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Multidimensional Identity among the Youth Bulgarians in Diaspora (Case Study of Odessa, Ukraine)

The aim of the paper is to present the results of research conducted in 2013, on the migration strategies among young Bulgarians from the historical Bulgarian diaspora in South Ukraine. The research is the result of a combined methodology – a survey among university students of Bulgarian origin in the city of Odessa and school graduates from high-schools with a Bulgarian Language education (city of Bolgrad and the village of Chiyshia), as well as individual interviews. The main results show a balanced ratio of those willing to temporarily migrate to the “Historic Motherland” (Bulgaria) for education and work purposes, and those who do not declare any willingness for migration as such. The formation process of a certain malleable identities among the young representatives of the Bulgarian community in the Southwestern Ukraine is clearly evident from the represented results.

Key words:

migration strategy,
migration
willingness,
identity, diaspora,
Bessarabic
Bulgarians,
Ukraine

The new millennium and the dynamic political transition and social changes in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in the beginning of the 1990s brought significant changes in the ideas concerning the ways in which the nations and national identities are constructed. If the 19th century nationalists believed in the possibility of the creation of stable and clearly defined nation-states, and the sociologists and the philosophers of the 20th century pessimistically predicted the end of history and the possibility of existence of a homogeneous world without nations and nationalism, then the active cross-border mobility and transnational migration processes in Southeast Europe in the first decade of the 21st century are the main catalyst of the discussions concerning

the concept of the homogeneous national identity and national culture, which were taken for granted. The optimists aver that liberal democracies can construct “an egalitarian multicultural society” where “it is possible, without threat to the overall unity of the national society, to recognize that minorities have a right to their own language in family and community contexts, the right to practice their own religion, the right to organize domestic and family relations in their own way, and the right to maintain communal customs” (Rex 1995, 30-31).

But while some authors are claiming that the nation state is in crisis (Beck 1997), the collapse of the former Soviet Union and ex-Yugoslavia have shown how from the decayed poly-national communities new nation-states are reborn as phoenixes. We are witnessing similar processes nowadays – we witness the struggle for a creation of new nation-states, in which the state, the citizens and their cultures are linked in a variety of linkages, which are far from the ideal “Western” model, requiring that the citizens of the nation-state should share mutual languages, culture and identity (Čapo Žmegač 2008, 323). The new possibilities for mobility of the people in the conditions of open European borders have put the relations between the nation-state and the diaspora (historic and in the same time newly emerged in the last decades) in a new context. In the rapidly developing transformation processes of the national identities in the countries of Eastern Europe, the diaspora is taking significantly new place in the context of the processes in the host-country, as well as in these in the metropolis (cf. Vertovec 2009, 98-99).

Until after it gains the status of an independent nation state its elite is seeking for its ways of becoming a member of one or several transnational structures (as EU for example). This choice is always difficult and is not always the best as the tentative politics of Ukraine’s president Viktor Yanukovych has shown so far¹. The rapidly developing globalization and trans-border migration processes in Southeast Europe, as well as the influence of the transnational organizations and institutions, are creating new conditions and are inculcating new symbolic values when the dynamic and transitional national identities are constructed (Angulo 2008, 154).

The double transition process of the East European countries - towards the Western European model of liberal democracy, and at the same time, towards capitalism, i.e. the removal of the states’ hegemony over the economy, conjuncts with the new phase of the development of capitalism and globalization. In a number of countries (such as Bulgaria for example) all this was accompanied by decomposition of numerous economic, political and social structures, which previously played a crucial role in society for more than forty years. The 1990s have shown the insolvency of the political concept of the “historical reversibility” towards the social reality of the pre-socialist epoch (Hristov 2013, 131).

The integration of the Eastern European countries into the EU is simultaneously a way for transformation of the previous economic, social and political structures, as well as replication of new models for nation constructing and new meanings and this

1. The present study was conducted in October and November 2013, immediately prior to the rapidly developed revolutionary events in Ukraine, which resulted in Yanukovych’s resignation.

way new meanings and essence are added to the national identity (Angulo 2008, 155). The fast developing trans-border migration to Western Europe can be interpreted as the creation of a “bridge” between the old concepts of national identity, existing in the socialist reality of the former Eastern Bloc and the new understanding of identity, adopted by the people, living in the conditions of pan-European transnational mobility. In this context the example of the *gastarbeiters* from the former Yugoslavia can become significant in the comparative Balkan plan (Hristov 2010, 102). During the last two decades the migration of the Eastern European countries has become the main catalyst of the division between territory, nation/society and culture, i.e. the main ideological components of the nation-state idea, as well as for the discussions concerning the concepts of the homogeneous national identity and national culture which are taken for granted (Čapo Žmegač 2008, 323).

In the rapidly developing transformational processes of the national identities in the Eastern European countries a significant place is assigned to the role of the diaspora – historic or newly emerging, for the ongoing processes in the receiving country and the metropolis (cf. Vertovec 2009, 94-95). During the last two decades in Bulgaria varied social circles – scientific and political, are arguing that the demographic crisis in the country can be solved through “importation” of ethnical Bulgarian population from the historic diaspora; this is the call for the “returning in the Motherland” (Лулева 2012, 350-351). This provoked my scientific interest and therefore to conduct a survey and to analyze the processes, developing among the Bulgarian community in South Ukraine and mainly in the region of Odessa.

Research of this kind is not completely new – one study analyses the dynamics of ethno-cultural identity of the Bessarabic Bulgarians during the decades after the post-socialism (Пимпирева 2012, 131-165), another one focuses on the labor migrations in Moldavia and South Ukraine (Средкова 2012, 284-292), or setting a framework for interpreting the relationship between the historical diaspora and the metropolis in the post-socialist period (Лулева 2012, 343-357). New strokes are added by researching the dynamics of the fast changing social and political setting and the diversity of the points of view involved. By now the “insiders’ point of view”, i.e. the attitude towards the migration, destination and the willingness among the Bulgarian community in South Ukraine, was left on the sidelines in the context of the variety of interpretational paradigms, considering the fluctuations between the different concepts concerning the overcoming of methodological nationalism (cf. Лулева 2012, 347-348).

This work provides a change of perspective, in other words this is a study, based on fieldwork, examining the migration strategies of the young Bulgarians living in Odessa and its district, who desire to return to their historical motherland Bulgaria, but only as one of the possible temporary or permanent migration destinations. In many ways the current study is a sequel of the Alexandar Ganchev² similar research among pupils and students from the Bulgarian community in Bolgrad (Ганчев 2008,

2. I am thankful to Associated Prof. Aleksandar Gochev, as well as to all my colleagues and friends from Odessa State University “Mechnikov” for their invaluable help for the realization of the project of my study.

86-98) and Odessa (Ганчев, Лесникова 2012, 125-138) that started several years ago. In order to follow the dynamics of the migration mindset the survey, conducted several years before was repeated.

According to the official data provided by the census conducted among the Ukrainian population in 2001³, the Bulgarians are the fourth in size community in the country totaling 204.600 people⁴, 150.600 of which are currently living in the Odessa district, mainly in the historical region Bessarabia in the cities of Bolgrad and Odessa in particular. Without going into further historic details⁵, we are going to note that their settlement on the territory of current South Ukraine is a product of a migration in several stages which took place at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century – after one of the many Russian-Turkish wars in 1806-1812, resulting in the Bucharest Peace Treaty, according to which Russia received the territory between the Prut, Danube and Dniester rivers, also known as Bessarabia (Кабузин 1974, 23-24). Simultaneously, the Treaty fixed the concentration of big masses of Bulgarian refugees in the regions, where subsequently the basis of the Bulgarian colonies were set (Скальковский 1848; Клаус 1869; Дойнов 2005), only to become a Bulgarian diaspora after two centuries. By the Russian Governing Senate Decree dated 29th of December 1819 the Bulgarian colonists were declared as being colonists who received numerous privileges, regulating their economic, political and social life, along with a number of legislative norms (Грек, Червенков 1993). Part of them continued their migration east where they created Bulgarian colonies in the area of the Sea of Azov steppes (the areas of Kherson, Zaporozhye and Crimea). During the last two centuries their settlements were successively included into the state borders of the Russian Empire, Kingdom of Romania, Soviet Russia, and after 1991 in independent Ukraine.

The most serious impact on the changes going in the traditional Bulgarian identity of the Bulgarian communities in South Ukraine occurred in the decades after the World War Two, i.e. the years of Soviet power, whose ideological influence is distributed among the Bulgarian villages by specifically constructed bodies (Нягулов 2006, 237-256). In this period there were ongoing processes taking place in society leading to a radical change of a number of segments of the traditional Bulgarian culture, creating the fundamental basis of the traditional mindset of the Bulgarian migrants; a process of “inclusion” in the so called “Soviet” way of living and infiltration of the socialistic forms of rituality, exempted from the traditional folklore Orthodoxy new national standards, were started. A core feature of this period became the creation of the paradigm of Soviet identity, which was expected to automatically soak and neutralize all the other varieties of this category, including the ethnical ones (Пимпирева 2012, 134).

3. Всеукраїнський перепис населення 2001 р., Національний склад населення регіонів [<http://pop-stat.mashke.org/ukraine-ethnic2001.htm>]

4. The representatives of the Bulgarian community in Ukraine and Moldavia are citing data, based on the background and approximate calculations, which is exceeding the one given by the official institutions (Нягулов 2012: 14). Therefore we are going to use the official data for the number of the Bulgarians in Ukraine, since it should expose the truth of what is the self-determination of the people, based on their free choice.

5. This topic extends beyond the limitations set for the current study.

With the decay of the former Soviet Union in the beginning of the 1990s the attempts to change the Bulgarian identity in Ukraine were significantly reduced, but even until today the Bulgarian historical diaspora is not unified. Several Bulgarian communities, amongst which the Bessarabic and the Khersonic are the biggest and relatively well studied. Only in Odessa there are three officially registered (as the all-Ukrainian) cultural-education associations of the Bulgarians in Ukraine: Association of the Bulgarians in Ukraine, Congress of the Bulgarians in Ukraine, and the newest one – Assembly of the Bulgarians in Ukraine (cf. Пимпирева 2012, 138). The process of linking the Bulgarians in South Ukraine is ongoing, supported by the official institutions of the Bulgarian state.

In this context the Bulgarian communities in South Ukraine are classic ethnic diaspora – what Kaching Tölöyan (1991, 5) has called ‘the exemplary communities of transnational moment’, and one of the hallmarks of this kind of diaspora is “the ‘triadic relationship’ between: (a) globally dispersed yet collectively self-identified ethnic groups; (b) the territorial states and contexts where such groups reside; and (c) the homeland states and contexts whence they or their forebears come (cf. Vertovec 2009, 4 and references cited therein). Their awareness of multi-locality stimulates the desire to connect oneself with others, both ‘here’ and ‘there’ who share the same ‘routes’ and ‘roots’ (Vertovec 2009, 6); for Sturat Hall (1990) the condition of diaspora (in the conditions of trans-nationalism) comprises ever-changing representations that provide an ‘imaginary coherence’ for a set of malleable identities. Taking Stuart Hall’s framework (1991) as working hypothesis we can assume that the production of hybrid cultural phenomena manifesting ‘new ethnicities’ is especially to be found among transnational youth whose primary socialization has taken place within the cross-currents of differing cultural fields; among such young people, facets of cultural and identities are often self-consciously selected, syncretized and elaborated from more than one heritage⁶.

The research initiated by me in October and November 2013 among the young representatives of the Bulgarian diaspora in South Ukraine, more specifically in Odessa and its district included several target groups. In the focus of the present study were the questions concerning the migration attitudes of the young Bulgarians, living and studying in the cities of Odessa and Bolgrad, the village of Gorodnoe (former Chiyshia) with a compact Bulgarian population, as well as the modes in which they construct their multidimensional identities of ethnic Bulgarians and citizens of Ukraine. The main groups were the students of Bulgarian origin in the different universities in Odessa and the students of the final grades in the high school in Bolgrad (the so called “Bulgarian high-school”) and the village of Chiyshia. Alongside a survey was conducted in the Bulgarian Sunday School for Bulgarian language courses in Odessa in order to create comparable bases.

The total number of the respondents in the survey I conducted was 135. The

6. This can be summarized with the words of my colleague-Professor in History in Ukraine, ethnic Bulgarian, who says about himself: “*Ja sovetskij pacan!*” meaning: ‘I grew up as a Soviet youth’. He has declared this identity as primary for him in front of me.

research was constructed with an interdisciplinary approach, combining quantities (survey) and qualitative – detailed interviews were carried out with part of the respondents as well as with representatives of different community organizations of the Bulgarians and the headmasters of the schools (20 in total).

The survey containing 40 questions, aimed primarily to clarify the internal motives and attitudes towards the migration mindset of the youth and their dependence on the individual, family and group (in a local meaning) social, cultural and language experience, i.e. all that can be included in the so called “micro-level” of the study (Ganchev 2011, 228). The survey contained two thematically constructed groups of questions. The first group was aiming to reveal the choice of a migration strategy on the internal axis linking the villages with the cities and/or cross-boundary migration outside Ukraine with the motive of receiving better education or better work realization (in Ukraine, or in a preferred for a labor migration country) as well as preferred period (temporally or permanently); significant share were the questions linked with the existence of kinship, ethnic, friendship social settings and their influence over the migration wills and the choice of a country of destination. The second group of questions was targeted towards revealing the migration strategies of the youth of the Bulgarian diaspora regarding the metropolis: Are the young people willing to continue their education (or specialization) in Bulgaria and is this fact providing them with certain advantages on the labor market – in Ukraine, Bulgaria, or the EU countries? Is Bulgaria present in their strategies for active mobility, for temporary or permanent migration?; To what extend their migration strategies are influenced by their experiences gained in the family, the local community and the diaspora as a whole? etc. The interviews with these respondents who have already finished their education in Bulgaria, returned and successfully realized themselves in Ukraine (especially in Odessa), turned out to be of an extreme importance. I had the chance to attend the organized by the newspaper “Rodna Kray” (‘Homeland’) in Odessa round table of former students, who studied in Bulgaria, dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the important for the youth community 103 Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria⁷.

I would like to begin the presentation of my results with the story of the “Mister Bulgarian” contest, which I attended, held in Odessa on the 20th of November 2013. The jury, consisting of local business-ladies of Bulgarian origin and chaired by a famous business lady, ethnical Ukrainian, ranked three successful young men, representatives of the Bulgarian diaspora. In order to select a winner the jury asked all three candidates one question: What is for you, the Bulgarian from Odessa, Ukraine?

7. On 31st of May 1993 is published Decree №103, accepted by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, concerning the performance of educational activity among the ethnic Bulgarians abroad. This document is the legislative basis, on which a number of young people from Ukraine, Moldavia, Serbia and Macedonia are receiving education in the Bulgarian Universities nowadays. According to article №4 from the Decree: “The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science is annually providing up to 400 places, subsidized by the government, for individuals of a Bulgarian origin to be accepted in a full course of education”.

The first candidate answered that for him this is his country of birth but for a real homeland he considers the historical one – Bulgaria. The second one declared that his country is Ukraine, and Bulgaria is just the historical homeland of his ancestors, on the other hand the third one's answer reminds of King Solomon's decision: *"The Bulgarians of Ukraine are privileged from the faith that they have two motherlands – one, in which they were born (Ukraine) and one, from which 200 years ago their ancestors came here (Bulgaria). I keep both of them in my heart!"* As one might suspect, the third candidate won the "Mister Bulgarian" contest.

Similar malleable identities among the young representatives of the Bulgarian community in the Ukrainian part of Bessarabia can be easily tracked in the answers given by the respondents in an anonymous survey conducted among the students, attending 11th grade in the two most significant for the diaspora schools in the Odessa region – the one in Bolgrad (The Bolgrad high-school "G.S. Rakovski") and in Gorodnoe village (Chiyshia). The choice of a target group was not accidental – on the one hand they are seniors and in less than a year they are going to be students in different universities, and on the other in most of the cases (except for only six cases in the Bolgrads' high school) both or (rarely) one of the parents are ethnical Bulgarians, as in both high schools the Bulgarian identity is the primary one pointed by the respondents. The total amount of the people who took part in the query was 48, respectively 29 in Bolgrad (10 boys and 19 girls)⁸ and 19 in Chiyshia (5 boys and 14 girls) aged 16-17 years old. The questions were focused on the attitude of the young people towards the metropolis, what are the perceptions of Bulgaria as prospective country for receiving a good university education and for potential working realization, i.e. the willingness for an educational or labor migration. The data was compared with the results of a similar survey conducted by Aleksandar Ganchev in 2006 among 27 students from the Bolgrad High-school.

Most of the school graduates from both schools are with a dominant Bulgarian ethnic identity, but with a clearly negative attitude toward migration to Bulgaria: (a) from all the 48 high-school students only 6 (4 girls and 2 boys from the Bolgrad high-school) declared different (Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz or Moldavian) identity, and all the others (even having one of their parents from the dominant in the country Russian or Ukrainian population) have self-determination of Bulgarians; (b) with small exceptions, the spoken language in the family is Bulgarian (in its local dialect form) alongside with Russian; (c) the preparedness for permanent emigration outside Ukraine is extremely low, on the contrary most of the respondents are declaring their strong will to live, continue their studies and to realize themselves in the country (in the meaning of the homeland – Ukraine), with the motive "I'm a patriot!" (*"Я напмуом!"*); (d) Bulgaria is the preferred country for temporary migration with a certain aim-better and cheaper education, but it is not perceived as ideal for permanent migration; (e) practically they are lacking willingness to realize themselves in the

8. 13 of them are born in Bolgrad, 2- in the city of Izmail and the rest – in the villages of the Bolgrad region (5 in the village of Vassilevka, two respectively in the villages Vladichen, Zaliznichnoe and Chervenoarmeiskoe, and one respectively in each of the villages Tabakhi, Granichnoe, Kalchevo)

home village-only five youngsters from Chiyshia (2 girls and 3 boys) and no one from Bolgrad high-school declared that they would like to stay in their city or village.

The image of Bulgaria is constructed primarily as its perception as a historical motherland – on the question: *"What do you know about Bulgaria?"*, the majority of the answers were typically: *"One of the oldest countries in Europe"*, *"The ethnical motherland of my ancestors"*, *"A country, related to my predecessors"*, *"The country of my origin"*. The standard answers of the question: *"What is Bulgaria for you nowadays?"*, are as follows: *"A beautiful country with cultural and nature landmarks"*, *"A country with natural diversity, appropriate for holidays and tourism"*, *"Bulgaria is an EU member with good perspective for choices and development"*, but the most common answer was: *"A country, which is giving a good and free education for us – the Bulgarians from Bessarabia"*. These answers show the preserved emotional relationship with the image of the "mythical motherland", typical for the previous generation of the population of Ukrainian Bessarabia⁹. But they also show the motivation for migrating among the school-graduates: practically all the respondents declared their willingness to visit Bulgaria as tourists or rarely to specialize in the language, for no longer than a month; solid intention for migration to Bulgaria in order to receive a University education was declared by only 10 students from the Bolgrad High-school (2 girls and 8 boys) and 11 from the school in Chiyshia. In this respect the dynamics of the migration attitudes shows a certain growth of the will for a temporary migration, in comparison with the 2006 survey, when only five of the questioned 27 school-leavers declared their will to continue their education in Bulgaria (Ганчев 2008, 92), although in the 2013 survey, one of the answers mentioned "the brain drain" process as a reason for continuing education in Ukraine.

Here we have to put out one particularly important argument, explaining the low migration preparedness among the school graduates from the Bulgarian diaspora in South Ukraine – the difficulties which they are experiencing with the high standard Bulgarian language. Even though it was studied from first year in both of the schools, the local spoken dialect is relatively far from its literary form – for more than 200 years it was developing in a (mainly) Russian language surrounding. Thus these students, who came to study in Bulgaria and are ethnical Bulgarians, are perceived as "different" (i.e. as *'русначета'* – 'Russians'); in Bulgaria they are developing specific identity of "Bessarabic Bulgarians", different from the Bulgarians from the Metropolis (Ганчев 2006, 288). Because of the vicinity of Odessa, where the education in the universities is held primarily in Russian, in the last several years the city is becoming a centre for higher-education for the Bulgarians from South Ukraine, and therefore in a real alternative of the Bulgarian education.

Bulgaria is a country attractive for a prolonged migration, aiming educational or labor-market realization, only for every third school-leaver from Bolgrad and every

9. As one of the major researchers of the topic of Bessarabic Bulgarians – Nikolay Chervenkov, remembers in an interview taken in 2007: *"15-16 years ago our Bulgarians were going to Bulgaria as it was Jerusalem – as it was a pilgrimage! Now this travel became something absolutely ordinary..."* [http://liternet.bg/publish13/p_marchev/besarabskite.htm]

second from Chiyshia. This is valid especially for these, who declared that they have relatives in Bulgaria (10 in total) or for these who have already been in the country (20 in total). Despite this very rarely any of the students singled out Bulgaria as a preferred destination for a labor migration after finishing their education – only 5 of these who took part in the survey (3 from Chiyshia and 2 from Bolgrad) indicated it as the most attractive in this context; the ranking is led by Germany (15), United Kingdom (5), Russia (3), France (3), Switzerland (3), USA (2), and with only one vote respectively Poland, Finland, Canada and Italy. In this respect the migration attitudes of the youngsters coincide with the actual destinations for seasonal migration among the middle generation of Bulgarians in the Odessa region, whose labor mobility is aimed primarily to Finland (90%) and Poland (10%) (cf. Ganchev 2011: 233). It is interesting that because of the closeness of the Gagauz language to the Turkish language and the belonging of the Moldavian language to the Roman language group, some of the answers contained Turkey (2) and Italy as possible destinations for (temporary) labor migration, if one of the parents is from a Gagauz¹⁰ or Moldavian origin; Romania is completely absent from the answers.

Let us compare the data obtained from the survey among the school graduates in Bolgrad and Chiyshia with that received in the poll among the students of Bulgarian origin in Odessa. The poll among the students from different faculties of the “Mechnikov” State University, Odessa and some other universities or colleges (with economical or juridical disciplines) included two types of respondents. The first group was of students aged 18-21 of Bulgarian origin – future historians, ethnologists, economists, medics, who are not studying Bulgarian language (34 in total). The second target group was of the students in their last two years of study of “Bulgarian philology” at the Odessa University, who are intentionally studying the standardized Bulgarian language; the majority among them are of Bulgarian origin (18), but there were ethnical Ukrainians (12) and Gagauz (1). They were 65 in total (52 women and 13 men). The questionnaire contained similar as the aforementioned questions, adapted to their status of students. The results obtained are comparable with those received from a similar survey conducted by Alexander Ganchev and Anya Lesnikova in 2010 among 89 students of Bulgarian origin (Ганчев, Лесникова 2012, 125-138).

My initial hypothesis, supported by the information gathered in essential from personal interviews, was that the life strategies concerning migration in Bulgaria are going to be higher among the students, whose education is related to the professional work with the Bulgarian literary language. Following the results from the previous surveys, it could have been predicted that the migration mindset among the rest of the students with a Bulgarian background will not be very high, despite the expectations in Bulgaria¹¹ (Лулєва 2012, 35-31). For example, in 2010 hardly 8% of the Bulgarian

10. The Gagauz people are an Orthodox population, which inhabited the Bessarabic region almost two centuries ago, migrating from Northeastern Bulgaria. Their language belongs to the Turkic language group, and is close to the Turkish language. Today they inhabit the territory of Moldavia, Southwest Ukraine and in small groups – some villages in Bulgaria.

11. Hereby I am once again going to state that the survey was conducted immediately prior the

youth, willing to migrate (temporarily or permanently), have chosen Bulgaria as their most desired destination (Ганчев, Лесникова 2012, 133-134). The results substantially proved these expectations: in 2013 only 17,65 % (6 people – 1 man and 2 women) of the 34 students-respondents of Bulgarian origin declared their will for a longer (or permanent) labor migration to Bulgaria, versus 38% (13 people – all women) state their strong reluctance to migrate outside Ukraine, no matter where. Among the students from specialty “Bulgarian philology” the percentage is markedly higher – Bulgaria is a desired destination for prolonged (or permanent) migration for 26% (8 people, 3 of which are ethnic Ukrainian females), 29% (9 women) are stating unwillingness for migration outside of the country. The percentages show that there are no mass migration desires towards Bulgaria – hardly every forth student, studying Bulgarian language professionally and only every fifth student from a Bulgarian ethnic origin are predicting this potential possibility of work and life realization. This is evident in the answers of the question: “Which country do you see as the most prospective regarding the labor migration (temporary or permanent)?” – the most desired destinations are Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, USA and Russia (the last two are with almost equivalent positions). Bulgaria is not presented in this list, since it is a desired destination for tourism and rest (this is the most common answer) and for specialization (with all the students majoring in “Bulgarian Philology” and among the half of the others), but it is not considered as a place suitable for permanent migration. This gives us a completely different picture than the one, shown in the poll results from the Bulgarian Sunday school, where 17 (13 Bulgarians and 4 ethnic Ukrainians) out of the 22 respondents declared their solid and clear will for a permanent migration in Bulgaria, i.e. these are 77%.

On the other hand a high percentage (38.5 % – 25 people) of the students are showing preparedness for a temporary labor migration to Bulgaria after their graduation, but for no longer then 1-2 years; the analysis is showing a significant prevalence of the willingness for educational and labor mobility before the permanent emigration. Part of the motivation for this kind of mobility, despite the knowledge of the language and the close cultural mentality, the nostalgia for “returning back to the roots” in the “homeland of the ancestors” is still evident. In some of the answers to the question: “*What is Bulgaria for you?*”, alongside with the common phrases “*historical motherland*”, “*beloved country*”, “*prospective country, which is an EU member*”, there can be found answers like these: “*This is a country with a rich culture, saturated with diversity, homeland of the Bessarabic Bulgarians*”, “*Bulgaria is the homeland of my ancestors and is a second homeland for me*”, “*Bulgaria is my fatherland and therefore is a part of me*”, “*For me Bulgaria is a country, in which I would like to return again and again. It is my ancient homeland and I am proud of it*”, “*For me Bulgaria is not only a place for a rest and tourism, but also a chance for me*

EuroMaydan revolution events in Kiev and the current political crisis in Ukraine. The development of the crisis, as well as for the widespread political and economic instability in Ukraine at the moment can possibly raise the migration attitudes among certain parts of the Bulgarian communities in the country.

to work and develop myself after finishing the university”, “When in Bulgaria I feel energized. I like the Bulgarians themselves: good, friendly, cheerful people, which distinct them a lot from the Ukrainians”.

Nevertheless, many of the students with a Bulgarian origin, who took part in the survey, emphasized their lack of knowledge of the literary language and on the differences in the mentality (on the axis “Balkan”/“Post-Soviet” differences) as main “adaptation barriers” for the successful migration to Bulgaria. For example, answering the question: “What is the main obstacle, causing serious problems in the adaptation in a foreign country?” (Bulgaria is included), besides the almost standard answers as: “*new culture*”, “*unknown people*”, “*different mentality*” (including different head gestures for “Yes” and “No” answers), “*not knowing the language*” (for those who are not philologists), “*nostalgia for the relatives and friends*”, in the surveys of the students of Bulgarian origin the arguments for the unwillingness to emigrate from Ukraine are supported by arguments of the type: “*I love the place where I was born and I live*”, “*It is hard to bare the separation from the birthplace*”, “*All my relatives and close friends are here, everything here is “home”*”, “*Because my homeland is Ukraine!*”, “*I love Ukraine!*”, etc.

The analysis of the answers from the survey shows that we are witnessing a new generation, socialized in the years of independent Ukraine, who possesses high consciousness of a citizen belonging to Ukraine in particular. In the context of what was said in the beginning of this article, we can summarize, that the highest level of citizen identity in a nation-state is formatted when a person with a different ethnic background and ethno-cultural identity is considering himself as a citizen of the country, in which he lives in and of its civil society. In this regard the ethnic Bulgarians from the Odessa region are showing a high level of citizenship consciousness – 38% of the students of Bulgarian origin, who took part in the survey (versus 30% in 2010 – cf. Ганчев, Лесникова 2012, 136) are declaring their strong unwillingness to migrate from Ukraine. Simultaneously with this, the percentage of the people, an important part of whose life strategy is the temporary labor migration outside of the country remains high – 38.5% (with almost 50% in 2010 – cf. Ганчев, Лесникова 2012: 136), as for this case Bulgaria is taking the leading position, which is understandable, taking into account the ethnic, cultural and language background of the young people in the diaspora.

It becomes clear that the image of the “mythical Homeland” which was alive in the communal consciousness in the mid-1990s now turned into a much more lucid picture of the “historic Motherland” (Ганчев, Лесникова 2012, 127), which is a result from the strengthened connections and contacts with the metropolis, as well as the extensive information, which is available for the family and friends circle in the past two decades, concerning the socio-economic situation in Bulgaria. This turns Bulgaria into a desired destination for mobility, but not for permanent settlement – if 1/3 of the respondents are showing preparedness for temporary (prolonged or shorter) migration to Bulgaria (related to education, work, etc.), than 1/3 of the young people from the diaspora are showing negative migration activity and in their life strategies cannot be

found other desired country than Ukraine.

We can consider the first group of students, showing high migration activity, as potential workforce in Bulgaria and possible new citizens of the country, in a case of well-developed adaptive social and economic programs for the representatives of the diaspora. By now the information about similar programs is flooding the Bulgarian media, more than what actually happens (Јулева 2012, 344). As for the legislative acts, accepted by the member states of the EU (including Bulgaria), aiming to attract the representatives of the diaspora of the latter as labor migrants and demographic donors are by now in a process of development and approbation (Ganchev 2011, 246); in this context the nature of migration interrelations between Bulgaria as “Motherland” and Bulgarian diaspora in Ukraine can be formulated as developing.

In conclusion let us go back to the issues, set out in the beginning, concerning the new conditions in which the identity formation processes are developing, and in which the dynamics of the relationship between the metropolis and the diaspora is evolving in the context of the Transnationalism (fellow Steven Vertovec – 2009) and pan-European mobility. More than 30 years ago Jean Monnet described the future *Homo Europaeus* as a “trans-national, ‘post-national’ actor who would rise above parochial attachments to locality or nation” (Čapo Žmegač 2008, 336); he would become a rootless cosmopolitan, a deterritorialized Bohemian who would epitomize the various ideals of Enlightenment rationalism (Shore 1999, 64).

As a number of analyses show, the EU will not only refuse to reject the logic of nationalism, it will not turn into a post-national society delivering supra-national identity of its members, but it has, notwithstanding its rhetoric, reaffirmed national identities (Martiniello 2000, 354). Moreover – in the conditions of pan-European mobility the newly emergent global–local dynamics of the cultural management and the attitude towards it, which we recognize as “tradition”, has become a central concept in terms of identity work (Hristov 2012, 985-993). My earlier research among the returnee *gastarbeiters* in Serbia and Macedonia shows that once they looked into “the mirror of otherness” in the multicultural environment of the EU, the new returning migrants discovered their strong bond with their birthplaces and gradually developed a local and/or regional identity (Hristov 2010, 102), along with their national identity, and very rarely with the pan-European one.

This observation is confirmed by the results from the survey, conducted among the young Bulgarians living in the diaspora in South Ukraine – similarly to the migrants¹², dwelling simultaneously diverse spaces, they develop a single malleable identity, as every time a different part of its multidimensionality is being activated. And while being in the conditions of the post-Soviet range of independent Ukraine, the unambiguous ethnic identity of “we – the Bulgarians” is gradually being replaced with the regional-ethnic identity of “we – the Bassarabian Bulgarians” (Коч 2009, 372). Thus the migration to the “historic Motherland” Bulgaria is not being perceived

12. According to Riva Kastroyano (2002) the modern migrants in Western Europe inhabit simultaneously four dimensions, having different meanings for the different generations of migrants: the country of origin, the host-country, their local space and this, belonging to the EU.

as “going back to the roots”, but as a rational choice made in order to achieve a potentially better life.

From the data analysis it becomes clear that neither the migrant activity is that high-hardly every third is regarding it as a possibility when constructing his own life strategy, nor is Bulgaria that appealing for emigration, as it could have been expected from the representatives of the Bulgarian ethnic community in the Odessa region. Even these, who are already situated in Bulgaria, are currently experiencing the ongoing process of regional identity formation as “Bessarabian Bulgarians”, different from the “Bulgarians in Bulgaria” (Ганчев 2006, 288); the sense of marginalization in the recipient country, despite the fact that the latter is previously perceived as the “ancient homeland of the ancestors”, is compensated by the virtue of the comebacks at home and the defragmentation of the space is not capable of dissociating the migrants from the local community, to which they remain empathetic.

Similar expectations are demonstrated by the young Bulgarians from the diaspora – relatively high migration activeness is displayed regarding the temporary migrations, but the home space and individual commitment to Ukraine is a relationship hard to be deconstructed; the circular migration remains to be one of the leading life strategies for the young people, but only as a transitional situation and a condition for survival of the local community as whole (Sredkova 2012, 292). The study showed how far is this multidimensional selective identity of the young people of the diaspora from the nation-state related concepts of national-identity. Only the future will show what course will take the relation between the largest historic Bulgarian diaspora – this in South Ukraine, and the Bulgarian state.

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