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SCIENTIFIC METHODS OF REGIONALIZATION OF UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF SOCIAL TENSION¹

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Abstract: *One of the broadest methodological problems dealing with doing multi-faceted social and sociological research in different subject-matters of Ukrainian society on extrapolation of Ukraine territory-geographical division, namely the criteria of its regionalization, is under discussion in the article. Basic scientific definitions and approaches on the region identification are given in the article. Different research approaches on this problem and regionalization criteria are taken into consideration under national conditions of regional differentiation. The aim of the paper is to substantiate the best approach and region division criterion in Ukraine from the perspective of social tension study. Having analyzed a number of scientific approaches, we suggest the political – administrative regional division as the best one in social tension study.*

Keywords: *social tension, region, regionalization, methodology.*

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1. Formulation of the problem.

The current social tension in the focus of nowadays sociological science is the systematic phenomenon on which significantly impacts not only macroeconomic and macro social features of society, but its own and other factors, particularly, in the view of its natural climatic, settlement and historical compounds of Ukraine. Therefore, the logic of the research has led to the necessity of studying the regional aspects of social tension that occur – possibility to define special features of region's development and thus, the ambiguity of



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factors that mark social tension in the regions. The tension shows itself with the appearance of a particular situation within society (though, not in every region). It increases, decreases, changes. Accordingly, this study demands also the situational approach in the specificity of a certain region, during analysis of which it is necessary to consider historic, socio-cultural development of the defined region that reveals in quantitative procedures of the data analysis. That is how the substance of “accountancy of regional features” can be understood in measuring of the social tension of Ukraine that under certain circumstances may generate its growth. Exactly this includes adding the method of consideration of regional features to the investigative arsenal that composes the scientific problem of the present research.

2. Analysis of recent research and publications.

For sociological science, the problem of conceptual distinction of regions is relative for every particular course of study. Mainly this problem is related with the situation in Ukraine. Among the number of abroad and domestic researchers, regarding our study, the following developments are worthy of attention: A. Markusen (nature of regionalization), L. Oleh, Y. Zaprotsky (features of regionalization in Russia), Y. Kaplan (inter electoral factors of regionalization), E. Golovaha, N. Panina (regionalization of protests), L. Nagorna (regional identity in Ukraine), O. Vishnyak (political classification of Ukrainian regions), O. Stegny (regional factors of development of the political culture among Ukrainian population) and others.

3. Earlier unsolved items of a general problem.

The criterion and procedure of regionalization in Ukraine were and still are an open issue in dependency with a substance of its usage. In this particular case, basing on the analysis of existed visions, we are trying to highlight and explain the accepted technique of applying the regional factor in the investigation of the social tension in Ukraine that manifest problem setting and a goal of the study.

4. Main material exposition.

Correspondent analysis of the instruments of given research topic indicates that a problem factor is linked, from our perspective, with the weak explication of basic definitions, notably: “region”, “regionalization”, with the absence of precise theoretic models of a present phenomenon with unproven methodological approaches of tension measurement to Ukrainian reality. In particular, a region as a system influences on social tension. Therefore, its development and forms of its manifestation are influenced by the region. Causes of its increasing and tendency of its growth in different locations are not the same in stages of their progress. In fact, every region has its own origins, this or that dominant type of conflicts. Their diagnostics and further regulation are possible only with accountancy of the number of aspects that indicate nature, sources, and strategies of members’ conduct who are involved in the conflict interaction in the given geographical area. Ukrainian regions, which were formed during various historic periods composing different countries, have vivid distinctions between them speaking about the ethnic structure of the population, urbanization rate, etc. to these objective elements of contrasts, differences of sociomental character that are likely to deteriorate in conditions of the geographical ambiguity of the Ukrainian nation.

Making facts of the regional level that influence social tension available may refine the definition of “region.” Many disputes were held on clarification of this concept stressing either on the problem of defying spatial, administrative borders and positioning of regions to each other or on fixation of social differences. As a criterion for the procedure of “regionalization”

the investigators took the defined array of social and economic, socio-political, electoral, socio-cultural signs.

The problem of definition of the term region, its polysemantic is caused by complexity and possession of the multitude of aspects. In scientific researches, principles of severance or “notion” of a region are rather varied and are almost exhaustless. Mainly a region appears as only relative construction, matter of which is determined by the tasks that investigator sets for himself. Such kinds of research objects presume the systematic approach, which includes different aspects and levels of its analysis. There are not a few approaches for the definition of “region.”

Social sciences still cannot find the unique definition of the term “region”, therefore it is reasonable to provide several views on its comprehension. Features that characterize definition of “region” are complexity, unity, specialization, manageability, notably, the presence of political-administrative governing bodies. In sociological literature, a region is observed, firstly, as a space of a particular social structure, an organization of power and cultural traditions that give rise to sociologists to speak about spatially differentiated consolidation of people [1, p.94]. First of all, this is integral economic and territorial formation, which consists of smaller socio-economic subsystems. Foreign experience proves that spatial disproportions are presented nearly in every country. Moreover, the practice of countries that overcame the transformation of social systems reveals that increase of disproportion of social development is an objective process.

Synthesizing different approaches, for example, E. Markusen defines a region as “spatial community that historically evolves, which includes physical surrounding, socioeconomic, political and cultural environment, and also a dimensional structure that differs from other regions and territorial units like a city or a nation [2, p.7; 251]. As part of cultural direction, F. Brodel interpreted region as the unique “world” with the inherent mentality, a way of thinking, traditions, worldview, and sensation of the world. Similar to this is M. Lerner’s definition as the unity of people and places, natural conditions, ethnical groups, economy, history, the manner of thinking and lifestyle [3]. As to L. Oleh, a region is recognized as “self-sustaining social organism that exists in integrity with the environment and possesses physico-geographical, cultural and civilizational, political and administrative, legislative features and serves as mean of formation and function of the certain federation” [4, p.124].

Another researcher Y. Zaprodsky selects such regional peculiarities as climate, landscape, and natural resources that significantly impact on living conditions of the population; ethnic political, cultural and historical, religious, demographic and other descriptions that now have the meaning of objective factors of population’s vital activity, place of people’s existence and the basis of formation of durable traditions and behavioral rules; economical state, presence and qualification level of required force power, specificity of social structure, dynamics of social relationships, general level of education and culture of population [5, p.28].

Obviously, regional level is represented by a set of economic, social, political and institutional, cultural, confessional, ecological, demographical, historical, ethnical, legislative and other causes, each of which plays its role and contributes to the formation of originality of a region. Consequently, polysemantics of the term “region” can be seen, the meaning of which depends on the representation of a certain face of life. Definitions of I. Budge and K. Newton are worth of attention, according to which region is a territory that is a real community from the geographical point or such a spatial community where there are succession and population of which shares certain general values and aspires to preserve and develop own originality in order to stimulate cultural, economic and social progress” [6, p.124].

Therefore, the key indicators of concept “region” are certain territory that is geographically drawn from the whole territory of a country; the population that lives on this territory and has common features towards the rest of the population of this country. The

third indicator, according to various platforms, must be self-identification or self-awareness of presence of peculiarities in this group of people, which distinguish them from others. This indicator provides accountancy of priority of regional self-identification against the national one.

As can be seen, modern understanding of a “region” is oriented on its maximum complexity and unity, on total consideration of its components – natural, social, economic, political, from one hand, and on marking of its diversity and uniqueness from the other hand. This situation generates a number of methodological questions and issues: every component, every factor of regionalization has its own nature and own regularity regarding the spatial allocation.

It must be recognized that all levels of factors influence the interests and needs of the huge mass of people that form “core” or model of the region. Particular epicenters of people’s dissatisfaction always lay in its focus. Social tension occurs because of people’s awareness of their infringed rights and interests (first of all derivational paradigm). Here a significant role play the mass media, with the help of which political and communicational actors form some thought, spell out ideas regarding rights, interests of society. These may be conceptions of historical injustice towards deprived interests. However, the main cause of such actions serves, as a rule, economic interests. Moreover, socio-political tension is focused on the failure to address the basic people’s needs.

Regionalism is the multilevel category as well as the whole activity of society. Taxonomy of regions has not gained to date certainty in the economy of the domestic region. “Regions” are called groups of areas (Carpathian region, Donbas, etc.), areas (Odessa region and others), groups of administrative regions (Danubian region) and so on. Every country or society has its own peculiarities on this subject. Ukraine reveals not an exception, but precise and contrast regional differential nature. Though, Ukraine has its own features. It is considered that regional differences of Ukraine are much deeper than European countries and possess traits of civilizational character. Here, regional identities had formed earlier than country appeared and therefore there is domination of regional and local identities under nationwide and state identities. The multitude of complex investigations point, particularly, on the dichotomy of regional identities of West and East, especially on ideological, political, language levels were elements of social exclusion are revealed in interrelation. However, more essential is intersectionality of regional and political identities.

Among all comprehensive investigations and approaches the acceptable and effective in terms of validity, notably for the appliance of studying of social tension, became socio-political (electoral) approach for detection of regional peculiarities in Ukraine. The crucial conception for differentiation of socio-political electoral space became “regional identity.” Without immersing into an essence of different variations of its interpretations, it is possible to state that this is “the awareness of cultural, historical, ethnical, etc. separateness of population of a certain region” [7, p. 44]. The basic parameters of the regional identity in which expand discrepancy and polarity of interests and values, on the base of long-term investigative experience sociologists defined: the level of loyalty to governmental authority, foreign policy orientations; language priorities, confessional preferences; dominants of historical memory, proportion of “left-wing” or “right-wing” political attitudes [8, p.287-305]. Structurization of electoral space was carried out according to ideology: “right-wing” West and “left-wing” East, South and Centre of the country. Majority of researchers separates the political culture of the Right Bank and the Left Bank areas. Further structuring of electoral space was held basing on regional elites as barriers of regional identities that gave rise for scholars to claim about the genesis of a new axis of territorial differentiation of socio-political benefits – “westernized/pro-Russian” orientation. For now, aggregation and articulation of political interests of part of the society have occurred in atypical for representative

democracy way: “square-government” and not “government-opposition” that reveals a deep crisis of political system of the country and make premises for territorial distinction.

Therefore, the value basis of every Ukrainian region is its own socio-cultural code that can be observed as the concentration of natural and geographical, geopolitical, historical, cultural and other features. And its impact on socio-political preferences is rather determinant. Transference of postulates of electoral geographical theory on Ukrainian reality reveals that all mentioned factors to some degree have an effect. Consequently, indicated socio-political cycles reveal differentiation of socio-political benefits of Ukrainians according to the regional characteristic.

Basing on various investigations and corresponding scientific analysis of voters' electoral preferences, researchers by their own logic selected different regional structures according to quantity and inclusiveness of this or that area. Rather popular, in particular, is the division on four basic macro-regions. From the perspective of Y. Kaplan and S. Yanishevsky (National Institute of strategic research) – these are West, East, Centre and South [9]. L. Nagorna excretes Western, Central, Southeastern regions and Autonomous Republic of Crimea [10, 206]. Within the domestic media debate, regions are defined as oblasts. According to analysis that was made by O. Vishnyak five types of political regions were singled out in Ukraine: Donbas and Crimea (Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, AR of Crimea, city of Sevastopol); other southeastern oblasts (Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Kherson oblasts); transitional region of Northern East and Kirovograd region (Zhitomir, Kirovograd, Poltava, Sumy, Chernihiv oblasts); Central Ukraine (city of Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Kyiv, Khmelnytska, Cherkasy oblasts); Western Ukraine (Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopol, Chernivtsi oblasts) [11, p.336].

As we see the scientific procedure of regionalization of Ukrainian society itself is not generally accepted and has significant contradictions from time to time. In the system of allocation of Ukrainian regions, there are many (as we mentioned) “variables” that do not allow to single out these or those regions strictly, even not because of social causation but due to scientific and investigative interest and vectors of a particular science orientation. Analysis of specialized literature, research practice revealed that alternative solution of the given problem is widely implemented the practice of single-administrative (for every oblast) regionalization during early stages of investigation and analysis. This is justified for many types and variety of investigations, first of all for electoral, socio-political, socio-economy, socio-legislative so forth, which reveal administration as one of the developmental leverages of every region-oblast.

5. Conclusions and perspectives of further investigations of the given topic

As this issue has a number of sides, one, which defines the object of study as an instrument that helps to reveal the specificity of action of inner factors in different regions; possibilities to highlight the peculiarities of regions' development are laid in methodology and, therefore, the ambivalence of factors that determine ST within regions. Study of social tension requires the situational approach to features of a certain region, basing on which is essential to consider historical, socio-cultural development of the region in analyzing, and first of all take into account socio-economy, socio-political and other indicators of quantitative procedures of the data analysis. This is possible by using in terms of research practice of basic political investigation to apply the method of “social map”. Procedurally, this occurs in using of so-called social mapping (“social map”) of the region – spatial division of system of complex social rates (data): system of static indicators of multi-sectoral character that identify a separate region (oblast, region, city); demographic, socio-economy, socio-political and other characteristics of a certain region, its socio-cultural, historical and geopolitical (which is relevant for now) features and specificity of its development.

Author details (in Ukrainian)**НАУКОВІ ПІДХОДИ РЕГІОНАЛІЗАЦІЇ УКРАЇНИ У КОНТЕКСТІ СОЦІОЛОГІЧНОГО ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ НАПРУЖЕНОСТІ**

Євген Сірий

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Анотація.: У матеріалі висвітлюється одна із широких методологічних проблем у розгортанні різносторонніх соціальних та соціологічних досліджень у різних предметностей українського суспільства в екстраполяції територіально-географічного розподілу України – критерії її регіоналізації. В статті даються основні наукові визначення та підходи щодо розрізнення регіону. У розрізі вітчизняних умов регіональної диференційованості розглянуті різні дослідницькі підходи з цієї проблематики та критерії регіоналізації. Метою роботи є обґрунтування оптимального підходу та критерію регіонування в Україні в контексті дослідження соціальної напруженості. В аналізі низки наукових підходів, як оптимальним пропонується політико-адміністративний розподіл регіонів у дослідженні соціальної напруженості.

Ключові слова: соціальна напруженість, регіон, регіоналізація, методика.

Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at

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