ISSN1857-047X

December 2013 Volume V Number 1-2(9-10)

Interstitio

EAST EUROPEAN REVIEW OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

INTERSTITIO Volume V Number 1-2 (9-10) December 2013

EDITORIAL BOARD:
Editors, Virgiliu Birladeanu, Tomasz Pawelec
Editorial Assistants, Alina Felea, Gabriela Popa

CORRESPONDING EDITORS:

Ulf Brunnbauer (Germany)
Jennifer R. Cash (UK)
Ludmila D. Cojocaru (R.Moldova)
Andrey V. Dakhin (Russia)
Rozita Dimova (Germany)
Andrei Esanu (R.Moldova)
Maciej Kucharski (Poland)
Irina Livezeanu (USA)
Andi Mihalache (Romania)
Paul E. Michelson (USA)
Marius Rotar (Romania)
François Ruegg (Switzerland)
Pavel Tereshkovich (R.Belarus)
Lilia Zabolotnaia (R.Moldova)

ADVISORY EDITORS:
Ryszard Kaczmarek
Anatol Petrencu
Judith Rasson
Marsha Siefert

Interstitio. East European Review of Historical and Cultural Anthropology is a scholarly periodical published by Institute of Social History "ProMemoria", Moldova State University in cooperation with the Institute of History, Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.

This volume was published with the financial assistance
of the Foundation Konrad Adenauer

© 2013 Institute of Social History "ProMemoria"

The Editors, INTERSTITIO. East European Review of Historical
and Cultural Anthropology

Rethinking History Center, Institute of Social History "ProMemoria"
Moldova State University
bd. Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt 133, of. 33,
MD-2004, Chişinău,
Republica Moldova

E-mail: rethinkinghistorycenter@yahoo.com

The Editorial Board welcomes substantive articles on Eastern Europe from
the perspective of Historical and Cultural Anthropology.
Languages of publication: English, Polish, Romanian, Russian.

The orthographic system specific to each author/article was maintained.
Proofreading is the author's responsibility.

ISSN 1857-047X

December 2013 Volume V Number 1-2 (9-10)

Interstitio

East European Review of Historical and Cultural Anthropology

INTERSTITIO
East European Review of Historical and Cultural Anthropology

December 2013 | **Volume V** | **Number 1-2 (9-10)**

Special issue: Time, Space and Agency in (Post)Socialist Festive Culture

Guest editors: Ludmila D. Cojocaru & Jennifer R. Cash

Contents/ Spis Treści/ Sumar:

Studies/ Studia/ Studii

APPROACHING FESTIVE CULTURE AFTER SOCIALISM: HISTORICAL RUPTURES, CONTINUITIES OF MEMORY
Ludmila D. Cojocaru
(Chişinău, Republic of Moldova)
Jennifer R. Cash
(Halle/Saale, Germany)..5

EUPHORY AND PROPAGANDA: THE CELEBRATION OF GHEORGHE GHEORGHIU-DEJ'S FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY
Alexandra Toader
(Iaşi, Romania)..16

TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE RITUAL CYCLE IN POST-SOCIALIST MOLDOVA
Jennifer R. Cash
(Halle/Saale, Germany)..30

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, OFFICIAL COMMEMORATIONS, AND THE STATE CALENDAR IN UKRAINE, 1991-2012
Alexandr Osipian
(Kramatorsk, Ukraine) 51

NEGOTIATING MEMORY, POWER AND ISLAM:
FESTIVITIES COMMEMORATING HISTORICAL FIGURES AND EVENTS IN KAZAKHSTAN
Toko Fujimoto
(Osaka, Japan) 74

SACRED MISSIONS AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES: MODERNIST TELEOLOGY AND PERSONHOOD IN SIBERIAN RELIGIOUS REVIVALISM
(THE CASE OF YSYAKH SUMMER FESTIVAL)
Eleanor Peers
(Halle/Saale, Germany)..92

FESTIVALUL "MĂRŢIŞOR" ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA:
PROIECŢII PERFORMATIVE ALE RENAŞTERII NAŢIONALE
Ludmila D. Cojocaru
(Chişinău, Republic of Moldova) *112*

Photo Essay / Photo Esej / Foto Eseu

LENIN, THE MOLDOVAN COMMUNISTS AND PIONEERS,
OR NOSTALGIA FOR THE SOVIET PAST IN FIFTEEN IMAGES (2005-2013)
Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu
(Chişinău, Republic of Moldova) *125*

Book Reviews/ Recenzje/ Recenzii

LAURA ADAMS. 2010. THE SPECTACULAR STATE: CULTURE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN UZBEKISTAN. DURHAM: DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS, IX, 242 PP.
Michael Bobick
(Pittsburgh, USA) *137*

GERALD W. CREED. 2011. MASQUERADE AND POSTSOCIALISM: RITUAL AND CULTURAL DISPOSSESSION IN BULGARIA (NEW ANTHROPOLOGIES OF EUROPE). BLOOMINGTON & INDIANAPOLIS: INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS, XI, 272 PP.
Rozita Dimova
(Gent, Belgium) *139*

PERFORMAREA IDENTITĂŢII CULTURALE ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA, ÎNTRE FOLCLOR ŞI NAŢIONALISM
(Jennifer R. Cash. 2011. *Villages on Stage: Folklore and Nationalism in the Republic of Moldova,* Berlin: LIT Verlag, xi, 212 pp.)
Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu
(Chişinău, Republic of Moldova) *141*

O ISTORIE CULTURALĂ A REGIMULUI SOVIETIC, LA PERIFERIILE DE EST ALE URSS
(Ali F. Iğmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012, XI, 240 pp.)
Ludmila D. Cojocaru
(Chişinău, Republic of Moldova) *144*

CONTRIBUTORS.. *147*

Studies / Studia / Studii

APPROACHING FESTIVE CULTURE AFTER SOCIALISM: HISTORICAL RUPTURES, CONTINUITIES OF MEMORY

Ludmila D. Cojocaru
Chişinău, Republic of Moldova

Jennifer R. Cash
Halle/Saale, Germany

Abstract. The post-1989 period came with new regimes of memory and contested genealogies of identity. Suppressed memories and marginalised identities of the previous system gained the public space to reclaim acknowledgement. The festive culture was the most often reclaimed public context where individuals and communities were able to renegotiate allegiances and meanings. Active performances and the performative dimension were used as a medium in which cultural identity was not only expressed, but also enacted. The authors argue that the festive culture in the ex-socialist countries represents a mixture of the legacy of socialist celebrations, holidays introduced slightly before or after 1989-1991, and religious revivals in the form of both pagan/ancestral and Church festivities. Many of the festive forms assert the re-invigoration of the pre-socialist national identity of the new regimes.

Trough this edited volume – *published with the financial assistance of Konrad Adenauer Foundation at Chişinău* – we aim to offer the reader a comparative approach to the transformation of festive culture from the socialist period till recent times. The investigations concern the actors and agencies, stage settings, festive practices, and negotiation of new and old meanings in public celebrations; the contributors consider how celebrations offered space and created time for resistance, loyalty or escape; how they served as frames for hope, solidarity and remembrance; how socialist performances changed people's views of their own pasts and identities; and how the propagandistic traits of festive culture have been revived, forgotten or marginalised since 1991.

Key-words: festive culture, performativity, political rituals, commemorations, Eastern Europe

Cuvinte-cheie: cultura festivă, performativitate, ritualuri politice, comemorări, Europa de est

Festive Culture under Socialism

As historical studies suggest, new regimes (and especially those that come to power after revolutions) have often used mass celebrations and festive culture to craft new collective identities and to gain legitimacy (Ozouf 1988; Corbin et. al. 1994; Watson 1994). The Soviet Union and the socialist states of Eastern Europe were no exception to this general observation. The socialist regimes mobilised citizens in the construction of socialist modernity through performative techniques of management. Among other techniques, festive culture was used in official efforts to re-structure history, memory, and identity. During the first decades of the construction of Soviet socialism, celebrations were meant "to bring cultural and social enlightenment to the population" (Petrone 2000: 15) and "to temporarily empower the participants by drawing them into the network of Soviet existence" (Chatterjee 2002: 3-4). The "revival of traditions" from the late 1950s onwards, characterised by successive efforts to provide happiness and leisure for Soviet citizens (Binns 1979; Lane 1981; Baiburin and Piir 2009) was followed by the festive abundance of the Brezhnev-era. In spite of economic and political stagnation during the 1970s-1980s, festive culture was vibrant and marked by significant transformation (Kelly and Sirotinina 2010). The impressive extension of this period's official calendar proved the large interest of totalitarian states to public celebrations and commemorative practices.

Less sustained attention has been devoted to festive culture as a topic of historiographic interest in the other socialist states, but the official calendar and state-sponsored festivals and celebrations across the Bloc also attempted to build socialism, responding in the process to popular demands for the continuity, reinvigoration, or introduction of both old and new festive forms (e.g. Roth 1990; Kürti 1991). Socialist Romania was perhaps the most visible case in which state power aimed "less to persuade than to immobilise the citizens' brains possessed by ritual rather than by faith" (Gluckmann 1985: 62). During Ceauşescu's rule, the official cultural apparatus elaborated a national-level mechanism to control the ordinary people through entertainment in the form of the festival "Song to Romania". Held annually, all amateur performance groups were required to participate in this competitive festival. The result was not just the elaboration of a highly staged, controlled, and censured form of folklore that was broadcast to Romania's citizens as their own "culture". It also meant that, "there exist no clubs or Houses of Culture where people can practice folk dancing or singing just for fun. Each of them must enter the competition and thus be subject of control" (Giurchescu 1987: 166).

The challenges of history, memory, and identity to the aims of official culture differed in each country. In socialist Bulgaria of the 1970s, for example, the government intensified its efforts in "cultural management" by introducing various kinds of "socialist" rituals, expanding from life-cycle rituals to national celebrations, "to replace the personality cult and (instill) new mechanisms to legitimize their power, to instill socialist values in the population, and to fight the influence of the Church" (Roth 1990: 8). The different approaches to official culture might be hypothesized as relating to localized norms about the

degree to which the state met or created popular interests. In East Germany, for example, Tompkins has asserted that even though the "cultural officials proved opened to the input of composers and audiences [they] worked hard to maintain ideological influence over [music] festivals" (Tompkins 2013: 35). In Poland, music festivals also slipped from party control during the post-Stalinist thaw, affording composers and audience chances to escape from Stalinist ideology and to forge their own cultural agency (Tompkins 2013: 28). In the case of Yugoslav socialism, already recognized by scholars as "exceptional" and "famous for its contradictions" (Ramet 1999: 90), the cultural policy and politics of festive culture were also unique. For instance, even in Slovenia's immediate post-war period, dominant discourses heavily critiqued the possibility of evaluating culture on the basis of socio-political criteria and the strong state-party cultural policy model was sidelined (Hofman 2011). Indeed, the presence of a vibrant "market" in styles of folkloric music and performance, among other artistic genres, is the image produced by most scholarship on Yugoslav festive culture (March 1980; Hofman 2011).

The performative dimension of political rhetoric also varied according to the nearby presence of other (competitive) regimes of memory. Within the Soviet Union, the Central Asian republics and Siberian peoples were under particular pressure to perform their "development" to European levels; thus the discourse of nationalities policies was equated with the artistic discourses of festive culture (Iğmen 2011: 7). On the western borders of the Soviet Union, republics were demanded to perform party loyalty, social cohesion, and Soviet prosperity not only at the domestic level (within of the republic and to other Soviet audiences), but also in front of "Others" from across the Soviet border (Čiubrinskas 2010; Cash 2011a; Cojocaru and Dimova 2013). The cultural policies of other socialist states similarly adjusted to the political demands of nearby states (Kürti 1991).

Much of the existing scholarship on festive culture under socialism has concerned the complex relationship between official politics and ordinary people. In short, the study of festive culture has been motivated by the precepts of totalitarianism. From this perspective, studies can be classified as those which conclude that socialist cultural events were largely "artificial", "falsified" and "unnatural" forms of cultural presentation which differed very much from "real life" (e.g. Kaneff 2004: 141); or as those which highlight the agency of culture workers in creating forms of socialist culture that they themselves found acceptable (if not desirable) at various points in time (e.g. Cash 2011b; Iğmen 2011; Slezkine 1994). The frameworks of official culture and celebration also allowed the development of explicitly ethno-national identities that were often not compatible with socialist values (Čiubrinskas 2010; Adams 2010). While public discourse across the Bloc in the early years of post-socialism emphasized the disjuncture between official and real life (noted, e.g. by Kaneff 2004), sustained scholarly attention in the 2000s generally supports the perspective that socialist cultural events themselves "challenge[d] the tendency to categorize and produce a fixed, static concept and interpretation of socialist official culture" (Hofman 2011: 239).

About Continuities and Ruptures

If the discourse about socialist festive culture has been framed within the dominant paradigm of totalitarianism, the questions that would motivate the study of post-socialist festive culture have been less well articulated. Hence, the motivation to gather several perspectives in this volume on continuity and change within festive culture across the post-socialist Bloc.

The post-1989 period came with new regimes of memory and contested genealogies of identity. Suppressed memories and marginalised identities of previous system gained the public space to reclaim acknowledgement. The festive culture was the public context most often reclaimed where individuals and communities were able to renegotiate allegiances and meanings. Active performances and performative dimension stated as medium in which cultural identity was not only expressed, but also enacted. The transformation of festive culture has been complex, and the high degree of formal continuity complicates any efforts to see festive culture as truly reflecting "local" or "bottom-up" perspectives. The politically-determined infrastructure of cultural events from the socialist period complicates efforts to speak of "markets" in culture, or the "branding" of ethnic and national identities (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). Even as culture workers become cultural entrepreneurs, they often work within the structure of the "House of Culture", itself a globalized form of early twentieth century national modernity (Donahoe and Habeck 2011; Balzer 2012).

Festive culture in the ex-socialist countries represents a mixture of the legacy of socialist celebrations, holidays introduced slightly before or after 1989-1991, and religious revivals in the form of both pagan/ancestral and Church festivities. Many of the festive forms assert the re-invigoration of the pre-socialist national identity of the new regimes. In some cases, the new festive forms have the potential to "return" elements of pre-socialist social life as well. Cash (2013b) suggests that changes in Moldova's ritual cycle after 1989 re-invoke a pre-capitalist temporal order marked by the alternation of work and rest according to Church and agricultural calendars. Yet such changes seem relatively detached from state intentions. Although Oushakine (2013) asserts that many of the cultural symbols and patterns from socialist culture have been re-invested with new meanings to smooth the frustrations of post-socialist political and social realities, most official culture still seems primarily targeted at asserting the legitimacy of the state, sometimes with recourse to the national past, sometimes with the Soviet past (Galinovskaia 2012; Bîrlădeanu 2013).

Yet the questions asked so frequently of socialist festive culture have been little asked of post-socialist culture. How have the new regimes attempted to harness the potentials of festive culture in establishing their legitimacy? What are audience attitudes towards official and non-official celebrations? Are audiences loyal to official forms of festive culture? Are they absent? Do they resist the implied messages? A few authors (e.g. Nicoară 2005) have advocated for more sustained attention to the different relations that audiences have with official and non-official celebrations. Depicting "variety" is no longer adequate for understanding how festive culture relates to other social issues across the

region. In this volume, we therefore support increasing interest in the study of festive culture, and more generally in performance and performativity. Public events, festivals, anniversaries, remembrances, rituals can and should be approached as a "powerful site in the struggle of different actors against (and between) contestation and ambiguity, from within and without alike" (Dimova and Cojocaru 2013: 3; Cash 2013a: 75).

Approaching Festive Culture after Socialism

This volume of "Interstitio" is devoted to "Time, Space and Agency in (Post) Socialist Festive Culture" – *published with the financial assistance of Konrad Adenauer Foundation* – and therefore aims to offer the reader a comparative approach to the transformation of festive culture from the socialist period. The investigations concern the actors and agencies, stage settings, festive practices, and negotiation of new and old meanings in public celebrations. The articles aim to analyze and interpret; they do not merely "catalogue what actually happened at such festivals" (Baiburin and Piir 2009: 229). The authors aim to reveal the multiple voices of staging memory and identity, the strategies of legitimising and contesting new collective identity by analysing the following questions: How do ordinary people perceive the festive culture products sanctioned and promoted by the official power politics? What practices of adaptation, negotiation, or resistance can be discerned, and how influential are they in undermining the legitimacy of ideological projects of nation-building? What are the transformations in the case of religious or traditional feasts? How socialist performances changed people's views of their own pasts and identities; as well as how the propagandistic traits of festive culture are being revived, forgotten or marginalized after 1989?

The socialist period is represented by Alexandra Toader's study and concerns the field of public ceremonies in socialist Romania. The paper specifically aims to explore the evolution of the phenomenon called the "cult of personality" in the Romanian political and social space through the analysis of the official ceremonies devoted to marking the birthdays of important socialist leaders. Her special focus is on the fiftieth birthday of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the first leader of the Romanian Workers' Party. Toader's archival data illustrates what might be expected: that is, that the festivities mobilized, from centre to periphery, the entire society in the glorification of the "beloved leader's" birthday. But, the archive also evidences the unexpected: both the sudden appearance and disappearance of this mode of mass celebration. The article leaves the reader to wonder how to weight the problems of aggressive chance in the official calendar between 1947-1953, the pre-socialist celebration of royal birthdays in Romania, and the (re?)appearance of the cult of personality under Ceaușescu cult of personality (see also Gabanyi 2000).

The remaining papers trace the transformation of festive culture in ex-Soviet republics.[1] The first two studies approach the official calendar as "the

[1] We find it provocative that our call for papers aroused little interest elsewhere in the post-socialist region.

most spectacular site of collective memory" (Zerubavel 1985), with reference to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The first paper was published by Jennifer R. Cash in the *Anthropology of East Europe Review.* We have republished it here because it draws attention to the interlocking political, economic, and social effects of the temporal rhythms of official calendars; the very issues which underpin much of the historical literature on early Soviet festivals and celebrations, and which have not been addressed in comparative perspective. Like Cash (2013b), Alexandr Osipian focuses on the issues and challenges that bedevil the construction of a national calendar in the context of post-soviet political and economic realities. Osipian investigates the national celebrations in relation to identity politics built around certain realms of memory. And he calls attention to the variety of ways to classify the events included in the official calendar, because the official classifications themselves contain a muddling variety. Osipian pays particular attention to what he calls the "new Ukrainian holidays"; in these, he finds duelling efforts across the country to create a new social and national space. While such new holidays appear to allow Ukrainian communities to recover memories and cultural practices that reassert both national and regional identities suppressed during the Soviet period, Osipian argues that an "official calendar" celebrating all of these new holidays can, paradoxically, prevent national consolidation in post-Soviet Ukraine. As we go to press, Osipian's warnings about the use of festivals and public events in Ukraine to shape political loyalties in the absence of real economic or social reforms are deeply disturbing.

The next two studies move the attention of our readers to the eastern borders of the ex-Soviet Union – the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Sakha Republic. Both papers relate to the reinvigoration of what might be classified, in the realm of post-Soviet festival developments, as pagan or ancestral festivals. *Nawrïs* and *Yhyakh* are this in the sense that these festivals were not state or official holidays in the pre-socialist period; they involve the celebration of ancestors; and they are connected to non-Christian religious traditions. But the use of this classificatory system mostly serves to draw attention to the fact that they represent the cultural and social facets of daily life that the Soviet festival system sought to overcome in the Union's eastern reaches. In their present incarnations, these festivals reveal the complex ways that religion (Islam and Shamanism) and spiritual practices now intertwine with historic legacies, local memory, and ethnic, national, and regional identities.

The study by Toko Fujimoto focuses on festivals commemorating historical figures and events, seeking to clarify the dynamics of festive culture in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. The author states that even as the governments of Kazakhstan have approached festivals as a means to build national cohesion, there has been a gap between the state's aims and ordinary people's interests, even in the festivals that local communities want to celebrate. Fujimoto develops her investigation by focusing on rural communities and concerns the villagers' interest to reconstruct regional identity. The study investigates how rural communities reclaim their history spanning the pre- and post-Soviet periods through festive structure. The spring festival *Nawrïs,* which is celebrated with ritual meal of *nawrïz köje* (a kind of porridge) and various games, is Fujimoto's case study. This festive event, she argues, offers time and space where villagers negotiate, manage and reshape their relation with power narratives. Both state and community want to see *Nawrïs* celebrated, but villagers want to highlight Quranic recitation for the ancestors; a practice that promotes genealogical memory, knowledge of "ancestral land," and religious identity with little connection to national identity, the current Kazakh state, or its cultural and historic relations with near neighbours of the past or present. Fujimoto's study thus shows an example of festive culture that symbolically creates an alternative space and time to that of post-socialism, ordinarily marked by ambitious nation-building projects and widespread social, economic, and political frustration.

The paper by Eleanor Peers explores the current racialisation of religion among a non-Russian Siberian people, the Sakha. Although we pause over the term "racialisation", Peers' account indeed shows a naturalization of Sakha spirituality to an extent that "ethnicization" no longer seems the appropriate term. Peers concentrates her study on the summer-time festival – *Yhyakh* – which symbolizes the welcoming of summer and the awakening of nature. It has its roots in pre-Soviet Sakha shamanism: its central aim is to secure the good will of the local area spirits by offering them *kumys* (fermented mare's milk). The organizers and participants in this festival experience the event as reviving pre-Soviet traditions, but Peers draws on newspaper accounts, Soviet television footage, and other data to argue that both the form and content of the new festivals is a continuation of the ethnicization that was a hallmark of the Soviet project of modernizing local cultural practices. What has happened in the post-Soviet period takes this modernization to its extreme, turning a culturally-construed "Sakha" identity into the only possible one (i.e. it has become unthinkable that a Sakha identity could reflect class or political interests). Peers argues that the narratives of the sanctified Sakha identities also contain elements derived from the essentialist Soviet-era ideology on nationality and human progress, suggesting that they result from an interaction of ideas stimulated in part by integrationist Soviet policy. For example, eulogies of Sakha shamans emphasise their immersion in "traditional" Sakha culture, while presenting biologised accounts of these shamans' supernatural powers, which highlight their capacity to surpass biomedicine. These sets of narrative offer answers to questions about personal teleology and value; these questions incorporate a distinctive post-Enlightenment assumption that the human self exists in relation to a universal purpose. The author suggests that the Sakha assimilation of European modernist notions of nation, personhood and universal value, via their integration into a Russianised Soviet society, has encouraged a search for an authentic self that is articulated as a crisis in ethnic identity, and which is having a profound influence on this people's post-Soviet religious revivals.

The paper signed by Ludmila D. Cojocaru examines the politics of staging the "Mărțişor" Music Festival in the Republic of Moldova as a context which influenced new perceptions of local, regional and national repertoires. The investigation argues that socialist staging politics can be analyzed as a multidimen-

sional phenomenon to highlight the dialogical, dynamic and multi-vocal nature of scene. Studying the evolution of Music Festival after socialism, Cojocaru shows that not only the state politics constrain identity, memory, tradition, but public performances of memory and identity can also shape the ways in which the nation is imagined, constituted and legitimated.

The material by Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu presents a photo-essay on the ritualized forms of nostalgia in the Republic of Moldova, reflected in the official (political and religious) holidays, celebrated between 2005 and 2013. The paper argues that despite the attested differences in terms of age, personal and collective experience, social and professional status, ethnicity or gender of participants, the scenarios used by the Communist Party of Moldova to celebrate the Soviet anniversaries after 1989 in Moldova are "built" on the ideological *clichés* of yesteryear. The author follows up the updated aspects and agendas of these events through examining attitudes, actors and emotions, and presents the confrontations conducted under/for the reporters' camera.

Towards Future Studies

While this special issue originated in our desire to extend the questions previously asked of socialist festive culture into the study of post-socialist phenomena, the articles gathered here also suggest the possibility for new directions and questions that can be applied both backwards and forwards in time. We were particularly impressed to see how "muddled" the agency of the state seems to have become in the creation of post-socialist festive culture. Even as socialist era structures remain largely intact (e.g. in the *structure* of state-funded festivals implemented from above on a national-local template; and in the predominance of state-funded personnel who were active during the Soviet period and/or have received new cadres who were trained in similar methods; the *form* of official calendars; festivals that celebrate ethnic and cultural particularity; activity at houses of culture), little clear direction seems to exist from above. That which might come (e.g. in *Nawrïs*) is immediately negotiated and transformed into a festival that is more local, more ethnic, more ancestral. And yet, as Peers points out, the paradox appears that contesting the Soviet visions of culture seem to still further its agenda. At the very least, almost all of these festivals foreclose opportunities for the creation of non-ethnic memories and narratives. As Osipian points out, alternative festivals have emerged in Ukraine, some of them (like re-enactor and food festivals) have clearly alternative agendas to ethno-nation-building. But these are never embraced as official festivals. And perhaps, in the post-Soviet context, they cannot be: elsewhere Bîrlădeanu (2013) has shown how Moldovans have rejected the state's attempts to stage auto racing and wine festivals, suspecting them of reeking too much of Soviet "mass culture".

Taken together, the cases presented here modify the otherwise substantial evidence that the cultural expansion of the post-socialist period has encouraged a priority of national-folkloric and political festive events. The new official holidays were created through the reconfiguration of past meanings

of an assortment of signs and symbols to build new legitimacies. The new festivals therefore have been part of nation-building projects, even as they also provide evidence of substantial "showisation" (Russ. *shounizatsiya*). Festivals have become glossier, slicker, more sophisticated media productions as if this were enough to distinguish them from the "ideologisation" processes inherent to socialist culture (Kelly and Sirotinina 2009: 267).

These cases reiterate what Clifford Geertz (1973) long ago commented in his discussion of spectacle as cultural performance. That is, a performance is a collectively authored "text" about a particular society; it is a story people tell themselves about themselves. Or, as Beverly Stoeltje has written about festivals: "The messages of festival concern the shared experience of the group and multiple interpretations of that experience. [...] In all socially based festivals, however, the messages will be directly related to the present social circumstances as well as to the past" (Stoeltje 1992: 263). "The festival [...] can strengthen the identity of the group and thus its power to act in its own interest" (271). Though Stoeltje's examples of festivals come largely from the more commercialized and "democratic" festival culture of the United States, her insights still hold for the post-socialist region. Post-socialist festival culture does not reveal the clean lines of either totalitarianism, popular democracy, or lifestyle marketization that "we" analysts might want to see. Such clean lines would make our task easy; we could then, in a sense, write the socialist and post-socialist dimensions out of festive culture. Or, we could continue to use these as the only defining frameworks of festive culture in the region. Alas, or hurrah, we must learn instead to identify and write the "stories that people tell themselves about themselves" (Geertz 1973: 448) in the current festive culture.

References:

Adams, Laura. 2010. *The Spectacular State: Culture and National Identity in Uzbekistan.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Baiburin, Albert and Alexandra Piir. 2009. "When We Were Happy: Remembering Soviet Holidays," in *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*, edited by M. Balina and E. Dobrenko, 161-186. London: Anthem Press.

Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam. 2012. *Shamans, Spirituality, and Cultural Revitalization: Explorations in Siberia and Beyond.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Binns, Christopher. 1979a. "The Changing Face of Power: Revolution and Accommodation in the Development of the Soviet Ceremonial System". Part I, *Man* 14(4): 585-606.

Binns, Christopher. 1979b. "The Changing Face of Power: Revolution and Accommodation in the Development of the Soviet Ceremonial System". Part II, *Man* 15(1): 170-187.

Bîrlădeanu, Virgiliu. 2013. "Wine and Speed: The Post-Soviet Holidays in the Republic of Moldova (2001-2009)," *History and Anthropology.* Special issue "Politics and Performance in South-Eastern Europe," guest eds Rozita Dimova and Ludmila D. Cojocaru, 24(1): 36-55.

Cash, Jennifer R. 2011a. *Villages on Stage: Folklore and Nationalism in the Republic of Moldova.* Münster: LIT Verlag.

Cash, Jennifer R. 2011b. "Capitalism, Nationalism, and Religious Revival: Transformations of the Ritual Cycle in Postsocialist Moldova," *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 29(2): 181-203.

Cash, Jennifer R. 2013a. "Performing Hospitality in Moldova: Ambiguous, Alternative, and Undeveloped Models of National Identity," *History and Anthropology*. Special issue "Politics and Performance in South-Eastern Europe," quest eds Rozita Dimova and Ludmila D. Cojocaru, 24(1): 56-77.

Cash, Jennifer R. 2013b. "Transformations of the Ritual Cycle in Postsocialist Moldova", *Intersitio. East European Journal of Historical and Cultural Anthropology*, special issue "Time, Space and Agency in (Post)Socialist Festive Culture", guest eds Ludmila D. Cojocaru and Jennifer R. Cash, V 1-2(9-10): 30-50.

Chatterjee, Choitali. 2002. *Celebrating Women: The International Women's Day in Russia and the Soviet Union, 1910-1939*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Čiubrinskas, Vytis. 2010. "Forging (ethno) Nationalist Sentiment through Time and Space: Revivalist and Diasporic Ways of Accommodating Multiculturalism in East Europe and USA," in *De Palerme À Penang*, edited by François Ruegg and Andrea Boscoboinik, 103-118. Münster: LIT Verlag.

Cojocaru, Ludmila D. and Rozita Dimova, "'Nature' and 'Nation' in the Republic of Moldova: Rebirth and Rebuilding through the International Festival of Music 'Mărțişor'," in *History and Anthropology*. Special issue "Politics and Performance in South-Eastern Europe," guest eds Rozita Dimova and Ludmila D. Cojocaru, 24(1): 13-35.

Comaroff, John L. and Jean Comaroff. 2009. *Ethnicity, Inc. (Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning)*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

Corbin, Alain et. al. (coords). 1994. *Les usages politiques des fêtes aux XIXe-XXe siècles*. Paris: Publication de la Sorbonne.

Dimova, Rozita and Ludmila D. Cojocaru (guest eds). 2013. *History and Anthropology*. Special issue "Politics and Performance in South-Eastern Europe", 24(1).

Donahoe, Brian and Joachim Otto Habeck (eds). 2011. *Reconstructing the House of Culture. Community, Self, and the Makings of Culture in Russia and Beyond*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Gabanyi, Anneli Ute. 2000. *The Ceausescu Cult. Propaganda and Power Policy in Communist Romania*. Bucharest: Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House.

Galinovskaia, Julia. 2012. "Prazdnik po sovietski: ofitzialinaja prazdnicinaja kulitura v Belarusi [The Official Festive Culture in Belarus], *Tzentr Evropeiskoi Transformatzii*, available at <http://eurobelarus.info/files/File/Galinouskaya_Desovetizatsiya.pdf>, accessed on 12.06.2013.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 412-454. New York: Basic Books.

Giurchescu, Anca. 1987. "The National Festival 'Song to Romania': Manipulation of Symbols in the Political Discourse," in *Symbols of Power. The Esthetics of Political Legitimation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, edited by Claes Arvidsson and Lars Erik Blomqvist, 163-172. Stockholm: Coronet Books Inc.

Gluckmann, André. 1985. *La bêtise*. Paris: Grasset.

Hofman, Ana. 2011. "Questioning Socialist Folklorization: The Beltinci Folklore Festival in the Slovenian Borderland of Prekmurje," in *Audiovisual Media and Identity Issues in Southeastern Europe*, edited by Eckehard Pistrick, Nicola Scaldaferri and Gretel Schwörer, 238-257. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Iğmen, Ali. F. 2012. *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan (Central Eurasia in Context)*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Kaneff, Deema. 2004. *Who Owns the Past? The Politics of Time in a 'Model' Bulgarian Village*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.

Kelly, Catriona and Svetlana Sirotinina. 2009. "'I didn't Understand, but it was Funny': Late Soviet Festivals and their Impact on Children," *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* 5: 254-300.

Kürti, László. 1991. "Rocking the State: Youth and Rock Music Culture in Hungary, 1976-1990," *East European Politics & Societies* 5: 483-513.

Lane, Christel. 1981. *The Rites of Rulers. Ritual in Industrial Society - the Soviet Case*. Cambridge: CUP Archive.

March, Richard. 1980. "The Ideology of Folklore Festivals in Pre- and Post-War Yugoslavia," *Kentucky Folklore Record* 26(1-2): 53-61.

Nicoară, Simona. 2005. "Sărbătoare, comemorare, celebrare" [Holyday, Commemoration, Celebration], *Caiete de Antropologie Istorică* IV, 1(7): 7-12.

Oushakine, Serguei. 2013. "Remembering in Public: On the Affective Management of History," *Ab Imperio* 1: 269-302.

Ozouf, Mona. 1988. *Festivals and the French Revolution*, translated by Alan Sheridan. Cambridge: Harvard University Press**.**

Petrone, Karen. 2000. *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ramet, Sabrina. 1999. "*In Tito's Time,"* in *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States*, edited by Sabrina Ramet, 89-105. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Roth, Klaus. 1990. "Socialist Life-Cycle Rituals in Bulgaria," *Anthropology Today* 6(5): 8-10.

Slezkine, Yuri. 1994a. "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53(2): 414-452.

Stoeltje, Beverly J. 1992. "Festival," in *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainment. A Communications-Centered Handbook*, edited by Richard Bauman, 261-271. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Tompkins, David. 2013. "Instrumentalizing Entertainment and Education: Early Cold War Music Festivals in East Germany and Poland," in *Socialist Escapes: Breaking Away from Ideology and Everyday Routine in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989*, edited by Cathleen M. Giustino, Catherine J. Plum, Alexander Vari, 27-47. New York: Berghahn Books.

Watson, Ruby (ed.). 1994. *Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 1985. *Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in Social Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

EUPHORY AND PROPAGANDA: THE CELEBRATION OF GHEORGHE GHEORGHIU-DEJ'S FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY

Alexandra Toader
Iaşi, Romania

Abstract. The main purpose of this study is to examine the ceremonies marking the fiftieth birthday of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the first leader of the Romanian Workers' Party. Research on this topic is initiated in the hope of understanding the mechanisms that made possible the flourishing of particular symbols and images which gravitated around the Romanian communist leader. A rigorous analysis, backed by observations on the evolution of the phenomenon called "cult of personality" in Romanian political and social space, involves a central unit of analysis, which stems from the totalitarian paradigm. Therefore, the study aims to emphasize the extension of the festivities from center to periphery, highlighting the mobilization of the entire society to worship the "beloved leader". This approach finally assesses the conversion of these practices into everyday life in communist Romania.

Key-words: cult of personality, public festivities, propaganda, ritual, political symbol

Cuvinte-cheie: cultul personalităţii, festivităţi publice, propaganda, ritual, simbol politic

Introduction

Although many Western scholars have approached the study of the "cult of personality" in Europe, prior emphasis on the dynamics of public celebrations have focused on two dictators: Hitler and Stalin. The magnitude of public manifestations was indeed especially significant for the German and Soviet cases; however, the cult of personality was part of everyday life in all communist societies. I argue that it should be possible to identify quantitative and qualitative variations in the cult of socialist leaders which indicate asymmetries between the regimes. To this end, this study explores the typology of celebrations marking Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's fiftieth birthday, emphasizing the euphoria manufactured by the artisans of Romanian propaganda prior to the leader's anniversary. Consequently, the study argues that the fabrication of ceremonies is a clear indicator of the degree of power personalization and of the symbolic dimension of the leader cult.

Theoretical Approach and Methodology

Research on the personality cults of National Socialism and Stalinism has concluded that the importance of political ritual and symbol should not be understood as the expression of an irrational adulation and deification of the leader. On the contrary, spectacular political rituals should be seen as a "central component of an ideological system which consciously sought expression in the mysteries of myth and symbol" (Taylor 1981: 504-505). In other words, as Graeme Gill argued (1980: 186), the source of the cult lies not in the personal vanity of the leaders, but in "the disparity between the formal structure and rules of political practice and the informal norms governing personal access to power". Thereby, the ritual is perceived as a social act which takes place in a specific socio-cultural context (Wuthnow 1987: 97-144). Ritual, as used in this paper, refers to a complex of symbolic acts, characterized by its formality, order, and sequence, which tends to take place in specific situations, and has as one of its central goals the regulation of social order (Gorman 1990: 19).

Over the past two decades, three scientific studies about leaders' birthdays in communist Romania have been published (Gabanyi 2003; Cioroianu 2004; Marin 2008). Yet each of these works examines only the ceremonies prepared for Nicolae Ceauşescu. In some respects, this may be explained as a reaction to the exacerbated dimensions of the Romanian leader cult in comparison with his predecessor. The studies, however, also reveal a general reluctance of historians to engage with the archival documentation on the organization of ceremonies: the three above-cited studies of the Ceauşescu cult are mainly analyzed through the images projected by the Party press. The present study takes these works as its starting point and seeks to identify the nature of the ideological and teleological framework of the celebrations marking Gheorghiu-Dej's fiftieth birthday. Moreover, the paper adds a historical dimension to the analysis of this topic through the use of documents from the National Archives of Romania. The files in the "Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej" collection contain information regarding the decisions undertaken to mark the Romanian leader's birthday; while information from other collections, including those of "Cancelarie, Propagandă şi Agitaţie" [Chancellery, Propaganda and Agitation], and "Organizatorică" [The Organizational], highlights the propagandistic dimensions of the event. However, these collections allow only the reconstruction of the top-bottom mechanism in implementing decisions. Therefore, I have tried to also quantify the impact of organizational decisions in an empirical manner, using information from memoirs or other works which were published contemporaneously. The evaluation of public opinion in communist regimes is difficult because of their totalitarian organization, but recent research underlines the concern that agencies gave to what ordinary people thought about the regimes in which they lived (Corner 2009).

My approach is not a "history from below" (Le Bon 2000; Censer and Hunt 2005: 39); such histories have demonstrated that an investigation into crowds, their attitudes, and the political networks of their members can reveal a rationale for even the most horrifying violence in revolutionary politics. In the case of the

cult of personality of Gheorghiu-Dej, however, with very few exceptions, the results of popular participation in praising the leader were predetermined by the regime (Sperlich 2006: 70). My historical investigation is thus a "history from above". This is so even though power was not simply imposed; the efficacy of that which was imposed also depended, to a high degree, on the actions of the dominated. In this regard, the study invokes archival documents, as well as different statements of political figures about the former leaders' personality, notwithstanding the difficulties posed by the characteristic *langue du bois* of public speeches.

The Role of Public Festivities in Communist Romania

Before the installation of the Communist regime, Romania had almost a century of royal tradition. Seen as the image of God on Earth, the Romanian kings were glorified on their birthdays. During the interwar period, the celebration of royal birthdays was so intense that it generated critique as a particularly "Romanian" madness. In an article published in "Universul" [The Universe], Pompiliu Păltănea (1931: 1) ironically observed that "centenaries were not enough" for the organizers of public festivities. The author ventured that "the madness of the commemorations had general, superior, and professional benefits". As he put it, "ministers and academicians find an excellent oratorical outlet on these occasions; professors and scholars manufacture studies and memoires".

On the one hand, therefore, the political culture of "performing the nation" in socialist Romania has many similarities with the prominence of public festivities in the interwar period. Carol II, for instance, became the beneficiary of a genuine cult, especially beginning with 1938. Poems were dedicated to him on the occasion of his birthday (Acrostiş 1938: 24). Moreover, military parades were held not only in Bucharest, but also in other important cities of the country. On the other hand, this bond between past and present has not been a specific feature only for twentieth century Romania. For example, Nadine Rossol (2010: 15) highlights the role of celebrations at the turn of the twentieth century in Germany. In the capital of Berlin, the city center, the area surrounding the city palace, and the main street (Unter den Linden) were reserved for various ceremonies and military parades in which ordinary citizens participated actively. The socialist regimes installed in Eastern Europe after the Second World War presented different sets of continuities with the past from those in Western Europe. Nevertheless, even the "Romanian" madness was rooted in a common European political use of festive forms and personal commemorations.

Shortly after the installation of the communist regime, the celebration of certain laic and religious events began. The National Archives have in their possession many documents concerning the festivities organized on the occasion of various public holidays.[1] The celebrations organized for marking these symbolic events were usually prepared in detail one or even two months in

[1] 1 May – Labour Day, 23 August – National Day of Romania (1948-1989), 7 November – Bolshevik Revolution Day, and 30 December – Day of monarchy abolishing and proclamation of the Romanian People's Republic (1947).

advance, with large sums of money allocated for this purpose. Massive parades were held in Bucharest and in all major cities to celebrate the establishment of the new "socialist legality". The essential characteristic of these moments was, by far, their monumentality. Taking the example of 1 May in other communist societies, the French anthropologist Georges Ballandier (2000: 21) noted that the moment became an obvious occasion for the society to present itself in an idealized manner, built on the spectacular, and having as its main goals the symbolic equalization of society and the profound attachment between the people and their Leader. In other words, holidays served to modify the relationship between societal parts and the whole. In comparative terms, the communist leader's birthdays mirrors the strong relation between power and society through the image of the ritual: it is performed in a specific situation, at a specific time, and at a specific place.

The Making of the Festivities: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's Fiftieth Birthday

Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1901-1965) was the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) from 1945 until his death in 1965. He joined the RCP in 1932 and was sentenced to prison in 1933 after the Griviţa Strike in February of that year. He remained imprisoned for twelve years, which left a mark in his future personality as a leader (Toader 2012: 167-178). After the removal of the Pauker-Luca-Georgescu group from the Party's leadership in 1952 and, thereafter, of Miron Constantinescu and Iosif Chişinevschi, the Romanian communist regime did not experience political instability like Hungary, Poland or Czechoslovakia, which makes us advance the term "routinization" for the characterization of the regime after 1956 (Madarász 2009: 54). Placed in this context, Gheorghiu-Dej's fiftieth birthday is to be considered a landmark in the evaluation of the characteristics of his personality cult.

The first public notices of a communist leader's birthday were published on 14 December 1944. This date marked Ana Pauker's fiftieth anniversary. On the first page of "Scânteia" [The Spark], a greeting signed by the Central Committee of the RCP was published for the one who "has fought, for three decades, serving the Romanian people" (*Scânteia* 1944: 1). Liuba Chişinevschi also published, in the Party newspaper, a genuinely deferential article dedicated to "Our Ana" (Chişinevsca 1944: 3). In 1945, as in the previous year, Ana Pauker's birthday was also recognized. Telegrams, greeting letters were published, most of them emphasizing Ana Pauker's "heroic past" and "her fight for the freedom of the country" (*Scânteia* 1945: 1). In the second half of the 1940s, only the most important Party members sent their greetings to the Romanian communist leaders, thus the references in the press were limited. Public celebrations were similarly restricted: Party leaders received symbolic gifts from the delegates who participated in the birthday ceremony and were awarded official decorations, but the general public was not involved. In this respect, the early celebrations of Romania's communist leaders were significantly different from those of either Hitler or Stalin in the 1930s (e.g. Kershaw 1987: 57; Gill 1980: 167).

Even as the scale of birthday celebrations for Romanian leaders expanded, they remained distinct. Unlike Hitler or Stalin (whose birthdays were celebrated publicly even while they were in their 40s), until his fiftieth birthday Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej was celebrated in a limited frame, with all festivities unfolding at the Central Committee Headquarters. There were usually invited various delegations from all corners of the country, who congratulated him for his outstanding contributions. The archival documents contain information only beginning with the leader's forty-eighth birthday, which takes us inevitably to the conclusion that until 1948, these festive actions were not of great importance for the Party propagandists. On 8 November 1949, for example, Gheorghiu-Dej received only a single greeting card, signed collectively by the most important Party members of the time: Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca, Teohari Georgescu, Iosif Chişinevski and Alexandru Moghioroş. The text was written in a simple manner, so that the General Secretary received messages of "Happy birthday, health and powerful fight at the head of the Party leadership, in the way of building the socialism in our country"[2].

The next year, however, the celebration of Gheorghiu-Dej's birthday was amplified in scope. In 1950, 81 workers from various industrial units of the country visited the leader and presented their gratitude on the occasion of his forty-ninth birthday. An additional 109 workers from the most important factories in Bucharest, like the industrial platform "Timpuri Noi" and the Railway Station "Griviţa Roşie", also presented gifts to the General Secretary[3]. Vasile Luca was in charge of welcoming and thanking the delegates in the name of Gheorghiu-Dej for "the spontaneous manifestation which was a proof of love and faith in the Romanian Workers' Party, and faith and will in the fight for achieving the great cause of the working class, the building of socialism in our country". The delegates subsequently presented their commitments in front of the Party and Drăgan Andrei sent greeting messages to "our beloved Father", in the name of the pioneers of the Capital.[4] Among the gifts Gheorghiu-Dej received were a copy of "The History of the Communist Party (Bolshevik)" covered in leather, an electric desk lamp, a diplomatic bag, a big picture of the four teachers of Marxism-Leninism, and boxes of fruits, vegetables and drinks.[5]

It is important to take note of one important difference between the gifts Gheorghiu-Dej received on the occasion of his birthday and those handed to the Romanian kings. For instance, in 1909 Carol I received as a seventieth birthday present from the Council of Ministers a silver vase on a marble pedestal encrusted with symbolic representations of the Sigmaringen and Peleş castles. Thus, if we consider these gifts as symbols of the political regime, one may reconstitute the type of legitimacy invoked by the political leader (see Ssorin-Chaikov 2006: 359). Given the political discontinuity between past and present, the gifts received by the communist leaders highlight, first of all, the intimate

[2] *ANIC.* Colecţia Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, file 697: 2.

[3] *ANIC.* 1950. Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, file 244: 16-22.

[4] *ANIC.* 1950. Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, file 64: 9-12.

[5] *ANIC.* 1950. Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, file 244: 9-10.

structure of communist ideology. The ordinary and personal nature of the gifts sent by the Central Committee conveys a certain logic of power, expressed from bottom to top, from the level of masses to that of the leader. They also put an emphasis on labour and socialist production which are actually the characteristics of the "new socialist order". The givers, however, did not choose their gifts: all the decisions concerning Gheorghiu-Dej's birthday were imposed from upper echelons of the party and administrative apparatus.

Despite the early forms of broadcasting the Gheorghiu-Dej cult, his birthday did not become a "holiday of the entire people" until he turned 50 in November 1951. Subsequent celebrations also failed to garner ordinary citizens' enthusiasm until 1961 when Gheoghiu-Dej celebrated his sixtieth birthday. The preparations for the occasion resembled those for other Eastern European communist leaders, not only Stalin but also Poland's Bolesław Bierut. For example, the celebration of Bierut's sixtieth birthday on 18 April 1952 was marked by the renaming of streets and factories, various pledges, greetings to the leader through collective letters and telegrams; and the publication of several books about the leader (Main 2004: 182).

The preparations for the official celebration of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej began well in advance. On 5 September 1951 the members of the Central Committee made an official "Statement" regarding the leader's anniversary. The statement indicated that solemn reunions would take place and offered guidelines for appropriate forms of celebration. The first version of the document contained thirteen instructions for the working people, writers and press on how they should congratulate Gheorghiu-Dej. For example, greeting cards were to thank the Party for the success obtained over time and for making new commitments to advance the well-wisher's field of activity; notice of advance accomplishments of the five-year plan were also encouraged.[6] Such greetings thus followed the general pattern already established for official holidays. As early as 1950, party officials themselves commented on the ubiquity of "passionate greetings, solidarity and devotional telegrams"[7]. The written commitments were usually published in the press a few days before the celebrated moment, with an aim to spurring further social mobilization. According to an article published in "Universul" [Universe], on the occasion of Gheorghiu-Dej's fiftieth birthday "thousands of greeting cards" had been sent to the Central Committee Headquarters (*Universul* 1951: 2). As a consequence of the large number of telegrams and letters received, they were published in several consecutive numbers of the newspapers, until 15 November – a full week after Gheorghiu-Dej's birthday.

Among the measures adopted two months in advance of the leader's birthday were a series dedicated to studying political issues on the basis of Gheorghiu-Dej's works published in "Articole şi cuvântări" [Articles and Speeches]. Ten days of special seminars were organized[8] which emphasized

[6] *ANIC.* Colecţia Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, file 703: 2.

[7] *ANIC.* 1951. Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, file 93: 6 verso.

[8] *ANIC.* Colecţia Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, file 703: 2.

the image of Gheorghiu-Dej as a "theoretician". An article published in "Romania Liberă" [Free Romania], for example, asserted that "there is not a single important issue that comrade Gheorghiu-Dej has not debated in his works" (Dona 1951: 2). Moreover, the propaganda emphasized his "teachings" as a "great testimony of the invincible force of our Party, of the genial ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin". The leader's own personality was also much discussed and a decision was announced that his official biography should be studied: for the four-week period between 5 October and 8 November, factories, clubs and schools, were to organize conferences focused on Gheorghiu-Dej's "life and fight". At the same time, beginning with 8 October, the Party press had to publish articles about his life and activity.[9] Thereby, his third official biography, published in May 1951, became the almost exclusive subject of study for the entire society. Finally, it was decided that 250,000 young pioneers would study, during the entire month of October, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's biography. The purpose of these decisions was to keep people informed and familiarized with his upcoming birthday, but they also helped to popularize the little known leader as a personality. Because he had spent much of the interwar period in prisons and camps, the public knew little of his rise within the party which had led to his position of leadership.

Another set of decisions announced during the preparatory phase related to symbolic gifts from and for the General Secretary. It was decreed that three "Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej" scholarships of 6,000 lei per month should be established. They were meant to be awarded to "the most deserving students". The decision was later changed so that thirty-five such scholarships were granted. Sites for the erection of memorial in all the cities considered to be closely tied with the leader's biography, like Bârlad, Moineşti, Dej, and Galați, were also announced.[10]

On his birthday, Gheorghiu-Dej was decorated. He received the honorary title of "Hero of Socialist Labour in the People's Republic of Romania" and the gold "Sickle and Hammer" medal. The decree was published in "The Official Bulletin of the PRR" on 8 November. As mentioned above, other communist leaders also received decorations on their birthdays. The difference lay in the fact that the "Hero of Socialist Labour" award had recently been created, as the decree of title establishment had been published in "The Official Bulletin of the PRR" only ten days before Gheorghiu-Dej's birthday. Thus, he became the first who received the distinction. According to the text of the decree, it was the highest degree of distinction for "exceptional achievements in economic and social construction" and was awarded to individuals who contributed to "the growth of the economy, culture, science and the glory of the People's Republic of Romania" (*Buletinul Oficial al RPR* 1951: 1). It imposed the elaboration of a genuine solemnity for his decoration, festivity which coincided with his birthday; members of no less than thirteen delegations participated at the ceremony.[11] Among them, the delegation which represented the Union of Working Youth

[9] *Ibidem.*

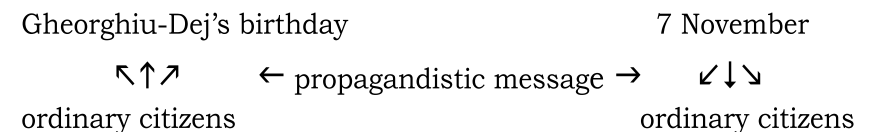
[10] *Ibidem*, 7.

[11] *Ibidem*, 25.

offered to Gheorghiu-Dej a letter that contained the name of 2,319,933 young people who promised, in front of the Party, to "contribute, with all their young powers, to the building of socialism in our country"[12]. It is worth mentioning that the decision to obtain the signatures of 1,500,000 young people was a part of the "Plan Prepared by the Central Committee of the Union of Working Youth for the Fiftieth Anniversary of Comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej".[13] The letter was published on 8 November both in "Scânteia Tineretului" [Spark of Youth] and the official daily of the Party. Moreover, a copy of "Scânteia Tineretului" was printed on canvas and handed to Gheorghiu-Dej.[14]

The day of 8 November culminated with a "comradely dinner" attended by members of the Central Committee and of the Government, officials from the Soviet Union's embassy in Romania, as well as the editors of the newspaper "Pentru pace trainică, pentru democrație popular" [For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy], for a total of 99 guests. The delegates delivered their speeches glorifying the "beloved comrade". The ceremony was held as planned, in the Hall of the Party Headquarters, where he received gifts, flowers, and greetings.[15]

On 8 November, Gheorghiu-Dej did not appear in public. Rather, the press began to celebrate his birthday beginning with 9 November. The explanation of the delay consists in the fact that the previous day had been decreed free, due to the celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution, on 7 November. This celebration was considered one of the most important holidays for the Romanian communist regime and had been observed since 1944. Year by year, this day was used to underline the central role of the Soviet Union and the friendship between the Romanian people and Stalin. Thus, comparing the amplitude of the festivities organized on 7 November with those prepared for Gheorghiu-Dej, one may identify a different dynamic of the propagandistic message, which could be represented as follows:



As shown above, if on the occasion of Gheorghiu-Dej's birthday his personality was at the centre of the propagandistic message, on 7 November the central role of the people had been asserted.

However, in a wider view of "staging politics" (Strauss and O'Brien 2007), there were signs that the celebration of Gheorghiu-Dej's birthday would eclipse the celebrations of 7 November. Contrary to the previous years, 7 November was not celebrated as usual. References to the moment were not published in

[12] *ANIC.* 1951. Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, file 49: 3.

[13] *ANIC.* Colecția Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, file 703: 7.

[14] *ANIC.* Colecția Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, file 705/1: 2.

[15] *ANIC.* Colecția Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, file 703: 25-47.

the media in the preceding two months. Also, for more than a week beginning with 9 November, all the newspapers gathered information about Gheorghiu-Dej. According to the "tradition", newspapers published the greeting letters of the members of the Central Committee to the "beloved comrade" and provided reports about the moment of his decoration. The next stage was to remind the "entire working people" about the fiftieth birthday of the "Leader of the Party and People", words used by Chivu Stoica (1951: 2) in his speech delivered on this occasion.

A specific trait of this moment was the "poets' race" in poems devoted to the General Secretary. It should be noted that the action was not a spontaneous outbreak. The "Work Plan of the Literature and Art Sector" for 1951 demanded the "stimulation" of such works, especially in the field of prose, dramatic, and children's literature, and in opera, ballet, and symphony works. The titles weren't mentioned, but analyzing the publications of the time, one can identify the individuals who contributed to glorifying the name of the Party leader. All the more so since the number of poems dedicated to him during 1951 is consistently higher than the writings edited in the previous years. The poets who sang Gheorghiu-Dej's name were those who had been in deep connection with the Party since the installation of communist rule in Romania. Thus, in "Scânteia", we meet the name of Dan Deşliu (1951: 3), who devoted an authentic versified tribute to "the one forever tied with the Party". Academician A. Toma (1951: 3) also composed a poem entitled "Comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. To the Fighter and Advisor for his Fiftieth Birthday", considering the General Secretary "the most courageous and awake among those forever awake". Maria Banuş (1951: 4) was also present in the newspaper pages, dedicating to Gheorghiu-Dej the poem entitled "Under the Young Stars", urging the people to bring more and more gifts to "the most beloved sons". These were not the only poems composed on this occasion. Indeed, many other works created during 1951 to celebrate the leader's birthday or thirty years of the Party's existence remained unpublished (May 1951). The artistic creation realized in 1951 was considered a "genuine success", as we can read in the "Notice on the Accomplishment of the Working Plan in the Field of Literature and Arts During 1951"[16]. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej was not a source of inspiration only for writers. On 14 November 1951, six days after his birthday, academician Petre Constantinescu-Iaşi delivered a speech at the Institute of History and Philosophy of the People's Republic of Romania's Academy entitled "Comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Advisor for the Historical Sciences in the PRR", thanking the Party and the Government for encouraging and sustaining the scientific works in the field of history. Furthermore, he assessed that historians found a direct support from Gheorghiu-Dej himself by using his works, considered "a source of inspiration for the study of History and especially of the contemporary period". Not least, Gheorghiu-Dej was qualified as "supporter and builder of the Romanian culture and science"[17].

[16] *ANIC.* 1951. Fond CC al PCR – Propagandă şi Agitaţie, file 6: 86.

[17] *ANIC.* 1951. Fond CC al PCR – Propagandă şi Agitaţie, file 50: 1, 28.

Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's celebration also included the renaming of factories after him. On 12 November, "The Official Bulletin" published the decree to rename Hunedoara Steel Mill after Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. According to the text of the decree, this action was accomplished in order to "satisfy the demand of the working class" (*Buletinul Oficial al RPR* 1951a: 1). Indeed, a day before, newspapers published an article about the "liveliness" of the Hunedoara workers who demanded the change of name in the case of their industrial unit (*Scânteia* 1951a: 1). Moreover, another article published that day envisaged the "deep love of the workers for the beloved Leader of our people", expressing their desire that their factory be renamed after the General Secretary. In fact, the initiative to rename the factory was not spontaneous. The proposal was advanced on 7 November by a group of leading workers (*România Liberă* 1951: 3), but the decision had been approved two months in advance by the Central Committee.[18] Nor was Hunedoara Steel Mill the only factory renamed after the leader. Only a few days later, many newspapers reproduced the decree on renaming Doiceşti Thermocentral after Gheorghiu-Dej. As in Hunedoara, the decision was presented as being encountered with enthusiasm by the workers; Gheorghe Ghoerghiu-Dej's portrait was adorned with flower garlands and hung in a "place of honour" (*Scânteia* 1951a: 1). It was not the first time that Gheorghiu-Dej's name was awarded to factories or industrial units, and the practice later continued with other Party officials like Petru Groza, Vasile Luca, Gheorghe Apostol, Ana Pauker, and Emil Bodnăraş.

Between his fiftieth and sixtieth birthdays, Gheorghiu-Dej was not celebrated on such anymore grand scale, which can be regarded as a consequence of the "Decision" adopted on 17 June 1952 by the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Romania and by the members of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party. It was specified that "in case of celebrating the anniversary of individuals having particular merits, as well as scholars and other individuals with special merits in the fields of science, technology, literature and arts, the ceremonies will be organized only at the age of fifty, sixty, seventy and eighty" (Hotărârea 1952: 1). This decision should be read together with other important events that took place in mid-1952. To exemplify, on 2 July, at a meeting with editors from the central and local presses, Gheorghiu-Dej urged journalists not to popularize his name in the press anymore.[19] As one may find from the archives, the meeting resulted from the critical reaction of Boris Mitin, the editor of the journal "For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy", to the growing dimension of Gheorghiu-Dej's cult in 1952. This decision was strengthened in the following years as a result of Stalin's death in 1953 and Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" in February 1956. Consequently, in the years that followed, Gheorghiu-Dej's name was not mentioned in the newspapers on the occasion of his birthday. The members of the Political Bureau usually sent collective telegrams of congratulation[20], and

[18] *ANIC.* Colecţia Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, file 703: 2.

[19] *ANIC.* 1952. Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, file 58: 1-21.

[20] *ANIC.* Colecţia Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, files 717, 737, 742, 743, 753, 769.

throughout November newspapers usually published various articles on his life or poems devoted to him.

To understand the celebrations better, one might turn to questioning who participated in their planning. The names of important Party propagandists were seldom mentioned at the official level. Archival documents often help to identify the individuals who contributed to the organization of festivities. In the case of the Gheorghiu-Dej cult, such information is not so difficult to recover. Scholarly literature agrees that "the stage director of Dej's cult" was Leonte Răutu who, together with Iosif Chişinevschi, occupied the most important positions in orchestrating the propagandistic message. Leonte Răutu (1910-1993) was the chief of the Sector of Propaganda and Agitation in the period between 1948 and 1956. This agency transformed, in 1956, into the Department for Propaganda and Culture, but Răutu remained in charge until Gheorghiu-Dej's death in 1965 (Dobre 2004: 509). At the same time, Iosif Chişnevschi (1905-1963) was Secretary for Propaganda and Culture in the period between 1948 and 1954. The memoires of different individuals re-confirm their main role in transmitting and controlling the propagandistic message. In his journal, Miron Radu Paraschivescu (1994: 354) noted that "if a member of the Central Committee – let us say Leonte Răutu – was not impressed by a novel or poem, an army of writers were suddenly trying to settle it". Moreover, according to the Party's statute, the Department of Propaganda and Agitation had a special status. As part of the Central Committee apparatus, this organism was not allowed to adopt decisions; the organism in charge of it was the Central Committee.[21] On the other hand, it should be underlined that both Leonte Răutu and Iosif Chişinevschi were members of the CC, thus they actually took part in adopting the decisions that they executed.

The manner in which Gheorghiu-Dej's birthday was celebrated indicates the degree of mobilizing the Party members and the society. The festivities organized for his fiftieth birthday incorporate many of the forms of manifestation of his personality cult, at the highest level, all the more so as the event was understood as an official holiday. Placed in this context, the use of various symbols on this occasion was designed to create a bond of identity between leader and followers. This effort to bond people with their leader was then abruptly curtailed. Gheorghiu-Dej's birthday was mentioned explicitly again in the press only on 8 November 1956, when celebrating his fifty-fifth anniversary, but the publishing space allocated for marking the event was insignificant (*Scânteia* 1956: 1). By the time of his sixtieth anniversary, the planned celebrations were envisaged in a totally different and more moderate manner.

Conclusions

The theoretical argument emerging from my research was directed toward a better understanding of the role of official festivities in communist regimes. My analysis developed a new method of interpreting the ceremonies marking the birthdays of communist leaders in Romania, analyzing the role of these festivities in developing the personality cult of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej'.

[21] *ANIC.* 1949. Fond CC al PCR – Secţia Organizatorică, file 111: 7.

The festivities marking Gheorghiu-Dej's fiftieth birthday were prepared well in advance to reflect a desired set of relations between the leader and his followers. The moment was used as a means of imposing order on a certain socio-cultural situation and as a means of regulating, controlling, and (re) establishing the intimate structures and relations were involved in this ritual only through certain decisions taken from above, the birthday celebrations of Romania's leaders never emerged as spontaneous outbursts of the people. On the contrary, the mass subscribed to the official rules which only created a spurious, if glorious, moment.

References:

Acrostiş Omagial închinat Majestăţii Sale Regelui Carol al II-lea, 1 ianuarie 1938.

Arhivele Naţionale Istorice Centrale (ANIC). Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, files 64/1950, 244/1950, 49/1951, 93/1951.

ANIC. Colecţia Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, files 697, 703, 705/1, 717, 737, 742, 743, 753, 769, 771/1, 771/3.

ANIC. Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, files 64/1950, 244/1950, 49/1951, 93/1951.

ANIC. Fond CC al PCR – Propagandă şi Agitaţie, files 6/1951, 50/1951.

ANIC. Fond CC al PCR – Secţia Organizatorică, file 65/1951.

Ballandier, Georges. 2000. *Scena puterii.* Oradea: Editura AION.

Banuş, Maria. 1951. "Sub stele tinere-Fragmente," *România Liberă* November 9:4.

Buletinul Oficial al RPR. 1951. "Decret nr. 168 pentru instituirea titlului de 'Erou al Muncii Socialiste din RPR'", September 28: 1.

Buletinul Oficial al RPR. 1951a. "Decret nr. 196 pentru atribuirea numelui de Combinatul Siderurgic 'Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej' Combinatului Siderurgic Hunedoara." November 12: 1.

Buletinul Oficial al RPR. 1952. "Hotărârea nr. 977 a Consiliului de Miniştri al RPR şi a CC al PMR pentru reglementarea sărbătoririi aniversărilor şi a comemorărilor." June 18: 1.

Censer, Jack and Lynn Hunt. 2005. "Imaging the French Revolution: Depictions of the French Revolutionary Crowd," *The American Historical Review* 110(1): 38-45.

Chişinevsca, Liuba. 1944. "Ana noastră," *Scânteia* December 14: 3.

Cioroianu, Adrian. 2004. *Ce Ceauşescu qui hante les Roumains. Le mythe, les representations et le culte du Dirigeant dans la Roumanie communiste.* Bucureşti: Ed. Curtea Veche.

Corner, Paul (editor). 2009. *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Deşliu, Dan. 1951. "Sub steagul Partidului," *Scânteia* November 9: 3.

Dobre, Florica (coordinator). 2004. *Membrii CC al PCR. 1945-1989. Dicţionar.* Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică.

Dona, H. 1951. "Problemele construcţiei de stat în opera tovarăşului Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej," *România Liberă* November 9: 2.

Gabanyi, Anneli Ute. 2003. *Cultul lui Ceauşescu.* Iaşi: Editura Polirom.

Gill, Graeme. 1980. "The Soviet Leader Cult: Reflections on the Structure of Leadership in the Soviet Union," *British Journal of Political Science* 10(2): 167-186.

Gorman, Frank H. Jr. 1990. *The Ideology of Ritual. Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology.* Sheffield: JSOT Press Sheffield.

Kershaw, Ian. 1987. *The Hitler Myth. Image and Reality in the Third Reich.* Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Le Bon, Gustave. 2000. *Psihologia mulțimilor.* București: Editura Antet XX Press.

Lowie, Robert H. 1994. "Ceremonialism in North America," *American Anthropologist.* Theme Issue "Facts and Problems of North American Anthropology" 16(4): 602-631.

Madarász, Janette. 2009. "Economic Politics and Company Culture: The Problem of Routinisation". In *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979. The "Normalisation of Rule"?,* edited by Mary Fulbrook, 52-75. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Main, Izabella. 2004. "President of Poland or Stalin's Most Faithful Pupil? The Cult of Bolesław Bierut in Stalinist Poland". In *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships. Stalin and the Eastern Bloc,* edited by Balász Apor, Jan C. Behrends, Polly Jones, E. A. Rees, 179-193. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Marin, Manuela. 2008. *Originea şi evoluția cultului personalității lui Nicolae Ceauşescu. 1965-1989.* Alba Iulia: Editura Altip.

Palmowski, Jan. 2009. *Inventing Socialist Nation. Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945-1990.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Păltănea, Pompiliu. 1931. "Moda comemorărilor," *Universul* XLVIII(265) 27: 1.

Publica□iile Ateneului Nou. 1938. "Omagiu Majestății Sale Regelui Carol al II-lea □i Marelui Voevod Mihai de Alba Iulia (1930-1938)," 1.

România Liberă. 1951. "Să ne arătăm demni de marea cinste ca uzina noastră să poarte numele tovarăşului Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. Mitingul fulger al oamenilor muncii de la 'Combinatul Siderurgic Hunedoara'". November 11: 3.

Rossol, Nadine. 2010. *Performing the Nation in Interwar Germany. Sport, Spectacle and Political Symbolism, 1926-1936.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Scânteia. 1944. "Tovarăşa Ana Pauker. Trei decenii de luptă în slujba poporului roman." December 14: 1.

Scânteia. 1945. "Telegrame primite de tovarăşa Ana Pauker cu ocazia împlinirii a 51 de ani." December 16: 1.

Scânteia. 1951. "Cu mare însufle□ire, siderurgi□tii de la Hunedoara au cerut ca uzina lor să poarte numele tovarăşului Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej." November 11: 1.

Scânteia. 1951a. "Sărbătoarea constructorilor Termocentralei 'Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej' din Doiceşti." November 20: 1.

Scânteia. 1956. "A 55-a aniversare a tovarăşului Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej." November 9: 1.

Sperlich, Peter W. 2006. *Oppression and Scarcity. The History and Institutional Structure of the Marxist-Leninist Government of East Germany and Some Perspectives of Life in a Socialist System.* Connecticut, London: Praeger.

Ssorin-Chaikov, Nikolai. 2006. "On Heterochrony: Birthday Gifts to Stalin, 1949," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12(2): 355-375.

Stoica, Chivu. 1951. "Tovarăşul Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej în fruntea luptei partidului pentru construirea economiei socialiste în RPR," *Scânteia* November 9: 2.

Strauss, Julia C., O'Brien, Donal Cruise (editors). 2007. *Staging Politics. Power and Performance in Asia and Africa.* London, New York: I. B Tauris.

Taylor, Simon. 1981. "Symbol and Ritual under National Socialism," *The British Journal of Sociology* 32(4): 504-520.

Toader, Alexandra. 2012. "Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej's Personality Cult, in the Light of Psychobiography: A Methodological Approach," *Politics, Culture and Socialization* 3 (1-2): 167-178.

Toma, A. 1951. "Tovarăşului Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. Luptătorului şi îndrumătorului la cea de-a 50-a aniversare," *Contemporanul* November 9: 3.

Tucker, Robert C. 1997. "Personality and Political Leadership," *Political Science Quarterly* 92(3): 383-393.

Universul. 1951. "Alte telegrame şi scrisori de felicitare primite cu prilejul aniversării d-lui Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej." November 10: 2.

Weber, Max. 1963. *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Wuthnow, R. 1987. *Meaning and Moral Order: Explorations in Cultural Analysis.* Berkley: University of California Press.

TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE RITUAL CYCLE IN POST-SOCIALIST MOLDOVA

Jennifer R. Cash
Halle/Saale, Germany

Abstract. Throughout history, large scale political and economic change have often correlated with change in the observance of holidays and the ritual cycle, reflecting and enabling the appearance of new ideologies and practices related to work. This is especially true for the modern period, both from the initial appearance of capitalism and industrialism, and in the twentieth-century efforts of states to engineer and better control economic development. The Soviet Union and other socialist states, for example, transformed the cycle of annual holidays celebrated by their populations with the intent of spreading political ideology and increasing economic productivity and efficiency. While there is a small but rich literature about the surprising effects of these policies, there has been no sustained study of post-Soviet or post-socialist transformations in ritual cycles and their connection to changing economic practices and ideologies. This paper represents a preliminary attempt to analyze the impacts of capitalism, nationalism, and religious revival as influences on transformations in the ritual cycle of post-socialist Moldova. .

Key-words: ritual cycle, ritual, post-socialism, Moldova, holidays, celebrations

Cuvinte-cheie: ciclul ritualistic, ritual, post-socialism, Moldova, sărbători, celebrări

Introduction

Over the past two decades, relatively little attention has been given to the topic of changing ritual cycles during postsocialism. This is so despite the importance given by the socialist regimes themselves to the ritual calendar, and to the establishment of new ritual cycles as part of the process of building socialism[1]. Wide-ranging historical and cross-cultural studies also indicate a frequent coincidence of changes in the ritual cycle with large scale political and economic transformation, suggesting that postsocialism should also have been occasioned by significant changes in ritual life. In the early years of the post-socialist transition, communities throughout Eurasia responded to economic hardship and the collapse of institutional safety nets both by withdrawing

[1] Creed (2002: 57) adds that the absence of ritual analysis for the post-socialist period is a particularly "curious lacuna" because several leading scholars had worked on the topic prior to the collapse of socialism, and because ritual has remained a topic of interest for prominent anthropologists of Western Europe for several decades.

from ritual activity (Creed 2002) and by intensifying their participation in such events as weddings, feasts, and festivals (Werner 1999). But what have the overall impacts of transition been on local ritual cycles? And what have been the major influences on these transformations?

The following pages focus on the Republic of Moldova as a case study. I propose a preliminary analysis of changes in the ritual cycle, as it is experienced in rural Moldova, in which I consider the influence of economic transformation (capitalism), nationalism, and religious revival. The paper is based on nine months of fieldwork in 2009-2010 in the village of Răscăieți, near Moldova's southeastern border with Ukraine.

Transformations of Ritual Cycles

Ritual calendars are both sign and symbol of power structures and social hierarchy (Burman 1981). Institutions that control calendars exercise significant power in shaping individual and collective experience. In part the power derived from controlling rituals is related to their content and meaning, but control over the cycle of rituals observed and celebrated is more fundamentally related to the definition and control of time itself. For example, even the hour, the day, and the week are temporal constructs emerging out of religious rituals associated with Judaeo-Christian tradition (Muir 1997: 72-79; Zerubavel 1981). Even though the time units themselves have now been emptied of their original religious meaning, their universal acceptance reflects a historical process in which the Judaeo-Christian tradition has dominated social life on a global scale. In the modern period, economic and political institutions have also recognized the power of controlling rituals and time. Early capitalists struggled for a few hundred years to break the influence of the church's established cycle of holidays and feasts over the working habits of their workers (Thompson 1967), while all new European political regimes since the French Revolution, have sought to adjust the ritual cycle according to their dominant ideology (Ozouf 1988).

Indeed, the ritual calendar was a site of ongoing manipulation by the socialist regimes throughout Eastern Europe. In the early years of the Soviet Union, for example, new holidays (and the abolition of others) commemorated the revolution, and sought to implement new social values specific to a socialist society (Binns 1979a). Over time, however, the functions of new rituals changed. During the 1930s, public celebrations emphasized "joy" and prosperity, signaling to citizens, the state, and the international community that Soviet citizens lived well and supported the state (Petrone 1994: 26). After Stalin's death, the Soviet ceremonial calendar expanded rapidly during the 1960s, in a continued effort to legitimize Soviet rule as well as provide leisure for Soviet citizens (Binns 1979a: 589). Many of these new holidays were "homeopathic", imitating and overlaying preexisting folk holidays and rituals, especially in Ukraine and the other western republics (Binns 1979b). Outside of the Soviet Union, other socialist states also manipulated ritual cycles and calendars for political, economic, and social goals. In the 1970s, for example, the Bulgarian government intensified its efforts in "cultural management" by introducing various kinds of "socialist"

rituals, expanding from life-cycle rituals to national celebrations, "to replace the personality cult and (instill) new mechanisms to legitimize their power, to instill socialist values in the population, and to fight the influence of the Church" (Roth 1990: 8). The importance of such engagements with the relationship between past, present, and future in individual and collective lives has to do with the centrality of time itself to Marxist-Leninist ideology (Kaneff 2004).

The impact of socialist calendars on mass perceptions of time, political opinion, or social values is clearly mixed. Roth, for example, identifies four types of response to the Bulgarian regime's changes, none of which was wholly compliant with the intended effects. Instead, he finds partial rejection, adaptive acceptance, over-acceptance (in which a new ritual is used to accomplish "old" gains in status), and locally-specific meanings ascribed to public rituals (again towards private forms, primarily large-scale feasting) (1990: 10). In the Soviet Union, as well, new holidays seem not to have created the extreme rupture with the past that was intended. The Soviet holiday cycle was intended not only to break the influence of religion in everyday life, but also to discipline peasants into urban, industrial workers by providing regular relaxation as a reward (Lane 1981). Yet within the conditions of a planned economy, the new holidays had the unexpected effect of duplicating the earlier agricultural-religious pattern of fast-feast (Petrone 2000: 16 / 1994: 79-80). Instead of smoothing time and work into a more uniform and continual process as happened in other industrial systems, the dynamics of economic production and distribution under Soviet socialism intensified the disjuncture between "normal" times and celebratory periods.

The introduction of new holidays and rituals during the socialist period, however incompletely accepted, nevertheless contributed to the shape and form of everyday socialist life. As people participated in the life-cycle rituals, public holidays, and mass celebrations organized by the state, the possibilities for other activities were shaped and constrained accordingly, so that the rhythms of their lives became entangled with the state's ideology and economic system. Katherine Verdery (1996: 40), for example, describes the ways in which official temporal rhythms prevented Romanian citizens during the 1980s from engaging in hospitality and other forms of ritualized sociality that were not managed by the state. The ritual cycle mediated relations between the socialist state and its citizens in multiple ways. The revival of folk rituals in some areas, such as Western Ukraine, thus helped to break the state's control over social life, introducing new models for political self-organization alongside the ritual itself (Kenney 2002).

But what has happened in the post-socialist period? In the early 1990s, new post-socialist governments throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union engaged in a number of practices to remove the symbolic markers of the socialist regimes. Across the region, streets were renamed, monuments changed, history textbooks rewritten, and national holidays reintroduced or established (Watson 1994). The early years of postsocialism were so strongly marked by symbolic reordering that important political and cultural figures were even being moved and reburied in multiple locations (Verdery 1999). But what of the ritual cycle in its totality? Has it been a concern for the new regimes? And, if so, how are they using it? Do new rituals promote capitalism? Religion? Nationalism? Something else? In the following pages, I attempt a preliminary sketch and analysis of the contemporary ritual cycle in rural Moldova. The questions to be asked include how the post-socialist calendar differs from the socialist one, and what this tells us about the changing nature of power.

Definitions of ritual and related terms vary widely (see Bell 1997). In this case, I have followed the lead of Edward Muir, whose opinion is that it is most important to frame the concept of ritual "so that it is useful for analysis" (1997: 6), rather than seeking an ultimate definition of the concept itself. Accordingly, I consider the ritual cycle to be composed of two elements – legal holidays determined by the state, and popularly observed feasting occasions. Feasting occasions further include major religious holidays, major Saints' Days and popular name days, life-cycle events, death commemorations, and family holidays. The reasons for this selection will shortly become clear.

The Moldovan Case

The Republic of Moldova became an independent state in 1991, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Like other Soviet republics, the late 1980s were marked by the rise of a nationalist movement. In Moldova, this movement briefly represented the interests of multiple ethnic groups but soon developed into the Popular Front, which demanded recognition of the essential unity of ethnic Moldovans with ethnic Romanians, and the unification of Moldova with Romania. While ethnic Moldovans form the majority population (nearly two-thirds in 1989), the ethnic minorities nevertheless represent a numerically substantial and politically salient population. Thus, in the post-Soviet period, identity politics have been at the fore of state politics.

In the first years of independence, the new government pursued a variety of pro-Romanian policy changes. These changes, combined with elite politics, sparked violent conflict in the region of Transnistria, and among ethnic Gagauz in the south (Kauffman 1996). As a result, all subsequent governments have pursued "Moldovanist" orientations for the state's national identity in varying degrees (King 2000), recognizing a kinship between ethnic Moldovans and Romanians, without insisting that the two peoples form a single nation, nor that the two countries should be united. In 2001, the reformed Communist Party gained control of the government for two terms, with their mandate ending in 2009. While the Popular Front's engagement with political symbolism clearly stressed the Romanian identity of ethnic Moldovans and the Republic of Moldova, the engagement of subsequent governments with political symbolism has been less overtly recognized. Western analysts, for example, tend to see little substantive difference between the symbolic engagements of the Communist Party and its opposition, especially since 2005 when all political parties have promoted Europeanization and the eventual entry of Moldova into the European Union as a primary political goal (March 2004). Local scholars, however, report a much more complex relationship between the current Communist Party, Moldovanism, and the Soviet Union (Bîrlădeanu 2013; Cojocari 2007).

The complex relationship between contemporary political issues and the Soviet legacy is visible in the official ritual calendar. Since 26 December 1990, the list of official holidays and rest days in the Republic of Moldova has been modified five times.[2] In 1991, 1999, 2001, 2002, and 2009, new holidays have been added, and – occasionally – others have been removed. The list has been changed continuously since the original publication of this article; I discuss these ongoing changes below. The result is a somewhat confusing mix of days, designated as one of three types: 1) national holidays and commemorative days; 2) traditional holidays; and 3) days of rest[3]. The list reflects the continuity of several Soviet-era holidays that were adopted by the general population, the reintroduction of religion into public life, and the commemoration of a few "heroes" of the recent national movement[4]. The impression gained from reading the list is hardly one of consistency or deliberation. The classification of holidays is chaotic, contradictory, and in many ways, nonsensical based on other local conceptions of how holidays ought to be divided.

***Figure 1**. Official Holidays and Rest Days in the Republic of Moldova (* indicates holiday listed in more than one category)*

	Holiday	Date according to International Civic (Gregorian or "New") calendar	Celebrated with Household Feast?	Also public holiday?
National holidays and commemorative days	Mihai Eminescu Day (Romanian national poet and writer) (post-soviet)	15 January	No	
	Commemoration of the Victims of Fascism	22 June	No	
	Sovereignty Day	23 June	No	
	Ștefan cel Mare Day (Moldovan Ruler) (post Soviet)	2 July	No	
	Victims of Stalinism	6 July	No	
	Constitution Day	29 July	No	
	Independence Day (post Soviet)*	27 August	No	Yes
	Our Language Day (post Soviet)*	31 August	No	Yes
	National Wine Day (post Soviet)	Second Sunday in October	No	
Traditional holidays	New Year's (1 January)*	1 January	Yes	Yes
	Mărțişor	1 March	Workplace	
	International Women's Day*	8 March	Yes	Yes
	International Worker's Day*	1 May	No	Yes
	Victory Day*	9 May	No / Some picnics	Yes
	International Children's Day	1 June	No	
Days of Rest (Public Holidays)	New Year's (1 January)	1 January	Yes	Yes
	Christmas (7, 8 January)	7, 8 January	Yes	Yes
	International Women's Day	8 March	Yes	Yes
	Easter	Changing	Yes	Yes
	Easter of the Blessed	1 week after Easter	Yes – in cemetery	Yes
	International Worker's Day	1 May	No	Yes
	Victory Day	9 May	No / Some picnics	Yes
	Independence Day	27 August	No	Yes
	Our Language Day	31 August	No	Yes
	Hram (locally specific)	each locale has its own	Yes	Yes
	Christmas	25 December	Some	Yes

[2] Hotărârea Parlamentului Republicii Moldova cu privire la zilele de sărbătoare şi la zilele de odihnă (Parliamentary Decision of the Republic of Moldova concerning celebratory days and rest days). Document in author's possession, copy provided by the Public Law Library in Chişinău (Biblioteca Publică de Drept).

[3] The categories, in the original Romanian, are 1) *sărbători naționale şi zile comemorative*, 2) *sărbători tradiționale*, and 3) zile de odihnă.

[4] Days devoted to particular categories of workers are not included in this list, but several continue to be celebrated by workers themselves. Teacher's Day, for example, is still widely celebrated in schools. I do not include these days in my discussion because they are institutionally restricted, and not accompanied by feasting within most households.

National holidays and commemorative days are primarily new holidays, including two days devoted to Moldovan-Romanian national figures (Mihai Eminescu and Ştefan cel Mare), three days commemorating moments in the construction of post-Soviet statehood (Sovereignty Day, Constitution Day, and Independence Day), and one day which bridges nationalism and state construction (Our Language Day). Yet the category retains two Soviet-era holidays as well, honoring both Victims of Fascism and Victims of Stalinism, and includes an apparently incongruous holiday – National Wine Day – introduced in 2002.

The list of "traditional holidays" is anything but it includes the internationally celebrated date for New Year's (1 January), International Women's Day, International Worker's Day, International Children's Day, Victory Day, and Mărțişor. Three of these holidays reflect a commitment to internationalism, while Victory Day is an explicitly Soviet holiday. Even New Year's can be considered a Soviet holdover, in that the official calendar places it on 1 January, rather than on the folk and religious date of 14 January. Only Mărțişor, falling on 1 March, coincides with folk calendrical rituals, but its celebration in Moldova is more clearly linked to Soviet-era efforts to build a Moldovan nation, (Cojocari 2011). After 2009, this holiday's role has changed, and its public celebration has been more closely articulated with ideas of European heritage.

Several of the dates from the first two categories are also duplicated as "days of rest" on which public offices are closed. On New Year's, International Women's Day, International Worker's Day, Victory Day, Independence Day, and Our Language Day, all state employees (including teachers) do not work. Additionally, five religious holidays – Christmas (both the traditional celebration on 7-8 January and 25 December), Easter (Orthodox), Easter of the Blessed (1 week later), and *Hram* – are listed as days of rest. The mix of occasions on which the state authorizes a full break from routine work, is thus also internally contradictory, training the population's attention to both significant Soviet events and post-Soviet national ones; international and local; and state and church. In my fieldwork, I found that few of Moldova's citizens know how their official holidays are categorized, but several of the dates – such as Victory Day, Christmas, and New Year's – are regularly discussed as reflecting confusion in state priorities.

Indeed, as Bîrlădeanu (2013) has suggested, it appears that most of Moldova's post-independence governments have adjusted the calendar without a deep conceptualization of what holidays are able to *do*.[5] The new calendar does reflect the political achievements of the late-Soviet national movement. For example, many of the new national holidays focus attention on the shared linguistic and cultural identity between Moldovans and Romanians, while the religious holidays now recognized as "days of rest" acknowledge the importance of Orthodox belief and practice in Moldovan life. The inclusion of holidays such as Easter, Easter of the Blessed, and *Hram* can be considered part of a broader religious revival, coinciding with renewed ethnic and national sentiment. In this way, the new holidays respond to demands for greater recognition of local identity, and – in granting it – secure legitimacy for the new state. Yet this aspect of national holidays is also confused by the continued celebration of Soviet holidays like Victory Day, and the days commemorating the Victims of Fascism and Stalinism.

The new holidays thus best represent the political tentativeness of Moldova's post-socialist governments, as they have sought to distance themselves from Soviet rule, but also continue to rely on the Soviet system of holidays for legitimization among some segments of the population. Yet few of the new holidays, in concept or their celebration, seem intended to address the population beyond a narrowly defined political spectrum. For example, none of the new holidays seem intended to achieve the kind of effects commonly ascribed to state-established ritual calendars and cycles – e.g. regulating productivity, rewarding work, smoothing labor relations, or educating or entertaining the citizenry. Only National Wine Day, established by the Communist government (2001-2009) in its first year of power, looks beyond the immediate post-Soviet

[5] Unfortunately, it is not currently possible to access transcripts of the parliamentary sessions in which the law on holidays was discussed. A major fire in Moldova's parliament building on 7 April 2009, destroyed many of the records held in the parliamentary archives. Restoration is ongoing, but as of November 2010, when my research assistant, Corina Rezneac, obtained permission to the archives, all copies of the minutes related to the holiday law appear to have been among the lost records.

political context, as an attempt to "brand" Moldova and encourage international tourism and investment. Yet internal observers, comparing the variety of smaller holidays and events introduced by the Communist government, also see National Wine Day as continuing Soviet efforts to mold public opinion and behavior. Bîrlădeanu (2013), for example, argues that National Wine Day, like the Cup of Moldova auto race, is modeled on Soviet mass celebrations, but that citizens have rejected these invitations to public drunkenness and generalized spectatorship. Indeed, my own research bears out Bîrlădeanu's claims that many citizens refuse to participate in National Wine Day in part to protest the government's evident lack of commitment to improving real life conditions in the countryside.

In other words, the official list of holidays reflects the post-socialist state's general withdraw from planning, rather than a coherent vision of how holidays might be used as a tool of governance. Relatedly, while Moldova is officially transitioning to capitalism, the list of holidays indicates little concern for economic development. Official holidays, however, are only one part of the overall ritual cycle. In the following section, therefore, I will examine how official holidays combine with feasting events to contribute to a distinctive rhythm of work and rest with significant implications for understanding overall changes in the importance of the ritual cycle.

Village Holidays and Feasts

During 2009-2010, I conducted nine months of field research in the village of Răscăieți, near Moldova's southeastern border with Ukraine, and immediately on the border with the secessionist region of Transnistria. Răscăieți is a representative Moldovan village in several respects. From the geographical perspective, it is mid-distance from the capital city of Chişinău (ca. 113 km; 2-2.5 hrs drive), making it neither very far from, nor very close to, the country's political and economic center. It is also of medium size for a Moldovan village, with an official population size of about 2,500 people living in some 1,200 households. There are high rates of labor migration, particularly among the parents of school-aged children, of whom 54 percent have at least one parent working abroad. [6] The ethnic composition of the village is also overwhelmingly Moldovan, despite the prominence of Ukrainian surnames. There are also several Gypsy families who are now officially referred to as Roma although they do not speak Romani and identify themselves as "Moldovan" on census forms. Thus village demographics testify to the history of multi-ethnicity in the region while also reflecting a general tendency towards ethnic assimilation and homogenization within individual villages.

[6] In 2008, the local school conducted its own census, revealing that 30% of students have both parents working abroad, and 54% of students have at least one parent working abroad. The census was considered necessary because official statistics are based on registered residents of the village. When migrants do not officially un-register themselves as residents in the village they continue to be counted, even when they are not "at home" for long periods. While many migrants, particularly men, are only absent from the village for part of the year, even migrants who work abroad for several years do not usually renounce their village residency.

Răscăieți is an old village – first settled in 1595 – but there are no buildings that are even 100 years old, nor are there other obvious markers of this long history with the exception of a few artifacts housed in the village museum and among family possessions. Collective memory stretches only to the inter-war period, and really only to the events of the Second World War, when the village was on the frontline for several months. In a well-remembered and commemorated battle, Soviet forces succeeded in crossing the Nistru River and took control of a hill at the edge of the village. Villagers were evacuated during the severest fighting, and report that upon their own return or that of their parents, nothing remained: animals had been taken or slaughtered, houses burned, and even household goods (rugs, bedding) that had been buried in cellars for safekeeping were plundered. The period after the war is thus remembered as a time of starting households again "from zero". There are three monuments in the village to commemorate aspects of these battles, and until "recently" (circa 2006) veterans from the Soviet army who had fought in Răscăieți would come to the 9 May Victory Day commemorations with their families from other republics. This has declined in recent years as the veterans have died and new state borders between the former republics have made travel more difficult[7]. The war, however, remains an important pillar of village identity among even the youngest inhabitants.

Răscăieți's economy is dominated, like the whole country, by agriculture, and it has not fared well during the post-socialist transition. The village shares a mayor and administrative offices with an adjacent village, Răscăieți Noi, which was established on formerly unsettled land during the Soviet period with the rapid post-war population growth. Land holdings and economic data continue to be compiled collectively for the two localities, but other than the mayor's office, they have separate institutions (church, school, kindergartens, culture house), and are felt to constitute two villages. During the Soviet period, the combined village boasted two collective farms, both centered in Răscăieți. One farm, with its fields, buildings, and brigades located along the central road(s) specialized in growing vegetables for seed stock, although it also produced grain, fruit, and grapes. Poultry, pigs, and cattle were raised in barns in Răscăieți Noi, as part of the operations of the first farm. The other farm, established somewhat later, specialized in grapes and bulk wine production.

[7] These are the causes that the director of the village museum, who organized the event, gave for the decline, but I think it is almost certainly more complex. War memorials and commemoration have been studied by two local anthropologists, Ludmila Cojocari and Gabriela Popa. Cojocari (2007), for example, demonstrates that recent large-scale war commemorations have depended on official support, organization, and financing by the state. In a case-study of several villages, including the nearby village of Carahasani, Popa (2009) also finds that the renewal of war memorials and commemorations has largely been dependent on the initiative of one or a few individuals, if not organized through official channels. Both also find a pattern in which war commemorations have been moving from memorials into cemeteries during recent years, and in which the dead of all armies (not just Soviet forces) are now likely to be remembered despite the continuity of official state rhetoric which neglects the reality that Moldova's men also fought in the Romanian forces. Thus, I suspect that there are other reasons that the style of commemoration has changed in Răscăieți, including - at the very least - the museum director's changing level of commitment and activity, changing priorities of the local administration, and new options for commemorating the war dead.

The village might have been expected to fare better than it has under decollectivization and privatization because it is one of only four villages in a climatological microzone capable of producing the famous Purcari wines.[8] But the local wine factory has no bottling facilities, and Russia's recent bans on the importation of bulk Moldovan wine seriously crippled the factory's activities. Similarly, the political crisis between Moldova's central government and the secessionist region in Transnistria broke the chain of institutional relationships involved in vegetable seed production and verification. Local agricultural production and food processing has thus come to a virtual standstill in the past 15 years, with fewer than 100 people now employed by the village's two successor farms. The farms, moreover, no longer pursue the crops best-suited for the local soil and microclimate, but exclusively pursue grain production. Other employment options in the village are scarce, with only ten stores, three bars, and one internet and copy center, and a handful of entrepreneurial small farmers.

Between economic decline and labor migration, it would be reasonable to expect diminishing ritual activity. Indeed, people report a diminishment in the scale and liveliness of activities – a point to which I return in the conclusion - but the calendar itself hardly supports such a conclusion. Instead, the kinds of holidays observed by individual households appears – if anything – to be expanding, accommodating some of the holidays designated by national law, and also introducing a wider range of "religious" holidays into overt celebration.

As a component of overall fieldwork I conducted a small survey with 25 village households in February-March 2010. The questionnaire primarily included questions about household economic strategies, but also asked a question about the "celebrations, rituals, and events" that members of the household had participated in during the course of the preceding year[9]. The intent of the question was to gauge the cost of ritual life, as it then asked subsequent questions about whether gifts were given or received, whether the respondent considered this "expensive", and who else attended the event. Although not intended as such, the question also had the effect of generating an image of the local ritual cycle and classification of "holidays".

Respondents acknowledged few of the holidays included in the national law as among the "celebrations, rituals, or events" in which members of their household had participated in the past year. Observation also confirms that national holidays are rarely celebrated within the family. The survey question was instead interpreted as being about the feasts which a family sponsored or attended. The word my respondents used, *masă* (pl. *mese*), means table or

[8] The Purcari wines are blends, marked by precise sugar content and trace minerals of grapes grown on the hill slopes of these villages, which are in turn related to particular combinations of soil and sunlight. The more famous black wine (Negru de Purcari), sometimes ordered by the British royal family, combines Cabernet-Sauvignon, Rara Neagră, and Saperavi grapes. The red (Roşu de Purcari) contains Cabernet-Sauvignon, Merlot, and Malbec grapes. During the Soviet period, a third blend, Purple Purcari, was also produced in each of the four villages, but now is produced by none of them.

[9] The questionnaire I used was developed by the members of the Economy and Ritual group at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology to generate a limited set of comparative data on six field sites. Similar data on ritual cycles and the cost of ritual activity thus exist for communities in Romania, Hungary, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Kyrgyzstan.

meal, and could equally apply to any of a day’s meals as to a large feast. Survey respondents, however, meant the term to refer to a limited number of feasts, outlined in the chart below, coinciding with several major religious holidays, major Saints’ Days (especially those coinciding with popular namedays), family holidays, lifecycle rituals, and death commemorations.

Figure 2. *Household Based Feasts*

	Holiday	***Date according to International Civic (Gregorian or “New”) calendar***	***Celebrated with Household Feast?***	***Also public holiday?***
Major Religious Holidays	Christmas (old style)	7 January	Yes	Yes
	Easter	Changing	Yes	Yes
	Easter of the Blessed	Sunday or Monday after Easter, according to locality	Feast in the cemetery and at home	Yes
	Ispas (Ascension)	40 days after Easter	Yes	
	Duminica Mare / Rusaliile (Pentecost and Trinity Sunday)	50 days after Easter	Yes / Some picnics	
	Hram (locally specific)	each locale has its own; 21 November in Răscăieți	Yes	
Major Saints Days	Sf. Vasile	14 January	If nameday	
	Ion Botezătorul	19 January	If nameday	
	Sf. Ion	20 January	If nameday	
	Adormirea Maicii Domnului	28 August	If nameday	
	Sf. Andrei	13 December	If nameday	
	Sf. Gheorghe	6 May	If nameday	
Family Holidays	Baptism	Often coincide	Yes	
	Cumătrie (baptismal party)		Yes	
	1st birthday		Yes	
	Marriage registration	Often coincide	Yes	
	Cununie (betrothal)		Yes	
	Wedding (party)		Yes	
	Funeral		Yes	
Death Commemorations	Scheduled commemorations over 7 year		By families with deceased	
	Saturdays of the Dead		By families with deceased	

Of the holidays designated by national law, it is worth noting that only some of the public holidays are celebrated by household based feasts. Such feasts are held only on New Year’s Eve, Christmas, Easter and Easter of the Blessed, *Hram*, and Women’s Day. Each of these falls into the category of “days of rest”, but households still do not feast on all public holidays. One family mentioned barbecuing outdoors on 9 May, but others did not, which means either that they are exceptional, that the holiday is in decline, or that most families forget to report it because it does not follow the more common schema of religious holidays suggested by Christmas, Easter, *Hram*, and even New Year’s as a Soviet-era Christmas-substitute (see also Bîrlădeanu 2013). A further anomaly in the categorization of the national holiday list is that Soviet Army Day (23 February) – though no longer in the official state calendar – is being resumed as a Men’s Day among some segments of the population; this should not be dismissed as mere nostalgia or sympathy for the recently ruling Communist Party. In the village where I conducted research, Army Day activities were organized for high school boys by an outspoken “democrat” who otherwise opposes both the Communist Party and Russian influence on Moldova’s political and cultural life. Rather, Army Day, as it is celebrated locally, commemorates the military service and resultant deaths of local men; not only does the village have strong memories of World War II, but it also lost a well-regarded young man during the Soviet war with Afghanistan[10]. Army Day celebrations involve food and drink, but exhibit a wide range, from men treating each other to drinks in local bars, to outdoor picnics and barbeques, to large meals prepared by the woman of a household to serve her husband’s guests.

In urban areas, particularly the capital, many of the holidays outlined in national law are accompanied by public festivities – such as outdoor concerts, parades, and speeches. Thus urban families often participate in these holidays as a form of leisure, but do not organize corresponding private celebrations in their homes. For culture workers and many intellectuals, their part in the continual organization of these public festivities also intensifies their experience of living from “celebration to celebration”. But similar events are organized more rarely in villages, meaning that the national calendar is less salient in the rural cycles of work and leisure.

[10] The importance of Army Day is almost certainly like that of Victory Day, which – aside from official commemorations organized by the national government - has been absorbed into the celebration of Easter and familial cycles of death commemoration (Cojocari 2007). Many war monuments have similarly been absorbed into the fabric of local village memory and commemoration, quite apart from their official Soviet meanings (Popa 2009).

"From Celebration to Celebration", or – "From the Ship to the Ball"

While village households celebrate only six of the holidays recognized by national law with feasts, survey respondents identified many other feasting occasions in the course of a year. There are so many feasting occasions that respondents often tired of listing them for me. There are many differences between the kinds of events collectively identifiable as feasts. Feasting events in general range from festive meals held within the nuclear family (like those prepared on New Year's Eve or Christmas) to major events with upwards of 200 guests (like weddings). The scale in the size of attendance is matched by a scale in expense, although even the smallest family events often cost upwards of 100 Euro. It was common, as well, for villagers (and their urban counterparts) to describe themselves as living "de la sărbători la sărbători" ("from celebration to celebration"), as a comment on the frequency with which they prepared and attended festive occasions. In an attempt to capture some of what that expression means, I describe the winter holiday season below.

On Saturday, 9 January, I took a short leave from fieldwork to attend a research group meeting in Macedonia. My host family was dismayed that I would be missing the second round of New Year's Day celebrations, but gleefully announced that when I returned ten days later, I would be going directly "from the ship to the ball" – like a sailor on leave. Immediately upon my return, I would attend three birthday/nameday parties (only one of which I was told about before leaving), spend a day assisting in the preparations for a baptismal party, and then attend the same celebration the following evening.

We had already been celebrating what felt like a non-stop string of holidays through the month of December and the first week of January. On St. Andrei (14 December), which marked the beginning of the winter holiday season, the family sought out families to visit that were celebrating the nameday for one of their members. On 17 December, the family observed the six month mourning period for the wife's mother's death, scheduling it to coincide with her nameday (St. Varvara), rather than the actual calendrical date. While technically a somber occasion, it still involved substantial cooking and eating, with guests in attendance. St. Nicolae fell on 19 December, and again the family considered going to one of several families with a nameday celebration, but decided against it. Even then, the wife baked special breads to send to her son at university. On 25 December, many households prepared special foods in case they had visitors, since the day had been declared a holiday by the government. Though few families planned to celebrate this Christmas themselves, they were prepared for visitors who might be celebrating. The family I was staying with was no exception; in fact, they felt compelled to celebrate because of my presence, and invited several guests. On 26 December, I was invited to attend a 3-year death commemoration. Again, although somber, it also involved a feast, which had taken three women two days to prepare. 31 December and 1 January were celebrated as New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. When we attempted to "return to work" on 2 January, our plans were thwarted by a casual invitation by a

neighbor, which we found impossible to refuse. On 4 January, we began three days of preparing food for Christmas on 7 January, which everyone expected to celebrate for a full three days. I left the village on the third day, but found myself celebrating St. Stefan's Day as a family *Hram* (Patron Saint's Day) with friends in the capital.

In short, from 14 December - 9 January, I had ten occasions to feast. Five of these occasions were calendrical holidays, likely to be celebrated by many if not most families in the village. Two were death commemorations, meaning that only a limited number of families in the village were participating. Yet all families observe such commemorations, and many were equally likely to do so during the winter holidays. One of these commemorations also fell on a Saint's Day, so families with women named Varvara may have also had small celebrations. Families not celebrating 9 January as the third day of Christmas may well have celebrated it as a nameday or family *hram*. The one event "without occasion" was the invitation we received from our neighbors. But in fact, this last event did have an occasion – it was the day following a holiday, which meant that it fell within the traditional three days allotted to nearly all holidays for exchanging visits.

Although I had ten occasions to feast, and only technically observed eight, I actually feasted several more times. On the five calendrical occasions widely celebrated in the village, each household prepared and ate its own feast, received several shifts of guests, and then visited other households. My host family regularly visited two other households (their marital godparents, and their own marital godchildren)[11]. Because of the rounds of visitors and visiting, feasting usually continued on the second day of each holiday, and food remained for the third day (and sometimes subsequent days), so that visitors coming for non-celebratory purposes were still treated to a festive table in the days immediately following a holiday. In total, the calendar would predict some fifteen days out of twenty-five during the "winter holidays" as being used by all villagers for feasting during this period. Taking into account the additional one or two days of advance preparation needed for each, it is clear that the entire period is devoted primarily to feasting. The observance of family events in addition to the commonly observed calendrical holidays only intensifies this time.

Returning on 19 January, I arrived for Bobotează/John the Baptist Day. On this day, many households send an individual to morning church services, but household celebrations only occur when someone in the family is also celebrating a nameday. This, however, is one of the most popular namedays, and is thus widely celebrated with family feasts. Indeed, the husband in my host family celebrated it as both nameday and birthday. The 20 January, St. John's Day, was similarly celebrated as a major nameday. It is also considered the last of the winter holidays, after which there are "officially" no further holidays until the spring.

[11] There are two types of godparents in the Republic of Moldova - those who witness and sponsor a wedding (*nași de cununie*), and those who baptize a child (*nași de botez*). The godchildren in both cases are referred to as *fin* (m.), *fină* (f.), or *fini* (pl.).

Yet the spring comes early. Most people mention 23 February (Army Day) or 8 March as the next holidays to occur, but in fact are likely to observe other feasts in the intervening month. For example, the 21 January is traditionally celebrated as Midwives Day. Thus on the very day when women are supposed to resume household work, they may in fact take gifts of food and drink to the woman who delivered their children, spending the day joking and celebrating with other women. The holiday is no longer practiced in my fieldsite, but there was no shortage to continuing celebrations. In addition to birthday and nameday events, many families also use the lull in calendrical holidays to schedule lifecycle events such as baptisms and baptismal parties. On 22 January, for example, we spent the day preparing for a baptismal party to be held on the following day.

While December and January are expected to be passed as a series of celebrations and holidays, this rhythm often also marks a family's life at other points of the year. This is true for three reasons. On the one hand, there are other holiday cycles, such as the cycle centered on Easter, which also generate multiple feasts. Interestingly, villagers who responded to my survey in February rarely mentioned the smaller feasts in the Easter cycle, but those who responded in late March, as Easter approached, often did. Clearly, the intense celebration of holidays does not "end" in late January, as I was often told, but continues throughout the year. Village Saints' Day celebrations (*Hram*) form another cycle which generates multiple feasts. Although *Hram* celebrations occur throughout the year, most are clustered in the fall, before the Christmas fast begins. For many families, *Hram* celebrations in other villages provide the opportunity and motivation to visit family, friends, and colleagues. Yet since these visits tend to be reciprocal, the more visitors one receives during one's own *Hram*, the more intense one's own visiting/celebrating schedule is to other villages. Only the summer months (June-August) are not marked by widely shared holidays, but life cycle events, death commemorations, and the occasional village *Hram* continue to mark the calendars of individual households.

Life is Less Joyous...

Many of my informants sense that there is something specific to the rhythms of Moldovan life, and this sense has become more pronounced as people who have worked abroad reflect on the differences in their life at home and abroad. For example, one woman described how people are permanently left with unfinished plans: "You decide you want to do something, and start to do it, and then something intervenes". She retold the story of a friend who had worked abroad and returned home, determined to have "time for herself" as she had in Italy. Yet she found she could not "get things in order" at home in Moldova with the same techniques: "When you come back to Moldova, it is like walking into mud. You get stuck, and cannot move forward". People told me repeatedly (and I observed), that they were constantly working from early in the morning until late at night, and that the constancy of feasts drove this intense schedule of household labor.

My fieldwork in the village of Răscăieți was part of a larger comparative project on economy and ritual in six post-socialist countries. One of our initial questions within the project was whether ritual activity has increased or decreased during the post-socialist period. Not surprisingly, this question does not have a simple answer. Public events, like many Soviet holidays, have largely disappeared from village life. At the same time, religious holidays have gained greater prominence. Major holidays like Easter that were observed with some secrecy during socialism are now openly observed. Many individuals are now also observing many more minor religious holidays and rituals than they previously did. My host mother, for example, no longer washes laundry or does other "work" on Sundays; she sometimes goes to church and gives *pomană* on Saturdays of the Dead; and she even attempted fasting for the first two weeks of Lent in 2010.

Other holidays have been both more and less pronounced in particular years. Holidays with a public dimension are particularly vulnerable to inconsistencies in organization and funding. For example, the celebration of village Patron Saint's Days (*Hram*) has been generally increasing as part of religious revival since the early 1990s, particularly as churches have been newly built or reopened. Villagers in Răscăieți remember the mid-1990s as a highpoint in their own *Hram* celebrations – when outdoor concerts and dances were organized and drew large crowds. In recent years, however, there has been declining interest and energy in *Hram* celebrations. This was particularly noticeable in 2010, when the mayor put little effort into organizing public activities because her energies were occupied with problems related to the installation of gas mains along the village's central streets, and no other individual or group (such as the staff at the Culture House) took the planning initiative. As it happened, *Hram* fell during the highpoint of the 2009 flu pandemic, and all public activities except the church service were cancelled by recommendation of the county government. Rumors spread that the police would block entrance roads to the village (it had the highest number of flu cases in the county), and many expected guests did not arrive from other cities and villages. The example of *Hram* celebrations points not only to the importance of uncontrollable idiosyncrasies from year to year (such as weather or flu scares), but also the central role played by festivity organizers in garnering interest and enthusiasm for particular holidays. This example reveals the continuing legacy of hierarchical and politicized control of cultural activity from the Soviet era as well: in most villages, culture workers have primary responsibility for organizing public celebrations, such as dances and concerts, but they often do not undertake these responsibilities without the mayor's direction. Moreover, both culture workers and political leaders at the county level can require, encourage, or deter the organization of public events in villages.

On the whole, formal observances of holidays, traditions, and religious rituals within households are probably on the increase. Yet people report a loss of excitement, interest, energy, and enthusiasm over the recent and more distant pasts. When I questioned this, informants could identify no clear patterns in the

changing holiday cycle. Most were quick to assess the holidays as decreasing, but this perspective that holidays were more special, joyful, or sincere "before" was adopted equally by respondents in their early twenties and those in their mid-80s, as well as everyone in between. Reported assessments of changes in the ritual cycle, are therefore almost certainly overdetermined by a shared style of narrating history as decline. As Zerubavel notes, narratives of decline are "mental historical outlooks", which cannot be equated with "actual historical trends" (2003: 16). When pressed to compare the celebration of particular holidays across years, I was also offered evidence that "every year is different". Indeed, this perspective also reflects villagers' assessment of the recent past as a period of general impermanence, instability, and constant change.

After 2010: Holidays in the Third Decade of Independence

Every year's ritual calendar is different too. Since 2010, Moldova's legislation on holidays has been updated six times (Parlamentul Republicii Moldova) to the date of this article's publication. The updates available online indicate additions (such as Apple Day), changes (e.g. a shift in the dates of Wine Day), and deletions to the list, but do not present the full text of the current legislation. In 2011, the basic text was modified substantially.[12] Though it still designated three major categories, these were reclassified so that the contradictions and overlaps of the previous organization were no longer present. Instead of 1) national holidays and commemorative days; 2) traditional holidays; and 3) days of rest, the holidays are now classified as: 1) celebratory days; 2) commemorative days; and 3) days of rest. The earlier classifications of "national" and "traditional" holidays were subsumed under the "celebratory days" along with the newly added subcategories of "religious," "professional," and "international" holidays.

The 2011 categorization is more internally logical and consistent; it is also more conciliatory in its approach to defining the "nation." In the 2011 legislation, the list of Moldova's national holidays commemorates the technical dimensions of independent statehood: Day of the Flag, Day of Sovereignty, Constitution Day, and Independence Day. No historic figures are included, and only a single instance of commemorating the country's "Romanian" identity is included ("Our Language Day"). Holidays celebrating heroes of the country's "Romanian" heritage (Mihai Eminescu, Grigore Vieru, and Ștefan cel Mare) appear in the second category of commemorative days alongside tragic events whose recognition is often controversial and reminds society of particularly stressful periods (1992 armed conflict [with Transnistria]; the Chernobyl accident; Victory Day (over fascism); and victims of repression).

At one level, the 2011 organization of the law on holidays almost certainly reflects the symbolic consolidation of Moldova as a nation-state, independent but not forgetful of its Soviet history. Though there is little text surrounding the categorization, that which is present continues the symbolic construction of an inclusive and democratic nation; the state is meant to "guarantee the continuity of popular traditions, sustain the initiatives of citizens, public

[12] Lege "Cu Privire la zilele de sărbătoare, zilele comemorative și zilele de odihnă în Republica Moldova."

authorities and institutions, and commercial and non-commercial organizers to hold celebrations and other important events" (Capitol I. Articolul 1.4). Citizens and religious institutions are entitled to suggest new holidays for inclusion in the list; restrictions are noted only to prevent a proliferation of professional days.

The 2011 law, however, retains the same days of rest that I noted above. At the local level, this almost certainly means that confusion over which holidays should be publicly celebrated and why continues. Nor is the 2011 organization of the holidays likely to be as stable as it suggests: in 2014, there was a draft law to replace Victory Day with Europe Day (also to be celebrated on May 9). Not only would such a substitution change national symbolism significantly by replacing a Soviet holiday with a demonstration of European belonging and sentiment, but the draft law also proposes its changes relative to the original 1990 structure of the law with its earlier order of priorities ("on commemorations, celebrations, and rest")![13]

In the third decade of Moldova's independence, the cycle of public holidays remains highly politicized. It seems clear that holidays are meant to serve a political role, and more specifically they are meant to serve as an ever-changing statement of the current government's position in an ongoing nation-building project. They are not meant, perhaps surprisingly, to actually regulate national sentiment among citizens (except insofar as they allow the constant contestation of national identity). They most certainly indicate little concern to regulate collective cycles of work or rest. Nevertheless, the constant addition of holidays, rare deletions, and constant uncertainty over which holidays ought to be celebrated contributes to the expanded celebration of holidays in local communities with attendant effects on local uses of time.

Postsocialism and the Flattening of Time

A more complex discussion of measuring change, and especially of analyzing the structure of informant memories of past ritual activity, is certainly well worth pursuing. In the immediate context of documenting the post-socialist ritual cycle in rural Moldova, however, a few initial conclusions can be made. The most important of these is to note that while there appears to be an overall proliferation of rituals and feasts, people are experiencing a flattening of the ritual cycle. It is clear that during the post-socialist period, the celebration of public holidays in villages has certainly decreased, while the celebration of major and minor religious holidays within the household has definitely increased. In other words, public celebration has decreased, while private feasting has increased. This general change is also noted by informants who point out that holidays are increasingly becoming occasions for feasting that are not accompanied by additional ritual activities. This is true in the case of the village *Hram*, where interest in public dancing has dropped off. It is also

[13] The order of the first two holiday types are reversed in the 2011 law, see above footnote. Available at <http://munteanu.md/initiative/lege-privind-declararea-zilei-de-9-mai-ziua-europei>, accessed on 03.05.2013.

especially true for the ritually-dense winter holiday period, where a number of subsidiary activities associated with the holidays are no longer being practiced. For example, the night before St. Andrei's Day was previously accompanied by a number of divination rituals practiced by girls to determine the qualities of their future husbands. While women in their forties and older have vivid memories of at least one episode of divination from their girlhood, teenage girls today and their parents report that such divination does not take place. Similar examples are abundant.

The result is a flattening of the ritual cycle. Rituals become, in this case, primarily feasts, and holidays have few dimensions other than time off from work spent in cooking and eating. In this context, the experience of going "from celebration to celebration", is only partly a joyful one. It also entails frustrations, and a sense of not being able to bring work plans, whether at home or in the fields, to completion. In the light of previous research on socialist holidays, for example Katherine Verdery's discussion of the *etatization* of time through celebrations as well as work and production schedules, this experience of frustration and lack of control in the post-socialist setting appears as something of a paradox. Why have people not used free time in "their own interest"? Why does the observance of rituals continue to be felt as something not in individuals' control in the post-socialist period? In the current period, it is not even possible to see the celebration of holidays as something determined by the state, as the official calendar is no longer connected to any clear policy to encourage social rhythms in a particular direction. The answer of course is complex, and points to the multiple forms which individual and collective self-interest can take.

The combined extension and flattening of the ritual cycle, with its series of feasts which households are constantly preparing and consuming, is the result of a complex combination of institutions influencing local rhythms. The decline in public festivals, for example, is most closely linked to the withdrawal of the post-Soviet state from the instrumental use of festivities to control social rhythms and ideology. Not only has the village government and Culture House ceased to plan many public festivals, but withdrawing from public activities has been a pragmatic response as people themselves reject the intrusion of the state into their lives. In not organizing public festivals through informal means, people do in fact use free time to other, self-interested purposes. The increase in family feasting, however, should be differently explained. Family feasting in Moldova (excluding major events like weddings), has little connection to direct economic incentives or discouragements. The reciprocal nature of feasting reaffirms and strengthens a core set of relations on which people rely for many kinds of support, but households vary in the degree to which they rely on close relatives, godparents, or godchildren for securing their material needs, and most seek to minimize their dependence, even as they increase visitation. In this case, feasting may be best understood as promoting social relationships for their own sake. Labor migration affects the attendance of individuals at ritual events, and also supplies cash for purchasing many food items, but also bears

little direct influence on the extension or flattening of the ritual cycle. Rather, the most direct influence on the ritual cycle appears to be the reinvigoration of many religious holidays as family feasts.

The reinvigoration of family feasting is best understood as part of a lived nationalism and religious revival. People seek to reclaim time as an expression of their individual and collective identities. The holidays are known "from tradition", and have been actively reinstated in the ritual cycles of many households as an effort to recapture the past, and specifically, the sense of moral order ascribed to the past. In reclaiming time for identity, however, people have also lost the ability to put time to other purposes such as completing other necessary tasks for household provisioning, physical rest, or leisure activity. Feasting punctuates work, but does not necessarily bring rest. Awareness of this situation produces tension, especially among women who bear responsibility for most of the cooking and cleaning, yet everyone feels compelled to observe the feasts, largely for the dual purposes of avoiding social censure and reaffirming social relationships through reciprocal visits. Paradoxically, in the case of Moldova, changes in the ritual cycle during postsocialism suggest a "return" to a pre-capitalist temporal order, where the religious and agricultural cycles dominate alterations between work and rest.

References:

Bell, Catherine. 1997. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Binns, Christopher. 1979a. "The Changing Face of Power: Revolution and Accommodation in the Development of the Soviet Ceremonial System": Part I, *Man* 14(4): 585-606.

Binns, Christopher. 1979b. "The Changing Face of Power: Revolution and Accommodation in the Development of the Soviet Ceremonial System": Part II, *Man* 15(1): 170-187.

Bîrlădeanu, Virgiliu. 2013. "Wine and Speed: The Post-Soviet Holidays in the Republic of Moldova (2001-2009)," *History and Anthropology.* Special issue "Politics and Performance in South-Eastern Europe," guest eds Rozita Dimova and Ludmila D. Cojocaru, 24(1): 36-55.

Burman, Rickie. 1981. "Time and Socioeconomic Change on Simbo, Solomon Islands," *Man* 16(2): 251-267.

Cojocari, Ludmila. 2007. "Political Liturgies and Concurrent Memories in the Context of Nation-Building Process in Post-Soviet Moldova: The Case of 'Victory Day'", *Interstitio: East European Review of Historical Anthropology*, guest eds Irina Livezeanu and Jennifer R. Cash, 1(2): 87-116.

Cojocari, Ludmila. 2011. "Festivalul Mărțișor (1966- 2009): între celebrarea primăverii şi mitologia națiunii" [Festival Martişor (1966-2009): Between Spring Season Celebration and Mythology of the Nation], in *Disciplinarea socială şi modernitatea în societatea modernă şi contemporană (sec. XVI-XXI),* edited by Toader Nicoară, 529-543. Cluj-Napoca: Accent.

Creed, Gerald. 2002. "Economic Crisis and Ritual Decline in Eastern Europe," in *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*, edited by Chris Hann, 57-73. London: Routledge.

Kaneff, Deema. 2004. *Who Owns the Past? The Politics of Time in a "Model" Bulgarian Village.* New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Kauffman, S. 1996. "Spiralling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova's civil War," *International Security* 21: 108-138.

Kenney, Padraic. 2002. *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

King, C. 2000. *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*. Stanford: Hoover Institution.

Lane, Christel. 1981. *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society - The Soviet Case*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

March, L. 2004. "Socialism with Unclear Characteristics: The Moldovan Communists in Government," *Demokratizatsiya* 12(4): 507-524.

Muir, Edward. 1997. *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ozouf, Mona. 1988. *Festivals and the French Revolution*, translated by Alan Sheridan. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Parlamentul Republicii Moldova. 1990. "Hotărâre nr. 433 din 26.12.1990 cu privire la zilele comemorative, zilele de sărbătoare şi la zilele de odihnă în Republica Moldova", in *Monitorul Oficial*, nr. 5, 26.12.1990, available at <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=306859>, accessed at 03.05.2013.

Petrone, Karen. 1994. *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Politics and Culture in Soviet Celebrations, 1934-1939*. PhD dissertation. University of Michigan.

Petrone, Karen. 2000. *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Popa, Gabriela. 2009. "(Re)producing Spaces, Deriving Identities: Symbolic Appropriation of the Second World War Monuments in Post-Soviet Moldova," Paper presented at final conference for the project "New and Ambiguous Nation-building Processes in South-Eastern Europe: Collective Identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova and Montenegro in Comparison", Chişinău, 15 October 2009.

Roth, Klaus. 1990. "Socialist Life-Cycle Rituals in Bulgaria," *Anthropology Today* 6(5): 8-10.

Thompson, E. P. 1967. "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present* 38 (December): 56-97.

Verdery, Katherine. 1996. *The "Etatization" of Time in Ceauşescu's Romania. What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Verdery, Katherine. 1999. *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Watson, Ruby (editor). 1994. *Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Werner, Cynthia Ann. 1999. "The Dynamics of Feasting and Gift Exchange in Rural Kazakhstan," in *Contemporary Kazakhs*, edited by Ingvar Swanberg, 47-72. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon.

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 1981. *Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in Social Life*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 2003. *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, OFFICIAL COMMEMORATIONS, AND THE STATE CALENDAR IN UKRAINE, 1991-2012

Alexandr Osipian
Kramatorsk, Ukraine

Abstract. This paper tries to answer the question: how homogenous must the memories of a "memory place" be in order to generate national identity? Special attention is given to the official politics of memory, which, paradoxically, prevent national consolidation in Ukraine. In post-Soviet Ukraine, the mobilization of the electorate with the abuses of the past is especially effective because it overlaps with regional differences. Different historical legacies, myth-memories, and cultural symbols of different regions are abused by politicians to produce an axis of confrontation between the "West" and "East" of Ukraine in public politics. Many Ukrainians, disappointed with the lack of real economic and social reforms, as well as with the abuses of historical memory by the political elite, found their escape from politics in festivals. These new free-of-politics festivals are mostly organized at the initiative of voluntary groups, sometimes in cooperation with local authorities, could be classified as historical, culinary, or fashion festivals, reinvented folk-festivals, or historical "reconstructions". Such festivities give an opportunity to change the role that "ordinary people" play in their everyday lives and to restore from the grassroots level the social cohesion deliberately destructed by competing political elites on the national level.

Key-words: state calendar, commemorations, re-constructors, national identity, regional differences, Ukraine

Cuvinte-cheie: calendar oficial, comemorări, re-constructori, identitate națională, diferențieri regionale, Ucraina

Introduction

National memory is shared by people who have never seen or heard of one another, yet who regard themselves as having a common history. They are bound together as much by forgetting as by remembering (Gillis 1994: 7). The imperative of the modern nation-state formulated by Ernest Gellner as "one culture, one state" (Gellner 1994: 113-115) is still not realized in Ukraine with it current situation of cultural cleavage. More than twenty years after independence, Ukraine is politically divided into the pro-Western "orange" – Western and Central – and pro-Russian "blue" – Eastern and Southern – parts in accordance with electoral preferences. The notion of the "two Ukraines" widespread in discourse has in a way become paradigmatic. The Ukrainian ruling elites deliberately use it to turn the conflict between their own economic interests into a "war" of memories and identities.

According to Anthony Smith, "[t]he aims of nationalists are not to recreate the past in the present, but to use its example as an inspiration and means

for renewing decayed or fragmented societies, so as to make them viable and confident in the face of the pressures of modernity" (Smith 2004: 204). Quite the reverse, in contemporary Ukraine the past is actively used to divide society for political purposes. In my analysis, there have been four stages in the uses of history in post-Soviet Ukraine:

1) in the late 1980s-early 1990s, history was used to discover the crimes of the communist regime and to undermine the domination of the Communist Party;
2) in the 1990s, history was used to legitimize the emergence of the new independent state;
3) from 1999-2007, the ruling elites began to use history to divide Ukrainian society by emphasizing regional diversity in the perception of the past. This period is marked by the evident decline of the Communist Party of Ukraine in the presidential election of 1999 and in the parliamentary election of 2002. Obvious uses and abuses of history and memory in Ukraine occurred during the presidential elections in 2004 (the Orange Revolution) and during the parliamentary election campaigns in 2006 and 2007;
4) from 2007-2008, politicians have deliberately instrumentalized "the hot issues" of history through the erection and destruction or desecration of "memory places". The new memory places include monuments devoted to the most controversial persons in Ukrainian history; provocative billboards picturing historical topics; and competing commemorations. All are aimed to push out alternative myth-memories from the cultural memory of Ukrainian society or to mobilize certain segments of the electorate according to their alternate visions of the past. Such technologies were used again during the presidential and parliament election campaigns in 2010 and 2012, respectively.

Presidential elections and the so-called Orange Revolution in late 2004 opened a new era of the politics of memory in Ukraine under the presidencies of Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovych. This period, which continues until now, could be characterized by the instrumentalization of the past for the purposes of current politics, a growing and cynical manipulation of the electorate by the ruling elite, indifference among many people to the official commemorations, and the growth of alternative un-official practices of historical commemoration. In this paper I shall look at how the process of remaking the official state calendar unfolds while noting the resistance of large segments of the population. Special attention will be given to the numerous "wars" of commemorations, monuments, and symbols, as well as to regional and age differences and diversities in perceptions, representations, and reconstructions of the past on the popular level. Thus, my paper will be devoted mostly to the recent period of 2004-2012 (with the survey of main trends present in 1990-2004).

In this paper I will address the following set of questions: Why can one witness the evident growth of unofficial and alternative forms and practices of collective dealing with the past in recent years? How do ordinary people respond to official politics of memory and state-led commemorations? How homogenous must the memories in a "memory place" be in order to generate national identity? My focus in this paper is mostly on the interdependence between national identity, collective memory, and "realms of memory". The emphasis on holidays and national identity embraces several topics and the debates surrounding them.

I will begin with analyzing the currently existing official calendar of state holidays in Ukraine. Then, I will examine the changes in the collective identities of the former Soviet Ukrainians after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Special attention will be given to the regional diversities in the perception of history. This paper also provides a detailed account of major trends in the nation-building and official politics of memory. Then, I will turn to the official commemorations. Namely, I will consider the uses and abuses of historical commemorations by competing political elites in Ukraine, as well as in Russian-Ukrainian relations, with the main focus on the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010). The latter part of this study examines in more detail some unofficial or alternative commemorations and festivals as well as amateur reconstructions of real or imagined historical events and cultures, in order to discuss their contents and purposes, and in particular the ways in which ordinary Ukrainians deal with the recent and remote past.

State Calendar

State structures play a key role in shaping and maintaining a nation's narrative of its collective past. One fundamental way that states organize and articulate this narrative is through the state-designed calendar of official holidays, commemorations, and celebrations. The institutionalization of this narrative in the calendar provides a temporal framework that brings pivotal events in a nation's history into popular practice and consciousness in a ritualized, cyclical fashion. Because of the enormous symbolic significance of the state calendar and its capacity to reorient a group, the calendar is a powerful means by which to mark discontinuity between the past and the present, between a former regime and a new one (Wanner 1998: 141).

Much like the flag or a national anthem, the calendar symbolizes the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the nation. The calendar of annual commemorations creates a distinct rhythm of social life that unifies a group through collective action. By connecting individuals to a group through a shared calendar of celebrations and commemorations, a sense of belonging is also created. State-sponsored commemoration, therefore, can be viewed not only as the practice of history but the practice of belonging as well (Wanner 1998: 142). The repetitive nature of commemoration implies continuity with the past even when the links between present and past have been freshly invented. Repeated commemorations can therefore serve as an effective source of solidarity among those who participate. The dimensions of the group acknowledged in commemoration usually reach mythic proportions, often including the living, dead ancestors, and those still to be born. Such grandeur serves the ritualistic atmosphere of the commemoration and lends authenticity to it (Wanner: 1998: 143).

Some issues of state calendar and public holidays in Ukraine have been already studied. American anthropologist Catherine Wanner mostly studied the period of the Ukrainian "national revival" and early statehood during 1990-1994 (coinciding with the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk). During these years, the new state's efforts concentrated on overcoming Soviet legacies and inventing new traditions. Wanner captured these efforts, but omitted evident diversities in regional perceptions of the past, probably because her fieldwork was restricted mostly to Kiev and L'viv. Ukrainian social scientist Viktoria Sereda studied the subsequent period of 1994-2004 (the presidency of Leonid Kuchma). Sereda analyzed regional diversities studying two poles of Ukraine's political and cultural landscape – L'viv and Donetsk. While she captured the diversity in these two places, Sereda omitted an analysis of the deliberate efforts of the ruling elite during those years to counterbalance regional differences and produce more balanced and usable historical narratives without a radical split from the Soviet legacy. Sereda also classified Ukraine's official holidays into three categories – old Soviet, traditional Ukrainian, and new Ukrainian (Sereda 2007: 171).

Sereda's category of "traditional Ukrainian holidays" is problematic on a few counts, some of which Sereda herself acknowledged. It includes religious holidays, which might be considered "traditional", but the majority of holidays in this category were invented in Galicia in the 1930s to celebrate the (unsuccessful) efforts to create an independent Ukrainian state after the First World War.[1] Since Galicia was part of the Polish Republic in 1921-1939, Ukrainian national identity was seen as connected to the threat of separatism and thereby deliberately suppressed by Polish authorities.[2] Thus, these "traditional Ukrainian" holidays were never celebrated officially, but mostly by the members and fellows of radical Ukrainian parties. These holidays were also celebrated in the 1940s and early 1950s in Western Ukraine, mostly in the underground, in order to mobilize more Ukrainians for the struggle against Nazi-German, Soviet-Russian, and Polish oppressors. Many of those who celebrated these holidays in their initial incarnations left Ukraine during or after the Second World War,

[1] Galicia includes three *oblast*'s – Lvivs'ka, Ternopils'ka, and Ivano-Frankivs'ka with a total population of about 6 million. Galicia/Halychyna was part of the Polish state from the mid-fourteenth century until 1772, then under Habsburg rule till the end of the First World War, and the in the Polish Republic from 1921-1939. Under Habsburg rule, Ukrainians were allowed to develop a distinctive Ukrainian identity to counterbalance the growing Polish nationalism in Galicia. After the transformation of the Habsburg Empire into the dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1867, Galicia obtained regional autonomy with a Polish domination in politics, economy, education, and culture. By the early twentieth century Galicia had become the center of Ukrainian nationalism; the famous Ukrainian historian Mykhaylo Hrushevs'kiy (1866-1934) called it the "Ukrainian Piedmont" in 1906. After failed attempts to create a West Ukrainian People's Republic in November 1918 - July 1919, Galicia fell back under Polish rule. During the 1930s-1940s Galicia was the main area of the political and military activities of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which proclaimed an independent Ukrainian state as their main goal. Thus, in the center of the concept of Galicia as "Ukrainian Piedmont" there is an image of the region as the main center of the national liberation movement and of victimized heroism of Galician Ukrainians in the twentieth century. In comparison, other Ukrainian lands have generally been depicted as reluctant or even indifferent to the idea of an independent nation-state.

[2] "[T]he majority of Western Ukrainians who ended up in the restored Polish state were not treated as equals. By the end of the 1920s their position was not much better than that of an internal colony of Poland" (Marples 2007: xv).

and found new homes in the United States and Canada. There, they continued to celebrate these holidays as "national" ones, in order to maintain their own and younger generations' Ukrainian identity in diaspora. These holidays were never celebrated in Soviet Ukraine before or after the Second World War. In fact, their celebration and commemoration were officially prohibited in the USSR as being part of the nationalistic historical narrative. There was a special article in the Soviet Criminal code, according to which Soviet citizens accused of "bourgeois nationalism" were officially persecuted. Thus, these holidays were seen as "traditional Ukrainian" only by the overseas Ukrainian diaspora.

After the collapse of the USSR in the early 1990s, "national" holidays were reintroduced in Galicia thanks to the joint efforts of the party *Narodny Rukh* ("People's movement"), which won regional elections in Galicia in 1990, and the influential Ukrainian diaspora. These holidays were then introduced into the new state calendar as national holidays as part of the agreement between "national-democrats" led by the Head of the *Narodny Rukh*, Vyacheslav Chornovil, and "national-communists" led by Leonid Kravchuk, former secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, and first president of Ukraine in 1991-1994. Some of these holidays, such as the "Day of the unity (*sobornist'*) of Ukraine" (22 January), received an official status. Others, such as the "Day of the heroes of the Battle of Kruty" (29 January), were openly celebrated by national-democratic parties; sometimes even high-level officials attended, when Ukraine's president made an alliance with these parties and needed the support of "their" electorate.[3] Later, new holidays were added to the state calendar by presidential decrees. Because the majority of these new (quasi-traditional) holidays reflects the regional experience of Galicia, they have not been accepted in Eastern Ukraine – as Sereda clearly demonstrated in her paper.

In my opinion, the main holidays of the current state calendar are better classified as old Soviet, new Ukrainian, or religious. In this way, the "new Ukrainian" category also includes the political holidays and historical commemorations from Galicia. Soviet holidays included in the new state calendar incorporate "Victory Day" (9 May), the "Liberation of Kiev Day" (6 November), and the "Day of the defender of the fatherland" (23 February). The latter is the most controversial holiday because it is clearly connected with the creation of the Bolshevik Army in 1918. During the last twenty years, the status of this holiday has been changed several times from official to unofficial; it is rejected in Western Ukraine and attacked by nationalist and national-democratic politicians, but celebrated en masse in South-Eastern Ukraine. In the South-East, the celebration is considered largely devoid of historical meaning, and is celebrated as a "Men's Day" equivalent to "Women's Day" (8 March). In recent elections, Ukraine's president has changed his attitude toward this holiday in order to win the votes of "pro-nationalistic" or "pro-Soviet" voters.

Table 1 includes the main national holidays as of 2012 that are connected to Ukrainian history and statehood, celebrated annually with the participation

[3] For more information on shifts of electoral base in contemporary Ukraine see: Colton (2011).

of state leaders, and broadly presented in mass-media. This table does not include purely religious holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, or Trinity; universal holidays, such as the New Year; and holidays not connected with the unique historical experience of Ukraine, such as Women's Day or May Day (Labour Day). Soviet holidays are marked with an asterisk (*); days by free appear in bold.

Table 1. *Current state calendar of Ukraine (2012)*

Holiday	**Date**
Day of the unity (*sobornist'*) of Ukraine (1919)	22 January
Day of the heroes of the Battle of Kruty (1918)	29 January
Day of the defender of the Fatherland* (1918)	23 February
Birthday of poet Taras Shevchenko (1814)	9 March
Memory day of the Chernobyl catastrophe (1986)	26 April
Victory Day* (1945)	9 May
Memory day of the victims of political repressions	17 May
Day of the Slavic (Cyrillic) alphabet	25 May
Memory day of the victims of the Great Patriotic War (1941)	22 June
Constitution Day (1996)	28 June
Day of sovereignty proclamation (1990)	16 July
Day of the Ukrainian flag	23 August
Independence Day (1991)	24 August
Religious holiday of the Virgin Mary (*Pokrova Bohorodytsi*) celebrated as holy patroness of Ukrainian Cossacks; memory day of Ukrainian Insurgent Army (1942)	14 October
Liberation of Kiev Day* (1943)	6 November
Memory day of the victims of *Holodomor* (Famine) (1933)	last Saturday of November

As one can see, the overwhelming majority of the state-celebrated holidays are connected with the history of the twentieth century. They are grouped around themes of Ukrainian statehood – 1918, 1919, 1990, 1991, and 1996, the Second World War/Great Patriotic War – 1941, 1942, 1943, 1945, and mass suffering. Some holidays, celebrated previously on the regional level or only by certain parties, were elevated to the national level by President Yushchenko – "Day of the heroes of the Battle of Kruty", "Memory day of the victims of political repressions" – and celebrated at the highest political level by the regime of President Viktor Yanukovych and Prime Minister Mykola Azarov. Other holidays formally celebrated during the presidencies of Kravchuk and Kuchma as national commemorations, such as "Memory day of the victims of *Holodomor*", were moved to a higher level under the presidency of Yushchenko and preserved under the new power of Yanukovych and Azarov. This continuity could be explained as part of the efforts made by President Yanukovych to occupy a central position "in-between" two extreme poles – radical nationalists and orthodox communists. Yanukovych accepted holidays introduced by Yushchenko in order to attract the moderate segment of voters in Central

Ukraine and some parts of Western Ukraine – in particular in Bukovina and Transcarpathia – who voted for Yushchenko in 2004 and later were disappointed and disillusioned with the lack of real reforms during his presidency. At the same time, some holidays have different meaning in different regions and are celebrated in different ways by different political parties. *Pokrova Bohorodytsy* (Virgin Mary as protector) holiday is a good example of this phenomenon. The holiday celebrated in across Ukraine as a religious holiday, but in Central Ukraine and by some parties traditionally identified as "national-democrats" it is also celebrated as the day of Ukrainian Cossackdom, while in Western Ukraine – in particular in Galicia and Volhynia – and by nationalist parties it is celebrated as a commemoration of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA).

Battles for History: Monuments, Holidays, Toponyms

After the collapse of the USSR there has been no dominant ideology in the new independent states. Actually history became a substitute of ideology, a kind of quasi-ideology. The émigrés who left Ukraine in 1940s provided a plethora of works about the tyranny of the Stalin regime, the Famine, and so on. The result has been the elaboration of a national history outside Ukraine that could be taken up as part of the contemporary state and its official past (Marples 2007: XII). In these narratives Ukraine is represented as a victim of alien powers, in particularly of Russia, and Ukraine's independence has been accepted as decolonization. The post-colonial narrative of Ukraine's past became normative in the history teaching at schools and universities, but such a post-colonial identity is mostly rejected in Eastern and Southern Ukraine.[4] After 1991 it became very difficult to develop an all-inclusive model of historical mythology. Nationalistic myths, such as the feats of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, could not penetrate Eastern Ukraine, and the attempt by Ukraine's first two presidents, Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma, to include the Great Patriotic War in an official conception of history did not meet with favour in Western Ukraine (Marples 2007: 20).

New collective memories require a concerted forgetting – a collective amnesia. The USSR was a perfect example of a society with collective amnesia. The main purpose of this policy was to overcome controversial events in the past, which divided different nations and ethnic groups living in the USSR, and to organize and mobilize them around one great project of the future – building communist society and the new Soviet nation. During Perestroika, this "pact of a collective amnesia" was dismantled and then "ghosts of the past" were freed by the old-new elites in order to legitimize new nation-states which formed after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991.

In the process of nation-building, the masses of ordinary people must be turned into a nation by the deliberate efforts of political elite. Institutionalized forms of invented national history must be expended on ordinary people. In the case of Western European nations that were constructed during the nineteenth

[4] For more information on regional diversities in contemporary Ukraine, see Barrington, Herron (2004: 53-86); Hale (2010); Liber (1998); Osipian and Osipian (2006); Osipian and Osipian (2012); Sasse (2010).

century, in the first and second time zones of Ernest Gellner's classification (1994: 22-25), the past was blank and had to be filled in for the mostly uneducated peasants. This task was successfully fulfilled by the joint efforts of historians, politicians, and school teachers. In the case of post-Soviet nations – which fall into the fourth time zone – the past was not blank in the collective memory of ordinary people who had been urbanized and educated during the Communist rule. In Ukraine, at the moment that independence was proclaimed in 1991, people mostly shared a memory shaped during the Soviet era. Some of them – mostly in Western Ukraine - had strong anti-Soviet feelings. Even in the latter case, their image of the national past was not coherent and built around the well-elaborated national history, but mostly perceived as a rejection of Soviet historical meta-narrative. In the case of independent Ukraine – ruled mostly by the former Communist leaders – the need to commemorate came directly out of a politically-driven desire to break with the inconvenient Soviet past. In independent Ukraine, new commemorations were meant to construct as great a distance as possible between the new state and the old USSR, between Soviet and Ukrainian narratives of the past, and between the new Ukrainian and Russian states. The Russian state was seen as the predecessor and ancestor of the USSR and a main threat - imagined and real - to the recently developed Ukrainian statehood.

New national commemorations were fiercely contested from the very beginning of independent Ukraine. Communist conservatives objected to the concept of the Ukrainian nation distinguished from the Russian "older brother" and refused to participate in its anniversaries, instead giving preference to the remembrance of so-called "red dates" of the Great October Socialist Revolution and V. I. Lenin's birthday. The inhabitants of South-East Ukraine have been refusing to exchange local memory, mostly based on former Soviet traditions, for the newly constructed national memory until now. But even those who admired the idea of the new Ukrainian nation have been divided on what should constitute the national identity. Right-wing nationalists and "national-democrats" promoted the cultural model of the nation based on a popular ethnic culture, ethno-history, and language. Thus, ethnic Ukrainians are seen as the fundament of the nation in which ethnic minorities should be assimilated in the nearest future. So-called "centrists" who have actually been ideologically amorphous as the "party of power" concentrated around presidents L. Kuchma (1994-2004) and V. Yanukovych (2010-2014) have promoted the model of a political or civic nation, which could not be constructed and realized under the circumstance of reducing democracy in Ukraine. Right-wing nationalists and "national-democrats" see the model of political/civic nation as part of the alien efforts actively supported by neo-imperialist politics of Russia to continue the Russification of ethnic Ukrainians.

According to Pierre Nora, temporal and topographical memory sites emerge at those times and in those places where there is a perceived or constructed break with the past. This break with the Soviet past is evident mostly in Western Ukraine where monuments to Lenin and other Communist leaders and symbols

were dismantled or destroyed in 1990-1991. In the following twenty years[5], new monuments were devoted to Stepan Bandera (Lviv, Drohobych, and some other towns in Galicia) (see Portnov 2007), Mykhaylo Hrushevskiy (Lviv), the medieval Galician prince Daniel (Lviv and Halich), and even to Austrian emperor Franz Josef II (Chernivtsi). In the 1990s, many towns and villages in Galicia have seen local museums founded, and numerous monuments and burial mounds erected. All these structures were devoted to the memory of the members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and combatants of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) (Marples 2007; Marples 2010). The same situation has been replicated in the renaming of urban and village topography. In the USSR, the main street in almost every town and village was named after Lenin. In two regions of Western Ukraine – Galicia and Volhynia – by the end of the 1990s, these streets had been renamed after Stepan Bandera. During the Soviet period, at least one of the central streets in any town or village - in Western Ukraine in particular - also carried the name of the "Red Army" (*Chervonoarmiys'ka*).[6] After 1991, the "Red Army" street was perceived as a sign of Soviet/Communist domination and even military occupation, and these streets were mostly renamed after Ukrainian rifleman brigades (*Ukrains'ki Sichovi Stril'tsi* – USS).

In Central Ukraine, this process was more gradual and remains unfinished. In its western part – so-called Right-Bank Ukraine – the monuments to Lenin and other Communist leaders have been gradually dismantled by the end of 2008. This process was a part of the campaign, organized by the president and devoted to the commemoration of the victims of *Holodomor,* the artificial famine of 1933 orchestrated by the leadership of the Communist Party. The huge monument to Lenin on the central square in Kiev was dismantled in the early 1990s, but Lenin's monument of a much lesser size survived several attempts of dismantling organized by right-wing activists. At the same time, Kiev is the leader among other cities in terms of the number of new monuments erected during the last twenty years and mostly devoted to political leaders of Ukraine from different epochs (with the exception of the Soviet era). In Left-Bank Ukraine, all monuments still stand on their proper places. The same situation is in South-East Ukraine, where all Soviet monuments and topography names remain untouched. Moreover, in Zaporizhia a small monument to Stalin was erected in front of the regional headquarters of the Communist Party in May 2010.

The Soviet era remains the most contradictory. For the residents of South-East Ukraine, it was a time of heroes, scientific and military achievements, economic prosperity, and social security. For the inhabitants of Western, and partly of Central Ukraine, it remained a period of villainy, degradation, political and cultural oppression, and Russification directed by the Communist Party from Moscow.

[5] This data was mostly collected during my fieldwork in Western Ukraine – Lviv, Chernivtsi, Drohobych – in August 2002, February 2003, December 2005, May 2008, July 2011 and July 2012, and on several visits to Kiev between 1988 and 2011.

[6] Western Ukraine – as well as other "western parts" of the USSR – was attached to the Soviet Union in 1939-1940 as the result of Stalin's diplomacy and the Red Army activities.

In Western Ukraine, the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 was perceived as the final and complete departure from the Soviet past. This macro-region proved particularly adept at constructing a cult of new beginnings closely connected with the idealized model of Ukraine's past (which actually never existed even in this region) inhabited with heroes of national revivals, a liberation struggle, and the heroic sacrifice of freedom-fighters. Their compatriots from the South-Eastern regions were encouraged to forget the imperial/colonial past, to treat the Soviet era as an aberration, and to read Ukrainian history as if it had begun in 1991; Ukrainians in the South-East were not willing to do this.

In the course of a normative process of nation-building a plethora of monuments, holidays, cemeteries, and museums remain very effective in concentrating time in space and in providing many people with a sense of common identity. These devices were repeatedly mobilized in political rhetoric to serve a variety of causes. But in the case of Ukraine, all these phenomena were turned into instruments of division. Since different realms of memory dominate the historical imagination in Western, Central and South-Eastern Ukraine, politicians have preferred to use memories to divide and mobilize "their" electoral group rather than to create a unified Ukrainian identity across the country.

Official Commemorations: Manipulation of the Past

The first mass commemoration of independent Ukraine in 1990 was organized by the still-ruling Communist Party and by recently founded "national-democratic" parties.[7] It was the 500-year anniversary of Ukrainian Cossackdom. It was celebrated on a large scale and demonstrated the political potential of such commemorations for mass mobilization.[8]

The instrumentalization and uses of commemorations for the purposes of current politics became evident during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma (1994-2004). During this time, the celebration of the 380th anniversary of the Battle of Khotyn in 2001 was a good example. In September-October 1621, the Polish-Lithuanian army and the Ukrainian Cossacks of Zaporozhian joined forces to defeat the Ottoman and Tatar armies in September-October 1621 near the fortress of Khotyn (now in Chernivtsi region). In 1991, the 370-year anniversary was celebrated mostly on the regional level as part of the recovery or rediscovery of Ukrainian history where the "Cossack myth" played a central role.[9] Then the battle was seen as an example of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation instead of the stereotypical eternal rivalry and hatred in Polish-Ukrainian relations which had been long promoted in the Russian/Soviet historical meta-narrative. In 2001, the celebration of 380-year anniversary of the battle gained additional meaning and

[7] "The national-democratic organizations of Galicia that came to power there after the first relatively free elections in the USSR [in 1990]… employed the Cossack myth as their main weapon in the political struggle for eastern Ukraine" (Plokhy 2008: 175).

[8] Actually, for the first time Ukrainian Cossacks were mentioned in the historical sources in 1492. For more details on the 500-year anniversary of Ukrainian Cossackdom, see Sysyn (1991); Karel (1997); Yekelchik (1998); Kasianov (2007).

[9] For more details on the origins of the "Cossack myth", see recent monograph of Harvard Professor Serhii Plokhy (2012).

scale. In the scandal surrounding the murder of Ukrainian journalist Georgiy Gongadze and publication of audio records by Secret Service Major Mykola Melnychenko, President Leonid Kuchma was accused by political opponents of having been involved in the murder. Kuchma was isolated in the international arena and no foreign state leaders visited Ukraine. Under such circumstances, commemoration of the battle was seen by Kuchma's entourage as a good pretext for inviting Aleksander Kwasniewski, president of Poland, to celebrate the mutual glory of the two nations. Moreover, Poland, which had recently joined NATO, represented itself as Ukraine's "lawyer" in Europe and the West. Thus, the visit of Polish president Aleksander Kwasniewski could interrupt Kuchma's international isolation and be used as an argument in his conflict with internal opposition. The scale of commemoration was changed dramatically - in a short time, a huge amount of money was allocated from the state budget for archaeological excavations in the fortress, its restoration, and preparation for the celebration at a very high level. Unfortunately for Kuchma, Kwasniewski cancelled his visit at the last moment. Nevertheless, Kuchma took part in the celebration.

As mentioned above, the early twentieth century and Soviet pasts are contradictory and hotly debated inside the country, as well as on the international stage.[10] But the significance of more distant historical events to contemporary Russian-Ukrainian relations is also strongly contested. For example, the Battle of Poltava on 27 June 1709 remains one of the most controversial events in Ukrainian history. The defeat of the Swedish army of King Charles XII, supported by Ukrainian hetman Ivan Mazepa and several thousand Cossacks, not only signified the beginning of the era of Russian dominance in Eastern Europe, but also the decline of Ukrainian Cossack statehood, which was destructed completely in 1763. In the Russian Empire, the anniversary of the battle was among major state-organized celebrations. The decline of the Soviet historical mythology during *perestroika* stimulated Russian nationalists to rediscover the greatness of the Russian past. In summer 1989, the organization "Young Russia" (*Rossiya Molodaya*) intended to visit Poltava and to reconstruct the battle to celebrate its 280-year anniversary. The recently founded oppositional "People's Movement of Ukraine" (*Narodnyi Rukh Ukrainy*) opposed this commemoration and prevented the visit of "Young Russia" to Poltava. Thus, *Rukh* demonstrated that "the victory of Poltava" was a foreign commemoration and that Russia and Ukraine have different historical narratives, a different past, and a different future. This story was repeated in 2009, when the 300-year anniversary of the battle was turned into a symbolic act of distancing Ukraine from Russia, a typical symbolic strategy during the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko. Ukraine rejected the idea of a common commemoration of the battle, but allowed Russia's ambassador to Ukraine, Viktor Chernomyrdin, to commemorate the event. There was also a monument of Charles XII sent from Sweden to be erected on the battlefield. Local authorities of Poltava – urban as well as regional (of the city of Poltava and of Poltava oblast) - preferred to take a neutral position on

[10] More on the uses of history in Russian-Ukrainian relations in Soviet and post-Soviet (namely in 1990s) era, see Kohut (2001); Plokhy (2001); Plokhy (2008); Yekelchyk (2004); Yekelchyk (2004a).

this issue. The most active was Yuriy Luzhkov, the Mayor of Moscow in 1992-2011, known as the most persistent Ukrainophob within the Russian political elite. He organized a reconstruction of the Battle of Poltava in the architectural reservation "Kolomenskoe village" near Moscow. During the commemoration in Kolomenskoe, Luzhkov recited his own poem, in which he accused Yushchenko of being a "contemporary Mazepa" that is a traitor of "the eternal friendship of the fraternal Slavic nations – Russians and Ukrainians".

Within Ukrainian society, there is no consensus on the outcome or significances of the Battle of Poltava. Some people still perceive the event within the context of a Russian/Soviet historical framework, while others have adopted other perspectives. A sociological survey conducted in 2009, in advent of the 300-year anniversary, reflects popular attitudes toward the battle (Table 2).

Table 2. *Popular attitudes regarding the Battle of Poltava (1709). Sociological survey made by "Research and Branding Group".*

The battle was a	victory	43.7 percent
	defeat	9.2 percent
	neither victory nor defeat	20.0 percent
	I don't know	27.1 percent
Would you like to fight for	Peter I	34.3 percent
	Mazepa	19.2 percent
	Charles XII	1.7 percent
	I would rather observe the battle than to take part in it	18.8 percent
	I don't know	20.4 percent
	refused to answer	5.6 percent

In July 2009, there was a commemoration of 350-year anniversary of the Battle of Konotop. In this battle of 1659, the Cossack army of hetman Ivan Vyhovskiy with assistance of his Tatar allies defeated completely the Russian army near the town of Konotop. The commemoration of this battle was organized on the highest level with personal participation of President Yushchenko. The commemoration of Konotop was seen by its organizers as an alternative to commemoration of the Poltava battle. Naturally, in Russia, the commemoration of Konotop was seen as an inimical act of the Ukrainian government in relations between the two countries.

Commemorations were used by politicians not only in relations with Russia to distance independent Ukraine from the former "imperial center", but also in domestic politics to divide and mobilize electoral segments living in different regions and maintaining different collective memories. The actual living memory communicated face to face is the memory of three generations. Thus, the living memory of contemporary Ukrainians embraces the history of the twentieth century. So-called "cultural memory" going to the more remote periods in the past is socially constructed. As a rule, the social construction of the past is launched by elites via uses of existing historical narratives as depositories of "collective memory" and mass-media as a communication mediator between the elite and "ordinary people".

"The war of monuments" to Empress Catherine II of Russia in 2007-2008 can provide a deeper insight into strategies used by politicians in order to manipulate public opinion. The empress is associated with both the destruction and the construction of portions of Ukraine. In the "black legend" of the Ukrainian national historical narrative, emotionally elaborated by the Romantic poet Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) and mostly accepted in Western and Central Ukraine, Catherine II (1762-1796) is associated with the destruction of the Cossack Hetmanate (1763) and of the Cossack Zaporozhian *Sich* (1775). In the "golden legend" of South-Eastern myth-memory, however, the empress is associated with the victory over Ottoman Turks and Tatars, and as the "founder" of several cities: Ekaterinoslav (now Dnipropetrovsk), Odessa, Sevastopol, Simferopol, Mariupol, Kherson, and Luhansk. Monuments of Empress Catherine II destroyed during the Soviet era were restored in Odessa in 2008 and in Sevastopol in 2007. Numerous pickets held by Ukrainian "national-democrats" in these two cities were unsuccessful in preventing the restoration of the monuments.

Thwarted in their efforts to destroy the monuments to the empress, the nationalists initiated the construction of a monument to Ukrainian hetman Petro Konashevich-Sahaydachnyi[11] in Sevastopol. In Odessa, an inscription "hangmen"[12] appeared on the monument of Catherine II on 2 February 2010, a few days before the second round of the 2010 presidential elections, held on 7 February 2010. Construction or reconstruction of monuments is too expensive to be done by anyone other than the national or regional authorities. Moreover, the permission to erect a monument, or to demolish one, can be issued only by the local authorities.[13] Thus, the local authorities of Odessa and Sevastopol, dominated by the Party of Regions, deliberately issued permission and allocated money for the reconstruction of the monuments as a response to the politics of memory realized by President Yushchenko and as a demonstration of their autonomy on the regional level from the capital, dominated by their "orange" rivals. The monuments and hot debates around them also reinforced local identity of the residents of South-East Ukraine as different from inhabitants of Western and Central macro-regions of the country.

The same scenario was used later in two other cities of South-East Ukraine – Dnipropetrovsk and Luhansk. In 2011, the "Gorshenin Institute" think-tank

---

[11] In 1618, hetman Petro Konashevich-Sahaydachnyi, the leader of Zaporozhian Cossacks, travelled by sea to the Crimean peninsula and captured the city of Caffa/Capha (now Theodosia), which at that time was a major spot of the Ottoman slave trade. Thus, in the Ukrainian "golden legend", Sahaydachnyi is not only associated with the Black Sea and Crimea, but also is seen as the liberator of Christian captives and slaves from the hands of infidel Ottomans.

[12] There are four more figures in addition to the Empress, which is why they are referred to in the plural.

[13] During the presidency of Yushchenko, a huge bronze monument of hetman Ivan Mazepa was manufactured in Kiev to be erected in Poltava as a Ukrainian response to the Russian "golden myths" of "Victory of Poltava" and "eternal brotherhood of two Slavic nations", in which Russia traditionally plays the role of the elder brother of Ukraine. The monument was made with money from the state budget, but the local authorities of Poltava rejected the idea. They motivated their refusal with the results of a sociological survey, according to which the majority of inhabitants of Poltava reject the idea of Mazepa's monument in their city. The monument remains in the Kiev plant, waiting its future destiny.

asked 600 inhabitants of Dnipropetrovsk (former Ekaterinoslav): would you mind the restoration of the Catherine II monument? The restoration was supported by 51 percent of those asked. Then "Gorshenin Institute" asked for a comment from Volodomyr Yavorivskyi, a man of letters, member of parliament, eternal "national democrat", and professional participant in the battles for history. His response was highly predictable. Yavorivskyi said: "Today the Ukrainian nation is ill in a political sense because of memory and the atrophy of national pride. How it is possible to erect a monument to Catherine II who destroyed [Cossack Zaporozhian] *Sich*? If the inhabitants of Dnipropetrovsk want to admire her monument and put flowers – it means that the nation is truly sick." Of course, he identified as ill that part of the nation living in the South-East, identifying them as "untrue Ukrainians". In the same year the City Council of Luhansk also stated his intention to erect a monument for Catherine II. Thus, monuments and commemorations became focal points in political debates retranslated through mass-media in order to mobilize the electorate on both sides: "blue" as well as "orange". The intention to erect monuments in Dnipropetrovsk and Luhansk was stated long after the victory of Viktor Yanukovych in the presidential elections of 7 February 2010, and could not be explained as a disagreement with the politics of memory of President Yushchenko, as it was in 2007-2008. The possible explanation could be the intention to provoke endless debates on the contradictory past in order to maintain a divided society and to win the sympathy of a traditional electoral base in a given region in future parliamentary and presidential elections in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the monument dedicated to the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef (1848-1916) was erected in Chernivtsi (Western Ukraine) in 2008. This monument provoked no debates despite the fact that Ukrainian statehood could be said to have been stalled for more than a century while Galicia, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia were provinces of the Habsburg Empire. Franz Josef is absent in the "black legends" of both ethno-national and Soviet historical narratives, and thus a monument to him could not be used easily by politicians to divide society.

If the conflicts of the present seem intractable, the past has offered a screen onto which desires for unity and continuity, that is, identity, could be projected. The uniqueness of the situation in Ukraine is that main political actors use the past to cover present social conflicts and to shift growing social tensions toward the realms of collective historical imagination. Thus, in Ukraine, the past has offered a screen on which desires for identity conflict can also be projected. In particular, after the "Orange Revolution", politicized memory has tended to divide rather than unite, just as it continues to do in places like Ulster (Northern Ireland), Sri Lanka, or Chechnya.

Regional Diversities: Commemorations, Festivals, and Re-constructors

The disintegration of the USSR was accompanied by the collapse of the socialist economy and society, which in turn led to the destruction of a convenient way of life and the fragmentation and atomization of society in the 1990s. A strong

psychological need to be part of a bigger group with shared identity and values produced a growing demand for collective action. In Western and partly Central Ukraine, this demand was satisfied with the new holidays invented to legitimize Ukrainian statehood. These commemorations are devoted to the "national revivals", "national heroes", and "national liberation struggle" connected with the history of Western and Central Ukraine. Thus, the history of Ukraine is seen as a interplay between Kiev and L'viv, where the decline of one center inevitably succeeded with the revival of the other one in accordance with the historical meta-narrative produced by the famous Ukrainian historian Mykhaylo Hrushevs'kyi (1866-1934) and reproduced in new historical narratives in the 1990s. In order to legitimize Ukrainian statehood, the authors of Western Ukrainian identity narratives try to distance Ukrainian history from Russian and Soviet history.[14] The "realms of memory" of South-East Ukraine are completely absent in this new Ukrainian historical narrative because they were part of the imperial Russian and Soviet narratives. In turn, the new post-Soviet commemorations are not accepted by the residents of South-East Ukraine as authentic, and are seen instead as imported from "nationalistic Western Ukraine"[15].

Pierre Nora holds that each nation has its canonical memories and myths that bind the community together and create social identities. Myth and memory give the community a narrative through which it can continue to forge its identity. The act of remembering is related to the repository of images and ideals that constitute the social ties of a community (Nora 1996: XV-XXIV). Residents of South-East Ukraine had no wish to commemorate along with inhabitants of Western Ukraine and vice versa. Ukraine appears to have two Ukrainian nations. Dominique Arel explained the dual identity community as follows:

> "The majority of the population in Eastern and Southern Ukraine has internalized a Ukrainian identity, as promoted by Soviet nationality policy. [...] Eastern Ukrainians call themselves Ukrainians, but not in the same way as Western Ukrainians do. Eastern Ukrainians tend not to think of identity in exclusive terms. In Soviet era, they felt simultaneously Ukrainian *and* Soviet. With the disappearance of the Soviet identity, they feel adrift, unsure of where to affix there Ukrainian identity. [...] Eastern Ukrainians are not Russians, but in their interpretations of their past and future they feel intimately connected to Russia" (2007: 50-51).

The specific feature of the collective memory and commemoration practices of South-East Ukraine are celebrations of the jubilees of the foundation of "giants

[14] "On the nation-state logic grounded in a primordial understanding of the nation as an organic entity persisting through time and culminating in the establishment of 'its' state in modern times, [...] the only effective defense against the Russian/Soviet historical narrative that 'proves' the existent unity of Ukrainians and Russians lies in constructing an alternative historical narrative that would 'prove' that the Ukrainian nation has always been separate" (Shevel 2011: 22-23).

[15] "The problem here is that attempts to replace the crude Soviet/Russian historical narrative with an equally crude 'pro-Ukrainian' narrative would most likely not be successful on the national level" (Shevel 2011: 23).

of heavy industry", mostly founded in the course of "socialist industrialization" in the 1930s. These plants are working places for thousands, and sometimes for tens of thousands, of local residents. The jubilees are accompanied by so-called professional holidays, such as "Coal Miners' Day" (23 August), "Machine Builders' Day"[16], and "Metal Workers' Day". The plants and celebration of their jubilees as well as of "professional holidays" provide the feeling of collective identity for the inhabitants of South-East Ukraine. The problem, however, is that these "realms of memory" are local, mostly limited within a city or a town, and do not provide a sense of belonging to a large and powerful community, such as the "Soviet people" or the USSR. Old Soviet holidays and monuments have lost much of their power to commemorate, to forge and sustain a single vision of the past, but they remain useful as signs distinguishing South-East from the "nationalist West" of the country, as an alternative to a new and alien narrative, which endangers the dominance of post-Soviet elites in their domain.

In the late 1990s, there were efforts to revive the May Day celebration because this holiday was less politicized than other Soviet holidays.[17] In 1999, Donetsk region authorities reintroduced official demonstrations which had been abandoned after independence. The article from the regional newspaper "Donetskie Novosti" wrote that "The people accepted their initiative with the nostalgic feeling of deep satisfaction" (*Donetskie Novosti* 1999: 7, quoted from Sereda 2007: 173). Thousands of Donetsk inhabitants came to Lenin Square to greet the representatives of each district of Donetsk who proudly marched in columns with flags and balloons. Many small children got especially excited. "People who came to the holiday were very satisfied and this proves once more that not everything was bad in our Soviet past and we should not reject it" (*Donetskie Novosti* 1999: 7, quoted from Sereda 2007: 173).

The myth of "the Great Patriotic War" – the Soviet name for World War II – is another commemoration distinguishing South-East Ukraine from other parts of the country. The inhabitants of Galicia - and to a lesser extent of Volhynia - see the "Victory Day" of May 9 as connected to the Soviet occupation of the region and to the mass crimes committed by Stalin's regime. To the contrary, in South-East Ukraine "Victory Day" is the main historical holiday and during the presidency of Yanukovych its significance grew significantly. Moreover, "Victory Day" is closely connected with local and regional identities and commemorations. In the biggest cities of South-East Ukraine, there are annual commemorations of "Liberation Day" devoted to the liberation of the given city from the Nazi occupation in 1943-1944. In some cities, "Liberation Day" is also celebrated as the "City's Day"[18].

There is also other trend, most evident in the case of Donetsk. In the 2000s, with the decline of the coal mining industry, the local Donbas identity was reinforced by football.[19] In 2005, Renat Akhmetov, the Donetsk-based tycoon and the president of the football club "Shakhtar", built a new football stadium in Donetsk – "Donbas-arena" – comparable with the best football stadiums in Europe. The stadium and the area around it with a football museum and monuments were transformed into the main element of Donbas regional identity. Numerous victories of the "Shakhtar" football team in the national championship as well as in UEFA competitions were celebrated in Donetsk as the main holiday. The culmination point was the celebration of the "Shakhtar's" jubilee in 2011, personally attended by the president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych, who was born in Yenakievo, a satellite town of Donetsk.

In the Western and Central macro-regions of Ukraine, socialist industrialization was not as massive as in the East. Here, many factories were closed in the 1990s as a result of economic bankruptcy. On the other hand, the traditional ethnic culture connected with the peasant way of life survived and was promoted in the era of independence as "a true national culture." There – in particular in the 2000s – emerged numerous festivals organized by local authorities and members of voluntary associations and local businessmen. These festivals could be classified as historical, culinary, clothing, and reinvented folk festivals.

Historical festivals are mostly based on the "Cossack myth", folk culture, and popular patriotism. A few of them can be identified among the most popular festivals: *Kozatski zabavy* ("Cossack entertainments") annual festival held in Kamianiets-Podil'ski – a city with late medieval and early modern architecture ; *Cossack-fest*, *Zapriahay-fest*, *Kozatski kleynody* ("Cossack treasures") - festivals held in the Pyrohovo outdoor museum of Ukrainian traditional architecture near Kiev; *Shablya kozaka Mamaya* ("Sable of Cossack Mamay") and *Lava na lavu* ("Crowd against crowd") annual festival of Cossack wrestling held on the island of Khortytsya in the Dnipro River.[20] All these festivals not only remind inhabitants of large cities about their "Cossack roots", but also give an opportunity to spend a weekend in the countryside and to take a break from the daily routine of urban life. The "Cossack myth" is also an important part of "green tourism" in Central Ukraine. In Galicia and Volhynia[21], festivals are also dedicated to Stepan Bandera as the apotheosis of the "OUN-UPA myth". For example, the festival *Banderstadt* ("City of Bandera") held in the outdoor museum of agricultural history near the city of Lutsk includes non-conformist music, "patriotic tattooing", and *boyevoy hopak* – a mix of traditional dance and wrestling. Organizers of the *Banderstadt* festival stated that they want to promote patriotism among young Ukrainians with the help of music. In all given examples, active participants of the festivals live in tent camps, thus escaping the urban way of life.

16 The last Sunday in September. In some cities in Eastern Ukraine with numerous machine-building plants, "Machine Builders' Day" is also celebrated as the "City's Day".

17 In the official calendar of Soviet holidays, May Day was known as the "Day of International Solidarity of Working People".

18 For example, in Kharkiv the liberation of the city in 23 August (1943) is also the "City's Day."

19 The name of Donetsk football team "Shakhtar" means "a coal miner".

20 The island of Khortytsya is situated in the central part of the industrial city of Zaporizhia, which has a population of 700,000 people. The author visited the island including the reconstructed Cossack fortress *Zaporiz'ka Sich*, in April 2007. The author also visited the Museum of Cossack History and an equestrian show; both were meant to reconstruct Cossack everyday life and military exercises.

21 Covered with forests, Volhynia was a region of active resistance movement of OUN-UPA in the 1940s.

There are also numerous festivals devoted to traditional Ukrainian cuisine, such as *borshch* (red beetroot and cabbage vegetable soup with meat and sour cream), *salo* (lard), *deruny* (potato pancakes), and *halushka* (mix of rice and meat wrapped in sweet peppers or cabbage leaves) mostly held in Central and Western Ukraine. As a rule, participants of such festivals cook a certain dish in large quantities and then eat it together with the festival guests. In some places, monuments were erected to certain vegetables, fruits or dishes associated with a given town or village.[22]

There are also festivals devoted to traditional Ukrainian clothing, namely to the embroidered shirt known as "vyshyvanka", held mostly in Western Ukraine – in Lviv, Ternopil, Chernivtsi. *Vyshyvanka* is seen as a visible sign of Ukrainian identity and wearing it at the main national holidays as an expression of one's self-identification with "true Ukrainian culture". Ukrainian populists (Ukrainophiles) started to use traditional handmade peasant clothes in the 1860s as the visible sign of their unity with commoners, that is, with their imagined community, because only peasants were seen by Ukrainophiles as bearers of true Ukrainian identity (Yekelchik 2010). Contemporary Ukrai-nian politicians mostly from nationalist and "national-democrat" camps use *vyshyvanka* to identify themselves with certain segments of the electorate (Voznyak 2010).

Sorochynskiy yarmarok ("Fair in Sorochyntsi") could be seen as a culmination of the festival culture in contemporary Ukraine. Held annually in August in the village Sorochyntsi of Poltava region, this fair is a mix of an ethnic culture festival and an economic enterprise. The village of Sorochyntsi was chosen because in the nineteenth century the fair held there was praised by Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852) in his novel *Sorochynskaya yarmarka* ("The Fair at Sorochyntsi", 1830). Described in a lively manner, with many real and invented features of folk culture, the novel was perceived by many in Ukraine and even more so outside the country as reflecting the essence of Ukrainian mentality. The fair was reinvented and reintroduced in the early 1990s as a part of the "return to national roots" after seventy years of "national amnesia" in the USSR. At the same time, the very persona of the writer was a site of struggle in the "memory wars". Although he was ethnically Ukrainian and born near Sorochyntsi, Gogol wrote all his novels in Russian and spent most of his adult life outside Ukraine in Petersburg, Rome, and Moscow. He himself expressed ambivalence about his identity. Such an ambivalent identity as a Little Russian (*Malorossiyanin*) who was also part of (all)-Russian culture was possible before modernization began in the Russian Empire during the 1860s, but in modern society it is unthinkable. Hot debates erupted in the "war for Gogol" between Russia and Ukraine in the course of the writer's 200th anniversary, celebrated by both countries in 2009.

[22] A monument of a cucumber was erected in Nizhyn (Chernihivska oblast'), of *halushka* – in Poltava, of *deruny* – in Korosten' (Zhytomirska oblast'), of *varenyk* (curd or fruit dumpling) – on the highway from Kiev to Odessa. In 2011, a monument of a blackberry was erected in the village of Huklyve in Transkarpathia/Zakarpats'ka oblast', because local peasants collected blackberries in a local forest for export to Italy. Under the conditions of mass unemployment in rural areas of post-Soviet Ukraine, the "blackberry business" is the only opportunity for the residents of Huklyve to make a living.

The popularity of the above-mentioned festivals could be explained in their appeal to the emerging urban middle class. They are seen as an alternative to official commemorations that are formal, state-organized, attended by high ranking officials, and guarded by security servicemen; ordinary people can be only a passive audience at official commemorations. Unofficial festivals, however, are seen as a realization of people's creative potential, free from political intrigues and pre-election agitation. In actuality, this alterity is not complete. As a rule, most festivals are organized with some participation of the local authorities. Two of the annual festivals are held with the indirect support of presidents: the *Kozatski zabavy* festival in Kamianiets-Podil'ski was patronized for many years by Ludmila Kuchma, wife of former president Leonid Kuchma; the annual festival in Kiev *Kraina mriy* ("Country of dreams") is organized by Oleh Skrypka, a musician and close friend of Viktor Yushchenko who has himself attended the festival many times with his children. In many cases, politicians use festivals to represent themselves as "ordinary guys" close to their electoral base.[23]

Finally, some folk festivals with pre-Christian roots which survived mostly in the Carpathian Mountains region of Western Ukraine were transformed into Brazilian-style carnivals in the 2000s. The traditional winter fest "Malanka" held on 14 January and connected with pre-Christian agrarian cults, survived decades of Soviet militant atheism in Bukovina (Chernivtsi region). In the 2000s, the fest lost its ethnographic parochialism and transformed into a local carnival. The most famous of the Malanka carnivals is held in the small Carpathian town of Vashkivtsi in Chernivtsi region; it draws a nationally representative audience with thousands of tourists arriving from cities across Ukraine. Originally, "Malanka" was focused on the masking of men as women, goats, wolves, bears, and sometimes ethnic minorities, such as Jews and Germans, whose presence was closely connected with the history of the region in pre-Soviet times. In contemporary "Malanka" celebrations the masking approaches the scale and fantasy of Brazilian carnivals.[24] Many participants of "Malanka" dress as soldiers of the Soviet Army, which could be explained as a kind of nostalgia of the older and middle generations of local men. For almost all of them, military service was the first, and in many cases the only experience of travel far from their native town or village. Most of them experienced their military service in the Soviet Army as belonging to a large and mighty structure. Now they miss this feeling, living in a little town or village. Thus, the masquerade offers the possibility of a temporary return to "the lost golden age".

In 1998, Catherine Wanner wrote of the popular indifference to state-commemorations as a challenge to nation-building. In the intervening years, the indifference has remained, but people have not remained only "at home":

[23] Both Viktors – Yushchenko and Yanukovych - and some other politicians used the opportunity to visit the fair as ordinary customers, thus demonstrating their respect to "traditional" ethnic culture seen as a true expression of Ukrainian identity.

[24] I am indebted to Yana Kobryn who turned my attention to the "Malanka" festival and shared with me photos she made in town of Hlyboka (Chernivtsi oblast') in January 2010.

> "the entrenched indifference associated with state-sponsored commemoration remains a legacy to be overcome by the new Ukrainian state. In revising the state calendar, the leaders of post-Soviet Ukraine face a formidable challenge: creating inclusive commemorations that will resonate with individuals as authentic and meaningful in a public space that has long been discredited as a forum for lies. The emotional and experiential bankruptcy of Soviet holidays leaves in their wake a reluctance to partake in refashioned post-Soviet state commemorations. This has perpetuated the tendency to retreat out of the public sphere to the home front where commemorations, if they occur at all, are atomized, not collectively shared" (1998: 149-150).

Indifference to refashioned post-Soviet official commemorations was further strengthened during 2004-2012 when it became clear that national history and collective memory were being instrumentalized by national and regional office-holders and abused for immediate political purposes. At the same time, new trends became evident in the perception of the past and in the culture of collective memory – a new pluralism of commemorations.

As Bo Stråth has written, social cohesion may also be constructed from the grassroots level (Stråth 2000: 29-30). Many people - mostly urban, university educated members of the younger generation - including students, professionals, and some small businessmen have turned to more heterogeneous but Romantic representations of the past as an alternative to official commemorations.[25] These people call themselves "re-constructors" (*rekonstruktory*) because they reconstruct real or imagined events in the past. As a rule, they use old medieval castles and fortresses for their collective historical performances or "reconstructions". The most popular are castles in Lutsk, Kamianiets-Podilski, and Khotyn in Western Ukraine, and Sudaq in the Crimea. In other regions of Ukraine that have no castles, re-constructors gather in forests and make their historical performances there. Re-constructors use self-made clothes and armour manufactured in accord with the techniques of a given epoch. Residents of different regions of Ukraine take part in reconstruction performances, and re-constructors from Russia, Belarus', and Poland are numerous and welcomed participants in reconstructions held in Ukraine.

One might expect these reconstructions to advocate and disseminate nationalism, as in classical national movements in Western and Central Europe. After all, re-constructors are inspired by the Romantic yearnings for a lost knightly culture, and disappointed with the lack of reforms proclaimed by political elite. But the "reconstructions" performed in contemporary Ukraine are better understood as an escape from nation-building; they are the opposite

[25] This part of the paper is based mostly on the monitoring of TV news, as well as personal observations in Sudaq, and on a series of interviews conducted by the author with some re-constructors in the 2000s. I am particularly indebted to Vera Shelest and Aleksandr Plugin for sharing their personal experiences with me.

of a "political archaeology" of nationalism.[26] In their own view, re-constructors see standardized historical narratives, politicized memories, ritualized commemorations, and competitive lists of national heroes and villains as deadly, cutting off the present from the past, and discouraging rather than enhancing active citizenship. They have become creative producers and compulsive consumers of the past, looking for something that best suits their particular sense of self at the moment, constructing out of bewildering variety of materials, times, and places the temporal identities they need to make a performance.

Yet even among reconstructions, it is difficult to fully escape the weight of the duelling narratives of national identity promoted through official commemorations. How, for example, should we understand the activities of re-constructors who specialize in the reconstruction of the "Great Patriotic War"? They make their "reconstructions" on certain days connected with the main events of the war, such as 6 November which marks the "Liberation of Kiev" in 1943 and 9 May which is "Victory Day" and the "Liberation of Sevastopol" in 1944. They organize their reconstructions near big cities with numerous public audiences and sometimes have the support of politicians. These re-constructors are quite literally undertaking an "archaeology" of the past: they scour flea markets and battlegrounds for original Soviet and German weapons, medals, and other military equipment; they take part in archaeological excavations; and they help to identify and bury the remnants of soldiers.

In Lieu of Conclusion

In every case examined in this paper, commemoration offers an interruption to the daily routine, largely welcomed by participants. For the inhabitants of Donetsk, for example, May Day is not primarily a "Day of International Solidarity of Working People"; most people give little thought to the struggle between the antagonistic worlds of Capital and Labour. For their part, participants in the "Banderstadt" festival in Western Ukraine never read the political program of the OUN and are rarely devoted supporters of Stepan Bandera. Across Ukraine – West, Central, South, and East – the main reason for taking part in such festivities is to be part of a mass celebration, to enjoy the elements of carnival culture, and to engage with the illusion of a temporal return to a "lost golden age".

References:

Arel, Dominique. 2007. "Orange Ukraine Chooses the West, but Without the East," in *Aspects of the Orange Revolution III: The Context and Dynamics of the 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Elections*, edited by Ingmar Bredies, Andreas Umland and Valentin Yakushik, 35-53. Stuttgart: ibidem-Press Verlag.

[26] "As a movement that seeks a return to an idealized past in order to regenerate the community and assure its unique destiny, nationalism can be seen as a species of 'political archaeology' which helps to undermine tradition and ensure modernization. As such it is particularly attractive to all kinds of intellectuals and professionals – artists and writers, educators and journalists, scholars and technicians, lawyers and doctors – and conversely, the movement and its ideal of the nation stands in need of the advocacy and dissemination skills of these strata" (Smith 2004: 198).

Barrington, Lowell W. and Erik S. Herron. 2004. “One Ukraine or Many? Regionalism in Ukraine and Its Political Consequences,” *Nationalities Papers* 32: 53-86.

Berkhoff, Karel C. 1997. “‘Brothers, We Are All of Cossack Stock’: The Cossack Campaign of Ukrainian Newspapers on the Eve of Independence,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 21(1-2): 119-140.

Colton, J. Timothy. 2011. “An Aligning Election and the Ukrainian Political Community,” *East European Politics and Societies* 25(1): 4-27.

Donetskie Novosti, 1999. “We missed it for the last seven years”. 18: 7. Quoted from Sereda, Viktoria. 2007. “Regional Historical Identities and Memory,” *Ukraina Moderna,* Special Edition “Lviv-Donetsk. Social Identity in Contemporary Ukraine”, edited by Y. Hrytsak, A. Portnov, V. Susak, 160-209. Lviv, Kyiv: Krytyka.

Gellner, Ernest. 1994. *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals.* London: Hamish Hamilton.

Gillis, J. R. 1994. “Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship”, in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, edited by J. R. Gillis. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hale, Henry E. 2010. “The Uses of Divided Power”, *Journal of Democracy* 21(3): 84-98.

Kasianov, Gheorghi. 2007. “Ukraina-1990: ‘boi za istoriju’” [Ukraine -1990: Battle for History], *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 83, available at <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2007/83/ka8.html>, accessed on 02.06.2013.

Kohut, Zenon E. 2001. *History as a Battleground: Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Historical Consciousness in Contemporary Ukraine.* Saskatoon: Heritage Press.

Liber, George. 1998. “Imagined Ukraine: regional differences and the emergence of an integrated state identity,” *Nations and Nationalism* 4(2): 187-206.

Marples, David. 2007. *Heroes and Villains: Constructing National History in Contemporary Ukraine.* Budapest: Central European University Press.

Marples, David R. 2010. “Anti-Soviet Partisans and Ukrainian Memory,” *East European Politics and Societies* 24(1): 26-43.

Nora, Pierre. 1996. *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past,* trans. and ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, 2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press.

Osipian, Alexandr and Ararat Osipian. 2006. “Why Donbass Votes for Yanukovych: Confronting the Ukrainian Orange Revolution,” *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 14(4): 495-517.

Osipian, Alexandr and Ararat Osipian. 2012. “Regional Diversity and Divided Memories in Ukraine: Contested Past as Electoral Resource, 2004-2010,” *East European Politics and Societies* 26(3): 616-642.

Plokhy, Serhii. 2001. “The Ghosts of Pereyaslav: Russo-Ukrainian Historical Debates in the Post-Soviet Era”, *Europe-Asia Studies* 53(3): 489-507.

Plokhy, Serhii. 2008. *Ukraine and Russia: Representations of the Past.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Plokhy, Serhii. 2012. *The Cossack Myth: History and Nationhood in the Ages of Empires.* Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Portnov, Andrey. 2008. “Rodina-mati *vs* Stepan Bandera. Akskursija po izbrannim pamjatnikam vtoroj mirovoij vojni v sovremennoj Ukraine” [Rodina-mati *vs* Stepan Bandera. The Motherland vs Stepan Bandera. Fieldtrip around Selected World War II Monuments in Contemporary Ukraine], *Otecestvennie zapiski* 5: 33-46.

Sasse, Gwendolyn. 2010. “The Role of Regionalism”, *Journal of Democracy* 21(3): 99-106.

Sereda, Viktoria. 2007. “Regional Historical Identities and Memory,” *Ukraina Moderna,* Special Edition “Lviv-Donetsk. Social Identity in Contemporary Ukraine”, edited by Y. Hrytsak, A. Portnov, V. Susak, 160-209. Lviv, Kyiv: Krytyka.

Shevel, Oxana. 2011. “The Politics of Memory in a Divided Society: A Comparison of Post-Franco Spain and Post-Soviet Ukraine,” *Slavic Review* 70(1): 137-164.

Smith, Anthony D. 2004. “History and National Destiny: Responses and Clarifications,” *Nations and Nationalism* 10(1/2): 195-209.

Stråth, Bo. 2000. “Introduction. Myth, Memory and History in the Construction of Community,” in *Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community: Historical Patterns in Europe and Beyond*, edited by Bo Stråth. Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt/M, New York, Wien: P.I.E.-Peter Lang.

Sysyn, Frank E. 1991. “The Reemergence of the Ukrainian Nation and Cossack Mythology,” *Social Research* 58(4): 845-859.

Voznyak, Taras. 2010. *Retrospektyvna politilogiya. Epokha Yushchenka. Vtrata spodivan’* [*Retrospective Political Science. Epoch of Yushchenko. Disillusionment*], Lviv, available at <http://www.ji.lviv.ua/ji-library/Vozniak/polit-juschenko1/etnoprykoly.htm>, accessed on 02.06.2013.

Wanner, Catherine. 1998. *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine.* Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Yekelchik, Serhy. 1998. “Cossack Gold: History, Myth and the Dream of Prosperity in the Age of Post-soviet Transition,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 40(3-4): 311-325.

Yekelchyk, Serhy. 2004. “Ukrainian Historical Memory and the Soviet Commemorate Canon: Defining Ukrainian National Heritage under Stalin,” *Ab Imperio: Studies of New Imperial History and Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Space* 2: 77-124.

Yekelchyk, Serhy. 2004a. *Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination.* Toronto, University of Toronto Press.

Yekelchik, Serhii. 2010. *Ukrainofily: svit ukrainskikh patriotiv druhoi polovyny 19 stolittya* [Ukrainophiles: the World of Ukrainian Patriots in the Second Half of Nineteenth Century]. Kiev: KIS.

NEGOTIATING MEMORY, POWER AND ISLAM: FESTIVITIES COMMEMORATING HISTORICAL FIGURES AND EVENTS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Toko Fujimoto
Osaka, Japan

Abstract. This study aims to clarify the dynamics of festive culture in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, focusing on festivals commemorating historical figures and events. The governments of Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, use festivals as a mean to integrate the people into one nation. There is a gap, however, between the state's intent and villagers' interests. Although villagers seem to accept the state's intent to boost nationalism, their main interest is to reconstruct regional society by reclaiming their history spanning the pre- and post-Soviet periods through festive structure. This paper explores how villagers manage power relations and reshape a historically stratified regional space by holding festivals, supported by a memory system consisting of genealogy and "ancestral land" related to the Islamic practice of Quran recitation for ancestors. The data for analysis were collected during field research conducted in a village in northern Kazakhstan for 28 months between 2002 and 2011.

Key words: festival, festive culture, historical memory, power, Islam, Kazakhstan

Cuvinte-cheie: festival, cultură festivă, memorie istorică, putere, islam, Kazahstan

Introduction

In 1999, the centenary anniversary of the birth of the first president of the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan, Kanïsh Sätpaev, was celebrated in a small village on the vast Kazakh steppe. This anniversary was a government-organized festival held in cooperation with UNESCO. At the ceremony in Kanïsh's home village, villagers recited the Quran for him and his ancestors, and the village was praised as a sacred place where their spirits dwelled. This scene was quite different from the one marking the ninetieth anniversary in 1989, when flowers were offered to statues of Kanïsh and Lenin.

These anniversaries are examples of festivals commemorating Kazakh historical figures and events, both of which have been actively celebrated over the past twenty years. With a view toward unifying the people, festivals are held around the world, often to fulfil sociocultural and religious functions. Indeed, the Soviet government invented and efficiently used a range of socialist festivals as a means of creating a unified Soviet citizenry. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, what meaning could festivals hold for post-socialist societies? Does the intent of the government when arranging festivals align with the people's interests? What meaning does the local society see in the shift from a floral tribute to Lenin to the recitation of the Quran for Kazakh historical figures?

To answer these questions, we must first consider an overview of trends in Central Asian festive culture. In the process of nation-building after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a range of festivals were actively celebrated by the newly independent countries. The spring festival, *nawrïs*[1], which had been only privately celebrated during almost the entire Soviet period, began to be publicly celebrated as a national holiday in every country of Central Asia (Etizen 1999: 73-102; Obiya et al. 2005: 481-482; Yoshida 2004: 291-297; Adams 2010: 50-58). The governments also established new public holidays such as Independence Day which are actively celebrated every year (Adams 2010). Islamic feasts, called *ayt* in the Kazakh language, include the Feast of Sacrifice (*Qŭrban ayt*) and the Feast of Breaking the Fast at the end Ramadan (*Oraza ayt*), as well as the *auïzashar* feast after sunset each day during Ramadan (the ninth month of the Islamic calendar). The festivals for these holidays were conducted on only a small scale under the socialist regime, but have become larger in the post-socialist period (Fujimoto 2008: 1-28). In addition, festivals commemorating historical figures and events, most of which had been marginalized by the nation-building of the Soviet era, were deemed important and organized by the governments of the newly independent Central Asian countries. For instance, the 660th anniversary of the birth of Amir Timur and the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the cities of Bukhara and Khiva were celebrated in Uzbekistan (Obiya 2005: 185-212); the millennial anniversary of the birth of the epic hero Manas was observed in Kyrgyzstan (Yoshida 2009: 267-288).

The reason these festivals were celebrated can be explained as a means of boosting national prestige (Sakai 2003: 191-195), or as a rediscovery of historical figures and events in the context of a new nationalism (Obiya 2005: 185-212). Organizing festivals at the national level is a way of lending power to the state; the Soviet use of modern cultural forms was essential to its success in transforming national cultures (Adams 2010: 8, 197). Thus, the festival is an important means of national integration.

Nevertheless, how ordinary people accept these festivals is another matter. Sometimes people have pursued aims that do not quite fit the official intentions of the state. For instance, *nawrïs* is celebrated in various ways, from a cosmopolitan spring festival to a Muslim celebration, according to the local character of regions in Kazakhstan (Eitzen 1999: 73-102). Concerning festivals commemorating historical figures, villagers in northern Kyrgyzstan celebrated the Manas festival, but did not completely accept him as a symbolic ancestor of the Kyrgyz nation because he is not their own patrilineal ancestor (Yoshida 2008: 275-282).

[1] *Nawrïz*, a New Year's festival, held on the vernal spring equinox, is derived from a Persian word that means "new day". Because of the influence of Persian culture, this spring festival is celebrated in Central Asia.

The meaning of the festivals for people living in a regional society could relate to the problem of how people understand the concept of tradition. On the one hand, Hobsbawm (1992 [1983]: 9) has argued that many "traditions" were invented during the modernization of societies. On the other hand, Yamada pointed out that a traditional culture is one that can be acknowledged by each population or group as having been inherited over generations; such culture is flexible and adjusted to the times, but is positioned as "traditional", and its handing down to future generations is planned (Yamada 2011: 264). In the process of "socialist development", only some elements were defined as ethnic culture; religious elements were defined as remnants of a past traditional society that should be made extinct through socialist development. However, religious festivals and life-cycle rituals continued to be conducted on a small scale as traditional customs, especially in rural areas. This might have affected the festive culture in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Therefore, we need not premise this study on the invention of tradition theory; instead what is needed is careful analysis of the continuity and change of festivals from the pre-Soviet period to the post-Soviet period.[2]

From this point of view, the present study aims to clarify the dynamics of festive culture, focusing on the festivals commemorating historical figures and events, in comparison with *nawrïz* and Islamic feasts. Festivals commemorating historical figures and events, which are organized by both the government and the people, suggest how they each interpret the past and how they are attempting to reconstruct society after the socialist period, based on what they regard as their tradition.

The data for this study were collected during field research in the S village district in the Bayanauïl region of Pavlodar province in northern Kazakhstan over a period of 28 months between 2002 and 2011. The village district includes three villages which were established during the Soviet period: Qarajar is the central village, where the village district office is located; Ïntïmaq is the second village, where I mainly conducted my field research.[3] The population of the village district was 1,427, 99 percent of whom were Kazakh; the population of Ïntïmaq was 708[4].

[2] There are some different terms indicating festivals and holidays in the Kazakh language. *Meyram küní* or *mereke* indicates a public holiday, which the government officially decrees as a day off from work. Festivals, a series of celebration connected with a particular activity or idea, are generally called *toy*. Anniversaries such as *toqsanjïldïq* (ninetieth anniversary) and *jüzjïldïq* (centenary anniversary), which commemorate a person's birth or the foundation of an institution, are also included in the *toy* category. Additionally, there are various feasts, especially large meals prepared on religious occasions. For instance, *as* means a large memorial feast, held in honour of a person. There are also Islamic feasts called *ayt*, which include the Feast of Sacrifice and the Feast of Breaking the Fast after Ramadan, as well as *auïzashar*, the feast after sunset during each day of Ramadan.

[3] In addition to the village district office, a mosque, a culture house, a community centre, a call centre, a hospital, and a school are located in Qarajar; only a school, small medical office, and a community centre are located in Ïntïmaq.

[4] These data are based on interviews with staff at the village district office in 2005. According to the national census in 2009, the population of Kazakhstan was approximately 16,010,000. Kazakhs accounted for 63.1 percent and Russians 23.7 percent of the total population (*Agenstvo Kazakhov po statistike* 2010: 10). Although many Russians live in northern Kazakhstan, Kazakhs make up over 80 percent of the population in the Bayanauïl region.

In this study, firstly, we look at an overview of the historical dynamics of festivals from the pre-Soviet period to the Soviet period. Secondly, we discuss nationalism and festive culture in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, focusing on state policy and people's interests. Thirdly, we examine how villagers handle power relations and attempt to reclaim their history through the use of festive structure; the analysis targets three different types of festivals commemorating historical figures and events. Fourthly, we discuss the system of memory and how villagers reshape regional space within the continuity of what they regard as their tradition.

Nomadic, Islamic, and Soviet Festivals: Historical Overview

In pre-Soviet Kazakh nomadic society during the 19th and early 20th centuries, festivals played sociopolitical and religious roles in integrating diverse patrilineal descent groups called *ru*. Pre-Soviet festivals included seasonal festivals such as the spring festival *nawrïs*, which is celebrated with the ritual meal of *nawrïz köje* (a kind of porridge) and various games, and other festivals related to nomadic pastoralism such as the celebration of the first horse milk at the beginning of summer and the feast of *soghïm* meat at the beginning of winter. The second category of pre-Soviet festivals were the Islamic feasts such as the Feast of Sacrifice and the Feast of Breaking the Fast at the end of Ramadan. A third type of pre-Soviet festivals were those related to the life cycle, for example, circumcisions, weddings, and large memorial feasts called *as,* which were held one or several years after the death of a prosperous and influential Kazakh man. A fourth type of festival included celebrations to mark other occasions concerning the modernization of Kazakh society under the rule of the Russian Empire, such as the opening of a village's Kazakh-Russian school. These festivals were mainly held by prosperous Kazakhs called *bay*, and included such elements as reciprocal feasts, blessings, the scattering of milk products and sweets for celebration, the presentation of clothes to guests, the recitation of the Quran for the deceased (particularly for one's ancestors), and various kinds of games, such as horseback games and horse races.

During the Soviet period, however, the policies of collectivization and sedentarization considerably changed Kazakh society. Prosperous Kazakhs were criticized as "enemies of the people" and were banished from their pastures in the early 1930s. Many patrilineal descent groups were gathered into one collective farm (later, a state farm), which was the predecessor of the Kazakh villages, including Ïntïmaq. Anti-religious campaigns also affected Kazakh society. At the same time, the Soviet government invented new public holidays for Soviet citizens: Revolution Day, May Day, International Women's Day, Soviet Army Day, Victory Day, the New Year, and so on. The new form of festivals for these Soviet public holidays included ceremonies and concerts in cities as well as on collective and state farms. Villagers were taught strictly how they should prepare for these festivals in Soviet schools.

Among Kazakh festivals in the pre-Soviet period, Islamic feasts were held only by elderly people on a small scale because of repeated anti-religious campaigns. *Nawrïz* was publicly banned, and only some people prepared the ritual meal *nawrïz köje*. Celebrations related to pastoral economy continued to be held, but were relatively small. As for life-cycle rituals, circumcision related to Islam was done in secret; large memorial feasts, which had been organized by prosperous Kazakhs, were not held during almost all of the Soviet period because they had been banished from the village, and because the traditional large memorial feasts were considered a waste of time, according to the socialist policy.

However, the pre-Soviet Kazakh festivals were not completely replaced by Soviet festivals. Some non-religious elements of Kazakh festivity were incorporated into Soviet festivals. Furthermore, Kazakh villagers celebrated socialist development with a Kazakh way of offering blessings. It is also noteworthy that villagers continued to conduct the recitation of the Quran for the deceased at funerals and in memorial rituals, albeit on a small scale, even though religious elements were removed from Soviet festivals.

Nationalism and Festive Culture in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan

The public holidays in contemporary Kazakhstan were divided into the Soviet ones and new ones.[5] Some Soviet-era public holidays adopted by the people such as International Women's Day, Victory Day, and the New Year continued to be celebrated.[6] Revolution Day is no longer celebrated. Some Soviet-era public holidays have continued, but with their names changed. May Day, which had been a festival of the proletariat, has become Kazakhstan People's Unity Day, a holiday for friendship between the country's multiple ethnic groups. *Nawrïz*, Independence Day, Capital City Day, and Day of the First President of Kazakhstan are newly established holidays.

Among these public holidays, *nawrïz* is the most actively celebrated festival in scale.[7] The relation between nationalism and festive culture is clearly shown in the revitalization of *nawrïz*, which was officially revived by the government of Kazakhstan in 1989 as a national celebration in Republic Square of Almaty *(Nawrïz: janggharghan salt-däst*ürler 1990). From that time, *nawrïz* began to be officially organized and celebrated at each of the several administrative levels: at the state capital, at provincial capitals, at regional capitals, and in each village. Public officials serve as the primary organizers at each level.

Although public officials give a broad outline of *nawrïz*, the specific content of the festival at the village level is decided by residents. For instance, the village district office divided İntïmaq villagers into four groups, based on streets, for contests held during the *nawrïz* festival in 2005. The content of

5 Current public holidays in Kazakhstan are the New Year (1-2 January), International Women's Day (8 March), *Nawrïz* (21-23 March), Kazakhstan People's Unity Day (1 May), Victory Day (9 May), Capital City Day (6 July), Constitution Day (30 August), Day of the First President of Kazakhstan (1 September), and Independence Day (16-17 December) (Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan n.d.).

6 *Yolka*, the Russian Fir Tree Festival before the New Year, has also continued to be held from the Soviet era up to the present.

7 For the dynamic of *nawrïz* in China, see Eitzen (1999) and Hann and Pelkmans (2009).

traditional meals, costumes, dramas, songs, music, and dance were decided by the villagers themselves; schoolteachers in particular played a major role in the decision-making process. A village woman told me that it is necessary to display "Kazakh tradition" during *nawrïz*. This is a common understanding of *nawrïz* among villagers, and raises a question: what is their Kazakh tradition?

Interestingly, the villagers held rituals such as a wedding (*betashar*) and the celebration of circumcision (*sundet toyi*) on the stage.[8] In the pre-Soviet period, *nawrïz* was not an occasion to hold these rituals. However, villagers had not publicly celebrated *nawrïs* for a long time during the Soviet period. Therefore, when the government decided to revive *nawrïs*, villagers incorporated these rituals, which had continued to be held during the Soviet period, into the *nawrïs* festival as part of their tradition. There is a gap between the government and villagers in the understanding of tradition: the government intended the festival to be a form of multi-ethnic entertainment, but villagers regarded the life-cycle rituals as their tradition. This contradictory and complex situation was caused by the fact that the revitalization of *nawrïz* was initially led by the government, but the content of the festival at the local level was decided by villagers.

Next, let us turn our attention to the Islamic feasts, which relate to nationalism in a different way. Islamic feasts are not public holidays, but rather important religious festivals in Kazakhstan. The government defines Islam as a part of Kazakh tradition. In other words, Islam was revitalized as a cultural basis of nationalism. According to this policy, the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Kazakhstan founded a number of mosques across the country and aimed to spread the Five Pillars, including daily prayers and Friday service held in mosques. For villagers, however, Quran recitation for the deceased, especially for ancestors, is crucial. Therefore, Islamic feasts and Ramadan have been revitalized as important occasions for Quran recitation for ancestors (Fujimoto 2008). The Feast of Sacrifice is an occasion for reciprocal invitations between households to dine on the meat of scarified livestock. During my long-term field research from 2003 to 2005, villagers complained that the Feast of Sacrifice was not a public holiday because they regarded themselves as Muslims and wanted not to work but to celebrate the feasts with relatives and friends through mutual invitations to feasts followed by Quran recitation.

It is noteworthy that neither *nawrïz* nor *ayt* originate in Kazakh culture. The government also needs its own festivals to express nationalism. Festivals commemorating historical figures and events are suitable for this purpose. At least seven anniversaries commemorating Kazakh historical figures have been held in Kazakhstan with the support of UNESCO, which was eager to support the festivals commemorating historical figures and events as "cultural heritage" in newly independent Central Asian countries in the 1990s and 2000s.[9] Then, what was the villagers' attitude to these festivals commemorating historical

8 For the dynamics of life-cycle rituals, see Werner (1999) and Fujimoto (2011a).

9 According to UNESCO, seven anniversaries commemorating the birth of Kazakh historical figures were held with support from UNESCO's Paris headquarters during the 15 years from 1992 (UNESCO n.d.). Two of them were from the Bayanaŭïl region, Pavlodar province.

figures and events? The next section explores this question by analyzing the villagers' attempts to commemorate historical figures and events.

Villagers' Attempts to Commemorate Historical Figures and Events

The Bayanauïl region produced many Kazakh intellectuals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Accordingly, a relatively large number of governmental festivals commemorating historical figures from this region have been held. In this section, I examine three cases of festivals. Two of them are governmental festivals, and one is a non-governmental festival. Case 1 is the festival commemorating Kanïsh Sätpaev, celebrated at the national level, and Case 2 is the festival commemorating the history of schools, celebrated at the regional level. In contrast, Case 3 is non-governmental memorial feast. Through an examination of these cases, I aim to clarify how villagers organize these festivals in terms of their relationship with government.

Case 1: Republic Festivals Commemorating a Kazakh Scholar

This case shows how villagers responded to the governmental festivals, which were organized at the national level as well as the local administrative level. Kanïsh Sätpaev (1899-1964) was born in winter quarters near present-day Ïntïmaq in 1899. His grandfather Sätpay was a *hajji*, and his uncle Äbikey Sätpaev was an intellectual who was killed in one of Stalin's purges in 1938. After studying in Russia, he worked in Kazakhstan as a geologist and earned a doctoral degree of mineralogy/geology in 1942. He held the position of President of the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan during 1946-1952 and 1955-1964. He might be the most famous President of Academy of Sciences in Kazakhstan. He is known not only for his academic research, but also for the utilization of Kazakhstan's abundant natural resources. He also strove to improve the standard of living in his home village, Ïntïmaq, by introducing an improved breed of sheep and building a large granary.

After Kanïsh's death in 1964, the ninetieth anniversary of his birth was celebrated at the initiative of Kazakhstan's government at the national level in 1989 during *perestroika*.[10] According to the program, lectures about his work were given by scholars and a documentary film on his life was screened in Almaty. These events were organized at the national level by official bodies such as the Kazakhstan government and the Academy of Sciences in Almaty. Afterward, a festival was held in the Bayanauïl region of Pavlodar province for two days; one day in the regional centre, the town of Bayanauïl, and another day in his home village, Ïntïmaq. These events were organized by provincial, regional, and village officials in Pavlodar province. This late Soviet festival in Bayanauïl town mixed elements of Soviet festivity, such as floral tributes to Lenin and Kanïsh, with those of Kazakh festivity, such as wrestling and horse races. In addition, the "Kanïsh Sätpaev Museum" was opened in a room of the school in Ïntïmaq to present the village's history and Kanïsh's life. Kanïsh's daughter and

[10] Data on the ninetieth and centennial anniversary of Kanïsh Sätpaev's birth are based on the program of events, a video produced by a television company in Kazakhstan, and interviews with villagers.

her husband visited Kanïsh's birthplace and the graves of Kanïsh's father and grandfather, as they did again on the centenary anniversary.

We can see some aspects of change between the ninetieth and centenary anniversaries of Kanïsh's birth. The centenary anniversary was held in 1999, after the independence of Kazakhstan, with the support of UNESCO. In Almaty, the film screening and lecture were held as on the ninetieth anniversary. At the regional level, however, we can see some changes. In contrast to the ninetieth anniversary, most of the festival program took place in Ïntïmaq on the centenary anniversary. Although the program was quite similar, a notable difference was the appearance of some religious elements in the official festival at the villagers' suggestion. At the beginning of the ceremony in Ïntïmaq, the *molda* (mullah), a man who knows the Quranic verses well, was sitting on the stage together with three elderly men, and recited the Quran for the spirits of Kanïsh and his ancestors. In the village officer's speech, the village was described as a sacred place, filled with ancestral spirits. The other remarkable change was villagers' active participation. Schoolteachers performed a drama of Kanïsh's birth, and his favourite song was sung in the concert. After the concert a bout of Kazakh wrestling was held. Guests were presented with ethnic costumes and served a meal of meat in a Kazakh nomadic tent, erected in the grounds of the village school, and elderly people gave blessings after this large meal.[11]

On the ninetieth anniversary, villagers had simply accepted the festival, but began to propose the content of the festival and to participate actively in the centenary anniversary. Notably, the villagers incorporated elements of their Islamic practices into the festival. For villagers, the commemoration of their ancestors, including Kanïsh and his kin, was one of the most crucial parts of this festival, although they do not reject the nationalism expressed through festivals.

Table 1. *The ninetieth anniversary of the birth of the First President of the Academy of Sciences (1989)*

Location	Action(s)
Almaty city	- screening the documentary film of Kanïsh Sätpaev
Bayanauïl town	- opening ceremony - drama on Kanïsh's life - concert and dance - Kazakh wrestling - horse race - floral tribute for statue of Lenin and Kanïsh Sätpaev - visit to the Museum of Bayanauïl region
Ïntïmaq village	- visit to the birthplace of Kanïsh Sätpaev - visit to the graveyard of Kanïsh's father and grandfather - visit to the Memorial Hall of Kanïsh Sätpaev - Kazakh entertainment 'aytïs'

[11] The 110 years of his birth was celebrated in 2009 as an academic conference of schoolchildren, which was called *Kanïshtanu* (Study of Kanïsh).

Table 2. *The centennial anniversary of the birth of the First President of the Academy of Sciences (1999)*

Location	**Action(s)**
Almaty city	- screening the documentary film of Kanïsh Sätpaev - memorial lecture
Pavlodar city	- ceremony - Kazakh wrestling - horse race
Ïntïmaq village	- visit to the birthplace of Kanïsh Sätpaev - visit to the graveyard of Kanïsh's father and grandfather - memorial ceremony - the Quran recitation for the spirits of Kanïsh Sätpaev and - his ancestors - drama on Kanïsh's birth - concert (Kanïsh' favourite songs) - presentation of gifts (Kazakh costume) - Kazakh wrestling - festive meal

Case 2: Village Festival Commemorating the History of a School

Next, I will discuss the village festival, which began at the villagers' initiative; my aim is to examine how they express their own history through festival, and how they handle power relations with higher level officials. This festival was held to commemorate the centenary anniversary of a village school founded in the pre-Soviet period.

The founding of the school was closely linked to the modernization of Kazakh society in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.[12] The intellectuals in northern Kazakhstan, including the prosperous Kazakh family of Shormanov in the Bayanauïl region, were eager for modern education to come to the region, owing to a sense of crisis in Kazakh society at that time. Accordingly, they requested that the Russian Empire open a school for Kazakh children, and this demand was accepted after many years. The Kazakh-Russian school, the first school to provide a modern education system to Kazakhs in the region, was opened in 1903 on a hill of Aqkelín, the winter quarters of the Shormanov family. At the opening of the school, many heads of livestock were slaughtered for the feast, horse races were run, music was played, and songs were sung in celebration (Bätenŭlï and Älípbaev 2003: 37). If it had been during the Soviet era, villagers could not have celebrated the centenary anniversary of this school, because this school was strictly criticized in the early Soviet era as a school for the bourgeoisie, and the present school's predecessor was supposed to be a Soviet school. However, a reconsideration of history which started during perestroika allowed for re-evaluating the activities of Kazakh intellectuals under the Russian Empire. Under these circumstances, a festival commemorating the village school was proposed by schoolteachers to the Committee of Education in the regional office, which then suggested the plan to the provincial office. Although schoolteachers proposed a village-

[12] Kazakh society was gradually conquered by the Russian Empire over a period ending in 1869.

level festival, the provincial officials decided to celebrate this anniversary at the provincial level, because of the value they placed on the school's long history reaching back to the pre-Soviet period. This decision, however, caused trouble in scheduling the festival because the provincial office decided when the festival would be held. The date of the festival, which was originally planned for the summer of 2003, was repeatedly postponed, and the festival was finally held on 16 October 2004. The end of autumn in Kazakhstan is not a suitable time to hold a large festival that includes horse races and other games; by then it is already cold. Villagers, particularly school teachers, complained that the provincial and regional governments controlled the schedule and villagers themselves had no voice in deciding the date.

Although the festival itself was postponed, the head of the village district office and school teachers decided to present the villagers with a book that had been prepared for the centenary anniversary. This book was written and edited by a man who was born in Ïntïmaq and worked at a cultural centre in a city in the province. The village school's director was the co-author. The book was published as a not-for-sale item, sponsored by National Pavlodar University, and displayed publicly to villagers on 24 October 2003 when Republic Day was celebrated at the school.[13] The writer of the book made a speech explaining that he wrote it with the school's director, but that the information had been offered by many villagers and therefore it was the villagers' book. Later, copies of the book were distributed among most of the families in the village. Additionally, a gathering for the centenary anniversary was held on 25 December 2003 at the school, under the name "An Oral History: Our school's 100 years". Schoolchildren appeared on stage and sang songs, and also presented posters, which they had worked for a long time to prepare. This event was a part of the festival that the schoolteachers had organized.

At long last, the festival for centenary anniversary of the school was held on 16 October 2004. It was a cold day, but from the morning, the villagers of Ïntïmaq gathered at the school to participate in the centenary anniversary. Some of the participants had volunteered on the previous day to help prepare for the festival. The ceremony was conducted before noon. First, participants stood and sang the national anthem. Then, a congratulatory message from the regional office governor was read out. The school director gave a speech, making reference to the pre-Soviet history of the village and school. The director of the village district, an officer of the Ministry of Education and Sciences, Kanïsh's son-in-law, the author of a book on Kanïsh, and other notable persons from the village, such as the president of a medical centre and a professor at Pavlodar National University, attended this festival from various cities and gave speeches. A song, in which the village was praised as Satpaev's and Shormanov's home village, was sung with the accompaniment of the *dombra*, a traditional Kazakh musical instrument. This song was composed by a man from the village. At the end of the ceremony the elderly *molda* (mullah) gave an address, and an elderly woman ritually scattered candy and a kind of cheese to celebrate the festival.

[13] Republic Day was a public holiday in 2003 and 2004 during my field research in Kazakhstan.

The gymnasium, the largest room in the school, was full of villagers, possibly numbering more than one hundred. After the concert, guests were served lunch at the school. In the afternoon, Kazakh wrestling, horseback games, and horse races were held on the steppe near the village. Herdsman in the village had themselves suggested these races and games.

It is noteworthy that *auïzashar*, the daily feast after sunset during Ramadan, was held at the school at the end of the centenary anniversary festivities. When the date of the centenary anniversary was decided, the school's sub-director, a woman who was knowledgeable of Islamic practices, noted that 16 October fell during Ramadan, and that it would be problematic for holding the festival, because alcohol should not be served during Ramadan. Although alcohol is usually allowed at festivals, Kazakhs do not drink any alcohol on an occasion when the Quran is recited, such as Islamic feasts. Therefore, villagers were embarrassed that the festival would be held on the second day of Ramadan. However, the date was not shifted again because it was the official decision. The school's sub-director suggested serving alcohol at lunchtime for the guests who did not keep fast, but holding the *auïzashar* feast, without any alcohol, as a part of centenary anniversary.[14] The sub-director's idea was supported by the villagers, and seventeen elderly men and women who had kept fast were invited to the feast after sunset. After the feast, the *molda* recited the Quran for the deceased who had graduated from the village school. In other words, the Quran was recited for all of the deceased villagers because there had been only one school in this village for one hundred years. The elderly people are respected by the villagers, and they commemorated the deceased during the festival as representatives of the whole village. In this way, the villagers harmonized the official festival and Islamic practices to commemorate village history.

This village festival shows how the people strove to commemorate local historical events in their own way. Villagers handled power relations by proposing an alternative plan to celebrate the anniversary and by introducing their tradition which incorporated Islamic practices.

Case 3: A Non-governmental Memorial Feast

Lastly, I will examine a non-governmental memorial feast in which ancestors were commemorated by their descendants. As I indicated in the first section, Kazakhs traditionally held large memorial feasts called *as* for prosperous and influential men. Although villagers could not hold the large memorial feasts during the Soviet period, they continued to recite the Quran for the ancestors on a small scale. After the independence of Kazakhstan, the large memorial feast was revived to celebrate the centenary anniversary of a villager's birth or as a memorial feast in honour of erecting a tombstone at an ancestor's grave (Fujimoto 2011a). The former was clearly stimulated by the governmental centenary anniversaries of historical Kazakh figures; the latter reflected the rising consciousness among Kazakhs of their roots. From the 1990s to the 2000s, five such memorial feasts were held in Ïntïmaq. The common

[14] Usually, the *auïzashar* feast is held at villagers' homes in turn during Ramadan.

characteristics of these memorial feasts, according to financial possibility, are a large meal, Quran recitation for the ancestors, and the display of genealogy, as well as horse races, horseback games, and giving a gift of clothes.

Among the memorial feasts, one was a large feast held by the *Qoja* people, descendants of Islamic missionaries to Central Asia, some of whom are thought to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. A memorial feast was held for Muhamedjan, who was born in *Qoja* in the Bayanauïl region during the nineteenth century. On three occasions, he took Kazakhs from Bayanauïl to Mecca for the Hajji. On the third pilgrimage, his companions died and only he could safely return to Bayanauïl.[15] His son Khabibolla was also said to be a man with special, sacred talents who could knock down a *shaytan* (evil spirit). However, their graves were almost forgotten because few tombstones were erected during that time. The Kazakh belief is that if a graveyard is desolate, it might bring some kind of misfortune. Therefore, four descendants from the male line of Muhamedjan erected a tombstone in June 2006. After erecting the tombstone, the Quran was recited for them and one sheep was slaughtered and served by the family of Muhamedjan's grandson's daughter who lives in the region. Approximately ten people attended this small memorial feast.

In addition, one of the descendants, a son of Muhamedjan's granddaughter, erected a fence around the grave and held a large memorial feast at the school in July 2007. It is not common for a descendant from the female line to give a memorial feast. However, this prosperous man, who has an important post in a city, had a desire to take care of his mothers' ancestral graves and to hold a great feast. One hundred and fifty people participated in this feast. They were mainly *Qoja* people with their wives and daughters-in-law from various large cities in Kazakhstan. For example, one man, Muhamedjan's great-grandson, who was born in Almaty and could not speak the Kazakh language, traveled 1,000 km to Ïntïmaq in order to pay respects at the grave and to attend the memorial feast. It can be seen then that the memorial feast is attractive for not only rural but also urban Kazakhs, and some of the latter may even host the feast. Ïntïmaq villagers from other patrilineal descent groups also could take part in this feast. Commemorating ancestors is thus a means to reclaiming history and making ties with kin and other villagers.

So far, we have examined three different types of festivals commemorating historical figures and events. Government-organized festivals commemorating historical figures and events represent a new type of festival invented in the Soviet period; state intent and power could be observed in this type of festival in the post-Soviet period as well as during the Soviet period. Negotiation with provincial officials is difficult because the state has overwhelming power. Therefore the villagers' strategy is to avoid direct confrontation with state officials, but rather to try to find other ways to express their commemoration. In this sense, villagers' initiative, although subject to some limits, seems likely to

[15] According to an interview with a man working in the regional mosque in the town of Bayanauïl, 61 Kazakh men went to the hajji from the Bayanauïl region during the second half of the 19th century and during the early 20th century when Kazakhstan was under the rule of the Russian Empire. Their names are honourably engraved in stone in front of the mosque; Muhamedjan's name is listed among them.

have intensified, as shown by the fact that they incorporated Quran recitation into the governmental centenary anniversary of a Kazakh scholar in Case 1, and that villagers themselves decided to celebrate their village history to mark the centenary anniversary of the village school in Case 2; but in this case, their initiative was restricted by the power of state officials. Moreover, some villagers began to hold non-governmental festivals in Case 3.

Accordingly, the next question is why villagers are so eager to commemorate historical figures and events, and what kind of memory system allows villagers to do so. Nationalism is not a satisfactory explanation, although the national consciousness is widely accepted by villagers. The reason is likely related to the reconstruction of the village society in the post-Soviet period, with emphasis being placed on continuity of their tradition from the pre-Soviet period, as examined in the next section.

Reshaping Regional Space through Festivals

Holding festivals to commemorate historical figures and events is a way that villagers reconstruct village society in continuity from the pre-Soviet period. It is noteworthy that the power relations in the region underwent major changes due to policy transitions. The agent that organizes festivals was changed. As mentioned in Section 1, prosperous and influential Kazakhs, who had held festivals, lost their social status in the early Soviet era. After the break-up of state farms, which had supported the holding of Soviet festivals, in the mid-1990s village districts emerged from the territory of state farms, but these districts are only administrative units and do not have strong political and economic functions, in contrast to a state farm. Under these circumstances, the villagers began to re-evaluate the pre-Soviet history of their ancestors, which was transmitted by elderly persons, and began to hold festivals.

The memory system relating to genealogy, ancestral land, and Islamic practices supports the villagers in reclaiming their own history through festivals. Kazakh oral history is closely connected with an awareness of *ru*, which is the patrilineal descent group. Based on this firm consciousness of *ru*, regional history has been orally transmitted through genealogy called *shejíre* [16]. Usually *shejíre* starts with the *ru* founder's name, which is followed by their male descendants' names. Famous ancestors' lives and achievements are also referred to in *shejíre*. Some villagers own a written *shejíre* genealogy which earlier generations wrote down. Through this genealogy, villagers know the names and lives of their ancestors. There are not so many villagers who know well their genealogy and ancestors' achievements. Because of this, villagers are proud their roots if they do know them.

These genealogies are often referred to in festivals commemorating historical figures and events. In Case 1, the genealogy of Kanïsh Sätpaev was shown in the exhibition at the village school. Furthermore, the genealogy of villagers was written down in the book recording the history of the school and

[16] There are two types of genealogies: *jetí ata* and *shejíre. Jetí ata* literally means "seven ancestors", that is seven patrilineal ancestors in a direct line.

village published on the occasion of the village school's anniversary in Case 2. The memorial feast is also an occasion to display genealogy. For instance, at the memorial feast of the *Qoja* people in Case 3, two types of genealogies, which had been written down, were displayed for the participants. One is the *shejíre* genealogy of fifteen generations, which a deceased *Qoja* man had written in Arabic and passed on to his descendants. The other is a newly written genealogy of descendants through a female line. This new type of genealogy was written down because the sponsor of the memorial feast was the son of the granddaughter of Mukhamedjan. Participants at memorial feasts understand their history and genealogical linkage through these genealogies.

Consciousness of ancestral land, which is related to genealogical consciousness, reveals the migration history and memory of nomadic quarters of patrilineal descent groups in the vast steppe going back to the 18th century. Place names are memorized along with the names of the segment of the patrilineal descent group that used the land as nomadic winter quarters until collectivization during the early Soviet period. Such places, where graves are often located, are called the ancestral land of a segment of a patrilineal descent group.

Although festivals after independence mainly have been conducted in the present-day village of Ïntïmaq, which was formed in the early Soviet period by the sedentarization and collectivization of Kazakh nomads, the former nomadic winter quarters with graves, which are called ancestral land, play a crucial role in festivals commemorating historical figures and events. For example, *Ayrïq* is the winter quarters and graveyard of the Sätpaev family (Case 1) and is located 5-6 km from Ïntïmaq village. The neighbouring winter quarters called "Imantay", where Kanïsh Sätpaev was born, were named after Kanïsh Sätpaev's father, Imantay Sätpaev. At the time of the anniversaries of Kanïsh Sätpaev, guests and villagers visited these places. Moreover, *Aqkelín,* the winter quarters of the Shormanov family where the Kazakh-Russian school in Case 2 was built, literally means "white bride". The origin of this place name is a legend that, in the early 19th century, a Kazakh girl in a white dress came to this place to marry Shorman, the grandfather of the school's founder. Connected with this legend, the Kazakh-Russian school is called *Aqkelín mektebí* (*Aqkelín* School). Accordingly, the book published on the anniversary of the village school was titled *Araylï Aqkelín* (*The Dawn of Aqkelín*). The graves of Muhamedjan and his family from *Qoja*, for whom a tombstone was built in Case 3, were also located on the hill of *Aqkelín.*

The memory system of genealogy and ancestral land is related to an important Islamic practice among Kazakhs: Quran recitation for the deceased, particularly ancestors, is a crucial element for villagers to commemorate historical figures and events. As indicated in the previous section, the *molda* (mullah) recited the Quran for Kanïsh and his ancestors both on stage and at the graveyard in Case 1. At the centenary anniversary of the village school in Case 2, the Quran was recited by this mullah at the *auïzashar* feast for the graduates from the school, in other words, the deceased villagers. In Case 3, the Quran was recited for *Qoja* ancestors by their descendants.

The reason why villagers included the Quran recitation even in the governmental festival relates to their belief in spirits of the deceased. It is said that if you do not memorialize your ancestral spirits, disaster could befall you; if you memorialize them, they will protect you. It is believed that the spirits of the deceased, particularly ancestral spirits, affect the living. This belief is supposedly rooted in a pre-Islamic ancestral cult. However, Kazakh villagers regard the Quran recitation for the deceased as an Islamic practice and continued to conduct it even in small scale during the Soviet era. Now, they openly invite kin and neighbours to a large meal and recite the Quran for the deceased on various occasions including the Islamic Fasts and large memorial feasts. According to genealogical consciousness, the names of the deceased are read after the Quran recitation. This memorial ritual of Quran recitation is usually held by descendants at home or at a graveyard to memorize the names of their ancestors. However, festivals commemorating historical figures and events allow villagers to commemorate not only their own ancestors but also the deceased from the whole village or region. In other words, the memorial ritual gains a public character through festivals commemorating historical figures and events.[17] Villagers regard the Quran recitation as a crucial element for the festivals because they believed they are blessed by God as well as by ancestral spirits through the Quran recitation.

In comparison with the other festivals revived or re-valued in the post-Soviet period, such as the spring festival and Islamic feasts, the festivals commemorating historical figures and events have their own effect on Kazakh society. The meaning of the festivals commemorating historical figures and events is not limited to nationalism, but rather extends to villagers' attempts to reclaim their own history and reconstruct regional society.

Conclusion

In Central Asian countries, post-Soviet festive culture at the national level has a certain similarity in its propagandistic style of nationalism. This similarity is rooted in the Soviet festive culture, which served to integrate various ethnic groups into one nation based on socialism. Festivals commemorating historical figures and events also began to be celebrated during the Soviet era, and further developed in post-Soviet Central Asian countries, and therefore include similar content: ceremonies, lectures, film screenings, concerts, monument building, and exhibitions, sometimes with the inclusion of ethnic games. The national festivals also enjoy the support of UNESCO, and thus present nationalism internationally.

At the same time, however, the regions of the former Soviet Union originally had a variety of cultures, and in this sense, the Soviet attempts to create a unified populace through a festive culture based on socialism were a form of grand experiment. It is notable that Soviet festivals included a few non-religious

[17] Young villagers who have studied Islamic dogma at the Islamic institutes founded after the independence of Kazakhstan often emphasize the importance of the Five Pillars over memorial feasts in the practice of Islam. However, they do not deny the importance of memorial feasts in Kazakh society.

elements of the pre-Soviet festive culture of each region, although religious elements were excluded. In Kazakhstan, various festivals, which were looked down on by the Soviet government, did not go completely extinct but continued to be held as non-governmental celebrations on a small scale in many cases. These non-governmental celebrations during the Soviet period have been re-evaluated and incorporated into post-Soviet governmental festivals.

The different policies of each independent state after the fall of the Soviet Union also affected festive culture, such that festivals have gradually come to have considerable diversity in content over the past twenty years. The extent of using *nawrïz* festival as a mean of nationalism differs and is relatively greater in Uzbekistan (Adams 2010) than in Kyrgyzstan (Yoshida 2007) and Kazakhstan. As for festivals commemorating historical figures and events, the selection of historical figures and events differ according to the state policy of each country. In Kazakhstan there is not one significant historical figure who stands as a national symbol, like Timur in Uzbekistan or Manas in Kyrgyzstan. Rather multiple historical figures are celebrated, nationally as well as regionally, at the historical figure's birthplace. Thus, village-level festivals at a historical figure's birthplace in the various regions of Kazakhstan have uniqueness. The organizers of festivals in rural areas are people who informally hand down Kazakh rituals and festivals. They emphasize these elements as part of their tradition in post-Soviet festivals.

Accordingly, a village festival is not a perfect copy of a national festival. Villagers celebrated festivals in the manner they regard as their tradition: they act out life-cycle rituals on stage in the *nawrïz* festival and recite the Quran for their ancestors at Islamic feasts. Even in festivals commemorating historical figures and events, which began to be held during the Soviet period, the villagers have introduced religious elements. These religious elements, which play an important role in village-level governmental and non-governmental festivals, are rooted in the ritual of Quran recitation for ancestors, which Kazakh villagers continued to conduct as their tradition during the Soviet period.

Villagers' attempts to celebrate festivals do not necessarily conflict with state intentions to use festivals as a means of nation-building. However, the most important problem for villagers is reclaiming their own history and reconstructing local society through festive culture in the post-Soviet era. The present study not only points out the gap between the government and villagers, but also clarifies the villagers' attempt to hold festivals under their initiative. The villagers' initiative seems likely to be intensified, although it faces certain limits. Negotiation with officials is sometimes difficult because of the administrative hierarchy. Under these circumstances, villagers do not directly confront power relations but rather manage them; they do so by proposing alternative plans for celebrating an anniversary to commemorate their regional history.

The memory system of genealogy and ancestral land supported this process of reclaiming villagers' own history through festive structure. Concerning the relation of time and festive culture, as Cash pointed out in her description of the annual festivals of Moldova, control over the cycle of

rituals is fundamentally related to the definition and control of time itself (Cash 2011: 182). This study reveals that not only control over the annual cycle but also control over historical time is essential for a post-socialist society, when examining Kazakh villagers' attempts to commemorate historical figures and events. This process is related closely to the reshaping of regional space. Most festivals are based in and on the village which was built during the Soviet era. However, the winter quarters and graveyards before collectivization play an important role in festivals commemorating historical figures and events. Thus, regional space is stratified by historical memory. With the support of the memory system in connection with Quran recitation for the ancestors, Kazakh villagers reclaim and control space and time by holding festivals of their history spanning the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Soviet period, and the present. Through holding festivals commemorating historical figures and events under changing power relations, they try to reconstruct their society based on the continuity of their regional tradition.

Acknowledgment

I offer my sincere gratitude to Prof. Takako Yamada of Kyoto University and Dr. M. Kh. Abusseitova of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan for their advice on my research over the years. I am grateful to Dr. Jennifer R. Cash and Dr. Ludmila D. Cojocaru for giving me valuable advice on this paper. This research was supported by a grant from the Matsushita International Foundation and by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) "The New Development of Religious Revitalization in a Transborder Space in Central Asia".

References:

Adams, Laura L. 2010. *The Spectacular State: Culture and National Identity in Uzbekistan*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Agenstvo Respubliki Kazakhstan po statistike. 2010. "Perepisi naseleniya Respubliki Kazakhstan 2009 goda: Kratkie itogi". Astana: Agenstvo Respubliki Kazakhstan po Statistike.

Arghïnbaev, Kh., M. Mŭqanov, V. Vostorov. 2000. *Qazaq Shejíresí Khaqïnda* [The Kazakh Genealogy]. Almatï: Atamŭra.

Bätenŭlï, J. and B. Älípbaev. 2003. *Araylï Aqkelín* [The Dawn of Aqkelín]. Pavlodar: S. Torayghïrov attïndaghï Pavlodar memlekettík universitetï.

Cash, Jennifer R. 2011. "Capitalism, Nationalism, and Religious Revival: Transformations of the Ritual Cycle in Postsocialist Moldova," *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 29(2): 181-203.

Eitzen, Hilda C. 1999. "Nawrïz in Kazakstan: Scenarios for Managing Diversity". In *Contemporary Kazakhs: Cultural and Social Perspectives*, edited by Ingvar Svanberg, 73-101. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Embassy of the Republic Kazakhstan. N.d., available at <http:www.embkazjp.org/consularissues.htm>, accessed 03.08.2013.

Erofeeva, I. V. 2003. *Rodoslovnye kazakhskikh khanov i kozha XVIII - XIX vv.* [The Genealogy of Kazakh Khans and Qojas in 18th-19th Centuries]. Almaty: TOO Print-S.

Fujimoto, Toko. 2008. "Post-Soviet Jidai no Shishakuyo: Kazakhstan Hokubu Noson ni okeru Gisesai no Jire wo Chushinni" [Kazakh Memorial Services in the Post-Soviet Period: A Case Study of the Feast of Sacrifice in a Northern Kazakhstan Village], *Slavic Studies* 55: 1-28.

Fujimoto, Toko. 2011a. "Kazakh Memorial Services in the Post-Soviet Period: A Case Study of Northern Kazakhstan Villages,"in *Continuity, Symbiosis, and the Mind in Traditional Cultures of Modern Societies*, edited by Takako Yamada and Takashi Irimoto, 117-132. Sapporo: Hokkaido University Press.

Fujimoto, Toko. 2011b. *Yomigaeru Shishagirei: Gendai Kazakh no Islam Fukkou* [Revitalization of Memorial Rituals: The Dynamics of Islam in Contemporary Kazakhstan]. Tokyo: Fukyosha.

Hann, Chris and Mathijs Pelkmans. 2009. "Realigning Religion and Power in Central Asia: Islam, Nation-State and (Post)Socialism," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61(9): 1517-1541.

Hobsbawm, Eric. 1992 [1983]. "Dento ha Tsukuridasareru" [Tradition Invented], in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nawrïz: janggharghan salt-dästürler. 1990. *Nawrïz: janggharghan salt-dästürler* [Nawrïz: Revived Tradition]. Almatï: Qazaqstan.

Obiya, Chika, Jun Sugawara and Toko Fujimoto. 2005. "Gendaiban Nauruz no Iwaikata" [Contemporary Nawrïz], in *Chuo Eurasia wo Shiru Jiten*, edited by Hisao Komatsu, Hiroshi Umemura, Tomohiko Uyama, Chika Obiya and Toru Horikawa, 481-482. Tokyo: Heibonsha.

Obiya, Chika. 2005. "Eiyuu no Fukkatsu: Gendai Uzbekistan Nationalism no nakano Timur" [The Revival of a Hero: Timur in the Context of Nationalism of Contemporary Uzbekistan], in *Islam Chiki no Kokka to Nationalism*, edited by Sakai Keiko and Usuki Akira, 185-212. Tokyo: Tokyo University Press.

Sakai, Hiroki. 2003. "Shukusai: Dentou to Seijiteki Enshutsu" [Festivals: Tradition and Politic Production], in *Chuo Ajia wo Shiru tameno 60 Sho*, edited by Uyama Tomohiko, 191-195. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten.

UNESCO. N. d. available at <http://www.unesco.kz/new/en/unesco/news/2004>, accessed 15.01.2013.

Werner, Cynthia Ann. 1999. "The Dynamics of Feasting and Gift Exchange in Rural Kazakhstan," in *Contemporary Kazakhs: Cultural and Social Perspectives*, edited by Ingvar Svanberg, 47-72. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Yamada, Takako. 2011. "Anthropology of Continuity and Symbiosis of Traditional Cultures," in *Continuity, Symbiosis, and the Mind in Traditional Cultures of Modern Societies*, edited by Takako Yamada and Takashi Irimoto, 117-132. Sapporo: Hokkaido University Press.

Yoshida, Setsuko and Yoshida, Setsuko. 2009. "Eiyujojishi Manas to Nation Saiko" [Reconsidering Manas Epics and Nation], in *Postshakaishugijinruigaku no Shatei*, edited by Takakura Hiroki and Sasaki Shiro, 267-288. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.

Yoshida, Setsuko. 2004. *Chuo-ajia Noson no Shinzoku Network: Kyrgyzstan Keizaiiko no Jinruigakuteki Kenkyu* [Kin Networks in Kyrgyzstan: An Anthropological Study on Economic Transition]. Tokyo: Fukyosha.

Yoshida, Setsuko. 2007. "Shuto no Saiten, Nouson no Shukujitsu: Kyrgyzstan Nooruz Fukkou ni Miru 'Kokka' to 'Minzoku'" [Festival in Capital City and Holiday in Village: "State" and "Nation" in the Context of the Revival of Nooruz in Kyrgyzstan], in *Chuo Asia niokeru Uighurjinchikishakai no Henyo to Minzoku Identity nikansuru Chosakenkyu*, edited by Shinmen Yasushi, 219-237. H.15-H.18 Nendo KAKENHI (A) Kenkyseikahokokusho.

SACRED MISSIONS AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES: MODERNIST TELEOLOGY AND PERSONHOOD IN SIBERIAN RELIGIOUS REVIVALISM (THE CASE OF YSYAKH SUMMER FESTIVAL)

Eleanor Peers
Halle/Saale, Germany

Abstract. This article takes a revivalist shamanic festival in Siberia, the Sakha people's Yhyakh, as a case study, using it and the discourses around it to explore the ways Soviet ideology has been assimilated into contemporary perceptions of Sakha ethnicity. I trace the continuities between Soviet-era modernist contentions about reified ethnicity and universal value, and the ideas behind popular Sakha revivalism, showing how Soviet ideologies have been assimilated into movements, practices, and categories that their authors could never have imagined.

Keywords: ethnicity, shamanism, religious revivals, Russian Federation, Sakha (Yakutia)

Cuvinte-cheie: etnicitate, Şamanism, renaştere religioasă, Federaţia Rusă, Sakha (Yakutia)

Introduction

When does the expression of cultural difference become a sacred mission, and how can it happen in a society that once prided itself on being atheist and multicultural? Such a transformation in the role of culture has happened in many places in the former Soviet Union. This article takes a revivalist shamanic festival in northeast Siberia, the Sakha people's *Yhyakh*, as a case study of the transformation of Soviet ideology and discourse into contemporary perceptions of ethnicity. The transformation moves a modernist social project into one of spiritual and moral re-generation, but it has happened through continuity and evolution rather than revolution. Through the *Yhyakh*, I trace the continuities between Soviet-era modernist contentions about ethnicity and universal values and the ideas that motivate popular Sakha revivalism. I show how Soviet ideologies have been assimilated into a movement that sees the regeneration of Sakha culture – not the creation of a communist society – as a quest of surpassing spiritual and moral importance.

The Sakha people are one of the largest indigenous ethnic groups in Siberia. Around 440,000 Sakha people live in Russia, and the vast majority of this population lives in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).[1] The Sakha people arrived in the areas they currently inhabit through a series of migrations northward during the second millennium of the current era. They experienced Russian colonization from the mid-seventeenth century and with it a steady increase in European cultural influence; during the Soviet period, this influence intensified into a radical transformation of earlier ways of life. This transformation has lost none of its intensity in the post-Soviet era: since the 1990s, Sakha people have continued to find themselves navigating competing and mutually contradictory attractions, choices, and pressures in a context that continues to change fundamentally from year to year.

A rapid urbanization of the Sakha population started during the late Soviet period and has intensified in the post-Soviet period. The city of Yakutsk is no longer a Russian-dominated Soviet outpost, but has become the Sakha capital city. Sakha people now form the majority of the population as they move into the flats vacated by Russians returning to European Russia. The Sakha national revival of the 1990s did not reduce the appeal of Russian and global goods and lifestyles: increased urbanization and the opening up of the former Soviet Union to powerful global cultural influences has strengthened tendencies towards the loss of overt forms of Sakha culture. Those in the business of promoting Sakha culture and religiosity thus face a population distracted by a tidal wave of foreign and mainstream Russian technological and cultural products, which encourage young Sakha in particular to focus their ambitions on the styles of life and culture they imagine to exist outside the Sakha Republic. Remaining in the village to farm horses and cattle is by far the least preferable option for the younger generation to earn a living, although Sakha culture and religion has its roots in this way of life. As in many contemporary societies, the meaning of ethnic identity is becoming increasingly confused and contested, since Sakha ethnic identity has increasingly less relevance as the marker of a specific set of economic, social and spiritual practices. Meanwhile the political forms of the Sakha nationalist movement have come under severe pressure in the 2000s, as the Putin administration has sought to re-centralize the political power and administration of Russia.

Despite the many motivations and pressures for Sakha people to lay aside former practices and affiliations, a Sakha cultural revival continues apace in the form of a growing interest in Sakha traditional culture and religion. As the following pages will show, many Sakha people conceive of their traditional shamanic culture as the exclusive repository of life's most important values and projects. The mission to revive Sakha culture and identification is itself regarded as a sacred endeavour – as are similar missions taking place in other parts of the former Soviet Union and beyond. Section 1 outlines the pre-occupation with shamanism that characterizes recent discourses on culture and ethnicity

[1] For historical reasons, the republic is often referred to as Yakutia. For the sake of clarity in English I use "Sakha" as a shortened version of the official name.

among the Sakha through a description of the revival of *Yhyakh*. In section 2, where I focus on Soviet modernization projects in Sakha and the related production of television and media, I address how the Sakha case is indicative of wider processes in which modernizing and globalizing social transformations simultaneously encourage intense preoccupations with personal affiliation. This dialectic, moreover, did not only characterize the initial formation of modern nation-states, but is ongoing as more recent patterns in the movement of people and information has made ethnically homogeneous nation-states anomalous. The Sakha case is particularly interesting because it shows the transformation of historical materialist Marxist-Leninist approaches to understanding ethnicity into contemporary forms of Sakha nationalism and religiosity.[2]

Sanctified Ethnicity in the Republic of Sakha

One phenomenon that has emerged out of Sakha's post-Soviet cultural and political transition is a revival of the Sakha shamanic tradition, spearheaded by the widespread promotion and practice of the Yhyakh festival. In pre-Soviet times, the Yhyakh was a ritual of sacrifice, prayer and thanksgiving to the deities in the Sakha pantheon. The central aim of the classical Yhyakh was to secure the good will of the spirits by offering them fermented mare's milk (*kymys*). The offering was accompanied by the recitation of an *algys*, a combined hymn and prayer, and followed by the circle dance *ohuokhai*. Yhyakh rituals were one of the means by which Sakha communities could negotiate their relationships with the spiritual entities that inhabited their world. Like many other north Asian peoples - including the Evenki and other Tungusic-speaking peoples who have lived in Sakha for millennia - Sakha communities perceived an extensive array of gods, area spirits, ghosts and demons, living across a cosmos divided into upper, middle and lower worlds.

The Yhyakh has long been described as a "shamanic" practice in the scholarly literature (e.g. Eliade 1964), and although its application to more recent forms of the Yhyakh festival is sometimes debated, I have followed this usage for several reasons. First, the more recent festivals have demonstrably evolved from the older practice; secondly Sakha people commonly refer to the festivals as shamanic, despite the many other celebratory forms they incorporate. There can be no doubt that the pre-Soviet ritual was "shamanic": in traditional Siberian belief systems, some humans possessed unusual powers which enabled them to travel or communicate across the three worlds. These "shamans" (the word was taken from the Tungusic languages) used their connection with the spirits for various purposes, including healing, worship, warfare, and fertility. Indeed, the variety of Sakha words for specialized activities based on interacting with spirits testifies to the integration of a spiritual agency into every aspect of pre-Soviet life and relationship. For example, the men and women who went on spirit flights into the upper and lower worlds were and are called *oyuun* and

[2] I would like to thank James Carrier, Michael Carrithers, Joachim Otto Habeck, Patrick Heady, Svetlana Jacquesson, Nathan Light, Mihaly Sarkany, and the anonymous reviewer in particular for valuable comments.

udaghan, respectively, while a reciter of *algys* prayers is called an *algyschyt*; a herbalist healer is an *otohut*. In the pre-Soviet period, it was the *algyschyt*, and also very possibly the *oyuun* or *udaghan*, who conducted the Yhyakh rituals.

The Soviet administration forbade the Yhyakh at certain times, especially in the more accessible parts of the republic, but was never able to eradicate its practice entirely. Traditional Yhyakhs were held throughout the Soviet period in the more remote areas of Sakha, notably in the Suntar' region of the southwest. Elsewhere sports tournaments, concerts, or fairs were organized to accompany or replace the shamanic ritual components. I now turn to the Yhyakh in its contemporary form, to illustrate present-day formulations of ethnicity, value and spirituality in Sakha. My acquaintance with the Yhyakh festivals came from reading local newspapers published in 2004 (Peers 2010). Between 2009 and 2013, I attended fifteen Yhyakhs in different parts of the republic, and interviewed numerous participants, activists, and shamanic practitioners.[3]

The revival of the Yhyakh was an integral and highly visible part of the Sakha intelligentsia's nationalist political campaign during the late 1980s and early 1990s. During this time large-scale Yhyakh celebrations began to be held in central Sakha, as part of the nationalists' attempt to increase the Sakha republic's autonomy within the Soviet Union and its successor, the Russian Federation. These intellectuals and politicians were co-opting the by-then familiar Soviet technique of mass communication via public festival and cultural production to their own purpose. They were not alone; the practice of holding large public festivals with an inner political or commercial message was and continues to be widespread throughout the Russian Federation (e.g. Lane 1981; Peers 2010). The Yhyakh has become a central part of Sakha's festival calendar, even though the republican administration cannot maintain an overtly nationalist political agenda under centralizing pressures from Moscow. Every sub-regional and village administration in Sakha holds its own Yhyakh, and individual organizations and family groups have started to celebrate private yearly Yhyakhs; many intellectuals, cultural workers, ritual specialists and politicians now find themselves spending late June and early July crossing Sakha as they travel from Yhyakh to Yhyakh. The largest Yhyakh celebration, attended by many thousands of people, is held just outside Yakutsk, over the last weekend of June. Like other substantial Yhyakh celebrations, it is truly a festival, incorporating a variety of cultural and sporting events, and bears an immediate outer resemblance to broader Soviet traditions of cultural production and sport. The Soviet-educated cultural workers who organized the first Yhyakhs are still active, and have also trained the younger generations of directors, choreographers, singers, dancers, and athletes.

Yakutsk itself feels noticeably quiet during its Yhyakh celebrations. Buses and taxis ferry people back and forth between the city centre and the Yhyakh site throughout the two-day festival although the festival site also incorporates several large campsites for those who wish to spend the night. Amidst the variety

[3] I would like to thank the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, in Halle/Saale, Germany, for the material and intellectual resources I needed to undertake this fieldwork.

of attractions and distractions, the festival's schedule is built around the core celebration of Yhyakh as a shamanic ritual. The festival is opened with the *algys*, and the second day begins with a formal greeting of the sun at around three a.m. These openings are not merely formalities, but draw high and reverent attendance. On the first day, the crowds of Yhyakh guests, many of whom are in Sakha national costume, watch the opening *algys* in silence, broken by a ripple of amusement when a large group sits down by mistake, thinking that the ritual has been completed. At the completion of the *algys*, the crowds surge forward to participate enthusiastically in a joyful *ohuokhai*, forming a shifting series of concentric rings. The greeting of the sun on the second day is also attended by a large crowd of those who have detached themselves from the all-night pop concerts and disco tents. The atmosphere is also hushed and respectful; after the main ritual, a long queue of people snakes around a giant bronze horse-tethering pole covered in strange hieroglyphics[4], as they take turns to photograph themselves against it and touch it in order to bring themselves luck.

During the festival, people do enjoy the secular attractions of food, sports, horse racing, other entertainment, and the opportunity to spend time with friends and relatives in the fresh air. Yet the organizers of the Yhyakh are careful to both provide and promote the Yhyakh's capacity for spiritual nourishment and healing. A circle of small cabins serves as surgeries for folk healers. In Russian, the term used to refer to those offering these services is *narodniy tselitel'* (lit. folk healer), but the Sakha terms *emteechchi* and *emchit* more explicitly indicate that these healers use shamanic powers to treat a variety of emotional, psychological and spiritual problems. The area surrounding the healing cabins remains quiet throughout the Yhyakh, but it can be quite busy as small queues form periodically outside the cabins of the most respected folk healers. Festival-goers can also receive personal *algys* blessings, and all those who attend undergo a spiritual cleansing as they enter the site. The gates are designed so that all who enter walk past small, smoking fires. *Algyschyt*s dressed in national costume stand by these fires. As the wafting smoke cleanses people entering the festival, the *algyschyt*s explain clearly and concisely what is happening and how the festival participants should behave. The responses of individual people to the shamanic dimension of the Yhyakh vary widely, however people quickly follow the small easy rituals that festival organizers have gradually introduced in successive editions, such as walking round a sculpture of a holy tree, touching the bronze horse-tethering post, or burning horse hair to feed the spirit of the fire. Sakha's two leading *algyschyt*s both assert that increasingly more people are beginning to understand and respect the Yhyakh's spiritual aspect.

However, the demonstrated excitement and respect of the Yakutsk festival are noticeably lacking at the village Yhyakhs in Suntar' Region. The region is 800 kilometres away from Yakutsk and its ritual cycle was less affected by Soviet policies. Its inhabitants remember large-scale Yhyakhs being held throughout the Soviet period, and ethnographer Susan Crate witnessed what was clearly a

[4] Traditional Sakha horse-tethering poles were normally made of wood, and are supposed to have been incorporated in rituals, but the bronze version is an innovation.

well-established tradition in the mid-1990s (Crate 2006). Demographic change, in tandem with the converse attraction of globalized cultural products, fashions and communication devices, however, seems to have clouded the enthusiasm for traditional spiritual practice in Suntar'. Many consultants complained that their Yhyakhs were no longer what they once had been, and their disappointment was easy to understand. The elderly *algyschyt*s had to battle a constant hum of conversation and the snapping of air rifles on sale at makeshift stalls while reciting their blessing; all too often the *ohuokhai* was performed in a short line of elderly people, unable or unwilling to form the requisite circle for the dance. Yet the head of the village of Kutana, a well-educated woman with close links to the regional centre and Yakutsk, was determined that her Yhyakh would be different. She had put considerable effort into organizing an Yhyakh that was true to the Sakha spiritual tradition, and was rewarded by a reasonable crowd of young and old onlookers. She was nonetheless unable to prevent stallholders from driving their vans disrespectfully onto the ritual site.

The contrast between the Yhyakhs in Yakutsk and Suntar' Region illustrates the slow dissemination of Sakha nationalist revivalism from the population centre in Yakutsk to the republic's outlying villages. There is a certain irony in this process, as a few decades ago the outlying villages were considered the heartlands of Sakha cultural practice. The movement's most active participants in organizing Yhyakhs tend to be members of the intellectual and cultural elite with connections to the political establishment. Yet the extent to which the Yhyakh has caught on as a public and private event also indicates a deeply felt urge among a broader segment of the population to revive Sakha cultural and spiritual traditions.

Yhyakh festivals almost certainly appeal to the broader population as an ethnically - and historically – inflected form of entertainment, as do new festivals described for other parts of the former Soviet Union (e.g. Osipian 2013). Yet, the rise of the Yhyakh has occurred in the midst of a more extensive renaissance in shamanic-inspired healing throughout Sakha. As one informant put it, folk healers have come into social prominence, "like mushrooms after rain". In the remainder of this section, therefore, I turn to an account of the new healers.

The most famous of Sakha's new folk healers appear on television, publish books, and participate in large public events. Those who are trying to forge a career travel from region to region within the republic, holding *séances* as they go – sometimes in the neo-shamanic temples that are being built in some parts of the country. This sudden efflorescence of shamanism began during the 1990s, driven partly by the wave of interest in Sakha tradition and religion that accompanied the politics of national revival – but also by the new freedom for traditional Sakha folk healers to practice openly (Kolodeznikova 2010).

Healers undertake a variety of activities spanning psychological and physical healing, cultural production, and academic research and publishing. As my Sakha consultants have occasionally pointed out, today's shaman must possess a wide array of talents: he must be an artist, an academic, and a businessman, and he must manifest paranormal gifts in every activity he

undertakes. The variety of motivations among folk healers is also very large. Some repeatedly demonstrate a powerful urge to help others by developing their spiritual gifts, while others endowed with theatrical talent hardly deny their desire for money or status. The healing phenomena glossed as "shamanism" in Sakha bear a strong resemblance to the "fluid and dynamic fields of social practice" witnessed by Galina Lindquist in Tuva and Khakassia (Lindquist 2006: 12). As in these south Siberian non-Russian republics, Sakha "shamanism" can be regarded as a "free floating" signifier in the sense elaborated by Thomas Csordas: it has many referents within the local cultural context which can be shaped by competing interests (Lindquist 2006; Csordas 1997). The responses of ordinary Sakha people to these healers vary as widely. Some dismiss the entire phenomenon as charlatanism, however another common reaction is to seek out the individual healers, artists and academics who seem genuinely to be able to help or inform. Individual neo-shamanic stars thus wax and wane.

However, one thing that unites all these individuals is an emphatic commitment to their Sakha heritage. In the most extreme cases, folk healers may claim to have had insights into the Sakha people's great and mysterious cultural and spiritual tradition through combining their enhanced intuition with a venture into scholarship. For example, in 2004 one folk healer published two extensive interviews in the republic's government-sponsored newspaper - regarded as a quality mainstream organ - in which he asserted that the Sakha people are a unique people, "guests on Earth, destined for the creation of the sixth race [the great people of the future]. […] We are people of the Sun" (*Yakutia* 2004: 11). Most Sakha people I know regard such statements as embarrassing and potentially dangerous – yet their publication is possible even in mainstream and established newspapers because of the support of even a minority among the intellectual elite. The small number of folk healers who publish books and hold lectures in a number of prominent venues benefit from similar support; the lectures I witnessed had small but attentive audiences.

Other folk healers focus their attention on specific strands of healing within Sakha shamanism. For example, there are healers who specialize in the Sakha herbalist tradition; in the practice of calling the souls of unborn children to childless couples; or in the use of the Sakha jaw harp, the *khomus*, to heal and cleanse. Still others explore the possible benefits of other healing traditions, such as Hawaiian massage or acupuncture, while continuing to demonstrate their regard for their ethnic identity in various ways. Sakha folk healers tend to own a national costume, which they wear at prominent events to emphasize their Sakha identification. The majority of Sakha folk healers thus represent their practice as a rediscovery or continuation of a specifically Sakha spiritual tradition, which can and should be maintained. Their perceived authority and popularity is demonstrated in the way that politicians and businessmen try to co-opt them into apparently secular public events. For example, in 2011, I saw a group of well-known and respected female healers model traditional Sakha shawls at a fashion show; a pop concert I attended started with an *algys* from Sakha's most famous female healer.

The popularity of Sakha shamanic spirituality among the general population is, I think, inextricably linked to the widespread preoccupation with Sakha religious and cultural tradition, and to a widespread willingness to render the personal search for physical, spiritual and psychological wellbeing in terms of the quest to recover Sakha heritage. The folk healers who make extravagant claims about the Sakha people and their heritage tap into collective and individual longings to comprehend and value a Sakha identity. This longing is so powerful that it translates Sakha cultural traditions into something of quasi-sacred importance. Many scholars of the former Soviet Union have identified similar quests in other regions. But why should traditional cultural practice have such an intimate connection with present-day religious and spiritual experience? Does rapid social and cultural change necessarily generate a preoccupation with traditional cultural practice? And why should the spiritual profundities and powers that are thought to lurk within traditional cultural practice also be considered to have the capacity to resolve contemporary crises of value and identity?

The series of national revivals that took place over the 1990s have led to a burgeoning literature on Soviet and post-Soviet perceptions of identity, produced both within and outside the former Soviet space. Much of this research has been concerned with the capacity for perceptions of identity to generate ethnic, national, and civic forms of political mobilization (see: Kolstø 2000; Petersson 2001; Piirainen 2000; Tishkov 1997; Tolz 1998). Ethnographic studies of former Soviet communities have however brought out the complexity and variety of present forms of identification. The identities that might be termed "national" in the Russian Federation overlap with other collective identifications. All are in a process of rapid cultural change, and actual political developments have often differed from what might be expected. Even among Siberian peoples, the overlap and relative strength of various identities has differed greatly (see: Anderson 2000; Balzer 1993, 1995; Balzer, Petro and Robertson 2001; and Ventsel 2005). For example, Marjorie Balzer (1999) has described the ways in which kin-related identities related to beliefs in reincarnation have continued to have a profound importance for the Khanty people of western Siberia. In contrast, Bruce Grant's (1995) ethnography of the Nivkhi living on Sakhalin Island reveals that the Nivkhi had assimilated a pan-national Soviet identity so thoroughly that the collapse of the Soviet Union caused multiple identity crises among them, rather than a surge of Nivkhi national pride.

Against the background of the Russian Federation's shifting political context, in which non-Russian ethnic nationalism has become increasingly denatured as a political force, studies of identity have focused more on changing identifications in specific communities, or in relation to particular trends in cultural production or education (Bassin and Kelly 2012). As Mark Bassin and Catriona Kelly contend, attempts to understand processes of identification in the former Soviet Union can now "move away from the traditional image of the (effectively or imperfectly) regimented and brainwashed subject of the communist utopia, *Homo Sovieticus*, to a subtler view of ordinary Soviet citizens

as engaged in multiple beliefs, practices and institutions that they themselves helped to shape, to understand and to articulate" (Bassin and Kelly 2012: 13). In this article, I show the kinds of identification that have resulted from this negotiation of beliefs, values and institutions, and the way in which ideas and perceptions related to ethnic identity are incorporated into broader categories of value and meaning within contemporary Sakha experience. More specifically, I focus on how Soviet-influenced, modernist perceptions of Sakha ethnicity have been incorporated into revivalist Sakha religiosity.

Ethnic Identity and Soviet Modernization

Modernist nation building in the Soviet Union

The signifier "modernity" has developed a huge range of meanings and associations. I here treat it as a broad subject of investigation within the specific case of the Soviet Union. The Soviet form of modernization placed a strong emphasis on generating systematized, pan-local institutions to achieve social change. Soviet-era policy makers corresponded to the "high-modernist" ideologists described by James Scott, in that they were driven by "a strong [...] version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and, above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws" (Scott 1998: 4). Soviet modernization began as an attempt at social engineering, predicated on a particular understanding of history, humanity, and value, and executed through a determined and rapid dissemination of institutions that corresponded with the desired production of scientific knowledge and technology. New and systematized practices of knowledge formation were intended to create a new world in which the technologies of materialist science would enable humanity to reach new heights of prosperity, creativity and morality.

The rise of the modern institution seems in general to be connected to a habit of positing and reflecting on internal identities, their histories, and their futures. These identities are integral to the flow of personal subjective experience, even though they are abstracted from it. Many scholars have written on the interdependence between the proliferation of systematised institutions that transcend the time and place of an individual's daily life, and changing perceptions of the nature and meaning of individual personal experience. Pierre Bourdieu for example describes the widespread convention in the modern world of treating one's personal experience as an internally coherent and meaningful project, attached to a self-sufficient and unitary identity (Bourdieu 1986). As Anthony Giddens contends, people living in a globalizing world among organizations, value systems, discourses and technologies that increasingly bypass their immediate location in time, community and space are, paradoxically, concerned with paradigms, values and practices that apply to the project of imbuing their personal experience with order, logic and meaning (Giddens 1991). This preoccupation with the internal "self" and its meaning also has a place within Latour's account of modernity, with its emphasis on the appearance of "human" and "non-human" ontological categories; its distinction between the production of "hybrid" natural and cultural technological innovations, and the academic disciplines predicated on dividing nature and culture; and its account of the "Crossed-out God" (Latour 1993). The positing of a unique "human" quality of being begs the question as to the nature of this being, especially since it no longer refers to a divine creator. Meanwhile, the practice of generating segregated academic discourses on discordant epistemological foundations makes possible the widespread discussion and dissemination of abstracted philosophies of the "self", humanity, and their meaning and value - such as the Marxist positing of a universal goal in its own model of the specifically "human" society.

Soviet-era modernization was strongly inflected by the pragmatics of governing an enormous and multi-cultural empire, and the state's plans for economic and social modernization were largely inseparable from nationalities policies.[5] Like the Enlightenment and modernist thinkers of Western Europe, Bolshevik ideologues dealt in terms of universal values that applied to a generalized humanity. But Bolshevik ideologues also intended to inculcate these paradigms, and their corresponding institutions, very rapidly into societies with substantially different perceptions of value, history and personhood. To win sympathy for the Marxist-Leninist endeavour, legitimize the Soviet accession to power, and finally create a communist society, the Bolsheviks had to change the Soviet population's worldviews and aspirations. In a communist society, all members were to have committed themselves so completely to a rational interest in the good of all that all forms of social inequality would disappear. Yet the Russian Empire's non-Russian populations lived according to a wide range of Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish and Shamanist traditions, and there was no reason to suppose that they would have attempted to construct a communist society if they had been granted national self-determination. Nor could it even have been expected of most of the Russian population, which had no prior knowledge of Marxist-Leninism.

The Bolsheviks regarded colonialism as a form of capitalist exploitation, and thus they were faced with the additional ideological challenge of rendering their efforts to spread Marxism-Leninism as "liberating" the former subjects of the Russian Empire. Liberation involved helping smaller nationalities (such as the Siberian peoples) develop politically, economically, and culturally. But it also entailed the public celebration of these non-Russian cultures, even though the Soviet plan to inculcate a Marxist-Leninist worldview might have been expected to include the elimination of cultural difference. Instead, under the slogan of "national in form, socialist in content", the contradiction between universalism and ethnic specificity was resolved at an ideological level; in practical terms, "ethnic" cultural production was supported to the extent that it could be restructured to match the recognized genres of the European arts (Slezkine

[5] I base this short account of Soviet modernization as coinciding with nationalities policies on the accounts of Bromley and Kozlov (1989); Hirsch (2005); Khamutayev (2005); Lane (1981); Martin (2000); Shanin (1989); Slezkine (1994, 2000); Tishkov (2003); Vihavainen (2000); Yakovlev (2003).

2000). Moreover, Marxism-Leninism incorporated European understandings of nationality, ethnicity, and their crucial influence over social activity (Hirsch 2005). Cultural identity was understood as a *sui generis* personal characteristic, integral to an individual, and reflected in his behaviour. Cultural production thus carried out much of the work of modernization, especially among non-Russians, within the Soviet Union. Much of the ideological work of Soviet modernization thus took place through an extensive system of festivals and public events (Lane 1981) supported by a huge network of venues, teaching institutions, and cultural workers. This network, best-embodied in the "House of Culture", remains more or less in-place, if severely under-funded, across most of the former Soviet Union (Donahoe and Habeck 2011).

The social transformations that occurred in the former Soviet space during the twentieth century correspond to the broader modernizing and globalizing trends of recent times. As in other parts of the world, Soviet and post-Soviet populations found themselves developing and encountering technologies and systems of organization that transcended their immediate locale, within a wholesale transformation of daily life. This transformation was as profound in Sakha as it was in other parts of the Soviet Union. The majority of the Sakha population started the twentieth century living in scattered homesteads, herding cattle and horses. These settlements were conglomerated into Russian-style villages during the Soviet-era collectivization of agriculture, followed by urbanization in the 1990s. Over the past century, Sakha populations have become more and more deeply integrated into institutions that span the enormous territory of the former Soviet Union and the rest of the globalized world.

As part of this transformation, Soviet populations became aware of a break in time, separating their "traditional" past and practice from their "modern" reality. Complex localized relationships between people and their immediate environments, along with the patterns of knowledge, value and expertise they incorporated, were re-formed according to a universalized system of social organization, technology and knowledge production. As Scott (1998) describes, the techniques and institutions the central government set up to make intricate local contexts "visible" to the overarching state – and thereby also subject to its control – produced abstracted bodies of knowledge and competence, which shaped the lives and expectations of Soviet citizens in their turn. This system placed the acquirement of expertise into the ever more generalized institutions of modernist science and academia, which placed their stamp on the former Soviet Union's enormous and varied population in the form of standardized industries, agriculture, settlement and education. Even as Soviet populations became increasingly involved with abstracted, delocalized technologies and value systems, their exposure to the mysterious dimensions of human experience contracted from the extensive animist, Christian, Buddhist and Muslim religious systems of the Tsarist Empire to differing individualized ways of adjusting to the officially sanctioned materialist position. In the Soviet Union, the "Crossed-out God", an absented presence that Bruno Latour (1993) identifies as key to the development of modernity, was a legion of crossed-out

ancestors, area spirits, saints, prophets, local demons, and deities who, along with the moralities and philosophies they espoused, were designated by the Soviet authorities as both non-existent and actively malevolent.

The results of Soviet-era modernization were very different from what the early Bolshevik policy-makers had in mind. The formal structures set up to exert the state's influence could not exist without an extensive repertoire of local practice and response within an overall process of social change that was beyond state control. One consequence was the creation of a new awareness of ethnic identity (often experienced as national identity) among much of the population: the delocalization of the Soviet population's lifestyle, institution and personal experience did indeed appear to coexist with a growing concern about the nature and meaning of reified selves and identities. A personal awareness of non-Russian ethnic identity began to take shape as a set of abstracted ideas instead of remaining an unquestioned part of daily experience – even as actual cultural difference was being whittled slowly away. It was this awareness of ethnic identity that enabled activists all over the former Soviet Union to articulate their conflict or dissatisfaction with the central Soviet government in terms of the needs of one or other ethnic group, during the national revivals of the 1980s and 90s.

Soviet ideological discourse and 'ethnic identity' in Sakha (Yakutia)

A television film about Sakha culture made by the Central Television channel in 1970, and shown to me in 2011, shows how the ideological strands related to modernization, cultural production and ethnicity took shape in the public sphere during the later Soviet period.[6] It juxtaposes images of what was then regarded as "traditional" Sakha cultural practice with evidence of the industrialised trappings of contemporary life – for example, footage of a parade with cars, balloons, and a brass band marching through Yakutsk's frozen streets is intercut with images of Sakha people dancing their traditional circle dance, the *ohuokhai*. The film aims to show how, in the contemporary Soviet Union, the "fairy tale" (Russ. *skazka*) of Sakha traditional culture became united with the "reality" (Russ. *yav'*) of industrial progress to create new forms of artistic creativity.

Human achievement in this film revolves around the two poles of industrial progress and folk cultural production. Much of the film is devoted to displaying the art, music and dance that was regarded as traditionally Sakha, and the way that this cultural production was being transformed under the Soviet influence. Given the centrality of festival and public ritual to Soviet life, it is unsurprising that a traditional Sakha festival is included in this account of Sakha life: the film contains a lengthy segment on the Yhyakh.

An idealised portrayal of Sergei Zverev, a famous and by then elderly Sakha singer, plays a central role in the film's communication. Zverev personifies the "traditional" Sakha – a lover of nature, who translates nature's wisdom into songs for his people. He also espouses the favourable and supportive

[6] I would like to thank Sakha's State Film Archive for sharing this footage with me.

attitude that such idealised "traditional" Sakha were supposed to have towards Sovietisation. In the film, a narrator provides a Russian translation of Zverev's singing: "O you great, almighty descendants of beautiful times", addressing the next generation, "owners of the sun's energy, and the thunder of the fire's strength, hear my bidding: increase the abundance like the rush of spring". The film shows Zverev himself actively engaged in generating new forms of creativity: his dance troupe performs stylised folk dances and songs which incorporate both Russian and Sakha elements.

The viewer is constantly invited to contemplate objects signalled to carry an ineffable wonder. Potent images include a joyous profusion of spring flowers, intricate Sakha folk dancing and craftsmanship, the might of mechanised diggers, and the carving of a giant mine in a hillside. Music guides the viewer through the images with a voiceover that draws attention to the artistry of a shaman's dance, for example, or the beauty of the forests. The sense of wonder does not refer to a consistent or articulated group of overarching paradigms or beings – as one might expect in a country that officially had an exclusively materialist and atheist population. But the multiplicity of images does replace and divert attention and memory from the large and complex community of upper gods, lower demons, and area spirits in the Sakha shamanic cosmos, along with the Christian spiritual entities that found their way into the pre-Soviet Sakha worldview. These images are notable by their absence, and the audience is reminded that the shaman is nothing other than an accomplished theatrical performer. The film uses images, music and language to assert that its "good" subjects are so good as to amount to transcendent, universal values in themselves: the beauty of the forests for example has a value that is absolute, eternal, and hence transcendent of any specific human or temporal context.

Meanwhile the voiceover, in combination with Zverev's persona, sets this sense of undefined transcendence into moral and teleological contentions. As the film suggests, "good" people should strive to access and promote objects of transcendent wonder, such as folk cultural production. Their present ability to do so derives from the Soviet endeavour, the uniting of "fairy tales" with "reality", which is carrying them into an even brighter future - a future where the Sakha people in their traditional fur boots and caps will enjoy indoor plumbing, airplanes and jazz music, ever forging their way to new cultural and technological heights, along with the other Soviet peoples. Zverev sings of the future coming together of the family of peoples, who will sing more loudly than they do today, to which the Sakha will bring their own *choroon* of *kymys* (a sacred drinking vessel full of fermented mare's milk). His song refers to the imminent establishment of communist society, which is in and of itself the universal object of humanity's striving.

Sakha cultural practice is presented as having its own worth since "traditional" cultural production is one site of transcendent value. Yet, Zverev's innovations in dance indicate that traditional cultural production is part and parcel of a transformation of life into something even better, signalled in part by the appearance of motorcycles, helicopters and European-style brass bands in

the wilderness of Sakha. A genuine engagement with Sakha cultural practice is not one of the filmmakers' main priorities: the film's portrayal in fact collapses it into a generalised and therefore abstracted understanding of "northern indigenous" culture. The film shows the Sakha to be reindeer herders, living far enough north to experience the polar night. In reality, the predominant influence in Sakha cultural heritage is Turkic, linking the people to Central Asia more than to the far North. Most Sakha people live in the central part of the republic, south of the tundra and the polar night; when this film was made, the bulk of this population would have lived in small villages and towns, farming horses and cattle rather than reindeer. The Sakha continue to have a complex and uncomfortable relationship with the people who have a stronger claim towards being the Republic's indigenous population – the reindeer-herding Tungusic minority, made up of the Even and Evenk peoples. As part of the film's depiction of this abstracted "northern ethnic culture", the film empties Sakha culture of any substantive differentiation from mainstream Soviet attitude and practice. No mention is made of the fact that Zverev – at one time a practicing shaman – is offering *kymys* to the upper spirits during the footage of the Yhyakh. According to the voiceover, the Yhyakh is simply an occasion for drinking *kymys* and participating in sports tournaments. Zverev, as a respected elder, is said to have had the honour of "opening" the festival with a traditional song.

Yet this abstracted cultural identity is shown to be so integral to Sakha personhood that the Sakha people in the film are all personifications of it – whether they are archetypes of the "traditional" Sakha in national costume, like Zverev, or younger, Sovietised Sakha, dancing the *ohuokhai* in modern clothes. Other than the voiceover, nobody in the film speaks. The people unselfconsciously manifest their Sakha nature in everything they do, while the combination of Zverev and the voiceover help the viewer to understand the nature of "Sakha-ness". The ontological category of the "human" in this film entails "ethnicity": to be "human" requires an ethnic identification - in this case, Sakha - which itself ascribes its own set of characteristics to the subjects to which it refers. The characteristics associated with Sakha identity immediately mark "traditional" Sakha culture as a precursor to the current status quo. According to the film, traditional Sakha have a very close relationship with nature and animals. They hunt, they herd reindeer, they sing and dance, they make intricately crafted household objects, and they eulogise the beauties of nature – but they show no sign of having their own form of social, political, or economic institutions nor technological innovations. The film therefore also implies the Sakha people themselves to have a specific relationship with the transcending Soviet future it intimates, since they and their characters are apparently defined by their cultural identity. To carry the label "Sakha" is also to carry a required commitment towards the golden Soviet future – otherwise one is irrationally denying humanity's ultimate goal, and the social system bringing it about in one's own underdeveloped cultural context.

As demonstrated in this film, Soviet social, technological and cultural institutions exposed Sakha people to radical reformulations of cultural difference, personhood, teleology and transcendence. These institutions transformed the Sakha life experience and affected their sense of their own individuality in relation to the world around them. In many ways, these changes were disorienting, and with gods "crossed out", individual Sakha sought other guiding ideas, principles, and forces. Whether intended or not by the architects of successive waves of nationality policy, ethnicity came to fill this function. Every individual in the Soviet Union had an ethnic identity; cultural productions, to which all Soviet peoples were regularly exposed, elaborated the specific and common elements among the Soviet peoples; model "ethnic" individuals (like Sergei Zverev) were cultivated and promoted as cultural heroes in all groups; and thus the concept of ethnicity came, over several decades, to bridge the universal values and goals of communism with the confusing particularities of individual lives. To be "human" in the late Soviet Union was to be "ethnic".

Soviet Teleologies and Sanctified Ethnicity in the Post-Soviet Revival

I would like to suggest that the reason many Sakha are drawn to seek their guiding values and spiritual experience in their traditional cultural practice is linked to certain key formulations in Soviet ideology, and the way they have become integrated into the process of both Soviet and post-Soviet cultural transition. Large public festivals, such as the Yhyakh, help to promote these visions of what it means to be Sakha. To elaborate on this suggestion, I will return to another formulation of the ideas behind contemporary Sakha revivalism, from a moderate and well-respected source. Mandar Uus is a well-known artist and blacksmith from Taatta region; I have seen one of his shamanic calendars in almost every Sakha home I have entered. He performs some *algys* rituals, and gives well-attended public lectures on spirituality, morals and culture; however his main focus is the Sakha handicraft tradition. The preface of his latest book on Sakha handicraft, which is now in its second edition, contains the following paragraphs:

> "As well as [the endowment of man with reason], so that in the Middle World man lived out his destined years happily, in addition to many Fundamental Understandings for the bringing to fruition of man's not inconsiderable possibilities, man was endowed with the invisible, mysterious feeling of Beauty – that which cannot be caught and held, a light, miraculous power, radiating warmth, and then he, carefully hiding and guarding it, took this power with him. …
>
> Look and listen… (*kör-ihit*, in Sakha) These are the cherished, memorable words, full of deep meaning, which our respected elders left to us as a testament. … Because our ancestors had highly developed capacities for imagination and creativity, they created the great work of song – the Olongkho epic, and skilful ornamental patterns, and as a gift bestowed them on us, the future generations, so that with them we could blaze the trails of our lives…
>
> If ornaments and patterns beautified our life, like a meadow of flowers, then with what blinding adornment could another great Beauty of the Sakha people stand before other people, other peoples, before the whole of humanity… And so, if we preserve the Ornaments, the basic components of Beauty, and develop them further, and elevate them into a masterpiece of the Sakha people, then, without exaggeration, on the tree of life, the *Aal Luuk Mas* of the whole of humanity, we could become one of the evergreen leaves, and our people would continue flourishing for many centuries.
>
> Being one of the Sakha people who acknowledge this great goal, and wishing to make my contribution to its attainment, I give my dear native people this work of many years, dedicated to the Inheritance of Beauty…" (Mandar Uus 2010: 4-5)

Mandar's preface adapts post-Soviet revivalist contentions into many of the paradigms that come out of the above-described Soviet film[7]. What Mandar says could have been said decades earlier by Zverev. A generalized mankind coexists with abstracted universal values, powers and aims, and among them beauty, as a mysterious, divinely bestowed force. Man, or "the human", exists as many peoples – each of which has certain "highly developed capacities" and can be judged according to the contribution that it makes to humanity – and as a line of consecutive generations. Specifically, the Sakha people have inherited a capacity for "imagination and creativity": their ethnic identity carries with it a selection of personal characteristics. Along with the universalized mankind and his values come the "great goals" to which individuals dedicate their efforts.

However man also coexists with some of the fundamental elements of the Sakha shamanic universe, such as the tree of life, the upper, lower and middle worlds, and the Great Creator, who bestowed Beauty and Reason upon man. The ancestors, and specifically Sakha ancestors, are no longer stepping aside to allow the younger generation to continue into a brighter future, but are showing them their ultimate goal: the linear progression of history gains its momentum from the glories of the past, rather than those of the future. Man's ultimate goal has also changed, particularly among some ethnic groups, such as the Sakha.

The distinction of ideas about ethnicity in the 2000s is subtle. Instead of devoting his life to building the communist society, Mandar writes that Sakha man should heed the wise words of previous generations. In the new era, Sakha men and women should do all they can to preserve and publicize the great Sakha cultural tradition – so that it shines with its own radiance among the cultures of the world, rather than disappearing into a homogeneous, Russified pan-Siberian backwater.

[7] Yu. Vizbor and A. Shcebakov (scenery). 1970. *Documentary film "*Якутские портреты*" (Sakha Portraits).* Moscow, Central Television, Creative Union "Экран".

Conclusions

Two modernist contentions with a clear Soviet-era provenance can be identified in all the examples I have presented here. Firstly, the Soviet filmmakers, the organizers of the Yhyakh, the neo-shamanists and Mandar Uus all assume that there are universal values external to human activity, against which human action can be measured, and a trajectory of human historical development plotted. Secondly, the abstracted, essentialized concept of ethnicity described in the first section looms large in all these discourses, for example in the contention that earlier Sakha generations had "highly developed capacities for imagination and creativity". Contemporary Sakha people continue to live with modernist notions of universal value, ultimate human goals, progress, and identity, among institutions that draw their aspirations, knowledge regimes and values ever further away from locally specific "traditions". Plenty of well-to-do Sakha villagers now own laptops, have access to the internet, and aspire to spend their holidays in Chinese beach resorts. However the rapid evolution of the Soviet Union into post-Soviet Russia has deprived its population of the constant collective repetition of Soviet ideological narratives, which allowed individuals to conceive of their relationship to a universal human purpose in terms of their ethnic identity, and their commitment to the Soviet project. Individual perceptions of an ultimate reason for life therefore can now be associated with a frustrating sense that the goal in question has somehow faded out of sight; meanwhile, those who are preoccupied with their coherent human "self", its life trajectory, and its interaction with the other entities they experience, can no longer refer to Soviet-era models of humanity, personhood and value.

As the television film illustrates, Soviet-era official discourse posited a strong link between abstracted, universal human values and goals, and a reified notion of ethnicity. The phenomenon of the Yhyakh, and the popularity of Sakha revivalist shamanism, suggests that a common response to the quandaries posed by contemporary life is to associate one's perception of ethnic identity with personal goals and values, translating the Soviet-era link between ethnic identity and universal value into a propensity to ascribe a supreme worth to the revival of ethnic tradition. The attempt to frame the vagaries of subjective experience within the modernist paradigm of a unitary self existing among universal values revolves around linking selfhood with universal value via this notion of ethnicity. The importance of ethnic identity to Soviet and post-Soviet notions of selfhood has thus led to a tendency for existential and spiritual longing to be experienced as an alienation from one's own ethnic culture - hence the relevance of Mandar's intention to devote himself to preserving the Sakha cultural tradition, and the attraction of the contemporary Yhyakh celebrations.

Soviet and post-Soviet festival culture continues to be an important conduit in the dissemination, negotiation and adaptation of key ideas in the former Soviet Union. Over the years, Sovietized Sakha cultural production, followed by later cultural forms such as the Yhyakh festival, have aided the emergence and

transformation of key categories within Sakha social life. As this case indicates, modernist paradigms originating in Soviet-era ideological discourse continue to influence the way religious belief is understood and experienced in the former Soviet Union: religion is associated with a combination of spiritual experience and surpassing value, understood to be located within specific traditional cultures. Conversely, this sanctification of ethnic identity has ramifications for the Russian Federation's identity politics. The federal administration in Moscow no longer has to contemplate the possibility of non-Russian nationalist political mobilization, but, as long as non-Russians continue to seek spiritual growth in their traditional cultures, neither can it assume that non-Russian ethnic identification will dwindle into irrelevance. Thus, the identifications and spiritual practices that modernization apparently renders inconsequential have emerged as important factors within Russia's contemporary context, in common with other religious and nationalist movements across the world - perhaps as a result of the teleological and ontological assumptions that underlie modernization drives, as they are assimilated into the complexity of everyday experience.

Yakutsk's enormous Yhyakh testifies to the resonance of Mandar's words. The Yhyakh has many facets, but it is overwhelmingly a Sakha national festival. Foreign guests are encouraged and celebrated, but they can only ever be exactly that – foreign guests, warmly invited to dance the *ohyokhai* and join in a communal celebration of the republic, its nature, the spirits, and the Sakha cultural tradition. And for an increasing number of Sakha people the Yhyakh is also an event of profound spiritual significance: the revival of their cultural tradition, their spiritual practice, and their most precious values and aspirations are intertwined.

References:

Anderson, David. 2000. *Identity and Ecology in Arctic Siberia: the Number One Reindeer Brigade*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Argounova, Tatiana. 2001. *Scapegoats of* Nationalism*: Ethnic Tensions in Sakha (Yakutia), Northeastern Russia*. Unpublished PhD dissertation: Cambridge University.

Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam. 1993. "Dilemmas of the Spirit: Religion and Atheism in the Yakut-Sakha Republic," in *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union*, edited by Sabina Ramet, 231-251. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam. 1995. "A State within a State: The Sakha Republic (Yakutia)," in *Rediscovering Russia in Asia: Siberia and the Russian Far East*, edited by Stephen Kotkin and David Wolff, 139-159, London: M.E. Sharpe.

Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam. 1999. *The Tenacity of Ethnicity: A Siberian Saga in Global Perspective*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam, Nicolai N. Petro and Lawrence R. Robertson. 2001. "Issues of Culture and Identity: 'Cultural Entrepreneurship' in Russia's Regions," in *Fragmented Space in the Russian Federation*, edited by Blair A. Ruble, Jodi Koehn and Nancy E. Popson, 219-268. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Bassin, Mark and Catriona Kelly (editors). 2012. *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Publishers.

Bassin, Mark, and Catriona Kelly. 2012. “Introduction: national subjects,” in *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities*, edited by Mark Bassin and Catriona Kelly, 3-16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986/2000. (“L’illusion biographique,” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 62-63 (1986): 69-72; “The Biographical Illusion”, trans. Yves Winkin and Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, in *Identity: A Reader*, edited by Paul Du Gay, Jessica Evans, and Peter Redman, 299-305. London: Sage Publications.

Bromley, Iu., Viktor Kozlov. 1989. “The Theory of Ethnos and Ethnic Processes in Soviet Social Sciences,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31(3): 425-438.

Chulos, Chris J., Timo Piirainen (editors). 2000. *The Fall of an Empire, the Birth of a Nation: National Identities in Russia*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing ltd.

Crate, S. 2006. “*Ohuokhai*: Sakhas’ Unique Integration of Social Meaning and Movement,” *Journal of American Folklore* 119(472): 161-183.

Csordas, Thomas.1997. *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Religious Healing*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.

Donohoe, Brian, and Joachim Otto Habeck (editors). 2011. *Reconstructing the House of Culture: Community, Self, and the Making of Culture in Russia and Beyond*. New York: Berghahn.

Eliade, Mircea. 1964. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, translated: W.R. Trask. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila (editor). 2000. *Stalinism: New Directions*. London: Routledge.

Giddens, Antony. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Grant, Bruce. 1995. *In the Soviet House of Culture: a Century of Perestroikas*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hirsch, Francine. 2005. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Khamutayev, Vladimir. 2005. *Buryatskoye natsional’noye dvizheniye 1980-2000-e gg.* [Buriat National Movement of 1980s-2000s]. Ulan Ude: Izdatel’stvo Buryatskogo nauchnogo tsentra SO RAN.

Kolodeznikova, Lyuba. 2011. “Sakha Shamanism”. Paper presented at the Tenth Conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions, Budapest, Hungary.

Kolstø, Pål. 2000. *Political Construction Sites: Nation Building in Russia and the Post-Soviet States*; translated by Susan Høivik. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Lane, Christel. 1981. *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in an Industrial Society - the Soviet Case*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lane, David. 1981. *Leninism: a Sociological Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Latour, Bruno. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*, translated by Catherine Porter. Harlow, England: Pearson Education Ltd.

Lindquist, Galina. 2006. *The Quest for the Authentic Shaman: Multiple Meanings of Shamanism on a Siberian Journey*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell International.

Mandar, Uus. 2010. *Sakha ojuuta-bichite: Uzory i ornamenty Sakha* [Sakha Patterns and Ornaments]. Yakutsk: Bichik.

Martin, Terry. 2000. “Modernization or Neo-traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordializm,” in *Stalinism: New Directions*, edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick, 348-367. London: Routledge.

Osipian, Alexandr. 2013. “Public Holidays, Official Commemorations, and State Calendar in

Ukraine, 1991-2011”, *Interstitio. East European Journal of Historical and Cultural Anthropology*, special issue “Time, Space and Agency in (Post)Socialist festive Culture”, guest eds Ludmila D. Cojocaru and Jennifer R. Cash, V 1-2(9-10): 51-73.

Peers, Eleanor. 2010. *Print, Power and Personhood: Newspapers and Ethnic Identity in East Siberia*. PhD thesis, University of Cambridge.

Petersson, Bo. 2001. *National Self-Images and Regional Identities in Russia*. Aldershot: Ashgate publishing ltd.

Piirainen, Timo. 2000. “The Fall of an Empire, the Birth of a Nation: Perceptions of the New Russian National Identity,” in *The Fall of an Empire, the Birth of a Nation: National Identities in Russia*, edited by Chris J. Chulos, Timo Piirainen, 161-195. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing ltd.

Ruble, Blair A., Jodi Koehn, Nancy E. Popson (editors). 2001. *Fragmented Space in the Russian Federation*. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Shanin, Teodor. 1989. “Ethnicity in the Soviet Union: Analytical Perceptions and Political Strategies,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (3): 409-424.

Slezkine, Yuri. 1994. *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Slezkine, Yuri. 2000. “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” in *Stalinism: New Directions*, edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick, 313-347. London: Routledge.

Tichotsky, John. 2000. *Russia’s Diamond Colony: the Republic of Sakha*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Tishkov, Valeriy. 1997. *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and After the Soviet Union: the Mind Aflame*. London: Sage.

Tishkov, Valeriy. 2003. *Rekviyem po etnosu: issledovaniya po sotsial’no-kul’turnoy antropologii* [Requiem on Ethnos: Studies on Socio-Cultural anthropology]. Moscow: Nauka.

Tolz, Vera. 1998. “Forging the Nation: National Identity and Nation Building in Post-Communist Russia,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 50(6): 993-1022.

Ventsel, Aimar. 2005. *Reindeer, Rodina and Reciprocity: Kinship and Property Relations in a Siberian Village*. Munster: Lit.

Vihavainen, Timo. 2000. “Nationalism and Internationalism: How did the Bolsheviks Cope with National Sentiments,” in *The Fall of an Empire, the Birth of a Nation: National Identities in Russia,* edited by Chris J. Chulos, Timo Piirainen, 75-97. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing ltd.

Yakovlev, Vasiliy. 2003. *Zhizn’ i sud’ba moya* [The Life and My Fate]. Yakutsk: Bichik.

Yakutia. 2004, June 4: 11.

FESTIVALUL "MĂRŢIŞOR" ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA: PROIECŢII PERFORMATIVE ALE RENAŞTERII NAŢIONALE

Ludmila D. Cojocaru
Chişinău, Republic of Moldova

Abstract. Inaugurated officially at 1 March 1966, the Music Festival "Mărţişor" has become familiar to the memories of several generations from the Republic of Moldova, making a direct association between the tradition of *mărţişor* and Festival "Mărţişor". The popular culture that reflects the spirit and personality of a community was often (mis)used by the power discourse to create a desirable image of the nation. The paper analyses the symbolic allegories established between the celebration of nature's rebirth and the rebuilding of "Moldovan nation". The cultural policies of Soviet period contributed to the institutionalizing of "Mărţişor" Festival in the Moldavian SSR as a scene for multiple voices; since 1991, the event is revived within the context of different projects of nation-building to perfrom the rebirth of national identity in the region.

Keywords: ideological project, nation-building, International Music Festival "Mărţişor", Republic of Moldova

Cuvinte-cheie: proiect ideologic, construcţie naţională, Festivalul Internaţional de Muzică "Mărţişor", Republica Moldova

Introducere

Sărbătoarea naţională este un jalon fundamental al asocietăţii care dezvăluie atitudini şi valori adânc ancorate în memoria colectivă, exercitând funcţii ambivalente: pe de o parte, legitimarea ordinii sociale existente şi, pe de altă parte, fuzionarea sacrului cu profanul contribuind la construcţia comunităţilor imaginate (Heideking, Fabre, Dreisbach 2001: 2). Cercetătorii au remarcat că serbările publice nu se opresc la *reflectarea* practicilor şi realităţilor sociale; ele posedă puterea de a *construi* concepte politice şi crea sensuri culturale (Heideking, Fabre, Dreisbach 2001: 3). Performarea tradiţiei şi culturii populare în cadrul manifestărilor publice oferă astfel "semnificaţi inedite prin care comunităţile şi identităţile pot fi construite şi mobilizate" (Stokes 1997: 5), determinând motivaţia promovării festivităţilor de către structurile puterii, în egală măsură,

pentru susţinerea proiectelor de construcţie a naţiunii şi pentru exprimarea firească a identităţilor naţionale (Binns 1979/80; Lane 1981; Kertzer 1988; Ozouf 1988; Spillman 1997).

Cultura festivă nu poate fi privită în afara contextului istoric în care a fost inaugurată şi care, de obicei, modifică considerabil relaţiile puterii cu structurile sociale şi memoria colectivă. Conform unor opinii, procesul de gestionare culturală se manifestă mai pronunţat în societăţile autoritare, cu o clasă politică consolidată în jurul unor scopuri comune (Lane 1981:1). Alţi cercetători sunt înclinaţi să interpreteze emergenţa evenimentelor performative cu pronunţate valenţe politice sau, uneori, construite abundent pe dimensiunea sacrului drept trăsătură specifică a societăţilor marcate de tensiuni interne (Santino 2009). Astfel, în anii socialismului, puterea sovietică a ştiut să ofere maselor sărbători multiple şi spectaculoase, în limitele unei clasificări mult prea generale aplicată culturii de către regimul ideologic: cultura internaţională, cultura naţională, cultura de masă şi cultura tradiţională. Cultura internaţională era asociată progresului; cea naţională era articulată tradiţiei care punea în evidenţă aspectele omogenizate, materiale, fermecătoare şi pline de culoare ce reprezintă esenţa neschimbătoare a naţiunii; cultura populară/de masă constituia o sinteză a influenţelor locale şi internaţionale contemporane, trăite cu bucurie de toate vârstele, însă, din perspectiva activităţii de divertisment şi fără calităţile edificatoare invocate primelor două tipuri. Cultura tradiţională era asociată ideii de *backwardness* (invocând cultura oamenilor de la ţară şi a oamenilor simpli), deşi încărcată de idealuri romantice despre autenticitatea folclorului şi tradiţiei naţionale. Iar discursul oficial al puterii sovietice se caracteriza prin atitudinea ambiguă faţă de cultura tradiţională a popoarelor din Uniunea Republicilor Sovietice Socialiste (URSS). Promovarea specificului naţional nu corespundea politicii de modernizare, de creare a "omului nou" şi "poporului sovietic". Pe de altă parte, "[a] desemna identitatea naţională înseamnă a marca teritoriul şi frontierele sale, a defini raporturile cu 'ceilalţi', a forma imaginile amicilor şi duşmanilor, ale aliaţilor şi rivalilor" (Nicoară 2003: 256). Astfel, în condiţiile unui discurs oficial ancorat în mitul despre "prietenia seculară", "frăţia popoarelor", "republici-surori" etc. şi unei vecinătăţi directe cu state ale căror ideologie nu corespundea întocmai celei sovietice, sistemul de partid a fost nevoit să accepte unele compromisuri şi negocieri în organizarea manifestărilor publice.

Atitudinea cercetătorilor occidentali vizavi de fenomenul sărbătorilor sovietice a fost una antropologică, axată pe interesul faţă de cultură, autenticitate, analiză mesajelor simbolice. Preocupările istoriografiei sovietice erau marcate de impactul festivităţilor asupra maselor, asigurarea unui transfer fidel al mesajului ideologic, căutarea formelor eficiente pentru desfăşurarea acţiunilor festive în masă, elaborarea strategiilor de performare a rezultatelor de cincinal şi reiterarea datelor statistice pe post de argument al modernizării şi progresului. În această perioadă, după cum constata istoriografia sovietică, în Republica Sovietică Socialistă Moldovenească (RSSM), "[i]storia construcţiei culturale este reflectată mai slab în comparaţie cu alte dimensiuni ale construcţiei socialiste

şi comuniste" (Брысякин 1972: 127). Iar în perioada post-totalitară, distingem revigorarea interesului pentru manifestările publice, lăsând vizibile o serie de aspecte neexplorate (Heideking, Fabre, Dreisbach 2001: 14). Astfel, până a trece la prezentarea propriu-zisă a studiului, vom menţiona că cercetarea abordează *festivul* în calitate de matrice a afirmării culturale, dar şi de formare identitară asemenea unui cadru cultural-didactic al procesului de construcţie identitară. În acest fel, evenimente festive pot oferi optici noi asupra atmosferei din societate în perioada istorică dată, în general, şi asupra stării de spirit a "comunităţii memoriei" , în special (Irvin-Zarecka 1994: 47). La fel, privită cu mai multă atenţie, celebrarea publică scoate în lumină aspiraţiile şi viziunile comunităţilor. În acest context, subscriem aserţiunii despre existenţa unei dimensiuni neexplorate asupra manifestărilor publice, mai ales, în cazul festivităţilor axate pe aniversări, prin conferirea unui sens nou conceptului de "celebrare" care lasă să se înţeleagă că idea de comemorare a trecutului poate deveni mai puţin importantă decât proiectarea prezentului acestei societăţi în viitor (Fabre, Heideking 2001).

Studiul dat şi-a propus să exploreze modalităţile prin care Festivalul Internaţional de Muzică "Mărţişor" din Republica Moldova reflectă procesul de construcţie identitară în acest spaţiu şi investighează impactul culturii festive asupra procesului de construcţie a naţiunii în perioada 1966-2009. Cercetarea este construită pe argumentul că, fiind percepută drept o dimensiune a culturii populare care reflectă spiritul şi personalitatea unei comunităţi, tradiţia mărţişorului şi transferul de sacralitate a acestuia în conţinuturile Festivalului "Mărţişor" au fost intrumentalizate de discursul puterii (1966-2009) pentru crearea unei imagini dezirabile a societăţii din RSSM şi, ulterior, din Republicii Moldova. Calea de constituire a acestei imagini a avut un parcurs sinuos, evoluat de la stereotipul sovietic despre "Moldova însorită", "înfloritoare", "ospitalieră", republică sovietică ancorată în imaginarul epocii prin versul "ca un strugure de poamă/stai pe harta Uniunii", până la proiectul ideologic de construire a "naţiunii moldoveneşti", revigorat tenace în perioada post-sovietică de către guvernările comuniste din Republica Moldova (2001-2005; 2005-2009).

Considerăm, că ignorarea multivocalităţii memoriei colective şi accentuarea artificială a sentimentului de mândrie naţională prin tematici de glorie şi comemorare a trecutului au marcat atitudinea oamenilor simpli faţă de dimensiunea ideologică a sărbătorilor publice. După cum vom arăta ulterior, în cazul Festivalul Internaţional de Muzică "Mărţişor", oamenii simpli s-au detaşat de discursul puterii, lăsând loc în atmosfera de sacru a Festivalului doar pentru dimensiunea culturală şi sentimentul de comunicare cu tradiţia. Proiectul puterii privind construcţia "naţiunii moldoveneşti" şi ingerinţa politicului în sărbătoarea mărţişorului s-au dovedit a fi percepute ca provocare ideologică incompatibilă cu atmosfera de sacru, iar mesajele identitare inserate de discursul puterii în scenariul sărbătorii cu scopul de a indica publicului anumite afilieri identitare au fost apreciate de audienţă drept străine, de manieră anacronică. Spectatorii au preferat să separe arta şi frumosul de ideologie şi politică, trăind bucuria primăverii prin muzică în contextul tradiţiei mărţişorului şi în cheia

conceptului declarat de fondatorii Festivalului – "promovarea muzicii şi a talentelor".

Schimbările ideologice care au avut loc în perioada 1967-2009 au constrâns de fiecare dată "noii antreprenori ai politicii [şi politicilor culturale] să caute un nou principiu suprem edificator, o valoare esenţială, un ideal mai cuprinzător, în mitul naţiunii" (Nicoară 2003: 256), nucleul central în mitologia naţiunii fiind dintotdeauna mitul unităţii. Tradiţia seculară de a celebra sosirea primăverii prin ritualul dăruirii mărţişorului celor apropiaţi, fortificând astfel legăturile de familie, a fost preluată de discursul puterii şi extinsă artificial pentru a construi sentimentul coeziunii şi identităţii naţionale. De asemenea, tradiţia mărţişorului şi revendicarea acesteia de către discursul puterii ca "tradiţie a poporului moldovenesc" constituia ocazie unică în proiectul "moldovenismului" de a coborî în conştiinţa colectivă până la rădăcinile cele mai adânci ale "arborelui genealogic al naţiunii" şi de a suprapune proiectul ideologic despre naţiune peste proiectul ideal care "popula imaginarul colectiv" (Nicoară 2003: 256). Indiferent de faptul că Epoca de Aur a perioadei socialismului dezvoltat şi tratarea acesteia drept perioada de "istorie adevărată a omenirii" se identifica în perioada sovietică cu "biruinţa Marii Revoluţii Socialiste din Octombrie" (Брысякин 1972: 126), iar în perioada de după independenţă – cu perioada de domnie a lui Ştefan cel Mare, performarea ideologică a Festivalul Internaţional de Muzică "Mărţişor" legitima ancorarea proiectelor de construcţie a naţiunii în timpurile imemorabile ale tradiţiei mărţişorului. Crearea sărbătorii de celebrare a renaşterii naturii prin muzică, la scara întregii RSS Moldoveneşti, cu invitarea artiştilor şi colectivelor artistice din toată Uniunea Sovietică, a avut scopul cultivării sentimentului de mândrie naţională şi apartenenţă la un singur destin – "naţiunea moldovenească". Statul şi partidul reieşeau din considerentul că implicarea unui număr cât mai impunător de participanţi la ctitorirea culturală deschide posibilităţi pentru naşterea şi identificarea talentelor artistice, dar şi pentru propagarea idealurilor comunismului şi devotamentului faţă de Patria sovietică. În rezultat, organizarea oficială a Festivalului a depăşit hotarele frumosului şi ale muzicii, devenind involuntar parte a procesului politic şi a discursului ideologic. Asemenea lecţiilor de istorie, narativul festiv era chemat să reprezinte imaginile trecutului selectate riguros de retorica oficială: divinizarea eroilor, victoria binelui asupra răului, evocarea trecutului legendar şi a noului început etc. În rezultat, proiectul de construcţie a naţiunii urma să obţină legitimare şi, mai important, sacralitate. Or, "sacralizând puterea naţiunii se poate face din forţa ei o autoritate incontestabilă" (Thomas 1998: 33 apud Nicoară 2003: 257).

Festivalul de Muzică - "gală a talentelor autentice"

Sub semnul primăverii şi renaşterii naturii Festivalul Internaţional de Muzică "Mărţişor" se desfăşoară mai bine de patru decenii. Inaugurat la 1 martie 1966, festivalul pentru prima dată a fost organizat la iniţiativa directorului Filarmonicii Naţionale Alexandru Fedcu şi a regizorului Gleb Ceaicovschi "ca o gală a talentelor autentice". Despre acest eveniment, devenit în scurt timp tradiţie în

RSSM, istoriografia sovietică menţiona: “[s]ub influenţa tradiţiei sovietice de a organiza festivaluri de artă în corespundere cu anotimpurile anului, în Moldova Socialistă din 1968 (sic: 1967) a devenit tradiţională sărbătoarea de primăvară a artelor “Mărţişor”” (Брысякин 1972: 173).

Perioada de desfăşurare a concertelor era prevăzută pentru intervalul 1 martie - 10 martie, timp în care cele mai diverse genuri de muzică urmau să umple sălile de concert din Chişinău şi din satele republicii. Acest cadru temporal a reuşit să fie respectat an de an, supravieţuind perioadelor de schimbări politice şi social-economice radicale. Astăzi, Festivalul Internaţional de Muzică “Mărţişor” este nelipsit din amintirile câtorva generaţii şi se bucură de popularitate printre reprezentanţii diferitor categorii de vârstă, indiferent de preocupările profesionale sau politice. Memoria colectivă a asigurat emergenţa unei asocieri directe a tradiţiei mărţişorului cu cea a Festivalului Internaţional de Muzică “Mărţişor”; ambele fiind create, perpetuate, promovate “pentru a aduce primăvara în casele şi sufletele noastre”.

Actul de inaugurare a Festivalului Internaţional de Muzică “Mărţişor” a “îmbogăţit” semnificaţia mărţişorului cu noi conotaţii, diferite de cele a sărbătorilor tradiţionale. Prima, mai evidentă, este cea de mesager al muzicii. Cea de-a doua conotaţie a fost articulată pe dimensiunea politicilor culturale, adresate comunităţii internaţionale – cea de mesager al RSSM în plan (ex-)unional şi internaţional. Astfel, organizarea Festivalului “Mărţişor” cu statutul de “festival internaţional” şi inaugurările în cheia “la nivel republican” trebuia să contureze trăsături noi în imaginea republicii. Lista epitetelor “republică însorită”, “popor ospitalier”, “plai înfloritor” a fost îmbogăţită prin recunoaşterea internaţională a muzicalităţii, farmecului tradiţiilor şi gustului pentru frumos al “naţionalităţii moldoveneşti”. Iar delegarea rolului de “republică-gazdă” pentru invitaţii din cele “15 republici-surori” ale URSS venea să legitimeze proiectul de construcţie a “poporului sovietic”, “naţionalitatea moldovenească” fiind parte componentă a acestuia şi în care se integra cu succes.

În primii ani după instaurarea regimului comunist, revigorarea interesului pentru cultura tradiţională se explică prin necesitatea elaborării unui instrument de combatere a fastului/memoriei religioase: “[f]estivalurile sovietice erau chemate să substituie magia serviciilor divine din locaşurile bisericeşti şi să compenseze aviditatea de entuziasm, absent în viaţa publică din URSS” (Geldern von 1993: 5). Selectarea imaginilor din trecut avea loc în favoarea simbolurilor păgâne, cele creştine fiind marginalizate. Această preferinţă exprimă dilemele ideologiei ateiste care oricum necesita circumscrierea unei dimensiuni sacre în noile practici sovietice. Absenţa unui sistem simbolic secular apropiat orienta specialiştii, inevitabil, spre simbolismul păgân (Lane 1981: 238).

Un alt considerent care a marcat iniţiativele de organizare a festivalurilor şi susţinerea activă din partea discursului oficial în acea perioadă era obiectivul de revigorare a susţinerii maselor pentru construcţia noii orânduiri, oferind cetăţenilor sovietici posibilitatea de a celebra valorile promovate de această societate într-o formă pe care alte discursuri nu o puteau oferi. Odată cu formarea

RSSM, în virtutea situaţiei de interstiţiu între URSS şi Republica Socialistă România (RSR), statutul “republicii însorite” era conceput la nivel internaţional, inclusiv de ideologia sovietică, drept “vitrină” a Uniunii Sovietice; iar la nivel unional, în contextul proiectului de construcţie a “poporului sovietic” constituit din popoarele celor “15 republici-surori”, RSSM era promovată prin sintagma “egală între egale” (Визер, Даниленко, Репида 1972). Mitologia celor “15 republici surori” din marea familie a poporului sovietic a fost elaborată şi din perspectiva “importanţei familiarizării altor naţiuni cu cultura unui anume popor în vederea înaltei aprecieri a acesteia” (Рогачев, Свердлин 1967: 150). Remarcăm aici că inaugurarea Festivalului “Mărţişor” are loc în ajunul aniversării a 50-a a “Marii Revoluţii Socialiste din Octombrie”. Or, pe fundalul noilor “realizări socialiste” cu această ocazie, este insistent vehiculată ideea despre cultura sovietică care “nu că s-a născut, ci a devenit un organism artistic multinaţional unic în anii transformărilor socialiste”(Литературная Газета, 1972).

Un factor, de asemenea, important în promovarea Festivalului Internaţional de Muzică “Mărţişor” a fost oportunitatea de încurajare a cooperării culturale în contextul mitului despre “popoarele înfrăţite”: “unitatea de idealuri şi scopuri a naţiunilor şi naţionalităţilor sovietice contribuie la comunicarea spirituală a popoarelor ţării, creează condiţiile necesare pentru perceperea culturii altor naţiuni socialiste. Această necesitate în comunicarea spirituală depinde în mare măsură de tradiţiile culturale ale poporului, nivelul de dezvoltare estetică a maselor, interesele artistice ale acestora” (Даниленко 1972: 155). Or, perioada socialismului dezvoltat presupunea uniformizarea nivelurilor de dezvoltare culturală a popoarelor sovietice prin extinderea contactelor culturale între popoarele sovietice, intensificarea schimbului de valori culturale între republicile URSS: “activitate strict determinată a statului şi partidului, ce coordonează armonios interesele întregului popor sovietic ca o nouă comunitate de oameni cu interesele naţiunilor şi naţionalităţilor luate în parte” (Брысякин 1972: 160). Astfel, la Festivalul “Mărţişor”, în perioada 1967-1972, au participat peste 30 de interpreţi şi colective artistice cu renume, inclusiv artişti ai URSS, laureaţi ai concursurilor vocaliştilor, artişti populari ai estradei sovietice etc. În materialele Congresului XXII al PCUS se menţiona că oamenii sovietici de diferite naţionalităţi deţin deja trăsături comune ale imaginii spirituale, generate de noul tip al relaţiilor sociale care întruchipează în sine cele mai frumoase tradiţii ale popoarelor URSS (Материалы XXII сьезда КПСС apud Даниленко 1972: 155-181). Se considera că “aceste specificuri naţionale ale imaginii spirituale determină, mai mult sau mai puţin, şi percepţia artistică” (Даниленко 1972: 159).

De menţionat, că funcţia propagandistică a Festivalului “Mărţişor” şi practica de folosire a celebrărilor publice în scopul explicării principiilor politice a condiţionat acceptarea unui dialog cu cultura tradiţională, anterior străină scopurilor ideologice. Astfel, imaginea mărţişorului ca simbol al primăverii este păstrată integral, deşi îi este extins contextul de aplicare şi valenţele simbolice. Mărţişorul este scos din contextul intim al familiei şi al comunităţilor rurale şi este transformat într-un simbol al “marii familii a naţiunilor” (Malkki 1994) din cadrul URSS. Iar în acest fel, de la natura care reînvie până la imaginea

națiunii care se reconstruiește rămânea de făcut un singur pas. “Patria” este ideea centrală în discursul ideologic sovietic. Performarea alegorică a legăturii între Natură, Mamă, Patrie se întreține prin ritualurile și simbolurile antrenate în dimensiunea sacră a sărbătorii. Festivalul riscă în acest caz să devină instrument de manipulare socială, antrenând spectatorii într-o viziune simbolică trunchiată asupra realității:

> “Pentru că mitul poporului/națiunii vehiculează o realitate emoțională - de la recursul la origini, la convingerea de popor ales, dar și o atitudine de intoleranță etnocentrică, tradusă în sentimentul de a fi singurii juști, el impune drept virtute legitimă iubirea de patrie și de națiune” (Nicoară 2003: 259).

Constatăm, că tradiția ancestrală de celebrare a primăverii nu a reușit să evite politica oficială de propagare a “patriotismului sovietic”, căzând sub incidența activităților în spirit “stahanovist”. Prin contribuția structurilor de stat – grădinițe și școli primare – s-a încercat o apropiere semantică și contextuală a tradiției mărțișorului cu “tradiția inventată” de celebrare a Zilei Internaționale a Femeii (“8 Martie”). Alături de tradiția ancestrală moștenită de la bunici și părinți, instituția grădiniței și a școlii primare a plasat sărbătoarea de sorginte socialistă consacrată femeii. Discrepanța valorilor promovate de aceste două sărbători a fost compensată, grație eforturilor educatoarei/învățătoarei, cu introducerea sintagmei “un mărțișor pentru mama” și a unui nou titlu pentru sărbătoarea de “8 Martie” – “Ziua Mamelor”, care ulterior vor pregăti terenul pentru analogiile simbolice trasate artificial între legenda despre Baba Dochia și discursul despre femeia socialistă. Oare putea exista un vehicul cultural mai reprezentativ pentru legitimarea zilei de “8 Martie” decât prin apelul la actul magic de dăruire a “primului mărțișor”, confecționat cu mâinile proprii, în spiritul competitivității “mărțișor pentru mama” și aureolat de poveștile bunicii despre renașterea naturii și legenda mărțișorului?

Observăm, că primele tentative de institutionalizare a tradiției mărțișorului au decurs sub auspiciile structurilor de stat articulate, prin definiție, ideologiei sovietice. S-a urmărit intenționat substituirea mesajului de evocare a cultului Naturii-Mame prin acțiuni de comemorare a cultului Mamei, ultimul rezumând simbolic imaginea mamei/profesoarei asociată imaginii femeii socialiste și sugerând, prin extindere, imaginea Patriei. Sentimentul de adorație față de patria sovietică și identitatea moldovenească îl atestăm cultivat prin liturghie politică. Sărbătoarea internațională a femeii “8 Martie” urma să contribuie la substituirea tradiției mărțișorului cu tradiția sovietică de comemorare a mamei (Patriei-Mame), plasând Festivalul, iar odată cu el și proiectul de construcție a națiunii într-un context modern, internațional și, nu în ultimul rând, sacru. Noile simboluri și imagini din trecut urmau să constituie imaginarul identitar al noii comunități din “Moldova însorită”, prin care să se manifeste sentimentul de apartenență la comunitatea națională “moldovenească”.

În cazul RSSM, ideologia puterii era proiectată la nivel republican sub formă de replici de performare a narativelor centrale/centralizate, urmărindu-se construcția “naționalității moldovenești” în perimetrul proiectului de construcție a “poporului sovietic”. Pe fundalul unei auto-cenzurări drastice a culturii naționale, mărțișorul s-a arătat discursului puterii drept unul atractiv, romantic și cu un șarm național inofensiv ideologiei socialismului dezvoltat, iar dimensiunea muzicală a Festivalului părea să ofere aureola corespunzătoare pentru perceperea subiectivă.

Politici culturale și practici festive post-sovietice

Colapsul URSS și politicile promovate de guvernările imediat post-1991 au temperat dimensiunea ideologică a mesajelor propagandistice, rupte de contextul idealurilor de suveranitate, oferind în schimb mai mult spațiu simbolic pentru obiectivele firești ale unui “festival internațional de muzică”.

Schimbarea în conținutul Festivalului Internațional de Muzică “Mărțișor” a intervenit în perioada 2001-2009 multilateral ilustrată prin discursul politicilor culturale, prin revenirea la directivele de gestionare ideologică a spectacolelor (mai ales, cele de inaugurare) și prin ingerința violentă a puterii în mesajul simbolic al practicilor de celebrare a renașterii naturii, apelând la instrumentalizarea mecanismelor de comemorare și amnezie colectivă în favoarea noului proiect de construcție a națiunii – “poporul multinațional moldovenesc”.

Perioada 2001-2005, a primului mandat de guvernare comunistă, s-a caracterizat prin căutări și strategii de personalizare conceptuală a Festivalului Internațional de Muzică “Mărțișor”, rezumate în scenarii cu bugete modeste implementate, în mare parte, grație entuziasmului artiștilor profesioniști și amatori din Republica Moldova și preferințelor acordate de organizatori (preponderent, din motive financiare sau a legăturilor moștenite din perioada sovieitică) pentru artiștii din spațiul ex-URSS. În aceste condiții, orice performanță în conținutul scenariului devenea imediat remarcată de public. De exemplu, inițiativa organizatorilor ediției Mărțișor-2004 de a extinde considerabil geografia țărilor participante, invitând artiști din Franța, Germania, România, Israel, SUA, Japonia, China, Ucraina, Cehia, Italia, Bulgaria, Federația Rusă, Belarus a fost înalt apreciată de spectatori; iar mass-media a menționat despre Festivalul Internațional al Muzicii “mai internațional ca în altă dată” (Timpul 2004). În același timp, mesajul oficial al Festivalului revine la clișeele ideologiei sovietice. Astfel, în cuvânt de salut la concertul de inaugurare din 2004 Președintele Parlamentului, Eugenia Ostapciuc, se referă la rolul Festivalului “în apropierea oamenilor, în consolidarea prieteniei, a dimensiunii umanitare și culturale a colaborării dintre state și națiuni” precizând că “mesajul artistic și uman al Festivalului, care deja de circa patru decenii simbolizează anual sosirea primăverii, este *mesajul păcii, prosperității, bunei înțelegeri și prieteniei*” (sublinierea ne aparține) (Serviciul de Presă al Parlamentului RM 2004).

Implicarea directă a structurilor puterii în organizarea și desfășurarea Festivalului devine și mai pronunțată în perioada celui de al doilea mandat al guvernării comuniste (2005-2009). Cea mai evidentă este noua dimensiune “națională” a politicilor culturale, manifestate prin tentative de subscriere a Festivalului la mesajul principal, promovat “la scară națională” despre “națiu-

nea moldovenească". Importanța simbolică a noilor politici culturale și implementarea acestora în cadrul Festivalului "Mărțișor" este validată prin hotărâri de guvern și gestionată de Ministerul Culturii și Turismului în cooperare cu Ministerul Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, urmărind să con-sacre prin tradiția "Mărțișorului" topografia simbolică a "poporului multinațional moldovenesc". De exemplu, începând cu 2005, Festivalul se desfășoară "sub înaltul patronaj al Guvernului Republicii Moldova"[1] și este promovat la nivel oficial ca "unul din cele mai importante evenimente culturale", "componentă importantă a culturii naționale" care "reflectă nivelul dezvoltării culturale a țării (sublinierea ne aparține) (Serviciul de Presă al Președinției RM 2007)".

Mesajele despre "pace, prosperitate și prietenie" se dovedesc a fi, în percepția oamenilor simpli, șubrede și discreditate pentru promovarea sentimentul de coeziune identitară la nivel "național", fapt ce determină înlocuirea treptată a tematicilor generale prin altele, capabile să ofere proiectului de construcție a națiunii o imagine cu fața umană. De fiecare dată, însă, tematica rămâne contextualizată tradiției ancestrale despre renașterea naturii, vestitorul căreia este mărțișorul.

Astfel, spectacolul de inaugurare "Mărțișor-2007" s-a produs sub laitmotivul "Destin în Do Major", dedicat "Anului Eugen Doga". În acest context, în cuvânt de salut Președintele Republicii a menționat, că "întreaga muzică a lui Eugen Doga [...] constituie un veritabil triumf al dispoziției de primăvară, sunt întotdeauna o victorie asupra disperării și fricii. [...] Creațiile Dumneavoastră au permis întregii lumi să afle despre existența talentatului nostru popor, despre auzul său muzical absolut și să cunoască vocea sa inconfundabilă" (Serviciul de Presă al Președinției RM 2007). Mai mult decât atât. În cheia ritualurilor ancestrale de celebrare a Noului An Agrar la început de primăvară, Președintele avea să declare, deși într-un context simbolic absolut străin gândirii tradiționale, că "Anul Eugen Doga" în Moldova a început! Primăvara și "Mărțișorul" au venit pe meleagurile noastre. Vă felicit cu prilejul deschiderii Festivalului Internațional "Mărțișor-2007!"" (Serviciul de Presă al Președinției RM 2007).

Ediția următoare a Festivalului, "Mărțișor-2008", s-a desfășurat sub genericul "Tinerețe, Grație, Frumusețe" în unison cu mesajul oficial de declarare a anului 2008 "Anul Tineretului"[2], preconizându-se organizarea concertelor cu participarea exclusivă a tinerilor interpreți (News Agency Info-Prim Neo 2008). Sacralitatea mitului ideologic despre "prietenia popoarelor" nu decade, însă din conținutul noilor politici culturale. În anumite contexte, sintagma "popor moldovenesc" ia dimensiune internațională și este substituită prin "popor multinațional moldovenesc". În acest scop, mesajul "coeziunii naționale" și "prieteniei de secole între popoare" este re-prezentat prin acțiuni insistente de extindere a Festivalului "Mărțișor" la scara "întregii țări" și peste hotarele Republicii

[1] Conform Hotărârii Guvernului nr. 859 din 26 iulie 2004, în care au fost stabilite principalele repere privind statutul, organizarea, conținutul **și** finanțarea acestei manifestări culturale de mare prestigiu.

[2] Anul 2008 a fost declarat Anul Tineretului în Republica Moldova în baza unui decret al Președintelui din 26 decembrie 2007, având drept scop sporirea rolului tinerilor în viața social-politica si culturala si crearea de condiții pentru manifestarea plenară a potențialului creator al tinerei generații.

Moldova. Ulterior, în stilul rapoartelor de cincinal, presa "națională" urma să ateste, că "autoritățile locale au avut o atitudine serioasă față de pregătirea pentru aceasta acțiune. [...] Toate raioanele au organizat deschiderea solemnă a Festivalului, întâlnind oaspeții cu pâine și sare, flori și mărțișoare" (Porcesco 2008a), iar ambasadele, cazul Ambasadei Moldovei în Belgia, au depus eforturi considerabile pentru "a ne reprezenta cu aleasă destoinicie și fler modestul (deocamdată) meleag la înaltele curți europene" (Belâi 2008).

Discursul oficial pe marginea caracterului internațional al Festivalului a continuat exploatarea imaginii "patriei sovietice", redată simbolic prin sintagma "15 republici-surori". Continuitatea acestei imagini era asigurată prin redundanța mențiunilor publice despre "15 țări" invitate să participe la Festival. Astfel, atât structurile puterii cât și mass-media a reiterat că "printre momentele care au dat culoare festivalului a fost evoluarea în cadrul festivalului a oaspeților "Martisor"-ului, veniți din 15 țări ca să ne aducă primăvara în suflete (sublinierea ne aparține)" (Porcesco 2008).Departe de gândul de a evalua sau contesta valoarea artistică a participanților la Festival, găsim sugestivă atitudinea structurilor de stat și politica oficială de remunerare a participanților la spectacolele mărțișorului ca tributare speculațiilor sovietice despre ospitalitate, entuziasm și educație patriotică. De exemplu, ministrul Culturii și Turismului menționează generozitatea organizatorilor Festivalului față de reprezentanții "celor 15 țări invitate" prin precizarea că "acestora li se vor plăti onorarii și le vor fi asigurate cazarea și masa" și, pe de altă parte etalează atitudinea rezervată față de muzicienii profesioniști și amatori din Moldova: acestora "nu li se va plăti nimic, ei vor face voluntariat sau lucru patriotic (sublinierea ne aparține)" (Jurnal de Chișinău 2008).

Ediția "Mărțișor-2009" a fost concepută de narativul puterii să încununeze opera de creare a națiunii moldovenești print-o ediție specială dedicată "Aniversării de 650 ani de la constituirea statului moldovenesc". Conotația simbolică a mărțișorului și calitățile apotropaice atribuite acestuia prin ritualul dăruirii sunt substituite prin funcția de "mesager al culturii naționale". Calitățile de esență magică ale mărțișorului tradițional au fost substituite prin magia celor șapte note ale mărțișorului-festival ca ocazie a unor noi începuturi. Anotimpul renașterii naturii devine context sacru pentru oferirea cadourilor tradiționale "întregului popor moldovenesc", doar că în locul mărțișoarelor tradiționale este adus în dar însuși Festivalul International de Muzica "Mărțișor" cu paleta de manifestări culturale desfășurate "pe întreg teritoriul țării". Incinta Palatului Național din Chișinău a fost transformată pe perioada acestei ediții în "casa mare" a "poporului multinațional moldovenesc" unde a fost invitat tot neamul pentru a celebra sosirea primăverii, pentru a re-trăi împreună renașterea naturii și, nu în ultimul rând, pentru a re-construi națiunea (Кишинёвские Новости 2008).

Constatăm, că viziunea oficială față de cultură a continuat să pedaleze din inerție pe clișeele ideologiei sovietice, determinând numeroase acțiuni de instrumentalizare politică a culturii. Astfel, condamnarea și respingerea regimului sovietic s-a produs fără a respinge standardele culturale și clișeele ide-

ologice. Dilema privind tradiție-modernizare este reflectată evident în edițiile post-sovietice: performarea ansamblurilor folclorice, etalarea costumelor tradiționale şi incursiunea narativelor despre legenda mărțişorului au fost pas în pas cu reiterarea performanțelor internaționale şi de ultimă oră (invitarea pe scenă, alături de colectivele artistice a echipei naționale de fotbal, a colectivele artistice care au reprezentat Republica Moldova la prestigioase concursuri internaționale etc.). Şi dacă în perioada sovietică coloritul național era ajustat la ideologia oficială, după proclamarea Independenței constatăm o tendință inversă: incorporarea narativelor ideologice în manifestările publice naționale.

Elita culturală a continuat să accepte conlucrarea cu puterea în limitele ideologiilor naționale(iste), profitând de contextele, resursele şi ocaziile oferite de putere pentru soluționarea problemelor proprii, iar astfel contribuind la promovarea, legitimarea şi reproducerea structurilor puterii. Noile proiecte ideologice, desfăşurate pînă în anul 2009, au promovat explorarea dimensiunii tradiționale prin forme culturale elaborate în perioada anterioară. În rezultat, atestăm în continuare politici oficiale de completare a formelor culturii tradiționale conform parametrilor ideologici din perioada sovietică.

Concluzii

Dincolo de mesajele ideologice tangente, Festivalul "Mărțişor", totuşi, a reuşit să cultive în toate timpurile un sentiment sincer/sănătos de mândrie pentru valorile tradiționale, transformându-l în simbol al Moldovei. Simbolul mărțişorului în sine continuă să rămână în acest spațiu un simbol al identității etno-culturale româneşti şi identității civice moldoveneşti. De altfel, acest eveniment ancorat în cultura tradițională românească nu s-a axat pe atitudini etnocentrice, predispuse să marginalizeze alte culturi. Esența festivalului este exprimată prin ritualul lui central (dăruirea mărțişorului) şi simbolul principal – mărțişorul. Atmosfera romantică, de legendă, a mărțişorului a devenit, în ultimele două decenii, o proiecție performativă a identității colective şi renaşterii naționale în Republica Moldova.

Bibliografie:

Belâi, L. (2008) "Sărbătoarea primăverii moldave în Belgia; 'Martisor-2008' pe meridianele planetei', *Moldova Suverană*, http://www.moldova-suverana.md/index.php?subaction=showcomments&id=1205854500&archive=&start_from=&ucat=10& (accesat 14 aprilie, 2012).

Binns, Ch. (1979/80) "The Changing Face of Power: Revolution and Accommodation in the Development of the Soviet Ceremonial System: Part I & II", *Man*, vol. 14/15, pp. 170-187.

Geldern von, J. (1993) *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917-1920*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Heideking, J., G.Fabre şi K. Dreisbach (eds) (2001) C*elebrating Ethnicity and Nation: American Festive Culture from the Revolution to the Early 20th Century (European Studies in American History)*, Berghahn Books, New York.

Heideking, J., Geneviève Fabre (2001) "Intorduction", in *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation: American Festive Culture from the Revolution to the Early 20th Century (European Studies in American History)*, eds Heideking J., G.Fabre şi K. Dreisbach, Berghahn Books, New York, pp. 1-24.

Irwin-Zarecka, I. (1994) *Frames of Remembrance. The Dynamics of Collective Memory*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick.

Jurnal de Chişinău (2008), http://www.jurnal.md/article/5531/ (accesat 14 aprilie, 2012).

Kertzer, D. I. (1988) *Ritual, Politics and Power*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Lane, C. (1981) *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society - The Soviet Case*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Malkki, L. (1994) "Citizens of Humanity: Internationalism and the Imagined Community of Nations", *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, no. 3, pp. 41-68.

News Agency Info-Prim Neo (2008), 26 februarie 2008.

Nicoară, S. (2003) "Identitatea națională, o sensibilitate latentă a modernității (secolele XVIII-XX)", *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, nr. 7, Universitatea „1 Decembrie 1918", Alba Iulia, pp. 255-265.

Ozouf, M. (1988) *Festivals and the French Revolution,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Porcesco, C. (2008) "10 zile de prietenie şi valoare artistică autentica. MĂRȚIŞOR 2008", *Moldova Suverană*, http://www.moldova-suverana.md/index.php?subaction=showcomments&id=1205253240&archive=&start_from=&ucat=10& (accesat 14 aprilie, 2012).

Porcesco, C. (2008a) "Primele acorduri ale primăverii", *Moldova Suverană*, http://www.moldova-suverana.md/calendar_out.php?subaction=showcalendar&d=3&m=3&y=2008&month=3&year=2008 (accesat 14 aprilie, 2012).

Santino, J. (2009) "Performing Ireland: A Performative Approach to the Study of Irish Culture", in *Crossroads: performance studies and Irish culture*, eds S. Brady şi F. Walsh, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 13-20.

Serviciul de Presă al Parlamentului RM (2004), "Mesaj de salut participanților la Festivalul Internațional de Muzică 'Mărțisor-2004' al Preşedintelui Parlamentului Republicii Moldova, Eugenia Ostapciuc, 1 martie, 2004 in http://xv.parlament.md/news/01.03.2004/ (accesat 14 aprilie, 2012).

Serviciul de Presă al Preşedinției RM (2007), "Luarea de cuvânt a preşedintelui Vladimir Voronin la deschiderea Festivalului Internațional de Muzică 'Mărțişor-2007'", 1 Martie 2007, in http://www.prm.md/press.php?p=1&s=4623&lang=rom (accesat 14 aprilie, 2012).

Spillman, L. (1997) *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Stokes, G. (ed) (1997) *The Politics of Identity in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Thomas, J. (ed) (1998) *Introduction aux methodologie de l'imaginaire*, Ellipses, Paris. Apud: Nicoară, S. (2003) "Identitatea națională, o sensibilitate latentă a modernității (secolele XVIII-XX)", *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, nr. 7, Universitatea „1 Decembrie 1918", Alba Iulia, pp. 255-265.

Timpul (2004), http://www.timpul.md/Rubric.asp?idIssue=446&idRubric=383 (accesat 14 aprilie, 2012).

Брысякин, С.Л. (1972) "Некоторые вопросы историографии культурного строительства в Молдавской ССР", in *Равная среди равных. Сборник статей по истории социалистического и коммунистического строительства в Молдавии*, eds Визер Б.К., Даниленко Р.Б., Репида Л.Е., Штиинца, Кишинев, pp. 126-154.

Визер, Б.К., Даниленко Р.Б. Репида Л.Е. (eds) (1972) *Равная среди равных. Сборник статей по истории социалистического и коммунистического строительства в Молдавии*, Штиинца, Кишинев.

Даниленко, Р. В. (1972) "Культурное сотрудничество народов СССР и его роль в эстетическом и интернациональном воспитании трудящихся", in *Равная среди равных. Сборник статей по истории социалистического и коммунистического строительства в Молдавии*, eds Визер Б.К., Даниленко Р.Б., Репида Л.Е., Штиинца, Кишинев, pp. 155-181.

Кишинёвские Новости (2008), http://www.kn.md/?idn=1991 (accesat 14 aprilie, 2012).

Литературная Газета (1972), 8 martie 1972.

Материалы XXII Съезда КПСС, p. 405. Apud: Даниленко Р.В. (1972) "Культурное сотрудничество народов СССР и его роль в эстетическом и интернациональном воспитании трудящихся", in *Равная среди равных. Сборник статей по истории социалистического и коммунистического строительства в Молдавии*, eds Визер Б.К., Даниленко Р.Б., Репида Л.Е., Штиинца, Кишинев, pp. 155-181.

Рогачев, П.М., М.А. Свердлин (1967) *Нации – народ – человечество*, Политиздат, Москва.

Photo Essay / Photo Esej / Foto Eseu

LENIN, THE MOLDOVAN COMMUNISTS AND PIONEERS, OR NOSTALGIA FOR THE SOVIET PAST IN FIFTEEN IMAGES (2005-2013)

Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu
Chişinău, Republic of Moldova

Abstract. This photo-essay presents fifteen images to reflect the ritualized forms of nostalgia for the Soviet past in the Republic of Moldova between 2005 and 2013. Although the involved groups' meanings and reasons on post-Soviet nostalgia are diverse in terms of age, personal and collective experience, social and professional status, ethnicity and gender, the scenarios used by the Communist Party of Moldova to celebrate the Soviet-period-anniversaries, such as Pioneers' Day, are still "built" on the ideological *clichés* of yesteryear. Beyond the protocol dimension, the author follows up the updated aspects and agendas of these events by examining various extensions, actions, and attitudes of the involved communities, as well as confrontations conducted under/for the reporters' camera.

Keywords: post-Soviet nostalgia, political ritual, celebration, Pioneers' Day, Republic of Moldova

Cuvinte-cheie: nostalgia post-sovietică, ritual politic, celebrare, Ziua Pionieriei, Republica Moldova

Preliminaries

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s and the assertion of a national ideology, dramatic changes occurred through contesting and reloading societies' symbolic organization, redefining political rituals, and changing the official calendar and the public holidays (Cash 2013; Osipian 2013).[1] However, this phenomenon circumscribed multiple aspects involving different experiences, social inertia, competing memories, and political options with different modes of community involvement, all of which depended on people's attitudes, contexts and accumulated experience. In the electoral campaign for the 2001

[1] I would like to thank Jennifer R. Cash for valuable suggestions and encouragements in developing this photo-essay idea. I alone remain responsible for any shortcomings in the present material.

parliamentary elections, the Communist Party came to power in the Republic of Moldova, partly because of their use of an updated nostalgia for the Soviet past. Even though these nostalgic expectations remained unfulfilled, between 2001 and 2009, the official political discourse attested to manners of pathos which have claimed the right of appealing and articulating speculative constructions and patterns of Soviet ideology. Inaugurated with ostentation, the anniversary celebrations of Moldovan statehood in 2009, overshadowed other versions of the official festivities, creating, in effect, a repertoire of preferences propaganda spared through the official directives (Bîrlădeanu 2013).

This photo-essay presents fifteen images from Communist celebrations between 2005 and 2013 in order to reflect on the ritualized forms of nostalgia for the Soviet past in the Republic of Moldova. Through these images, I aim to underline the emotional canvas of public events related to Communist ideology, and to point to the emotional dimension which dominates the relationship between the groups involved in these events and articulates their distinctive features as "emotional communities" (Rosenwein 2006).

Celebration of the October Revolution Anniversary in Chişinău, 7 November 2007

***Fig. 01**: Participants at October Revolution anniversary in Chişinău, 7 November 2007, under the slogan "Lenin's ideas will be alive forever". Photo courtesy Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu.*

During 2001-2009, the Communist Party re-invigorated celebrations of Soviet holidays and anniversaries with a visible political facet, such as the anniversary of the October Revolution (7 November), Lenin's birthday (22 April), Pioneers' Day (19 May), Labour Day (1 May) and Victory Day (9 May). In this process, the spaces and places related to the Soviet past have been streamlined through reconstruction and rehabilitation. Through various dramatizations and theatrical actions, political rituals and performances were made to channel collective emotions towards a deep religious sense of gratitude and patriotism. The "political liturgy" in this period prefers to point in the Soviet style to scenes of victory and glory. Celebratory scenarios revived images of the victory of the Soviet soldier-liberator and those liberated, who were respectively filled with pride and gratitude, offering audiences a sentiment of adhesion and return to a founding past.

Celebration of V. I. Lenin's birthday at his monument in the Square of the International Exhibition Centre "MoldExpo" in Chişinău, 22 April 2009

***Fig. 02:** Monument to V. I. Lenin, The Square of the International Exhibition Centre "MoldExpo" in Chişinău, 22 April 2009. Photo courtesy Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu.*

The square of the International Exhibition Centre "MoldExpo", where the Lenin monument is currently located in Chişinău, had its own evolution and became a distinct space in the post-Soviet period. During the Soviet period, the site of the current Centre was part of the Exhibition of the People's Economy Achievements, founded in 1957, with a Board of Honour to "Socialist Work". The functions of *mediator of collective emotions*, as well as of *device of ritualized practices*, were assigned to this terrain after V. I. Lenin's monument (sculptor S. Merculov, architects A. V. Şciusev and V. Turcianinov) was relocated to stand in front of the Honour Board of socialist workers. Until 1991, the monument towered in the centre of Chişinău, in front of the building of the Council of Ministers (now, the Government of the Republic of Moldova). Celebrations are held here every year on 22 April for Lenin's birthday, and on 19 May for Pioneers' Day. It now mediates nostalgias for the Soviet past and anchors the ceremony for investing into the ranks of the Pioneers held on Lenin's birthday. According to the organisers' intentions, these public rituals aim to assure generational cohesion, and to transmit to the audience a sense of belonging and collective happiness.

Ceremony of induction in the ranks of pioneers' organisation, "MoldExpo" Square, Chişinău, 21 April 2007

Fig. 03: *Ceremony of induction into the ranks of the Pioneers' organisation, "MoldExpo" Square in Chişinău, 21 April 2007. Photo courtesy Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu.*

The celebration of Pioneers' Day in Chişinău, as part of the official events organized by the Communist Party, became a media event repeated year after year since 2006. The ritualized practice of induction in the ranks of the Pioneers' organization, the symbolic attributes of the organisation (the flag, the red cravat, the Pioneers' salute) attracted mass-media attention by performing in front of the cameras and giving to the audience an appearance of Soviet continuity. Reopened in 1997, the Pioneers Organization of Moldova expanded its ranks considerably after 2001. According to its leaders, it now has approximately 6 000 members. It must be pointed out that after 1991, the organization did not preserve its administrative status from the Soviet period. Today it activates as a civic organisation, and the educational institutions have become detached from its ideological mission "to forge Communist generations". In the new circumstances, the Pioneers' organization kept a narrow range of institutions and fields of activity developed by members or associations related to the Communist Party. These institutions are part of local administrations and schools, and parents have become the main actors who direct and sanction their child's enrolment in the local chapter. To parents, these forms of institutionalization contribute to the development of their children's moral values, including the educational-patriotic dimension promoted by the Pioneers' organization.

The solemn swearing-in of Pioneers in Post-Soviet Moldova

Fig. 04: *Ceremony of induction into the ranks of the Pioneers, "MoldExpo"*

Square in Chişinău, 21 April 2007. Photo courtesy Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu.

The solemn swearing-in of today's Pioneers is uttered consecutively in two languages – first in Russian, then in the "language of state" (i.e. linguistically Romanian, conventionally Moldovan) :

> "I, [*the name*], in front of my comrades, I do solemnly swear to love and be devoted to my Motherland, to study hard, to struggle with bad habits. Always and everywhere to be honest; to help seniors, to protect minors. Conscientiously to achieve the Pioneer assignments.
>
> Young pioneers, to the fight for Motherland, to the good and justice – be ready!"

Celebration of V. I. Lenin's birthday at "MoldExpo" Square, Chişinău, 21 April 2007

Fig. 05: *Celebration of V. I. Lenin's birthday anniversary at "MoldExpo" Square in Chişinău, 21 April 2007. Photo courtesy Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu.*

Fig. 06: *Sequence from V. I. Lenin's birthday celebration at the "MoldExpo" Square in Chişinău, 22 April 2013. Photo courtesy Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu.*

Certainly, children's participation marks the moment of maximum emotional vibration for the participants at the event (see Fig. 06, 07). This ritualised action articulates, in one part, the actors' memories about their past and, at in another part, it embodies the regeneration and continuity of institutions.

The President of the Republic of Moldova (2001-2005, 2005-2009), Vladimir Voronin, celebrates Pioneers' Day

Fig. 07: *The President of the Republic of Moldova (2001-2005, 2005-2009), Vladimir Voronin, celebrates Pioneers' Day* (Гренада 2013).

With the presence of a large number of civil servants and their personal security, these events required a formalised protocol and proceedings. To complement them with meaning, the participants expanded these meetings with "informal" gatherings and spaces. They are used by ordinary people to communicate, sing, and make photographs for personal archives. At the same time these informal gatherings are used by the authorities as alternative communication ground, to approach the crowd, distribute gifts to children and to the orchestra members.

Celebration of V. I. Lenin's birthday at the "MoldExpo" Square, Chişinău, 21 April 2007

Fig. 08: *The Pioneers' Day celebration, Chişinău, 21 April 2007. Photo courtesy Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu.*

Although seen by adults, in the frame of these events, as an occasion to pass "the torch of valuable traditions" to the young generations, the children themselves viewed these events with an array of emotions and attitudes: joy similar to that in school-like games, distrust caused by the increased attention, and uncertainty from the insidious questions of reporters.

"The Pioneers' *drujina*" at the Pioneers' Day celebration in Chişinău (2009-2013)

Fig. 09*: The Pioneers' Day celebration in Chişinău, 2013 (Падалко 2013).*

Fig. 10: *The Pioneers' Day celebration in Chişinău, 2013* (Komsomol.md 2013).

Fig. 11: *Laying of flowers at the monument to the leader of the world proletariat, "MoldExpo" Square in Chişinău, 22 April 2009. Photo courtesy Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu.*

Without any hint of sarcasm, the Party websites "build" their images according to the visual patterns of Soviet ideology. The ambiance of all celebrations was backed by a musical background of Soviet-era heroic songs and the celebration itself always culminates with a laying of flowers at the monument to the leader of the world proletariat.

In the defence of monument to V. I. Lenin

Fig. 12: *In the defence of the monument to Lenin. Square "MoldExpo" in Chişinău, 20 April 2012* (Независимый информационный портал 2012).

Fig. 13: *In the defence of the monument to Lenin. Square "MoldExpo" in Chişinău, 20 April 2012* (Greadcenco 2012).

Apart from building communities, these events are also contested by those who do not share the Communist ideological visions and activities. They have also generated designated places of refuge and strategies of challenge for the Communist opposition. Valeriu Ciobanu, a veteran of the Dniester War (1992), addressed a petition to the Chişinău City Hall and the Moldovan Government on 17 June 2011, urging the authorities to destroy all Communist monuments still present on the territory of the Republic of Moldova within thirty days. The same day, in a publicly declared action, Ciobanu hammered his petition to the Lenin monument, arguing "that because of this scarecrow in stone there have suffered, and are still suffering, many people". Along with his comrades, on 2 April and 19 April 2012, on the eve of Lenin's anniversary, Ciobanu held a press-conference announcing about the intention to demolish ("to speck") the Lenin monument in the Square of the International Exhibition Centre "MoldExpo". It is important to note that during 2012, as during the previous year, the plans made by local administrations to demolish monuments to V. I. Lenin, incited spirits every time. The demolitions and removals of the monuments have been countered by their repair and re-installation, leaving many Lenin monuments still standing in the country at the time of this publication. The contending parties have fully involved their supporters, excitement and emotions, and confrontations have often turned into a mass-media spectacle.

"Our Motherland is the Soviet Union!"

Fig. 14: *"Our Motherland is the Soviet Union!" The Memorial Complex "Eternity" in Chişinău, 9 May 2005. Photo courtesy Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu.*

Fig. 15: *"Our Motherland is the Soviet Union!" at the Memorial Complex "Eternity" in Chişinău, 9 May 2007. Photo courtesy Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu.*

The last decade of experience in the Republic of Moldova shows that nostalgia for the USSR was one behavioural strategy, a possible response to the traumas caused by change, without becoming a norm for the entire society. For some people, however, the emotional feelings for the Soviet past, "orchestrated" by the authorities in the period 2001-2009 and subsequently, regenerated and circulated symbols, discursive and behavioural models, political rituals, and realms of memory which together determined the attributes of some *communities* and *cultural codes*.

Some concluding remarks

The photographic hypostasis presented in this essay articulates the ritualized forms of nostalgia for the Soviet past in the Republic of Moldova during 2005 and 2013. By following the agendas of updated "Soviet" events through various extensions, actions, and attitudes of the involved communities, as well as confrontations conducted under/for the cameras of press agencies, the essay emphasises the diversity of meanings and reasons for post-Soviet nostalgia.

References:

Baiburin, Albert; Alexandra Piir. 2011. *When We Were Happy: Remembering Soviet Holidays*, in *Petrified Utopia. Happiness Soviet Style*, edited by M. Balina and E. Dobrenco, New York: Anthem Press, 161-186.

Bîrlădeanu, Virgiliu. 2013. "Wine and Speed: The Post-Soviet Holidays in the Republic of Moldova (2001–2009)", in *History and Anthropology*, special issue "Politics and Performance in South-Eastern Europe", guest eds Rozita Dimova and Ludmila D. Cojocaru, 24 (1): 36-55.

Cash, Jennifer R. 2013. "Transformations of the Ritual Cycle in Postsocialist Moldova," *Interstitio. East European Journal of Historical and Cultural Anthropology*, special issue "Time, Space and Agency in (Post)Socialist festive Culture", guest eds Ludmila D. Cojocaru and Jennifer R. Cash, V 1-2(9-10): 30-50.

Osipian, Alexandr. 2013. "Public Holidays, Official Commemorations, and State Calendar in Ukraine, 1991-2011", *Interstitio. East European Journal of Historical and Cultural Anthropology*, special issue "Time, Space and Agency in (Post)Socialist festive Culture", guest eds Ludmila D. Cojocaru and Jennifer R. Cash, V 1-2(9-10): 51-73.

Rivière, Claude. 1988. *Les liturgies politiques*. Paris: PUF.

Rosenwein, B. H. 2006. *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Turner, Victor. 1982. *From Ritual to Theatre. The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York, Performing Arts Journal Publications.

Гренада. 2013. "В Кишиневе прошла торжественная линейка и прием в Пионерскую организацию (фоторепортаж)," 19.05.2013, available at <http://www.grenada.md/post/v_kishiniove_proshla_torjestvennaea_lineika_i__priem_v_pionery>. All websites were accessed on 15.09.2013.

Komsomol.md. 2013. "День Пионерии в Кишиневе (фоторепортаж)," 19.05.2013, available at <http://komsomol.md/ru/index.php?newsid=275>.

Независимый информационный портал. 2012. "В Кишиневе идёт битва за памятник Ленину (фоторепортаж)," 20.04.2012, <http://www.noi.md/ru/news_id/11481>.

Падалко, Ольга. 2013. "День пионерии: Кишинев, Кагул, Басарабяска (фоторепортаж)," Коммунист. Газета Партии Коммунистов Республики Молдова, 19.05.2013, <http://comunist.md/?p=423>.

Book Reviews/ Recenzje/ Recenzii

LAURA ADAMS. 2010. THE SPECTACULAR STATE: CULTURE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN UZBEKISTAN. DURHAM: DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS, IX, 242 PP.

In her rich analysis of holiday spectacles in Uzbekistan, Laura Adams carefully chronicles how elites are redefining Uzbekistan in the post-Soviet period by shifting from Soviet-era ideologies and practices to those of a modern nation-state. To accomplish this, Uzbek elites use holiday spectacles as a means of redefining national history, strengthening Uzbek national identity, and distancing Uzbekistan from Soviet internationalism in favour of Karimov's "ideology of national independence." The particular irony of this ostensible distancing from Soviet norms is that it is precisely Uzbekistan's legacy of Soviet internationalism that allows contemporary national spectacles to be seen as congruent with what Adams calls "international norms" – namely Olympic-style spectacles that Uzbek elites see as an internationally intelligible means of communication (p. 194-195). These performances help posit Uzbekistan as a "normal" member of the international community (p. 9).

Based on interviews and observations with planners, performers, directors, and cultural workers (artists, directors, musicians, dancers, etc.), Adams focuses on two state-sponsored holidays: Navro'z and Independence Day. Through an explication of these holidays' contemporary iterations and an exegesis of their Soviet counterparts (or lack of, in the case of Navro'z), Adams shows how Uzbek elites seek to re-create a heroic and distinctly Uzbek past, to create new public meanings and associations, and to sanctify as national spectacles that were once distinctly Soviet.

Adams shows how cultural producers and bureaucrats, who are astutely aware of the power of Hollywood productions, special effects, and broadcasting, seek to emulate large international events. Most notably, the Uzbek state replaced Soviet-style parades based on mass participation with Olympic-style song and dance spectacles promoting elitist cultural ideals and images of a glorious Uzbek past.

Adams finds that cultural elites took seriously the project of creating Uzbek national spectacles. Though she chronicles some muted resistance as organizers sought to "persuade" (i.e. "marshall," in the language of socialism)

institutions and groups to perform in spectacles, it is never really clear how such “resistance” should be interpreted. Many institutions and artists were over-extended and thus sought to avoid any new obligations and pressure that organizers put upon them. Though few refused outright, some would simply not appear as promised. Amateur regional and ethnic troupes were more enthusiastic about the status and other benefits brought by being invited to participate in these performances.

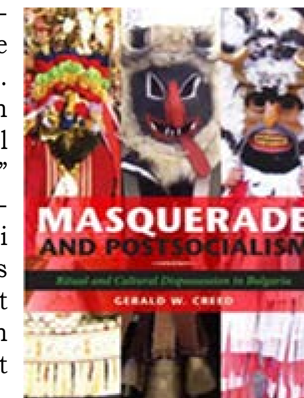
Adams’ central argument is that spectacles constitute one-way political communications that impose state discourses and simultaneously attempt to mobilize people through the illusion of participation. With this in mind, Adams writes that spectacles take “on a vibrant quality of democratic participation even though there is nothing democratic or participatory about” them (p. 97-98). In Uzbekistan’s early years of post-Soviet independence, Adams argues, spectacles were adequate for mobilizing citizens. Until the unrest and political insecurity that accompanied the onset of the colour revolutions in the early 2000s there was little need for more repressive activities.

Despite the populist orientation of state spectacles, they are not particularly effective for communicating ideology to the general public given that their audiences are limited. Additionally, holiday spectacles did not fit with popular concerns nor have widespread popular appeal. Instead, under the “command system of cultural production [...] the only audience that shaped the final performance” was the elite politicians and bureaucrats (p. 174). Adams’ book constitutes an extended argument about the workings of power and ideology among elites, culture producers, and spectators, and as such is a valuable contribution to scholarship on both Central Asia and the former Soviet Union.

The book’s focus on popular mobilization and the desire of the Karimov regime to uphold international norms leaves the comparative aspect of the work understudied. Are there parallels to other states of the former USSR, or, perhaps even more boldly, in the West? Are these performances integral to the constitution of national sovereignty? Or are they just state-directed to the masses seeking entertainment? Though these spectacles are ostensibly consumed as entertainment, it is useful to think of them in terms of their importance as part of the broad performance of sovereignty that defines all modern regimes. Given both the broad theoretical importance of this work and its particular ethnographic focus, this volume will be ideal because of its well-articulated argument about the relationship of elites, spectacles, popular mobilizations, and for its intricate discussion of the various and often conflicting institutional processes through which spectacles emerge. It will be of significance to scholars interested in exploring the “soft power” of modern states and authoritarian regimes, and for those interested in how elites use culture and cultural productions to create state power as well as their own places within the state apparatus.

Michael Bobick
(Pittsburgh, USA)

GERALD W. CREED. 2011. MASQUERADE AND POSTSOCIALISM: RITUAL AND CULTURAL DISPOSSESSION IN BULGARIA (NEW ANTHROPOLOGIES OF EUROPE). BLOOMINGTON & INDIANAPOLIS: INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS, XI, 272 PP.



This is a convincing analysis of the mumming rituals in Bulgaria told in a clear language packed with reflexive and theoretical conclusions. Based on long-term fieldwork in different villages in Bulgaria, the analysis went way beyond my initial expectations of getting insights into a “pre-modern” ritual relevant for contemporary Bulgaria. Gerald W. Creed persuasively argues that the Kukeri and their performances reveal substantial aspects not only about Bulgarian society but also about political hierarchies, power division and Western civil(izing) tendencies towards Eastern Europe that shape worldviews and larger systems of knowledge.

It has been awhile since I have encountered the use of “emic” concepts to explain the views of local people. Creed courageously manages to do so without disregarding the aspects that have supplanted the emic. He pays close attention to the power of the language with which we recount local practices, the places and histories of the people we study, as well as the politics and responsibilities involved in the objectification and representation of our interlocutors.

From the outset, the author is upfront with his intention: despite the seemingly “old-fashioned” usage of “emic” descriptions, the book’s main task is not to dwell on the mumming practices and rituals in their “emic” appearance but by using them to be critical of Western “ideal types” that have placed the former Eastern European socialist countries in a specific civilizational pigeonhole vis-à-vis Western political economy and democracy. In this task, Creed succeeds magnificently. We can indeed learn a lot about life in postsocialist Bulgaria by looking through the lens of this “seemingly esoteric cultural practice” (p. 2). By using the mumming rituals, the book offers effective “decoding” of gender relations, local forms of networks that arguably function along the lines of civil society, and local forms of providing cooperation and village support that exist beyond the dichotomous paradigms of atomization or collectivity that have subtly dominated several decades of anthropological work in the region. By analyzing the Romani presence among the mummers, along with the reaction of Roma spectators, Creed also effectively manages to go beyond the perception of Bulgaria as nationalistic or exclusionary with respect towards ethnic difference, and especially towards the Roma ethnicity. Of course, the author acknowledges that there is deep-seated discrimination against Roma. But he shows us that the Kukeri, as a model of collectivity, allows for a variety of flexible incorporations and inclusions of minority populations without pre-

tending to end or resolve ethnic prejudice. Similarly in terms of gender, Creed reveals how Bulgaria's rigid gender system can facilitate greater flexibility for individuals through such practices as the Kukeri than can the more flexible quotidian gender arrangements in the West (p. 4). Yet he does not deny the deep patriarchal nature of Bulgarian society.

By underlining the political and economic devastation of the recent decades of transition and "cultural dispossession", Creed shows the changes that have taken place on the level of human relations in the villages along with people's ways of dealing with the intensity of these changes. By "dispossession", Creed means that the cultural options and alternatives present in local practices have been eroded by the cold war opposition that structured global perceptions for much of the twentieth century (p. 4). He insists that if western scholarship, political and NGO actors had taken cultural practices such as the mumming rituals more seriously, new political alternatives and perceptions could have been developed without the stigmatizing effects that led to cultural dispossession in Bulgaria and the rest of the post-socialist countries of Eastern and Central Europe.

Thus, Creed tries to destabilize the reified dichotomy that is wide-spread nowadays in which "core concepts of the Western political economy: democracy, civil society, the market, privatization, rule of law, minority rights, and gender equality" are often contrasted with "the supposed indigenous barriers to these goals: corruption, patriarchy, nationalism, and various socialist legacies" (p. 5). Creed insists on viewing postsocialist studies as a global condition, which, similarly with post-colonial studies, has affected the rest of the world and thus is a "global condition": "postsocialism is not just the situation of former socialist countries, it is the condition of the world in the aftermath of a global cold war that derogated socialism and laid the groundwork for cultural dispossession" (p. 7).

And yet, there is something very Evans-Pritchardean with this analysis. By using the Kukeri to offer alternative interpretations of "the cultural dispossession" of Bulgaria, and of postsocialist studies in general, there is a slippage into a functionalist impasse reminiscent of how Evans-Pritchard analyzed the Nuer and the Azande to show how "emic" magic and witchcraft practices revealed broader social processes. I remain unconvinced as to why Bulgarian Kukeri are so distinctly different from the remaining carnival practices elsewhere in the Balkans, South Eastern Europe or beyond. Why did the author not capitalize on the rich theoretical legacy of a literature that would have allowed him to go beyond a functionalist critique of the West? By ignoring Mikhail Bakhtin, Natalie Davis, Jacques Le Goff, and other historians and theorists who have given us such stunning studies of mediaeval carnivalesque rituals, and the politics embedded in them, Creed stunts the theoretical reach of his analysis. He reduces his study to a critical functionalism while disregarding the more elaborate combination of semiotic, symbolic, psycho-analytic, and dialogical interactions that are the polyphonic backdrop against which mumming takes place.

The potential for such an analysis is present. Had the author only unpacked the assertion of one of his informants that the entire year he was a Kukeri, and therefore could only be himself for several days each year, we could have been offered an interpretation of this ritual with a Lacanian twist: the mask carries more truth than the face beneath. Arguing that the subject always needs recourse to fiction (or performance) in order to assume his "real self", Jacques Lacan argued that it is through fiction, mask, or lie that the "truth" emerges. Following Lacan, and other "emic" Balkan/East European readings of him (e.g. Zizek 1989), Creed could have gone further in highlighting the centrality of the Kukeri and their rituals to understanding postsocialist Bulgaria and its neighboring societies, and in arguing foremost for their centrality in understanding the ruptures and voids of the libidinal entanglement of Bulgaria and the West.

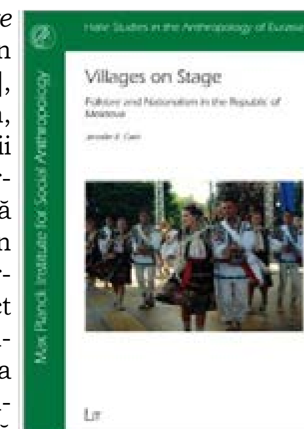
Reference

Zizek, Slavoj. 1989. *The Sublime Object of Ideology.* London: Verso.

Rozita Dimova
(Gent, Belgium)

PERFORMAREA IDENTITĂŢII CULTURALE ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA, ÎNTRE FOLCLOR ŞI NAŢIONALISM

(Jennifer R. Cash. 2011. *Villages on Stage: Folklore and Nationalism in the Republic of Moldova,* Berlin: LIT Verlag, xi, 212 pp.)



Studiul monografic *Villages on Stage: Folklore and Nationalism in the Republic of Moldova* [Satele în scenă: folclor şi naţionalism în Republica Moldova], semnat de antropologul american Jennifer R. Cash, investighează politicile de construcţie a identităţii etnice şi naţionale în Republica Moldova din perspectiva mişcării folclorice [*folklore movement*], după declararea independenţei în 1991.[1] Valorificând un bogat material etnografic şi aducând în centrul cercetării numeroasele dezbateri consemnate, direct sau indirect, în mediul comunităţii etnografice şi folclorice din Republica Moldova, Cash atrage atenţia asupra dimensiunii performative a proceselor identitare în spaţiul vizat. Printr-o analiză punctuală a proiectelor de construcţie identitară performate de ansamblurile folclorice, autoarea înaintează ipoteza performării unei noi imagini a Republicii Moldova – cea de "naţiune a satelor" [*nation of villages*] (p. 5). Viziunea autentică

[1] Studiul monografic este o versiune dezvoltată şi îmbunătăţită a tezei de doctorat, susţinută în 2004 la Departamentul de Antropologie, Universitatea din Indiana, SUA (vezi: Cash 2004).

asupra națiunii promovată de actorii culturali prin activitatea performativă a ansamblurilor folclorice scoate în evidență, consideră Cash, “rolul satelor atât ca sursă a producției culturale, cât şi a diversității etnice” (p. 13).

Cercetarea prezintă o “etnografie critică a ansamblurilor folclorice din Republica Moldova” (p. 11) şi astfel ne invită să privim dincolo de caracterul apolitic, asumat de folclorişti, etnografi, agenți culturali sau oameni de creație din Republica Moldova în activitățile de promovare a valorilor naționale şi tradițiilor autentice; la o privire mai atentă, riguros articulată din punct de vedere teoretic şi metodologic, Cash distinge legătura intrinsecă între activitățile legate de mişcarea folclorică şi dezbaterile politice privind apartenența (sau excluderea!) etnică şi, respectiv, națională în societatea multiculturală a Republicii Moldova.[2] Mai mult, aşa cum precizează *Introducerea* (Capitolul 1), multiculturalismul a fost cultivat în Republica Moldova, în primul rând, ca o modalitate nouă de adresare a relațiilor etnice, având “şanse mari de a produce confuzie şi masca realitățile sociale locale” (p. 10). Întrebarea-cheie la care îşi propune autoarea să răspundă prin acest studiu ține de condițiile de instrumentalizare a folclorului în proiecte etno-naționaliste şi investigarea circumstanțelor în care folclorul poate contribui la promovarea pluralismului în societate (p. 12).

Prima parte a lucrării (Capitolul 2 şi 3) analizează evoluția situației etno-culturale din spațiul cercetat, ținând cont de numeroasele proiecte de construcție a națiunii aplicate de-a lungul ultimelor două secole. Bazându-se pe definițiile teoretice privind construcția identității etnice şi civice, autoarea aduce în discuție problema identităților performate şi condițiile care determină succesul sau eşecul proiectelor de construcție identitară (p. 49). Analizând contextul Republicii Moldova, Cash constată că astfel de criterii precum “autenticitatea, legitimarea sau performativitatea, care unesc populația Republicii Moldova, nu au fost suficient de bine înțelese de potențialii constructori ai națiunii” (p. 49) din regiune. Incursiunea istorică în activitatea ansamblurilor folclorice scoate în evidență relația complexă dintre structurile statului şi producătorii culturali privind rolul culturii în articularea identității naționale (p. 51). În opinia autoarei, emergența mişcării folclorice în Moldova post-sovietică a fost determinată în mare parte de contestarea politicilor sovietice privind identitatea etnică. Rolul predominant în această tendință l-au jucat ansamblurile folclorice de amatori, iar criteriul principal în legitimarea activității acestor ansambluri a fost cel al autenticității, autorizată de discursul folcloriştilor, etnografilor, lucrătorilor culturali (p. 68).

Partea a doua a lucrării aduce în lumină noi aspecte ce țin de crearea, asumarea şi performarea identității naționale şi diversității etnice în Republica Moldova. Autoarea supune unei analize riguroase festivalurile folclorice (Capitolul 4), expedițiile folclorice în comunitățile rurale cu participarea etnografilor locali (Capitolul 5) şi discursurile produse în diferite medii folclorice cu referință la identitatea culturală şi diversitatea etnică (Capitolul 6). Astfel, în capitolul patru, consacrat procesului de constituire a comunității folclorice la nivel individual şi administrativ, este supus analizei repertoriul selectat de actorii culturali locali şi criteriile aplicate de aceştia față de cultura materială a lumii tradiționale. Or, aşa cum reiese din cercetarea efectuată de Cash, punctul de referință al tuturor actorilor culturali în Republica Moldova, inclusiv etnografi şi folclorişti, rămâne a fi *satul* – întruchiparea autenticității, modelelor de comportament, bastion al moralității şi identității naționale. Totodată, punctează autoarea, autenticitatea tradițiilor denotă un caracter emotiv bine conturat, autoritatea etnografică a satului urmând a fi promovată sau marginalizată prin contribuția unui cerc larg de actori culturali (etnografi, directori ai ansamblurilor folclorice, membri ai juriului în competițiile cu tematică folclorică): în Moldova, festivalurile scot în evidență criteriul autenticității, aplicat asupra performărilor folclorice, formând atât cadrele unei comunități folclorice, cât şi consolidând imaginea Moldovei ca națiune (p. 81).

Capitolul cinci pune în discuție relația dintre autenticitatea tradiției şi autoritatea discursului etnografic, consemnând un context amplu de manifestare a factorilor emotivi în activitățile artistice şi etnografice în localitățile Republicii Moldova. Cash consemnează o intensitate sporită la nivel de atitudini, trăiri, percepții exprimate de lucrătorii culturali în contextul promovării discursului pro-românesc. Materialele folclorice colectate în timpul expedițiilor pe teren în localitățile rurale din Republica Moldova devin, aşa cum reiese din experiența celor două expediții întreprinse cu participarea autoarei, parte din repertoriul ansamblurilor folclorice şi etno-folclorice performate pe scenele publice din mediul urban (p. 121, 135). Capitolul şase însumează experiența personală de comunicare, formală şi neformală, a autoarei cu folclorişti, etnografi, actori culturali din Republica Moldova vizavi de problema autenticității, recunoaşterii diversității etnice şi proiectele de construcție a identității naționale. Perspectiva asumată de aceştia în evaluarea unei “culturi autentice” şi identificarea transformărilor culturale şi din mediul comunităților etnice din Republica Moldova (cazul etnicilor găgăuzi şi evrei) denotă, în viziunea lui Cash, ancorarea în perimetrul discursului oficial de construcție a identității naționale: recunoaşterea parțială a diversității etno-culturale, incorporată prin similitudini culturale, şi respectiv contestarea culturilor ne-româneşti din Republica Moldova (p. 151). Crearea noilor criterii privind autenticitatea creației populare performate de ansamblurile folclorice, cu scopul contestării ideologiei sovietice asupra identității etnice, lasă suficient loc pentru ierarhii culturale, problematizează includerea socială a grupurilor etnice, acestea fiind “mai puțin binevenite [...] pe scena națională” din Republica Moldova (p. 20).

Compartimentul *Concluziilor* expune argumentele cheie prezentate anterior, totodată articulând noi tematici de cercetare a comunității folclorice, mai ales în contextul crizelor de reprezentare de la începutului mileniu trei. Studiul monografic al tinerei cercetătoare Jennifer R. Cash este o contribuție inteligentă şi originală, aliniindu-se corpului de cercetări etnografice şi antropologice privind Europa de est, de o importanță metodologică şi teoretică majoră pentru analiza culturii tradiționale din spațiul post-sovietic.

[2] Teza este reconfirmată și în alte publicații recente în domeniu: “În pofida clivajului de stânga sau de dreapta, exista o asumare profund-afirmată că, indiferent de afiliere, cercetătorii erau preocupați de documentarea patrimoniului național. Chiar și atunci când se refereau la variante regionale sau locale, cadrul național era înalt valorizat și avea rezonanță la publicul larg” (vezi: Boskovic, Hann 2013: 2).

Referinţe:

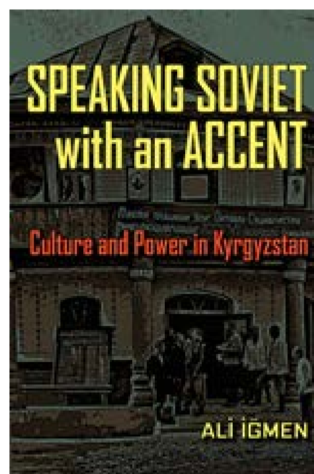
Cash, Jennifer R. 2004. *In Search of an Authentic Nation: Folkloric Ensembles, Ethnography, and Ethnicity in the Republic of Moldova.* PhD Dissertation. Indiana University Press.

Boskovic, Aleksandar and Chris Hann (eds). 2013. *The Anthropological Field on the Margins of Europe, 1945-1991.* Münster: LIT Verlag.

Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu
(Chişinău, Republic of Moldova)

O ISTORIE CULTURALĂ A REGIMULUI SOVIETIC, LA PERIFERIILE DE EST ALE URSS

(Ali F. Iğmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012, XI, 240 pp.)



Cartea *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan* [A vorbi cu accent limbajul sovietic: cultură şi putere în Kârgâzstan] este semnată de cercetătorul american de origine turcă Ali Iğmen, fiind un studiu asupra politicii de construcţiei a identităţii kârgâze "cu imagine sovietică", în anii 1920-1930. Studiul pune în discuţie finalităţile ideologice şi practicile culturale privind "ridicarea poporului kârgâz până la nivelul popoarelor europene din Uniunea Sovietică" (p. 7), detaliat analizând "rolul pe care l-a avut intelectualitatea populaţiei băştinaşe în crearea unui discurs al transformărilor culturale" (p. 6) şi implicaţiile instituţiilor culturale antrenate în campania de transmitere şi diseminare a ideilor socialiste (p. 8).

Astfel, investigaţia a fost orientată să caute răspunsuri în ce măsură au reuşit procesele şi condiţiile modernizării sovietice să afecteze dinamica identităţii culturale kârgâze pe durată scurtă şi care sunt consecinţele "orientalismului" sovietic faţă de aşa-numiţii "subiecţi asiatici" pe termen lung? Care a fost impactul politicilor culturale din primele decenii ale puterii sovietice în Asia Centrală asupra tradiţiilor culturale locale? Rolul agenţilor locali ai politicilor culturale în promovarea discursului festiv central se înscria într-o strategie de "mimetism cultural" sau articulează tendinţa unei "hibridizări coloniale"? Pentru a răspunde, Iğmen cuprinde, pe lângă numărul impunător de studii de referinţă în domeniu, un corpus larg de documente oficiale ale timpului precum rapoarte, corespondenţă, directive regionale, protocoale, presă, imagini - toate elaborate într-un "limbaj specific regimului bolşevic", cu o conotaţie politică bine articulată pentru ceea ce presupunea atunci "dezvoltare culturală". Consemnând înregistrarea selectivă a informaţiei în documentele oficiale ale timpului, acestea "lăsând deseori în umbră o parte considerabilă a istoriei [politicilor culturale] investigate" (p. 5), autorul îşi nuanţează cercetarea prin valorificarea unui bogat material empiric de dată recentă precum interviurile şi memoriile celor trecuţi personal prin experienţa transformărilor culturale din anii 1920-1930 la hotarul de est al URSS: "povestirile de viaţă pot elucida conexiunile stabilite între activitatea instituţiilor culturale şi crearea elitei sovietice politice şi culturale" (p. 5).

Economia lucrării constă din şase capitole, însoţite de *Introducere*, *Concluzii, Ilustraţii, Glosar, Bibliografie* şi *Index*. Primele două capitole aduc în atenţie politicile culturale şi procesul de construcţie a identităţii culturale în RSS Kârgâză, subliniind rupturile, transformările şi continuităţile produse în primele decenii de modernizare a societăţii tradiţionale kârgâze şi, respectiv, notele distincte ale relaţiei centru-periferie dintre Moscova şi republicile din Asia Centrală. Dincolo de elucidarea discursului imperial în definirea subiecţilor "asiatici", autorul scoate în evidenţă atitudinea intelectualităţii indigene faţă de narativul "civilizator", atât cel iniţiat de Imperiul Rus cât şi cel de sorginte sovietică (p. 20). În opinia autorului, "bolşevicii au aplicat numeroase tactici coloniale, precum categorizarea şi exploatarea grupurilor etnice, pentru organizarea 'naţionalităţilor sovietice'" (p. 25). Tratarea culturii kârgâze de către "administratorii sovietici în domeniul educaţiei şi politicii naţionale drept una inferioară societăţilor sedentare, precum cea uzbecă", a încurajat preluarea diferitor exemple de "dezvoltare culturală" din localităţi ruse, ucrainene, tătare, uzbece şi promovarea acestora în mediul societăţii kârgâze (p. 25). Or, cea mai eficientă metodă pentru atingerea obiectivului propus au fost, în opinia autorului, cercurile dramatice. Studierea procesului de implementare a noilor directive ideologice relevă strategii de negociere elaborate de agenţii culturali şi administratorii instituţiilor culturale la nivel local şi regional, dintre care un rol distinct revenea capacităţii acestora de a învăţa să vorbească – mai ales în cazul rapoartelor! – în "limba partidului" (p. 25). Transformările culturale impuse prin noua politică identitară ajung să producă o nouă comunitate în RSS Kârgâză – "kârgâză prin formă, dar sovietică prin conţinut" (p. 36).

Evoluţia dialogului între politicile culturale centrale şi cele locale, prin analiza instituţiilor şi practicilor menite să implementeze cursul de dezvoltare culturală în noua republică sovietică, este subiectul de studiu al următoarelor patru capitole. Autorul consemnează trăsături locale în elaborarea noului limbaj de comunicare a băştinaşilor cu autorităţile sovietice – *speaking Soviet the Kyrgyz way* [a vorbi limbajul sovietic în manieră kârgâză] (p. 180), articulat politicilor bolşevice de construcţie a "omului nou".[1] Ţinând cont de faptul că modernizarea sovietică "nu lăsa loc pentru trecutul şi tradiţiile culturii kârgâze", scopul final fiind "transformarea poporului kârgâz în cetăţeni sovietici" (p. 41), Iğmen analizează rolul caselor de cultură – în viziunea sa, "mici laboratoare care participau în şi *la* (subl. noastră) promovarea schimbărilor economice, politice şi cultuale din Uniunea Sovietică" (p. 45). Materialul empiric investigat de autor în arhivele acestor instituţii şi teatrelor sovietice relevă un dialog activ între administratorii culturali locali şi regionali prin negocierea propuneri-

[1] De menţionat, la fel, studiul monographic semnat de Stephen Kotkin care operează cu sintagma "speaking Bolshevik" [a vorbi limbajul bolşevic] (vezi: Kotkin 1995: 220).

lor, adresarea nemulțumirilor sau solicitarea asistenței materiale din partea instanțelor centrale. Una din realizări, în viziunea autorului, fiind promovarea festivalurilor culturale regionale ca formă de exprimare culturală a tradiției kârgâze în perimetrul politicilor culturale sovietice (p. 38-39). Însuşirea limbajului bolşevic, astfel, oferea posibilități de negociere a politicilor culturale la nivel local şi regional. "Corespondența caselor de cultură arată că administratorii regionali responsabili de evenimentele culturale, precum celebrări şi ceremonii de premiere, pledau pentru politici construite din imaginea eroilor naționali şi cu trăsături specifice tradițiilor culturale regionale" (p. 83-84).

Abilitatea de a comunica cu Moscova în limbajul bolşevic ofereau actorilor culturali locali – pictorii, sculptorii, muzicienii, poeții kârgâzi – posibilități de promovare în ierarhia noului sistem al puterii (p. 87). La fel, sunt analizate noile expresii culturale de construcție a poporului sovietic, inclusiv, metamorfozele imaginii propagandistice a femeii kirghize, care în pofida specificului cultural, religios al regiunii şi tradițiilor culturii nomade, trebuia să corespundă canoanelor ideologice sovietice (p. 133).

Ideile prezentate de autor în urma acestor analize concluzionează prin „convergența modernității sovietice şi tradiției kârgâze, evitând ciocnirea între cultura sovietică şi cea kârgâză, la fel cum a fost în cazul kazah, dar nu şi cel uzbec sau tadjic", punctând ideea despre "ambiguitatea caracterului colonial al proiectului cultural sovietic în RSSK" (p. 141). Revenind la interogația privind relația populației indigene şi proiectele sovietice de construcție a națiunii în Asia Centrală, autorul conchide: „elita kârgâză, mai curând a învățat să vorbească limbajul revoluției culturale sovietice cu accent kârgâz" (p. 146).

Considerăm că lucrarea ar fi avut de câştigat în cazul unei abordări comparative între regiunile istorice ale spațiului cercetat, ținându-se cont de existența istorică a celor două regiuni distincte în partea de nord şi de sud a Kârgâzstanului. În pofida unor carențe de transliterare din limba rusă în limba engleză (p. 75), analiza întreprinsă de cercetătorul american Ali Iğmen este una de actualitate pentru întreg spațiul post-sovietic, inclusiv pentru cazul Republicii Moldova mai ales cu referință la proiectele de substituire a pattern-urilor seculare prin modelele modernizării sovietice în RSS Moldovenească. Strategiile de înglobare a elementelor naționale în cultura festivă de sorginte sovietică a fost reacția populației autohtone la ofensiva ideologiei sovietice, contribuind indirect şi pe anumite paliere la păstrarea formelor de artă şi tradițiilor populare locale şi naționale (p. 91). Recomandam cu căldură această carte celor interesați de înțelegerea complexă a trecutului, până nu demult încă tratat "cu accent sovietic" în istoriografia domeniului. Publicarea studiului final într-o limba de circulație internațională, deşi materialele investigate au fost de limbă rusă şi/sau kârgâză, facilitează şi extinde considerabil cercul audienței ştiințifice.

Referință

Kotkin, Stephen. 1995. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ludmila D. Cojocaru
(Chişinău, Republica Moldova)

Contributors:

Virgiliu BÎRLĂDEANU, PhD, Institute of Social History "ProMemoria", Moldova State University; Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, virgiliubirladeanu[at]gmail.com

Michael BOBICK, PhD, UCIS Center for Russian & East European Studies, University of Pittsburgh, USA bobick[at]gmail.com

Jennifer R. CASH, PhD, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany, cashjennifer10[at]gmail.com

Ludmila D. COJOCARU, PhD, Institute of Social History "ProMemoria", Moldova State University, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, lcojocari[at]promemoria.md

Rozita DIMOVA, PhD, Department of Slavonic and East-European Studies at Ghent University, Gent, Belgium, Rozita.Dimova[at]UGent.be

Toko FUJIMOTO, PhD, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan, toko_moldir[at]idc.minpaku.ac.jp

Alexandr OSIPIAN, PhD, Kramatorsk Institute of Economics and Humanities, Kramatorsk, Ukraine, agricolae_ua[at]yahoo.com

Eleanor PEERS, PhD, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany, peers[at]eth.mpg.de

Alexandra TOADER, PhD, History Department, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi, Romania, ada_toader[at]yahoo.com