30 YEARS AFTER AN ACCIDENT: COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF THE CHORNOBYL RESETTLERS

By

Yelyzaveta Havrylenko

Submitted to Central European University

Deaprtment of Sociology and Social Anthropology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts

Supervisors: Andreas Dafinger

Vlad Naumescu

Budapest, Hungary

2017

ABSTRACT

Chornobyl disaster that happened in Ukraine in 1986, was one of the most serious nuclear catastrophes in the world. However, no separate research on its social consequences for the resettled people and the Ukrainian society has been done. Through the example of village the village of Kupuvate in Chornobyl zone in Ukraine, current research gives up-to-date information about the collective memory transformations that have happened to the resettled people. Main findings of the research are following: feeling of belonging to the former homeland among resettlers that did not disappear over 30 years and a contradiction of Soviet, Ukrainian, and alternative discourses of the Chornobyl disaster and zone. Along with this, spatial resilience of the Chornobyl zone is analyzed from the post-disaster management perspective and the possible trajectories of recovery for the migrants, the Zone, and the Ukrainian society are marked. The current research contributes to the maintenance of the social memory about the Chornobyl disaster as well as provides practical solutions for the overcoming the trauma caused by it in the community of the resettlers and the larger Ukrainian society as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my supervisor Andreas Dafinger and my second reader Vlad Naumescu for helping me to say clearly what I wanted to say.

I also want to thank my respondents who opened their houses and hearts for me.

And finally, I would like to thank my father, for everything.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 1: Approaching Chornobyl Disaster

Thirty one years ago one of the biggest nuclear disasters in the world occurred. Not only it has polluted local nature with radioactive substances and negatively affected the nature of Ukrainian and Belorussian Polissia regions, but also threatened the health of their dwellers as well as people in many European countries. Among the main causes of The Chornobyl disaster was negligence of the stuff, disregard of the safety rules at the power plant, and the design of the reactor. The consequences of the disaster were grievous. According to the report provided by Bebeshko, Bazyka and Chumak (2012), the territory contaminated with radioactive dust appeared to be more than 145,000km2 (Figure 1) in Ukraine, Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus (p.5). The contamination of the territory is shown on the Figure 1 that presents the map of its radioactive pollution in the result of the Chornobyl disaster. (United Nation Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, 2017).

Because of the immediate release of radiation into the environment and long-lasting process of radioactive decay disaster had both early and delayed radiological effects for the health of people. As stated by Anisimov and Ryzhenkov (2016) in their research on the Chornobyl disaster consequences, "Early effects include acute radiation sickness, local damage to skin and eyes, and hematological, immunological and cytogenetic disorders in the accident liquidation participants and the population. Delayed radiological effects are an increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer and leukemia; an increased incidence of cancer among the liquidators; growth of overall mortality and vascular mortality of the accident liquidation participants and evacuees; and radiation cataracts" (p. 268). Chornobyl sufferers in Ukraine were informed by the doctors that they are going to feel the radioactive influence on their health in 10-20 years, and many of them really did experience it. Moreover, because of the comorbidity of the diseases, induced by

radiation, they continue to cause new health problems in people with time and age. That is why it can be said that people are going to experience more health problems caused by the disaster in the future.

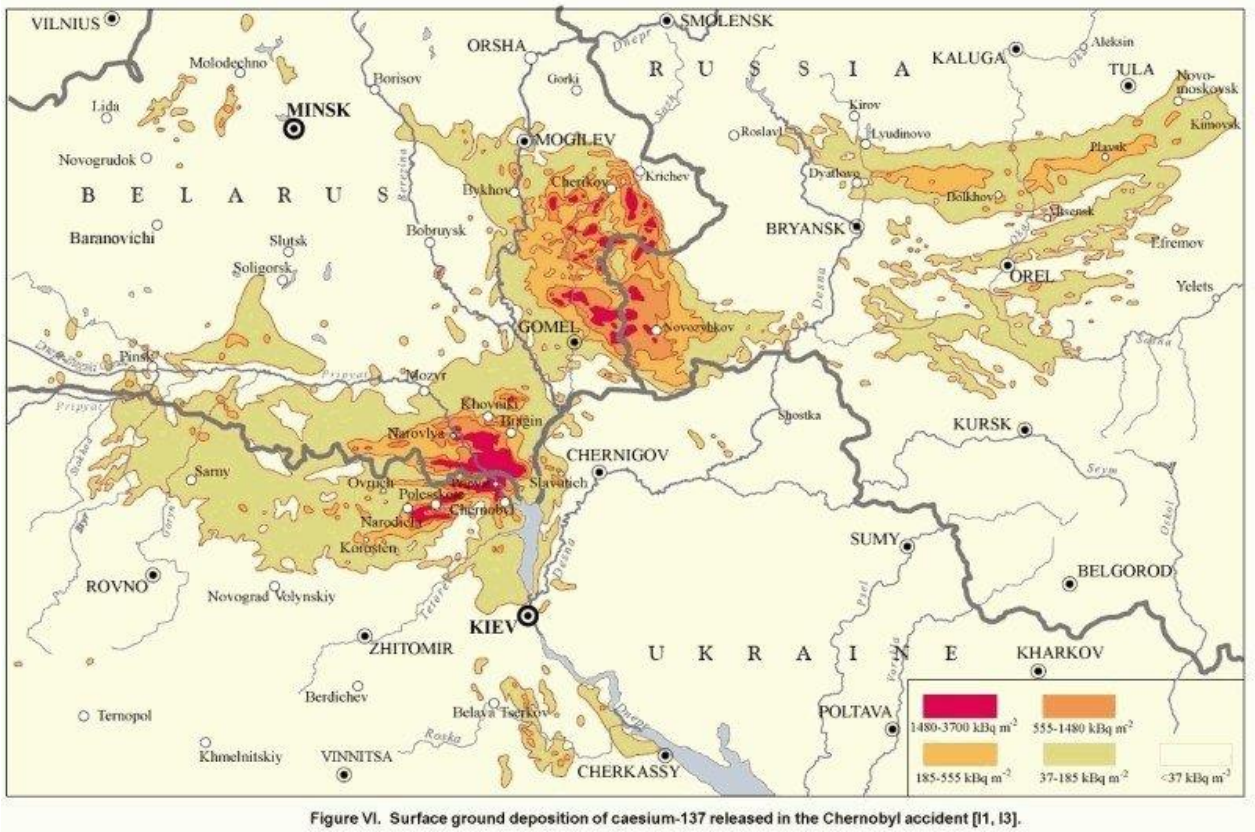

Figure VI. Surface ground deposition of caesium-137 released in the Chernobyl accident [I1, I3].

Figure 1. Chornobyl Radiation Map

According to the statistics for Ukraine, presented in the report by Holovakha and Panina (2008, p.64), 7% of Ukrainian population suffered from the disaster on the ChNPP, while 3.5 millions of citizens were exposed to radiation. Medical examinations proved that 80% of these people and 85% of liquidators are ill. At the same time, more than 82000 people became disabled because of the disaster. Nevertheless, these numbers are only approximate ones. At the same time, 30-kilometres Chornobyl zone of alienation was formed as a measure of protection from the consequences of the disaster. However, the methods of its formation seemed to be more

voluntarist, than logical because it was created without knowledge about actual contamination of the land. A lot of villages that were not in 30-kilometres area de-facto, were included to it de-jure because of being a part of one "kolhosp" (collective household of villages in Soviet Union). It was the case of the researched village Kupuvate, that was not a part of the alienated area de facto. However, in five years Ukraine became independent, and "kolhosps" disappeared. Inclusion of the village to the Zone meant resettlement of all its population, that resulted in psychological challenges of adaptation to the new places, with which a lot of migrants did not manage to cope.

Despite its destructive consequences, the Chornobyl disaster contributed to the development of the civil society and ecological movement in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, because a lot of environmental activists and journalists began to question the Soviet politics of the concealment of the disaster's consequences. At the same time, the disaster encouraged growing disbelief into the Soviet government among the population of Soviet Ukraine that led to its collapse in 1991.

Despite the great social consequences, Chornobyl, in the first place, has become an individual tragedy. That is why in the current research I propose to look on this tragedy by the eyes of its sufferers - people from the village of Kupuvate in Kyiv region, Ukraine, who were resettled permanently from their homeland because of the Chornobyl[1] disaster. Figure 2 presents the map of the village (Soviet military topographic maps, 2017).

How it is possible to understand what has happened to them and their picture of the world? In this research I explore collective memory about the Chornobyl disaster preserved by *Chornobylci*. By this term I mean all the people from Chornobyl region who were resettled because

[1] The name of the city of Chornobyl in this paper is spelled according to the Ukrainian grammar.

of the disaster as well as liquidators – workers, who were liquidating the consequences of the disaster. According to Moris Halbwachs, "in reality the past does not recur as such... everything seems to indicate that the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present" (Halbwachs, 1992, p.39-40). Constructive nature of collective memory suggests that understanding of the disaster among migrants is changing with time, that influences their identity, feeling of belonging and opens new possibilities to deal with the consequences of the disaster.

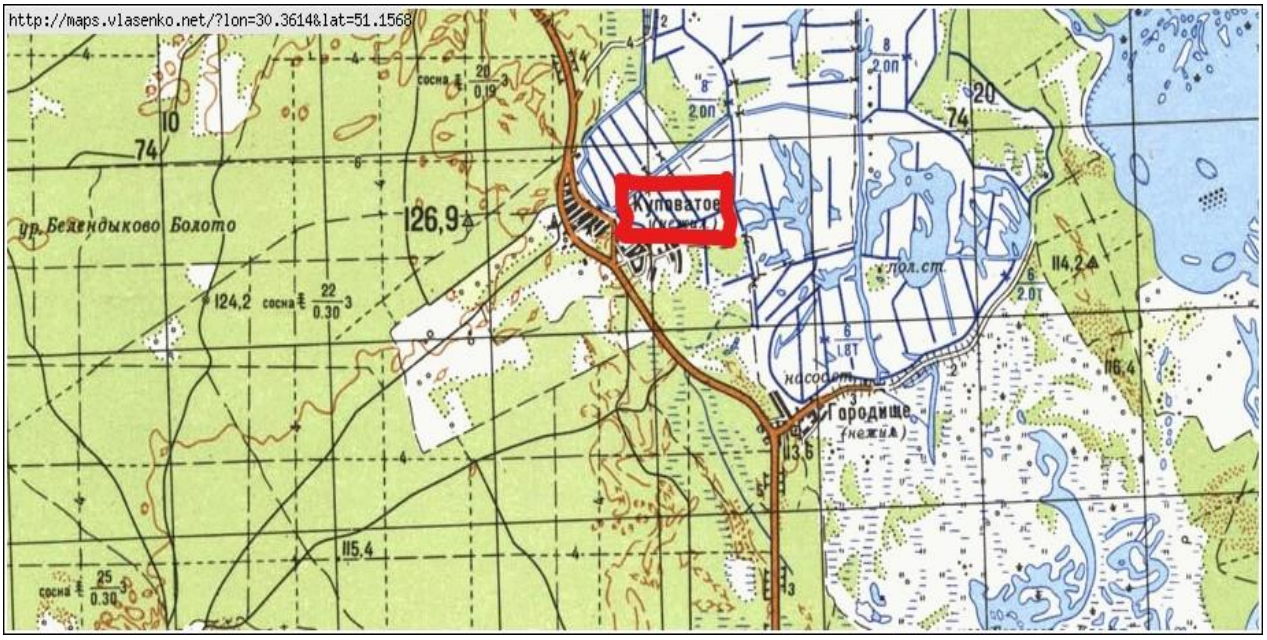

Figure 2. Topographic Map of Kupovate

Despite the fact that there were a lot of research done on the consequences of the Chornobyl disaster for the nature, people's health, psyche, and adaptation after resettlement, they were mostly conducted from an impersonal scientists' perspective, while the aspect of migrants' self-view was neglected. This information is important for understanding how the Chornobyl disaster continues to influence its victims and the whole Ukrainian society to date. Such understanding, in its turn, will help to establish efficient post-disaster management policies. That is why the current research

is aimed at the adoption of the phenomenological perspective on the human experience that values multiplicity of subjective perceptions to get rich, up-to-date representations of the Chornobyl disaster consequences from "the live memory" holders. In order to reach this goal three following questions should be answered. How “cultural trauma”, caused by the Chornobyl disaster, is represented in the ways it is remembered nowadays? What representational discourses of the Chornobyl disaster and the Zone exist among resettlers and Ukrainians on the whole and how they influence these groups? What are present challenges connected with the management of the Chornobyl disaster’s consequences and how they can be tackled?

The current research was designed as a case-study of the community of village Kupuvate, which was resettled from the village because of its inclusion into the Chornobyl zone. The village is situated in Ivankiv area in Kyiv region, 32 kilometers from the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant (ChNPP). The population of the village before the disaster was estimated as 324 people. Before the disaster those people were living in a semi-agricultural community, making their ends meet both by working on farms around and in bigger cities as well as doing private farming. When I came to the village in autumn, 2016 there were 19 locals living there, who came back to the Zone after the resettlement. In the village I did an anthropological research, living and interviewing the people.

In the current research I continued exploration of the Kupuvate community by interviewing people who were resettled from the village to the new places of living – villages of Gruz’ke, Novi Opachychi, and Kyiv. Consequences of the Chornobyl disaster for the collective memory transformations of the Kupuvate resettlers can be fully understood only if the experience of the different categories of resettlers is analyzed. That is why in the current research I rely both on the new findings and the ones from my previous research in the Zone to present different dimensions

of Chornobyl sufferers' experience. During my fieldtrip to Kyiv and Kyiv region in April, 2017 I conducted fifteen deep, semi-structured interviews with two groups of migrants – old and middle-aged generation. By old generation of resettlers I mean people who were older than thirty five years when the disaster occured. By middle-aged generation I mean people who were younger than this age, respectively. I was also planning to interview young generation of resettlers' children who were born outside the Zone. However, several trial interviews with them proved that the perception of the disaster consequences for their families has not crystalized in their consciousness yet or they were indifferent to them. That is why the investigation of this generation of resettlers can have potential for research in the future.

In Chapter 1 have introduced the historical context of the Chornobyl disaster and related statistics on its consequences for the health of people and for the nature in Ukraine and the neighbouring states. I also described methodology and questions of the current research.

In Chapter 2 I will present the main literature on the topic and theories that were helpful for the analysis of my findings, such as theories of precarity, risk society, traumatogenic change.

In the Chapter 3 I am going to discuss migrants' perception of the disaster, challenges, socio-spatial differences, and discrimination that they faced due to the resettlement. I am also going to explore the reasons of the radioactive danger neglect among the migrants. At the end, I am going to show how ambiguous treatment of the disaster consequences by the Ukrainian authorities, resettlers, and current settlers of the Zone results in its different representations in the view of the mentioned groups.

In addition, in Chapter 4 I am going to adopt the concept of place-identity to explain how the resettlement influenced the formation of multiple identities in migrants. Its consequences for

self-understanding, subjective well-being, and the feeling of belonging will be also presented. Finally, I will reflect on resettlers' attachment to their homeland and the Zone that results in the particular practices and attitudes towards repatriation.

Next, in Chapter 5 I am going to analyze the consequences of the Chornobyl disaster in the paradigm of risk society. I will also explain the need in the establishment of the legal status of the Zone and Chornobyl and changing public and official discourse of speaking about it to manage the consequences of the disaster. Spatial resilience of the Zone as a natural object will be analyzed to explore the potential of its opening and revival of the resettled communities.

Finally, in Chapter 6 I am going to conclude description of my research by summarizing its main findings. Those findings will touch upon Chornobyl disaster as "a cultural trauma"

CHAPTER 2: Searching for the Lens to Look Through

To start with, as long as current research is devoted to the collective memory of Chornobylci about the Chornobyl disaster, Moris Halbwachs' theory of collective memory appears to be a foundational theoretical framework to describe Chornobylci's recollection of their post-disaster experiences. His theory is helpful for this research because its main argument is that memory of the group is not a stable entity, but changing with time. Accepting this, I am going to show the main factors of this change. Another advantage of this theory is the fact that it helps to understand the connection between collective memory and identity. On the matter of memories' recollection Halbwachs (1992) says: "...We place ourselves in the perspective of this (our primary group, ed.) group, we adopt its interest and follow the slant of its reflections" (p. 52). So, learning memories and opinions about the disaster shared by the dwellers of the researched village, it will be possible to describe their self-perceptions and compare them to official discourse about Chornobyl established by the Ukrainian government in the public sphere.

Next, collective memory is tightly connected with the feeling of belonging that Rebecca Bryant (2011) describes in her research on the political conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots that resulted in the forced resettlement of members of those groups. In this research Bryant shows how through the recollection of the common memory by both groups about the conflict and its consequences the feeling of belonging to native lands and communities is manifested. She describes the components of this belonging such as attachment to home and the need to be useful for the community. That is why I am going to adopt her theory of belonging to show how, through the remembering about the past, Chornobylci are forming their own discourse of the disaster and its consequences that includes their own identity.

After the Chornobyl disaster a lot of literature about its consequences for the health of people and nature appeared. In the following years its social consequences were examined more thoroughly. Among the most detailed books about different aspects of Chornobyl is a book by Adriana Petryna (2013) *"Life exposed: Biological citizens after Chernobyl"*. Developed by Petryna, notion of biological citizenship as a survival strategy of Chornobylci will be helpful for my research because it explains a lot of their practices aimed at managing disaster's influence on their lives by themselves. At the same time, I am going to undermine Petryna's claim that Chornobylci were manipulating structures of knowledge and power to obtain social benefits based on radiation-induced injuries. For this, I am going to adopt a concept of risk society to show that uncertainty of being-in-the-world, experienced by people who suffered nuclear disaster, was the main trigger of all their attempts to cope with disaster's consequences.

Similarly, the challenges for self-definition caused by biological side of existence are examined in the theory of precarious lives, proposed by Judit Butler (2006). When Butler talks about precarity, she refers to Levinas' theory of the face that displays extreme precariousness of the Other. From this point of view, Levinas' definition of humanity as a rupture of being acquires its sense. And the vulnerability of Chornobyl sufferers and Zone dwellers appears to be a matter of recognition who is human and who is not (read, who is a subject to financial and social benefits from the government and who is not).

At the same time, with the help of risk society theory, invented by Ulrich Beck (2006), resettlers' vulnerability can be also understood as a common vulnerability of people living in the time when they can not believe their senses any more. To specify, in his article, devoted to the Chornobyl disaster, Beck claims that nowadays the world doubles itself because the world of the nuclear technologies is separated from the world of ordinary life. Everybody appears to be

vulnerable in a risk society because the reality of risk is usually controlled by the governments who produce risk definitions as a part of their power games. What has happened to people during The Chornobyl disaster, according to Beck (1987) became "an anthropological shock" for the Ukrainian society, the world, and the Chornobyl sufferers themselves because of the grievous influence of the invisible radiation on people's bodies.

In order to explore specificities of the life under nuclear threat in risk society I am going to compare the case of Chornobylci with the case of the inhabitants of la Hauge (France) who were living and working on the nuclear waste reprocessing plant. This case was researched and described by Francoise Zonabend (2007) in her book *"Nuclear peninsula"*. Using her research, I am going to show that the closer is people's relationship with the phenomenon of radioactivity, the more they tend not to acknowledge its danger. Along with this, I will highlight similarities between the ways in which discourse of the reticence about danger was formed in both cases, producing fear in people from la Hauge and uncertainty in Chornobylci, to show general vulnerability of people that phenomenon of radioactivity produces in risk society.

What is more, as long as collective memory changes, so does the individual identity affected by it, that is why several identity theories were adopted in the current research to explore up-to-date self-perceptions of Chornobyl resettlers. Identity change is highly dependent on social change, especially the traumatogenic one, described by Piotr Sztompka (2000). Without any doubt, the Chornobyl disaster was traumatogenic, because it was a sudden, comprehensive, fundamental and unexpected event. The author defined the awareness about the collective loss and suffering and their appearance in the public discourse as the main criteria of collective trauma. In his theory social rootedness and broad education are the main factors of social groups protection from trauma. At the same time, his concept was adopted by Yakovlieva (2014) to define the Chornobyl disaster

as “a cultural trauma” of Ukraine (p.43), which I am criticizing in my research as a part of official state discourse about Chornobyl that does not match real opinions on the disaster shared by its sufferers nowadays.

Spatial aspect of Chornobyl appeared to be very important for this work because of the research of Chornobyl sufferers’ resettlement, Chornobyl zone settlers and the very Zone as a spatial phenomenon. The concept of place-identity as self-understanding based on the socialization in particular place, developed by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell D. L. (1996), was applied to understand the process of multiple identities formation connected to resettlement after the disaster. The main idea of multiple identity theory isin the fact that important life events can become disruptive for one identity and encourage formation of the other. In the current research it is used to describe not only the process of such identity formation in resettlers, but also the ways they reconciled old and newly emerged identities in their selves with time. Also, place attachment theory, described by Tuan (1979), that explains why people start to define some place as home, helped to understand what challenges Chornobylci faced being forced to abandon their homes. The main argument of Tuan lays in the extreme importance of home as a central point for individual system of orientation in the world as well as home for gods and ancestors’ souls. So, it helps to understand, how “homeliness” of the Zone developed as a part of resettlers’ identity before this place became alienated.

While governments believed that they can control and calculate the risks, a lot of nuclear accidents, and Chornobyl is among them, proved that they can not. Neither authorities, nor military forces, nor business, nor military can define and control risks rationally, that is why people usually have no choice but to cope with the uncertainty of their everyday life on their own which makes them very vulnerable. That is the main point of the risk society theory, developed by Beck (2006).

Seen in the framework of this theory, uncertainty about radiation, health, and future that Chornobylci experience nowadays can be understood, while the need for their rights' insurance in the time of omnipresent vulnerability can be argumented.

So, with the help of the theories, described above, I invented a lense to look on the human condition of people who suffered from nuclear disaster. I investigated it on the individual level by researching identity, belonging and attachment as well as from the perspective of macrosociological theories such as those about risk society and vulnerability. Last but not least, social memory theory served me as a link between individual and social levels.

CHAPTER 3: Perception of the Chornobyl Disaster and the Zone by Migrants

3.1. Roots of the Uncertainty

From the very first moment of the Chornobyl disaster, the politics of its concealment, led by Soviet authorities, defined its perception by people who were supposed to be resettled. In her research, Yaroshinskaya (1998) mentions that "overall concealment of truth on radioactively contaminated areas had lasted for three years – till the first Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR" (p.114) that had been taking place on the twenty fifth of May, 1989. What is more, revealing secret documents about the Chornobyl disaster, Yaroshinskaya states that in order to "normalize" sudden increase in people coming to hospitals with radioactive exposure, Politburo heightened maximum acceptable doses by several times, so, those people were refused hospitalization (Ibid., p.117). Lack of the correct information and mistreatment of the sufferers in hospitals resulted in the development of uncertainty in the future in people who learnt about the fire at one of Chornobyl nuclear power plant, but did not know its causes. According to Fritz and Williams (1957), "when people have no prior warning, the recognition of danger is frequently delayed. One reason is the commonly noticed tendency of persons to associate disaster signs with familiar or normal events" (p.43).

That is why perception of the nuclear disaster as fire delayed the feeling of danger in villagers from Kupuvate. Despite the fact that they learnt about the nuclear nature of disaster very soon, concealment of the information about radiation by Soviet authorities put them at risk. Respondents from Kupuvate were continuing to stay and work on fields at home during one week after the disaster until buses came to take them to the place of resettlement. Narrative of one

female, 91-years old respondent shows gender differences in the strategies that people were adopting to cope with the fact of resettlement:

"A lot of buses came to the village because of the disaster. People were crying with their heads grasped. Others were taking axes and hammers to make huts in the forest. I was organizing resettlement in my village. At that time man got drunk and slept, while women were crying and wailing. Authorities lied to us that it will be only 3-days long resettlement. Nobody wanted to leave the village."

At first, people from Kupuvate were settled in the village Kopylov (Kyiv region) in the houses of the locals, while new houses were being built for them by volunteers from Russian Federation and Western Ukraine. In the memory of migrants this time is marked by thankfulness to the people who accepted them in their houses. At the same time, they were not reluctant to mention some cases of hostility to them from the locals in the interviews, that were revealed only during deeper conversations. For example, male, 47-years old respondent, who is currently working in the city of Chornobyl, said that Chornobylci did not experience discrimination in the new village. However, when I asked him to recall some examples of treatment, he remembered:

"People were treating us differently. Some compassionated us. The others… Sometimes head of the village was introducing migrants to the locals to settle them temporary in their houses. At the head's presense they were accepting them. But, after the head was leaving, locals were throwing migrant's belongings from their houses."

Overall, concealment of the information on radioactive exposure as well as ambiguous treatment in the new places of resettlement appeared to be the main roots of uncertainty about the

future in Kupuvate villagers. Such an uncertainty worsened their experience of relocation and discrimination from the locals which they did not know how to confront.

3.2. Challenges of the New Life

When the houses for migrants were ready, they were finally settled at the village of Gruz'ke in Kyiv region. However, the quality of their new homes was very poor because they were built in a rush. A lot of respondents had to build new homes after first winter because provided houses were not suitable for living. One male, 74-years old respondent was happy to get new house because at the moment of the disaster he got married and was supposed to take care of his wife, though, he described the condition of the house without any idealizations:

"When they brought us to the new houses, everything was wet there. Doors were falling out, so, we had to fix them. We also did outbuilding. But we are thankful to the builders. The whole Western Ukraine was involved in it. Every house was built during the four months."

However, not all the houses were in such poor condition. Some of them, mainly the smaller ones, were of a good quality and even furnished on the money collected by builders (not by the government) for the resettlers. At the same time, destruction of the poorly built houses during the first winter of resettlement appeared to be the main reason for their owners to come back to their homes in the Zone.

Next, it is important to understand that for resettled people their village was a stable framework in which interpersonal relations and group identity were maintained. According to Fried (1963), "most notable in the working class, effective relationships with others are dependent upon a continuing sense of common group identity, the experience of loss and disruption of these affiliations is intense and frequently irrevocable" (p.157). Kupuvate dwellers were combining

wage or seasonal work with private farming and formed rather closed community because of geographical location of their village in the alienated forest area. Despite the fact that villagers were resettled together to the new places and got houses near each other, they, mainly, did not manage to reestablish former relations in the new socio-spatial setting. That is why some of them went back to their empty village in Chornobyl zone where spatial environment was familiar to them or were dreaming about coming back all their life which was reported by one female, 48-years old respondent with compassion to her co-villagers:

"The biggest trauma was a psychological one, because people were told lies. If they knew from the very beginning that they will not come back, they would humble themselves. In the old age, many people "were going home" – they went crazy on this idea. But some people went back to the Zone – and nobody of them died of cancer, everybody died because of age."

Neverheless, while respondents' confidence in the safety of the Chornobyl zone for life is based on the evidence of their co-villagers' death (though, there is no medical statistics on this issue), there is also scientific explanation for the fact that old people have been managing to live in Chornobyl zone already for so many years. In her research, Yaroshinskaya (1998) cites the first open report on the consequences of the Chornobyl disaster "Radio-contamination Patterns and Possible Health Consequences of the Accident at the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Station: " Among the population and, in the first place, among the population residing in the strict control zones and being exposed to irradiation every day since the catastrophe at ChNPP, the authors says, there will be less fatal cases of induced cancers than among the populations of all other territories" (p.116). So, while continuous exposure to small amounts of radiation was proved by the scientists to be less harmful for health than single substantial irradiation, it can be assumed that organisms of people, who are currently living in the Zone, got used to such small dozes. Nevertheless, the lack

of information about the influence of radiation on human body encouraged the appearance of non-grounded opinions about its harmlessness among Chornobylci, worsened by the feeling that their resettlement was unjust and not necessary at all.

At the same time, adaptation of those who stayed was complicated by stigmatization. At the beginning of conversation respondents usually tended to remember positive treatment in new community. However, during the investigation of challenges of adaptation they named a lot of cases of stigmatization. Among those cases were calling with offensive names, public expression of hostility in the market or post-office, ungrounded accusation of being responsible for all negative events, refusal to accept resettled children to school. Here is how respondents describe their experience:

"At the post office and other public places people were telling that we brought a lot of radiation. They were saying that they had headache because of us". (Male respondent, 74 years)

"At the very beginning people did not like us here. They were calling us Germans ("nimci", Ukr.) because our language was different, stray people ("zabrody", Ukr.), and Palestinians ("Palestynci", Ukr.)". (Female respondent, 91 years)

Such stigmatization can be explained by the theory of purity and danger, proposed by Mary Douglas (2003). The fact of resettlement defined migrants from Chornobyl as people in a marginal state who were placeless. And, as long as locals could not define their status, they were treated them as both vulnerable (with compassion) and dangerous (with prejudice).

Symbolical nature of the discrimination of resettlers is evident because radiation can not spread from person to person. It would be possible only if somebody was severely affected by radioactive exposure, however, it was not the case of Kupuvate villagers. As resettlers became

familiar to locals with time, they were not feared as strangers any more and facts of discrimination transformed into jokes that both migrants and locals laugh at now.

Along with partial discrimination, difference in the landscape was one more challenge for migrants to adapt at the new place. In her research on resettlement, Speller (2000) argues that in rural area landscape usually forms a part of a culture. Being resettled, people from Kupuvate lost forms of the landscape in which their cultural practices were normally conducted. And while resettled children adopted new spatial forms for self-expression very soon, for older generation it was mostly impossible because they were socialized in their village during a long period of time. So, difference in the landscape was the most striking part of resettlement for older generation. Its representative, female, 78-years old respondent described differences between Kupuvate and new village Gruz'ke in the following way:

"There were a lot of rivers in our village, reach nature that are absent in this village. There we were living near the water. Trees there were fertile and the water was mild. There our health was better, here there is a lot of salt in the water."

Another substantial challenge was an adaptation to the cultural differences that was going on very slow in the community of resettlers. Being raised in a rather closed society with strong patriarchal and religious values, older generation of migrants could not reconcile with disrespect of religious and family values in the local community of Gruz'ke. Older respondents were telling me that they were negatively impressed by the disrespect of the old people, obscene language and free romantic relationships practiced by the local youth. In general, Chornobylci were taken aback by the high level of robbery, fights, and murders, seen usually in the new village, that they have never experienced in Kupuvate. There such things just were not possible, because small size of their community was ensuring social control, while the area and population of Gruz'ke were much

bigger. Female, 42-years old respondent explained painful perception of the new environment in her older co-villagers by their religiosity:

"Chornobyl people are very religious. Parents were teaching us not to work on Sunday. When we came here (to Gruz'ke) we saw that locals do not respect Sunday. During the first years we felt a difference in the treatment of fests and life here. Our people were cheerful, they were gathering together usually and celebrating with all the village. In this village traditions are different. I felt that our people started to give up. They were gathering together, but all their conversations were about the life in Kupuvate. They were dreaming about coming back home during a long period of time".

So, quality of houses, differences in landscape and culture of the new villages, discrimination from the locals were the greatest challenges for Chornobyl sufferers' adaptation after resettlement. While resettled children were adopting new community values and styles of behavior very easy, older generation did not attempt to do so because their worldview was already formed, that resulted in a painful nostalgia for the lost homeland lasting for many years.

3.3. Is not it True that Radiation is Everywhere?

As long as from the very beginning of the disaster and resettlement people in Chornobyl area were not informed about the real consequences of the disaster for their health and influence of radiation on it, they got used to avoid thinking about it. They also started to think that even if the danger exists, it will not affect them personally. In her research, Francoise Zonabend (2007) describes similar coping strategy that people developed to deal with the danger of irradiation and contamination living near the nuclear waste reprocessing plant: "Opinion polls shows that fear of an accident like that at Chernobyl appears less acute, the nearer a person lives to a nuclear

establishment" (p. 44-45). She explains such attitude of her respondents by their trust and reliance on the government that was supposed to take all safety measures. In case of Chornobylci, they became disappointed in the governmental help very quickly because of its scarcity, but they preserved the same attitude to radioactivity as Zonabend's respondents.

However, the situation of liquidators was even worse, because their bodies suffered the most from radiation during the liquidation of the consequences of the disaster. According to my respondents, even if people were called through military service to work as liquidators, they could refuse this work. Nevertheless, it was happening very rarely because for many of them big financial compensation for this work was motivating enough to stay there. Some of them were conducting that work because of the deep feeling of patriotism and responsibility in front of the country and their community. So, even if they were understanding that their health is deteriorating because of it, they were continuing working. As several respondents from their families informed me, with time liquidators developed a feeling of fatalism because they were guessing that they will not live long as radiation had irreversible effect on their health. That is why a lot of them started to drink hard. Diseases, caused by radioactive exposure, in combination with alcoholism and depression caused by them resulted in the very soon death of that people. Their death came in hand to the state authorities who were expecting them to die fast on two reasons. Firstly, they had secret information about severe violations of human rights and health protection norms that were happening during the liquidation. Secondly, they were subjects to big financial support and social benefits, which they never got. The matter was that Soviet Union established a program to support the liquidators. But, as Petryna (2000) explains in her research, "administrators… materially benefited from those processes by claiming material and physical damages themselves" (p.24). That is why real

liquidators were benefiting from that program very rarely because those benefits were distributed among the members of authorities and their friends by the principle of nepotism.

What is striking, even in families where liquidators died of radiation, people does not accept radiation as a real danger. All of them think that there is no radiation in Chornobyl zone nowadays So does one female, 47-years old respondent, who blames Soviet authorities for voluntarist approach to the establishment of the alienated zone:

"There is no radiation there. The time of radioactive decay is known. When the nuclear reactor exploded, the wind was blowing not in our direction, but on the Republic of Belarus and Zhytomyr region. They should have not simply take a compass and measure 30km around the reactor, but track the situation. Later it appeared that they should have ask for help abroad. But in the Soviet Union it was not permitted to ask for help – they were pretending they know and can manage everything on their own."

So, the issue of the danger from radioactive exposure is not that important for Chornobylci as painful experience of the resettlement, that they consider to be unjust and did by the Soviet government not in a professional way. They are usually ready to admit that there is no radiation in the Zone at all to fulfill their need for information about it, which Ukrainian government did not satisfy by now because of the discourse of disaster's "normalization" that will be discussed later. In the narrative of one female, 78-years old respondent attempt to understand nature of radiation by comparing it to the wind is evident:

"Firstly, people did not want to communicate with us. They were thinking we have a lot of radiation. But is not it true that radiation is everywhere? It was flying everywhere where it could. Everything can happen in the air".

Research about collective views of Chornobyl in the neighboring Republic of Belarus, done by Tatiana Kaspersky, shows the same attitude to the life under invisible threat that people from polluted regions developed. In this attitude Chornobyl as a way of being is not present anywhere in particular, it is not tangible. Some respondents both from older and middle-aged generation go to the doctor and he tells them that he does not know whether their health problems are caused by radiation or age. Another people apply for social benefits for the liquidators from their families and are refused being told that if their relatives were really liquidators, they should have been already died by this time. So, whatever Chornobylci do to ensure their rights, they appear to be dependent on the state authorities about what Petryna (2000) is talking in her research: "…In rejecting a cost-effectiveness model (aimed at overcoming the health consequences of the Chornobyl disaster with the help of scientific solutions, ed.) the Ukrainian state is privileging its role over that of abstract indicators (economic, social, scientific) in determining the size and style of government of exposed populations. In line with its Soviet predecessor, the state perpetuates its paternalistic role as the giver and taker of social resources and as life insurer" (p.118).

Such an omnipresence of the government's role in the definition of the Chornobyl disaster's consequences and ways to deal with them results in the simultaneous displacement of Chornobyl into the past and future, that Kaspersky talks about in her research. On the one hand, because of the concealment of the information about actual exposure to radiation in population and corruption of Chornobyl social benefits by state administrators, Chornobylci displaced disaster into the future in which they might learn the unpredictable influence of radiation on their bodies. On the other hand, as long as Chornobyl became a bargaining chip in the fight for Ukraine's independence from Soviet Union, its legacy was displaced into the past in order to build a narrative of its commemoration (Arndt, 2012).

So, the main factor of the unserious treatment of the radioactive danger in the Zone and for their health among Chornobylci nowadays is provoked by the overprivileged role of the state to define the discourse of Chornobyl consequences' management.

3.4. Chornobyl Zone in The Mirror

Lack of awareness about actual state of radioactive decay in Chornobyl zone as well as illegal practices there undermine the status of the Zone as a place of alienation. It can be analyzed through the theory of socio-ecological systems, proposed by Cumming (2011) as long as it contains both human and ecological components. Also, this zone possesses qualities of complex systems such as non-linearity, potential for alternative stable state, and self-organization. As a socio-ecological system, it is not in equilibrium or static but changing with time. As for the boundaries of the Zone, they are fuzzy, though there is legally established border that separates the 30-kilometres area around the reactor from the surrounding territory. Fuzziness of these boundaries is dictated by the fact that just after the disaster they were defined conditionally, however, there were much more polluted areas out of the zone than in the zone itself on the territory of Ukraine, as was already mentioned above in the respondent's narrative. Possibility to enter "prohibited" space of the Zone by breaking law, using bribes, as tourist or researcher undermines the inviolability of its boundaries. For the present and former settlers of the Zone this fact signifies absence of the need to restrict the access there now. For example, one male, 48-years old respondent, who is currently working in the city of Chornobyl, expressed his dissatisfaction with the mismatch between its legal and real statuses in the following way:

"It is now officially done on the site. If I want to hunt or fish in the Zone, I can pay money and go there. This is abnormally. If it is a Zone – it should function like a Zone. But our government is only talking that it will make natural park of it, revive the lands and tourism. And there is not

radiation there, so, they could have make 10-kilometres zone long ago. People say that our government have shared the lands along Prypiat' (the river in Chornobyl zone, ed.) long ago. Both foreigners and military people build their houses and live there. They are attracted by the nature and river."

At the same time, that ambiguity makes resettled people to think about the transformations of their former homeland in the Zone not as an absolute, but as a degree to which the radiation could already disintegrate or become harmless. That is why a lot of respondents retells the rumors about the possible elimination of the border from 30-kilometres area to the 10-kilometres one.

Due to the ambiguities in its perception, Chornobyl zone possesses heterogenous nature. Its alienated status does not matter for migrants – they always think about it as of their home. For Ukrainian government, it is a problem of the radiation stored in the exploded reactor, land, and water that still can be very dangerous, for which they don't have money and desire to solve it. Chornobyl zone as a spatial phenomenon is both real and abstract, which makes it to be a heterotopy. A notion of heterotopy was proposed by Michel Foucault (1986) as a place that exists and does not exists as real at the same time, like an object in the mirror. Moreover, it is both heterotopy of crisis and deviation. First, nuclear disaster caused the disruption of social practices and pollution of nature there – a crisis, that was "managed" by labeling this place as a zone of alienation and restricting access there.

Second, everything that is connected with the Chornobyl zone – both the place and resettlers are perceived as deviant and abnormal due to the lack of information and encouragement of "the deviation discourse" by the media. So, the Zone is a heterotopy because its legal status as a place of alienation coexists with its perception as a home by Chornobylci, as a touristic

destination for tourists, and as a place full of rich resources that can be exploited by the government that results in the contradictory practices described above.

CHAPTER 4: Chornobylci

4.1. Multiple Identities Emergence

To start with, collective memory about the Chornobyl disaster is inseparable from Chornobylci's identity. In his theory of collective memory, Halbwachs shown its connection with identity: "We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them... a sense of our identity is perpetuated." (Halbwachs, p.47) But, the fact that memory is changing with time means that it also causes identity change. In its turn, as long as resettlement became an event that caused disruption in collective memory of Chornobylci, connection of space and individual identity should be considered to understand experience of resettled people. According to Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), space is connected with individual identity through the identification with the place and space-identity (p.205) Identification means acknowledgement of the belonging to the particular social category. During the interviews respondents were asked whether they belong to the people of Chornobyl (whether they are Chornobylci) and what meanings they associate with such belonging. That is to say that there can be two meanings for this word: origin from the Chornobyl area and being a sufferer of Chornobyl catastrophe. All three groups of people – Chornobyl settlers, middle-aged and old generation of resettlers mostly reported self-identification with Chornobylci as native people of the Chornobyl region. One female, 42-years old respondent said:

"When I hear on television or in the conversation about Chornobyl, I feel that I belong to Chornobylci. Mostly, because I was born there. I already feel some responsibility and I like this feeling. One should live with it and respect it in oneself."

However, there were several cases in which belonging to Chornobylci group was associated with the disaster because of its health consequences or stigmatization of the Chornobyl

resettlers just after the disaster. For example, one respondent associated such belonging with health status that was ascribed to people whose health suffered because of the disaster:

"I consider myself to be Chornobylec' because I am disabled (invalid, Ukr.) now. I have headache and heartache, constant dizziness. I used to be examined every year in the hospital for liquidators. We did not know that this is because of the disaster. But now I got a status of the disabled (invalidnost', Ukr.) because of heart problems".

Though people from Kupuvate, mainly, does not associate name Chornobylci with Chornobyl-induced health problems, they still remain subjects to the state discourse of the medicalization of Chornobyl victims' selves that has been functioning in the Soviet Union and continues to function in Ukraine now. This process was described by Petryna (2000) in her research as an ascription of "the ill-defined state" (p.202) to Chornobylci by doctors that defined their image in society as people affected by the disease that can not be predicted. In the late 90s, when Petryna was doing her research, such medicalization could prevent people from getting job and leading normal social life. Stigmatization of people and place that became involved in relationship with radioactivity is also described by Zonabend (2007) in her research. One of her respondents said: "It (nuclear waste reprocessing plant, ed.) has stolen everything from us, even our name, even our identity". So, radioactivity influences the ways in which identity of people is communicated in public discourse. Nowadays, as long as social memory about the Chornobyl disaster in society works as a discourse of its normalization, (Kalmbach, 2013) my respondents are not influenced by medicalization that much because they are not fighting for social benefits any more as long as they consider such fight to be useless. But they can not help being influenced by the stigma of being "contaminated" with the consequences of the nuclear disaster imbued in their belonging to Chornobylci group.

4.2. "The Golden Age" of the Place

Attachment theory, described by Bowlby (1988), stresses intimate emotional bonds as an inevitable part of human nature that has protective function for individuals. Development of the attachment behavior occurs through the formation of the special cognitive structures in individuals since the first years of life. At the same time, attachment to place always includes a sense of belonging or attachment to the particular community in which people live. It usually depends on the length of residence and age of individuals.

To specify, attachment to place was thoroughly explored by human geographers who approached it from the phenomenological perspective. Theory of Yi-Fu Tuan enables the appreciation of nuances of people's attachment to spaces. It distinguishes between the rootedness and sense of place. "The former is conceived of as an unconscious state of deep familiarity with a place which implies long continuous residence, while the latter is a conscious force of creation and conservation of places through words, actions and the construction of artefacts" (Bonnes, 2017, p. 142) That is to say that both forms of space attachment are exercised by the resettlers towards the Chornobyl zone. It is obvious that, due to the age, older generation of migrants is more "rooted" in the place of their village than the middle-aged one because they have more memories about important events of their life there. Furthermore, such memories are usually connected with emotions, that makes them very powerful. It was proved by research on autobiographical memories: "Autobiographical memory is of fundamental significance for the self, for emotions, and for the experience of personhood, that is for the experience of enduring as an individual, in a culture, over time" (Conway & Pleydel-Pearce, 2000, p. 261). At the same time, sense of place is inseparable from rootedness, because it is its verbal and symbolical expression. It can be said, that

older generation played important role in the transmission of the sense of homeland to their children, who are middle-aged now. Sense of the Zone and village is conserved in the narrative about their rich nature with fish and mushrooms and the narrative about ancestors who are buried in the land of Chornobyl region. Even the people who were resettled from Chornobyl area as children tend to idealize their homeland like one female, 48-years old respondent:

"Our land (the land of Kupuvate, ed.) was so rich that we never experienced famine. Because even when in the Soviet times grain and potato were confiscated, we still had rivers, fish, and forest. We usually had dry mushrooms and berries. We could have fresh fish both in the summer and winter. So, we survived because these resources were not controlled by the authorities. But when we came here (to the place of resettlement, ed.) – there was nothing in this place, neither forest, nor river."

Reflecting on how people usually reconstruct the past, Halbwachs mentioned that "all people … instinctively adopt in regard to times past the attitude of the Greek philosophers who put the golden age not at the end of the world but at its beginning" (Halbwachs, 1992, p.48). That is why this woman is idealizing her childhood - it is "a golden age" for her. However, this image of the village that is common among all respondents from Kupuvate is not mere image of the unreachable past. It their memory it is still real, encoded in the notions of the rich nature, soils, and harvests as well as daily practices of life in the village with its events and dwellers. On this matter Halbwachs says that "as often as we return to these events and figures (from the past, ed.) and reflect upon them, they attract to themselves more reality instead of becoming simplified" (Halbwachs, 1992, p.61). So, until important notions about the life in the village are not forgotten, memories about it will be reproduced among the resettlers being idealized in the new framework of comparison between the homeland and the place of resettlement.

According to Radley, "how and what we remember is also objectified in material forms which are sometimes (but not always) arranged to embody categories and thereby mark out the object's significance" (Radley, 1990, p.47). Artefacts, brought from the Zone, such as icons, along with religious meaning acquired additional function of the representation of the lost homeland, sacred and mostly unreachable. Ordinariness of these objects as well as the fact that they were taken from home and "absorbed" its atmosphere makes them "pleasurable forms of remembering". What is more, the fact that not only icons, but also people were displaced from home explains their additional function to repair the identity disruption in Chornobylci group. When community worships God, it always subtly worships itself. When people were leaving their homes in Chornobyl zone after the disaster, they left some icons there due to the belief that until there is an icon in the house, there is a God there. One female, 86-years old respondent, who is currently living in the Chornobyl zone, explained to me the importance of the icons at home:

"According to our traditions, there should be an icon in the corner of the house. On the side of the sunrise. When somebody is leaving the house forever, one icon should be left inside. Until there is an icon in the house, there is a God there".

To put it in the other way, having icons from homeland in their houses now, Chornobylci can feel connection with their previous life, culture, and religious tradition in the native village. And they can feel that "the golden age" of their homeland still lasts, even though only in their memory.

4.3. Home to Belong

Attachment to place is tightly connected with the attachment to homeland. It has profound value for its dwellers, while resettlement may result in the destruction of the whole worldview of

people. Despite the fact that researched society is rather modern to be lost in the world when out of their home, it possesses deep symbolical value of its homeland. Firstly, along with Orthodox Christian tradition, pagan tradition was always respected in this society, that is why it usually saw their land as inhabited by gods and spirits that live in nature as well as souls of their ancestors, who can both cause harm and protect people. And because of the strong ancestor worship in the community, deep sense of the past and continuity in place were formed. Here is how one female, 91-years old respondent, who still lives in Chornobyl zone, expressed her attachment to homeland:

"I love my village. Homeland is a creature. Mother is irreplaceable. You can not replace your mother by me, so can not I. Our graves are very beautiful. That is why the best place for me is my homeland."

So, for this respondent her native land in the Chornobyl zone is not only alive as a creature, but also is strongly associated with the graves of ancestors. In Halbwachs theory, ancestor worship is beneficial for the maintenance of the collective memory of the group because of the importance of the dead for every family that originates from them: "The dead are gods who belong to their own families, and the family alone has the right to invoke them. These dead have taken possession of the soil" (Halbwachs, 1992, p.63). Along with this, the dead are referents, relation to whom is recalled through the act of remembering their images and individual positions. In this way, the whole social structure of the village is recalled by the resettlers with their positions in it. That is how deep respect of the graveyard and ancestor worship appeared to be one of the strongest factors that preserved the original, predisaster identity of all migrants. Next, community of the researched village, as all similar communities from the Zone, is granted free access to the Zone by the authorities in the day of ancestor commemoration called "grobky", that literally means "graves" in Ukrainian language. This day, that happens at the next weekend after Easter, is very important

for the maintenance of the original identity of resettlers and revivification of the community feeling among them because all resettled dwellers from near and far come to the village. One female, 86-years old respondent described her experience of "grobky" as following:

"When I'm attending "grobky", I don't want to leave then. It does not matter for me that my house is ruined. My parents are buried there. When I am reaching the village – a thorn pricks my heart. The wetlands there are dried now – they used to be very beautiful!"

Chornobyl migrants value this day very much because it gives them an opportunity to gather together, practice their traditions of ancestor worship, singing their songs and recall the life before the disaster. All these practices maintain the identity of Kupuvate community in its members that can be also explained as a feeling of home where they can experience intimacy between each other and where they are accepted by default by their co-villagers: "To belong in a place, to feel its "homeliness", then, is not only to "feel at home" there, but to have a history there, to be recognized by others as belonging…To be at home, then, is not only to know the familiarity of a welcome, but to assume the welcome as one's right" (Bryant, 2011, p.53). The history of Kupuvate resettlers before the disaster is much more important for them than the history of life in new places, that is why no one of my respondent feels there at home, but still consider Kupuvate to be the one.

Last but not least, attachment to house is an inevitable part of the place attachment. While it is tightly connected to the general attachments to place as a storage of memories, homeland and home of ancestors' souls, house plays important role as an object of attachment itself. That is why during the resettlement, the most difficult challenge for migrants was to leave their houses that they used to build and decorate on their own. Speaking about the resettlement and further reminding of home, female, 42-years old respondent mentioned her house with a special warmth:

"Some people like that they were offered better houses than they had. However, though we had wooden houses, they were special for us. My father was carving the shutters and painting doves on them. When I was painting the bricks, my father taught me how to do it beautifully. Everybody liked to smarten their yard".

All in all, place attachment influenced past practices and present attitudes of people from the Chornobyl zone in several ways. Just after the resettlement, according to the information, given by my respondents, 128 people from the village illegally came back to their houses using forest roads. Mainly, they were older people who could not adapt to the values of the new places and felt uncomfortable in the strange houses. What is more, older people were usually lonely, that is why they were settled with several other people in one house, which was not comfortable for them. Attachment to houses is particularly strong among the resettlers. A lot of middle-aged people, who have good houses, job, families, and life in the new places, say that they would return and rebuild their ruined houses if the authorities open the Zone for repatriation. "The dream of return, then, may be expressed as a longing for ancestral homes, but for most it is really a longing for what those homes represent. The home was not only a place, but was the center of a social network that included both the living and the dead" (p.29-30), explains Bryant (2011) in her research. That is why for Chornobylci their homes, even ruined, represent the connection with ancestors who used to live there.

So, in the practice of "grobky" attendance and recollection of memories about native homes the feeling of belonging to the community of the village, that existed before the disaster, is maintained among Chornobylci. While new places of resettlement did not become real homes for the respondents, every opportunity to see their houses and co-villagers revives in them the feeling of home that they had before the disaster.

CHAPTER 5: Post-disaster Life

5.1. After the Disaster: Today and Tomorrow

Despite the fact that nowadays it is possible to get a lot of information about the Chornobyl disaster, zone, and people, they are still perceived by Ukrainians and resettlers as something that exists not here and concerns not them. Avoidance of the public conversation about problems of the Chornobyl zone along with its replacement into the past by hyperbolized commemoration prevents Ukrainian society from the transformation to a stronger one, empowered and not deprived by its own history. Such transformation often requires a courage of acknowledging own vulnerability and facing all the possible scenario of the consequences of the Chornobyl disaster and radiation on Ukrainian territory for future generations. Such courage is, first of all, a courage to realize the biological side of our existence as humans because our vulnerability, as Judith Butler explains it, starts with the body: "The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all this as well" (Butler, 2006, p.26).

Nevertheless, Chornobyl resettlers do not acknowledge the real danger of radiation and its past influence on their health to form the illusion that if they does not see it, it does not exist and is not going to affect them. As long as in the Soviet Union human lives were not valued at all, the lives of a group of people, who were liquidating the consequences of the Chornobyl disaster, were considered as "unreal". That is why they were sent to death. And after the disaster, being severely affected by radiation, a lot of them were refused a status of liquidator that could ensure some financial and medical help for them. Those people experienced all "benefits" of biological citizenship both in Soviet Union and independent Ukraine that Petryna explains in her research. She says that "the very idea of citizenship is now charged with the superadded burden of survival"

(Petryna, 2000, p.218). At the same time, as one of her respondents, administrator in a hospital said, “the diagnosis we write is money” (Ibid., p.105). So, from the very beginning of disaster Chornobylci became trapped between the need to rely on the government that was supposed to provide them with information on what has happened to them and the need to fight with the government proving their health problems. However, as Petryna shows in her research, neither Soviet, nor Ukrainian government wanted to acknowledge the real consequences of the disaster for people’s health because of the money that were corrupted instead of being allocated between victims. This dualism of relationships between Chornobylci and both Ukrainian and Soviet states resulted in the lack of truth to the authorities in general that only worsened negative influence of the uncertainty on their life.

As for the Chornobyl disaster, it possesses all the features of global risk that exists in risk society described by Ulrich Beck (2006). First, it is de-localized because its consequences are still to be discovered by the future generations of Ukrainians and humanity. As one of the respondents mentioned about radiation, “everything can happen in the air”, so, radioactive pollution appears to be omnipresent. Second, it is incalculable because nobody can measure exact number of people who suffered and will suffer in the future from the processes of the radioactive decay. Third, it is non-compensable because it is impossible to collect the radioactive dust from the land where it accumulated and stop the influence of radiation on human bodies affected by it, ones the disaster happened.

In the article “The anthropological shock: Chernobyl and the contours of the risk society” Beck applied the notion of risk society to the Chornobyl disaster in particular: “Global risks serve as a wake-up call in the face of the failure of government in the globalized world”, says Beck (2006, p.341). He claims that the loss of sovereignty over our senses results in the loss of

sovereignty over our judgements which is true for the Chornobyl resettlers. In their narrative about the danger of radiation they refer to Japanese “experts”, authorities who define the accepted amounts of radiation in this or that area, mass media that create the discourse of Chornobyl sufferers on the edge of the sentimental stories, funny videos and unproved myths. So, Chornobylci are made to adopt the judgements of the "expert" sources about what happened to them because in the risk society they can not rely on their own senses.

At the same time, Chornobyl as a phenomenon signifies the onset of the counter-modernity in which time, space, and social differentiation transcend from human perception. The Chornobyl resettlers can not know when radiation is going to affect their health, settlers of Chornobyl zone are not able to know which places in the Zone are radiation-free to fish and collect mushrooms that they eat there. Ukrainian society can not know which generation will be affected by radiation that is stored now under the sarcophagus over the exploded reactor. So, in the time of counter-modernity uncertainty appears to be a lifestyle of everybody.

In this situation bureaucratization of the control over the consequences of the Chornobyl disaster continues to be exercised by the Ukrainian government as it was done by the Soviet one. As Petryna (2000) describes it in her research, “soviet ideologues thought to control interpretations of biological processes as a means of social regulation” (p.119). With the help of this strategy disaster and its consequences were gradually “normalized” in the public discourse. They were represented as being controlled and dealt with firstly by the Soviet government and then by the Ukrainian one. To make things worse, social benefits for the sufferers of the disaster, that are provided by the government nowadays, are very scarce and can not solve health, recreational and emotional problems of the resettlers. For example, Chornobylci who have status of the sufferers (postrazhdali, Ukr.) receive less then 4 dollars monthly that are supposed to be spent on the health

improvement. As Ulrich Beck (1987) claims, “to categorize, classify and regulate everything in scientific-authoritarian-bureaucratic fashion belongs to the first logic of risk avoidance” (p.161). However, such an approach to the consequences of the disaster is adopted by the Ukrainian government not because of some defined logic. It resembles ritualist behavior as a way of adaptation to anomia (Macionis & Gerbert, 2010) that has no aim, but in which people engage by inertia, using the same old-fashioned tools and strategies as they used to do in the Soviet Union to reach aims which do not exist any longer. In her research Petryna (2000) describes the manner in which Chornobyl funds, founded to help Chornobylci, used to work in late 1990s: “Humanitarian shipments of medicines often ended up in the hands of the wrong people, who profited by selling these items on the streets” (p.144-145) So, bureaucratization of the control over the disaster’s consequences resulted in the impersonal nature of the ways in which they were dealt with. It led to the corruption of the resources that were supposed to be used to help the Chornobyl sufferers, and as a result, to the rights violations of Chornobylci.

5.2. Contradiction of the Chornobyl Discourses

According to Harvey (2007), space is political project whose status and meaning is changing with time. Ambiguous status of the Chornobyl zone as semi-closed area to which excursions are organized and in which rich people build their houses nowadays shows the need for the opened discussion of the change of its meaning and functions for Ukrainian society.

There can be defined two discourses in which the Chornobyl zone is viewed, perceived, spoken about, and exists. Those are the Soviet, Ukrainian, and alternative discourses. The first one, which was a discourse of the concealment of the disaster consequences, was already described above. This discourse was developed against the so-called “radiophobia” among population that was reporting a lot of irradiation-induced diseases that government did not want to acknowledge

as being caused by the disaster. Second discourse gradually developed from the first and can be described as "normalization" of the disaster in public opinion done by the state: "…The 2006 report by the Chernobyl Forum advocated re-settling the regions that had been evacuated in the late 1980s and taking back "Chernobyl-related benefits and privileges"" (Kalmbach, 2013, p.137). At the same time, nowadays, Ukrainian society satisfies itself with the entertaining stories about 90-year old ladies from the Chornobyl zone dancing to welcome tourists, while Ukrainian and international journalists from the popular medial usually exploit the survivors of the tragedy and people from the Zone to get well-sold materials for their media. Last but not least, alternative discourse is formed by the Chornobyl zone migrants who do not really perceive it as a place of danger or alienation:

"For some people Chornobyl is a Zone, but for us it is a homeland. It is alienated from society. But we were born there, we knew every road there. Homeland." (Female respondent, 52 years old)

Furthermore, a lot of migrants already displaced the disaster into the past, so it partly lost its tragic nature for them. When asked about belonging to Chornobylci group, one female, 89-years old respondent expressed her attitude to the "disaster" narrative in the following way:

"I am not associating being Chornobylec' with the Chornobyl disaster. The real disaster was in 1933 when people were swelling from hunger (artificial famine made by the Soviet authorities that turned into genocide against Ukrainians, ed.). But now one could live normally if there was no war. So many people already died! This war is a real disaster. I can not stand watching it on television".

So, nowadays there exist those three discourses of speaking about the Chornobyl disaster. While the Soviet one already became a history, the other two continue to influence the disaster perception in Ukrainian society and the quality of the resettlers' life. The matter is that "normalization" of the disaster does not solve up-to-date problems of the Chornobyl zone and health problems of population. At the same time, the discourse of Ukrainian state is more powerful than that of Chornobylci because state media provide its communication to the public. And even when Chornobylci are given a voice, everything that they say is represented by the media through the discourse of normalization or entertainment of their audience.

5.3. Spatial Resilience

Along with two discourses mentioned above, the Chornobyl zone is undergoing real transformations nowadays that can be characterized as spatial resilience. It refers to the ways in which spatial variation – including such things as spatial location, context, connectivity, and dispersal influence (and are influenced by) the resilience of a socio-ecological system or other complex system. (Cumming, 2011, p.4) As long as it takes place due to the revival of nature, the potential for several changes of the identity of the Chornobyl zone opens which also implies the potential influence on the identity of the Chornobyl migrants and the whole Ukrainian society.

Firstly, according to the measurements of the radioactive pollution done in 2000 year, 1000 of 2200 settlements in the Zone could change their legal status because the radioactive pollution diminished there (Chornobyl Herald, 1999). The main obstacle for such change is the lack of interest of the local administration to review the status of such settlements. However, if there is a possibility to reduce the alienated zone to the 10-kilometres area now, revived spaces should be offered, at the first place, for the repatriation of migrants who want to return to their homeland. However, transformations that occurred in the Chornobyl zone after the disaster may not be seen

as favorable by the resettled people because the revival of nature, free of human presence, made their villages unsuitable for living. For some of them it is the main reason that would prevent them from returning back home if such possibility occurs. Prospective settlers of the revived spaces could benefit from them if the current resilience in some parts of the zone was reduced to make them suitable for living for the native people and new settlers. However, the preference should be given to the native people who were originally living in the zone because they represent and preserve the original culture of the area as well as farming traditions.

Secondly, transformation of the revived land of the Zone with rich flora and fauna into the natural reservation or park and establishment of the legal protection of its resources would change the image of the Zone to the more positive and optimistic one. It would also create working places for the repatriated people and new settlers, so, there would be no place for trauma in the public discourse about the Chornobyl disaster any more.

What is more, collective memory of Chornobylci is marked by trauma because of the experiences of disaster and resettlement that penetrates the whole culture of the resettlers' community nowadays. "Cultural tissue is the most sensitive to the impact of traumatogenic changes, precisely because culture is a depository of continuity, heritage, tradition, identity of human communities, says Sztompka (2000, p.281). Spatial mobility of people can be a source of cultural trauma, and this is what has happened to the Chornobyl resettlers. Such trauma is usually connected with the syndrome of distrust towards people and institutions as well as disorientation in collective identity, idealization of the past in favor of the future that was revealed among people from Kupuvate and described above.

Again, trauma can be constructive when it encourages social becoming and destructive when it ruins affected culture. Despite the fact that a lot of traditional practices such as collective

singing, embroidery, some farming practices, special for their home region, were almost abandoned by the resettlers, trauma did not result in the destruction of their culture because of the continuity of memory about the past. Such connection with the past has been maintained through the ancestor worship and annual ritual of "grobky" as well as the artefacts and narratives from home, passed from older generation to the younger one. So, trauma, experienced by Chornobylci, still can be constructive for their community if appropriate changes occur in the collective memory about disaster in the broader public discourse that contradicts resettlers' self-visions now.

That is why the most important transformations of the memory about the Chornobyl disaster in Ukraine should occur on the representational level in the official discourse. According to Yakovlieva (2014), "Chornobyl disaster became symbolical, cultural, and historical stigma, traumatic legacy of the past and a subject for political speculations" (p.47). Due to the lack of information about the disaster at the late 90s, Ukrainian society became dependent from its threat that was not explained to the population by the Soviet government. At the same time, irresponsible interpretations of its consequences, provided by the media in public discourse, continue to encourage this dependency. At the same time, tourism to the Zone maintains victimized image of Ukrainian society at the international level. (Yakovlieva, 2014) So, social work should be mainly directed on the overcoming of "cultural trauma" caused by the disaster in Ukrainian society.

Such overcoming can happen through the rethinking of the disaster by means of art, public discussions, change of the legal status of some alienated settlements. Separate initiatives that work in this direction already exist in Ukraine. Some of them are rather ambiguous. As was reported on the official web-page of the State agency of Ukraine on exclusion zone management (2017), first hostel "Polissia" in Chornobyl was recently opened "with the aim to increase the quality of visitors' stay in the exclusion zone". On the one hand, tourism to the Zone should exist because it

helps people to learn about the Chornobyl disaster and its consequences not to fear the Zone and radiation. But, on the other hand, this very tourism exploits poor living conditions of the current Zone settlers as a mean of entertainment. To make tourism in the Chornobyl zone ethical one should give some part of the profit from it for the infrastructure rebuilding and support of the basic needs of Chornobylci who live in the Zone. Among another initiatives Festival of film and urbanism "86" can be named. Established in the youngest city of Ukraine, Slavutych, that was built for the CNPP workers, festival relies on the local culture and dwellers of the area near the Chornobyl zone to promote decentralization of culture, support urbanistic initiatives in the city, and provide trainings for the independent filmmakers, as reported on the official page of the festival in the section "About us" (2017). During the festival a lot of discussions on the Chornobyl legacy for Ukraine are held and excursions to the Zone are organized. As long as such festival uses "brand" of Chornobyl to initiate positive change in the local communities, it helps to start unbiased dialogue about the disaster's consequences and potential of the Zone for Ukrainian society. So, initiatives that work with collective memory about Chornobyl should be always accessed by their aim, ethics and influence on the local population as well as Ukrainian society as a whole.

In addition, reconciliation of the memory about the disaster in different discourses should be supported on the legal level because it sets out the frame for the everyday practices of individuals. Up-to-date status of the Chornobyl resettlers and the Zone should be defined according to the real transformations that happened to them. At the same time, migrants should be granted with environmental refugees' status which will ensure their rights for social benefits and financial aid. Environmental refugees – "people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporary or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption, (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardized their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their

life" (El-Hinnawi, 1985, p.83-85). Today no refugee convention acknowledges the existence of such a group of refugees or provide some protection for them. In their article, Anisimov and Ryzhenkov (2017) proposed the development of the international treaty for the protection of the environmental refugees' rights and the development of the "ecological disaster zone" classification as a way of managing consequences of the Chornobyl disaster (p.283). According to their view, "ecological disaster zones are those parts of an area in which economic or other activities (accidents) lead to profound irreversible changes to the environment resulting in significant deterioration of flora and fauna" (Ibid., p.281). Ones these statuses will be defined on the international level and ascribed to the Chornobyl resettlers and zthe Zone, their regulation by the international organizations will prevent governmental violations towards the Zone and ensure resettlers' rights.

All in all, in the first place, it depends on the Ukrainian society how the Chornobyl disaster will be remembered today and tomorrow. Memory is a flexible structure, but it influences the logic by which society recalls its own image. Discrepancy of the official and alternative discourses on the Chornobyl zone and resettlers is not beneficial neither for society, nor for the resettlers themselves. Risk society that lives with nuclear disaster's legacy is vulnerable by definition, that is why it should be protected by the international law. But it also should initiate rethinking of the Chornobyl disaster itself in order to cure any trauma that was triggered by it.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

Collective memory is one of the most powerful factors of the group identity maintenance. Not only it helps to transmit culture and values of the group from one generation to the other, but also it influences the dynamics of the group's life and practices depending on the contexts of its representations. Despite the fact that thirty years have already passed after the Chornobyl disaster, collective memory about its consequences has not been reconciled among the different groups in Ukrainian society yet. In the current research several important findings on the challenges connected with the recollection of memories about the disaster and their influence on the everyday life of Chornobylci were revealed.

One of the main aims of this research was to show that the perception of the Chornobyl disaster, zone, resettlement, and radiation has changed in the Chornobyl sufferers with time. Such change is obvious because social memory transforms with context in which it functions. But this transformation is, usually, not noticeable on the social level, that is why it should be stressed and articulated to inform the society about it. The Chornobyl disaster is not the same event as it was thirty years ago, so, it can not be treated the same way as in the past.

Firstly, it was found out that there exist several discourses of the representation of the Chornobyl disaster in collective memory: Soviet, official, and alternative. Soviet discourse was connected with the concealment of the disaster's consequences and became a past already. Official discourse of the Ukrainian government and media nowadays tries "to normalize" the Chornobyl disaster with subtle aim to diminish social and financial help for the sufferers. At the same time, Chornobylci also do not consider themselves as victims of the disaster because they already humbled with the life in resettlement. However, the narrative of "cultural trauma" is still communicated on the official level as a part of disaster's commemoration that encourages

preservation of "the victimized" identity of Ukrainian society. Such a discrepancy of discourses leads to the violation of human rights of Chornobylci and ambiguous status of the Chornobyl zone that results in its misuse and biased representation in public discourse.

What is more, it was revealed that Chornobylci managed to preserve their original identity through the collective memory about the life before resettlement. While the Chornobyl disaster has split their identity in several ones, their original culture remained important for self-definition. That is why they associate themselves with Chornobyl, but with the region, not the disaster. Feeling of belonging to the place of their ancestors is one of the most important factors that would make a lot of respondents to come back to Kupuvate and rebuild their houses if such possibility occurs.

However, there exist a lot of challenges of Chornobyl's legacy that Chornobylci and the whole Ukrainian society are facing nowadays. Those challenges were established by the concealment of information about the influence of radiation on health and unjust distribution of the social and financial benefits by Soviet government after the disaster. In risk society, based on the life in nuclear age, inability to rely on the government as a source of help and information has made both Chornobylci and all Ukrainian society vulnerable in front of the unexpected consequences of the disaster. Their "normalization" nowadays is not dealing with the real problems of the sufferers and the Chornobyl zone such as scarce social benefits that are not sufficient to deal with the radiation-induced health problems and misuse of the Zone's resources.

Last but not least, current research proposes the ways in which post-disaster management of Chornobyl issues can be carried out to improve sufferers' quality of life, overcome uncertainty of the life near the Zone contaminated by radiation and benefit from its resources. The most important changes should occur on the legal level which means establishment of the "environmental refugees" and "ecological disaster zone" categories to ensure rights of

Chornobylci and prevent misuse of the Zone. Next, up-to-date state of the Zone should be reexamined to reveal possibilities for the repatriation of resettlers and establishment of the natural park there. In this case, despite the challenges associated with the infrastructure's renovation, return of the original population there would help to revive the culture of Polissia region, affected by the disaster, and contribute to its economic development. To conclude, previous measures can be effective only if the change in public discourse about the Chornobyl disaster occurs through the initiation of the public discussions about Chornobyl legacy, its rethinking by the means of art, provision of the up-to-date information about the disaster's consequences, and ethical tourism.

All in all, as long as social memory is flexible and changes its meaning with time, it can be used to overcome negative consequences of the Chornobyl disaster both for the resettlers and Ukrainian society. Shift from the construction of the disaster's meaning to the construction of the meaning of its overcoming should be one of the main strategies of the Chornobyl trauma management. Nowadays, Ukrainian government continue to exercise the style of trauma management defined by Ekatherina Zhukova (2016) as the minimum progress (p.197). It describes state of "acting as a passive savior, reluctant to restore security for its citizens, hesitant to take responsibility and build trust" (Ibid., p.202). On the contrary, Ukrainian society needs a strategy of the maximum progress in which state should take responsibility, reobtain the truth of people, and provide security for them. This condition is crucial for the overcoming of the consequences of the Chornobyl disaster because it can form positive identity of the whole society. In fact, a process of the formation of such identity already started with a change of the self-image of the Chornobyl resettlers and identity of the Zone that were described in the current research. Now this process should be supported by the government and civil society to ensure better future for next generations of Ukrainians. At the same time, experience of the post-disaster management challenges associated

with the Chornobyl disaster can be used to prevent and overcome other nuclear accidents that, unfortunately, are not rare in the era of risk society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anisimov, A. P., & Ryzhenkov, A. J. (2016*). Thirty years after the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant: historical causes, lessons and legal effects.* Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law, 34(3), 265-283.

Arndt, M. (2012). *Memories, commemorations, and representations of Chernobyl:* Introduction. Anthropology of East Europe Review, 30(1), 1-12.

Bebeshko, V.G., Bazyka, D.A. & Chumak, A.A. (2012*) 'Radiological and Health Effects of the Chernobyl Disaster'.* Radiation Hygiene. 5(1)

Beck, U. (1987). *The anthropological shock: Chernobyl and the contours of the risk society*. Berkeley Journal of Sociology, 32, 153-165.

Beck, U. (2006). *Living in the world risk society: A Hobhouse Memorial Public Lecture given on Wednesday 15 February 2006 at the London School of Economics.* Economy and society, 35(3), 329-345.

Bonnes, M. (2017*). Psychological theories for environmental issues*. Routledge.

Bowlby, J. (1988). *Attachment, communication, and the therapeutic process. A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development*, 137-157.

Bryant, R. (2011). *The Past in Pieces: Belonging in the New Cyprus*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Butler, J. (2006). *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. Verso.

Chornobyl Herald (Вісник Чорнобиля) – 1999. – №99/100; 2000. – № 41.

Conway, M. A., & Pleydell-Pearce, C. W. (2000). *The construction of autobiographical memories in the self-memory system.* Psychological review, 107(2).

Cumming, G. S. (2011). *Spatial resilience: integrating landscape ecology, resilience, and sustainability. Landscape ecology*, 26(7), 899-909.

Douglas, M. (2003). *Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. Routledge. Chapter 6.

Festival of film and urbanism "86". (2017). About us. Retrieved from http://www.86.org.ua/about/mission/

Foucault, M., & Miskowiec, J. (1986). *Of other spaces. diacritics*, 16(1), 22-27.

Fried, M. (1963). *Grieving for a lost home. In l. dujl (Ed.),* The urban condition (pp. 151-171).

Fritz, C. E., & Williams, H. B. (1957). *The human being in disasters: A research perspective. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 309(1), 42-51.

Halbwachs, M. (1992*) On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press.

Harvey, D. (2007). *Neoliberalism and the City.* Studies in Social Justice, 1(1), 2.

Holovakha, E., and N. Panina, eds. (2008) Ukraiins'ke suspil'stvo 1992–2008: sotsiolohichnyy monitorynh. Kyiv: Instytut sotsiolohiii NANU.

El-Hinnawi, E. (1985). Environmental Refugees. UN Environmental Programme.

Kalmbach, K. (2013). *Radiation and borders: Chernobyl as a national and transnational site of memory. Global Environment*, 6(11), 130-159.

Macionis, J., & Gerber, L. (2010*). Sociology, Seventh Canadian Edition*. Don Mills: Pearson Education Canada

Petryna, A. (2013*). Life exposed: biological citizens after Chernobyl.* Princeton University Press.

Radley, A. (1990). *Artefacts, Memory and a Sense of the Past. Collective remembering*, 46-59.)

Soviet military topographic maps. (2017). *Topographic map of Ukraine, Russia, Belorussia.* Retrieved from http://maps.vlasenko.net/ua/kyivska/ivankivskyj/kupuvate.

Speller, G. M. (2000). *A community in transition: A longitudinal study of place attachment and identity processes in the context of an enforced relocation* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Surrey).

State agency of Ukraine on exclusion zone management. (2017, June). Hostel Polissia is working for the visistors of the Zone. Retrieved from the website of the State agency of Ukraine on exclusion zone management: http://dazv.gov.ua/novini-ta-media/vsi-novyny/dlya-vidviduvachiv-zoni-vidchuzhennya-pratsyue-khostel-polissya.html

Sztompka, P. (2000). *The Ambivalence of Social Change Triumph or Trauma?.* Polish Sociological Review, 275-290.

Tuan, Y. F. (1979). *Space and place: humanistic perspective. In Philosophy in geography* (pp. 387-427). Springer Netherlands

Twigger-Ross, C. L., & Uzzell, D. L. (1996). *Place and identity processes.* Journal of environmental psychology, 16(3), 205-220.

United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. (2017). *Maps of radionuclide deposition.* Retrieved from http://www.unscear.org/unscear/en/chernobylmaps.html.

Yakovlieva, Y. O. (2014). *The Chernobyl accident as a cultural trauma of Ukraine.* Anthropological Measurements of Philosophical Research, (6), 43-53.

Yaroshinskaya, A. (1998). *Overview of different information about acute radiation syndrome among inhabitants around Chernobyl. Research Activities about the Radiological Consequences of the Chernobyl NPS Accident and Social Activities to Assist the Sufferers by the Accident*, 114-120. P116

Zhukova, E. (2016). *Trauma management: Chernobyl in Belarus and Ukraine.* The British journal of sociology, 67(2), 195-215

Zonabend, F. (2007). *The nuclear peninsula.* Cambridge University Press.