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PERSONAL AND GROUP SECURITY

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Abstract

This paper has as purpose to approach different levels of security, as reflected in the individual's participation in the construction of personal and group security. Comprehensive interviews were applied. The target group of the study was represented by adults belonging to various ethnic groups in Romania. The idea of security as resulted from the analyzed interviews may be looked at from three different and correlative perspectives: as a feeling (diffuse for most of the population and clearly accentuated for the individuals with a high training degree and preoccupied by this topic), as an identity (personal, familial, ethnical or a sense of belonging to an ethnic group or a nation), and as an attitude (acknowledging and involving oneself into ensuring personal, group and national security).

Keywords: security, individual, group, ethnicity, nation.

Introduction

From a traditional point of view, but also a legal one, national security is the prerogative of some well-organized institutions with clearly defined tasks, which conduct specific activities. The aspect we follow in this study is revealing the contribution brought by an individual as a member of an ethnic group, but also as a member of the society as a whole, to the consolidation of national security seen as the overlapping of individual and group securities. The constructionist perspective was chosen for analysis because it sees the ethnic group as a construct and people as collective agents with the capacity to build and re-build, to act strategically in order to pursue their individual and collective interests. Moreover, every social actor builds his own reading filter of reality based on his conceptual representations, but at the same time he is subject to the common definitions accepted by the members of his group (Fedor, 2015a). Constructionism is focused on relations and stands for the role of the individual in constructing significant realities. By participating, ensuring personal safety and networking, each individual can contribute to the development of his own safety, as well as the one of the group he belongs to or of society in general.

Literature review

Studies on security are mainly based on what occurs officially, therefore involving the institutional, group and societal view. Carpinschi (2015) states that the agenda of human security is supported by useful references, rich in documents, reports, empirical reports, statistical data, schemes and charts, he also finds a discrete presence in the project of human security of spiritual-philosophical disciplines, scarcity of conceptual-reflexive approaches, insufficiency of theoretical approaches with practical and therapy-existential outcomes. In the theory of security, the traditional reference point is the „nation-state": national security is the central notion in the literature in the field, especially in the Anglo-Saxon literature built on the theory of the state (Sava, 2005). The national identity security is the central element in the security of a society (Herea-Funieru, 2009). The concepts of identity and security are closely related at several levels. The relation between identity and security reflects a structural correlation, in which identity requires security. The perceptions of identity determine those of security (Murat, 2016). The so-called „normal life" may be explained in terms of material and emotional nature of social security (Flynn & Kay, 2017). There is a sense of personal security referring to your own home and a sense of belonging to a space given by a country (viewed as a larger home). This sense of security motivates numerous immigrants to choose civilized countries (Hogarth, 2015).

Culturally, the main principle of civilized countries is built out of equal treatments of all citizens irrespective of their nationality. It guarantees to minorities the freedom to preserve and develop their mother tongue, customs and traditions, as well as to preserve their cultural identity. Cultural security refers to the

public and social spheres. Now, it is defined as a state in which it may consolidate and cultivate values that are laid down at the foundation of identity. It is perceived as a set of norms, conditions and various mechanisms that guarantee to the ethnic group a sense of security, unconditional development and a free perpetuation through active cooperation and tolerance (Jaroslaw, 2015). Similarly, there is ethno-cultural security viewed as a state of stable existence and reproduction of the cultures of all national groups belonging to a multi-ethnic world characterised by a high level of adaptability to social changes, possibility to take part in free exchange of cultural values and preservation of ethnic identity by community members. The risk reduction in this area is done by anticipating the aspects of ethno-cultural processes at national (regional) level and by maintaining an institutionalised state policy supporting the ethno-cultural rights of individuals and groups (Perepyolkin & Stelmakh, 2003). On the other hand, we discover studies based on Berry's theory of acculturation (2005) that uses the hypotheses and measures formulated within the project investigating mutual intercultural relations in pluralist societies. Their results show that the security perceived by the ethnic majority in a specific area, as well as by the ethnic minority, has contributed to the support given to multicultural ideology, tolerance and mutual integration (Lebedeva, Galyapina, 2016). Orientation towards acculturation of most members may differ depending on the state of valorisation or de-valorisation of the immigrants and national minorities. The status of valued and devalued immigrants and national minorities reflects the positive and negative stereotypes associated to these, these stereotypes depending on the country of origin, the socioeconomic state and the classification of group members as visible and invisible. The same host majority may support contrasting acculturation orientations depending on the status of valued or devalued of immigrants and national minorities (Bourhis & Montreuil, 2003). Our view on the other never ends and is made by building meaningful networks and using affective and cognitive strategies. Stereotypes and prejudices are correlated and cannot be understood without reciprocal relationships. These may become obstacles in community cooperation and development (Fedor, 2014a).

Rotaru (2006) states that stages of ethnic identity aim whether to preserve the culture of origin, or (and) to identify with the new culture in a non-conflicting, legitimate, multi-ethnic environment. The main feature of the ethnic group is its sense of collective uniqueness and the solidarity of its members (Smith, 1981). From this perspective, an individual relating to an ethnic group is more involved in performing social actions specific to the group and to the whole society. But, the identification with a specific ethnic community may be viewed as on-going social processes (Fedor, 2014b). Ethnic belonging in the modern world has an impact on internal policies without mentioning the formation of some unknown issues for the international environment. The simplification of ethnicity may have as a result clear mistakes regarding problems of mainly political nature. For example, the examination of ethno-political factors leads to accepting the fact that an ethnicity that revolts threatens both domestic and international security, ethnic conflicts having a highly destructive potential (Zolotukhin, 2015). Other studies show interesting differences between the well-defined and studied notion of diaspora, on the one hand, and, and the less studied concept of close to

diaspora, on the other hand. There are minorities in diaspora adopting life strategies of living in a social fog, becoming a „diaspora in the fog" (Sorescu Marinković, 2016).

Debate on social borders related to ethnic identity is complex drawing attention to socio-cultural and mental aspects. Collective mentality is the particular way in which a specific social group represents its world. These aspects of social representations are underlined especially by a social dynamics that through communication puts its social actors into interaction (Fedor, 2015b). The discussions touch the subject of relativity induced by the identification of individuals with the ethnic groups. Whether it is hetero or self-identification, the belonging to an ethnic group is linked to the image or status of a community. Many ethnic communities may be easily included into a category of peripheral, marginal or poor status communities (Brie, Dărăbăneanu, 2014).

There is a link between minorities and security and how these influence each other. The minorities may influence security both positively and negatively (Jura, 2012). As isolation and marginalisation of any community creates a vulnerability for national security (being brought into discussion the Islamophobic reaction to the attacks of September 11 that led to the isolation and marginalisation of Muslim citizens and residents in different countries), the focus is placed on developing the feeling of trust and opportunity to work together to reach common goals for ensuring the security of all citizens of a state (Hanniman, 2008). Also, there is a relation between ethnic representation in security institutions and the perceptions of security in the sense that a more nuanced view on ethnic representation is beneficial for changing the usual perceptions of the local population. So, the ethnic representation of minorities in security institutions impacts the perceptions of security by individuals of the targeted group. A high ethnic representation in security institutions leads to a high level of perceived security by the represented ethnic group (Gray, Strasheim, 2016). In what regards national minorities that managed to settle in the new motherland, the security and international studies showed that these developed rules and mechanisms preserving their ethnic identity (Micu, 2013). Ethnic groups may be viewed as more or less national as they bear some specific norms and features different from those of the majority. Even if members of a community have specific practices, symbolic forms and institutional arrangements, in public spaces they may be perceived as the others (Skey, 2010). Various studies assess the current living conditions of a minority that is generally perceived as very different from the others, whether these refer to life style, culture or economic strategies. More exactly, these try to discover the link between the poverty of minorities and a specific method of building their identity. One of the most amazing and unexpected discoveries of research shows a high degree of assimilation of a community (Rroma community in our case) attracts for it the chances to stay in poverty or extreme poverty, and the less assimilated and traditional the community remains, the higher are its chances to become prosperous, at least during periods of transition (Troc, 2002).

On the other hand, migration has been linked to security (border protection, terrorism, social cohesion) and to issues related to lack of security towards the

future (population size, sustainability and economic growth). Therefore, the concept of migration securisation appears, which requires stabilisation measures for what may be called global disorder (Humphrey, 2013). Problems linked to minorities and migration tend to be viewed from the perspective of security and control of their rights. There is evidence of the fact that aspects related to minorities and migration are clearly linked to security that have to be settled by policies based on rights. There are approaches to security rights, more exactly, the increased link between policies targeted at minorities and migrants and between security and rights (Sasse, 2005). For the refugees, formal citizenship remains a vital and highly desired by many. Mobility and security are identified as significant benefits for receiving a formal citizenship in the country where they settle. Formal citizenship provides a privileged mobility allowing young refugees to maintain and create trans-national identities and attachments that should be protected and it also guarantees a secure status in a national state and is an insurance against a further relocation in unsecure future. In providing these forms of mobility and security, formal citizenship contributes to a sense of ontological security providing an important basis for building a national and trans-national future (Nunn, McMichael, Gifford and Correa-Velez, 2016).

Research methods

Comprehensive interviews were applied. The research was carried out from February to April 2017. The target group of the study was represented by adults belonging to various ethnic groups (Romanians, Hungarians, Germans and Romani people). The questions were adapted to the level of understanding of the investigated subjects. The interviewed individuals gave their consent in regards to carrying out the interview. The corpus collected from the individual interviews was subject to coding processes based on a hierarchy of data importance and reoccurrence with a view to establish categories and topics. Thereafter, the concepts and topics were organized in a narrative scheme, which amounts the acquired knowledge on the research's topics of interest. The aimed thematic axes consisted of: the way in which members of various ethnic communities relate to national security, the way in which they perceive that their rights and freedoms are respected, and the accepted gap between personal freedom and matters of national security. We opted for this type of interview as it enabled the interviewed subjects to explore the topic until its saturation (Blanchet, Gotman, de Singly, Kaufmann, 1998). We informed the subjects on the confidential nature of information provided in the interview. The interviews have been taken on Skype. We aimed to bring an understanding of latent meanings of analysed messages using Grounded Theory Model (Corbin, Strauss, 1990), a methodology that focuses on the way in which the data and their analysis are the result of symbolic interactionism.

Results and discussion

The perspective of the Romanian ethnicity

The investigated subjects consider that there is a correlation between freedom and personal safety. But freedom presumes the affirmation of personal intentions and values to a certain limit, that of affecting another's rights, and it paradoxically entails the concept of self-censorship. This Weberian ethic of personal responsibilities is accompanied by the sense of protection, which is perceived outside of the individual and is placed on a macro-societal level. The common individual does not wonder about safety. In turn, the cultured individual takes responsibility for his deeds, which can contribute to the constructing of a personal safety cult, and he equally considers that society shall ensure his personal safety on mutuality grounds. Moreover, personal safety cannot be bought but it can be built on an individual level and granted at an institutional one. The fact that the common citizen has a workplace and ensures himself an income can lead to the idea that the income also ensures his personal safety, as far as he knows that he contributes to the national security by paying his taxes. The moral perspective is also brought up to attention, according to which the society should offer to each individual access to a workplace that entails increasing the society's security level by increasing the personal contributions. However, in order to reach a secure, safe and comfortable status in society, the main effort is made by the individual through his continuous attempts towards personal development on all planes. In a dysfunctional society, the individual's effort to contribute to the general security by ensuring his own often bumps into the failure to observe personal rights and liberties, which often remain on a pure theoretical stage. The main side effect is the sense of learned helplessness, which arises and leads to giving up on constructing your own personal safety, as well as lack of trust in the effort solely made by the state.

Following the analysis of the interviews, the emerged idea is that safety is a feeling, which is related less to the physical aspect or to intimacy and more to the process of free personal development. Within the individual's continuous efforts towards his personal development, the most important role is given to education and culture. These have a critical contribution to ensuring personal safety. Their role is obscured, however, and even canceled when it comes to ensuring group security, an obvious situation for the ethnic groups precisely mentioned. Promoting some individual data in public spaces is a sensitive subject. Promoting public data could be accepted, as far as it is part of the individual's contribution to the efforts of ensuring general security. Therefore, the idea of a responsible individual being honest is promoted. The limit consists of aspects related to private life. Going on a graded scale from the sole individual to the society as a whole (whether single, in a family, in a group of friends, in a professional group or in society), the sense of safety is not directly proportional to the size of the group he belongs to. The focus is put on family, on the small group and on the personal safety built by the individual himself. The main factor that puts the individual into a risky situation regarding his safety is considered to be losing his job, his status

on which his personal and family safety is built. The other risks derive from the relations with others within the group, from the various sizes and functions. In relations with "others", the most important role is played by mutual respect. It entails preserving personal safety. Consequently and correlative to mutual respect between group members, a substantial input in safety enhancement is provided by trust between the group members, as well as the organizational environment that focuses on team work and on equal chances for the personal development of each member of that group. As personal safety is a compromise between asserting rights and freedoms and respecting others, the individual is inclined to give up on some of those for the group or national security. This must be accompanied by trusting in the efforts made by the state for the individual.

National security may be considered an amount of individual safeties only if two cumulative conditions are fulfilled: for the sense of belonging to that nation to exist and for most of its citizens to be responsible. On one hand, volunteering influences the personal safety of the individuals who are distressed and, on the other, of those who are volunteers. In this regard, the connection between volunteering and national security seems to be natural and strong. The relation between each individual's personal safety and national security is mediated by justice. This can lead to the annihilation of learned helplessness, which, as we noticed earlier, has as side effect giving up on constructing your own personal safety, as well as lack of trust in the effort solely made by the state.

The perspective of Rroma ethnicity

The security of future security involves a conscious and continuous effort, financial, social and symbolic long-term planning and management. Shared living in society means that all its members follow a set of shared rules. In Rroma communities, a significant share of their members failed to follow these rules. The specificity of Rroma communities includes the strong unity of its members explained by their difficult past and the attitude of the majority towards them. Institutionally, Rroma ethnicity is not disadvantaged compared to the majority or common people. It may be understood by relating to the poor level of education of people from Rroma community correlated with lack of information. We may also add the cultural element of older generation that expect the state to solve all their problems. Modern life style and globalisation also leave a mark on Rroma communities. Their effects are found especially in traditions and mother tongue. A specific problem of this community is the study of the mother tongue.

The members of Rroma community believe that their rights and freedoms are respected, as well as their personal security. The links with the ethnic group are strong and bring with them the feeling of security given by the belonging to this group. Personal security is viewed by the members of Rroma community in terms of ensuring their basic needs. Education is not viewed in the above mentioned sense a priority. There have been created by the Romanian state facilities for integrating the members of Rroma community. Integration is often difficult due to different cultural background (attempt to transfer their own mapping to others from the constructionist perspective) but the results are satisfactory.

Nevertheless, the stereotypes and prejudices of the majority and other ethnicities towards Rroma community are still in place due to lack of understanding of the specificity of the „other". The integration of Rroma communities may be made using simple and efficient social policies. These social policies linked with the positive attitude of local authorities may lead to solving stringent problems of Rroma communities. Rroma feel that they are used as mass of maneuver in political games, but if their communities are better informed, this brings a change in attitude of local authorities.

There are several aspects contributing to personal security. For the institutions, an efficient method is not to view and assess the groups only using ethnic criteria. In this sense, mechanical solidarity is less efficient than organic in Durkheim's sense (Durkheim, 1893). Once made and functional, the model may be replicated. The success of multiethnic integration of projects lies in transdisciplinarity and in their creation based on general development interests of communities. The first step in ensuring personal community belongs to the individual, irrespective of its ethnicity. Later, we may discuss the problem of national security. For the members of Rroma community, we note that they are not willing to abandon their personal freedom for national security. In opposition, national security is associated with inter-ethnic help. The inter-ethnic help provided by Rroma communities is based on hospitality features of this ethnicity, a feature that is not perceived as reciprocal by its members. Globalization produced the disappearance of social borders even in the Rroma community. Volunteership plays an essential role in diminishing social borders as it arranges the interaction among various social and ethnic groups. It may be viewed as a mechanism involved in building the identity of these groups. The outcomes of getting involved in volunteering are felt at the group level (social, ethnic, cultural, etc.) but even more individually in terms of personal development for people from marginal and/or disadvantaged groups.

The perspective of the Hungarian ethnicity

The activities of ensuring the daily life help to put into practice personal freedoms. Personal rights and freedoms are respected for all citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity. The proximity of Hungary is not viewed as a facility or opportunity conferring additional rights and opportunities to Hungarian ethnics. Personal security is a conscious choice of the entourage and the group of friends. It includes multiple conscious aspects assumed by the individual. Personal security is a construct based on trust and correctness bringing with it also the individual's attitude towards the „other". Also, the first layer an individual must act on to ensure its personal security is the legal one. Belonging to a minority ethnic group brings with it an inherent feeling of solidarity functioning as a safety mechanism for a specific group. Belonging to a group may be viewed also as a paradigm due to which these ethnics act. Solidarity is the main feature of Hungarian community. Solidarity with an ethnic group is accompanied by the effort of inter-generational transmission of specific elements of Hungarian culture. Hungarian ethnics do not feel the existence of any external risks for manifesting their rights and freedoms.

The highest risk perceived by Hungarian ethnics is inside their community and refers to lack of education and culture. In general, education (personal and of the surrounding people) is important for ensuring personal and group security.

Respecting at individual level the rights and freedoms is viewed as a small-scale replica of respecting group rights and freedoms. National security is mainly the effort of all members of a society, irrespective of their ethnicity, to preserve the cultural and material heritage from ancestors. The way in which individuals get along, relate to each other impacts personal, national or group security. The ethnic group may generate solidarity even if society overall may generate conflicts and separation. There is a relation between individual, group and societal security and the contribution of each ethnic group and the main contribution belongs to the individual. There is a scale of attitudes of individuals that ensures the group functionality (ethnic, cultural, etc.). National security involves a transfer of some personal and group rights and the community may intervene into individual's rights to implement a superior national interest. Volunteership correlated with individual's education helps society to function well and strengthen its national security. Security is a personal construct of an individual irrespective of the group to which it belongs (family, group of friends, ethnic group, society etc.).

The perspective of the German ethnicity

Personal rights and freedoms stipulated by laws are avoided by authorities. Instead, there are rights created by the representatives of authorities. Politics dictates the activity of all state institutions and the direction of their development is wrong. Behind politics, there is the financial interest correlated with corruption specific to Romanian society. The feeling of security is correlated with abidance by the law. Personal security is perceived as being directly related to respecting the accountability ethics by each member of society, mainly by the state representatives. In a society where the representatives of authorities do not strictly comply with the legal provisions, the individuals acquire the syndrome of learned inability and refuse getting involved in constructive initiatives. The politics intervene also in volunteering activities impacting them negatively. Lack of trust in state institutions brings with it the feeling of distrust towards individuals affecting community cohesion.

The individual of good faith may accept a reduction of its freedoms in exchange for national security. This acceptance by the individual of good faith of the interference into its private space is conditioned by having trust in state institutions and by the accountable, well- intentioned use of its personal information. The process of winning trust in the Romanian is correlated with the transparency policy of the state institutions. The individual wishes that the state would build a relation of equality and mutual respect between the two partners. An individual may bring its contribution to building a balanced relation with state institutions based on the feeling of comfort and respect of these institutions. The process of winning trust in state institutions is difficult and it is accompanied by an effort to change collective mentality. Achieving national security may be obtained by a process of education and increase of the quality of life of society members.

Conclusions

The sense of belonging to an ethnic group in conjunction with ensuring a livelihood (from a cultural point of view), personal safety (which includes all fields of action) and socializing (from a relational-communicational point of view) has made a certain (ethnic) diversity permanent in (national) unity. Each activity and action within a society is jointly conducted, but there are punctual limitations arisen from belonging to one ethnic group or the other, especially in a symbolic area (cultural manifestations). All other activities are jointly conducted, which presupposes that ensuring the security is also jointly conducted.

There is a scale of safety levels experienced by respondents, in which belonging to an ethnic group does not have the highest ratio. However, at ethnic group level we observe an increased feeling of belonging for Rroma and Hungarian ethnics that brings with it group security with a higher role towards the members of other ethnic groups (Romanian and German).

The idea of safety as resulted from the analyzed interviews may be looked at from three different and correlative perspectives: as a feeling (diffuse for most of the population and clearly accentuated for the individuals with a high training degree and preoccupied by this topic), as an identity (personal, familial, ethnical or a sense of belonging to an ethnic group or a nation), and as an attitude (acknowledging and involving oneself into ensuring personal, group and national security).

There is a horizon of individuals' expectation for state institutions to intervene in ensuring personal and group security. It is accompanied by a feeling of distrust in public institutions. Individuals prefer to ensure their security at individual, family and group level. Also, they take part in building national security by giving up some of their personal freedom that belongs to the private sphere. National security is directly proportional to the degree of respect perceived by an individual.

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