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REASONS FOR EMERGENCE AND IDEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF THE IRREDENTIST POLICY

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Abstract

The article deals with the policy of irredentism, which is viewed as a state policy, aimed at joining the part of the territory of other states under the pretence of protection of the kin-groups from a perspective of rational approach. The author investigates the reasons for emergence of irredentism, emphasizes the decisive role of the “Great Idea”, which justifies the irredentist policy of the state, and draws attention to the influence of nationalism on the formation of the policy of irredentism. It gives a detailed analysis of the content of irredentist project of the Russian Federation because of which the annexation of the Ukrainian Crimea was carried out.

Key words

irredentism, the policy of irredentism, national minority, kin-state, “the Great Idea”, nationalism, “the Russian World”, the Crimea, the Donbass.

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1. Introduction

Political processes of the present time are characterized by more rapid pace, complexity and scale than in previous years. This is due to the formation of the information society, the complex interconnection of globalization and regionalization, the development of democracy. The tendency of politicization of ethnic groups is typical for the world; it is one of the consequences of globalization. Ethnopolitical processes largely determine the dynamic picture of the modern world; the nature of interaction between different ethnic groups is critical for these

processes. A distinctive type of interethnic relations is uniting irredentist movements of representatives of one ethnic group that are members of different states; this type of relationship goes beyond domestic and affects the interests of several states. Quite often, they cause interstate conflicts, which are characterized by duration, irrationality and difficulty in settling (Gokcek, 2010; Kim, 2016).

The problem is urgent due to the fact that irredentism creates difficulties for many modern states. Ukraine is no exception, while irredentism from a potential, to a certain extent latent problem, connected with the existence of pro-Russian sentiments

in Crimea and eastern regions of Ukraine, turned into a real threat to the territorial integrity of the state in the context of a nationwide political crisis in early 2014.

Taking into account the powerful influence of irredentism on domestic and foreign policy processes in the modern world, the question of the causes of irredentism, as well as the argumentation developed by irredentist states deserves the attention of scholars. The article proposes to distinguish between irredentism as a form of separatism initiated by national minorities and the policy of irredentism as a course of a kin-state.

The analysis of this problem will be more productive from the perspective of a rational approach, which focuses on investigation of the actions of political actors as those seeking to achieve maximum results. C. Offe (Оффе, 1996) emphasizes that for individual and collective actors the participation in ethnopolitics becomes a «rational» act when they are guided by economic, political or military rational considerations. The rational factor in ethnopolitical conflicts is more closely linked to the actions of political leaders and elites who use the potential of an ethnic group to achieve their own or collective goals, most often – to increase the political, socio-economic or territorial status of the group.

2. Approaches to the definition of the essence of irredentism

The story of irredentism originates in the second half of the 19th century, when a nationalist movement which emerged in Italy, demanded to introduce as a part of the state “*terre irredente*” (“unredeemed land”), in other words – neighbouring territories of other states where Italian-speaking population formed a majority. Since then irredentism has begun to acquire features of expansionism. The variety of forms of its manifestation in different historical periods and among different nations resulted in the absence of a single conventional definition that would satisfy the entire scientific community. In addition, there are many other forms of ethnopolitical behaviour that have some common features with irredentism. This issue causes scientists to equate them (irredentism and unionism, irredentism and pan-nationalism).

Scientific works propose different views on the essence of irredentism, which is considered not only as an ideology that justifies unifying movements, but also as the unifying movements of ethnic groups (Акляев, 2005), a political course of the state (Євтух, 2012) or even the type of ethnopolitical conflict

(Gokcek, 2010). The definitions of irredentist always use the criterion of *purpose*, which is the unification of groups of separated people, but the differences in the various definitions are due to the problem whom the researchers themselves consider as subjects of the unifying strategy, while the status of *participants* in the movement may differ. The variant of unifying when one part of the separated people has already created its own state (“kin-state”), while the other lives compactly on the adjacent territory of the neighbouring state (minority-irredenta) is the most common. D. Yagcioglu (1996) connects irredentism only with the fact of the existence of tense relations between the national minority in the state and the dominant ethno-cultural group. This situation leads to the interference of another neighbouring state, because «the ethnic group that happens to be the minority in the country where the conflict is taking place, is the majority in the country that decides to get involved». The purpose of the neighbouring country is more radical than protecting the rights and interests of minority, and consists in the «liberation» of the minority and the territory in which it lives.

However, irredentism quite often is viewed as all the cases of unifying that involves ethnic groups with different status – both nationalised and ungoverned, they seek to reunite within a single state formation. D. Horowitz (1991) defines irredentism both an attempt to detach land and people of one state in order to incorporate them in another, and as an attempt to detach land and people divided among more than one state in order to incorporate them in a single new state. M. Saideman and V. Ayres (2000) believe that the desire of ethnic groups to join their «ungoverned» relatives in order to form a new state is also irredentist and calls it a “Kurdish-style” irredentism. Moreover, the Kurdish precedent is not the only one, because there is an idea of creating the Tibetan state, which should unite the territories of several provinces of the People’s Republic of China, Nepal and Bhutan.

Many scholars (Kornprobst, 2008; Landau, 1991; Mayall, 1990; Євтух, 2012) associate irredentism with the actions of institutional actors – states, socio-political movements or parties. In «Legal Encyclopedia» (Юридична енциклопедія, 1999), irredentism is defined as a type of the national policy of the state (as well as political movement or party) aimed at uniting the people and ethnic groups scattered around the world and as a demand for the return of previously lost territories of a particular state in order to unite them within the borders of another state. From the point of view of a rational approach, the phenomenon under investigation should be interpreted

precisely as a «policy of irredentism», that is, a purposeful course to unite within one state such groups that are considered to be related by ethnocultural or other characteristics. The policy of irredentism is usually carried out under the slogans of protecting ethnic relatives who suffer distress in the country of residence. It is important to emphasize that by the subjects of irredentist policy such unification is considered to be possible only along with the territory in which the kin-groups live. That is why the annexation of the territory acts as the most radical instrument for implementing the policy of irredentism.

3. Premises and causes of irredentism

Irredentism as a political phenomenon has objective causes for the emergence and development. It is associated with the existence of separated people as an irrefutable historical fact. A. Semchenkov and R. Barash (Семченко, Бараш, 2009) rightly point out that from the historical point of view the phenomenon of separated people is not uncommon. On the contrary, the complete correspondence of administrative and state boundaries to ethnocultural areas occurs rarely. However, such a problem of separation did not exist for a long time; it arose only in the 19th century during the intensification of national liberation struggles and the growth of the level of national consciousness.

Historical premises for the formation of irredentism are connected with the change of state borders due to areal conquests, the emergence or disintegration of states and territorial divisions as a result of signing international treaties. This led to the fact that representatives of one ethnic group became residents of different states. The most extensive «re-designing» of the political space in Eastern Europe took place after the First World War, when many new states arose as a result of the collapse of the empires and due to imperfect delimitation of borders the problem of minorities intensified; and after the end of cold war, collapse of the countries of the socialist camp, namely the USSR and Yugoslavia.

The compact near-border localization of groups of separated people determines their territorial proximity, and therefore irredentist intentions live on the memory of the common historical past and historical ties with the «great fatherland». Cultural factors such as language and religion also play an important role in the irredentist strategy of minorities and kin-states.

From the standpoint of organicism, ethnicity can be regarded as a peculiar social organism endowed with collective memory and will, so the

characteristics that unite ethnic members into one community do not disappear under the conditions of separation. A common identity is quite stable and difficult to transform. By its nature, it is a group (collective) identity, and, accordingly, in certain circumstances it can stipulate the attraction to the unification of the ethnic group not only mentally, but virtually – in the physical space. Ethnic and territorial factors are closely intertwined within irredentism. The idea of the localization of one's ethnos in space and possession of a certain territory for representatives of the ethnic group is no less important than the realization of its natural cognation. According to R. Barash (Бараш, 2010a), the division of territory and ethnic group living on it is emotionally perceived as a violation of a given historical order. That is why irredentist assumes not only the unification of the population, but also the territory of its residence, because if the territorial factor were insignificant, the problem of separation would be entirely solved by migration.

According to the author, the fact of the separation of people is not itself an immediate condition for the emergence of irredentism, but it is actualized in the process of relations between polyethnic states and minorities within them regarding the status of the group, the accession to power, the volume of authority, and also depends on strategic interests of kin-minorities of the neighbouring states. In scientific literature, irredentism is traditionally described as a triad, represented by and an irredenta – a national minority within a polyethnic state, which seeks to be part of a neighbouring state on the basis of kinship; an irredentist state («a kin-state»); a multi-ethnic state, from which a national minority tries to detach itself.

A national minority within a polyethnic state may form irredentist sentiment as a result of dissatisfaction with its political, economic or cultural status, when it feels a certain distance between itself and the rest of the population, which is the result of ignoring the interests of this minority. The irredentist sentiment arises on the ground of a conflict of identities when ethnic identity dominates civic.

The polyethnic state, which has the minority-irredenta, experience a threat to its internal political stability due to the strengthening of irredentist sentiments. If the authorities want to avoid an escalation of interethnic conflicts, it should pursue an effective ethnonational policy. The consideration of the ethnonational factor in the domestic policy of the state is an important factor in the legitimacy of state power. In addition, the type of political regime itself influences the possibility of the emergence of irredentist. It would seem that democracy does not

allow the emergence of irredentist sentiments, but their emergence is quite possible under the conditions of liberal regimes, because they proclaim freedom of choice and speech, so the political leaders who declare irredentist slogans take advantage of it.

A kin-state is a neighboring state in which the ethnos, which has formed irredentist aspirations, as a rule, quantitatively dominates. This state can support ethnic relatives differently, ranging from cultural cooperation and ending with the formation of a course to the adherence of ethnic groups along with the territories of their residence as a part of a state. Attracting various resources to achieve the goal, including informational and military, can transform irredentism into a serious clear threat to the integrity of the polyethnic state.

In addition to objective factors, irredentism is fuelled by subjective reasons, because politicians who pursue rational goals in their activities and declare the need for the return of ethnic relatives to the state actively articulate the problem of separation. Irredentists often appeal to the right of people to self-determination, which they attribute to ethnic groups. Relevant rhetoric always finds sympathizers.

The combination of a set of objective and subjective factors can be observed in all cases of irredentism, ranging from Italian irredentism or Greek enosis. Under the slogans of irredentism, the German lands were united in the 19th century and later, in order to achieve national reunification, the acquisition of a territory of other states took place – the German annexation of the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia under the Munich Treaty and the Austrian Anschluss in 1938.

These are textbook examples of the implementation of irredentist policy, but irredentism was formed in other people of Europe as well. It is known that irredentism also existed in Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Lithuania, but it did not originate in other European countries – France, Great Britain, Spain, Benelux countries. R. Barash (Бараш, 2010b) explains this by the fact that in countries where irredentism originated, the establishment of a centralized state was late – either because of a long confrontation with its neighbours, or due to the existence once within a multiethnic state, where ethnic identity prevailed over civic.

4. The role of ethnic ideology in the conceptual substantiation of the policy of irredentism

For an ethnopolitical mobilization of groups of separated people in support of the irredentist course,

a kin-state develops an ethnic ideology – a set of doctrines, concepts and programs that interpret the history of the ethnic group, its mental characteristics, indicate the prospects for the development of the given ethnic group in a necessary way.

The emergence of irredentist as a strategy and political movement becomes possible on the basis of nationalism as a collective idea. According to E. Gellner (Гелнер, 2010), nationalism is, first and foremost, the political principle according to which political and national units must coincide. This is the very principle that correlates with the unifying strategy of the separated people. Irredentism is one of the practical embodiments of nationalism and activity based on his ideas, since the desire and movement for the unification of the «separated» people is best suited to the idea of social integration offered by nationalism. Irredentism as one of the ways of self-determination of an ethnic group develops as part of ethnic nationalism, which involves the unification of the people based on common history, language, culture.

The nationalist idea provides a powerful potential to all participants of the irredentist triangle. It is worth mentioning R. Brubaker (Брюбейкер, 2006), who identified three modern forms of nationalism that together form the «triadic nexus»: «nationalizing» nationalism of newly independent or newly reconfigured states, transborder nationalism, carried out by an external national homeland, and nationalism of national minorities. These nationalisms interact and conflict, cause civil and interstate conflicts.

An integral part of the ethnic ideology of irredentists is the “Great Idea”, which should be understood as a set of representations of the historical mission of the people and the priority tasks that the nation faces in the process of national construction functioning in the public consciousness. In the process of formation of the idea an important part plays both objective (including historical memory), and subjective (associated with the efforts of politicians and scholars) factors. The “Great Idea” uniquely combines the past and the future: the image of an ideal state tends to be in the past, which is idealized as the “golden age”, the period of political, economic and cultural prosperity of the people; it becomes the basis for the formation of the idea of desired future.

The positive attitude of the population towards irredentist slogans is facilitated by the ruling groups’ policy of actualization historical memory. For the separated people, the phenomenon of divided ethnic memory is typical, which is realized in several ethnic fields formed as a result of the division of the ethnic community and the presence of its parts in various ethnopolitical organisms (Єврых, 2012).

However, representatives of one nation, despite the separation, preserve some common images and representations in historical memory. Appealing to the historical past is a very effective means of influencing individuals and can strengthen their collective solidarity. The policy of memory is extremely important for legitimizing the foreign policy of the state.

A distinctive feature for the coverage of the historical past of the ethnic group in the ethnic ideology is its mythologization. National myths have a positive impact and show the ancient history of the ethnic group and the continuity of the traditions of statebuilding.

What actually happens is that the calls for the protection of kin-groups may mask the true motives of the irredentists to increase the influence of the state in the region. That is why the idea of "great power" can dominate in the irredentist ideology. The idea is to restore control over the territories that were previously part of a large state formation. All the doctrines of the "great power" emphasize the importance of the territorial factor in the national liberation movement, which confirms the high territorial status of the people. However, in ethnopolitical interstate conflicts it is difficult to find a way to meet such a requirement as the return of the original territories, because this "primordality" can always be challenged, namely, the question of the primacy of ownership of the territory is quite manipulative.

The "great ideas" arose in the 19th century – at the beginning of the 20th century among many European nations, mostly those who have experienced a long period of separation, and still remain relevant and nourish the irredentist policies of many states. Perhaps the most famous is the Greek Megali Idea, which is still relevant to the Greeks. The ideas of a "great power" are widespread in Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, and Hungary. While borders between states are considered inviolable according to international norms, the "Great Idea" exists to a greater extent in a latent form, due to the fact that it is a call to the revision of state borders, that is, an offence against sovereignty of a neighbouring state. It is presented mainly in the programs of radical nationalist political parties.

In general, the "Great Idea" played and plays an extremely important part in the implementation of the policy of irredentism, stimulating the state to apply various means for the accession of territories recognized as "unredeemed". However, irredentism, despite a powerful ideological background, rarely reaches the goal, because it encounters considerable resistance. History shows that conflicts and war with the irredentist component could not be avoided, especially in the countries that arose after the collapse

of Yugoslavia, where several "great ideas" collided, in particular, political projects on the revival of "Great Serbia" and "Great Croatia". Nowadays Ukraine and Russia are in the long-standing military confrontation with the irredentist component.

5. Russian irredentism in Ukraine

Ukraine is a polyethnic state and has representatives of more than 130 nationalities and nationalities. Some of them live compactly near the borders of their historic homelands – kin-states, and it is possible that irredentist sentiments will arise in those regions. This is exactly the case with regions adjacent to the Russian Federation – the Crimea and the Donbass. The quantitative prevalence of Russians is characteristic only for the Crimea, where in 2001 the share of Russians among all inhabitants of the republic was 58.3%; in the Donbass their share in the ethnic composition of the population of the region was smaller and amounted to 38.2% in the Donetsk region and 39% in Lugansk (Про кількість..., 2001). Russian politicians were showing interest in these regions for a long time, trying to fit them into the context of the "Russian World". Back in 1999 in the Russian Federation adopted "Federal Law of the Russian Federation about state policy of the Russian Federation concerning compatriots abroad» (Федеральный закон..., 1999). With the help of informational influence on the ethnic Russian and pro-Russian population of the Crimea and the Donbass, the idea of "historical injustice" of the inclusion of these regions into Ukraine and the desire to "reunite with the historical homeland" was quite active. The realization of Russian irredentism led to the annexation of the Ukrainian Crimea.

At the end of 2013 – beginning of 2014, the Revolution of Dignity took place in Ukraine, leading to the fall of V. Yanukovich's regime. Separatist movements in the Crimea and the Donbass intensified immediately and developed under the Russian scenario. Even during the period of revolutionary events, the state leadership of the Russian Federation used a complicated political situation in Ukraine in order to prepare the annexation of the Crimea. With the support of the Russian authorities and under the control of the Russian military, a so-called "referendum" on the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea was held in Crimea on March 16, 2014, which resulted in the illegal annexion of this region into Russia. The UN General Assembly recognized the illegitimacy of the referendum. Resolution 68/262 (2014) states that the referendum held in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city

of Sevastopol on 16 March 2014, having no validity, cannot form the basis for any alteration of the their status (Резолюция, принятая Генеральной Ассамблеей 27 марта 2014 года, 2014).

At the same time, separatists in the Donbass became more active, which led to the formation of terrorist organizations «DNR» and «LNR», which have been receiving significant support in military and armor by the Russian authorities for a long time already. In this regard, in early 2015, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine recognized the Russian Federation as an aggressor state (Постанова Верховної Ради України, 2015b, p. 68), and the DPR and LNR as terrorist organizations (Постанова Верховної Ради України, 2015a, p. 77).

Nevertheless, if in the Crimean version of separatism the irredentist goal was obvious, for the Donbas separatists it is quite vague, more like a remote and amorphous perspective. It seems that the highest Russian politicum is not interested in annexion of this region to the Russian Federation. Russia's support of separatists in the Donbass is a means of dismantlement of the situation in Ukraine.

It is obvious that in the foreign policy of Russia the irredentists' slogans mask expansionist policies aimed at the restoration of a «great power». On this occasion Z. Brzezinski (Бжезинський, 2014) noted that «the Ukrainian crisis is not a result of some kind of sudden quarrel, ...but a symptom of a more serious problem: the appearance of a policy packed within a larger philosophical concept».

The Russian "great idea" exists in the form of an extensive concept of the "Russian World" which synthesizes many elements, among which is not only the great-power idea of the revival of the Empire as "Third Rome" but also a special civilization mission of the Russian people in confrontation with Western influence. This concept, along with the popular slogans of the "Russian people as separated", "protecting compatriots abroad", "the Great Russian House" forms the basis for the expansionist irredentist policies of Russian government.

The Russia's foreign policy has become imperial in nature and is actually aimed at the reconstruction of the image of a mighty state, which was the Russian Empire, and later – the USSR. In our opinion, the importance of the very imperial idea in the policy of irredentism proves the situation in the Crimea and the Donbass. A large part of the population of these regions accepted the so-called "Soviet identity" for a long time. After the collapse of the USSR, a part of the population could not get used to the new conditions and was nostalgic about the lost state. This proves the presence of a pro-Soviet identity rather than pro-Russian. It also explains the relatively low

level of support for the pro-Russian forces in the Crimea at the local elections in 2010 (Притула, 2011). But already in 2014, according to the results of the pseudo-referendum, the Crimea was annexed by Russia. Of course, voting at gunpoint and falsifications could not provide another result, but all of these ultimately proves that irredentism as an integral part of the foreign policy of the state is, in fact, a technology that, in order to achieve the desired result, involves the use of any manipulations.

The interference of Russia in the affairs of other states is due to the militaristic ideology as a component of the idea of the «Russian world». For example, Russia's intervention in the affairs of Syria is a continuation of its aggressive foreign policy; it looks like a revenge for the USSR's defeat in the Cold War, and, consequently, indicates a continuation of the great imperial course.

The irredentist policy of the Russian Federation regarding the Crimea is a flagrant violation of the norms of international law. Annexion of the Crimea to Russia contradicts the norms of Ukrainian legislation (for example, illegal All-Crimean referendum due to the lack of legislative basis for its securing) and international law (violation of the territorial integrity of the state, the use of force). The Russian Federation has violated the international borders of Ukraine and is currently committing oppression of the rights of the indigenous Crimean Tatar population (Очередные притеснения крымских татар..., 2017). In December 2016, the UN General Assembly recognized the human rights abuse of the inhabitants of the temporarily occupied Crimea by the Russian occupation authorities (Резолюция, принятая Генеральной Ассамблеей 19 декабря 2016 года, 2016). It was then that Russia was named an invading state for the first time in the United Nations documents. The world does not recognize the Crimea as a part of the Russian Federation and applies sanctions against Russia, but radical nationalist forces in different countries see this as a precedent that is favourable to them.

6. Conclusion

Thus, irredentism is a political phenomenon, the emergence of which can be explained by a whole set of reasons, both objective and subjective. In the nature of irredentism both centrifugal and centripetal tendencies are manifested simultaneously. Centric tendencies are evident in the fact that irredentism contributes to the unification of the separated people within the boundaries of one state. The centrifugal tendencies are shown in the desire of the

national minority to withdraw from the multiethnic state, which allows us to interpret irredentism as a type of separatism. The attitude towards irredentism is also controversial: irredentism can be evaluated quite positively from the point of view of the realization of the right of the ethnic group to self-determination, but it is considered negatively from the standpoint of maintaining the integrity of the borders of the state in which the irredenta resides.

The systematic registration of irredentist demands is due to ethnic ideology, the core of which is the "Great Idea", which justifies the special historical mission of the people. The unification of groups of separated people is recognized as one of the priority tasks. In fact, the current policy of irredentism has the nature of expansionism and seeks to revive a "great power." A striking example is Russia's policy regarding the border areas of Ukraine. The world community should develop a coordinated position so that Russian irredentism, guided by the idea of spreading the «Russian World», has not become a dangerous precedent.

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