



Changes in the national identity of Ukrainians during the war

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Abstract. The article addressed the reconfiguration of the national identity of Ukrainians as a consequence of the Russian-Ukrainian war and its impact on the social and political climate within society. The study aimed to analyse the changes in the national identity of Ukrainians under the influence of full-scale Russian aggression. The article was based on the findings of the research project entitled “Intercultural Communication in Social Practices as a Factor in the Formation of the Civilizational Identity of Citizens of Ukraine in the Post-war Period”. The study examined data from sociological surveys, statistical reports, and historical events. Methods employed included content analysis, ethnographic research, and the historical-comparative method. These methodologies facilitated a multidimensional analysis of the phenomenon and enabled the identification of causal relationships in the transformation of Ukrainian national identity. The correlation between the national idea and national identity was explored. It argued that the content of the national idea has varied throughout different periods of the Ukrainian state’s existence. The article examined changes in the primary markers of identity under the influence of the Russian Ukrainian war. The dynamics of national identity development were analysed, with a focus on its connection to the establishment of civil society and civic identity. It was noted that the Ukrainian intelligentsia, cultural figures, military personnel, and spiritual leaders have always played a pivotal role in shaping national identity. The main markers of Ukrainian national identity that have become prominent during the war include societal homogeneity, overcoming the “East West” divide, the expanded use of the Ukrainian language, and the Ukrainocentric stance of internally displaced persons. All these aspects of national identity reflect positive changes towards the consolidation of the nation. One of the challenging consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war is external migration and unfavourable demographic forecasts, as evidenced by data from sociological surveys

Keywords: regional identity; transformation of national identity; Russian-Ukrainian war; identity politics; factors of identity change; civic identity; social practices

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Introduction

The Russian-Ukrainian war, whose hybrid phase predates the full-scale invasion of 24 February 2022, has triggered social processes that have yet to fully manifest. Undoubtedly, scholars from various disciplines will continue to study the societal transformations induced by this conflict for years to come. Not only has the global geopolitical landscape been altered; the period of sluggish reforms that characterised the pre-war phase of Ukrainian independence has definitively ended. Russian aggression has fostered domestic consolidation, decolonisation of Ukrainian consciousness, and national mobilisation against an external enemy. The recommendations of Russian “experts”, upon which decisions to annex Crimea, invade Donbas, and later, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Sumy, and other regions were based, have proven to be erroneous and failed to accurately assess the real situation in Ukrainian society. It has become apparent that over the years of independence, a new generation of Ukrainian citizens has emerged that does not suffer from nostalgia for the USSR and does not dream of its revival. Processes of identification and formation of a political nation have accelerated significantly.

The study of the transformation of value orientations within Ukrainian society during the fullscale war is particularly relevant, given the need to understand the processes of national consolidation and the strengthening of national consciousness amidst external aggression. It also seeks to identify new dimensions of national identity shaped by contemporary challenges (Dodonov, 2024). Events since 2014, linked to Russian aggression, shifts in Ukraine’s foreign policy course, and socio-cultural transformations, have acted as a catalyst for qualitative changes in Ukrainian society, as reflected in academic publications. National identity is a multifaceted construct – a cultural-anthropological, sociological, psychological, and political-ideological phenomenon composed, according to E. Smith (1994), of numerous components including ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic, and politico-legal elements.

Moreover, identity does not merely consist of a strong or weak self-identification with one’s nation but rather of understanding what that nation represents. As M. Ryabchuk (2019) notes, identity lies in “identifying oneself with values, culture, history, symbolism, and to a certain extent, with other state and legal institutions, political and economic interests of national unity”.

National identity is not merely a collection of combined identities but rather a system of multiple identities that interact with each other in specific ways and influence one another, forming intercultural communication. Genuine intercultural communication allows for the identification of shared values, worldviews, and traditions, such as respect for human rights and life, freedom, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and care for the environment. The cultural diversity of Ukrainian society encourages each individual to engage in constructive interaction, fostering a positive attitude towards representatives of other ethnic groups and developing knowledge about surrounding cultures.

The question of national identity has been the subject of intense scholarly attention since Ukraine gained independence. Of particular interest to theorists is the relationship between ethnic and national identity. Researchers have identified various types of collective (social) identities, including ethnic, national, civic, religious, regional, sociocultural, linguistic, territorial, civilisational, political, and historical. According to N. Elias (2001), individuals seek to overcome the contradiction of “I” without “We” as a rootless, absolutely isolated person through a “strategy of encapsulation”, during which an emotional attachment to a national “We-group” is formed. This “We-identity” is embedded in the individual’s personality structure. The formation of collective identity is a result of the socialisation process, grounded in shared collective memory, history, symbols, values, language, and culture. As V. Fadeyev (2023) notes, national identity often assumes the function of collective identification, weakening identification with one’s native area, family, or ethnic group.

The question of civilisational identity is a pressing issue within contemporary identity studies. As O. Rafalskyi *et al.* (2022) note, that Ukrainian civilisational identity is a complex, multifaceted, and transitional phenomenon, its foundations laid by generations of Ukrainians and spanning millennia. The authors emphasise that Ukrainian civilisational identity is a “historically formed and established integrity, a higher form of ethnic, social, cultural, civic, and national identities, grounded in the awareness of the civilisational nature of its national values, cultural-historical, religious, and mental traits that characterise Ukraine as a regional civilisation, aligning Ukrainians with the peoples of European civilisation”.

Scholars at the National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy have also addressed this topic. R. Demchuk (2016, 2017) examines national identity in the context of language policy and linguistic self-awareness. She analyses factors influencing perceptions of linguistic identity in Ukrainian society and the role of myths in constructing national identity. I. Lysy (2013) focuses on understanding the historical and cultural aspects of national identity. He analyses the impact of history and cultural traditions on the formation of Ukrainian national consciousness. Thus, the issue of identity is at the forefront of research by many contemporary Ukrainian scholars. This article aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the changes in the formation and development of Ukrainian national identity occurring under the influence of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The study examined the social, cultural, historical, and psychological aspects of this process, as well as key changes in Ukrainians’ perception of their own identity and their impact on national consolidation in the context of Russia’s full-scale invasion.

Materials and Methods

This publication was based on research conducted as part of the study titled “Intercultural Communication in Social Practices as a Factor in the Formation of the Civilizational Identity of Citizens of Ukraine in the Post-war Period” (state registration

number: 0124U001461). The research employed an interdisciplinary approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis with methods from sociology, cultural studies, psychology, and history. The primary data sources were the results of sociological surveys conducted by Ukrainian and international research centres since 2014. The study analysed the dynamics of changes in respondents’ answers regarding their national identity, language preferences, attitudes towards state symbols, and geopolitical orientations.

This article utilised a comprehensive comparative study conducted by the Sociological Group “Rating” titled *How the War Changed Me and the Country. Summary of the Year (Rating Group, 2023)*; data from the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (Paniotto, 2022), an analytical note by the NASU Institute of Sociology of Ukraine titled *National and Regional Identity of Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Events in Donbas, 2014-2016 (2016)*; data from the *Strategy of Demographic Development of Ukraine until 2040*, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2024); an analytical report *Autonomous Republic of Crimea: People, Problems, Perspectives (2008)* by the Razumkov Centre, and other studies. The analysis of these sources allowed for relevant conclusions on the research question.

This research employed content analysis to examine media discourse and information campaigns aimed at shaping or influencing Ukrainian national identity. Specifically, the study analysed publications in Ukrainian and international media, social media, and propaganda materials disseminated during the active phase of the war. Additionally, discourse analysis was used to understand the cultural and political context of the concept of national identity. Ethnographic research methods allowed for the study of the specifics of everyday practices among Ukrainians in different areas, considering both factors of regional division and differences between rural and urban populations. The application of the historical-comparative method facilitated the analysis of identity transformations in retrospect. The use

of these methods provided a multidimensional analysis of the phenomenon and allowed for the establishment of causal relationships in the transformation of Ukrainian national identity.

Results and Discussion

National identity and the Ukrainian national idea

Ukrainian researchers V. Troshchynskiy *et al.* (2018) assert that ethnic and national identities are not synonymous, arguing that there are no purely monoethnic nations in the contemporary world. They emphasise that while ethnic identity is not identical to national identity, it serves as a foundation for the formation of the latter. In this context, one can speak of different hierarchical levels of identity functioning. Ethnicity can be considered a lower level relative to national identity. In their study, the researchers note that ethnic identity is based on “blood ties” and is rooted in the psychological characteristics, temperament, and ethnodemographic potential of its bearers; it “creates the basis for national identity and resists the pressure of the cosmopolitanisation of social life”. Ethnic identity belongs to the realm of sociobiological communities, while national identity belongs to the political-legal sphere. A political nation is a collection of citizens of one state, not representatives of one, even titular, ethnic group. National identity does not depend on the ethnic origin of one’s parents. It is the result of a conscious choice by the individual and can form and even change throughout one’s life under the influence of many factors. If ethnic identity is primarily based on the genetic roots (ethnic origin) of a nation, is stable, independent of the person’s choice, and cannot be changed under the influence of circumstances, national identity presupposes a process of national self-awareness, a sense of belonging to a particular national community through a set of emotional, cultural, historical, and social connections. It is subjective, and variable depending on a whole complex of features.

The dynamics of national identity development should be linked to the formation of civil society and civic identity. The latter is based on

citizenship, constitutional rights and obligations of an individual, regardless of ethnic origin or blood ties, and involves self-identification with the citizens, rules, and laws of the state in which the individual resides. Such identity can be consciously chosen by a person and, in case of changing the country of residence, can gradually transform under the realities of another state. National identity is a phenomenon that arouses patriotism and a readiness to defend the borders of the state.

The Law of Ukraine “On the Basic Principles of State Policy for the Affirmation of Ukrainian National and Civic Identity” (2023) defines Ukrainian national identity as “a stable awareness of a person’s belonging to the Ukrainian nation as a unique community, united by a name, symbols, geographical and ethnosocial origin, historical memory, a complex of spiritual and cultural values, in particular the Ukrainian language and folk traditions”. At the same time, Ukrainian civic identity is defined by the Law as “a stable awareness of a citizen of Ukraine, a Ukrainian abroad of their political and legal connection with Ukraine, the Ukrainian people and civil society”. Consolidating factors for the strengthening of national and civic identities, according to the aforementioned Law, should be considered such public and state (national) values as unity – “unity, indivisibility of all territories of Ukraine, spiritual unity of Ukrainians”; the uniqueness of the Ukrainian people (national identity, uniqueness, originality) is determined by its history, culture, traditions, language; will – “ability, intention, directed effort, desire to achieve a goal”; dignity – “defending one’s spiritual and moral and state positions, awareness of one’s own weight and civic duty in the international community”.

The process of forming Ukrainian national identity is a long and complex one, intertwined with the influence of the national idea. As O. Doniy (2019) points out, “the national idea is a complex set of beliefs held by a large population group, based on shared myths of the past and shared dreams of the future”. The national idea conceptually shapes national identity, indicating what

the nation is rallying around and for. It should be noted that Ukrainian national identity is still in the process of formation and is going through a phase that other European states went through during the modern era. The Ukrainian state is still in the process of identity formation. This has led to uncertainty or vagueness in formulating the content of the national idea.

The formation of the Ukrainian national idea has been significantly influenced by generations of domestic intellectuals, creative elites, cultural figures, military leaders, and spiritual leaders of the nation. The Ukrainian national idea has undergone several transformations depending on the historical challenges faced; its content could not remain the same under conditions of statelessness, the struggle against the Empire, and during periods of independence, nation-building, and statebuilding. O. Doniy (2019), for instance, distinguishes between romantic, defensive, offensive, and competitive types of the national idea. S. Dembitskyi (2022a) proposes his own periodisation of the process of civic identity formation in Ukraine. He identifies six stages, including post-Soviet adaptation (1992-2002), the first civic mobilisation (2004-2006), political polarisation (2010), the second civic mobilisation (2014), national-civic crystallisation (2018-2019), and national-civic consolidation (2022), followed by national-civic fragmentation (2023-2024). In the stages identified by the scholars, where there were surges in the development of civil society and increased pro-Ukrainian identification among the population, a significant aspect can be traced: the culmination moments are linked to Russia's desire to keep Ukraine within its sphere of influence and, at the same time, the threat of another split among national elites under external pressure.

In the third year of the war, the Ukrainian intelligentsia is once again faced with the task of reformulating the content of the national idea to consolidate the current changes in the national narrative. The national idea must solidify the status of the "imagined community", which, despite its deep historical and sociocultural roots, is, in

fact, being shaped before one's eyes. In the face of an existential threat to Ukraine's existence as a state, processes are underway that are necessary to strengthen national identity: Ukrainian society is becoming more homogeneous, the "East-West" divide is being overcome, and a Ukrainian-language information and communication as well as cultural and symbolic space is being formed, among other things.

Ukrainian society is becoming more homogeneous

The diversity of Ukraine's political landscape, the historical specificity of the formation of the modern Ukrainian nation, and the different periods of individual areas (Crimea, Transcarpathia, Galicia, Bukovina, etc.) being part of the Ukrainian state did not allow sociologists to conclude that the Ukrainian nation was monolithic. This lack of homogeneity was further exploited by political technologists who, on the eve of every election, played the "separatist card", trying to attract local voters by speculating on partial regional problems. It was precisely on these separatist-minded Ukrainian citizens that the Russians relied on their plans for the secession of Crimea and Donbas, Kharkiv and Kherson, providing them with all kinds of support and financing relevant organisations.

This point is crucial, as there is a significant gap between the slogans of pre-election competition and the primary solution to regional problems and calls for violating the territorial integrity of the state. In the analytical note *National and Regional Identity of Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Events in Donbas, 2014-2016* (2016), as well as in the analytical report of the Razumkov Centre *AR Crimea: People, Problems, Prospects* (Socio-political, Interethnic, and Interfaith Relations in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, 2008), sociological studies conducted in various areas of Ukraine in 2008-2014 are analysed, the results of which did not record a critical surge in separatist sentiments. Moreover, the leaders of the separatists were representatives of marginal circles and even criminals. Thus, the

determining factor in the events in Crimea and Donbas in 2014 was not internal but external – Russian interference. The Kremlin managed to substitute the cause and effect, creating in the information field (at least at the hybrid phase of the war) the impression that it was not Russia that formed and financed the separatist movement in Crimea and the eastern regions of Ukraine, but that this movement was initial, spontaneous, and powerful. Russia merely “came to the aid” of its “compatriots”, saving them from the bloody “Kyiv regime”.

With the onset of the full-scale war, the masks were dropped. Ukrainians saw firsthand who was bombing their cities, killing their children, and robbing their property. They saw who the real enemy was and who was the defender. Residents of different areas, language groups, and electoral orientations united in the face of a common threat, which contributed to a strengthening of the sense of unity and consolidation of society in the struggle for Ukraine’s future.

In August 2023, the Ilko Kucheriv “Democratic Initiatives” Foundation, in collaboration with the Razumkov Centre, conducted a sociological survey (Sociological Monitoring “Ukrainian Society”, 2023). According to the results, 88.5% of respondents stated that they were proud to be citizens of Ukraine. Regional differences in responses had diminished: 95% in the West of the country, and 75.6% in the East (excluding the occupied territories). These figures indicate a reorientation in the minds of Ukrainians in favour of civic identity over ethnic identity. As noted by V. Kulyk (2023), previously, the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated a hereditary criterion, even when changing their nationality from Russian to Ukrainian, evidently driven by civic considerations. This, according to the author, testified to the persistence of Soviet ideas about nationality as a hereditary category. However, the national consolidation caused by Russia’s fullscale aggression has significantly undermined these ideas, meaning that people increasingly identify themselves as Ukrainians simply because they live in Ukraine, regardless of their origin, and transfer this civic

identity to the category of nationality, which was traditionally ethnic.

The sustainability of any political nation, its strength, and attractiveness depend on its inclusivity, that is, its ability to incorporate intercultural and multinational elements while remaining acceptable to representatives of other nations, and carriers of other cultures who are citizens of Ukraine or intend to become so. To a certain extent, inclusivity is opposed to xenophobia, determining the level of openness/closedness of a social community. In September 2023, 81% of Ukrainians surveyed by the Sociological Group “Rating” (Rating Group, 2023) reported that they had a negative attitude towards Russians; 52% – towards Belarusians. More than half of the respondents (58%) expressed the impossibility of reconciliation with the Russians. And 80% of Ukrainians believe that Russians should not be allowed into Ukraine, even as tourists.

On the one hand, such indicators are a sign of growing xenophobia, but on the other hand, they are quite predictable given the war crimes committed and continue to be committed in Ukraine by Russian servicemen. The polarity of assessments increases during wartime, but it is unlikely that outbreaks of interethnic conflicts within Ukraine should be expected, for example, between Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking Ukrainians, ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Russians who are citizens of Ukraine. It is sufficient to point out the large percentage of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking Ukrainians who are defending their homeland in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Paniotto, 2022). Interestingly, despite all the efforts of Polish farmers, the attitude of Ukrainians towards Poles has improved significantly compared to 2021.

Overcoming the “East-West” divide and expanding the use of the Ukrainian language

Ukraine is a divided country. This divide runs along the Dnipro River, symbolically splitting the territory of the state into the Right-bank West and the Left-bank East. The conflict potential of the

division into different types of identity has led to the weakening of the Ukrainian political nation, and harsh political confrontation, which was most acutely manifested during both Maidan protests, when the citizens of Ukraine were divided into two camps – for a European path of development for Ukraine or an economic and mental union with Russia. The social base of the camps, respectively, were voters from the western and eastern regions of Ukraine. As M. Ryabchuk (2019) notes, “for many years of independence, Ukraine, our society, has been characterised by the ambivalence of Ukrainian national identity, which is characterised by the existence of two national communities that can be defined as neo-Soviet/neo-colonial and Ukrainian/anti-colonial – with radically different cultural codes, symbols, historical narratives and value orientations”.

This ambivalence was concretised in Ukrainians’ attitudes towards the country’s foreign policy. The so-called West supported Ukraine’s Euro-integration aspirations, while the conditional East saw its future in a Eurasian community led by Russia. Before the Revolution of Dignity, the majority of Ukrainians did not support the idea of Ukraine joining NATO. After the full-scale invasion, 87% of surveyed citizens stated that they agreed with Ukraine joining the EU, and 86% – NATO (Rating Group, 2023). According to V. Fadeyev (2023), “those painful issues that for a long time became a factor of political and electoral divisions in Ukraine are gradually losing their relevance today. The differences between the West and the East are diminishing, giving way to new ones – made public by the war, since today the main factor determining the division into friends and foes has become the attitude towards the war, which has pushed all other factors of division into the background”. Thus, the war has united most Ukrainians in the fight against a common enemy, contributing to national unity and solidarity.

A sign of the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation is the attitude towards the state language. After the full-scale Russian invasion, the process of switching from Russian to Ukrainian as the

language of everyday communication accelerated significantly. The Russian aggression has caused a change in the mindset of most Ukrainians regarding “the place of the Russian and Soviet in the socio-cultural life of the country”, including language aspects. The Ukrainian language has turned into a kind of marker of national identity, a public manifestation of one’s national identity. It has become fashionable to speak Ukrainian.

This is especially true for previously Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine who have consciously switched to speaking Ukrainian. In general, 82% of citizens consider Ukrainian their native language, 60% speak it at home, 28% speak both Ukrainian and Russian, and 12% – Russian, notes V. Kulyk (2023). The author emphasises that even in the East and South of Ukraine, 72% aspire to only Ukrainian-language communication, 19% – any of the two languages of the visitor’s choice, and only 1% would like state institutions in their locality to work in Russian.

During focus group discussions, sociologists recorded an increased demand from interviewees for a choice of language for communication. The audience notes a significant increase in Ukrainian-language content of various thematic orientations on social networks (YouTube, Telegram, Instagram, etc.) after the beginning of the full-scale war, as noted by H. Bogdanovych (2024). Everyday social practices of communication with relatives living in the Russian Federation have already lost their sharpness, characteristic of the first period of aggression. Communication is most often reduced to discussing neutral topics such as weather, health, interesting culinary recipes, and avoiding painful political topics. In this way, at least the illusion of family closeness between people is preserved.

National identity as a choice for displaced persons

The question of national self-identification has become particularly acute for internally displaced persons (IDPs): refugees, displaced persons, and migrants. After all, they often had to pay for their choice with their homes, property acquired throughout their lives, and even their own lives.

The decision to “stay with Ukraine” came at a high cost. It was much easier to recognise the authority of the victor, remaining “under Russia”. Precisely because the choice to leave or not to leave was made consciously, there is a higher percentage of patriotic sentiments among IDPs.

If the first wave of IDPs consisted mainly of residents of Crimea and Donbas (in 2021, about 1.3 million IDPs were registered), then after 24 February 2022, migration flows covered a much larger number of people from the entire Left Bank. According to the Strategy of Demographic Development of Ukraine until 2040 (2024), as of July 2024, there were 4.7 million registered internally displaced persons, of which 3.4 million people (73.5%) were displaced after the full-scale invasion. In 2022 alone, the number of IDP families increased from 124,000 to 739,000. As O. Zlobina (2016) points out in her research, looking at the distribution of internally displaced persons across the country, one can not only acknowledge the scale of the issue but also its nationwide character. Thus, in six regions, the number of displaced persons is approaching 100,000, and there is not a single region that has not accepted displaced persons from Crimea or Donbas. At the same time, the lives of more than 1,700,000 people were practically destroyed, and the question of their reintegration into society arose, the author adds.

According to the sociological survey conducted by Group “Rating” (2023), as a result of the war, 17% of the population changed their place of permanent residence, with 15% (9% in the East) planning to return in the near future, 27% (16% in the East) willing to wait, 37% (49% in the East) intending to return after the war, and 13% (15% in the East) not planning to return at all. In total, 55% of residents changed their place of residence in the East, and 21% in the South. At the same time, 88% of IDPs from the East left their area, and 10% remained within the region, while only 33% of IDPs from the West left the area, 25% remained within it, and 41% within the region. This study revealed a trend towards an increase in the number of those who identify themselves as citizens

of Ukraine, from 76% to 94%. Interestingly, sociologists have also recorded an increase in those who identify themselves primarily as Europeans. Group “Rating” (2023) claims that the number of such people reaches 50%, while the number of those who call themselves “Soviet people” has decreased to 10%. According to the monitoring data cited by S. Dembitskyi (2022b), self-identification as a citizen of the USSR has also fallen from 2.8% to 1.4%. There is a weakening of local identification in favour of national and civic identification, which can be considered a favourable factor for strengthening national consolidation.

External migration and demographic forecasts

External migration has become another serious problem triggered by the war. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Strategy of Demographic Development of Ukraine until 2040 (2024), which provides the following figures: “Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, 34.39 million Ukrainians have left Ukraine and 30.91 million have entered (as of 31 May 2024). Thus, there are 3.48 million Ukrainians abroad who have left and not returned. In addition, according to surveys by the Centre for Economic Strategy, the number of Ukrainians who left through the Russian Federation to European countries is 7.4%, or 0.26 million. According to reports by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1.2 million Ukrainians have been deported or voluntarily left for the internationally recognised territory of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus. Accordingly, the total number of Ukrainians abroad is 5 million people. Additionally, at least 19.5 thousand children have been illegally deported to the territory of the Russian Federation”.

A high degree of correlation can be established between the self-identification of those who voluntarily left for Russia or Belarus and the forecasts regarding their return to Ukraine. Most likely, they are lost to the nation. It is more difficult to predict the behaviour of those who left for EU countries (Buzarov, 2023). At first glance, it seems that they were fleeing the war, and after

its end, when the threat to life disappears, these people should return to Ukraine. But it is not so simple. According to the Strategy of Demographic Development of Ukraine until 2040 (2024), in January 2024, 52.5% of respondents planned to return to Ukraine, 7.3% did not plan to, 15.8% were rather unlikely to return, and 24.5% were hesitant. It is clear that the longer the war lasts, the fewer refugees will return to Ukraine.

It should be noted that the European Union countries have created favourable conditions for the adaptation of Ukrainian refugees. Many of them have state programs to support displaced persons and provide social benefits. In other words, the EU is not interested in the return of Ukrainians home. At the same time, not all Ukrainian citizens have found themselves in Europe. In the focus groups conducted, they complained about the high level of bureaucracy in European institutions, excessive social control, and the lack of social mobility. Abroad, Ukrainians are reevaluating the effectiveness of state institutions in Ukraine and improving their assessments of government actions. It is necessary to work specifically with this category of migrants to encourage their return to their homeland. Among Ukrainians themselves, there is an ambiguous attitude towards those who left the country during times of crisis. Group "Rating" (2023) records a generally positive attitude among respondents towards women who left abroad with children, an indifferent attitude towards women who left without children, and the most negative attitude towards men of conscription age who fled abroad to avoid mobilisation.

Considering the research results, Ukraine's national elites should prioritise communication with Ukrainians who have left the country, to facilitate their return. Undoubtedly, the main factor influencing the decision to return will be the end of the war with Ukraine's victory. The second factor is positive trends towards changes in life towards European standards. However, analysing the experiences of everyday life abroad, and the negative practices that Ukrainians have

encountered in their search for a safe life, the country's leadership should reform the country taking into account the positive social practices that have formed in Ukraine.

Conclusions

The period since 24th February 2022 can be characterised as a new state of the Ukrainian political nation, where substantial changes have occurred in Ukrainians' understanding of their own identity. National identity has an "umbrella" nature, which can encompass, and hold under its "wing" very different identities: regional, ethnic, and individual. Its characteristic feature is that it cements a large group – a nation. This process occurs through intercultural communication both within the country and between countries, which are equally important for the awareness of national identity. Resistance to the Russian invasion was accompanied by a surge of patriotic sentiments in Ukraine, an increase in the cohesion of citizens around their belonging to a single Ukrainian nation, the idea of fighting for independence and democratic values. A peculiar catalyst for national consciousness, the formation of a civic identity among Ukrainians, and a surge of pride in belonging to the Ukrainian state was the feeling of an existential threat from Russia, fear of encroachment on national and personal security. Simultaneously, in the conditions of war, sociopolitical narratives that had dominated the national information and electoral space since the beginning of independence have completely lost any significance. The consolidation of Ukrainians during the war has made irrelevant the socio-political discussions that were considered vital before the Russian invasion. Such issues include regional, linguistic, ethnic, and confessional differences among Ukrainian citizens. The use of the Ukrainian language has expanded, and the Ukrainian people have realised that language defines spiritual and political boundaries. The Ukrainian nation has become more homogeneous, consolidated around shared values. Prospects for further research on this topic include an

analysis of the consequences of emigration and ways to return Ukrainians who have left abroad, as well as the integration of internally displaced persons into the social, economic, and cultural life of the country. None.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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Зміни національної ідентичності українців під час війни

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Анотація. Стаття присвячена проблемі переформатування національної ідентичності українців внаслідок російсько-української війни та впливу останньої на соціальну і політичну атмосферу в суспільстві. Метою статті був аналіз змін національної ідентичності українців під впливом повномасштабної російської агресії. Статтю підготовлено за результатами науково-дослідної роботи на тему «Міжкультурна комунікація в соціальних практиках як фактор формування цивілізаційної ідентичності в повоєнний період». У роботі проаналізовані дані соціологічних опитувань, статистичні дані, історичні події. Використано методи контент-аналізу, етнографічного дослідження, історико-порівняльний метод. Використання цих методів забезпечило багатовимірний аналіз явища та дозволило встановити причинно-наслідкові зв'язки у трансформації української національної ідентичності. Розглянуто проблему співвідношення національної ідеї та національної ідентичності. Доведено, що в різні періоди існування української держави зміст національної ідеї був різним. Досліджено зміну основних маркерів ідентичності під впливом російсько-української війни. Проаналізовано динаміку розвитку національної ідентичності, яку пов'язують зі становленням громадянського суспільства і громадянської ідентичності. Зазначено, що визначну роль у формуванні національної ідентичності завжди відігравала українська інтелігенція, культурні діячі, військові і духовні лідери нації. Основними маркерами національної української ідентичності, які актуалізувались під час війни, є однорідність суспільства, подолання розколу «Схід-Захід», розширення поля використання української мови, україноцентрична позиція переселенців. Всі ці аспекти національної ідентичності демонструють сприятливі зміни на користь консолідації нації. Одним зі складних наслідків російсько-української війни є зовнішня міграція і невтішні демографічні прогнози, про що свідчать матеріали соціологічних опитувань

Ключові слова: регіональна ідентичність; трансформація національної ідентичності; російсько-українська війна; політика ідентичності; фактори зміни ідентичності; громадянська ідентичність; соціальні практики