



ORIGINAL

## History of the Formation of Ethnic Minority Organisations at the Beginning of Ukraine's Independence

### Historia de la formación de organizaciones de minorías étnicas al comienzo de la independencia de Ucrania

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#### ABSTRACT

Ukraine's progress in European integration requires understanding the specifics of ethnic policy under current conditions. Therefore, the issue of historical retrospectives of the formation and activities of ethnic minority organizations in the early 1990s as one of the factors of state-building remains relevant. This study aims to analyze the historical context and peculiarities of the institutionalization of ethnic minority structures in Ukraine at the initial stage of the restoration of Ukrainian state independence. The research object is ethnic minority organizations, primarily those that focused their activities on national and cultural revival. The methodological framework includes the principles of historicism, tolerance, scientific impartiality, and impartiality. The formation of ethnic community organisations and the main vectors of their activities during the specified period have been traced in detail. Despite many common historical, cultural, and socio-political backgrounds, the formation of such organisations for different communities could have its peculiarities. For example, for Jewish organizations, the demographic issue was acute due to emigrant sentiments in the Jewish community. As for ethnic minorities like Hungarians and Romanians, they had close ties with their historical homelands. This fact also influenced their organizational structure in Ukraine. The Georgian minority built their organizations emphasizing cooperation between Ukraine and Georgia. Germans also sought to maintain ties with their historical homeland. For Poles, the religious factor was significant. Overall, in Ukraine, there were quite favorable conditions for the full development and activities of ethnic minorities despite the complex political and economic situation of the early 1990s. Nowadays, the issue of organizational development of ethnic communities is a matter of focus for state authorities both at the legislative level and at the level of local communities.

**Keywords:** Ethnic Minorities; Ethnic Communities; Ethnopolitics; Identity; National Minorities; National Cultural Societies; Patriotic Education; State-Patriotic Self-Awareness.

#### RESUMEN

El avance de Ucrania en la integración europea exige comprender las particularidades de la política étnica en las condiciones actuales. Por ello, sigue siendo relevante la cuestión de las retrospectivas históricas de

la formación y las actividades de las organizaciones de minorías étnicas a principios de los años 90 como uno de los factores de la construcción del Estado. Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar el contexto histórico y las peculiaridades de la institucionalización de las estructuras de las minorías étnicas en Ucrania en la etapa inicial de la restauración de la independencia estatal ucraniana. El objeto de la investigación son las organizaciones de minorías étnicas, principalmente aquellas que centraron sus actividades en el renacimiento nacional y cultural. El marco metodológico incluye los principios del historicismo, la tolerancia, la imparcialidad científica y la imparcialidad. Hemos rastreado las particularidades de la formación de las organizaciones de las comunidades étnicas y los principales vectores de sus actividades durante el período especificado. A pesar de muchos antecedentes históricos, culturales y sociopolíticos comunes, la formación de tales organizaciones para diferentes comunidades podría tener sus peculiaridades. Por ejemplo, para las organizaciones judías, la cuestión demográfica era aguda debido a los sentimientos de emigración en la comunidad judía. En cuanto a las minorías étnicas como los húngaros y los rumanos, tenían estrechos vínculos con sus patrias históricas. Este hecho también influyó en la estructura organizativa de las minorías étnicas en Ucrania. La minoría georgiana creó sus organizaciones haciendo hincapié en la cooperación entre Ucrania y Georgia. Los alemanes también intentaron mantener los vínculos con su patria histórica. Para los polacos, el factor religioso fue importante. En general, en Ucrania existían condiciones bastante favorables para el pleno desarrollo y las actividades de las minorías étnicas a pesar de la compleja situación política y económica de principios de los años 90. Hoy en día, la cuestión del desarrollo organizativo de las comunidades étnicas es un tema de atención para las autoridades estatales, tanto a nivel legislativo como a nivel de las comunidades locales.

**Palabras clave:** Minorías Étnicas; Comunidades Étnicas; Etnopolítica; Identidad; Minorías Nacionales; Sociedades Culturales Nacionales; Educación Patriótica; Autoconciencia Patriótica del Estado.

## INTRODUCTION

Since December 13, 2022, the Law “On National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine” has been in force in Ukraine. The previous legislative act was the Law “On National Minorities in Ukraine” of June 1992. The current realities require a look back at the history of the formation of ethnic minority organizations in the early 1990s to retrospectively analyze the rather long and challenging path covered by Ukraine in the field of ethnic policy. It is necessary to develop fundamentally new approaches and principles for the development of ethnic minorities in the XXI century. The emphasis should be on preserving historical and cultural heritage, cultural diversity, and harmonious coexistence with representatives of different ethnic groups and cultural and religious traditions.

The processes of organizing ethnic communities are also crucial in terms of the following aspects of social and political life. Such structures often act as intermediaries between ethnic communities and state authorities, promote cultural diplomacy, international relations, etc. At the same time, they also address individual requests for spiritual development, communication, and interaction with people of their ethnicity and traditions.

Based on the chronological framework of the study, it is reasonable to refer to the scientific developments of the 1990s and early 2000s. These studies were written directly upon fresh impressions of both the process of restoring Ukrainian state independence and the specifics of forming and initial activities of various ethnic minority organizations.<sup>(1)</sup> In particular, important facts are concentrated in the collective publication “Ethnic Directory. Ethnic Minorities in Ukraine” edited by V. Yevtukh<sup>(2)</sup> and the guide on the national composition of the population of Ukraine compiled by S. Chornyj.<sup>(3)</sup>

O. Husiev and Ya analyzed the features of national minorities through the prism of Ukrainian legislation.<sup>(4)</sup> The peculiarities of optimizing Ukrainian legislation regarding the legal status of national minorities are highlighted in the article by O. Perederii.<sup>(5)</sup> M. Zerkal studied the significance of national and cultural societies, media, and non-governmental organizations in educating ethnic minorities.<sup>(6)</sup> L. Kovach analyzed the activities of national-cultural societies.<sup>(7)</sup> The researcher examined Ukrainian and foreign scientific achievements regarding the influence of socio-economic factors on ethnopolitical processes.<sup>(8)</sup> The activities of ethnic minority community organizations became the subject of scientific attention for L. Loiko.<sup>(9)</sup> A. Shaikhatdinov studied the political-legal aspects of the functioning of ethnic minorities in Ukraine from the 1990s to the early 2000s.<sup>(10)</sup> The problems of ethnic self-identification in Ukraine from 1989 to 2001 were studied by I. Stebelsky.<sup>(11)</sup>

The development of state ethnopolitics requires attention not only to local specifics but also to the experience of other countries and the possibilities of implementing positive results in their own countries. Such experience is the subject of a monograph on the Visegrad Group countries.<sup>(12)</sup> The needs and priorities of the state ethnic policy and the dynamics of its development require a scientific understanding of previous developments in this

area. These issues are discussed in the collective research paper led by V. Kotyhorenko.<sup>(13)</sup> The problems of formation and practical application of basic value principles of ethno-political development of the state are the subject of the study by O. Rafalskyi (discourse of ethno-politics, language issue, national memory).<sup>(14)</sup> A. Harbaruk focused on the corpus of Polonist studies devoted to the 1990s.<sup>(15)</sup> The institutionalization of the Polish movement in Ukraine in the late 1980s and early 1990s is the subject of an article by S. Rudnicki.<sup>(16)</sup>

For the further development of this research, it is vital to engage the contributions of scholars who study the experience of institutionalization and social and political activity of ethnic minorities in different countries. In particular, a comparative analysis of the Hungarian minorities in Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, and Ukraine was carried out by V. Veres.<sup>(17)</sup> The transformation of the perception of ethnic minority identity in Poland, based on the example of several generations of Ukrainians and Belarusians, was examined by I. Matysiak.<sup>(18)</sup> A. Haase studied the coexistence of minorities and ethnic majorities. The researcher was particularly concerned about the expansion of European integration borders and the problem of minorities' incorporation into a new geopolitical environment.<sup>(19)</sup> European identification as a reaction to the socio-economic and cultural achievements of European integration among eight ethnic minorities from the Danube to the Baltic was studied by N. Tchistiakova and N. Waechter.<sup>(20)</sup> Based on empirical data on 12 ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe, V. Cebotari proves that the choice of identity is influenced by the level of socialization, economic status, possible discrimination, and intergroup tension.<sup>(21)</sup>

S. Shulman studied civic and ethnic national identification in Ukraine.<sup>(22)</sup> L. Barrington<sup>(23)</sup> also directs his research interests in the same direction. The impact of crisis phenomena on identity in the case of Ukraine is the subject of a study by O. Onuch, G.E. Hale, and G. Sasse.<sup>(24)</sup> O. Onuch and G.E. Hale studied the relationship between individual language preferences, language affiliation, and ethnolinguistic identity.<sup>(22)</sup> A non-standard view of the problems of ethnic minorities in Ukraine in the first years of the restoration of state independence is offered by D. Burds. The research is based on the testimonies of emigrants from Ukraine in the 1990s who left the country and claimed refuge in the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. The author insists that during these years, harassment of religious and ethnic minorities was widespread in Ukraine.<sup>(25)</sup>

Migration processes in Ukraine have intensified research on interethnic and intercultural relations between Ukrainians and their neighboring peoples. The study covers a wide range of topics, from the politics of memory and commemorations of controversial issues of history to everyday communication and social communications.<sup>(26)</sup> The problems of Jewish revival through the organization of Jewish communities have been addressed by V. Yelenskyi and S. Kalyan.<sup>(27,28)</sup>

The monograph by V. Kotsur<sup>(29)</sup> is a significant contribution to the comprehensive study of socio-political transformations, foreign policy challenges, and political imbalances that directly affected Ukraine's national minorities during the 1990s and early XXI century.

This study aims to examine the specifics of the formation of ethnic minority organisations in Ukraine in the early 1990s. The scientific problem that underscores the necessity of understanding the historical context of the formation of national minority organisations at the dawn of Ukraine's independence lies in determining the factors influencing the institutionalisation processes of ethnic communities during the initial stage of the country's state independence restoration.

This issue gains particular significance in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war and global geopolitical transformations, which, among other things, affect national and cultural identity. Understanding the forms and methods of organisation and activity of ethnic communities is a crucial factor in the consolidation of the Ukrainian political nation.

*Research aims.* The study aims to analyse the historical context and the specifics of the institutionalisation of ethnic minority structures in Ukraine during the initial stage of the restoration of Ukrainian state independence. Identifying the historical preconditions that had a significant impact on the institutional development processes of ethnic communities during this period will enable the exploration of the particularities in the formation of such organisations for different communities.

## **METHOD**

### **Type of Study. A general research descriptive article**

#### *Evaluation Criteria*

The limitation of the study is the lack of access to complete and up-to-date official data, as well as the complexity of experimentally verifying theoretical conclusions. To examine approaches to the studied process, scientific works and industry publications were analysed. Selection criteria for the literature included various factors, such as the quality of the journal, relevance to central industry themes, and the presence of peer-reviewed content. The works were selected using a chronological method. Additionally, the methodology employed a systematic review approach with elements of meta-analysis, where applicable.

### *Data Collection and Sources*

The sample consisted of information on the dynamics of the development of the studied processes and phenomena over the period 1990-2023. The following methods for processing statistical data were used: classification of indicators by categories, analysis of the dynamics of the studied phenomenon, and comparative legal analysis methods to identify differences.

### *Analytical Frameworks and Methods*

The primary methods for establishing cause-and-effect relationships included analytical approaches such as analysis, synthesis, generalisation, comparison, and abstraction. Induction was also used—a scientific research method aimed at identifying cause-and-effect relationships between phenomena and generalising empirical data based on logical assumptions, moving from specific to general, and from known to unknown.

Statistical methods, in the context of achieving the research goals, enabled the systematisation and generalisation of all information about the studied objects and phenomena, including their positive aspects and drawbacks. These methods also facilitated drawing parallels between the essence and purpose of the studied object or phenomenon and the results of its functioning.

To define specific parameters of the studied process, a comprehensive analysis of scientific articles published in various academic sources was conducted. To ensure reliability and validity of the conclusions, literature from influential journals indexed in well-known databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar was selected.

The research employed bibliographic and source analysis, which were conducted in accordance with the tenets of historicism. The aforementioned methods enabled the formation of a database of information and knowledge that is either directly or indirectly related to the subject of the study. The bibliographic method contributed to the systematization of scientific developments associated with the study of institutionalization processes among ethnic minorities in Ukraine in the early 1990s.

Source analysis is necessary to summarize the research results and study the evidence. The information approach made it possible to trace the development and transformation of trends in the scientific discourse covering the issues of this research. It was essential to analyze the research of foreign scholars related to the study of ethnic minorities, identity, relations between minorities and representatives of the ethnic majority, and state ethnic policy in different countries. Such approaches allowed us to analyze the discourse of the problem more thoroughly and to confirm or refute the claims of scholars about the specifics of the formation of ethnic minority organizations in Ukraine during the period in question. The historical-comparative and historical-typological methods were tested. These methods helped to understand the historical context, reasons, and preconditions for the formation of ethnic minority organizations and the specifics of their activities at the initial stage of the restoration of Ukrainian state independence. The cultural method was employed to understand the interrelation of political processes as well as national and cultural revival.

### *Ethical parameters*

The review of articles and specialised publications must also be accurate and objective, with the author's perspective clearly stated and distinguished.

## **RESULTS**

In conducting this research, the data set comprised information from the 1989 population census. The data is dispersed throughout a multitude of statistical compilations, government websites, and academic publications. As a consequence of the dissolution of the USSR, a comprehensive account of the census data was never made public. In Ukraine, the population census was conducted in 2001; consequently, the results do not encompass the temporal scope of this study.

According to the 1989 census, 51,452,034 people lived in the Ukrainian SSR. Ukrainians (the title nation) made up 72,7 % of all residents. The largest national minorities were Russians (22,1 %) and Belarusians (0,9 %) (Population Census Results). The results of the 1989 census showed both the negative impact of the Russification policy on ethnic groups and the cessation of this process. For example, by the end of the 1980s, there was not a single school with Ukrainian as the school language in Donetsk, Luhansk, Chernihiv, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, and Odesa. Moreover, according to the census, 130 ethnic groups lived in Ukraine. The majority of them included 17 ethnic groups, including Ukrainians, Russians, Jews, Belarusians, Moldovans, Romanians, Greeks, Poles, Crimean Tatars, Bulgarians, and Gagauzes.<sup>(13)</sup>

The data on the most organisationally active ethnic minorities and their structures has been organised and presented in table 1 in a systematic manner.<sup>(2)</sup>

**Table 1.** The most organizationally active ethnic minorities and their structures (according to “Ethnic Directory. National Minorities in Ukraine”)

Nationality	Population, thousand people	% of the total population	Places of collective centers	Organizational structures
Moldovans	258,6	0,6	Odesa, Chernivtsi, Mykolaiv, Donetsk regions.	Regional National Cultural Association of Moldovans, Regional Christian-Democratic Alliance of Moldovans
Bulgarians	204,6	0,5	Bolhrad district, Odesa region	The Weekly “Roden Krai”. Association of Bulgarian National and Cultural Societies and Organizations of Ukraine
Hungarians	156,6	0,4	Zakarpattia region, Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, Lviv, Kyiv	Festival of Hungarian folklore “Folk Springs”. Center of Hungarology at UzhSU. Society of Hungarian Culture of Zakarpattia
Romanians	151,0	0,3	Chernivtsi and Zakarpattia regions	Centers of Romanian culture in Bila Tserkva and Hlybokyi Potik villages in the Zakarpattia region. The Romanian Cultural Society named after M. Eminescu, the “Aron Pumnul” Scientific and Pedagogical Association, the “Golgotha” Society of the Repressed, and the Romanian Sports Society
Poles	144,1	0,4	Volyn, Zhytomyr, Lviv, Khmelnytsky regions.	Cultural and Educational Society of Poles in Ukraine. Society of Polish Culture in Lviv Region. Federation of Polish organizations
Jews	103,6	0,9	-	The Institute of Jewish Material Culture of Ukraine; the Cabinet of Jewish History and Culture as a subdivision of the Institute of National Relations and Political Science of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine; and two theaters in Kyiv: “Stern” and “Mazltov”. Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Ukraine (120 unions), Society of Jewish Culture in Ukraine
Armenians	99,9	0,1	Donetsk, Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipro regions, the city of Kyiv	13 national and cultural societies. Sunday schools for adults and optional classes for children to study the Armenian language and literature
Greeks	91,5	0,2	Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro, Luhansk, Odesa regions, Autonomous Republic of Crimea	Federation of Greek Societies in Ukraine
Georgians	34,2	0,0	Kyiv, Crimea, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Odesa regions.	4 national and cultural associations
Germans	33,3	0,1	Dnipro, Zakarpattia, Donetsk, Mykolaiv, Odesa regions	Society of Germans in Ukraine “Wiedergeburg”. Center for German Culture “Witzerstahl”

## DISCUSSION

The basic characteristics of ethnic minorities include common origin, language, religious beliefs, cultural and values orientations, and interaction based on these characteristics.<sup>(30)</sup> In international legal norms, there is no clear distinction between “ethnic minority” and “national minority.” From the context, it follows that these concepts are related, except that certain political characteristics are added to the characteristics of a national minority (such as participation in the political life of the country of residence and citizenship they hold).<sup>(31)</sup>

Even today, as V. Troshchynskyi proves, Ukraine has not fully formed a model of state ethno-politics that would allow ethnic minorities to be maximally included in the country’s social life.<sup>(32)</sup> In general, the following characteristics of the ethnopolitical situation have crystallized in Ukraine before the revival of state independence:

1. On the one hand, national consciousness emerged among various ethnic groups, both Ukrainians and national minorities. On the other hand, resistance to this by the authorities, despite the processes of democratization of socio-political life.
2. The titular ethnic group’s desire to form its own statehood and the willingness of various ethnic groups under the influence of this tendency to express their own identity.
3. Inconsistency in the policy of national relations and certain chaos in the forms and manifestations of national-cultural self-assertion.
4. Regional specificity of ethnonational processes.

5. The authorities lack effective and real experience in the field of national policy-making. This often leads to declarative measures instead of practical steps, especially legislative ones.<sup>(13)</sup>

There were attempts at anti-state activity by certain organizations of ethnic minorities. Thus, with the support of certain political forces in Romania, the Society of Romanian Culture named after M. Eminescu and the Christian-Democratic Alliance of Romanians in Ukraine sought to escalate the situation by inflating issues of the state's territorial integrity, as well as problems related to education, legal protection of Romanian rights in Ukraine, which were allegedly disregarded. This was reported in the local press, and calls were made to the international community. For such activities, the leaders of these organizations received warnings from the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine.<sup>(29)</sup> Overall, such actions introduced a specific imbalance into the life of the Chernivtsi region. It is possible to cite an example from today as a counterbalance to such destructive activity. This concerns the project "National Communities and Native Peoples," created by the organization "Ukrainer" and the Ukrainian Institute.<sup>(33)</sup>

Organizations of ethnic minorities in the territories of Ukraine existed long before the first years of the restoration of state independence in 1991. However, there is no institutional or generational connection between the organizations that existed, let us say, in the conditions of empires or the Soviet period of Ukrainian history. Organizations of ethnic minorities that exist today or have operated since 1991 emerged either in the years of Soviet "restructuring" or in the first years of the restoration of state independence.<sup>(25)</sup> Identification and presentation of oneself in the socio-humanitarian space, in society, in political and economic processes, the desire to defend one's rights and interests within the state by ethnic minorities is determined by several aspects:

1. Public identification of one's affiliation with an ethnic community other than the dominant one in the state.
2. Demands at the state level for recognition of one's distinctiveness within the ethnocultural diversity of the state.
3. Based on this, cultural, political, or other rights within the existing legislation are defended, or relevant legislative decisions are lobbied for.

Such defending of personal ethnic interests can range from demands to receive education in the mother language and to organize cultural associations to territorial or political autonomy or even secessionist calls and actions.<sup>(34)</sup>

On the website of the Encyclopedia "Britannica," a circular diagram of the ethnic composition of the population of Ukraine is presented based on the 2001 census data. The ethnic minorities indicated on the chart include Russians, Belarusians, Moldovans, and Crimean Tatars. 3,3 % of the population is listed as "other".<sup>(35)</sup>

The issue of the status of the Crimean Tatar people was raised during debates on February 12, 1991, in the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR. However, at that time, for various reasons, obtaining the status of native people proved to be problematic. The question of the status of the Karaites and Krymchaks as indigenous peoples also required legal clarification.<sup>(36)</sup> The Law of Ukraine, "On Native Peoples of Ukraine," was adopted only on July 1, 2021. According to the provisions of the Law, the Crimean Tatars, Karaites, and Krymchaks have the status of native people of Ukraine.<sup>(37)</sup>

On June 25, 1992, the Law of Ukraine "On National Minorities in Ukraine" was adopted. The articles of the Law guarantee citizens of Ukraine, regardless of their national origin, equal civil rights and freedoms. Article 3 of the Law defines the term "national minorities." Also, at the legislative level, the right of national minorities to education in their native language was guaranteed, both in state educational institutions and through the activities of national cultural societies and cultural development.<sup>(38)</sup> This was a framework law, and it remained in force until July 1, 2023.

Even during the years of Soviet "perestroika," the leadership of the USSR sought to continue to control processes related to national movements in various union republics. For example, on April 18, 1988, the Commission of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR on Patriotic and International Education was established. In 1990, this commission was reformed into the Commission of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR on State Sovereignty, Inter-Republican, and Interethnic Relations. During March-July 1990, the Law "On the Establishment of the State Committee of the USSR on Nationalities Issues" was adopted. On July 9, 1991, the Committee on Nationalities Affairs was established under the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (operated until June 1993). One of the tasks of this committee was to create conditions for meeting the socio-cultural needs, revival, and development of the cultures and languages of national groups living in the territory of the republic, as well as promotion of the activities of their public formations (Decree of July 9, 1991 No. 7 On the formation of the Committee on Nationalities under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR). As of the beginning of 1991, there were 87 national-cultural societies in the Ukrainian SSR. They began to organize in the spring of 1989. These were public associations formed for the practical realization of the linguistic, cultural, religious,

informational, and communication needs of ethnic minorities in the country. Among these 87 national-cultural societies were 22 Jewish, 8 Russian and Polish, 6 Bulgarian, 5 Armenian, 4 Greek, 3 German, 2 Karaim, and Moldovan.<sup>(39)</sup>

Initially, the societies operated within the framework of friendship and cultural relations societies with foreign countries (in the Soviet format of such structures). For example, a Greek community was established in Mariupol in January 1989. It was registered as a Greek language club under the Taras Shevchenko Native Language Society at the Donetsk regional branch of the Ukrainian Cultural Fund.

Similarly, in June 1989, a Jewish cultural and educational center, “Aleph,” was organized in Donetsk.<sup>(40)</sup> However, this situation could not last long, considering the centrifugal processes within the country and the growth of national movements and aspirations for ethnic and cultural self-identification. Societies led by non-conformists, human rights activists, and nationally oriented intelligentsia began to consolidate. Such societies operated in various cities of Ukraine. At the same time, there was a process of official organizational development: development of statutes, program principles of activity, personnel development, and official registration with government authorities. The cultural and educational society of Poles in Ukraine was established based on the “Society of Soviet-Polish Friendship.” During 1990-1991, the “Union of Poles of Ukraine” and the “Federation of Polish Societies of Ukraine” were organized.<sup>(41)</sup> By the end of 1991, there were 150 national-cultural societies in Ukraine; by 1995, there were 237 (16 with all-Ukrainian status). They represented the interests of 38 ethnic groups. In 1989, the Council of National-Cultural Societies of Ukraine was established. Since February 1993, this structure has received the status of a representative body of national societies as an advisory body to the Ministry of Nationalities and Migration.<sup>(7)</sup>

The forms of national and cultural organizations that operated in Ukraine during this period involved various forms: regional national and cultural communities, religious communities and associations, women’s organizations, charitable foundations, Sunday schools, sports, youth, student associations, and hobby groups. In other words, ethnic revival occurred within the framework of national and cultural organizations. Their activities covered more than just ethnic and national manifestations, uniting people not only on ethnic principles but also on cultural needs and demographic, social, and gender factors. At the initial stage of their activities, ethnic minority organizations focused on learning their native language.<sup>(43)</sup>

Also, since 1991, such organizations have been able to officially register their activities and direct their efforts to national and cultural revival. This included learning the language and exploring its history, reviving traditions and customs, searching for and preserving cultural heritage and historical memory, etc. The first half of the 1990s witnessed a rapid growth of national cultural organizations. By the fall of 1990, there were 84 of them in Ukraine, and by the end of 1994 - 237.<sup>(44)</sup>

In particular, these included 16 All-Ukrainian national-cultural societies, including Assyrian, German, Greek, several Polish, Georgian, Russian, Jewish, Romanian, Korean, Meskhetian, Hungarian, and Czech societies. People joined these societies on a voluntary basis. They wanted to have a real impact on the processes of the national and cultural revival of their ethnic community and integrate into the society of the new Ukraine. They shared common values and had a certain material base for realizing their goals and missions. However, there was an acute lack of premises.<sup>(45)</sup> These societies were autonomous in their activities and promoted communication and integration of their ethnic group within their cultural traditions. They were engaged in creative, educational, and upbringing work. However, the activities of such organizations should not be viewed exclusively through folklore and ethnography.<sup>(46)</sup> Their functions were much broader. This is evidenced, in particular, by the creation of the Council of National Societies of Ukraine and the Main Editorial Office of Literature in the Languages of National Minorities.<sup>(42)</sup> As for the Jewish community of Ukraine, since the second half of the 1980s, the process of Jewish emigration to their historical homeland has intensified. Therefore, the formation and development of Jewish national and cultural societies took place in two directions:

1. the traditional activities of such associations;
2. the focus on preparing for emigration.<sup>(28)</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The study aimed to analyse the historical context and the specifics of the institutionalisation of ethnic minority structures in Ukraine during the initial stage of the restoration of Ukrainian state independence. Identifying the historical preconditions that significantly influenced the processes of institutional development of ethnic communities during this period allowed for an exploration of the unique characteristics of the formation of such organisations for different communities.

The object of the study was the organisations of national minorities, primarily those focused on national and cultural revival. The methodological framework, which included the principles of historicism, tolerance, and scientific impartiality, enabled the tracing of the establishment of ethnic community organisations and the main directions of their activities during the specified period. It was found that, despite many shared historical, cultural, and socio-political preconditions, the formation of such organisations for different communities had

its own specifics.

The article presents a comparative analysis of the development processes of ethnic communities that closely collaborated in their organisational institutionalisation and received varying levels of assistance from their countries of origin (e.g., Jews, Germans, Poles).

The research results indicate that, overall, Ukraine provided fairly favourable conditions for the full development and activities of ethnic minorities, despite the challenging political and economic situation of the early 1990s. The ethnopolitical activity of communities was also diverse due to the specifics of the historical and political development of individual ethnic minorities, as well as demographic, educational, and urbanisation differences.

Today, the organisational development of ethnic communities is a matter of focus for government bodies both at the legislative level and at the level of territorial communities. Further research should focus on ethno-religious communities in Ukraine and their role in the process of national and cultural revival, as well as the activities of national minorities in Ukraine.

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