THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF EARTHQUAKES FROM THE FIELD BIRDA MORAVIŢA

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Abstract: The present article aims at realizing a theoretical framework of extensive research on both the social construction of ethnicities in a certain area and its materialization in a geographic, spatial and territorial context. In the introductory article, differences and similarities between notions such as "space", "place" or "territory" have been highlighted and the way they influence the preservation of ethnic identity, thus favoring a beneficial social construction of the ethnicities. Terms such as "house" and "dwelling" are used in a macro-social context, highlighting the desire to belong to a particular territory. Equally, through the introductory article of the research, we tried to present the main theories (primordialist theory, constructivist theory and instrumental theory), which represented a support in preserving ethnic identity and later in the realization of social construction of ethnicities.

Key words: ethnic identity, social construction, place, space, territory

1. INTRODUCTION

The rationale for writing this article is given by the desire to make a complex introduction to a theme of great geographical novel, entitled "The Social Construction of the Ethnics in the Birda-Moraviţa Plateau Geographical Survey." In the realization of the article I used the theories of some known sociologists, psychologists and geographers from international literature. At the same time, the establishment of the existing relations between the notion of social construction and concepts such as "territory", "space" or "place" was a cause of primary importance in the realization of this article. Ethnic social construction is the capacity of ethnic groups to build and maintain a series of inter-ethnic relations in the analyzed territory (Phinney, 2007). It has a number of direct and indirect attributes, positive and negative, such as: maintaining ethnic (and racial) identity, awareness of the concept of otherness and the application of ethnic stereotypes (Phinney, 2007; Descartes, 2012). Having as a starting point the research theme, we propose to give

some definitions of the attributes of social construction, definitions that will be confirmed or denied in the analysis. In this way, we will briefly explain key concepts such as ethnicity, "otherness", stereotyping and ethnic segregation for their application on the ground. We have to mention that these concepts are closely related to the notion of social construction in the spatial context. (Covaci R., 2016, p.24). Where there are ethnic groups that present some major differences from the majority ethnic group or from the other ethnic groups existing in the studied area we can talk about what is called difference-otherness, discriminatory - stereotyping or isolation, marginalization - segregation.

2. ETHNIC IDENTITY AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ETHNICITIES IN A SPATIAL AND TERRITORIAL CONTEXT

In a studied area, an element of utmost importance is how space and place with all their elements help to maintain ethnic identity or favor a social construction of the appropriate ethnicities. In this respect, specialized geographic literature provides us with information on defining the notions of space and place for their impact on the social construction of ethnicities (Covaci R., ibid). By the notion of place, it can be understood more than a simple location, "being considered, a location created by human experience" (Tuan, 1977, p.4). The same author sees places as identifying with, a city, a region, a classroom, etc., with centers where people can meet their biological needs such as food, water, etc. (ibid). The place can be used by people, their actions offering, "a deep sense of place" (Cresswell, Holloway, 2009, p.2). Place is an element that allows people to manifest their entire existence (going to work, spending time, shopping, etc.). From this point of view, space becomes a place when used and lived "(Cresswell, Holloway, ibid). , "Place is an integral part of space and space provides the resources in which the place can manifest" (Agnew, 2011, p.19). When discussing the notion of place with all the meanings it implies, we must refer to three dimensions: the location or location in which an activity or objective is carried out and which is closely related to other locations, the place in which each carries out its everyday work (house, shops, workplace, church, school, etc.). The third dimension is given by the way or meaning of the place, this dimension being in a relationship with the notion of belonging, with the fact that each place is unique to those who are part of it. (Agnew, 2011, pp. 23-24). According to Banks (1996), the notion of ethnic identity is closely related to the notion of "home" and "belonging." When we discuss the notion of ethnic affiliation, such as "home, dwelling" 'is remarked by a multitude of meanings (Sigmon, Whitcomb, Snider, 2002). The meanings of the notion of "house" in both groups and individuals depend on how they build and the variety of elements they associate in a certain context (Chaitin, Linstroth, Hiller, 2009, p.17). On the other hand, Moore (2000, p. 213) considers that when we refer to the meaning of the dwelling, we are actually talking about "housing and belonging", especially when it relates to ethnic groups or nationalities. Homes and memberships have a number of pragmatic attributes such as physical places and buildings, but also emotional and cultural attributes (customs and traditions) that constantly change and reinterpret (may be real, imagined or desired) (Black 2002, Lovell 1998, Chaitin, Linstroth, Hiller, 2009, p.19).   The house, and implicitly the sense of belonging, can hold spiritual, emotional or patriotic connotations (Sigmon et al., 2002; Duncan, Lambert, 2004). Sigmon et al. (2002) brings into discussion what is called "psychological housing", in which case the sense of belonging is related to a special place (p. 33). The notion of

'identity place' 'raised by Dixon and Durrheim (2004) highlights the fact that individuals build their own self and their own significance, the identity of the place being always seen in relation to the notion of cultural identity (Chaitin, Linstroth, Hiller, 2009, p.25). From the point of view of Mallett (2004), the notion of house is connected with notions such as: space, place, feelings, practices, etc. It can be considered that the notion of "house, dwelling" is dynamic but not exclusively related to a specific territory, which may be real or imagined, abstract or concrete, being influenced by personal emotions, social-cultural memories, symbols and traditions (Chaitin, Linstroth, Hiller, 2009, p.29).

The notion of "partial housing" is called into question by Magat (1999). The ideal home includes landscapes, cultural relationships, customs. In the partial case, however, some of these issues are missing. (Chaitin, Linstroth, Hiller, 2009, p.32). Magat (1999) makes the difference between what can be called "small dwelling" in which individuals carry out their daily activities and "large dwellings" as the place where each individual belongs. (Chaitin, Linstroth, Hiller, 2009, p.36). Space can be seen as an active element, produced and built by people through social relationships and practices, but it is not considered to be a container in which economic and social life takes place, but an element that favors the formation of relationships (Kitchin, Maynooth, 2009, p.270). Rose (1993, p.140) mentions that: the space is multidimensional and mobile. It is equally paradoxical, being sketched in a two-dimensional representation: the center and the edge, both inside and outside, which are occupied simultaneously ". Space is not a fixed, cognizable, predetermined entity. Space is in a continuous process of building, replacing, renewing, representing, a material and social reality " re-created repeatedly. (Kitchin, Maynooth, 2009, p.272). According to Doreen Massey (2005), space is the "social dimension", this being, a product of interrelation, a product of interactions"(p.9). In the same way, the social space takes us to think of, the space of the entire society, the space of the true social life" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.35). Space can be conceived as a sphere in which distinct trajectories intertwine a "sphere of coexistence of heterogeneity", which is, a product of relations and a subordinate of construction" (Massey, 2005). Furthermore, identities and interrelationships are understood to have close links, specific spatial identities (places, nations) are also conceived as having close relationships. If spatial identities are built on relationships, geography represents "science studying the nature of these constructions" (Massey, 2005, p.10). It is believed that we are surrounded by a lot of spaces: economic, demographic, sociological, ecological, political, commercial, national, continental, global; there are three areas that make our preoccupation the physical domain (nature and cosmos), (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 8-11). Specialized works emphasize a lot of specialized notions of space, such as: leisure, play, work, necessary utilities, everything is discussed under the notion of space "(Lefebvre, 1991, p.8). In Fremont et al. (1984), for geographers the social space is identified with" interference between places and social relations what is called "the set of socialized interrelationships". "The social space presents," a social and collective importance", lacking its psychological and imaginative dimension of living space (see Nae, 2011, p.11).

From a relational point of view, the place is understood to be composed of several parts between which a lot of links are established" (Seamon, 2015, p.19). Malpras considers the place to be, "an open region that is in relation to people, things, other spaces or locations" (Malpras, 1999, p. 36). Among the most important processes that give a specific and dynamic distinction to space, Seamon mentions, "the place of interaction" and "the place of identity", both of which are in close correlation with the social construct attributions of the ethnics in the area under analysis. Thus, the place of interaction can be

understood as a set of facts, events, actions, different exchanges between consumers sharing the same space "while the place of identity highlights the fact that space represents, an important part of people's life", as sometimes, "people get confused with the place to the same extent as the place is confused with the people" (Seamon, 2015, p.25).

Starting from all these notions, we can relate to what is termed in the specialized literature. We can talk about the concept of "territory as a lived world", which is considered, a center of human existence, whose qualities can be defined according to the meanings and aspirations of man-inhabitant (Ancuța, 2008, p.22). Human society as a whole has the ability to model a piece of terrestrial surface that implies a certain identity and structure, a surface termed territory (Le Berre, 1992). Being taken over in the 70s in fields such as ethology, physiology, anthropology, the notion of territory can be associated with elements such as: geography, region, space (Ancuta, ibid). When we consider the concept of territory there are authors who value, "the long time needed for the constitution of the territory" (Chivallon, 1999, p.130). The territory can thus acquire the "permanence" characteristic, identifying itself with "socialized spaces that have passed the test of time, which are loaded with history, involved in the longevity of the social group" (Chivallon, ibid). Some authors note the close relationship between territory and space, the territory being considered the result of the economic, ideological and political appropriation of a space by a group that has a particular representation of itself, of its history, of its uniqueness; the territory is a semi-sphere loaded space "(Di Meo, 1998; see Ancuta, 2008, p.154).

Ethnic identity and its social construction are particularly debated in literature. Descartes (2012) considers that ethnic identity is conceptualized as a "social construction that includes a culture, a language and a collective origin and common cultural traditions" (p.57). Starting from the idea that identifying and maintaining ethnic identity is a first attribute that is at the basis of a favorable social construction of ethnic groups in the analyzed area, we propose to present some conceptions from the international specialized literature regarding the term of ethnic identity in order to make
a premise the identification of a favorable social or reticent social construction in the area under analysis. In the opinion of Philip Q. Yang (2000, p.36) the term ethnicity is the object of various interpretations, not a clear and precise concept. In some cases, ethnicity can be conceived as a common one, while others associate this notion with common physical traits in an attempt to answer questions such as: What are the members of the ethnic group? Which ethnic group do you belong to? Expressing our agreement to these questions, ethnicity can be defined as belonging or identifying with an ethnic group, the notion being even synonymous with terms such as ethnic group members, ethnic identity, ethnic affiliation (Yang, ibid). Approached from another point of view, ethnicity is both subjective and objective. From a subjective point of view, ethnicity is identified with a product of human feelings but on the other hand it is based on objective characteristics, representing "a construction of social relations" (Descartes, 2012, p.57). In order to understand the emergence and persistence of ethnicity, we must answer questions such as: "What is the nature of ethnicity? Ethnicity is being built or inherited? what are the factors determining ethnicity or ethnicity?" (Yang, 2000, p.41) In this sense, scientists have developed several theories of ethnicity such as primordialism, constructivism and instrumentalism. The primordialist theory considers that ethnicity will never disappear because it is based on kinship relations, and it exists and has the possibility to develop due to the existence of a common origin (Yang, 2000, p. 42). The same theory views

ethnicity as static, and ethnic delimitation cannot be changed. Individuals belong to the same ethnic group because the members of that group have common cultural and biological origins. At the same time, taking the idea of Chaitin, Linstroth and Hiller (2009, p.7), we can consider ethnic identity as a fundamental and permanent aspect of human identity, claiming the existence of a common origin". Van den Berghe (1981) introduces the sociobiological perspective, presenting the biological factor and kinship relations as extremely important in the development of ethnicity. In Berghe's view, ethnicity is an 'extension of kinship'. (Van den Berghe, 1981) A second approach to primordialist theory refers to the importance of common culture in the petitioning of ethnicity. Thus, even in the absence of ancestors, ethnic identity may exist, and may perpetuate its tradition due to a common culture (common language, common religion, etc.). Different racial groups or people from the same country can form an ethnic group and develop a common ethnic identity even if they do not have common biological origins (Yang, 2000, p. 43). However, the primordial vision also has some limitations, these being due to the inability to explain the reasons why some ethnic groups are changing, the causes for which groups and ethnic identity fall into some kind of decline and disappear. Equally the primordial theories do not take into account the economic and political aspects that sometimes influence the feeling of ethnic belonging (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963).

Since 1970, the constructivist theory is based on arguments such as: Ethnicity is a created entity, a social construction, and as a prolongation of identity, ethnic boundaries are flexible and can be modified (Yang, 2000, p. 44). From this point of view, "ethnicity is dynamic", being a "reaction of social circumstances". Ethnic affiliation or belonging are equally determined or built by society. Even though the constructivist theory has a general tendency, there are some differences of nuance expressed by scientists. Thus Wiliam Yancey et al (1976) speaks of the perspective of "emerging ethnicity" created by structural conditions and considers that the formation and development of ethnic communities is ensured by the structural conditions associated with the industrialization process and the position of the ethnic group within a society. From this point of view, ethnicity represents a "response to the structural changes of society" (Yancey et al 1976, p.392). Jonathan Sarna (1978) initiates the so-called theory of ethnicity according to which there are two attributes on the basis of ethnicity: attribution and adversity. The first concept refers to the fact that individuals must be part of a particular ethnic group such as school or church, while adversity involves notions such as prejudice, discrimination, hostility. The author believes that "adversity forces members of the same group to unite, thus maintaining the identity and solidarity of the group" (Sarna, 1978). An innovative conception expresses the instrumentalist theories in whose view ethnicity is an instrument for obtaining resources. "In other words, ethnicity exists because it is useful" (Yang, 2000, p. 46). Orlando Patterson (1975, p. 348), which considers that "the basis of ethnicity is determined by the general and economic interests of the individual," is relatively similar. Bell (1975, p.169) regards ethnic construction as a "link between interests and affective relations". The most recent approach to instrumentalism is the "rational choice theory," with features common to social theories. According to it, "ethnicity is an option in which individuals promote their position within society by lowering costs and increasing the benefits of their actions" (Yang, 2000; Banton 1983; Hechter 1986, p.47). From this point of view, ethnicity is determined by calculating the costs and benefits of an ethnic community. According to this vision, each individual can choose the ethnic community he / she wants to share according to the material satisfaction he / she offers. These theories are, however, considered to be limited because in these circumstances there are

individuals who are unable to express their ethnic option while others choose their ethnic group, not only in terms of material gains, but also according to some satisfaction and psychological well-being. The approach of the ethnic identity has been achieved over time from various points of view, being explained both in theories considered as traditional and in a more modern perspective that aimed at the conceptual development of the notion of ethnicity, ethnic group, ethnic identity, etc.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we can say that both the place and the space and also the territory favor a social construction that is appropriate for the ethnic groups in a certain area. Social relationships exist and develop only in that place and space where individuals can meet to socialize. Elements such as difference-otherness, discriminatory-stereotypical attitude or isolation, marginalization-segregation arise in the context of the existence of more cohabiting ethnicities in a territory when disagreements are created between the majority ethnicity and the minority ethnicities. The emphasis on ethnic theories (primordial, constructivist, instrumental) within the article highlights the so-called "ethnic origin", as well as the tendency to associate ethnicity with terms such as "common race" or "degree of kinship" (Yang, 2000), "social circumstances" (Yancey et al 1976, p.392) or the degree of "utility" of the ethnicity for each individual (Bell, 1975, p.169).

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