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THE TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS OF HIGHLANDERS AS A MEANS OF SELF-IDENTITY AND ETHNOS PRESERVING

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Abstract. The article reveals the peculiarities of the ethnic identity of pupils in school socio-cultural space in the mountain school of Carpathian region. In general, the term “region” as socio-cultural space is generally accepted and a regional approach is an effective form of studying the problems of social and cultural transformations of the country as a whole as well as its socio-cultural educational and other spaces. Such methodological regulation helps to consider national (state) socio-cultural space as a unity of regional spaces. The decisive in resolving the existing contradictions between human activities and the nature of must become all the methods and tools that can help to form the basic culture and human consciousness is that will form the basis for the formation of the ethnic identity of the person.

Keywords: multicultural education, ethnic identity, institution of public education, socio-cultural environment, region.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable development is recognized by the world community as a dominant ideology of human civilization, strategic direction of providing tangible, social and spiritual progress of society in the XXI century. The transition to a sustainable development model is based on the principles of inalienability and interdependence of tasks that provide socio-economic development of society and environmental preservation.

National culture as the totality of traditions, customs, norms, values and rules of conduct is implemented in the educational, social, traditional, domestic, artistic level. In terms of spiritual revival of Ukraine deepens the natural interest of centuries-old customs and traditions, national, historical themes in education, literature, music, painting and arts and crafts.

Carpathian Region (Transcarpathian, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv and Chernivtsi region) covers an area of 56.6 thousand. km² (or 9.4% of Ukraine), where live 6.5 million people (or 12% of the population). Much of this territory occupy Ukrainian Carpathians – a unique mountain ecosystem in the West of our country.

2. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The significance of geo-cultural factors in mentality, spiritual formation and historical development of the nation went to in the writings of D. Chizhevskiy, A. Kulczycki, V. Yaniv, G. Lozko and in.

Definitely Carpathian region occupies a special place on the continent as it has a unique mountain system, wealth of natural resources, and exceptional originality of cultural and great spiritual heritage of many generations. Sustainable development is seen as a process that combines resources use, directions of investments, technological development and institutional changes with the needs of present and future generations. Sustainable development is a process of global resources management, the result of which should be their preservation, what in its turn will lead to conservation of the natural and cultural wealth. Foregoing definition focuses on the need to preserve nature and cultural heritage, and at the same time pays attention to the rational management of natural resources [3].

The purpose of the article is to examine the importance of paradigm of place and role of national ethnic rituals and traditions that for centuries have been performing an important worldview, and educational function.

For the Carpathian region particularly acute is a problem of mountain areas, which should have a special status that would legally secure needed social benefits and guarantees for its residents. In this context very important is the law adopted by Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On status of mountain settlements of Ukraine" (Law of Ukraine of 15.02.1995 № 56/95) and adoption of the State program of the Carpathian region socio-economic development, created by the Regional studies Institute of NAS of Ukraine.

The Carpathian Mountains form an arc 930 miles long area through seven European countries. They are the most biologically diverse land region in Europe. The Ukrainian Carpathians occupy 11% of the range.

Compared with the Himalayas or the Cordilleras in statistics of sizes, the Carpathians do not seem to be much of a mountain range. But it is not the dizzy heights, or the snow-bound peaks that give the Carpathians their irresistible lure - it's a kind of magic that you can't help feeling when you get there which draws you like a magnet.

The population on both sides of the Carpathians is divided into three approximately equal groups: the Lemkians, the Boikians, and the Hutsuls, who have inhabited the same regions since they first settled there.

The Carpathian region is widely known for its highly developed domestic handicrafts, especially wood-carving, brasswork, rug-weaving, and pottery-making. The Hutsuls' originality and artistic taste are particularly evident in their ornamentation and choice of colours.

The Hutsul costume is of the same southern, Balkan type as that of the Boikians, the Lemkians, and the rest of the Carpathian population, but its colours and adornment are more striking than those of the Boikians or Lemkians. It differs from theirs in details and, until recently at least, has been made from the Hutsuls' own materials [5].

The role of frontier regions, where the Carpathian region belongs, is seen in a new way – through the prism of integration possibility to general national space of other frontier areas (W. Kaganski, N. Zhivenok). The frontier regions are the structural elements of the transborder regions interpreting transboundary as an innovating socio-cultural form of cross-cultural interaction. Such concepts as "educational system", "educational environment" and "social cultural educational space" belong to categorical conceptual apparatus of education. Lively discussions are held on the pages of educational media as for the definition of functional connection, the nature and structure of these concepts [2].

The socio-cultural educational space of a comprehensive school is usually multidimensional and multilevel. Compactness (the strength of educational influence) and space (size) are typical for it. In the given context it is necessary to point out some qualitative characteristics of educational space: integrity, stability, differentiation, integration, self-organization. As for the design of educational space in the social environment, the distinction of its structure and infrastructure (social institutions, public

organizations, groups of people, events, institutions, communities, components, etc.) are of fundamental importance.

The fates of people who started to settle down in the areas of the Carpathian Mountains and the Appalachians long ago have been closely related. At the same time, the mountains are less accessible for people. For a long time it has contributed to the conservation of the mountainous nature and cultural identity of mountain highlanders. The Carpathian Mountains create specific conditions for the settlement and human habitation. Over a long historical period of time, special ethnographic and psychological types of Ukrainian highlanders have been formed there. The Carpathians are adequately represented by largest ethno-regions: Hutsulshyna, Boikivshyna, and Lemkivshyna [6, p. 282]. Hutsulshyna belongs to the category of "forgotten people of Europe".

This unique ethnographic region in the Ukrainian Carpathians has undergone the influence through the culture and political structure of such countries as Poland, Austria, Hungary and Romania, which spread their dominance in the Carpathians for a long period of time (throughout the twentieth century).

A lot of traditions and rituals were forbidden by the Soviet government. During the totalitarian regime people who were wearing hutsul clothes and singing hutsul kolomyikas (native songs) were pursued. There was even a criminal liability for "nationalism". In Soviet times, when all the folk calendar traditions were classified as remnant, hostile phenomena to socialism, plenty of national customs were destroyed. The most persistent forms of calendar rituals appeared those which lost a close relationship with religion, thus transformed into events and phenomena of folk art or holiday entertainment.

As for the residents of the Carpathian Mountains, national traditions and customs are an important part of their identity. Being among the traditional community of mountaineers, which is fenced off from the dynamic changes of social life by a natural barrier, mountainous people can ignore lots of global challenges of the society and that fact promotes the preservation of their identity.

In every national culture there are some dominating socio-cultural traditions, customs and beliefs that define the peculiarities of the world conception, form the character, develop artistic creativity and influence the further historical destiny of the people. Traditions, customs, rituals and beliefs of highlanders are the basis of national spirituality; they contribute to the definition of individual identity and determine the basic properties of ethnicity as cultural integrity. Not only gained cultural experience of the people but their dreams and hopes for a better future are reflected in the traditions and customs. Sticking to the traditions is a necessary condition for preserving the identity and integrity of the national culture.

Cultural traditions of highlanders are a social and cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation and reproduced in some social groups over the period of time.

These traditions include socio-cultural heritage objects (material and spiritual values) and the processes of socio-cultural heritage preservation.

Certain cultural patterns, institutions, norms of behaviour, values, ideas, customs, rituals, styles, etc can be traditions. Traditions are common for all the residents, ethnic groups and social groups and they are a necessary condition for their existence. The peculiarity of sticking to the traditions and their preservation are common for the inhabitants of the mountainous areas in the Carpathian region.

Traditions form the "collective memor" of the society and certain social and ethnic groups, ensuring their self-identity and progress in their development. Taking some elements of social and cultural heritage, society and social groups reject the other ones at the same time; that's why, traditions can be both positive (traditionally accepted) and negative (traditionally discarded). Divination and superstitions can be a good example.

Cultural tradition has been considered as a custom for a long period of time which is passed from generation to generation as a certain heritage, the covenant of the ancestors. In the traditional society, socio-cultural identity can be considered as the essence of the community, individual feature that belongs to him / her from the birth and can not be changed. Modern interpretation of identity can be

explained as a phenomenon which has been created by individuals, groups and society for a long period of time.

The identity of the individual is associated with the presence of clear settings for choosing goals, values and beliefs. These are regarded as the main elements of identity.

Identity (from the Latin *identicus* – identity, similarity) is a meaningful, vital and general scientific term which expresses the idea of permanence, similarity, continuity of the individual and their consciousness.

Personal identity or self-identity is the unity and continuity of life, goals, motivations and attitudes of the individual who identifies himself / herself as the subject of activity [7].

The following identities can be distinguished: social identity (identification with social position or status), cultural identity (identification with cultural tradition), ethnic identity (identification with a particular ethnic group) and group identity (identification with a particular community or group).

The records of prominent ethnographers and advanced materials demonstrate an important role of highlanders' belief in witchcraft, divination, prophetic dreams, different omens, amulets, charms and spells power in the traditional conception of the world and their daily life.

Customs and rituals. Customs and rituals are one of the oldest forms of spiritual culture of the people. Being similar to unwritten laws, they are born with the people and are passed from generation to generation, which means they become traditional.

The customs of the people are the signs which help the nation to be recognised not only in its present but also in its historical past. Folk customs cover all the areas of civil, family and social life. Customs are those unwritten laws which are followed in the smallest daily and the largest nationwide affairs. They are the strongest elements that combine individuals into a unity, one nation.

Customs are daily established rules of behaviour that have been developed historically based on human relationships as a result of repeated implementation of the same actions and awareness of their importance.

Rituals are symbolic events marking the celebration of the most important events in the life of human groups, families and individuals.

The rituals include *vinshyvannya* (congratulations) of boys for Christmas, New Year *posivannya*, *kolyada* (caroling), decorating of the houses for Green Holidays, etc. Being the oldest form of spiritual culture, the traditional system of *hutsuls'* customs and rituals represents appropriate cycles: household calendar and family customs and labour ritualism.

Calendar rituals include ritual and customary actions directly related to the national calendar, which regulated the working rate of economic activity of a farmer, ultimately dependent on the sequence on natural cycles - winter, spring, summer and autumn.

Household calendar rituals include: household rituals of winter cycle; household rituals of spring cycle; summer customs and rituals; autumn customs and rituals.

Calendar holidays are the most ancient rituals spreading their roots to the primitive pagan beliefs and combining the rational experience, religious and magical beliefs of our ancestors.

Winter, spring, summer and autumn holidays, rituals and customs make up the structure of the annual agricultural circles.

The inhabitants of the Carpathian region didn't have a sharp distinction between the seasons in their agricultural calendar: winter rituals gradually changed spring ones, spring rituals changed summer ones, etc. Every cycle of the holidays bore its sense meaning and was filled with lots of rituals and signs which linked the seasons together.

The necessary components of calendar holidays in Ukraine included the ceremonial table, economic and family magic, honouring of the ancestors, predicting the future, ritual rounds and congratulations, dressing up and masking. The holidays and rituals of the calendar cycle regulated all the aspects of highlander's life - industrial, social and domestic. Their main goal and objectives matched the fundamental desire of a farmer: to ensure the welfare and happiness of the family, a happy marriage for newlyweds, bumper crops and fertility of livestock, to take away all the evil, to predict the future and affect it.

The objectives of calendar rituals:

1. The conformity of private life to cosmic cycles (rituals associated with the winter and summer solstice).
2. The extraction and protection of all the evil forces (Jordan water sprinkling, spreading poppy on Makovey Day).
3. Ensuring the welfare and happiness of the family (Holy Night Rituals).
4. Happy marriage for young people (ritual on Catherine Day, Andrew Day, Midsummer Night).
5. Bumper crop and the fertility of livestock (Yurij Day, Dmytro Day).

Family Rituals. Despite the local diversity of several rituals and attributes, hutsul family rituals of the past epochs clearly reflect their community with Eastern Slavic ritual traditions, the unity with the spiritual culture of the Slavs. As is generally known, the rituals connected with the natural cycle of human existence refer to traditional family rituals, namely, birth (delivery rituals and christening), matrimony (wedding and marriage ceremony) and death (funeral ceremony and repast). In the past, rich folk demonology contributed to the development of the vast number of different customs and, according to hutsuls' conception, they had to play the function of amulets and were based mainly on magical actions.

The Hutsuls, people of the mountains, are ambitious, quick to take offence, ready to defend their dignity, if need be by force, sensitive to disrespect or irreverence. In the idyllic mountain settings, dramas were often played out, many of them tragic. In the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, both Ukrainian and Austrian authors wrote stories about the life of the Hutsuls, in which tragic and dramatic events were described (L. von Sacher-Masoch, O. Fedkovych, I. Franko, H. Khotkevych). The police records of those times also reflect eruptions of violence among the Hutsuls themselves, or directed against newcomers.

At the same time, the Hutsuls are good Christians. If church attendance they demonstrate good indication of religiosity, thus we can say that the Hutsuls are still very religious – it is only the very sick, too old or too young who do not go to church regularly. Nevertheless, you can easily detect traces of paganism in their Christianity, vestiges from the times when the Sun was god.

The Hutsuls are enamoured of their mountains – I would even say they fanatically love their land, and though many of them have to leave their homes in search of work (they began to be forced to look for employment over a century ago, and have had to be doing it ever since, in growing numbers), but as soon as they have earned enough money, mostly abroad, they return home [4].

The Carpathian magic is to be found in so many things. When you stand alone at a high point of an eminence and look down the valley wrapped in silence, you feel God's grace descending upon you. The magic is not only in the scenic beauty of nature. It is in the way people live their life – without electricity or natural gas, with the closest neighbour living on the next hill; it is the wooden churches, whose floors are covered with lizhnyky (wool blankets); it is even in these lizhnyky which are handmade rugs that the Hutsuls (or: Gutsuls, Uzulen etc.), local people, call "samorodni", "meaning, literally", "born all by themselves". These rugs are made of pure sheep wool by local women using a technology that dates hundreds, if not thousands of years back.

The Carpathian magic, by Natalya Kosmolinska, is in those wooden churches too, and in the icons painted on glass, in pottery with Carpathians ornaments, in ceramic tiles painted in their specific Carpathian way, in carved wooden spoons and plates that you see in the kitchens, in decorations of knives and old shotguns. Many a poet, writer and artist have been inspired by this magic. Lesya Ukrayinka created her "Lisova pisnya" (Forest Song), and Mykhajlo Kotsyubynsky wrote his "Tini zabutykh predkiv" (Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors) a hundred years ago, both having been inspired by the ethnographic and mythological richness of the Land of the Hutsuls. In more recent times, Sergiy Paradzhanov, who understood poetic magnetism probably better than any other film director of the twentieth century, made his most famous film using Kotsyubynsky's story and seeking inspiration in the Carpathian land [4].

Superstitions. The important place in the Ukrainian conception of the world belonged to numerous beliefs associated with precautions, restrictions, taboos, etc.

Divination is the art or practice of discovering what will happen in the future or what your fate is. Certain part of divination, primarily related to human activities, observation of natural phenomena, animal behaviour, etc., accumulated some rational experience. Even nowadays, plenty of superstitions and divination have lost their magical meaning becoming only an amusing traditional entertainment of mountaineers.

Labour rituals. The unique conception of the world which is typical for the residents of Ukrainian Carpathians is reflected in their labour rituals, including:

1. Firing up in the mountain pasture ground.
2. Cattle protection in the pastures.
3. Budz (hutsul cheese made of sheep milk) production.

The general list of the main types of highlanders' traditional household culture, mentioned above, leads us to the conclusion that there is an organic connection with the natural conditions of the Carpathians. That's why, any attempt to neglect these connections or to break highlanders' lifestyle which was formed and tested by the life practice eventually leads to a failure.

Mychailo Kotsyubynsky described customs, traditions, rituals and beliefs of highlanders in his book "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" so realistically and vividly, thus providing the ground for the making of the film by Sergii Parajanov in 1965. This film tells us about love, life and death, introducing Hutsulschyna and its extremely rich traditions and customs to the world. And as a result, it has got the international recognition and admiration of such world famous directors as Fellini, Antonioni, Kurosova and Andrzej Wajda. 39 awards, 28 prizes and 24 Grand Prix in 21 countries of the world have confirmed the worldwide recognition of the film, which promoted the uniqueness of the Carpathian residents and became the basis for the preservation of their identity.

Having conducted a public opinion poll of the residents who live in the lowland villages of the Precarpathia (Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv regions) and the highest for their hypsometric level administrative areas of the Carpathians (borough councils of Verkhovynsky, Rakhiv, Putyla, Yaremche districts, as well as a mountainous part of Kosiv area), it has proved the following: 61% of highlanders confirm that the nature of their area has significantly affected their spiritual world in comparison with 43 % of lowlanders.

There is a difference between the highlanders and lowlanders in the nature of emotions caused by natural home environment. The highlanders mostly admire the beauty of their environment (55%), and as for a third of respondents, the surrounding nature evokes admiration due to its mystery.

In the highlanders' opinion, the natural features of the landscape are the most important identity signs of their land. Thus, mountains, mountain pasture grounds, air and other natural features altogether make up 40% of the distinguishing features of homeland for the Hutsuls, and only afterwards those natural signs are followed by socio-cultural ones: traditions and customs (24%), language (8%), people's peculiarities (6%) and music (4%) [2].

In summary terms of social development, in which hutsuls found themselves throughout their history, the main common features can be mentioned as those which have the most significant effect on the peculiarities of their culture.

Impact factors of socio-cultural space development in the Carpathian region:

- the economic depression in the region;
- poor integration with the economies of other countries, agricultural orientation of economy;
- poor transportation infrastructure;
- political and administrative divisions;
- low proportion of people employed in the social manufacturing sector.

Due to such social background, traditional culture had the possibilities for long-term preservation of its most archaic features and its significant difficulties of surviving provided it with some compensating properties: life-affirming character, willpower, perseverance and stubbornness, prudence and natural optimism, manifesting themselves both in spiritual and material component of hutsul identity.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Sticking to the common traditions provides a favourable psychological climate for the highlander's existence who consumes less energy to adapt to a changing urban environment. Unfortunately, seeing the certain historical aspects of the development, forming the barriers with other countries influenced by globalization and urbanization, the number of people who recognize traditions as important ones in their lives is decreasing.

Thus, any changes in the traditional household culture must necessarily take into account the specific conditions of the mountainous areas not only the Carpathians but the ranges in any other part of the world, becoming nature relevant. Nowadays the problem defined is especially urgent for the Carpathian region while reforming the social and economic life in Ukraine. And the necessity of specific mountainous conditions of the Carpathians, which influenced the formation of hutsul traditional culture, is one of the main factors that influence the effectiveness of all government decisions not only in respect of Hutsulschyna but during the formation of the Programme for sustainable development of the Carpathians.

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У статті зазначено, що епоха глобалізації містить не лише чимало переваг і можливостей, а й загроз і небезпек, зокрема, тенденцію до уніфікації всіх сфер соціально-культурного життя. Це призводить до нівелювання культурної ідентичності та самобутності українців. Обґрунтовано, що ефективним профілактичним засобом таких небезпек слугує етнонаціональна обрядовість і традиції, які впродовж століть виконують важливу світоглядну, просвітницьку і виховну функції. Наголошено, що через календарні свята та обряди, традиції та вірування горян, які нерозривно пов'язані з природними порами року, з явищами навколишнього життя, можна простежити доволі яскраву персоніфікацію особистості, розкрити особливості формування її культурної самобутності.

Ключові слова: традиції, обряди, ідентичність, тенденції, фактори впливу, світоглядні орієнтири, горяни, регіон.