe // Bulletin of Perm University. Series Political Science. 2018. .No. 2. Pp. 45-60.
2. Vasiukov O.D. New minorities or unrecognized peoples? (Experience of Central and Eastern Europe) // Politiya: Analysis. Chronicle Forecast. 2019. No. 1 (92). Pp. 186-201.
3. Vasiukov O.D. Between the ethnographic group and a people: the national discourse of the Kashubian and Silesian activists in contemporary Poland // Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology. 2019. No. 2. Pp. 173-209.
4. Vasiukov O. Toward the Status of Ethnic Minority: The Study on Kashubian and Silesian Activism in Contemporary Poland // Working Papers of Center for German and European Studies. 2021. № 5. Pp. 4-33.

Analysis of data and findings

In the first theoretical chapter of the work, we examine in detail the various concepts on the study of the phenomenon of nation, nationalism, and national identity. We conclude that, despite the common belief that the nation is a modern phenomenon and the result of purposeful design, each modernist researcher has his own view on the history of the formation of nations. Nevertheless, all the considered authors agree that the modern bureaucratic state serves as the source and framework of the nations and nationalism, as well as political and military power and institutions are the key to explaining their origin. Summing up the basic ideas of numerous modernist-constructivist theories, we can conclude that the nation is the main political form of the modern association of people. Nations are characterized by a defined territory with a fixed political center, a single legal system that creates a unique political and legal community. A modern nation implies the participation of all citizens in the life and politics of the nation, a mass public culture that is spread by the institutions of the state standardized education system.

The special attention to the constructivist concepts of nationalism has allowed us to understand better the nature and meanings of those traditions that are invented nowadays by Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian activists. The ideas of ethnic, national or linguistic distinctiveness as well as the principle of group solidarity are the main messages that are introduced into the consciousness of the community through modern marches, conventions and ethnic holidays. The constant reproduction of such practices serve for the construction and legitimation of new ethno-national borders and imaginary communities in the region. We regard the constructivist understanding of ethnicity phenomenon and the problem of identity politics.

The first chapter also discusses the formation and conceptual content of the term "subethnos" in Soviet and post-Soviet humanitarian studies. Equivalent to this concept is contained in scientific schools of the Central European states. Ethnographers from Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine developed a strict taxonomy of the ethnic structure of the population, in which a number of communities were defined as a sub-ethnic or ethnographic group within another ethnic group. Various author's approaches may differ with respect to the boundaries of ethnic demarcation, but the common place for the subethnic / ethnographic group have been the presence of cultural and linguistic specificity and, that is most important, the awareness of its difference with the ethnic majority.

Second chapter includes the analysis of the current (sub)ethnic movements in Central Eastern Europe. Today in this region there is a dozen autochthonous ethnic groups that are traditionally named and often continue to be described as sub-ethnic groups, but they claim to increase their social and legislative status. Today, between these groups there are significant differences in the level of recognition of language rights, the institutional development of movements, as well as in the presence of organizations fighting for political or cultural autonomy. One of the key mechanisms in the struggle for increasing their legislative status and public recognition them as a separate ethnic group or people is language management, which manifests itself in attempts to codify their own literary languages. The recognition of the separate language is often perceived as a possible step towards further recognizing the group as an ethnic / national minority. This chapter also shows the phenomenon of language policy and language regimes in the region of Central Europe as well as their interconnection with the ethnic activism.

The third chapter shows that the political history of all three groups that we have chosen for comparison contains the experience of their own national movement. At the same time, among the Kashubians, Silesians and Ruthenians groups of intelligentsia appeared, which for the first time openly raised the question of nationality and identity of the local Slavic population.

From the very beginning of the Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian movements, ethnic activism balanced between adherence to three ethno-national models, two of which included integration with a more developed national project (Polish and German for Kashubians and Silesians, Russian and Ukrainian for Rusyns), and the third was aimed at development and strengthening of new “separate” model of national identification, which implies the presence of Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian stateless peoples. Today, among ethnic organizations of the Kashubians, Silesians, and Ruthenians in Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine, there are proponents of a dual (binary) identity and popularizers of recognizing such communities as an ethnic or national minority. Based on the census data, we can talk about the growing popularity of the Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian ethno-identification models. The number of people who consider themselves as the representatives of separate peoples or ethnic groups is also growing. The experience of ethnic activism of the last two decades among the analyzed groups has led to various legal achievements. Thus, the Kashubians are recognized as a regional language community, and the Rusyns of Slovakia are recognized as a national minority. Silesians in Poland, as well as the Ruthenian community of Ukraine today have not any form of legislative recognition.

The fourth chapter, based on the analysis of field materials and interviews with ethnic activists, shows that the activities of the Kashubian, Silesian and Ruthenian activists, as well as the discourse that they produce, are the rich material for analyzing the current specifics of interethnic relations and national policy in the Central European region. Today we are witnessing a rapid increase in the number of people identifying themselves as ethnic Kashubians and Silesians, which makes these groups the largest communities with non-Polish identities in the country. A similar process is observed in Eastern Slovakia.

In fifth chapter we also examined the main strategies used by ethnic activists to construct and spread feelings of national distinctiveness among members of their ethnic groups: campaigns during people censuses, the formation of new traditions, ethno-landscapes, as well as canons of ethno-history. The final part of the chapter provides a brief description of the reaction of the states and the leading political parties in CEE to ethnopolitical mobilization among (sub)ethnic groups.

If we try to summarize the factors that determined the specifics of the development and spread of national movements among sub-ethnic communities of CEE, we should mention: 1) cross-border character of communities. The residence near the border made the ethnic identity of this groups constantly debated and contested. The frequent threat of a change in borders forced states to implement an assimilation policy here with the purpose to minimize the cultural and linguistic distance between the center and the periphery; 2) the linguistic and cultural proximity (real or imagined) of ethnic groups to politically dominant communities, which made it

possible in the political and scientific discourse to assign them the status of sub-ethnic or ethnographic groups, or regional language communities. Thus, the very possibility of a claim of an ethnic group and its representatives to being a nation was disputed; 3) the presence of a narrow strata of intelligentsia, which could fulfill the role of national agitators. The tendency of ethnic intelligentsia to cultural assimilation among politically dominant communities; 4) the absence for a long time (almost until the beginning of the 90s of the 20th century) of standardized languages and cultural canons that could form the “high culture” (in Gellner’s understanding) on which the new national identity would be based.

As the present work shows, now we can see how the new “imaginary communities” are emerging, and how the number of their supporters is gradually growing. A more detailed analysis of (sub)ethnic activism in CEE will show whether (and how) ethnic entrepreneurs can disseminate ideas about national distinctiveness among members of their ethnic group, or step over (using the Hroch model) from phase B to phase C. Our analysis allows us to argue that without a comprehensive study of the specifics of sub-ethnic activism, we cannot fully understand the ethno-political processes taking place in the region of Central and Eastern Europe since the beginning of the post-communist transformation of the late 1980s - early 1990s till today. The case of ethnic activism, considered in this study, allows us to understand better the ethnopolitical processes within the minority communities in CEE. Even more, based on the such groups’ analysis we can see how Nation States legitimize and maintain their borders by discursive and administrative appropriation of (sub) ethnic and ethnographic groups.