

T. V. Potapchuk, Rivne State Humanitarian University

NATIONAL CHARACTER OF UKRAINIAN PEOPLE AS A COMPONENT OF NATIONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Potapchuk T. V.

National Character of Ukrainian People as a Component of National and Cultural Identity

This article addresses the various approaches to the problem of the national character. Theoretical analysis of scientific literature gave to discover the peculiarities of national character and determine what the national character is manifested in a relationship and attitude to the representatives of other nationalities, ethnic communities and social groups, in a concerted effort, tenacity and perseverance, in the special behavior.

Key words: national character, national consciousness, mental composition of the nation, Ukrainian statehood, the self-determination of modern Ukrainians.

National character of Ukrainian people is a value of Ukrainian nation that has been formed during the all period of ethnogenesis of Ukrainian people. And it defines the man's affiliation to one or another national community, underlies the national and cultural identity of all representatives of the particular ethnic group. It creates in the mind a sense of kinship of the man with other representatives of the nation [4, p. 24].

P. Hnatenko considers that the national character is a combination of "social and psychological qualities (national and psychological directions, stereotypes) that are common for national community on the particular stage of development and are shown in value attitudes to the world, in culture, traditions, customs and rates" [5, p. 6].

In general, national character is formed within the historical development of the nation. And this process is influenced by such factors as climate, geographical position and landscape area, where nation formation, social and historical conditions of people's living, state and character of culture and education take place. Whatever,

one can define particular common traits that are peculiar for representatives of European community. At the same time, each European nation has its special traits and further saving and development of these traits define its identification.

The aim of the article is to delineate the different approaches to the problem of national character of Ukrainian people as a component of national and cultural identity.

The problem of formation of national character of Ukrainian people is extremely important and urgent because the scientific understanding of such problem is dictated by national interests and urgent needs of our country, also because of Ukrainian national character is one of the important factors of modern processes of nation and state formation in Ukraine.

In the XIX century the concept of national character was perhaps the most challenging problem of Ukrainian and Russian common philosophical opinion that associated with active national processes deploying at that time. At the same time, there began to develop a philosophy of Ukrainian national idea, which was significantly connected with the analysis of specificity of living world of Ukrainian people and their culture as factors of formation of the features of Ukrainian national character. Beginning from the activity of Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, especially M. Kostomarov, the concept of Ukrainian national character acquired the status of scientific, ideological problem. Certain aspects of Ukrainian national character primarily related to the development of Ukrainian national idea were explored by the most famous figures of Ukrainian culture, such as V. Antonovych, M. Drahomanov, O. Potebnya, I. Franko, M. Hrushevsky, D. Dontsov, M. Mikhnovskyi, Y. Lypa, W. Lypynskyi, M. Khvyliovyi and others. The problem of definition and characteristic of national character can be found in works of S. Andrusiv, T. Wozniak, P. Gnatenko, V. Moskalets.

Processing of tools and conceptual construct is still continued that is evident from the discussion of issues such as:

- 1) correlation of social and biological in national character;

2) the degree of variability of national character. Numerous researchers consider that national character is able to change in conjunction with the process of society development;

3) the ratio of concepts “national character” and “mentality”. Among domestic researchers there is no consonance concerning definition of national character.

Explaining the phenomenon of national character we offer to consider it not just as a collection of individual elements, a set of properties but as integrality. This position is based on the fact that its factors are interrelated, interdependent and constitute an integral structural formation. Knowing one or other index, structural properties of national character allow us to predict the presence of a number of other indexes linking with the first one. Thus, we understand national character as an integral phenomenon, the semantic field of which includes the following components: 1) mental; 2) ethnic, and 3) social.

Separate traits of Ukrainian national character were examined in works of such scientists as: H. Vashchenko, P. Gnatenko, M. Kostomarov, O. Kulchytskyi, V. Lypynskyi, Y. Lypa, I. Mirchuk, I. Ohienko, O. Potebnya, M. Sumtsov, B. Tsymbalistyi, D. Chyzhevskyi, P. Chubynskyi, P. Fedenko, M. Shlemkevych, V. Yaniv, Y. Yarema and others. However, the authors of these papers did not take into account in their scientific explorations the theoretical foundations of modern Ukrainian culture and lifestyle that made it impossible to analyze this problem systematically.

It is known that national character of different nations is studied within several scientific disciplines; they are: history, ethnology, sociology, political science, social philosophy, ethnic psychology and Ukrainian culture and lifestyle. In this regard, the methods of national character study are associated with the theoretical and methodological principles of various sciences and traditions of particular scientific schools [1, p. 220 – 222; 6, p. 27 – 31; 10 p. 708 – 718]. In the 60-80s of the XX century the problem of national character formation has devoted a lot of discussion [3, p. 62 – 74; 8, p. 26 -34; 9, p. 122 – 158; 11, p. 80 – 82; 16, p. 78 – 85].

Nowadays, the researchers define the national character mainly as combination of social and psychological traits or constants that are common for specific nation on the particular stage of its development [6, p. 27 – 31]. Current researches demonstrate that phenomenology of national character comprises the different levels of social reality. It becomes evident not only in the activity of different social subjects beginning from large social groups (nation) and ending to separate individual, who represents this nation, but also because of the dominant public attitude, systems of moral standards, social norms, attitudes, core values, socialization forms, education principles, because of the character of human interaction and environmental effects, diversity of group world view, forms of housekeeping, relaxation, recreation, etc. [6, p. 27 – 31; 13, p. 101 – 109; 12; 14, p. 256; 15]. Representatives of many scientific and research institutes (M. Andreeva, A. Hramenytskyi, M. Hrymych, O. Donchenko, H. Ktsoyeva, D. Peabodi, T. Stefanenko, A. Shmeliiov) continue the study of national character of different nations [6, p. 27 – 31; 13, p. 101 – 109; 15].

However, even now there are problems concerning definition of the concept “national character”, clarifying of its place among others that are similar in semantics categories and also inconformity of theoretical and methodological foundations of comprehensive study of Ukrainian national character.

Various researchers confuse some categories such as: “national character”, “mentality”, “national consciousness”, “mental set of nation” and also they use the categories “national character” and “mental set of nation” as synonyms [1, p. 220 – 222; 9, p. 122 – 158]. But national character is only one of the components of mental set of nation, because mental set of nation includes not only national character, but also mentality, national image of the world, national consciousness and self consciousness, national senses, national traditions, customs and so on. So, one should not identify the concepts “national character” and “mental set of nation”. This fact was found at the beginning of the 80th of the twentieth century during the rather meaningful discussion on problem of national character [7, p. 62 – 74; 11; 16, p. 78 – 85]. S. Arutyunov, Y. Bromley, V. Kozlov, I. Kon, L. Drobizheva and other famous scientists supported the position of A. Dashdamyrov concerning categorical

separation of concepts “national character” and “mental set of nation”. After this discussion most of scientists no longer consider the concepts “national character” and “mental set of nation” as synonymous. Mental set of nation has two components: static and dynamic. Static component includes the toughest characteristics, such as: national character, mentality, national consciousness and self consciousness, customs, traditions, auto and hetero stereotypes, core values and so on. Dynamic component includes portable, unstable elements; they are national feelings and moods, national interests and orientations, habits and so on.

Some authors use not scientific concept of “national spirits” [7 p.70 – 71], although in 1983 year O. Leontiev brought into challenge the appropriateness of using of such pseudoscientific category, believing that such concept is likely metaphor [11, p. 81] as the concept of “national needs”. Indeed, the kind of spirit is associated with the features of higher nervous activity and kind of man’s nervous system (that’s why these features could not be understood as community characteristics).

Thus, national character is the steadiest component and it is the foundation of mental set of nation. National character is a specific, historically formed system-based integrity of various features and properties, that are typical for the national community providing for this community the quality certainty that allows to distinguish the psychology of one nation from another. National character is not everlasting, unchanging substance; it changes under the influence of environmental, historical, social and cultural, political factors. In particular, Ukrainian national character is determined by natural and geographical, cultural and historical, social and economic, social and political living conditions of Ukrainian people; it appears in culture, language, traditions, customs, rituals, habits, preferences of Ukrainian people. National character is characterized by specificity of emotions, feelings, moods, response intensity to the events that are taking place. Despite the fact of variability of social environment the relative stability of features of national character results from appearing of certain inertia due to inter-generational transfer of

collective experience. The features of national character are clearly expressed in specific for the particular national community forms of behavior and activities.

When we talk about national character of one or another public, one could not talk about different “sets” or “collection” of features, it should be concerned about degree of manifestation of this or that feature and also about the specificity of its expression. Any feature of national character is not unique, but system-based structure of characterological traits of the nation is unique, and it determines the national specificity of one or other people. Lifestyle structures the characterological features of the people, determines the organization of active interaction of ethnic with the natural environment, social and cultural environment, and also the influence of some natural and geographic, cultural and historical, social and economic, social and political factors on the process of nation formation. Thus, national character of one public differs from national character of another public by structure of its composing elements, degree of manifestation of certain features and properties, specificity of expressive symbols of mental processes and states, hierarchy and content of ethnopsychological, social and cultural characteristics.

Very often modern researches narrow down the notion of “national character” to a simple set of diverse features and properties that are specific to a particular national community [3, 12]. But this understanding of national character is rather simplistic and one-sided; this approach does not reveal the identity of studied phenomenon. As national character is a complete system of stable and typical for the community features and properties that create not only sum or set of characteristics, but internally integrated unity, system-based integrity of characteristics that provide for this community not only quality certainty, but reflect systematically the specificity of cultural and historical progress of the public (here we mean historical dependence of civilizational progress of the community, features that are formed among representatives of the community at each stage of its development).

Speaking about Ukrainian national character, here we mean that its bearer is a community, which is Ukrainian nation. In the context of this study we consider that citizenship would be the most appropriate component helping in defining of nation,

here citizenship is basic property and form of expression of belonging to the separate (in this case Ukrainian) nation. And in this case, Ukrainian nation is the collectivity of Ukrainians, those individuals who are eligible for election, have a right to vote and participate (or not) in public, political life of the country, which, as a result of possession of the nationality, involved in relationships that form Ukrainian statehood.

On the basis of the analysis of existing theoretical and applied researches on this subject there were noted the main features of Ukrainian national character, strategies concerning personal identity of Ukrainians. Relying on defined structure, we have concluded the following. Concerning mental component of national character it reveals itself in such features as: individualism, sociability, intelligence, imagination, generosity. The development of the intellect and senses affects the activity of character: for Ukrainian it is difficult to find his position in some way, but after taking the decision he is rarely persistent in achieving his goals. Here, it is appeared such character traits as: an attempt to personal independence in work, relying on their own strength, rejection of violence.

Regarding the ethnic component of national character it is a need to bring to notice the linguistic manifestation of this component. To our opinion, modern Ukraine is divided into three main linguistic sub-communities: Ukrainian, Russian, Surzhik. Thus, the senses of language unity and solidarity are not reproduced in Ukraine. Separately, one can speak about such generalized feature of Ukrainian national character as a national nihilism, i.e. problem of national identity of modern Ukrainian people.

The last component is social, it is characterized by the following signs on the level of features fixing of Ukrainian national character. Peasant living of Ukrainian people for a long period of time had caused to the appearing of such features in national character as industry, domesticity and liability to small communities.

We can conclude on the important role of interpersonal communications in daily life and consciousness of Ukrainian people, specifically familiarity: friendly and family relations. We find this component every time when we try to analyze social reality and how it is perceived by modern Ukrainian people. It is not surprising if we

take into account the role of family in life of Ukrainian people. In general we can say that many features of Ukrainian national character formed under the influence of Ukrainian families, and this background provides the dominant close of interpersonal relationships in formation of structuring entities, in particular the state. Also it is clearly evident the affection of Ukrainian to “his” territory, “small motherland”.

It is largely a consequence of such feature of Ukrainian national character as “peasantry” of Ukrainian lifestyle. On the level of state formation it is shown, first of all, in the regionalization of the Ukrainian political elite. Regional context becomes especially actual in today's conditions of constant propaganda and emphasizing concerning separation of Ukraine due to regional principle. And even such separation awakes an echo in hearts of Ukrainian citizens, because it is grounded on the laid in national character attraction to “their” territory, the tendency to identify himself with the community belonging to the territory.

The historical component, i.e. the national history of the people is expressed especially in its historical destiny. Historical experience of the nation creates historical consciousness. Social and cultural factors are important for studying of both inherent and acquired mental signs which influence on man’s socialization, his ability to create collectivities, groups, preservation of the ethnographic specificity, historical memory, customs [2, p. 136].

Consequently, national character is manifested in relations and attitudes to representatives of other nationalities, ethnic communities and social groups, purpose, forceful effects and insistence, behavioristic characteristics. In social mentality it is also a reflection of other ethnic communities, nations and peoples, integrated social and psychological characteristics and peculiarities that occur in communication, attitude, and relationships.

References

1. **Andreeva G. M.** Sotsyalnaya psihologiya [Social Psychology] / G. M. Andreeva. – M. : Progress, 1980. – 390 p. (rus)

2. **Arkhypenko L. M.** Natsional'na identychnist' yak chynnyk dukhovnogo zakhystu osobystosti [National Identity as a Factor of Mental Defense of Personality] / L. M. Arkhypenko // Psykhologichna bezpeka ta adaptatsiya osobystosti [Psychological Safety and Personal Adaptation]. Materials of the international research and training conference 7 – 8.11.2007 y. Dnipropetrovs'k. - Dnipropetrovs'k, 2007. – P. 133 – 144. (ukr)
3. **Bahramov E.** K voprosu o nauchnom sodержanii ponyatiya “natsionalnyi kharakter” [To the Problem of Scientific Content of the Concept of “National Character”] / E. K. Bahramov. – M. : Nauka, 1973. – 140 p. (rus)
4. **Gazina I. O.** Formuvannya pershoosnov natsional'noi svidomosti u ditei starshogo doshkil'nogo viku zasobamy ukrains'koi narodnoi muzyky [Formation of Principles of National Self-Consciousness Among Over-Fives Children by Means of Ukrainian Folk Music]: dissertation... Cand. Sc.: 13.00.08 / Iryna Oleksandrivna Gazina. – K., 2008. – 197 p. (ukr)
5. **Hnatenko P. I.** Ukrains'kyi natsional'nyi kharakter [Ukrainian National Character] / P. I. hnatenko. – K., 1997. – 116 p. (ukr)
6. **Hrymych M.** Dva vymiryu natsional'nogo kharakteru [Two Determinations of National Character] / M. Hrymych // Nauka i suspil'stvo. – 1991. – № 8. – P. 27 – 31. (ukr)
7. **Dashdamirov A. F.** K metodologii issledovaniya natsionalno-psihologicheskikh problem [To the Methodology of Research of National and Psychological Problems] / A. F. Dashdamirov // Sov. etnografiya. – 1983. – № 2. – P. 62 – 74.
8. **Drobizheva L. N., Kuznetsov I. M., Ktsoeva H. U.** Nekotorye problemy etnopsihologicheskikh issledovaniy [Some Problems of Ethnopsychological Reseaches] / L. N. Drobizheva, I. M. Kuznetsova, H. U. Ktsoeva // Psihologicheskiiy zhurnal. – 1988. Vol. 9. – № 3. – P. 26 – 34. (rus)
9. **Kon I. S.** K probleme natsionalnogo haraktera [To the Problem of National Character] / I. S. Kon // Istoriya i psihologiya. – M., 1971. – P. 122 – 158. (rus)

10. **Kul'chyts'kyi O.** Rysy charakterologii ukrains'kogo narodu [Features of Characterology of Ukrainian Nation] / O. Kul'chyts'kyi // Entsyklopediya ukrainoznavstva. – Vol. 1. – Munich – New York, 1949. – P. 708 – 718. (ukr)
11. **Leontiev A. A.** Natsionalnaya psihologiya i etnopsihologiya [National Psychology and Ethnopsychology] / A. A. Leontiev // Sov. etnografiya. – 1983. – № 2. – P. 80 – 82. (rus)
12. **Piren M. I.** Osnovy etnopsihologii [Basis of Ethnopsychology] / M. I. Piren. – K., 1996. – 385 p. (ukr)
13. **Pibodi D.** Psihosemanticheski analiz stereotipov russkogo haraktera: krosskulturnyi aspekt [Psycho-Semantic Analysis of Stereotypes of Russian Character: Cross Cultural Aspect] / D. Pibodi, A. H. Shmelov, M. K. Andreeva, A. E. Gramenitskiy // Voprosy psihologii. – 1993. – № 3. – P. 101 – 109. (rus)
14. **Ponomariov A.** Ukrains'ka etnografiya [Ukrainian ethnography]: Course of lectures / A. Ponomariov. – Kyiv: Lybid', 1994. – 317 p. (ukr)
15. **Stefanenko T. G.** Etnopsihologiya [Ethnopsychology] / T. G. Stefanenko. – M. : Institute of Psychology RAS, "Akademicheskii proekt", 1999. – 320 p. (rus)
16. **Starovoitova G. V.** O predmetnoi oblasti etnopsihologii [About Topical Area of Ethnopsychology] / G. V. Starovoitova // Sov. etnografiya. – 1983. – № 3. – P. 78 – 85. (rus)

Потапчук Т. В.

Національний характер українців як складова національно-культурної ідентичності

У статті розкриваються різні підходи до проблеми національного характеру українців. Теоретичний аналіз наукової літератури дав змогу виявити особливості національного характеру та визначити, що національний характер проявляється у відносинах і ставленні до представників інших національностей, етнічних спільнот і соціальних груп, у цілеспрямованості, вольових зусиллях і наполегливості, в особливостях поведінки.

Ключові слова: національний характер українців, національна свідомість, психічний склад нації, українська державність, самовизначення сучасних українців.

Потапчук Т. В.

Национальный характер украинцев как составляющая национально-культурной идентичности

В этой статье рассматриваются различные подходы к проблеме национального характера украинцев. Теоретический анализ научной литературы позволил выявить особенности национального характера и определить, что национальный характер проявляется в отношениях и обращении к представителям других национальностей, этнических общин и социальных групп, в целеустремленности, волевых усилиях и настойчивости, в особенностях поведения.

Ключевые слова: национальный характер, национальное сознание, психический состав нации, украинская государственность, самоопределение современных украинцев.

Information about the author

Tetyana Volodymyrivna Potapchuk – Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Vice-Dean for education, Musical and Pedagogical Faculty, Rivne State Humanitarian University.

The article was received by the Editorial Office on 09.01.2013

The article was put into print on 26.04.2013