

**TAMBOV ETHNO-CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS:
SPECIFIC FEATURES, ORGANIZATIONAL STYLE
AND DEVELOPMENT**

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Key words and phrases: ethno-cultural organizations; ethnic communities; institutional development; refugees; organizational style; ethnic groups; confessional communities.

Abstract: The paper deals with some problems of local ethnic organizations in Tambov. The main question of the work is to give short conclusions to organizational style as a concept in analysing ethnic community structures and institutional development of Tambov non-commercial ethno-cultural organizations.

The concept of institutional completeness is usually used only to identify, in broad terms, the degree of institutional development, rather than to specify the type or direction of development. For this reason, we suggest that the term “organizational style” serves as a more useful complement to that of institutional completeness. By “organizational style” we refer to the typical structures, practices, and strategies used by ethnic community members as they organize to act on their interests. Such an organizational style obviously reflects the interests, internal resources, demographic profile, culture and traditions of the group. That is why we would expect one ethnic community, such as the Jewish community, to differ from another, such as the Kurd community. But organizational style is also a consequence of the social, economic and political context, especially the pattern of intergroup relations, within which an ethnic group finds itself as its members build their community. It is for this reason that the Jewish community of Tambov, for example, differs from that found in Moscow, and even from that in Saint-Petersburg [Романова, 2000; Винер, 1999]. Institutional completeness, we hope to show, will take on different forms in communities, which develop different organizational styles.

Ethnic communities change over time, because organizational style reflects the context within which it develops. This issue of change is crucial. As Russian society has undergone fundamental political, economic and social transformations over the past 12 years, our science has to rethink the issue of ethnicity and to free themselves from their earlier focus on questions of assimilation, acculturation and conformity. In particular, the emergence of the Russian as a self-consciously national group and the initiation by the federal government of its multiculturalism policy have altered the role allotted to ethnicity in our society. These changes in the sociological approach to ethnicity are visible in the shift to questions concerning social or cultural boundary maintenance and the persistence of cultural differences in the analyses of ethnic group organizations.

Still, despite the progress made in analyzing ethnic community structures and the roles they play in Russian society, the essential processes underlying ethnic group

formations and the different forms they take have not yet been identified. Put simply, we still have very little research on how and why some people come to affiliate with others as members of a particular ethnic community, and on what bases they differentiate themselves from non-members.

In retrospect, the most obvious omission in much of this literature is the lack of attention given to the role of the state. This is a highly significant redefinition of the role of the state in relation to the ethnic groups found in our society. Nonetheless, it still does not do full justice to the complex interconnections among material, symbolic, and state interests. We agree with the opinion, that the state does not only mediate among different segments of society, it also has interests of its own; it does not only distribute material and symbolic resources, but politico-legal entitlements as well (Turner, 1988). If the role of the state has been as central to the development of the society as some scientists suggest (Panitch, 1977; Simeon and Robinson, 1990), then we should expect the impact of the state on Russian ethnic group formation to have been very significant indeed.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT: ETHNIC GROUP RELATIONS IN TAMBOV

We suggested that ethnicity has historically played an ambiguous role in a local society. On the one hand ethnic groups were expected to retain their distinctive identity and culture, on the other hand, they found themselves locked out of full integration into local multicultural mosaic. At the same time, the various ethnic groups imitated the example of Russian charter groups in treating ethnicity less as a matter of individual sentiment than as a form of collective organization. This, it seems to us, is the crucial point in understanding ethnicity in our region: ethnicity has come to serve as a focus around which communities are mobilized and maintained.

Like the current situation there are a plurality of different ethnocultural groups in Tambov, these groups are not immigrants to the town. Most of them lived here for several generations, but they remained to be Polish, Jewish or German, a circumstance which itself helped facilitate the maintenance of group identity.

In the nearly 30 years since Raymond Breton (1964) has published his seminal paper on the “institutional completeness” of ethnic communities, our understanding of ethnicity and of ethnic group relations has been significantly improved. Anthropologists have examined in detail many of the structural features, which characterize and differentiate ethnic groups. In doing so, however, they have tended to conceive of ethnic institutional completeness primarily in terms of “parallel” institutions, which either inhibit participation in the institutions of the “host” society or serve as alternatives to such participation [Anderson and Frideres, 1981]. They have thereby tended to ignore the ways in which ethnic communal and organizational development is itself a mode of participation in social, economic, cultural and political life.

Russian science hasn't paid much attention to such issues as ethnic groups and their organizations as it was considered that our society is going to turn out a complete society “soviet people”. But the growing wave of interest to “ethnic history”, “native language”, culture and ethnic conflicts show the importance of the problem and latest ten or twelve years the interest to the problem seems to increase.

In our paper we seek to address some of these neglected issues by examining the relationship within the ethnic community's organizations, their style and the policies, regulations, and actions implemented by ethnic groups of our region. We do so by examining the several largest ethnocultural minority groups of Tambov. This article deals with the Germans and the Jews. In each case we will detail the specific linkages among:

- 1) ethnic group characteristics;
- 2) development of ethnic organizational structures;

3) role as ethno-cultural institutions of Tambov.

For each of these groups we will present a brief discussion of some crucial factors, which either facilitated or inhibited institutional development in the ethnic community, and the resulting organizational style, which has come to characterize the community. We then turn to an examination of the evolution of cultural policy of the organizations within each community, for we believe that multiculturalism is the one sector which best displays ways of forming “civil society”. In our conclusion, we examine what the Russian state has lately begun to call a new “social contract” between ethnic group communities and the state. In this new relationship, the state supports the maintenance of ethnic diversity in exchange for compliance with state policy [Щукина, 2000: 90-103].

We begin by examining the concepts of institutional completeness and organizational style, both as structural features of the ethnic community and as modes of participation in institutional life.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETENESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STYLE

In his original article on institutional completeness, Breton stressed that the degree of institutional infrastructure developed by a particular ethnic collectivity is an important index through which to gauge the level of group consciousness. Full institutional completeness implies that “members would never have to make use of native institutions for the satisfaction of any of their needs” [Breton, 1964: 194].

Breton observed that in contemporary North America few if any ethnic communities show full institutional completeness. As he originally conceived it, the concept of institutional completeness was designed only to identify, in broad terms, the degree of institutional development, rather than to specify the type or direction of development. For this reason, we suggest that the term “organizational style” serves as a useful complement to that of institutional completeness. By “organizational style” we refer to the typical structures, practices, and strategies used by ethnic community members as they organize to act on their interests. Such an organizational style obviously reflects the interests, internal resources, demographic profile, culture and traditions of the group. That is why we would expect one ethnic community to differ from another community. But organizational style is also a consequence of the social, economic and political context, especially the pattern of intergroup relations, within which an ethnic group finds itself as its members build their community. It is for this reason that the Jewish community of Tambov, for example, differs significantly from that found in Moscow, and even from that in Toronto [Elazar and Waller, 1990]. Institutional completeness, we hope to show, will take on different forms in communities, which develop different organizational styles.

Because organizational style reflects the context within which it develops, ethnic communities change over time. These changes in the sociological approach to ethnicity are visible in the shift to questions concerning social or cultural boundary maintenance and the persistence of cultural differences in the analyses of ethnic group relations [Anderson and Frideres, 1981; Breton et al., 1977; Breton, Reitz and Valentine, 1980; Breton, 1984; Reitz, 1981].

We are quite agree with the point, but one more important issue is not touched that is a period of living in the region and character of migration.

What is more we still have very little research on how and why some people come to affiliate with others as members of a particular ethnic community, and on what bases they differentiate themselves from non-members. As Breton [Breton, 1978: 62] puts it, “Much of our thinking about inter-ethnic relationships assumes the existence of ethnic groups. That is to say, the very phenomenon that is problematic is frequently taken as a

given.” The underlying assumption continues to be that ethnic groups exist because they are culturally, linguistically, or religiously distinct groups or they are only religiously distinct groups, but linguistically and partly culturally are not.

In his criticism of strictly cultural accounts of ethnicity, Frederick Barth [Barth, 1969: 17] notes that in order to “visualize the basic requirements of the coexistence of ethnic diversity, I would suggest that we . . . ask ourselves what is needed to make ethnic distinctiveness emerge in an area”. Barth goes on to argue that in order to understand how ethnic diversity persists despite intergroup contacts, we must look away from the “cultural stuff” out of which ethnic groups are supposedly composed and towards the patterns of ethnic group relations found in a society.

Some people see multiculturalism as much more than learning about diverse cultures and cultural groups. Multiculturalism has the potential to transform educational institutions from monolithic centers of power to democratic constellations in which organizational structures reflect diverse cultures and voices. From this perspective, multiculturalism reaches into the depths of what educational institutions are with the hopes of creating what they ought to be.

METHODS

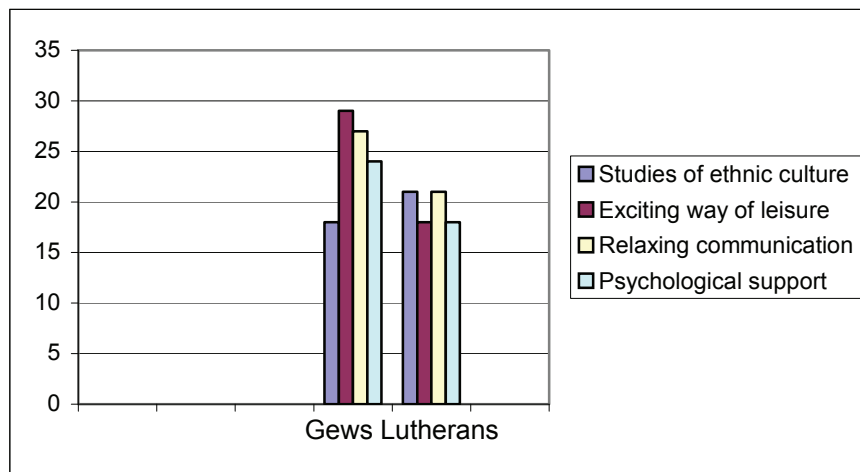
The data for this case study were derived from visits in which over 700 people of different local communities were formally interviewed. Interview participants were selected because of their role in developing, participating or supervising their ethnic groups or because of their participation as leaders or officials. Questionnaires included points concerning problems of ethnic culture, multiculturalism and institutional structure of organization activity. Different interview tables were developed for the various groups participating in interviews.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT: ETHNIC GROUP RELATIONS IN TAMBOV REGION

Ethnicity has historically played an ambiguous role in society. On the one hand ethnic groups were expected to retain their distinctive identity and culture, on the other hand they found themselves locked out of full integration, retaining their so to say “entrance status”. In this respect, the various ethnic groups imitated the example of different charter groups in treating ethnicity less as a matter of individual sentiment than as a form of collective organization. This, it seems to us, is the crucial point in understanding ethnicity: ethnicity has come to serve as a focus around which communities are mobilized and maintained.

As a matter of fact the run between groups are not too deep. This has had a significant impact on the development, nature, and context of ethnic inter-group relations. While these societies interacted somewhat in the areas of politics and work, they had until recently maintained a rigorous separation in terms of language, education, religion, residence, and marriage. Although the notion of “two solitudes” ignores the important realities of class, status, and political divisions within each of the charter groups, nevertheless there is some sense in which each of Russian groups doesn’t live in a world of their own. According to our research people come to the communities because inter ethnic relationship assumes the existence of ethnic groups.

Unlike the current situation when there are a plurality of different ethnocultural and racial groups arriving in Tambov, immigrants to the region during previous centuries moved to the town by small groups and for a long period of time. And the attitude of local population helped facilitate the maintenance of their group identity. While Catholic immigrant groups, such as the Polish (some of them lived here since the beginning of XIX century), were able to make use of existing Catholic agencies to some



Preferable reasons for taking part in ethnic community activities (in %)

extent, this left the Jews in particular to develop their own organizations in the areas of religion, education, health and social services. They developed their own organizational style, and, in their own way, each found their own solutions to the problems of integration into Russian society. The groups' barriers were rather high at that time, because of their different confessions.

Non-Catholics, for example, were not allowed into Catholic public schools. Fearing erosion in the largely clerical character of their organizations, they sought to insulate themselves and their society from any "outsiders". But on examining the local periodicals and documents of governor's department (XIX-the beginning of XX century) we didn't find any sign of alarm and suspicion in the local society. At the beginning of the XX century ethnic groups started to create the new types of group organizations which dealt with not only clerical matters but the social problems such as culture, education, health and others.

Today with the growth of ethnicity we find some organizations of ethnic groups which may be divided into two main types according to their activity: ethnocultural and clerical. But such typology seems not to be complete. Our research shows that clerical organizations are also involved into ethnocultural activity. Organizations, which activity lies in the field of social support of ethnic groups' members, for example, the Jewish charity organization "Nash dom" ("Our home"), include a number of different clubs and associations.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The local Jewish community is the oldest of the minority ethnocultural communities in Tambov, dating back to the early years of the XXth century, although large-scale immigration did not exist. This community illustrates some of the strengths and limitations of the notion of institutional completeness. Two points are particularly significant. One is that, there was no receiving society in Tambov for the Jews who arrived in after 20-th years of the XXth century, if by a receiving society we refer to a set of public institutions into which Jews could be integrated. The second point, linked to the first, is that Jewish organizations do not really form a system of "parallel" institutions. The community's Saturday schools, for example, do not parallel the dual confessional public school systems.

To a newcomer, who usually has very practical and immediate needs, the "receiving society" is not some abstract entity but a set of institutions which provide

personal services and with whom one has some personal contact. The rapid growth of Tambov Jewish community, however, took place during the early 20th century at a time when educational institutions, charity and relief agencies in Tambov were not organized along confessional lines.

While any clerical or state organizations provided aid to members of the Jewish community, they certainly were unable to meet any special needs of Jewish clients, such as religious services, kosher food, or staff members who could speak Yiddish or Ivrit. For the most part, community members were left alone to go their own way and create their own institutions. The organizations they created, such as Jewish Charity Services with net of clubs for different group members, or two clerical communities, which were neither intended, nor perceived to be parallel institutions, but as remedial; they filled in the gaps in the network of services available to Jews. In effect, conditions in Tambov reinforced the traditional Jewish ethnic of taking care of fellow members of one's own community.

Education illustrates this point particularly well. For a number of reasons education was an especially pressing concern for the Jewish community. There are several courses: from native language studying to ethno-historical and dancing (for children). It certainly helps to explain the high priority which Jewish community members placed on "cultural" education from the very beginning. Quite apart from the traditional importance it was assigned in Jewish culture itself, Russian Jews generally saw education as the major path for ensuring that the next generation would achieve full participation in the life of the society.

THE GERMAN COMMUNITY

As it is in the case with the Jews Tambov German community shows its own distinctive pattern of communal social relationships and organizational development. In some respects Tambov German community is unique among German Russian Diaspora communities as well. What is unique is that the community is not under the control of the Organization of Russian Germans. At the beginning of the 1990-s many refugees came to the Tambov region from the former USSR republics, mainly from Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan. They founded the regional department of Russian German organization.

Most of the Tambov Germans are not the traditional inhabitants of the region. They are immigrants. Regional authorities did their best to accommodate them, but the amount was too great. Primarily the community was under the guide's of Organization of Russian Germans and lead to some social activity, but later the structures of it become to be unable to carry out this difficult work. After several years the organization stopped to exist. The former members found it difficult to find the reason, its failure, but they blame the complex legal and social situation in the country. The most crucial issue of this failure is the absence of national school, where children would learn German, ethnic history and culture.

The reason of it, to our mind, lies not in the structural organization of the community, but in the lack of ethnical identity among different sub-cultural groups of Russian Germans.

The leaders of Germans struggled for the foundation of the autonomy, but the problem has not been solved. The autonomy is supposed to help ethnic Germans to solve legal matters and social problems, supervise the cultural life of the community.

There is another point. Unlike the Jews, German immigrants arriving in Tambov found that they fit into neither the established Greek Orthodox nor Catholic sectors of Tambov society. Tambov community doesn't have the Lutheran Church. In spite all of these facts the Lutheran community still exists. Pastor, who comes usually once a year, does the most important ceremonies for the regional parish.

But people haven't left the idea of institutionalizing their community. As one of our informant told us: "We want people, who come here to see that the community is a part of our culture. We know and love Russian culture. We want to know and keep our culture. We cannot forget who we are. If we don't have our own identity, how are we going to live?"

It seems from the first sight that today's situation may lead the ethnic group to the later assimilation. But we should take into consideration that the long term of existence in the "strangers' field" hasn't change the ethnic features of Germans. So the part of ethnic German's world construal depends on community and cultural self-consciousness. This part of the mind is connected not so with the native language, as with the special aspects of material and spiritual culture: such as confession, rites and customs.

CONCLUSIONS

Breton's concept of institutional completeness has been an important tool for scientists, especially in directing their attention towards ethnic groups as organized civil communities. In this paper we have sought to extend this perspective on ethnic groups by examining the typical organizational structures, strategies and practices used by ethnic group members. This is what we have called their "organizational style". We have shown that an examination of organizational style helps us to uncover the various forms of institutional completeness, which are to be found in different ethnic communities. Our brief discussion of the Jewish and German communities in Tambov has shown that each developed a very different infrastructure with a different focus, different sources of intra-group attachment, and different points of integration into the broader society. In short, not all communities have a relatively high level of institutional completeness and each of the two communities we examined developed in different ways for different reasons. If these case studies are representative of other ethnic communities, then examining the sources of diversity among Russia's ethnic groups will be a fruitful and important area of further research.

There are a number of issues raised by our discussion of organizational style. One is that the issue of integration into local society has been complicated by the absence of any definitive receiving society into which the immigrant can simply choose to integrate.

The ambivalent, partial and changeable nature of the receiving society suggests that the common characterization of ethnic institutions as parallel institutions misses an important point. Assuming that they do not wish to segregate themselves from the rest of society, which only a few groups in fact desire, what interest could ethnic group members have in investing the financial, human, and administrative resources necessary to duplicate existing services? Each of the groups we have examined has been willing to take advantage of the services offered to them if those services met their own needs and did not put them at a disadvantage. Only when a group has special needs, such as religious, cultural or linguistic needs; when the group is excluded from full participation in the agencies offering services; or when there are significant gaps in the services made available; only then will the community try to develop its own organizations to remedy these deficiencies.

The "social and cultural contract" between the ethnic communities and the host society has changed its character several times in recent history. Initially the state was not directly involved in these relationships. Still, the possibility exists for communities, which have reached a significant level of institutional development to assume more responsibility for cultural life of their group.

According to our research most group members of Tambov ethnic communities believe that ethnic traditions and folklore decline. But they consider ethnic and ethno-

confessional organizations to be the base of future existence and flourishing of their groups.

Ethnic community institutions are expected to help community members to solve social problems and to keep the ethnic culture. In return, the government is supposed to appoint community members to decision-making and advisory bodies, increase their representation in the public sector, and promote the initiatives of organizations of the cultural communities to develop their partnership with public institutions.

Our analysis of ethno-cultural organizations provides some insights into the larger issue of how one might think about multicultural organizational change.. Multiculturalism involves institutions so that all people have the opportunity to play significant roles in organizational life. Creating multicultural institutions involves rethinking the goals of citizenship, social responsibility, and democratic participation and becomes prominent part of our life.

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**Этнокультурные организации:
специфические черты организационного стиля деятельности и
перспективы развития**

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Ключевые слова и фразы: институциональное развитие организаций; конфессиональные общины; организационный стиль; переселенцы; этнические группы; этнокультурные организации; этнические сообщества.

Аннотация: Кратко рассматривается история и современное состояние институциональной деятельности некоторых этнических групп Тамбова, организационный стиль деятельности и институциональное развитие общественных структур этнических групп.

**Ethnokulturelle Organisationen: spezifische Züge des Tätigkeitsstils
und die Entwicklungsperspektive**

Zusammenfassung: Es wird die Geschichte und den gegenwärtigen Zustand der institutionellen Tätigkeit der einigen ethnischen Gruppen in Tambow, den Organisationsstil der Tätigkeit und die institutionelle Entwicklung von Gesellschaftsstrukturen der ethnischen Gruppen betrachtet.

**Organisations ethnoculturelles: traits spécifiques du style organisationnel
de l'activité et perspectives du développement**

Résumé: Sont examinés en bref l'histoire et l'état actuel de quelques groupes ethniques de la région de Tambow, le style organisationnel de l'activité et le développement institutionnel des structures sociaux des groupes ethniques.
