

OPENNESS AND CLOSEDNESS: ETHNIC STRATEGIES OF INDIGENOUS MINORITIES IN VIRTUALITY VS REALITY

In this paper, the author touches on the topic of openness and closedness in reality and virtuality and tries to answer the question of how much the strategies of openness and closedness of a particular community are related to their virtual and real interaction environment. Are the positions of openness or closedness shaped as a voluntary choice of an ethnic group? Is virtuality today serving as a tool for establishing one's position among others or an internal resource for maintaining ethnic identity? As we can conclude from the reviewed cases of several ethnic communities, these days there is a strong interconnectedness between the physical and virtual environments whenever we speak of these groups' self- and cultural manifestation. The desire to be recognized motivates Besermians to choose an open type of positioning; on the contrary, due to the ambiguity of external circumstances, Tubalars prefer communication solely within their community. The Soyots case proves that territorial remoteness is a key factor of their closedness in the digital environment. The preferred type can change depending on different kinds of circumstances: as the experience of Nagaybaks shows, under unfavorable factors they demonstrate increased network activity and openness while it decreases into closedness under relative ethnic tranquility. In a broader sense, the presented models demonstrate the current mobility of ethnic culture and its readiness for subsequent adaptations. Virtuality becomes inscribed into reality and it readily influences the contexts of cultures, interactions, and strategies of ethnic groups.

Keywords: *openness, closedness, virtuality, ethnicity, identity, indigenous peoples, Besermians, Tubalars, Nagaybaks, Soyots*

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