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THE INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY YUGOSLAVIA: SOME THEORETICAL NOTES AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

A theoretical approach to the multinationalism

The persistence of the ethnic boundaries in the contemporary societies is one of the major concerns of the modern macrosocial theories (Eisenstadt, 1985). That is the central focus of the theoretical works and the empirical research on contemporary multiethnic and/or multinational socialist societies as well. The impressive revival of the „national question" there becomes both the reason for questioning the old paradigms of societal integration and the object of some fascination for social scientists. In paraphrasing Lenin, Connor (1984), for example, put in that „the (national) form becomes the father of the (socialist) content".

As for contemporary yugóslav society, at least two major sources of the national question must be considered. Although these are very complex, because they originate out from a long history as well as various structural patterns of the yugoslav society, two relatively separate sets of factors responsible for the formation of today's nationalisms in Yugoslavia can be described.

The first source of contemporary multinationalism stems from the heterogeneity of the ethnic groups and their different historical paths. For a very long time the yugoslav space has been divided into various parts belonging to the foreign empires. Both the nationalistic tendencies of particular ethnic groups and their longing towards the integration into a common southslavic society have been working in the same time somewhere since the begining of the second half of nineteenth century. The double identity and the strategies appropriated to its pulsation have never disapeared, even when these groups have been established as the major units of yugoslav society. They variated their tactics depending on how far the existing situations have been seen as favourable, primarily by their leaders and elites (Petranović, 1980; Banac, 1984).

The second source stems from the process of development of the ideological legitimacy of the Communist party in Yugoslavia. Since the twenties in this century, under a direct influence of the Comintern, the Party has reformulated the principle of internationalism in terms of favouring the national emancipatory movements, as the most important „tactical goal" (Perović, 1984; Vlajčić, 1986). In the long term, it meant an anticipation of political policentrism based on the autonomy of the national units within the state. The process of reforming the strong centralized, soviet- type

state was starting in the fifties already, although the whole process was controled by Tito and the central federal elite, for the sake of equilibrium (Bilandžić, 1985). After Tito's death, however, the policentric tendencies became much stronger, producing the conlicts between the elites. In thay way, both the ideological landscape and the organizational pattern of the Party assimilated the patterns of the historical and structural diversity of the yugoslav society. There is a clear amplitude of the Party's strategy towards internationalism, which has started with transnationalism but ended up with multinationalism, without having a new formula of managing over the fairly autonomized national elites.

Generaly, the convergence between societal and political patterns of multinational development reestablishes the ethnic group or nation as the central category of macro-social dynamics. The nation, thus, can be defined as a three-functional social system the pattern of which is generated from a general type of social system which is characteristic for a global context. Such a definition is deduced from the tradition of social system theories (Parsons, 1966; Deutsch, 1972; Loomis--Dyer, 1976; Luhmann, 1986), as well as from a theoretical contribution in anthropology which I will comment on in the conclusional part of my paper. The three-functional pattern contains the functions of economy polity, and culture of a society ordered in a way which is determined by the general type of social system or the social-economic formation. In the western societies, the economic function (and elite) has the primacy over other two functions (and elites as well), which is determined by the characteristies of capitalistic system; besides, the relationships between functions or elites there imply certain portions of relative independence. In the eastern societies, but, the political function has a clear primacy as well as controling prerogatives over the other functions. In both cases, therefore, the nations are historicaly circumscribed and culturaly homogeneized spaces of a politicaly and economicaly defined system. When the order of three functions goes to change, as it is the case today in those eastern societies where the tendencies towards free market economy and political democracy arise, the eastern nations are going to be alike western, „bourgeois nations", tackling the issue of national self-determination which is typical for the classical period of western democracies formation.

In that way, Yugoslavia today is a country with a great variety of national units. Slovenia and Croatia, for example, did more on the economic development and political democracy thanks to the fact that the political elites there have reduced their authoritarian control ove: the other elites as well as over the non-political institutions in the society. It is still the national strategy, but of a different kind. The market economy and political democracy perspective gives more power to these nations, than the old system of central planing and redistribution. The other national units count more on status quo perspective, and that is the reason why the political elites there still predominate: these are supposed to ensure the constant share of their units in the system of central redistribution. This dychotomous context is not final. The contradictory processes of re-strengthening the nations are continuing on, the options of both sides are interpenetrating and creating the mixed and confused national patterns on both sides.

The empirical hypotheses

In approaching to the empirical research topic on social structure, interethnic

relationships and perceptions in Croatia in 1984, I was operating with two hypotheses:

(1) The policy of decentralization with policentric prospect, which has been operationalized through an at least near equal share of power resources (socioeconomic positions, political influence, and educational attainments) among both national-ethnic elites and lower strata of the national-ethnic groups, did remove the characteristics of the „ethnic stratification" (i. e. clear social inequalities between national-ethnic groups).

(2) As a consequence of such a policy, the interethnic perceptions manifest no or just a low degree of ethnocentrism and ethnic distance related.

Of course, these hypotheses are based on the assumption that there is a stable and relative static system of the resources production and allocation. One must notice here, but, that the developmental changes — first of all such as introducing the market economy which is a strongly selective mechanism of allocation of the resources — should be shaking down the existing system of the interethnic equilibrium. Then the existing societal positions of the groups as well as their boundaries become questionable, which provokes further the ethnocentric feelings and nationalistic tendencies of the groups in all of the three functional dimensions. Anyway, the processes of change in this type type of society are mainly initiated, directed, and controled by the political elites of the national-ethnic groups.

The results of the empirical research

On a sample of 3,453 respondents in Croatia, the variable of national-ethnic affiliation was intersected by the variables of social stratification, and that of the attitudes on the significance of the place of origin, prefered partners in social networks, and finaly that on the ethnic distance. Such analysis serves to elucidate the broader context our hypotheses belong to.

1. Social stratification and national-ethnic groups

The national and ethnic groups are broadly dispersed among various social strata in Croatia (table 1). More specificaly, the dispersion is largest among the major groups: Croats, Serbs, and „Yugoslavs" (a nationaly neutral group). It is important to note here that both Croats and Serbs are fairly represented within three upper strata or functional elites, i. e. political leadership, business class, and professional ideologues („system intellectuals"). It is not the case, but, for the minor groups: Muslims (mainly concentrated within the category of the unskilled workers), and Albanians (mainly artisans). The latter fit itno the pattern of ethnic stratification, while the first are represented in each strata nearly according to their share into the general population of Croatia. (One exemption is with Serbians who are slightly overrepresented in the upper social strata).

When comparing the share of the groups in the membership of the Communist party (table 2), as well as in its three-levels hierarchy (table 3), the picture is following: Serbs, „Yugoslavs", and Montenegrins are overrepresented, while the other groups are slightly underrepresented. However, the shares of the groups within the hierarchical structure of the Party are more proper (excepting the Serbs who are slightly overrepresented).

It is evident, therefore, first, that the major groups deal with pattern of a „fair

share" of power and, second, that the policy of the Party towards policentrism has been effectuated by avoiding the socio-economic and political discrimination. It is also evident, but, that such a policy was not directedtowards some minor ethnic groups as well. These groups have not been seen as important in solving the „national question" in Croatia; traditionaly, the relationships between Croats and Serbs are both most important and most sensitive.

Because only Croats and Serbs are the strategical targets of the. policy of non-discrimination, our first hypothesis can be only partialy confirmed. The preponderances of the Serbs here and there do not challenge this statement seriously, because their shares are far from being large and irritating — whereas an ideal pattern of power sharing is certainly impossible to achieve. The „success" of the Communist party policy against distrimination here is particulary impressive when it is compared, for example, with that of Soviet Communist Party, concerning the relationships between Russians and non-Russians there (Connor, 1984).

2. Some attitudes of the national and ethnic groups

It is a common place of this kind of research in the socialist countries that is far from easy to get the plausible answers of the respondents on the sensitive questions like that of ethnic and national feelings (Shlapentokh, 1982). In order to approach to the core of plausibility of the respendents attitudes, some indirections have been employed in the following questions.

On the question how far the repondents feel themselves attached to their place or area of origin, the political functionaries are those who expressed the strongest attachment to their area of origin (table 4). This attitude can be, at least partialy, explained by the fact the procedure of ellecting the functionaries for the higher posts within the Party, is conditioned by the initial support which must be given to them by the local party organization in their area of origin. Such a support is, nevertheless, most important, since the further procedure is more automatized according to the electional rules of the nomenclature. On the other side, the least attachment has been expressed by the private artisans and managerial class, which may indicate on a merely utilitarian or economic rationality orientation of these strata. The professionals have expressed a relative strong localist-nativist orientation. It is usualy for them to growing up, completing the education, and taking the employement in the cities, where the majoriti of them is born. (Untill several years ago the waves of political campaigns against the „immorality" of the professionals have been conducted aiming to their immobility, i. e. they do not want to leave their cities in searching for an employement regardless of the value of the jobs offered to them in rural sides).

One can suppose here that parochialism in the attitudes of the majority of social strata is determined mainly by the territorial immobility which is produced by the nature of this type of social system. It certainly contributes to the feeling of the attachment to the traditional categories of social affiliation, where the fixation of the importance of the local place is organicaly bounded with the detachment to the ethnic and national groups (Zaslavsky, 1982).

When asked about whom to contact with in seeking for help in the situation of crisis, all groups gave similar answer (table 5). In the of disease, they would ask for help their spouses or kins. In the case of having the problems on the job, they would

ask their colleagues for help. The exemptions are found in Muslims who are less prone to ask for help to their spouses, while Albanians and Slovenes are, reversaly, strongly bounded with their spouses in crisis situations. These data indicate on some differences of the pattern of social networking within the groups. It seems that the pattern of network in Muslims is determined by both situational and cultural factors; namely, the majority of them belong to the contigents of seasonal manual workers in Croatia where they came from rural areas of Bosnia in which the old patriarchal tradition, which does not legitimate the partnership between man and woman, is still strong. The Albanians are mainly craftsmen with a family enterprise, where both spouses are involved in the job, so that they are the social partners in the same time. The primary importance of the spouse by Slovenes, then, is probably due to the values and life-style of a group who is highly placed within social pyramid, i. e. to the monogamous egalitarianism of the upper middle class marriage.

Finaly, the ethnic distance is measured by a variant of the Bogardus scale (Owen, Eisner, and McFaul, 1981). When asked which groups are more preferable in terms of cooperating in work with them, the majority of the respondents answered that such a question is not of importance to them. Because of that, I will present and comment only the parts of positive answers, i. e. the preferences expressed by the groups (table 6).

The major groups — Croats, Serbs, and „Yugoslavs" — have the following preferences: Croats and „Yugoslavs" prefer mostly the members of their own groups, while Serbs prefer mostly „Yugoslavs". Besides, Serbs prefer the members of their own groups as well as Croats in nearly equal portions. In common, taking the preferences of other groups into account, the „Yugoslavs" are the most preferable group. The connotation of this group has to do with neutrality as well as symbolic patriotism of the word „Yugoslav", which does not clash with the ethnocentric feelings. Also, both the ethnocentric and particular outgroup preferences have not been expressed in an exclusive way.

The similar data have been found in a general yugoslav survey on ethnic distance attitudes (Pantić, 1987). Although such a picture cannot be taken as completely plausible and invariant neither, it manifest certain psycho-social ambiguity typical for the populations of the modern societies which have apropriated the egalitarian principle as one of the basic elements of democratic ideology (Janowitz-Bettelheim, 1964; Bastide — van den Berghe, 1957). The acceptance of the egalitarian norms, as well as universalistic values in general, must not be hypocritical, for it can depend on situations. Particulary in the conflict and tensional situations, people can react sensensitively, when the norms of the equality among groups are going to be descredited. The prevalence of the conformistic acceptance of the egalitarian norms in the periods of peace between the groups must not be the sing of camouflaging of a deeply rooted and exclusive ethnocentrism neither: even the frustrative conditions and authoritarian tendencies in personal life are not supposed to be translated automatically into the attitude of ethnic hostility (Katunarić, 1987).

The evidence about the attitudes calls for a more complex explanation of the plausibility of our second hypothesis. First, the structural dimensions of ethnic closurings exist indeed, particulary when we add to the data on declining rates of the interethnic marriages in Yugoslavia since the end of seventies (Petrović, 1986). Second,

the structural conditions of closurings must not be reflected onto the level of ethnic consciousness, since the rates of the reported preferences in terms of the ethnic distance are relatively low. The conformistic acceptance of the oficial ideology of egalitarianism softens in a way the ethnocentric tendencies among middle and lower social strata. In general, their attitudes look like an unclear copy of the attitudes of the elites. In a socialist society, it depends primarily on the political elites, i. e. how they interprete the situations what kind of political massages they emitate to the population. In Yugoslavia, for example, it is mostly important how the political elites interpete the events and transmit the informations concerning the seemingly conclusive development of the yugoslav federalism, which involves the process of redefining the national boundaries within.

Conclusion: Nationalism as a modern replication of an archaic structure?

Our empirical evidence does not reach too far: it reflects only the weakness of a modern ideology, i. e. its attempt to rearrange a long terms process of structuring the boundaries of the independent sociocultural and political units which we call nations. The seeming cycles of the histories of two Yugoslavias, which have started with the transnational patterns of societal integration, but ended up with a clear multionalistic dissipation — belong to the cummulative register of national formations elsewhere.

In the context of contemporary controversies between modernistic and primordialistic approaches to the national phenomenon (Smith, 1986), I would put some notes in favour of the primordialistic side. Namely, the crystalization of national society into a pattern of three-functional system — which tends to be economicaly self—sufficient, politicaly autonomous, and culturaly self-referential — manifests rather a deep-rooted potential of structuration of the post-primitive societies already. It refers to the capacities of the ethnic groups. They have generated as early all of the three functions necessary for their surviving in an, in principle, unlimited time-span. Here I recall on the substantial contribution of the opus of George Dumezil, who has reconstructed the mythologies of the indoeuropean ethnic groups in terms of systemic or three-functional approach (Dumezil, 1973; 1979). He recognized the symbolic functions of the economic, political, and cultural „good", while sociologists today describe in a homologous way the leaders, elites, and subsystems as necessary functions for integrating and developing the societies, as well as their historical identities.

The contemporary multinational socialist societies cannot avoid the deterministic matrix of structuration of nations neither. One must notice here, but, that the sequences of re-ordering of three functions, i. e. the changeability of the ranks of functions, are not completed yet. It refers to the role of cultural elites who have not been yet on the top of the pyramid of power in the history of societies up to now. Although both the indoeuropean myths and modern social system theory have given the primacy to the function of culture in the society, it is merely a projection of transcendental meaning of creativity. The real functions of national cultures since early teocracies up to modern industrial era are prevalent: they serve as symbolic patterns of identification of a local society which is builded up on the economic and political patterns — as well as patterns of social structure — typical for a large number of local societies, i. e. their „systemic" features. It means that the notion of the functional

primacy of culture is either an intuitive tendency of the old and new constructors of national myths or an idealistic fallacy which we may call the weberian: namely, the creative force of the cultural ideas in the begining of a new epoch is neutralized and routinized during the long period of reproduction of that epoch and its local societies. Along with that, the genetic substance of culture is substituted by the uniformistic patterns of structuration of society, and these do not need the fertilization of the new cultural ideas any more.

Nevertheless, the creative power of a nation which would contradict to its self-defensive power and the energy of self-conservation is still an utopian perspective. The behavior of the national cultural elites in the old and new Yugoslavia can serve as good examples for that: their transnational orientation has been withering away when the conflicts between national elites had arisen. Then they recurred to the strong nationalistic standpoints taking the roles of the collective memorists, sophistic interpretators, as well as ceremonial priests who surround the national political leaders.

Whether, therefore, a further development of any nation can by atypical in the sense that it could diverge from the „systemic history" and its global comprehesiveness (Tiryakian, 1985)? That strongly depends on the relationships (and the ratio within!) between the cultural cores which produce more of pluralistic patterns of society than the existing multinational societies, on one side, and polit-economic patterns which produce the uniform structures of the local societies as well as streghten their autarchic elements, on the other side. In other words, the creative or transcendental core of culture is the only stair within the mythical building of national history which could help to exit out of its boundary. It does not mean the need for wiping out the nations or ethnic groups either, but to transcend them with different and certainly richier forms of society, where the national unit is only one of the diferent forms of societal units and the old structures and identities are continued up by a whole bunch of the new structures and identities. The basic conditions for that is, of course, a continous enlargment of the number of places where the creative ideas and actions originate from. It is the only possible way of living of a society where the culture might have the functional primacy. The other forms of national surviving, namely those in the world of economic and political competition which impose the darvinistic rules up to the nations, especially to the smaller ones, imply new conflicts and lethal consequences. If the history of nations and global societies is only the succession of political elites and functions by the economic ones or vice versa, then there is no obstacle for the enormous expansion of power systems and its oponents of the same kind, regardless whether we speak about multinational Yugoslavia or multinational world in general.

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Table 1: *Social strata and national-ethnic groups (inpercentages)*

Political	Croats	Serbs	Muslims	„Yugoslavs"	Slovenes	Albanians
functionaries	71.6	17.7	.2	8.2	6.2	—
Managers	76.3	12.6	.3	8.6	.8	—
„System intelectuals"	72.5	11.9	.7	10.5	.2	—
Professionals	77.7	7.5	.3	10.8	.5	—
Skilled workers	66.8	13.7	.2	16.6	.2	.2
Unskilled workers	64.4	18.4	6.0	9.7	.5	—
Craftsmen	74.7	5.8	2.0	12.1	.5	3.5
Peasants	83.7	11.2	—	2.7	—	.2

Table 2; *National-ethnic groups and membership in the Communist Party (in percentages)*

	Member	Former member	Non-member
Croats	37.4	3.7	58.9
	67.9	60.6	78.1
Serbs	56.0	6.5	37.4
	21.9	23.4	10.7
Muslims	19.6	13.7	66.7
	.8	5.1	2.0
„Yugoslavs"	44.0	6.0	50.0
	5.3	6.6	4.4
Slovenes	40.6	—	59.4
	1.0	—	1.1
Montenegrins	77.8	—	22.2
	1.1	—	.2
Albanians	—	18.2	81.8
	—	1.5	.5

Table 3: *National ethnic groups according to three levels of political hierarchy (in percentages)*

	Commune level	Regional level	Republic level
Croats	72.7	79.3	69.5
Serbs	21.4	13.8	24.8
Muslims	.5	—	—
„Yugoslavs"	2.3	1.7	1.9
Slovenes	—	1.7	1.9

Table 4: *Social strata and their attachement to their place of origin (in percentages)*

	Place of origin	Area of origin	Actual place living	Actual area living	Other place	Else
Polit. func.	31.7	42.2	17.9	1.1	6.0	.4
Managers	38.1	30.1	22.0	3.5	2.4	.7
„System int."	43.1	30.0	15.0	3.4	5.2	1.1
Professionals	49.6	30.6	12.0	2.1	3.2	—
Clerks	51.2	23.3	17.8	2.8	2.8	.7
Skilled workers	45.5	32.1	15.1	1.7	1.3	2.0
Unskilled workers	51.8	29.0	12.9	3.3	—	1.3
Craftsmen	45.9	25.5	22.4	2.4	1.7	.3
Peasants	59.8	30.2	6.9	.9	—	.3

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Table 5: *National-ethnic groups and their partners in crisis situations (in percentages)*

	Spouse	Relatives	Neighbors	Friends	Colagues	Others
Croats	39.8	6.5	1.8	14.0	44.0	6.6
Serbs	32.1	4.1	1.4	12.5	54.8	4.9
Muslims	29.4	9.8	2.0	9.8	54.9	2.0
„Yugoslavs"	38.7	5.3	.7	18.0	39.3	8.0
Slovenes	53.1	–	–	9.4	46.9	3.1
Montenegrins	50.0	5.6	–	33.3	33.3	5.6
Albanians	72,7	9.1	–	9.1	18.2	18.2

Table 6: *The most prefered partners in work (in percentages)*

	Albanians	Monten.	Croats	„Yugos."	Muslims	Slovenes	Serbs
Croats	.6	7.2	24.3	16.3	1.1	9.9	5.7
Serbs	–	2.0	8.7	21.5	.7	5.2	8.1
Muslims	–	6.3	8.3	31.3	6.3	6.3	4.2
„Yugosl."	.5	1.3	6.1	26.1	1.1	5.3	3.7
Slovenes	–	–	30.8	15.4	–	46.2	–
Monteneg.	–	–	–	–	–	13.3	–
Albanians	6.3	–	25.0	25.0	–	–	6.3