

*Valentyna Bohatyrets, PhD in Political Science, Associate Prof.
Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6291-5180>*

**Historical Understanding of Contemporaneity
(Russia's Hawkish War Against a Dovish Ukraine)**

*“Ми воїни. Не ледарі. Не лежні.
І діло наше праведне й святе.
Бо хто за що, а ми за незалежність.
Отож нам так і важко через те. “ЛінаКостенко #
УкраїнаПереможе*

*We are Brave Warriors of Light,
No Idlers, Sluggards or Bystanders
We are Doing our Righteous Holy Job
To Fight and Stand for our Will and Independence.
(translated by Valentyna Bohatyrets)*

From a new viewpoint from which well-known features reappear, constructing a historical narrative has appeared to be mandatory so that we might find the answers to the most complicated questions regarding the nature or vindication of any historical thinking (Gallie:149). In the context of contemporary geopolitical challenges, history is vital for our understanding of why the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine happened, and embrace the history of Ukrainian national and ethnic identity.

Ethnicity is one of Europe's outstanding geographical characteristics and it is entirely appropriate that this has been given due recognition in the science domain. Many key terms in the interpretative social sciences and history – ‘ethnicity’, ‘race’, ‘nation’, ‘citizenship’, ‘democracy’, ‘class’, ‘community’, and ‘tradition’, are equally categories of social and political practice and analysis. The ‘categories of practice’, let's say, ‘native’, ‘folk’ or ‘lay’ categories – are considered the ones of everyday social experience, developed and deployed by ordinary social actors, as distinguished from the experience-distant categories used by social analysts (Geertz,). The basic contrast goes back at least to Durkheim's Rules of Sociological

Method, which criticized the sociological use of ‘pre-notions’ or lay concepts that have been created by experience and for it (Durkheim).

However, the negative aspects have often been emphasized in such a way as to suggest that discrimination and intolerance are normal occurrences, problems have generally arisen when democracy and security have broken down and minorities have been unable to defend themselves against xenophobic excesses and territorial changes arising out of war on a local, regional or world scale. While demonstrating the theoretical framework of ethnicity as political, social and cultural constructions, we could emphasize that it is an essential part of the vernacular milieu, especially in closed rural communities anchored in a specific language and culture where no other identity could be contemplated. People gain powerful community solidarity from such a situation; for example, it might help the Ukrainians to survive in an often-hostile environment, reflecting a generally negative image. Yet, this survival mentality is hardly in keeping with modern Europe: human rights’ equality is a basic requisite for progress to EU membership and the security that follows in its wake.

Currently, Ukraine is in its life-or-death battle with the terrorist Russia invaders. The roots of a present-day Russo-Ukrainian war go back to the last days of the Soviet Union, whose demise Mr. Putin has lamented as the “greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century”. Moscovia has long cast an acquisitive eye on Ukraine – now the second-largest Slavic state, previously a vast part of the Soviet Union and always Russia’s uneasy neighbour. The current Ukrainian crisis and Russia’s occupation of the Crimea are directly linked to Moscow’s project of taking advantage of ethnic conflict and reintegrating the space of the former Soviet Union into a comprehensive economic, political and military Eurasian Union.

Today’s events are the continuation of the 2014 occupation that is a continuation of 1944 deportation. This deportation is a continuation of the late 18th century first annexation.

According to Andrew Wilson, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, and Professor in Ukrainian Studies at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College, London, “Ukrainian national identity can best be understood by looking at Ukrainian society along a variety of different axes “tried to deconstruct, in the sense of debunk, some of the myths

about Ukraine and its past – both Ukrainian nationalists’ flights of fancy and Russian and other rival nationalists’ attempts to belittle or deny Ukraine, Significant aspects of the past are often now overlooked and need to be written back into the picture. Above all, this concerns the Ukrainian experience of empire, which has been a more or less ever-present factor in Ukrainian life since the sixteenth century at least. Many Ukrainians were quite willing citizens of the Polish Commonwealth and the Habsburg, Romanov and Soviet empires, and this should not be wished away by, ironically, taking too deconstructivist an approach to the history of these lost worlds and disassembling them out of the Ukrainian experience” (Wilson: xii). The scholar claims that Ukraine has not always been defined by its relationship with Russia, but it certainly is today, particularly given the legacy of the Soviet period, which continues to exert a huge influence on Ukrainian identity, politics, economics and even religion. (Wilson: xiii). Furthermore, Wilson claimed that according to such in-depth analysis, rapid Ukrainization based on the narrow traditions of west Ukraine is unlikely to occur. He emphasised that this broad middle group could be a swing vote in Ukrainian politics. He concluded by outlining three possible scenarios for Ukraine: a Canada-like state with its own Russophone or Ukrainophone Quebec; slow Ukrainization leading to a consolidation around Dnieper nationalism; or a continuation and redefinition of the overlapping identities that currently make up the ‘other Ukraine.’ Even as he set about trying to destroy Ukraine, Putin was paradoxically helping to reinvent it. Like Stalin, whose armed forces had done what the UPA could not and ‘liberated’ west Ukraine from the Poles in the 1940s, Putin was actually a Ukrainian nation-builder. (Williams:353).

Noteworthy, Putin’s imperial nationalism stems from his nationalist rhetoric that emerged after the collapse of the USSR in 1991, focusing on land losses and lamenting the separation of communities by new political borders. Increasingly, the tsarist past has provided a readily available reference framework to praise absolutist rule and defend aggressive foreign policy. “Vladimir Putin’s recent evocation of the military successes of 18th-century tsar Peter the Great against Sweden is just the latest example of his distinctive cherry-picking of imperial predecessors, Soviet rulers and religious icons to justify his invasion of Ukraine. It’s all part of the imperial nostalgia

that the Russian president has enthusiastically embraced since the mid-2000s” (Duran).

Russian aggression against Ukraine has become a catalyst for many processes that take place in the minds of Ukrainians, first of all, awareness of their main values, virtues and culture. The nation has rallied more than ever, united in defence of the integrity of its country, freedom and independence. The heroism and courage of our effective leaders-strategists, warriors, volunteers and fortitude of all Ukrainians impressed the whole world, which for the sake of Ukraine’s victory is on huge economic and infrastructure sanctions sacrifices. As citizens of different countries, different political systems, identity, mentality, cultures and different backgrounds, we have become able to directly understand the cultural ‘otherness’ and determine the relevance of our understanding of what Europe is; what values and standards are the basis of European identity; and what motivates and inspires Europeans to identify with Europe, where the highest social value is a person, and all state and social life is aimed at ensuring maximum comfort and protection of its rights and freedoms, which is the basis for the development of Europe in Ukraine.

What is more, my strong conviction is that Ukraine has contemporarily developed a world brand - “**UKRAINA** is a symbol of Freedom, Heroism, Velour, Invincibility, Creativity and Adamant Perseverance”. What is more, Ukraine’s teenagers and youth have been producing a crucial impact on the world. Namely, Ukrainian teenagers bake, sing, dance, paint (street art), embroider, volunteer, sculpt and mould, pick cherries and sell to raise the money and donate to AFU. The crowning glory is the fact that “actions speak louder than words’ . A 15-year-old teenager helped our Armed Forces to defeat an enemy column near Kyiv. With the help of a toy air-plane he captured the precise coordinates of the enemy equipment and transferred them to the Armed Forces. The reflections of a 12-year-old refugee from the Russian invasion of Ukraine Yeva Skalietska’s will be published this fall, the book is called “You Don’t Know What War Is: The Diary of a Young Girl from Ukraine.” “Everyone knows what the word ‘war’ means, but practically no one knows what this word really represents,” Skalietska said in a statement released Wednesday. “I want the world to know what we have experienced.” (Associated Press)

Under the scourge of unprovoked Russia's war, collective effervescence is the sense of energy and harmony that we feel together around a shared purpose - to truly embrace the beauty of our backgrounds, culture, and national identity. Furthermore, we want to increase our focus on determining how we in particular have a role to play in driving sustainable Doing Europe practices and raising our awareness of Ukraine's being European de facto. We work every day to realise the choice made by the Ukrainian people. To make Ukraine a successful, strong, European state, a member of the EU and NATO; Ukrainians take their pride in the country and by joint efforts we will achieve the goal and make Ukraine a success story and move forward. The quintessence of such narrative was voiced by a teenager, a true patriot and a cultural diplomat - Sofia Bohdanova, a first-year student of the Faculty of History, Political Science and International Studies at the annual Student's Scientific Conference of Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University in April, 2022, "With energy of youth who have already added to this world their creativity mixed with their intellectual abilities. All they needed was their words. Do you believe in it? Their voices were loud and confident. What's important is that those voices weren't only coming from students. They were voices of Ukraine. Loud and confident. Ukraine was talking to the whole society through students. She chose me to tell everyone here about its cultural diplomacy. Image-making of our country, its presentation and promotion has become an urgent precondition for further promotion of Ukraine abroad. The development of which directly depends on the inner world of the country, the identity of its spirit, atmosphere, its past, present and future from a Trypillian culture to cybertechnologies, and of course. from people. Today, our cultural diplomacy is not a clear, planned path taken by the state to maintain its authority in the international arena. Our diplomacy consists of loud, mournful cries of millions of people from all over the globe, announcing to the whole world about the deadly wound on Earth. This is how our cultural diplomacy looks now. Now, after all these months of heroic fighting of Ukrainian people, I can say that only our nation will be able to resist any evil. Any darkness. Only our nation will be able to outcry about the world's tragedy building in this way their own, unique diplomacy. How even will they be able to do this? The answer is simple and tale as old as time. Being Ukrainian means being brave. It has already been

written in our DNA. We just need to remember words. So, what does “word” mean? Power. Power of influence. Power of awareness. Power of individuality. Words of only one Ukrainian isn’t enough to the great fight, but millions of voices form cultural diplomacy, the representation of the nation, which wins everything in its path”.

Summarizing, we found it quite difficult to cover and highlight all issues concerned, nevertheless, having studied the cluster of topics centered on ethnic and national identity as political, social and cultural constructions in the historical context, several themes emerged that take our identity awareness to a profound extent.

Identity is neither permanent, nor is stable. Ethnic and national identity is multifaceted and not cast in stone. It evolves overtime. Older notions of ethnicity can be viewed as somewhat narrower and far more restraining. Being more essential in nature and differences it would have been rejected. Ethnic identity can be conceptualized as a process of identification i.e.; as taken for granted, something happening over time and that is never undeniably constant. Instead, it is subjected to the play of history (understanding our roots, we cannot ignore our background) and the play of difference. It is not an end state and there is nothing tangible to it. It is a social process that involves mediation. Ethnic identity is also relational, in the sense that it signifies the bond between an individual and the ‘other’. Ethnic identity is a social construct. It is constructed overtime through the accumulation of many things over time. The transition to democracy is a slow-moving and frail process. The advance of practical and rigorous public policies that are relevant, acceptable, and inclusive is vigorous for the democratic systems establishment. Such policies are reckoned to be pursued by citizens and supported by governments. To achieve this goal, initiatives must also overcome entrenched nativist attitudes if they are to be truly deep-rooted in the community. The issue is how to articulate and deliver such policies that will underpin the putting in the democratic ideal and which address the contexts unique to the countries undertaking this process. To be more precise, Russia’s losing war for gaining Ukraine is not to simply be degraded to “yet another conflict” as each conflict has unique situations and terrible consequences. Yet still, it is another significant sign of how power struggles have imprints throughout the globe and throughout history.

ПОЛІТИЧНІ ТЕОРІЇ ТА КОНЦЕПЦІЇ ...

“To avoid growing weary of the war and falling for misleading narratives, the West needs to understand exactly how Ukraine can win, and then support us accordingly. This war is existential, and we are motivated to fight. Properly armed, our forces can stretch Putin’s troops -which are already exhausted-past the breaking point. We can counterattack Russian forces in both Ukraine’s south and Ukraine’s east, pressuring Putin to decide which of his gains to protect. To succeed, however, the United States and its European allies must swiftly supply our country with appropriate numbers of advanced heavy weapons. We look forward to this day; any war ends with diplomacy. But that moment has not yet come. Right now, it is clear that Putin’s path to the negotiating table lies solely through battleground defeats.” (Kuleba)

I’m proud that we are defending our freedom and independence, we have developed a world brand - Ukraina; ruscists created their worst enemy - our united country. But we will resist. Because we are right. Because we are strong. Because we are Ukrainians. Glory to Ukraine!!! Glory to the Heroes!!! God bless Ukraine and let this war never become the end of our rope.

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