Multiculturalism and National Cultures in Eastern Europe[1]

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Multiculturalism and National Cultures in Eastern Europe. Analysing the effect of policies and discourses on multiculturalism, one of the popular buzzwords of 'Europeanization' among the elites in Central and Eastern Europe, the paper investigates the way a once proscribed ethno-religious group can become a commoditized national minority valued for its exotic and distinctive 'culture'. To explore this ethnification process, the paper examines the public events that suppose to strengthen multiculturalism in the peripheral region of south-east Poland. Instead of multicultural pluralism, not necessarily related to the major identification with ethnicity, however, one can observe that nations are becoming key definition categories for cultures. The paper argues that this ethnification of culture represents the wider trend of concealing rather than eliminating nationalist logics in the use of 'culture' in post-peasant Eastern Europe undergoing 'Europeanization'.
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Europeanization is defined as a discursive strategy and a device of power which in particular through administrative and institutional capacities of the European Union (EU), reorganizes group identifications in relations to territory and 'peoplehood' (Borneman – Fowler 1997: 488). The EU is neither a summary of political and bureaucratic institutions, nor a simple umbrella covering nation-states. It is an arena of cultural relationships, the entity which creates and reproduces its own culture, representations and symbols (Bellier – Wilson 2000: 4). Apart from the discursive-ideological form, EU also works through particular policies influencing many levels of social life. Various local, regional and state identities, practices and relations of individuals and groups accommodate to and question these policies and discourses. This means that there is a contrast between professionally defined Europe – within EU institutions as well as outside of them – and what is connected with the themes of citizenship, group belonging and everyday life among the Europeans (Shore 2000).

Balancing the prevalence of political science and economy approaches focusing on political institutions and analyzing nation-state societies as given 'wholes', this paper offers a 'bottom-up' social-cultural analysis of Europeanization among the people in south-east Poland, one of the many underdeveloped peripheries of Central and Eastern Europe. One of the most important policies and ideas of 'Europeanization' in this part of Europe is being promoted, in particular by the local power holders, through multiculturalism, a 'term describing the coexistence of many cultures in a locality, without any one culture dominating the region'[3]. In a sociological definition (Johnson 2000: 202), multiculturalism is a movement

'whose goal is to elevate and celebrate ethnic backgrounds … Multiculturalism has been promoted as part of a solution to a long history of ethnic and racial oppression. It has been criticized by conservatives as a devaluation of what they regard as an essential core of standards and wisdom traced to Western white civilization. Others argue that it is in fact merely a distraction from the underlying social inequality of wealth and power that multiculturalism can mask but do little to remedy.'

It is the latter way of criticism this paper aims to develop by analyzing the multicultural policies and discourses on 'culture' in what I call post-peasant Eastern Europe (Buzalka 2007). I argue that due to the exclusive position of intelligentsia in promoting and defining 'culture' in Central and Eastern Europe, demands of the market after state socialism such as the promotion of 'exotic' artefacts of and ideas on folk cultures to consumers, as well as minority policies such as the support of ethnically defined minorities, the policies and discourses of multiculturalism as a part of 'Europeanization' conceal rather than eliminate nationalist logics behind the use of culture. In other words, the promotion of diversity through multiculturalism does not prevent the nationalist tensions to vanish from policies and discourses, precisely because multiculturalism in post-peasant setting of Central and Eastern Europe makes culture to be locked within the category and practice of a nation. This actual 'multinationalism' has wide consequences in the sphere of policies towards, of and for the minorities.

Multiculturalism in post-peasant Eastern Europe

I employ the concept of post-peasantism (Buzalka 2007) that moves from the peasant family as an economic and social-structural unit in the countryside towards the rural morality, imagery, and ideology that is ingrained in memories and expressed in narratives, rituals, and symbols, not necessarily in the context of towns, villages, and hamlets, but also in cities including east European capitals. Because all socialist countries saw massive influxes of rural people into urban

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[3] The Columbia Encyclopedia, Fifth Edition, New York: Columbia University Press 1993, p. 1855.

centres, any analysis of the urban sphere today must start with the remnants of village folk in the cities.

Drawing on her observations of late socialist Poland, Pine (1993) described how peasant relations and practices such as gender relations were extended into the larger social world outside of the household, reaching into the second economy and entrepreneurship. Although the socialist state progressed in relativizing urban-rural divisions and changing the material nature of inequality in both the countryside and the towns, it was far less effective in shifting ideology (Pine 2002: 162), not least the one linked to the ways of life known from the agrarian times. Even inheritance ideologies, expressed through kinship, show that although the economic importance of land decreased in the countryside during socialist and post-socialist years, the emotional, aesthetic, and social value of land persisted (Pine 2003).

Andre Czegledy (2002) also analyzed 'urban peasants', in this case in Hungary. Despite living in cities such as Budapest and holding important managerial posts, many people retained their rural practices, identities, and memories through their leisure activities and through sociality around their hobby plot or allotment. The examples offered by Czegledy and Pine show that boundaries between the rural and the urban have remained porous in Eastern Europe, as they were under state socialism. The memories of peasant past are transmitted across generations, from peasant grandparents to their grandchildren, some of them university-educated. This type of memory is observable in everyday life, in people's worldviews as expressed in narratives that nourish a kind of peasant nostalgia. The more direct links these memories have to the role of state, church, and intellectuals in nurturing them, the more the peasant world is important for expressing post-peasant identities and promoting development of the peripheral areas through tourism, heritage preservation and support of 'cultures' locked within nations. In this way it happens less important whether the promoters and receivers of fashionable multiculturalism in Eastern Europe are actual peasant or post-peasants living in the city blocks.

According to Rogers Brubaker, in contrast to Western European models, the ethnicity in Eastern Europe takes the form of nationality, and ethnic heterogeneity is understood and interpreted as national heterogeneity.[4] As I argued elsewhere (Buzalka 2007), and would like to show in the end of this paper, the understanding and promotion of national cultures of the majority and of minorities in Central and Eastern Europe ignores the role of everyday ethnicity as opposed to nationalist politics (see Brubaker et al. 2006). The elite-controlled and promoted policies and discourses on multiculturalism, presented in the following sections on the ethnographic examples from south-east Poland, show how particular 'use of culture' conceals rather than eliminates the nationalist logics and ignores the role of everyday ethnicity and/or its limited influence on most of human relationships taking place on the ground[5].

The people in Przemyśl, a city in south-east Poland, are divided according to nationality and religious rite. In contrast to the city's earlier, multi-ethnic composition, a history of ethnic cleansings and state policies during and soon after World War II has resulted today in the overwhelming association of its seventy thousand inhabitants with Polish Roman Catholicism. The only minorities are the Greek Catholic community and a tiny group of Orthodox believers, who together number two thousand ethnic Ukrainians. The ethnic minority I studied in 2003–2004 consisted predominantly of survivors of the state-led ethnic cleansing of 1947, who had been forced to leave their villages, and of their heirs, who have been migrating back to south-east Poland, especially Przemyśl, since the late 1950s as 'Ukrainians', most of them practicing Greek Catholicism.

Posada Rybotycka is a village some thirty kilometres south-west of Przemyśl, situated in the Wiar Valley amid the beautiful Przemyśl Hills (Pogórze Przemyskie). The entire Wiar Valley was heavily Ukrainian before 1947. Because of post-war international agreements, most of the original Ukrainian inhabitants of the valley were moved to the area around Tarnopil in contemporary Ukraine, and the rest left during Action Vistula, the ethnic cleansing organized by the People's Republic of Poland against Ukrainians in country's south-east in 1947.

Posada is now greatly diminished from its pre-war size. The wooden houses of Ukrainians were buried, and several dispersed cooperative dwellings replaced some of them during the socialist years. Only the ancient *tserkva,* the parish house, and the cemetery reveal the location of the old Greek Catholic village[6].

Today signs of increasing tourism are everywhere. The remains of *tserkvy* and cemeteries are being preserved and information plaques installed next to them. A trainee working for an EU project in cultural heritage preservation said optimistically, 'The Podkarpacie region opted for tourism and history, and we will make a lot of money out of it'. This was to be achieved not only through preservation of the natural environment but also through the rich 'multicultural' heritage of the region. It is expected that financial support for Podkarpackie County from the European Union will reach 1.6 billion Euros in five years.[7]

[4] Quoted from public lecture delivered at Comenius University on September 26, 2008 by Rogers Brubaker.

[5] The material for this paper was prepared while I was a doctoral fellow at the Max Planck Institute for social anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany and the present version of the article was prepared while I was Andrew W. Mellon Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, Austria. The final version benefited from the comments by the anonymous reviewers of Sociológia/Slovak Sociological Review. Some of the ethnographic examples presented in this paper rely on Buzalka 2007.

[6] A *tserkva* (or *tserkov* in Ukrainian, pl. *tserkvy*; *cerkiéw* in Polish,) is a building of worship of eastern-rite churches.

[7] See http://miasta.gazeta.pl/rzeszow/2029020,34962,3205662.html, accessed in March 2006.

Substantial part of this investment in the economically underdeveloped and predominantly rural part of Poland is expected to create the basis for development of tourism, the 'catching-up' strategy widely applied in peripheral regions of Europe, such as the southern Mediterranean. (Boissevain 1996)

Increasingly since the 1980s, Posada Rybotycka and the surrounding area have become tourist destinations, particularly for middle-class people from Przemyśl. Walking trails crisscross the area, and bicyclists like to ride there because traffic is light on the barely repaired roads. Two Przemyśl Ukrainians bought the old cooperative building, opened a pub in it, and offered accommodation to tourists. Another rented the former Greek Catholic presbytery and turned it into a tourist hostel. Together with the Przemyśl branch of the Association of Ukrainians, they have since 2000 organized the annual event called Kupaly Night on the weekend before or after St John's (Ivan's) name day according to the Julian calendar (the day of St John the Baptist, according to the Greek Catholic calendar). In 2004 it took place on the weekend after 7 July – on Saturday and Sunday, 10 and 11 July. The ritual takes place at down and involves the singing of folk songs and dancing of folk dances around the bonfires which end with bathing in the creek. The term Kupaly is derived from the Slavic word for 'bathing'.

Besides the local Ukrainians and a few young Poles, a group of men with TV equipment walked around and chatted. They had come from Kraków regional television to film the event for the TV magazine Ethnic Climates (*Etniczne klimaty*), a monthly program for and about the national minorities and ethnic groups in Poland. Among the journalists was the dark-skinned moderator of the program, Brian Scott. He described himself by saying, 'I am the only black Polish journalist. I have done a lot for the coloured people in this country. I am their guy in the Polish media.'

Scott had come to Poland twenty years earlier from one of the African countries friendly to socialism. He studied journalism in Kraków, married a Polish woman and stayed. He produced *Ethnic Climates* together with the initiator of the series, the experienced journalist Waldek Janda, whom he characterized as 'an engine of ethnic programs in the public media and of programs about minority and ethnic groups in Poland'. These programs transmitted throughout Poland as well as regionally, were about 'Slovaks, Kashubs, Bielorusyns, and other minorities and ethnic groups'. As Scott stressed, he and his colleagues worked to help minorities keep

> their identities, their culture, their religion, cultural events, sport, etc. [We are interested in] young people, old people, places of tradition, maybe their past. [We focus on] things like monuments, cemeteries, [and] schools. [We want to know] in what ways the national minorities in Poland are keeping their identity. Who is helping them? Is the Polish state doing enough for them? And the local authorities, municipalities … what do they do for them?

The journalists saw their role in the program about the Kupaly Night in a similarly 'ethnographic' way, as Brian Scott put it. This time it was the Ukrainian minority they were going to 'do a lot for'. For the rest of the day, everything that happened in connection with the Kupaly celebration was adjusted to the wishes of the journalists. While the participants continued their preparations, Scott and Janda interviewed some of them. One was a professional restaurateur from Przemyśl, age thirty-eight, who explained her view of 'culture':

> I come from Podlasie, and we all have eastern roots there. I am a woman of the east … My husband is Tartar and Muslim, our son is a Pole, but he was baptized in a *tserkva.* He likes *tserkvy* very much, but churches too. With me it is the same. I am a conglomerate of cultures and I am enjoying it. Because of this I have a different perception of the world. I feel that I have a different sensitivity. I have nothing against 'otherness' … On the border there are two types of people, those who see 'otherness' as an obstacle and those who draw an advantage and inspiration from it. I belong to the second category. I draw from other cultures the best they can offer. It is a source of inspiration for me.

While the journalists and I discussed 'Ukrainianness', two middle-aged women in folk dresses put the finishing touches on an exhibition of Ukrainian folk dishes, and some folk artists set up tables near the creek where they would sell folk dresses and hand-made artefacts of straw and wood. Some men helped to herd some goats from a van into the middle of the field, where, together with some chickens and dogs, they were supposed to be the living part of the folk exhibit. People who were not engaged in the preparations enjoyed their drinks, and I noticed some singing of partisan songs from the time of World War II. Other people, some of them in folk costumes, played games in the water with the children. More and more people, Poles and Ukrainians alike, were arriving from the city. People sang folksongs near the creek. Old and young ate and drank together.

The presentation of Ukrainian food started with a butter-making competition. A woman of around forty then introduced the national cuisine. Another woman asked two men to help prepare the Ukrainian soup *barscz.* A microphone and camera followed the presenter as she cooked and commented on how to prepare the dish:

> Now we will show how to prepare Ukrainian *barscz*, the basic dish cooked in Ukraine since the old times. The basis is fermented beet or rye juice. On feast days the *barscz* was boiled in the broth; on work days it was cooked with fried bacon with onions. In addition, it can be combined with cabbage, beans, or peas. The soup is supposed to be dense, and the spoon should stand up in it.

When the *barscz* was ready, the crowd waited in a queue for Brian Scott to arrive. The food was left untouched until, smiling into the camera, he began to eat. People generally perceived this part of the event to have been made for a television audience.

The signal came when the young men participating in the ritual lit bonfires on the banks of the creek. Once the bonfires were burning, the young women performers, standing on the opposite side of the creek, began singing songs about love and nature. They wore folk dresses and had garlands made of wildflowers on their heads and chests. Camera flashes began to light up the dark valley. One girl appeared from the dark and sang, and the others answered. Holding hands, they made a queue and moved closer to the water, leaving a space for the girl coming out of the dark. She walked to the middle of the circle the girls made after approaching the creek, and all the girls danced slowly into the water.

Oleg, the forty-year-old activist, journalist, and poet was one of the main initiators of Kupaly Night celebrations in the Przemyśl area, wrote in a leaflet describing and promoting the ritual that it appeared '… The return of Kupalo [the old pagan god] was natural and pleasant. The love ceremony of the Ukrainian ancestors was warmly welcomed by contemporary Ukrainians, and they sang to Kupalo with love!'

Oleg's style may be uniquely poetic, but his description sheds light on the narratives that underpin the construction of Ukrainian identity in south-east Poland. This construction is full of rural features, unbounded wilderness, natural virility, and an authentic 'culture' relying on ancient tradition. Oleg also offered a less metaphorical interpretation of the Kupaly ritual:

> It is an attempt to return to the ancient traditions that were present in these areas. It is not an activity against polonization, it is an attempt to exist, to continue being as we once used to be … Everything was mutated after Action Vistula. We try to remember if we can … We keep in touch with the old rhythms of nature … The event is open, as the entire cosmos is open … In Poland and in Ukraine in recent years the Kupaly traditions have been revived. Something is in them … They give something to us … It is the same time, the same tradition, and the same rhythms across the ages.

A forty-year-old co-organizer of Kupaly Night made clearer how this old tradition was being rediscovered:

> There are certain centres such as schools and *tserkvy* that take care of one's nationality. But there are also informal activities like this one in Posada. I myself have observed that even people who did not grow up aware of their Ukrainian origin, who were not taught by their parents about their Ukrainian history, now search for it themselves … Most of the people here come from the Przemyśl region, but gradually people from all of Poland learn about this event … This is not a national ghetto. We want to show outsiders how rich Ukrainian culture was and what its range was and in this way break some stereotypes.

During and after the Kupaly ritual in Posada in 2004, many of my informants characterized it as 'the end of romantic times'. They were referring particularly to the increasing commercialization and 'media-ization' of the event. Although people wanted to show their rich Ukrainian culture to a Polish audience and welcomed journalists to the festival, at the same time many felt offended by the publicity and noted a loss of 'authenticity' in the once intimate community celebration. One participant, age thirty-six, commented:

> I take part in Kupaly every year ... I liked it most at the beginning, when everything was fresh; the emotions were authentic … I liked that it was not an artificial resurrection of folklore but an authentic experience and a kind of fun with that folklore … After a couple of years, however, I grew to like the event [*impreza*] less – the routine, schematic activities, the tape players as the basis for the girls' singing, and so on. Also, a lot of beer showed up … But I still go there. It is one of the few [Ukrainian] events also attended by Poles … They go there because they really want to go; it is interesting for them, and I like that they integrate with us, even if only to have a beer with us. Apart from that, there are the beautiful natural surroundings. Activities like this should be organized in such post-Ukrainian places.

Many other people commented that each year the event had become more commercialized. Food, drinks, and folk artefacts had begun to be offered for sale, and the event was now advertised and covered in the media. An older, bigger, and better-known event, the Lemko bonfire (*Lemkivska vatra*) – the twin of Kupaly Night – corroborates the observation that popular ethnic festivities are becoming increasingly commoditized in Poland. The annual Lemko festival, held since the 1980s at the end of July in the village of Zdynia in the Carpathians, attracts

sponsorships – big breweries compete over the monopoly for selling beer at the festival, for example – and is also financed by the state.

On 2 July 2005, Kupaly Night was organized near Przemyśl's city centre, next to the city's best-known hotel and near camping facilities and a sports stadium. The Kupaly ritual, performed by a student folklore ensemble from Ukraine, took place in the evening around a bonfire in a large field in the San floodplain. A covered stage with lights and technical equipment was erected next to the hotel and was surrounded by kiosks offering folk crafts, folk dishes, and books. Farther in the background were two fast-food tents. The hotel sold beer and hosted an icon-painting school for children.

This year the newly elected leadership of the Przemyśl branch of the Association of Ukrainians had managed to get organizational and financial support from the Przemyśl city council. Several thousand people were present at the climax of the ritual. The crowd was so large that only a few dozen people were actually able to observe the performance around the bonfire and in the river. I asked one friend why he thought the Kupaly celebration had been moved from Posada to Przemyśl that year. He replied:

> It is the fashion today; Ukraine is in the headlines … The city council gave money for it, [whereas] before they did not … They were there among their own [*wsistci swoji*]; nobody intervened in what they did. Here, you know that they [local Ukrainians] want to show up…

My Ukrainian friends observed that more Poles attended the event than in 2004. They appreciated this, arguing that it helped to strengthen mutual sympathies between the two nations. Nevertheless, some of my friends also remembered the intimate atmosphere of Kupaly Nights from previous years. In Posada they used to bring their own sausages and grill them and drink their own beer and vodka. Here, food and drink were for sale, and the event seemed impersonal.

It seemed certain that in future, the costs of advertising and subsidizing the event would grow. The city would contribute to the costs, as would the central office of the state-sponsored Association of Ukrainians in Poland, which included Kupaly on its official calendar of activities. Kupaly Night was no longer a spontaneous, voluntary, local ceremony but an ethno-festival aiming to strengthen the 'exotic' Ukrainian culture on Polish territory. The event was organized by professionals and ethnic entrepreneurs who rely precisely on the definition of Ukrainian culture as being 'close to nature', 'tradition' and 'spirituality'. Not only everyday ethnicity has been over-sized by certain commoditization and celebration of ethnicity in the ritual events, also state policies support the

educational programs that use ethnically defined cultures when promoting multiculturalism.

Teaching Multiculturalism

Jarosław is a city on the bank of the San River, thirty kilometres north of Przemyśl, where a workshop for teachers took place on 26 November 2003. Inside the former socialist house of culture (*dom kultury*) were gathered sixty-eighty teachers from the region, most of them teachers of history and related disciplines. The district president (*starosta*) of Jarosław opened the conference with a brief greeting. According to him, the main goal of the conference was to 'revive the history of national minorities in Jarosław', which had been suppressed during communism.

His deputy introduced himself as an historian. Stressing the position of teachers and the respect people traditionally gave them, he touched upon the responsibility they had for 'teaching people to respect traditions in our turbulent times'. In order 'to break the ties with the communist past', the role of teachers seemed to him essential. The general public knew little about its history, and so 'we [the teachers and historians] must fill the empty space left by communist historiography. In order to achieve this, we must get to the roots!' Contemporary politicians, he continued, knew little about history, either. Although they did not have time to read scholarly articles, they should listen 'to you historians, who create our current reality [*rzeczywistość*].' And teachers, he said, should be more engaged in public activities, especially patriotic ones, than they had been until now:

> Once people were dying under the flags, which were treated as religious relics. And today? The white-and-red [Polish] flag goes as it goes, carried by the young, chewing gum, and nearby another flag is being rolled up [improperly]. Young people do not treat the symbols of the fatherland properly. We do not know how to celebrate our national holidays anymore. Even we, the adults, do not know the duty of honouring the holiday, a part of our traditions.

According to this speaker, if someone were to write a monograph about Jarosław, he or she would have to mention that the Jarosław included under the Polish crown by Queen Jadwiga (1373 – 1399) was multi-ethnic in the past.[8] By that time, he stressed, the burghers of Jarosław were predominantly Polish by

[8] Crowned in 1384 at the age of eleven, Queen Jadwiga married Jagiełło, the ruler of pagan Lithuania, who became king of Poland. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1997.

nationality, although the dominant language was Latin. He mentioned tradesmen from Italy who underwent polonization, as well as the underprivileged position of Russians – meaning Ruthenians, the older name for Ukrainians – and Jewish settlers in historic Jarosław. He recognized as intruders the Swedes whose raids at the beginning of the eighteenth century initiated the city's decline. Among other nationalities, he also mentioned Saxons, and he did not forget to stress that Jews had been responsible for the little trade that took place up until World War II. In his interpretation, four dominant nationalities had coexisted in Jarosław before the mid-twentieth century: Poles, Russians, Germans, and Jews. The Germans were quickly polonized, and the Jews remained isolated. After World War I the Germans left the city, he underlined, only to return during World War II as conquerors. Today, he said, Jarosław had a chance for development. It could become a bridge to the east, but only if it had good, skilled citizens, as it had during the First Rzeczspospolita, when civic-minded traders governed the city.

Another historian commented on 'the beginning of multiculturalism in the south-eastern borderlands'. He stressed the importance of the 1353 Magdeburg Law for the city's self-government, highlighted the existence of church union as a significant source of multiculturalism (*wielokulturowość*), and tried to link this religious plurality with contemporary Europe. He drew the following conclusion: 'Not only in the cemeteries, where it is still most visible, but in people's everyday lives, this multiculturalism used to work in our land. As we now enter multicultural Europe, we should be aware that we have already been multicultural, and we should propagate our traditions of multiculturalism in the same way we take inspiration from Europe.'

After a break, another historian, Mr. Zamojski, took the floor. Although his topic was ostensibly the history of Jews in Jarosław, he spent most of his time glorifying Galicia under the Habsburgs. Stressing cultural differences between Galicia and the rest of Poland, he stated that Galicia was somehow a different country, 'and this has enormous significance for us'. As differentiating features he mentioned self-government, which did not exist elsewhere in historical Poland, and the tradition of tolerance, which came from Galicia's autonomy under the tolerant Habsburg monarchy:

> Look at Warsaw and the former Russian partition, what do they look like? They have different architecture, poorly built houses, no marketplaces in the centre. And look at Galicia, how nice it still looks! … We love our Galicia, we love our Franz Joseph. Only in Galicia do people hang his picture on the walls in houses and pubs. We love our Galician roots … Let's love Galicia, its religions and nationalities, its self-government, our roots, the hundreds of thousands of Jews, of whom Galicia was the biggest European seedbed. They were not only usurers but followers of liberal constitutionalism … The years 1942–1943, the time of the Holocaust, meant the end of an historical epoch in Galicia.

Another speaker talked about the German minority in Jarosław. She described how the positions of the patricians in Jarosław were at some point taken over by Germans, and how business and the local bureaucracy ended up in their hands as well. Her discussion of Austrians reflected the widespread Polish national interpretation of history, in which Austrian times were '150 years of the rule of a conqueror – a soft conqueror, but still a conqueror' – and Germans were, with Russians, the greatest Polish enemies. In her view, Jarosław was a Catholic city, untouched by Protestantism. She also stressed that Germans were essentially good, hard-working traders, and although they had little influence on culture, they had enormous influence on trade. Drawing evidence from the telephone book, she tried to convince the audience that some Germans still lived in the city – not least because there was a Lutheran church, and Lutherans must be Germans! Her conflating of nationality, language, and religion – the German speakers she mentioned could actually have been Saxonian Lutherans, Austrian Catholics, and Jews – illustrates the nationalist logic behind the 'multicultural' interpretation of the past, which locks cultures into nations.

After this presentation, a new project for students was introduced under the titles 'The Regional Route of Education – Our Small Fatherland' and 'Jarosław, the Multicultural City'. Its main goal was to advance knowledge about the region's history and culture. As its schoolteacher authors stressed, it should remind students about *wielokulturowość,* cultural heritage, and lead to the development of a national identity.

Next, some students from the music school offered a concert called 'The Music of Many Nations' (*Muzyka wielu narodów*). Its narrator, a Ukrainian music teacher from L'viv, explained that the students were playing multicultural pieces by Austrian composers of Jewish origin, a Danube waltz and peasant dances by another Austrian composer, a Russian folksong, and a Ukrainian song about Cossacks on the Danube. The music teacher himself finished the concert by playing piano motifs from the American musical *Fiddler on the Roof.*

The conference for teachers illustrates the way the new multicultural tradition is constructed in the Polish school curriculum. In this construction nations remain basic for defining cultures. This multiculturalism takes the form of either a multinationalism in which one nation (Polish) is, from a patriotic standpoint, superior to other, tolerated nations or a romanticized blend of the good old days of the upper classes and an idealized notion of the peasantry. The reference point of

this new multiculturalism is often the European Union and its policies of *wielokulturowość*.

In September 2003 the first Galician Multicultural Festival (Wielokulturowy Festiwal Galicja) was organized in Przemyśl. According to its mission statement, advertised on placards throughout the city, the festival was 'a sign of nostalgia for the past, for the people who made everyday culture, for the nations who inhabited this land for centuries'. As the organizers elaborated in one of the festival's leaflets:

> 'Our aim is to forge cultural links at the same time Europe is uniting … The aim of the festival is to inspire and create a growing interest in the cultures of national minorities … Enhancing and promoting regional culture, encouraging an attitude of tolerance between people – these are our chief objectives, the objectives of a uniting Europe.'

A Polish woman in her late forties, Ms. Krystyna, was an initiator and organizer of the festival. She had grown up in Przemyśl but had emigrated to London, where she established a foundation called Heritage (Dziedzictwo), which was the official organizer of the festival. She maintained homes in London and Warsaw and a farm near Przemyśl. She said she wanted to open provincial Przemyśl to high art and theatre and to offer regional cultural features such as folklore and cuisine to the outside world. In her view the festival was a combination of local patriotism and cosmopolitanism. She wanted to return to the 'good old culture' for which the city had been known before World War II and to help people learn about their tradition, history, and culture. She had heard from her late husband, a former resident of Przemyśl of Jewish origin, about the city's past – about the best cafes and the celebrations of Franz Josef's birthday, which was widely celebrated during the inter-war period but which she had been unable to observe herself, growing up in socialist Przemyśl.

Among the various activities of the festival was a concert presented on 4 September 2003 by a choir from Ukraine. Held in the Greek Catholic cathedral, it was called 'A Thousand Years of Ukrainian Sacred Music'. At the end of the concert the parish chaplain, described the artists and listeners as the 'Ukrainian family', formed out of the connections between Ukraine, the motherland, and Przemyśl Ukrainians. 'All routes from Ukraine to the west go through Przemyśl,' he said. The concert was well attended. Not only were local elites present, including the city mayor, but so were people from Ukraine's Ministry of Culture and some high-ranking diplomats. Some hours before the concert started, the ambassador of Slovakia visited the city, too. All the official guests signed

commemoration books, toured the chambers of the city council, and demonstrated their support for the high (national) culture presented at the festival.

Another part of the 2003 festival was the exhibition *Three Confessions – Two Religions* (*Trzy wyznania – Dwie religije*) in the National Museum of Przemyśl Land. It presented Judaism, Roman Catholicism, and eastern Christianity in three separate rooms, placing Greek Catholicism on the margins of the Orthodox room. The religions were represented through objects such as books, insignia, paintings, and liturgical garments. Parallel events were 'scientific sessions' about Galician history and culture provided by literary and art historians, other conferences, art exhibitions, concerts, theatre performances, film screenings, lectures, readings, and displays of handicrafts and regional cooking.

The most popular event for the local elites was a performance of Verdi's *Nabucco* by the L'viv Opera Company, held in the square of the Renaissance castle in Krasiczyn near the city. Although Przemyśl was already known for its 'high' culture – it was a centre for art, the seat of the oldest amateur theatre in Europe ('Fredreum', est. 1869), and a site for jazz festivals – some local intellectuals complained that few people bothered to attend these high-quality performances. A concert in the main square by the first orchestra of Israel, for example, attracted just a few locals. Some of my intellectual friends blamed their fellow ordinary citizens for a lack of good taste and for provincial ignorance.

Among other, more popular events reminiscent of the past were an open-air party called 'Švejk's Manoeuvres' (*Manewry Szwejkowskie*). The latter was an enactment of parts of the story 'The Fortunes of the Good Soldier Švejk in the World War', written by the Czech novelist Jaroslav Hašek. Dealing with a 'good soldier' in the Austrian Army, the story takes place partly in Galicia. Plans were also being made to erect a statue of Švejk in the city. For many locals this statue would be at least as attractive as the ones in nearby Sanok and in Humenné, Slovakia.

The Galician Multicultural Festival represented a fashionable revival of the good old days of Eastern Europe. A friend reminded me that this multiculturalism had come to Przemyśl from the bigger cities only four or five years earlier. It reveals an idealized past from before World War II. The narratives that underpin this past do not result simply from the new politicization of the public sphere in Eastern Europe since socialism but are also determined by traditional power relations in south-east Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. They are nurtured by minority rights policies, policies of multiculturalism as well as by tourism and the demands of the market, as presented on the case of ethnic rituals and in the representations of ethnic groups through 'exotic' (national) products that shall enhance marketing and consumption elsewhere in Europe. The celebration of diversity at the Kupaly Night ritual, the use of multicultural past at the seminar for

teachers, and the Galician Festival, however, first of all, reveal the blurring of the line between the multicultural and the multinational(ist) perspectives on human collectives.

Virtually all my Ukrainian informants appreciated the political side of the change from national animosities towards the celebration of ethnic diversity in Przemyśl, the presence of numerous Poles at the rituals such as Kupaly Night or festivals like Galica, and the city council's interest in co-organizing it. Most of them wanted to keep these events in Przemyśl and show their 'rich Ukrainian tradition' to a wider Polish audience. They believed that more consumers and tourists would attend the events in Przemyśl and that more politicians, who would be deciding on subsidies for national minorities, would notice them there. The public events such as Kupaly Night and Multicultural Festival Galicia in Przemyśl indicated not only the consolidation of Polish-Ukrainian relations but also the growing importance of the ethno-business and heritage industry. As a friend reminded me, people in the villages of south-east Poland nowadays thought differently from the way they used to: 'There is a lack of *tserkvy,* and it would be nice to have some more, to show them to tourists.' The commodification of tradition and ethnicity offered a means to achieve greater rural prosperity.

Multiculturalism in Central and Eastern Europe

Peripheral regions of Central and Eastern Europe intends to build its modern European future on tourism, for which a distinctive regional culture is particularly valuable. Increasing numbers of new members of the 'cultural intelligentsia' are being produced in high schools and universities in small towns across the East European countryside and these people will care about 'culture'. Many members of this new cultural intelligentsia will end up in tourism and heritage promotion and preservation.

According to the plans of scientific and research policy of the Slovak Republic for the period until 2015, there is among–twelve priorities one priority called 'Cultural and Artistic Heritage of Slovakia'.[9] The priority abstract explains the need for Slovak heritage in the following way:

> Globalisation in postmodern era challenged society with some fundamental questions that touch upon … the problems of national culture and the cultures of minorities, cultural heritage and other segments of culture, its preservation and development. European Union declared its aim to be unity in diversity. The challenge to research intensively and preserve, and where possible digitalize, artefacts of national culture and culture of minorities, being it the field of language and literature, fine art, architecture, music, folk culture and other fields of culture, is particularly important for all the nations of European Union. The aim of the research program is to show that national culture has been developed in European context and it belongs to this context. The contribution of Slovakia into European and world cultural heritage needs to be researched intensively and it needs to be promoted for the professional and consequently wider public in the world[10].

The quotation illustrates the understanding of culture and heritage in one of the EU new member state not only in the field of the ordinary members of intelligentsia in the peripheral towns like Przemyśl, however, it also shows the state cultural policies in the field of national heritage. Last but not least, the state also prioritizes particular 'scientific research' (!) that shall help to uncover and preserve the essential national heritage supposedly challenged by globalization. There is a special accent on cultural difference through nurturing exclusive, ethnically defined tradition without any reference to the way of what is national culture and tradition, how it works over time, and who defines it. National culture in these policies and discourses do not simply exist, but people have right to it. As the common cultural strategy for development of socially excluded Roma shows, some people (such as Roma) are even pushed to have right to their (national?) culture[11].

The significant part of the intelligentsia, writers, journalists, cultural workers, teachers, priests, and ethnic entrepreneurs, more or less consciously create and benefit from this state definition of culture, on which Chris Hann (2002) commented as relying on a conflation of culture, ethnicity, and identity. This is similar to what Elizabeth Rata (2003, 2005), inspired by Jonathan Friedman (1994) labelled neo-traditionalism. This neo-traditionalism fosters the politicization of national cultures and implies fundamentalist 'blood and soil' ideology despite its attempts at plurality. Studying a border region of the Austrian Burgenland, Andre Gingrich (2004) showed that although xenophobia and racism were vanishing from official political language, the emotional continuities of nationalism remained concealed behind the official discourse. Pamela Ballinger

[9] Approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic under no. 766/2007; see 'Návrh vecných priorít výskumu a vývoja Dlhodobého zámeru vednej a technickej politiky do roku 2015.' http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/8076FF9A1A3F6979C12573560042F489/$FILE/Zdroj.html , priority 6.1.8. 'Kultúrne a umelecké dedičstvo Slovenska', accessed in 5 November 2008.

[10] Translation by the author.

[11] For a frequent example of this essentialist use of culture in multiculturalism see the opening speech of the Deputy Prime Minister of SR, Dušan Čaplovič, a historian by profession, at the conference 'Interra 6-Interkulturalita a rómska národnostná menšina', held in Nitra in October 2008. http://caplovic.vlada.gov.sk/12493/prihovor-podpredsedu-vlady-sr-na-konferencii-interra-6--interkulturalita-a-romska-narodnostna-mensina-na-ukf-v-nitre.php, accessed in 4 November 2008.

(2004) discussed the Croatian regionalist movement in Istria, which, through a discourse of hybridity and purity, re-inscribed nationalist logic with an emphasis on autochthony, rootedness, and territory (see also Stolcke 1995). Recent effects of the return of nationalist and populist agenda into high levels of Central and Eastern European politics shows that this nationalist logic has wide consequences on majority/minority coexistence, despite quite frequent promotion on minorities and minority rights.

Considering the limited applicability of this minority talk and multiculturalism, one can see the potential for problems that might eventually develop as Central and Eastern Europe moves to what Ralph Grillo (1998: 16) conceptualized as a postmodern, post-industrial configuration of state and society. Thousands of migrants enter Central and Eastern Europe nowadays, but the countries are no longer the places of transit between Eastern and Western Europe as it was after the collapse of communism. The newcomers increasingly decide to settle down in 'European' Central and Eastern Europe and they will be difficult to fit into fixed cultures tied to post-peasant national cultures. Increasingly strict immigration policies, which are popular among post-peasant elites in Central and Eastern Europe, are so far the most visible signs of this development.

Conclusion

The revival of tradition in south-east Poland and Central and Eastern Europe is nurtured by Europe-wide and nation-state policies and discourses on 'culture' and national minorities, as well as by demands from the growing ethno-business and tourism sector. In the social setting of Eastern Europe that I defined as 'post-peasant' – i.e. the one based on rural social structures, ideologies, and narratives not exclusive common for the countryside, but the one often permeating into cities including East European capitals (see Buzalka 2007) – the dividing line between, on the one hand, the peaceful symbolism of the rural world and, on the other, the potential for that world to be marketized and mobilized destructively for nationalist purposes is fuzzier than might be expected by experts who promote simplistic policies of multiculturalism and heritage locked within 'national cultures'.

The common ground of this ethno-revivalist movement is a nationalist logic based on exclusive tradition, national heritage and bounded culture. The popularity of phrases like 'national mentality', 'preservation of national identity' or 'national heritage' are just the most frequent signs of this movement. As the state priorities of the new 'European' republics and the work of ethno-revivalists in Central and East European peripheries reveal, there is a long and potentially conflicting nationalist use of culture that is concealed behind the official discourses and policies of and on multiculturalism in which the upper classes dominate. This nationalist use of culture not only ignores the everyday ethnicity often independent of nationalist politics, but it mobilizes groups on the basis of sharing an ethnically defined culture. This mobilization sharpens the differences between minorities and majorities across the region despite the discourses on minority rights and multiculturalism enjoy relatively high policy priority.

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