Formation of national identity: cultural narratives of Ukrainian history

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The article is dedicated to exploring the impact of narratives on national identity. It examines key approaches to understanding national identity, the factors shaping its formation, and the processes of its transformation amid globalization and contemporary hybrid challenges. Particular attention is given to the Ukrainian context, specifically the role of national identity in the conditions of armed conflict and informational influence.

The study employs a range of philosophical methods, including historical-philosophical analysis, hermeneutics, dialectics, phenomenology, and critical analysis within a constructivist paradigm, enabling the tracing of the evolution of the identity concept. It is established that in Ukraine, given its postcolonial past and ongoing war, Ukrainocentric narratives of unity, resilience, and pro-Western orientation prevail over destructive Russian narratives, fostering societal consolidation, integration of internally displaced persons, and mobilization of the diaspora. However, challenges such as bilingualism, media fragmentation, and intergenerational gaps complicate the formation of a cohesive «we-identity». The study concludes that the conscious construction and support of national identity as a component of national security and cultural distinctiveness are necessary, through the development of harmonized narratives, promotion of Ukrainian-language content, media literacy, and inclusive practices.

Introduction

National identity is a pivotal category in the study of society, encompassing its culture, politics, and history. It is shaped through the interplay of historical memory, language, traditions, shared experiences, and perceptions of «self» and «other». The issue of Ukrainian identity has gained particular relevance amid ongoing war, migration challenges, and the increasing impact of globalization. Within the context of a postcolonial past and contemporary geopolitical transformations, Ukraine is undergoing an active redefinition of national self-awareness, accompanied by resistance to the aggressor's destructive narratives and the affirmation of Ukrainocentric values.

The study of tools for constructing ideologemes, national narratives, and myth-design processes is highly relevant to our topic. Methods of social engineering are applied across various domains of social reality, influencing the transformation of social institutions and capable of either enhancing or complicating people's lives. As a reformist strategy, social engineering carries not only risks but also opportunities for effective construction of national identity and the creation of behavioral models for an active civic space.

The **research objective** of the article is to analyze the historical and philosophical foundations of national identity, its contemporary definitions, and the mechanisms through which cultural, political, media, and migratory narratives influence the formation of «we-identity» in Ukraine, with particular emphasis on the challenges of war and strategies for social consolidation.

Research methods

The study of national identity in Ukraine is grounded in a set of philosophical methodologies that enable the analysis of identity as a dynamic sociocultural construct. A historical and philosophical approach is employed to trace the evolution of the concept of identity — from Aristotle's notion of sameness to the development of the modern concept of identity and its contemporary interpretations (Ricoeur, Anderson). This approach establishes the theoretical and methodological foundations for the study of national identity.

The hermeneutic method, drawing on Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity, is applied to interpret cultural, political, and media narratives as instruments for constructing «we-identity». The dialectical method, inspired by the thought of Fichte and Hegel, is used to analyze the interaction between the «I» and the «non-I» in the formation of national self-consciousness through dialogue with other cultures. The phenomenological approach helps to explore the subjective experience of identity in times of crisis, particularly in the context of war and migration.

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Narratives, ideologemes, and other communicative tools emerge as weapons—capable either of contributing to victory in war or being co-opted by the enemy. A narrative approach to the study of social phenomena makes it possible to examine national identity through the stories a society tells about itself and articulates in media and political discourse. Historical memory has been interpreted at different times through diverse social and political lenses in Ukraine, and collective identity has been shaped by both internal and external influences. In this context, the role of narratives becomes especially significant.

Critical analysis within the framework of the constructivist paradigm (Hobsbawm, Anderson) makes it possible to deconstruct Russian narratives and assess their impact on Ukrainian identity, revealing the mechanisms of social engineering and performativity (Butler, Bauman).

Results and Discussion

To understand the contemporary theoretical construct of national identity, it is necessary to examine its historical and philosophical foundations. The conceptual roots of the notion of identity can be traced to Aristotle's concept of sameness. In «Metaphysics», Aristotle formulated the logical principle of identity: each thing is identical to itself. This principle laid the groundwork for subsequent discourse on essence and selfhood, establishing identity as a fixed logical category. In medieval scholasticism, the term identitas was used to describe the metaphysical sameness of essences – particularly in theological debates about the nature of God – without direct reference to individual or collective self-definition. Nonetheless, this period prepared the intellectual ground for later developments.

A key phase in the formation of the concept of identity was the Early Modern era. The philosophies of F. Bacon, T. Hobbes, and J. Locke elevated the practice of experience to the level of theoretical reflection. The philosophy of experience provided new methodological tools for analyzing both individual trajectories of spiritual formation and autonomy, and collective forms of self-determination, including a community's awareness of national identity. In his Essay *Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke shifted from abstract logic to psychological mechanisms. He wrote: "Consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes everyone to be what he calls himself" (*Locke, 1975, Book 2: 224*). Locke's idea became foundational for later inquiries into identity as personal experience tied to consciousness and memory – critical for understanding individual identity in modern societies.

The decisive role of self-consciousness in philosophical discourse on the subject is further emphasized by Descartes, Fichte, and Hegel, as substantiated in V. Popov's monograph *Ancient Identology and Patristic Exegesis of Identity* (*2011*). For Descartes, self-consciousness is the subject's immediate awareness of its own thinking. Hegel, however, sees it as emerging from dialectical interaction with another consciousness, requiring recognition by the Other.

In his *Foundations of the entire science of knowledge*, J.G. Fichte proposed a dialectical understanding of identity. The awareness of the self (Ich) occurs through opposition to what is not-I. The splitting of consciousness into "I" and "not-I" is simultaneously an act of identification between consciousness and the world it creates – an act of creating the external world. The "I" and the product of its activity, the "not-I", together constitute the Absolute I, or pure consciousness (*Fichte, 1982: 24*). Fichte emphasizes the active role of the

subject in shaping its own essence and highlights the interaction between the subject and humanity – directly relevant to the formation of collective identity.

Abstracting from Fichte's idealism, his methodology of constructing a substantial supra-subject clarifies the mechanism of collective identity formation. The entire history of humanity may be seen as a search for the identity of the "I" – a continuous act of creative self-determination toward an ideal. Identity, therefore, is a dynamic process in which the self defines itself through dialogue with the Other. National identity is constructed in this same manner: a national community defines itself through its dialogue with other cultures.

The concept of national identity as a theoretical category emerged at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, amid the intensification of nation-building processes in Europe. These developments were driven by the collapse of traditional empires, the rise of Romanticism, and the growing prominence of ideas surrounding popular sovereignty. One of the first thinkers to conceptualize the link between culture, language, and collective self-awareness was the German philosopher J. G. Herder. In his *Outlines of a philosophy of the history of man*, Herder wrote: "Every nation bears the center of its happiness within itself, as every sphere bears its center of gravity" (*Herder, 1800: 461*). This metaphor reflects Herder's belief that each nation possesses an internal "national spirit" shaped by its natural environment, language, myths, and traditions. The concept of the Volksgeist (national spirit) became foundational for understanding the nation as an organic community unified by language, folklore, and custom.

For a long time, the dominant perspective in the study of nations and identity was the primordialist theory. Ernest Gellner and Anthony D. Smith, among others, viewed the nation as a natural, organic community arising from blood ties, shared ethnicity, common language, and religion. National identity was seen as innate and immutable, and the sense of belonging to a group as emotionally deep and biologically determined. Individuals were thought to be born into their identity, without the possibility of choosing it. This approach neglects the processes of social construction in the formation of identity and overlooks the influence of ideological and political narratives, education, and media. Paradoxically, this very approach is employed by Russia in its propaganda narratives, such as the notion of a "single people", which serve to justify discrimination, territorial annexation, and the destruction of Ukrainians.

We argue that identities not only exist but are constructed, disseminated, and transformed. Proponents of modernist theory such as E. Gellner and B. Anderson describes the nation as a product of modernity, arising from industrialization, urbanization, and the spread of mass education. Anderson famously defines nations as imagined communities. This opens the way for constructivist theory, which articulates the contemporary understanding of identity as a social construct. As the British historian Eric Hobsbawm suggests, identity can be shaped by political and intellectual elites through language, symbols, and myths. His ideas are widely applied in analyses of postcolonial nations, national myths, and national holidays.

In *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, E.Hobsbawm explores how national myths shape identity. He argues that

> myths of common origin, heroic past, or cultural exceptionalism are key to the construction of nations. Myths need not be based on historical fact, but they provide a narrative that binds

people together within a single political or cultural community (Hobsbawm, 1990: 21).

National holidays often serve as platforms for the performance and reinforcement of such myths. The celebration of historical anniversaries is accompanied by rituals that emphasize national unity and uniqueness. Hobsbawm stresses that such commemorations function as tools of socialization, embedding national identity in the consciousness of citizens (*Hobsbawm, 1990: 22*).

To arrive at a contemporary definition of national identity, we apply a comparative methodology that brings together philosophical, socio-psychological, and cultural approaches. This allows us to understand how individuals and communities construct their identities through sociocultural and historical practices.

A foundational contribution to the understanding of identity was made by Erik H. Erikson, who introduced the concept of identity into social psychology, emphasizing its psychosocial development. According to Erikson, "identity is a subjective sense of continuity and coherence, shaped through the resolution of crises, particularly during adolescence" (*Erikson, 1974: 18*). His concept of individual identity laid the groundwork for understanding collective identity, since the human being, as a social creature, cannot experience wholeness without a sense of belonging to a community. Therefore, individuals seek inclusion within such communities. That is why we argue that national identity is necessary for modern individuals, because people perceive themselves as part of a community through shared values, norms, and practices. Erikson's concept acquires additional significance here, as it links the individual "I" to the collective "We", forming a basis for nation-building.

Building upon Erikson's ideas, Paul Ricoeur proposed a dual-level model of identity that distinguishes between idem (bodily or numerical sameness, reflecting substantial constancy) and ipse (selfhood, reflecting dynamic changes in consciousness) (*Ricoeur, 2002: 147*). Ricoeur's framework enables national identity to be viewed as a synthesis of continuity (ethnic, cultural, historical characteristics) and dynamism (transformations in consciousness under the influence of social and political processes). In the Ukrainian context, this suggests a blend of historical tradition with contemporary transformations shaped by globalization and war.

An important contribution to the understanding of national identity is B. Anderson's concept of the "imagined community". He defines the nation as "an imagined political community formed through shared practices and historical narratives, which does not require direct contact among all its members" (*Anderson, 2006: 32*). "The nation is imagined as a solidary community moving through homogeneous, empty time, where members feel a sense of unity through a common imagination of history and culture" (*Anderson, 2006: 49*). In Ukraine, this manifests through the creation of narratives about a shared past, such as the struggle for independence or the preservation of cultural heritage, which reinforce the sense of national unity.

A. Sen, in his analysis of identity, emphasizes its plurality, encompassing ethnic, religious, linguistic, and political dimensions (*Sen, 2006: 16*). National identity, according to Sen, is neither singular nor monolithic but consists of multiple affiliations that individuals can consciously choose or combine. This pluralistic view of identity is evident in Ukraine, where ethnic Ukrainian identity coexists with civic identity. A particularly illustrative case is that of many Russian-speaking individuals residing in Ukraine who identify as Ukrainian, placing linguistic issues in the background while prioritizing shared political orientation or collective interests.

Building on the aforementioned theoretical foundations, national identity can be defined as a dynamic sociocultural construct that merges individual self-awareness with collective belonging to a nation through shared ethnic, cultural, historical, and political characteristics. It is shaped through the interiorization of values, norms, and narratives that provide a sense of unity and temporal continuity.

In Ukraine, the question of national identity holds particular significance due to its postcolonial context and current geopolitical challenges, especially the war with the Russian Federation. Historically, Ukrainian identity was forged through the struggle for independence and resistance to external domination – a process explored in the work of Bystrytskyi, who describes the revival of national identity following the dissolution of the Soviet Union (*Bystrytskyi, 2013: 43*). Since 2014, there has been an active rethinking of Ukrainian history, a growing emphasis on the Ukrainian language, and an ongoing process of decommunization. The full-scale invasion by Russia in 2022 accelerated the process of mental decolonization and radically transformed societal attitudes. Many individuals who previously held neutral or even favorable views of Russia have adopted strongly negative positions, leading to a rejection of everything associated with the aggressor. As a result, there has been a notable shift toward Ukrainian or Western cultural orientations, contributing to the strengthening of national self-awareness.

Despite this renaissance of Ukrainian identity and growing interest in Ukrainian culture, challenges to the formation of a cohesive national identity remain unresolved. One key issue is bilingualism, which creates tension between Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking populations and complicates national consolidation. Another is the generational divide: the older generation, raised during the Soviet era, often transmitted Soviet stereotypes to younger generations, hindering the development of a contemporary Ukrainian identity. The emotionality and psychological immaturity of a young nation are evident in impulsive responses to external challenges, which at times obstruct strategic reflection on national objectives. Furthermore, Ukrainian culture is still partially associated with a folkloric, rural tradition – a perception rooted in Soviet policies of sharovarshchyna and cultural provincialization, which reinforced a stereotype of inferiority. While efforts to promote high culture – particularly in literature, cinema, and the arts – have shown progress, they remain insufficient to fully overcome this legacy (*Kysliuk, 2018: 72*).

These contradictions demand a systemic approach to their resolution. In particular, there is a need for a deeper examination of the mechanisms through which narratives influence national identity, in order to develop concepts, ideas, and narrative strategies that can contribute to societal consolidation.

Narratives are the primary mechanism through which national identity is formed, generating a shared vision of the nation, its past, and its values. They enable individuals and communities to comprehend their belonging to a broader socio-cultural reality, thereby constructing a "we-identity". Paul Ricoeur views narratives as tools that allow for the interiorization of social norms and values, creating a link between individual and collective experience (*Ricoeur, 2002: 149*). Through stories, individuals inscribe their lives into a broader context. This is essential for understanding national identity as a process that unites the individual self with the collective.

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Ukrainian scholar V. Palahuta has argued that culture functions as memory, preserving and transmitting meaning across generations and thereby shaping collective identity (*Palahuta, 2022: 16*). Cultural memory, embodied in narratives, creates continuity, enabling a nation to perceive itself as a unified whole. In a similar vein, B. Anderson defines the nation as an "imagined community" sustained through narratives that generate a shared understanding of history and culture – even when members of the nation have no direct contact with one another. Narratives foster a sense of simultaneity, allowing a nation to imagine itself as a coherent community moving through time (*Anderson, 2006*). In essence, Anderson's ideas reinforce Palahuta's thesis about the formative power of culture and narrative in shaping identity, while adding that individuals with substantially different socio-cultural and historical backgrounds can be united as members of the same nation. This idea is particularly relevant to Ukraine – a multiethnic, diverse, and geographically large country, even without considering the occupied territories. It offers hope that the development of a distinct cultural identity can contribute to national cohesion.

Thus, narratives do not merely influence national identity, they actively construct it. Let us examine the types of narratives and the mechanisms through which they exert their influence. Contemporary Ukrainian culture (including cinema, literature, and music) has made notable progress since 2014, when the state began actively supporting Ukrainian-language content. However, its impact remains limited due to the enduring popularity of Western and Russian cultural products, despite the official ban on the latter. Ukrainian cinema, although improving in quality, still struggles to attract a mass audience. For instance, only two Ukrainian films made it into the top 30 most-watched films on the MEGOGO streaming platform in 2024 (*MEGOGO, 2024*).

Cultural researcher K. Korostelina highlights a particularly acute issue concerning children's media. She argues that Ukrainian animated content lags behind its Russian counterparts in popularity, which is a significant problem, given that the foundations of identity are laid in early childhood (*Korostelina et al., 2025: 12*). The situation in music is more favorable, largely due to radio quotas and Ukraine's strong performances in international contests such as Eurovision. Literature, despite the presence of talented writers, has seen a decline in influence due to a global reduction in reading habits. Its impact is often indirect: for example, members of the intellectual elite inspired by contemporary literature may go on to engage in political activity based on the ideas they encountered in books.

In recent years, digital platforms have played a pivotal role in promoting Ukrainian culture. YouTube and Twitch, along with social media more broadly, have become key channels for disseminating Ukrainian-language content. Since 2022, there has been a notable increase in Ukrainian-language blogs, livestreams, and media projects, reflecting a shift in cultural orientation (*Korostelina et al., 2025: 11*). While Russian-language content still retains popularity among certain segments of the population, the percentage of Ukrainian-language content consumed by Ukrainian users has been steadily increasing, according to sociological research.

Since 2022, performative culture has become a crucial tool in shaping Ukrainian national identity. Volunteer movements, marches in support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and art exhibitions featured in both international and Ukrainian media are examples of performative acts that embody narratives of solidarity, resilience, and resistance.

These events, as represented in the media, not only unite Ukrainians but also promote Ukrainian identity on a global scale, reinforcing national pride.

According to J. Butler, performativity "involves the repetition of identity through social practices and actions" (*Butler, 2005: 61*). Butler's concept, developed within the context of social norms and subjectivity, is particularly relevant to the study of national identity, as it emphasizes the active role of subjects in constructing collective identity through public acts that embody shared narratives. Such events, covered in the media, not only unite Ukrainians, but also popularize Ukrainian identity on a global level, strengthening national pride.

Another influential category of narratives is political narratives, which have had a profound impact on Ukrainian national identity in the context of war and globalization. V. Palahuta notes that Russia's invasion has intensified discourses on national unity and resistance to external aggression, providing a foundation for new national narratives (*Palahuta, 2022: 14*). Ukraine's aspiration for Western integration, particularly NATO and EU membership, has fostered a pro-Western identity associated with democratic values. Ukrainization has emphasized the revival of the Ukrainian language and culture, although it continues to face resistance due to persistent bilingual perceptions. Ongoing debates between multiculturalism and cultural homogeneity reflect the tension between inclusive and exclusive models of identity. The resilience narrative strengthens national pride and unity in the face of aggression. Overall, contemporary political narratives tend to reinforce Ukrainian identity, although active political discourse remains constrained by the ongoing war.

Media narratives in Ukraine also play a critical role in shaping national identity, though their effects are both constructive and problematic. On the positive side, media coverage of military victories, volunteer efforts, and achievements in sports and culture promotes Ukrainian patriotism and cultural pride. On the other hand, Russian media narratives – aimed at destabilizing Ukraine – have a negative impact on national identity. A further destabilizing factor is the influence of powerful financial groups that control significant portions of the media landscape and often prioritize individual interests over collective ones, thus undermining social unity. A defining feature of media narratives is their fragmentation and brevity, particularly in social media, where long-form texts and videos over 30 seconds tend to underperform compared to short-format content.

Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid modernity describes contemporary society as characterized by constant change, uncertainty, and fragmentation. «Unlike solid modernity, which relied on stable institutions, liquid modernity is marked by fluidity, where relationships are temporary and identities are fragmented» (Bauman, 2001: 192). Bauman's framework is particularly apt for analyzing media narratives in Ukraine, as digital media – especially social networks – reflect the ephemeral and fragmented nature of liquid modernity. Bauman argues that media often focus on personal stories and consumer desires, producing narratives primarily aimed at capturing attention. This tendency fragments public discourse into isolated segments, which in turn complicates the construction of cohesive narratives and, by extension, a coherent "we-identity".

An important factor in shaping identity has been the rise of social engineering technologies, which are increasingly influencing mass consciousness and behavior. In the article *Artificial Intelligence vs Human: Liminal Social Engineering*, we proposed defining social engineering "as a

strategic technology of constructing new meanings, principles, rules and facts of social interaction" (*Kolinko et al., 2024: 9*). Social engineering may serve the objectives of socio-political forces seeking to improve society, or it may be employed as a destructive instrument to support discriminatory, racist, and fundamentalist ideologies.

For example, we noted that

wanting to preserve the traditional mechanisms of government, Russia produces the narrative of the "post-Western", which is dangerous because it destroys the principles of the democratic world and tries to attract other traditionalist worlds, e.g., Chinese, Islamic worlds, etc., to its concept. The orientation of society towards narrowly interpreted national values and the formation of an image of the outside world as hostile take unattractive, dangerous forms, which affects communication strategies. The Russian information space is distorted in accordance with the country's imperial goals; disinformation tools also serve to create an information bubble for its own society (*Kolinko et al., 2022: 9*).

War-related narratives are driving transformational processes within Ukrainian national identity. Although such crises are inherently destructive, they may also catalyze opportunities for rethinking and rebooting national identity. In such moments, social engineering becomes particularly effective due to heightened emotional sensitivity and the collective need for meaning. Clearly defined concepts provide an emotional code for the community. The notions of "us" and "them" gain sharp contours. Social engineering thus becomes a regulatory mechanism of inclusion and exclusion within the symbolic space of the nation. Two primary mechanisms are at work here. First, there are formal mechanisms: citizenship, voting rights, and participation in political life. Second, the circle of "us" is defined by shared values and ideas of justice or a "just peace". The image of the "enemy" may be used to consolidate society, delineating who belongs to the community and who does not.

In the context of war, migration practices further test these mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion.

Transgressive reality, not centered within the norms and certainties of social order and human qualities, but rather experienced in liminal, borderline conditions, gives rise to a discourse of stepping beyond norms – a discourse of deviant and marginal sociocultural practices. The boundary signifies the limit of uncertainty, the ambiguity of the subject's position (*Kolinko, 2017: 372*).

Such conditions open up space for choice and self-awareness: "Who am I?", "What is my homeland?", "Which world order do I accept?" As we explored in the monograph *Hybrid War: in verbo et in praxi*, migration generates a new subjectivity, but it is accompanied by provocative challenges to established norms, cultural traditions, and everyday rules (*Kolinko, 2017: 372*). Migration can occur within national borders: in 2014, internally displaced persons from occupied territories moved to other Ukrainian regions. According to sociological research, most of them successfully integrated into their host communities. This fact undermines the Russian-propagated narrative of «regional differences», revealing it to be inconsistent with reality.

The issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is crucial for the analysis of narratives, as war forces them to reconsider their identities in new environments. Ukrainian-oriented narratives, such as national unity, resilience, and solidarity – promoted through media, volunteerism, and state initiatives – facilitate the integration of displaced individuals by providing them with a sense of belonging to the Ukrainian nation (*Korostelina et al., 2025*). Stories of the Armed Forces of Ukraine's heroism and community support contribute to the formation of a "we-identity" among this population group. In contrast, Russian narratives emphasizing "regional differences" or the idea of the "Russian world" aim to destabilize but have limited influence. Ukrainian-oriented narratives prevail due to the consensus among most IDPs that Russia is the primary cause of the war and Ukrainian suffering. Regarding adaptation, the vast majority of displaced persons integrate harmoniously, with most of their difficulties related to economic and everyday life factors (*Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, 2023*).

The diaspora is an important object of narrative analysis, as it forms a transnational identity by maintaining ties to Ukraine and influencing its global image. Narratives of solidarity highlighting Ukraine's struggle against aggression, as well as cultural narratives about traditions and uniqueness, disseminated through international media, strengthen diaspora patriotism. For instance, coverage of the war in European media motivates diaspora activism. The diaspora itself produces narratives such as "Ukraine as a victim of aggression" or "cultural uniqueness" through cultural festivals, protest actions, and charitable initiatives, which enhance global support for Ukraine. These performative narratives reinforce Ukrainian identity but may also create an idealized image of Ukraine that is somewhat detached from internal realities, occasionally complicating dialogue between the diaspora and residents of Ukraine (*Korostelina et al., 2025*).

Analyzing cultural, political, media, and migration narratives in Ukraine, we conclude that they actively shape national identity by strengthening patriotism, solidarity, and a pro-Western orientation amid war. Ukrainian-oriented narratives of unity and resilience prevail over Russian ones, facilitating the integration of displaced persons and mobilization of the diaspora, although media content fragmentation, language issues, and other challenges somewhat hinder societal consolidation. To enhance the "we-identity", it is necessary to develop harmonized narratives adapted to contemporary realities by supporting Ukrainian-language content, media literacy, and inclusive practices that unite society.

Conclusion

The analysis of philosophical concepts from Aristotle to Anderson reveals an evolutionary process in understanding identity as a socio-philosophical category. Engaging with the historical-philosophical discourse and contemporary interpretations of national identity has demonstrated that national identity is a dynamic socio-cultural construct formed through the interaction of individual and collective experiences within the context of historical, political, and social transformations. B. Anderson's concept of the "imagined community" proves useful for understanding the construction of identity through narratives, symbols, and practices. It is important to highlight the active role of subjects in shaping national self-consciousness through dialogue with the "Other" and the reflection on historical experience.

Research on the mechanisms of influence of cultural-historical narratives leads to the conclusion about the importance of creating symbolic policies and cultural infrastructure within the national space. The post-colonial past and the long, exhausting war with Russia are exacerbating the need for ideologues and philosophers to rethink Ukrainian society. The concept of national identity plays a key role in the consolidation of the Ukrainian community. Ukrainian-oriented narratives of unity, resilience, and pro-

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Western orientation prevail over destructive Russian narratives aimed at undermining national cohesion through ideas such as the "one people" or "regional differences". Pro-Ukrainian narratives foster patriotism, support the integration of internally displaced persons, and mobilize the diaspora, which promotes Ukrainian identity on the global stage through cultural and political initiatives.

However, the formation of a monolithic "we-identity" is complicated by several challenges. Language, as an identity marker, reflects contradictory worldview processes among segments of the population. Intergenerational divides, conditioned by the Soviet legacy, impede the development of a new collective identity. Media fragmentation, caused by the fleeting nature of information flows on social networks, hinders the creation of coherent narratives.

It has been demonstrated that narratives are one of the key tools for constructing identity and regulating inclusion and exclusion within the community. The concepts of liquid modernity (Bauman), performativity (Butler), and social engineering have been employed to substantiate the hypothesis regarding the algorithms of identity construction and the roles of cultural, political, media, and migratory narratives in shaping notions of "self" and "other". The migratory experience of Ukrainians underscores the transgressive character of identity formed in conditions of a fluid world and liminal social practices.

To strengthen national identity, a systemic approach is necessary: supporting Ukrainian-language content in media, cinema, literature, and digital platforms; enhancing media literacy; promoting inclusive practices that acknowledge the multidimensionality of Ukrainian identity; and strategically employing social engineering to create narratives of solidarity. Such an approach will contribute to national unity, reinforce cultural distinctiveness, and enhance resilience in the face of globalization and war.

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Формування національної ідентичності: культурні наративи в українській історії

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Стаття присвячена дослідженню впливу наративів на національну ідентичність. Розглядаються ключові підходи до розуміння національної ідентичності, чинники, що формують її становлення, та процеси трансформації ідентчності в умовах глобалізації та сучасних гібридних викликів. Особливу увагу приділено українському контексту, зокрема ролі національної ідентичності в умовах збройного конфлікту та інформаційного впливу. Дослідження застосовує низку філософських методів, включно з історико-філософським аналізом, герменевтикою, діалектикою, феноменологією та критичним аналізом у межах конструктивістської парадигми, що дає змогу простежити еволюцію концепції ідентичності. Встановлено, що в Україні, враховуючи її постколоніальне минуле та триваючу війну, україноцентричні наративи єдності, стійкості та прозахідної орієнтації переважають деструктивні російські наративи, сприяючи консолідації суспільства, інтеграції внутрішньо переміщених осіб та мобілізації діаспори. Однак, такі виклики, як білінгвізм, медіафрагментація та міжпоколіннєві розриви, ускладнюють формування цілісної «ми-ідентичності». Дослідження робить висновок, що свідоме конструювання та підтримка національної ідентичності як складової національної безпеки та культурної самобутності є необхідними через розвиток гармонізованих наративів, просування україномовного контенту, медіаграмотність та інклюзивні практики.

Ключові слова: ідентичність, національна ідентичність, конфлікт, медіа, справедливість, наратив, війна, інклюзія, ексклюзія.