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*Furdyga O.*

## EXCLUSION IN MODERN CULTURE

*This paper presents the approach of studying of exclusionary processes in modern culture, because of fundamental distinguishing of “reality-virtuality” on the base of the theories of Luman’s social systems, discourses (Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe, Ferclaut) and Thevenot&Boltanski’s grandeurs.*

**Keywords:** *exclusion, culture, reality, virtuality, ontology, discourse, grandeurs, regimes of engagement, criteria of stratification.*

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*T. Diyeva*

## PATRIMONIAL SETTLEMENTS IN UKRAINE: A REVITALIZED UTOPIA?

*This paper is devoted to what might be described as a new social movement in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus – a movement of patrimonial settlements. This movement is inspired on the texts by a Russian writer Vladimir Megre and pleading for a return to ‘mother earth’ for an unalienated life in small scale egalitarian communities. To some extent it reminds agrarian communities which were a part of communal socialism ideology proposed by Narodniki in XIXth century’s Russia. The key question of my article is whether we can see the phenomenon of patrimonial settlements as a revitalization of an idea of communal socialism.*

**Keywords:** *alternative communities, socialism, patrimonial settlements.*

This article is devoted to what might be called as a new social movement in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus – patrimonial settlements. This movement is inspired on the texts by a Russian writer Vladimir Megre and pleading for a return to ‘mother earth’ for an unalienated life in small scale egalitarian communities. The main object of this article is to try to find out whether we can see the phenomenon of patrimonial settlements as a revitalization of an idea of agricultural communities (communal socialism). Alternative communities is quite a new phenomenon for contemporary Ukraine (there were commu-

nities in XIX and the beginning of XX century), therefore little analysis has been done yet. While communal socialism as one of the theoretical streams of socialism was analyzed quite well (examples are Shubin, Antonov). I will try to reach the goal of the article making an analysis of the two based on my field research in eight different communities in Ukraine.

The end of XIX century in Russian Empire was notable for arising different streams of socialism theories. Communal socialism appeared at the 60-s as one of these streams, proposing a way of reforms

and evolution in contrast to revolutionary changes suggested by the Marxists. This steam appeared as a peaceful, reformist anarcho-socialist movement [1, p. 56]. The followers of this movement got name *narodniki* for their practice of ‘walking to the people’ (*hozhdenie v narod*). The key element of communal socialism is a theory of non-capitalistic development of Russia (at that time Russian Empire), a transition to socialism through saving, using and transformation of the collectivistic principles of existed agrarian communities. The main idea lies in organizing a horizontal network of agrarian communities which are supposed to be self-governed and to a great extent independent. This social structure was expected to be free from vertical power structures, instead forming horizontal network of equal communities resulting in a kind of federation.

To realize these ideas ideologists of communal socialism (Hertsen, Ogarjov and others) suggested using traditional agrarian communities existing in rural areas of Russian Empire. These communities were considered to be a good basis for communal socialism because of their preserved traditions of collectivism (collective possession of land, collective decision-making, election of community senior etc.). It would be wrong to say that *narodniki* considered these communities as a final ideal; instead, they treated them as a basis which needed to be substantially upgraded [2, p. 201]. Theorists of communal socialism tried to make a distinction between existed communities and communities that may become a base for future society. Being aware of traditional community’s limitations (such as poor self-government, domination of collective over individual etc.) *narodniki*, nevertheless, made peasants a foundation for the future social structure. Thereby, for *narodniki*’s theorists, agrarian community of the future is a peasants’ self-government organization that possesses land. The key issue that had to be preserved was peasants’ relation to the land – ‘anyone who works on the land has his right on it as on means of production’ [3, vol. 19, p. 184]. According to *narodniki*, to make a traditional agrarian community nearer to desirable ideal it was necessary to join existing community with conscious freedom of a cultural person [2, p. 208].

Ideologists of communal socialism distinguished communal and collective property on land in agrarian communities. In the first case we get soviet *kolhoz*, when people working on the land cannot use the results and products of their work, and state takes all products in order to re-distribute them. In contrast, the case of collective property assumes that each family gets its piece of land which it cultivates and uses all products of its work. Besides, *kolhoz* was submitted to governmental officials, while

agrarian community was supposed to be based on democracy, voluntariness and self-government. Moreover, ideologists of communal socialism believed that the best motivation for people to work hard and seriously is a possibility to possess and use the results of their own work: ‘a person does something seriously when he does this for himself’ [3, cited on 2, p. 205]

Some scientists (for example, Antonov) consider ideologist of communal socialism to be against state at all; however, I would rather say they saw social structure being organized not from above, but from below what means highlighting self-government in each community. Hertsen wrote that government from above states mental inferiority of people: ‘sense of any governmentalism is to convince people that they are so weak-headed that cannot deal with their own businesses’ [3, vol. 12, p. 223]. He connected moving to society ‘without state’ and ability of a person to use given freedom. Anarcho-federalism guarantees real self-government, while self-government guarantees freedom of a cultural individual within a community (which is a basement of *narodniki*’s philosophy) [3, cited on 2, p. 212].

Communal socialism is based on assumption of a quite high level of consciousness and culture of those people who are supposed to live in agrarian communities. The key issue of *narodniki*’s ideology is a synthesis of freedom and solidarity, which assumes ability to use freedom and be able for solidarity as well as to govern both their own and community lives. This presupposes that people are able to deal with their own passions, desires, control themselves and their life, and are able to co-exist with each other resting mostly upon internal principles. Despite significance of the high level of consciousness Hertsen was aware that ‘one cannot emancipate people’s external life more than they are free internally’ [3, cited on 2, p. 238]. As practice showed, traditional agrarian communities in XIX century Russian Empire did not meet these quite high demands; to surmount this obstacle it was necessary to make a substantial piece of work within peasants’ environment, in other words, to educate peasants and raise their cultural level. These factors caused so called ‘walking to people’ (*hozhdenie v narod*) which aimed to scan the level of peasants’ ability to conceive ideas of communal socialism and start to propagate communal socialism. Similar to western socialists (Ouen, Prudon, Furieu) *narodniki* tried to create elements of future society within contemporary one. However, this tactics only revealed unreadiness of peasants to accept their ideas [2, p. 238].

The ideas of the communal socialism had never been realized in practice. Communal socialism considered traditional agrarian communities in Russian

Empire as possible basement for society's movement to socialism, and peasants were considered as a social basis for this movement. However, communal socialism remained an unrealized utopia. Peasants did not understand *narodniki's* ideas; the only thing they wanted was land. In tsarist Russia the way of reforms was replaced by the way of radical changes – revolution. In XIX century community did not become a dominant social form, moreover, it did not survive Stalinist regime. As a result, traditions of communal living had been lost. Nevertheless, communitarian psychology and craving for community way of living seems to be quite enduring, and in XXI century ideas of grass-rooted communities with self-government tend to revitalize and to be of current importance again. One of the evidences is appearance of patrimonial settlements movement.

Patrimonial settlements movement appeared at the end of XX century in Russia. It was inspired by the texts of Russian writer Vladimir Megre, and pleading for a return to 'mother earth' for an unalienated life in small scale egalitarian communities. Participants of the movement strive for organizing communities and move there for permanent residence. Patrimonial settlements are supposed to be an alternative to mainstream social forms which provides the settlers with life in harmony both with each other and with nature ('mother earth'). Appearing at the end of 90-s in Russia, the movement spread quite fast to neighboring Ukraine and Belarus. At the beginning of 2000-s first settlements of this type started to be organized in Ukraine; nowadays (2010) there are around 20 active settlements in different regions of Ukraine <sup>1</sup>.

Similar to social experiments of Owen and Fourier (see, for example, [4]) the settlers try to implement features of new society 'here and now'. However, contrary to the earlier experiments, the settlers consider patrimonial settlements being a life-long project not only for themselves, but also for their children who are supposed to continue this mode of living <sup>2</sup>. Similar to those who organized other alternative communities (see, for example, [5], [6]) members of patrimonial settlements movement are unsatisfied with contemporary social, economical, and ecological situation in the world and therefore suggest their vision of necessary changes.

<sup>1</sup> Active settlements are those where at least three families live all the year round and other members settle down actively.

During my field work I conducted 24 in-depth interviews with settlers in eight settlements in five different regions of Ukraine. Additionally I conducted an analysis of all nine Megre's books as they are a source of ideology of the whole movement. Interviews were conducted during spring-fall 2009.

<sup>2</sup> This is one of the most important questions – whether children of today's settlers will stay in the communities, whether they will continue this way of life. There is no possibility of answer this question now; those children born in settlements are 6 years old in the best case.

Patrimonial settlements movement could be defined as a peaceful movement, suggesting the way of gradual changes. The settlers see future society as a network of communities with horizontal structure of power. Each community, according to their ideology, consists of a number of separate plots (patrimones) possessed by separate families. These plots cannot be sold or divided; instead they must be transmitted as heritage. There is no single opinion among settlers whether there must be private or collective property on land, and different communities make their own decisions. Among eight settlements I visited only one has collective property on land (they create a NGO and got the land for the organization).

All main theoretical principles of the settlers' ideology are stated in Megre's texts. Books about a Siberian anchorite Anastasia are a kind of set of main ideological points. These texts are a source of inspiration for the majority of settlers, who strive to follow all principles stated in the books. However, one should say that the books give only general direction and recommendations without any specification; being a source for inspiration they have not become a canon just because there are almost no concrete directions on how to implement idea of patrimonial settlements in practice. Therefore despite a great similarity of settlements, each of them is to a large extent individual as the settlers solve the same problems in different ways. It is impossible to understand patrimonial settlements movement without addressing to these texts. All settlers who I interviewed constantly made reference to Megre's books.

It is important to note that Vladimir Megre even being an author of the texts rejects to recognize himself as an author of ideas themselves; he constantly insists that he mostly re-tales thoughts of Siberian anchorite Anastasia. It had not been proven whether such a person as Anastasia really exists; however the opposite had not been proven as well. Therefore, referring to Megre as an ideologist of the patrimonial settlement movement, I will make remarks to remind this issue.

I would say that Megre (or Anastasia if to believe in her existence and her authorship of the ideas) plays the same role for the patrimonial settlement movement as Hertsen and other ideologist of communal socialism did for *narodniki*. Leaving aside all esoteric aspects of the texts, one can say that Megre proposes a way to reform contemporary society, by means of changing people's way of life. Basically, he proposes the same as *narodniki* did – to create a network of self-sufficient communities which should be based on self-government, collectivity, solidarity, and voluntariness. These communities are supposed to be socially, economically, politically and ecologically self-sufficient and sus-

tainable. Moreover, each patrimony being a part of the whole settlement is supposed to be economically and ecologically sustainable as well. According to Megre, this structure will shift priorities of human life and will allow restructuring the whole society.

Megre nothing says about the division of labor and industrial production, what is one of the most important issues in contemporary world. On the contrary, industrial and technocratic character of present civilization is represented as a wrong way of development which leads humanity to degradation and death [7]. However, this does not mean, as one might imagine, that ideologists of the patrimonial settlements movement suggest refusing to use achievements of technocratic civilization<sup>1</sup>. Being aware about danger of radical changes, Megre (again, or Anastasia) writes about gradualness of changes [7]. One of the most important issues in the texts is that the whole way of human living must be changed in such a way that neither industry nor technical inventions will be needed as technical equipments are crutches for people that stop development of brain [7].

If *narodniki* built their theories within realities of growing industrialization and did not think about general direction human civilization was moving, then Megre speaks about quite radical changes of the whole civilization (even though they have to proceed quite gradually) – changing the direction of the development. According to Megre (or Anastasia), it is self-replication of a wrong way of living that leads humanity to the crush. Living wrongly (in big cities with extremely high pollution, eating modified food, drinking polluted water, having very fast speed of life and no time to think about it etc.) people destroy their potential, and do not open and develop their hidden abilities (because simply do not have time to think about this). Therefore, it is a self-replicated wrong way of living that is responsible for present deplorable situation in the world, and it is a key point which must be changed in a first place.

According to ideologist of patrimonial settlement movement (either Megre or Anastasia), to build harmonic future society it is necessary to start here and now. It is a patrimonial settlement which is supposed to provide a ‘right’ way of living. Megre writes that is it impossible to build new future society without changing people who will build it, as they import their visions, believes, and patterns of behavior to the new form [8]. Patrimonial settlements are proposed as a way out of contemporary

civilization crisis, because while building them people are supposed to change in a better way. Starting to build a settlement, and (what is even more important) their own patrimony people will have to take upon their shoulders the responsibility for their life, start to act as conscious individuals but not like unthinking robot. Moreover, one of the most important roles plays conscious intention to build harmonic relations with each other and with nature (‘mother earth’). Reestablishing energy connections with nature is one of the most important conditions of success [9].

Unlike *narodniki* the followers of Anastasia do not go far in theoretical justifications of the future social structure. The only thing Megre states in his texts is that in the future the whole Earth will cover with network of patrimonial settlements, a harmonic relations between human being and nature will be restored. However, one can say that Megre proposes exactly the same idea just in another ‘cover’ – a network of self-governed communities. Both approaches have quite similar attitude to state power, both propose grass-root self-organization with direct democracy, both believe that vertical power structure humiliate people.

However, in contrast to *narodniki*, who always thought about political conditions that must support social changes, participants of patrimonial settlement movement are almost apolitical. While ideologists of communal socialism believed that without appropriate political conditions communities, which substantially differ from surrounding environment, will be crushed by the system, the settlers pay quite little attention to political issues.

Generally speaking, ideology of patrimonial settlements attaches significant value to human consciousness. Consciousness plays such a big role because no external control of settlers is provided by the ideology; it is supposed that people cooperate voluntarily, realize the necessity of solidarity and cooperation for common good. Moreover, it is supposed that members of a community are self-dependent and self-reliant; even though it is not totally true now, in any case people are able to this. As my research shows, the absolutely majority of the respondents tend to escape any vertical power structure within their settlements. In some cases this escaping from hierarchy leads to denial even of any formalized regulations of co-existence within the community: ‘I don’t think we need any rules in our community. Any regulation gives a possibility to meddle in other people’s businesses. There are some self-evident rules we support, like, for example, to respect each others’ territory...’ (Interview 4). However, in some other communities settlers started to arrive to conclusion that at least minimum set of the most general rules is necessary: ‘we realized that

<sup>1</sup> Of course, there are people in the movement who insist on giving up using technical achievements of industrial civilization; however, the majority of settlers even sharing general ideas, prefer to move to the ideal gradually.



together we can do more than being separately. I proposed to make a day of common work every Saturday. This day we gather and go to one of our neighbor to help him to do what he/she says. In this way we helped to build a house, a shed and next Saturday will dig a well' (Interview 14).

The reason caused this decision is very simple: after a while people revealed that the same facts and events they understand and interpret differently. 'If I start everything from the beginning now, I would be more careful about my future neighbors, and I would propose at least a minimum set of rules. For example, it is forbidden to sale plot of land to strangers who have no idea about patrimonial settlements. We've got such a neighbor and don't know what to do with him now' (Interview 11). Therefore, as practice shows, relying on high level of consciousness is unjustified; otherwise, even relying on consciousness there must be external regulators, at least during first several years.

As it was mentioned above, *narodniki* also attached significant value to human consciousness supposing that it could be developed naturally. However, they did not have chance to test this assumption, unlike the members of patrimonial settlements movement. As interviews indicate, those people living in settlements started to be more critical to what is stated in Megre's books. For example, they say that 'yes, we expect each other to be conscious, but at the same time it is worth to introduce some external rules...' (Interview 2).

Both ideologists of communal socialism and of patrimonial settlement movement believed that high level of consciousness have to be educated. While *narodniki* intentionally relied on peasants (since they planned to use their traditions of communal living), patrimonial settlements movement rests on middle class city-dwellers. It would be inconsistently to state that Megre intentionally wrote his books for middle class city-dwellers, I do not have evidences of this. However, the fact is that the absolute majority of members in active patrimonial settlements are citizens in first or second generation. None of my respondents or any other member of active patrimonial settlement I personally know were born or have been living for a substantial period of time in a village. This fact allows comparing the patrimonial settlements with 'intellectual' communes of XIX century's Russia [10].

Ideologists of communal socialism intended to use peasants' traditions of communal living (in other words, they needed their ability and skills of communal living) as a basement for a future society. Ideology of patrimonial settlements movement, instead, relies on people's subconscious inclination to com-

munal living and their intention to realize it. There are no traditions of communal living anymore, so the settlers have to learn everything from the beginning and on their own experience. As my field research shows, quite often contemporary settlers do not know how to live communally, making lots of experiments on their own lives. Moreover, as it was considered in my other article [11] commitment is not a necessary element for existing of patrimonial settlements in Ukraine.

Therefore, comparing the patrimonial settlements movement and communal socialism of XIX century, one can see that they have both similarities and differences. Both these movements propose to create a network of communities based on the principles of self-government, voluntariness, solidarity and cooperation. Both of them suggest horizontal power structure instead of vertical (moreover, they both believe that vertical power structure humiliate people). Both of them attach significant value to human consciousness and high cultural level; moreover, they have quite similar belief in people (both trust that people are able to be responsible for their own lives without anyone over them). At least, both of them suggest a way of reforms and evolution rather than radical changes.

At the same time there are a few differences between the two. *Narodniki* chose peasants as a social basis for realization of their ideas, while the participants of the patrimonial settlements movement are rather middle class city-dwellers (and I cannot state that Megre chose this social class intentionally). *Narodniki* intended to use peasants' traditions of communal living, their ability to live in community, while the settlers have to start everything from the begging, as traditions of communal living had not survived Soviet times. *Narodniki* during their 'walking to people' appealed to Christian values and used religious 'language' in communications with peasants, while ideology of the patrimonial settlements movement uses some elements of New Age and refers to old Slavic traditions. *Narodniki's* activity was within XIX century's realities (growing industrialization), while ideology of the patrimonial settlements movement assumes changing general direction of society's (or even, civilization) development, and suggest to change present way of life. At least, ideology of the patrimonial settlements movement includes such notions as social, economical and ecological sustainability, which just did not exist in XIX century.

Thereby, it seems to be possible to conclude that patrimonial settlement movement is to some extent a revitalization of community socialism ideas.

# **APPENDIX** **Interviews collected during spring – autumn 2009**

№ interview	Settlement	Sex	Age	Duration of living/activity in a settlement (years)
1	1	Female	36	4
2	1	Male	42	4
3	1	Female	37	4
4	2	Male	50	6
5	2	Female	36	5
6	2	Female	30	5
7	2	Female	29	5
8	3	Female	43	5
9	3	Female	48	5
10	4	Male	34	3
11	4	Female	33	3
12	4	Male	34	6
13	4	Female	32	5
14	4	Female	36	2
15	5	Female	49	3
16	5	Male	52	3
17	5	Female	40	3
18	5	Male	44	3
19	6	Female	49	3
20	6	Male	50	3
21	6	Male	40	3
22	6	Female	35	2
23	7	Female	38	2
24	7	Male	40	2
25	8	Female	31	2
26	8	Male	32	3

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Дієва Т. С.

## **РОДОВІ ПОСЕЛЕННЯ УКРАЇНИ: ВІДРОДЖЕННЯ УТОПІЇ?**

Статтю присвячено явищу в Україні, Росії та Білорусі, яке можна визначити як рух родових поселень. Цей рух закликає «повернутися до землі», для життя в невеликих рівноправних спільнотах. Деякою мірою це явище нагадує аграрні спільноти комунального соціалізму, запропоновані соціалістами-народниками в XIX столітті в Росії. Ключове запитання, на яке намагається дати відповідь ця стаття, – чи можна розглядати родові поселення в Україні як своєрідне відродження ідей комунального соціалізму народників.

**Ключові слова:** альтернативні спільноти, комунальний соціалізм, родові поселення.