



## The dynamics of values and vulnerability of modern democracy against the backdrop of globalisation and localisation processes

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**Abstract.** The relevance of this work was determined by the acute problem of value-based attitudes towards the world in modern conditions, articulated in the concepts of post-truth, the destruction of grand narratives of the past, and widespread fatigue and disappointment. This has led to the devaluation of traditional values and an axiological crisis. The aim of the work was to reveal the vulnerable aspects of democracy and their impact on the dynamics of values, globalisation and localisation processes of the present day. To achieve this aim, a set of methods was used, in particular, comparative, analytical, empirical, and causal. The research was conducted in the context of a sociocultural approach, based on the principles of systematicity and development. The research found that the instability of the world, permanent crises, and global challenges that characterise the modern era have led to significant sociocultural and political changes, which have become a serious test and threat to the democratic world. Leaders of political processes have increasingly appealed to the emotional and irrational sphere, defining it as the value base for political action. This has resulted in the global spread of manipulative practices, populist slogans, aggressive demagoguery, fear politics, and growing authoritarian tendencies in the socio-political sphere. Democracy, being limited in its ability to counter such practices, had at its disposal mainly means of dialogue, agreements, and deals that required prior consent, responsibility of the parties, and the willingness of all actors to comply with the terms of the agreements. This demonstrated the vulnerability of democracy, within which fertile ground was created for radicals and political criminals who viewed the stability of democratic values as weaknesses of democracy and used

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them to seize power, achieve immoral goals, and localise the population in closed communities through intimidation, violence, and political speculation. To counter this, the local unification of communities based on markers of patriotic nationalism seemed to be the most acceptable strategy, taking into account humanity's need for security and, at the same time, looking to the future. The results achieved can be used in educational and social work as separate topics in courses on ethics, philosophy, political science, etc

**Keywords:** authoritarianism; radicalism; populism; political manipulation; identity; nationalism; patriotism

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## Introduction

The research is relevant given the systemic crisis of democracy, which manifests itself in the decline of democratic open societies compared to authoritarian regimes, in the political instability of electoral democracy, in the devaluation of liberal values, and in the crisis of identity. The spread of information technology, the virtual environment and social networks, which, in the context of global environmental threats and challenges, pandemics and military conflicts, are becoming the primary medium for communication, has opened up broad prospects for their use for the purposes of emotional and psychological manipulation, suggestion, propaganda of populism, radicalism, plutocracy, social isolation, etc. The modern information society is characterised by excessive amounts of information that people are unable to perceive, but this information overload causes fragmentation of society. The process of forming social, informational, cultural, and ideological bubbles, echo chambers, and filter bubbles continues, with the intellectual isolation of social groups occurring according to the criteria of selectivity of perceived information. In the process, the concept of traditional values is being revised, and the universal nature of liberal democratic values, in particular legal equality, human dignity, popular sovereignty, etc., is being questioned. This deepens the social crisis and undermines the authority of democracy in the world.

Researchers T. Pryadko & A. Ruban (2025) have identified the following signs of the crisis of modern democracy: the ineffectiveness of the system of checks and balances, the spread of

authoritarian control over the media, civil society, and the judiciary, accompanied by a decline in political accountability; information wars and external influences. These factors undermine trust in democracy and create a high level of public dissatisfaction with politics and low levels of trust in governments and political actors. The crisis of democracy is exacerbated by a lack of political literacy, the crisis of classical ideologies, ineffective representation, and the growing influence of actors who are not accountable to the electorate. Ultimately, the threat of populism and authoritarianism is growing.

In conditions of destabilisation, two opposing trends are clearly evident: the growing processes of community localisation are overlapping with active globalisation movements. Researcher N. Natalina (2023) has described this state as the non-linearity, multidimensionality and asynchrony of democracy, considering it a trend towards the formation of a new world order characterised by conflicts between democratic and authoritarian regimes, political fragmentation of the world and the formation of a multipolar world model. In this regard, the problem of identity crisis and the ambivalence of its solution at the local and global levels becomes relevant. The formation of global identity is based on universal human values and behavioural markers, including democracy, inclusiveness and diversity, cultural openness, broad mental horizons and the mobility of ideas, knowledge and individuals, personal autonomy, environmentalism, right-wing politics, responsibility, solidarity, etc. The rise of isolationist

sentiments and trends, the desire for unity at the local level, is described by a number of researchers using markers of nationalism: nativist nationalism – in S. Marginson (2024), critical, exclusive nationalism – in F. Bieber (2022), and patriotic nationalism – in J. Sánchez-Prieto (2023). The localisation of communities also occurs on the basis of a number of factors, such as culture, media, financial values, and information technology, which are markers that influence the processes of grouping and self-identification. This dualism of identification processes is quite controversial in nature – contradictory processes caused by the latest challenges facing the world occur simultaneously. These challenges include pandemics, military threats, worldview conflicts and crises, resulting in growing existential anxiety, declining interpersonal trust, isolationism, manipulative and speculative political practices, geopolitical crises, economic turmoil, and so on. This is a paradox of the superposition of traditionalism and innovation, resulting in a systemic crisis. One of its manifestations is the crisis of modern democracy.

Against the backdrop of global threats, subcultures are developing rapidly, and various local cultural practices and movements are becoming more individualised, leading to heightened intercultural confrontation and intensified processes of localisation, de-Westernisation, desecularisation and deculturation. The degree of US dominance in the world is decreasing, with the country abandoning its position as a world leader in favour of internal development. Instead, China and groups of “non-Euro-American” states such as India, Iran, Indonesia, South Korea and Brazil are on the rise. In particular, researcher S. Marginson (2024) noted a trend towards a decline in the dominance of the United States and “Euro-American” countries at the global level, which he explained by the extraordinary situation associated with climate and environmental challenges and the powerlessness of states to counter them. The result is political destabilisation and a growing sense of danger, which affects the dynamics of values and the formation

of new value needs, among which nativism and securitisation stand out.

Thus, this concerns the formation of the foundations for a new world order and a multipolar world, a revision of traditional values, and the emergence of new value demands based on changes in people’s self-identification. The aim of this work was to study the dialectics of changes in value orientations and self-identification trends against the backdrop of the crisis of democracy and the ambivalent processes of globalisation and localisation in the modern world.

### Literature Review

A crisis, particularly one that is prolonged or lacks a foreseeable resolution, leads to a number of negative consequences. Philosophical analysis of the consequences, conducted at various times by researchers R. Koselleck (2004), A. Etzioni (2019), and P. Rosanvallon (2021), has made it possible to identify the most significant ones. In particular, these include: a reduction in the scope of experience and a distancing of expectations; an increase in aggressive demagoguery among isolated people; political vulnerability, destabilisation, growing dangers, fragmentation of life, difficult choices, and restrictions on the mobility of active population groups. Against the backdrop of such negative consequences, P. Rosanvallon (2021) proposes the concept of “life trials” as a new sociological category that reflects the crisis state of the world. The researcher emphasised the value of deep personal experience and the importance of the emotional reactions it generates. This refers to the growing crisis of rationality in the modern world, manifested in the increasing distance and gap between individuals and society, the escape into a world of irrational, psychological experiences, often virtual constructs, artificial solutions, and simulacra. At the same time, researchers distinguish between both negative and positive consequences of such an escape: emotional reactions can either exacerbate the closedness and fragmentation of society, increase fear, sometimes panic, and a feeling of vulnerability

to threats, or contribute to social cohesion and the accumulation of strength, primarily strength of spirit, in conditions of extreme threat, ensuring social security through the use of the community's internal potential.

One of the forms of uniting society against external threats is the national idea, which is implemented in various ways. In particular, researcher F. Bieber (2022) highlights the phenomenon of exclusive critical nationalism, which involves the pursuit of national unity in the face of dangers, crises, and global challenges of the modern world, such as covid-19 or the threat of nuclear apocalypse. This type of nationalism is characterised by a tendency towards isolation in the face of deadly threats. An integral factor in the formation of closed communities of this kind is emotions that often call for the exclusion of others. Community security is achieved through strict physical restrictions, which are actively and successfully used by right-wing politicians. F. Bieber (2022) noted that the factors of crisis unification of communities were the desire to achieve stability in the spread of the pandemic, protection from authoritarian regimes, and oppression of citizens' rights and freedoms. This localisation was based on fear and aims to strengthen borders as protective mechanisms against pandemics, globalisation, and risk groups. The result of such unification is the strengthening of exclusive nationalism – a closed type of nationalism, where membership in the group is ensured solely by the national/ethnic affiliation of the individual. Historically, communities united on the basis of fear are classified as mythological societies. Thus, the influence of mythological narratives on the formation of values, behavioural patterns, and communication strategies in such communities is to be expected. The obvious negative consequences of this kind of exclusive nationalism are the regulation of social life by emotional and irrational methods of influence, leading to the restriction of citizens' democratic rights and freedoms as a result of the introduction of policies of fear and prejudice, and regulatory security mechanisms

through increased control and surveillance. These conditions are fertile ground for the growth of political manipulation, right-wing radical movements, separatism and isolationism.

Another kind of emotional social escape is fatigue, disillusionment, and the rejection of rational political leadership. Thinkers from O. Spengler (2007) to contemporary philosophers like R. Keyes (2004) and S. Žižek (2022) have repeatedly stressed the destruction of the grand narratives of the past and the general exhaustion of European civilisation. C. Ryan (2021) described this condition as a "great refusal", a "great disillusionment" characteristic of European culture. R. Keyes (2004) announced the arrival of the post-truth era, defining it as a phenomenon of interpersonal communication and an alternative ethics – a grey ethical zone where emotions and personal convictions prevail, accompanied by a deliberate distancing from objective truth. History is mostly a story of colonisation, the seizure of new territories, and the forceful establishment of orders in colonised lands. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has become a time for rethinking history and past colonial practices, acknowledging the responsibility of Euro-North American civilisation for the actions of its predecessors. Ideas advocating for the rejection of Eurocentrism in favour of the autonomous development of local cultures and territories to preserve the authenticity of local cultures have actively begun to be voiced. Against this backdrop, P. Bruckner (2010) pointed to the rising sense of guilt and the need for repentance experienced by modern Europeans for the crimes committed by their predecessors – genocides, the Holocaust, world wars, and violent methods of exercising power and subjugation. The author labelled this need for repentance as a "tyranny". From a psychological perspective, such repentance resembles the efforts of children to distance themselves from the crimes of their parents by rejecting previous aggressive political experience, as a result of which any active display of force is perceived as evil, a threat of violence. This is a fragmentation of historical memory, resulting in political

weakness. Europeans are refusing methods of coercive pressure from the arsenal of previous generations, striving to preserve the calm well-being achieved after the Second World War. However, against the backdrop of new threats and aggressive belligerent regimes, this refusal/forgetting appears as the powerlessness of democracy.

Autocrats, radicals, and political manipulators seek to exploit this situation of powerlessness, using the unresolved contradictions of the past to destabilise the present. In the collective monograph by O. Horban *et al.* (2019), the researchers note that a fragmented, selective, rather than holistic image of memory provokes the destruction of legality and justice, causes territorial disputes, discrimination based on various criteria, and mass human rights violations. Ultimately, the fragmentation of memory turns into its ideologisation, during which certain fragments of historical reality are absolutised to fit the general logic of the proposed metanarrative, while facts that contradict this logic are silenced. The consequence of these actions is always manipulation and the distortion of history. This position is also held by Y. Dukh (2025), a specialist in Ukrainian strategic communications, who noted that painful historical traumas must be handled with extreme caution; they must be memorialised to ensure the tragedies do not recur. Thus, the politics of repentance involves solving three interconnected tasks: the honouring (sacralisation) of victims' memory, achieving historical reconciliation, and subsequently, the politicisation of historical memory. The process of politicisation of historical memory directly influences the formation of national identity and the stability of the value system, and therefore must be an integral part of the state-national security strategy. This is emphasised in the monograph by V. Yablonskyi *et al.* (2019). The researchers indicated the necessity of changes in historical consciousness and the construction of a national historical narrative, forming a memory policy that corresponds to national (anti-colonial) interests, promotes the formation of a stable national identity, legitimises

state sovereignty, and provides a holistic vision of the past for the purpose of societal consolidation. These issues are clearly strategic for ensuring the sovereignty and integrity of any state. Otherwise, historical traumas become a tool for blackmail, emotional pressure on opponents, and political manipulation, a source of claims and speculation. Ultimately, this escalates into historical revisionism, a historical debt that never expires. Such a path leads to the increase of political tension and inter-state contradictions, which are successfully used by dictatorships to weaken global democracy and strengthen themselves.

### Materials and Methods

The study was conducted on the principles of a systemic approach and development, employing socio-cultural and activity-based methodologies. A combination of research methods was used, including the comparative method – to determine the characteristics of globalisation and localisation processes, to explore the phenomenon of modern nationalism, and to compare and contrast these phenomena in the contemporary context in order to identify the causes and features of different types of nationalism. To examine the characteristic traits of various forms of nationalism, the patterns of their emergence and development, to compare their strengths and weaknesses, and to identify related social issues, the content analysis method was also applied.

The empirical method, which is most relevant for the study of current events and real-world political facts, was employed particularly in analysing media publications, processing internet content (especially on the YouTube platform), and summarising materials from scholarly articles published in professional academic journals. The empirical foundation for this method consisted of selected media publications and podcasts by Ukrainian philosophers, political scientists, cultural theorists, and political journalists. The chronological sample of materials covered the 2020s, while the thematic sample included events significant to the subject of the

study – such as the crisis of democracy, military threats, the rise of radical movements, the spread of populism, and their impact on worldview and socio-cultural transformations. The basic hypothesis of the study was that the systemic political crisis of contemporary democracy has an ambivalent impact on processes of self-identification and, consequently, on the transformation of values. This duality gives rise to a dichotomy in social consolidation processes, manifesting as globalisation and localisation.

In processing empirical material, the causal analysis method was applied to identify correlations between the dynamics of values and political processes; to study the regularities of globalisation and localisation in the context of global political and socio-cultural trends; and to explore the anthropological challenges and identity processes these trends provoke. Causal relationships were identified between the crisis of democracy, the decline in overall educational standards, and the growth of radical and populist political movements. These, in turn, drive value transformations toward increased differentiation, identity divergence, and, consequently, the closure of societies and the localisation of communities as a security response in a rapidly changing world.

The discourse analysis method was used for a critical examination of the discourse of nationalism, to generalise the characteristics of modern forms of nationalism, and to interpret their influence on social change, value transformation, and the direction of social consolidation processes. The observed diversity in contemporary nationalism proved productive for developing the hypothesis of the priority of patriotic nationalism – which, as demonstrated by the Ukrainian experience, most effectively counters present-day threats and challenges. Overall, the applied methods enabled the identification of the weak and vulnerable aspects of modern democratic systems of governance, the rapid dynamics of political and socio-cultural processes and events, their analysis, and the elucidation of transformation mechanisms. They also facilitated the formulation of

relevant generalisations and forecasts regarding the future resilience of democratic regimes under conditions of mounting challenges and threats.

## Results and Discussion

Scientists around the world are drawing attention to the peculiarities of the current socio-political situation, seeing in it threats to the future of the democratic world, when democracy proves incapable of protecting its own values, above all freedom of choice, in the face of a brutal criminal force seeking to forcibly restore the old norms and orders. Ukrainian historian Y. Hrytsak (2025) defines this state of affairs as an institutional crisis of democratic institutions, which in the current conditions are unable to perform their functions. There is a growing threat of abandoning the future in favour of regression, of escaping into the past. Researchers V. Ganuthula & K. Balaraman (2025), referring to the experience of the United States, India, Germany, China and Russia, pointed to dangerous political changes and the legitimisation of regressive processes in the modern world. The researchers believe that the key reason for such political changes was the interaction of money, identity and information. The authors identified this as a universal trend of contemporary politics whereby financial resources are used to deepen identity divisions, to amplify social differences through digital platforms, and to delegitimise democratic regimes while simultaneously enhancing the appeal of non-democratic narratives. Thus, it can be argued that democracy, by refusing to use force, loses out to totalitarian regimes. A symbolic example is the protest of Yale University professors T. Snyder, M. Shore and J. Stanley who relocated to universities in Toronto, Canada, as an act of dissent against the current political climate in the United States. This protest, in the form of refusal/escape characteristic of democracy, is an attempt to fight for one's values and beliefs by non-violent means of influence (Lopez & Wang, 2025).

Ukrainian researchers V. Lomaka (2024) and V. Yermolenko & T. Ogarkova (2025) point to the

vulnerabilities of modern democracy, calling the position of European democrats “the powerlessness of the strong” and emphasising that there are growing trends of fascism and radicalisation in the world. Right-wing ideological movements and emotional and value-based speculation are becoming increasingly popular, against which the critical rationality of democracy is proving helpless. Researchers call Western societies “risk reduction machines” and “insurance companies” that seek first and foremost to preserve the security of their own existence. In contrast, putinism, where the value of human life is minimal, operates as a “machine for increasing risks for others”. Democracy, based on the principles of humanism, legal equality, freedom of speech and respect for human dignity, proves incapable of resisting the trends that destroy it, thus demonstrating its own weakness and extremely vulnerable position. By refusing, even in threatening conditions, to use force in favour of open dialogue, democracy loses its ability to stop violence and evil. It is used as an open platform for attack by those who are extremely distant from democratic values but understand the vulnerability and weaknesses of democracy in order to achieve their own shameful goals. In this context, the position of researchers H. Carey & S. Mitchell (2020) is illustrative. They call for the mitigation of the prerogatives of power through the introduction of equality and consultation with local actors, insisting that without such mitigations, it is impossible to achieve stable peace. This opinion is indisputable in peacetime. The formation of international organisations such as the UN after the Second World War was precisely aimed at ensuring world order and strengthening peace between states within internationally recognised borders on the basis of the principles of equality and self-determination. These principles are enshrined in the UN Charter. However, since February 24, 2022, the international security order has been violently shattered, and its restoration now demands the unified strength of the democratic world – the application of democratic force against criminal

aggressors. Traditional democratic instruments – dialogue, compromise, and consensus – have proven ineffective against dictatorial aggression, posing an existential threat to humanity's future. Thus, peacemaking based on the mitigation of the prerogatives of power ignores the rights of future generations and increases the sense of uncertainty and insecurity.

The passage addresses a global political, governance, socio-cultural, and value crisis. J. Sánchez-Prieto (2023) points out that the world was engaged in a struggle over fundamental transformations of the system-forming order, linked to changes in the evaluation of the world and the formation of new value systems. This struggle was highly emotionally charged and often carries negative, oppositional connotations. Against the backdrop of the erosion of the idea of the future and growing public distrust of leaders and institutions, local identity grounded in shared ethno-cultural and national values gains increasing importance. A social demand for security emerges as a core value which, in the context of active global change, provokes localisation and the closing-off of communities. One of the most successful variants of such localisation, according to the author, is nation-building. The process of nation-building typically revolves around the values of language as the quintessence of culture and a shared historical narrative as the source of tradition. Nation-building myths become the emotional and value-based foundation around which processes of consolidation unfold. J. Sánchez-Prieto (2023) emphasises the importance of myth-making as a powerful engine of culture and communication, while noting its selective nature, linked to the constraints and loopholes of rationality, where rational elements combine with emotions, images, and symbols. The outcomes of this combination are often excessive and associated with heightened levels of social threat. Analysing contemporary processes of myth-making, the author identifies three types of myths: metaphysical, naturalistic, and cultural. Each displays a distinct value-emotional

colouring. Metaphysical myths possess a sacred character and appeal to the holy idea of a national spirit or messianism. Naturalistic myths rest on magical ideas of the sanctity of native soil, the spirit of ancestors, and the call of blood. Cultural myths are the closest to rational nation-building and appeal to the cultural transformation of a community into a nation under the pressure of harsh trials and the struggle for survival. An updated national narrative is formed in the emotional-value struggle, based on patriotic feeling, which becomes the antidote to national populism. In J. Sánchez-Prieto's (2023) conviction, patriotic nationalism formed on the basis of the cultural myth is the only capable force to ensure effective intercultural dialogues supported by moral values – the so-called moral dialogues, “dialogues that allow us to objectify and discern the variety of moral cultures at stake”. The very cultural, nation-building myth has been fully manifested in Ukraine. After all, Ukraine is at war, a “dramatic struggle for existence”, resisting Russian imperialism. Developing the idea of the regressive processes of the contemporary era, the author classifies Russian imperialism among them, viewing it as a consequence of social Darwinism. At the same time, the author considers war to be an effective cultural agent, whose noble outcome has been the transformation of the Ukrainian people into a nation. Thus, the researcher records a successful example of forced localisation of a community that has prospects for a successful future.

Indeed, wartime Ukraine has faced the threat of the obliteration of its statehood and of the Ukrainian nation itself, and therefore had no choice but to unite, militarise and fight. In circumstances where room for manoeuvre is minimised, what V. Havel (1985) called the “power of the powerless” is forged – a power which, the author argues, is feared by dictatorships everywhere. In the present conditions, the formation and consolidation of the Ukrainian nation around the values of patriotism and the necessity of defending the sovereignty and independence of the state is taking place. However, for the young Ukrainian state,

the task of resisting a large and powerful autocracy over a prolonged period is extremely difficult. Assistance and the combined efforts of the entire democratic world are required. At the same time, Europeans still find it very hard to resolve to take decisive action against the invaders and perpetrators of violence, and to employ the full military and armed potential at their disposal.

The arguments used to justify Europe's indecision range from “not provoking the aggressor” to warnings to Ukraine about excessive enthusiasm for the national idea. In view of this, it is worth differentiating between the concepts of nazism and nationalism. After all, it was precisely the accusation of nazism that became the pretext for Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Europeans are also quite cautious about the national question, believing that the historical era of nations is over and that the modern civilised world is a world of the internet, migration and multiculturalism, united around other value markers such as globalism, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism. In the context of globalisation, nations are losing their historical subjectivity, and the world is moving towards a post-national state. The identification of individuals by ethnic or national markers is opposed by the idea of universal humanitarian values: human rights, democracy, sustainable development, technological progress, freedom of speech, etc. The ideas of a cosmopolitan shift in global citizenship and post-national identity are becoming increasingly relevant (Habermas, 2005). Globalisation, the internet, international corporations, cosmopolitan risks, environmental challenges and multiculturalism are weakening national identity and prompting a transition to a reflective, conscious identity and a search for new forms of governance and cooperation at the international level.

For Ukraine, the issue of national identity is particularly relevant due to its more than three centuries of stateless existence. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the idea of the nation and the nation state emerged in Europe, Ukrainians were going through difficult times of loss of

statehood and political subjectivity. Statelessness always results in the oppression of ethnic communities (loss of rights, humiliation, enslavement, deprivation of language, culture, and historical memory). For a long time, Ukraine, divided into parts, was in colonial dependence (Stezhko *et al.*, 2021; Kultenko *et al.*, 2022). Only with the attainment of independence in 1991 did Ukrainians gain the opportunity to build their own sovereign state in accordance with their national character, history, traditions, culture, values and vision of the future. Therefore, the national theme, not having been experienced synchronously with Europe, is being comprehended and realised in the current difficult conditions, and at a fairly rapid pace – after all, Europeans had about five hundred years to transition from national to post-national identity. For Ukrainians, this is a relatively new experience of living in their own state in accordance with national and cultural traditions, ensuring the priority of national interests, values and prospects. This experience is shaped by the sensitive emotional and value-based foundation of tragic historical memory, the collective trauma of several generations of Ukrainians who were massively repressed, evicted from their native land, persecuted, devalued and objectified. The implementation of a colonial policy of inferiority forced Ukrainians to be ashamed of their own origins, ethnicity, language and culture. Therefore, for Ukrainians, national self-determination and self-awareness are linked to liberation from feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, insufficiency, defectiveness and unworthiness. The unifying basis for the formation of the Ukrainian nation is love and attachment to the native land – patriotism that has overcome narrow regional boundaries, xenophobia, and discrimination and has grown to the level of an active feeling, a conscious need to defend one's homeland.

It is important that the Ukrainian nation is formed on the principles of inclusiveness, not exclusivity, as is characteristic of radical chauvinistic national movements. The principle of inclusiveness implies openness, the unification of representatives of different ethnic groups living

together in one territory into a single nation – a political community that professes common patriotic feelings and strives to build a sovereign, politically, socially, culturally and economically successful nation state. Distinguishing between the concepts of ethnic and national identities, it is emphasised that the former (ethnic identity) is socio-cultural in nature, while national identity is political and legal in essence. The most telling example in this context is Ukraine's government representation: Ukrainians, Jews, Crimean Tatars, ethnic Russians and representatives of other ethnic groups represent the will of the Ukrainian people and identify themselves as Ukrainians at the level of political consciousness. Against the backdrop of growing fascist and chauvinistic sentiments in Europe and the United States, such Ukrainian inclusive nationalism appears much more promising and democratic. Ukrainian political journalist V. Portnikov (2025) systematically draws attention to this, emphasising that the issue of identity in the Russian-Ukrainian war is the most important for Ukraine's future.

National unity in Ukraine is forming in response to an external military threat, significantly accelerating the identification of the population. The war has become a trigger and catalyst for nation-building processes. F. Barnard (2003) called such processes the "spirit of the nation", when, in addition to the classic regulatory characteristics of statehood – territory, population, public authority, sovereignty, legal system, state symbols, international recognition – specific worldview components appear that determine national identity. In the modern tradition, the concept of the spirit of the nation is relevant to the concept of national identity, which is based on the values of language, historical tradition and culture. The spirit of the Ukrainian nation is manifested in the fact that Ukrainian culture overcomes inferiority and the boundaries of the local ethnic community, the language goes beyond the boundaries of purely family communication and becomes a means of social communication and marking one's own and others; history written in Ukrainian rather than imperial

textbooks becomes relevant to historical memory; there is a social demand for research into family trees and ancestry; Ukrainian culture, art, book publishing, theatre, cinema and other spheres are actively developing, and Ukrainian cultural figures are attracting interest and gaining recognition in their own country and around the world.

The contextual series of mental value oppositions between Ukraine and Western Europe can be summarised as the contrast between hard and soft power: Europeans have lost their hard power assets (positive assessments of military strength, military resistance, resilience in the face of the enemy), focusing only on soft power (the value of cultural diplomacy, words, agreements). The axiological opposition takes on a broader order: action versus words, responsibility versus irresponsibility, determination versus fear, confidence versus disbelief. Thanks to the construction of a renewed system of values, the power of the powerless acquires the potential to overcome dictatorship and military aggression and to protect freedom and justice. Meanwhile, Western societies are focused on reducing risks, avoiding harsh pressure, and striving to avoid greater harm: not provoking dictators, drawing red lines for dictatorships, etc. The West's focus on soft power is explained by the high value placed on human life in Western democracies, which is ensured by the organisation of preventive measures to reduce risks to the health and lives of citizens, the establishment of compensation payments for loss of life, etc. (Kartashova *et al.*, 2019). A threatening consequence of such aspirations is the rejection of force by democracy in favour of peace deals. At the same time, democracies lose force as their own asset. This is how the powerlessness of democracy in the face of the audacity and cruelty of dictatorships is formed. At the same time, democracy remains the only acceptable alternative to authoritarianism, tyranny and despotism, so democracy must be able to defend itself. The strength of democracy lies in its ability to use both the emotional and value potential of irrationalism and the methods of critical rational thinking, which

ensure an objective assessment and understanding of the situation, a value-based attitude to truth, a sober assessment of strengths and weaknesses and, ultimately, the use of force as a means of deterrence and countering aggression. Together, this paves the way for the unity of the democratic world based on responsibility, dignity, mutual respect and the pursuit of common security.

Liberal European culture has been shaped since the Renaissance by the dominance of the individualistic principle. For many centuries, it has determined the motives behind any individual or collective actions. The value of human life in a democratic world has been absolutised to the maximum extent, adversely affecting civic duties, in particular, the duty to defend one's homeland with arms and the willingness to sacrifice individual well-being for the common good. In a global world, the issues of territory and state borders have lost the urgency they had in classical geopolitical culture. A single global world has opened up opportunities for people to realise their potential without being rigidly confined to a specific territory. It is possible to realise individual talents and abilities in the single open space of the oikoumene. In postmodern discourse, the ideas of patriotism, national dignity and freedom-lovingness have been relativised, sometimes gaining an ironic interpretation or speculative context. The grand narratives of the past seemed to be firmly buried under postmodern irony. However, reality has exacerbated the problem of the dynamics of values, pointing out that the ideals of truth, goodness and justice, as formulated since Plato's time, need to be defended in the modern world. The values of freedom, democracy and the entire architecture of a free and open world require effort to secure. Freedom is not inherited, but is fought for at the cost of heroic efforts and great sacrifices, and democracy is a procedure that requires constant attention to ensure its observance. When the procedure is violated, democratic institutions are destroyed, and the world finds itself under pressure from the speculative simulacra of postmodern reality, in which

identity is blurred. Instead, in times of challenge, humanity needs an identity formed around markers of freedom, responsibility, security and stability, which are practically proven axiological and ethical constants. The results of empirical research by T. Mohamed (2025) are indicative in this context, allowing author to argue that in the field of education, the best educational achievements are demonstrated by students whose identity is defined in the range between cultural openness and nationalism. Meanwhile, rejection of national identity (non-nationalism) is associated with a decline in academic self-efficacy. Thus, localisation in closed communities around selective values of the past is also directly linked to a decline in education levels, which in turn negatively affects citizens' electoral skills and also contributes to the rise to power of political populists.

### Conclusions

Against the backdrop of the crisis of democratic institutions, there was a dynamic change in social and individual values. As a result, the political and socio-cultural situation in the world is changing quite actively and significantly, which is especially noticeable in the context of the transition of power in leading countries in Europe and the United States. The change of power is taking place mainly through democratic means, but it is becoming increasingly difficult for democracies to resist populist, totalitarian/authoritarian regimes without having sufficient leverage to prevent this without losing democracy. After all, the main value principle of democratic politics is, first and foremost, the consent of civil society to mutual respect for the rights, honour and dignity of each individual, compliance with rules, non-violation of agreements and contracts, and consideration of everyone's position. The democratic principles of tolerance and acceptance of others' differences, which have spread in recent decades, have led to the formation of a high level of moral sterility/servility, contrary to the personal selfish positions of individuals and their consumerist attitudes. As a result, there is a growing social tension in the world, which leads to the

localisation of communities as a way of escaping tension. Grouping into closed communities, united by a sense of fear of an unknown future, is based on selective memory, a tendency towards populist slogans, unification around the values of the past, primarily force and coercion to achieve security, fascism, radicalisation of views and actions, when authoritarian leaders exercise power through threats, manipulative suggestions and a policy of fear. Traditional moral values are being relativised in favour of emotional and sensual speculation, the absolutisation of the principles of selfishness and consumer culture as the worldview of present day. This is used in fascist ideologies to unite and localise communities against the backdrop of increasing government powers. The basis for such unification is populist rhetoric that devalues the traditions of law and morality, intensifies feelings of anxiety, and appeals to invisible threats capable of destroying the comfort of ordinary people.

Uniting around a national idea is one type of localisation. There are different forms of nationalism, from nativist nationalism based on mystical experiences to critical, exclusive nationalism, which is equivalent to the process of fascistisation of society. The experience of Ukrainians' struggle for freedom and sovereignty of their own state under the slogans and values of patriotic nationalism looks like the most successful national strategy for the future, capable of protecting the world from the decline of democracy and the triumph of dictatorships. Patriotic nationalism synthesises critical rationalism and irrationality, combining the emotional values of love for the homeland with real hard power, which allows it to resist tyranny in favour of democracy. After all, despite all the shortcomings of democracy, humanity has no better alternative, so democracy must be able to defend itself, including with the use of weapons. The localisation of communities based on the values of freedom, respect, responsibility, dialogue, reinforced by the real ability to defend their values, territory and rights, has the potential to become the basis for a new world union and a new order. The results of the study may also form the basis for

further development of the theme of the transitivity of contemporary axiological and ethical problems.

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## Динаміка цінностей та вразливості сучасної демократії на тлі процесів глобалізації та локалізації

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**Анотація.** Актуальність роботи визначилась загостренням проблеми ціннісного ставлення до світу в сучасних умовах, що артикулюється в поняттях постправди, руйнування гранднартивів минулого, великої втоми й розчарування. Це спричинило девальвацію традиційних цінностей та аксіологічну кризу. Мета роботи полягала в розкритті вразливих сторін демократії та їхнього впливу на динаміку цінностей, глобалізаційні та локалізаційні процеси сучасності. Для досягнення поставленої мети була застосована сукупність методів, зокрема, компаративістський, аналітичний, емпіричний, каузальний. Дослідження здійснене в контексті соціокультурного підходу, на принципах системності та розвитку. В процесі дослідження було встановлено, що нестабільність світу, перманентні кризи, глобальні виклики, якими характеризується сучасність, призводили до відчутних соціокультурних та політичних змін, що стало серйозним випробуванням, загрозою для демократичного світу. Лідери політичних процесів все частіше апелювали до емоційно-іраціональної сфери, саме її визначаючи як ціннісну базу для здійснення політичних дій. Наслідком цього стало поширення в глобальних масштабах в суспільно-політичній сфері маніпулятивних практик, популістських гасел, агресивної демагогії, політики страху, наростання авторитарних тенденцій. Демократія, будучи обмеженою у протидії таким практикам, мала в своєму арсеналі переважно засоби діалогу, домовленостей, угод, які передбачали попередню згоду, відповідальність сторін та готовність всіх акторів дотримуватись умов договорів. Це демонструвало вразливість демократії, всередині якої створювався плідний ґрунт для радикалів та політичних злочинців, що розглядали стабільність демократичних цінностей як слабкості демократії та використовували їх з метою захоплення влади, досягнення аморальних цілей, локалізації населення в закритих спільнотах шляхом залякування, насильства, політичних спекуляцій. В протидію цьому локальне об'єднання спільнот за маркерами патріотичного націоналізму видавалось найбільш прийнятною стратегією, що врахувала потреби людства у безпеці та, водночас, була спрямована у майбутнє. Досягнені результати можуть бути використані в освітній, соціально-виховній роботі як окремі теми в курсах з етики, філософії, політології тощо

**Ключові слова:** авторитаризм; радикалізм; популізм; політичні маніпуляції; ідентичність; націоналізм; патріотизм