FORMATION OF THE UKRAINIAN NATION: ETHNOCULTURAL TRADITIONS AND HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Vasyl Balushok
PhD in History, Senior Research Fellow,
Maksym Rylskyi Institute of Art Studies, Folklore Studies and Ethnology,
National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Ukraine

Olena Taran
PhD in History, Research Fellow,
Maksym Rylskyi Institute of Art Studies, Folklore Studies and Ethnology,
National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Ukraine

Summary. Ukraine's frontline position between the West and the East influenced nation-building. The modern civil nation in the country is formed on the basis of Ukrainians, who are an ethnic majority, although there are minorities. The task of the study is to consider this basis for the formation of the nation and the circumstances of its formation. The methodology is the concepts of nation-building, which combines moderate primordialism and constructivism, and frontier theory. Results. Ukrainians are a nation with an ancient agricultural culture, which determined the specifics of life, holidays and ceremonies, oral art, worldview of the people. In the twentieth century, as a result of the modernization of society and negative Soviet practices, many ancient elements of culture are a thing of the past. But a number of traditions have retained functionality (in construction, agriculture, clothing, food), and some have become national symbols (embroidery, jewelry, traditional cuisine, kobza culture, etc.). The Cossacks greatly influenced the formation of the Ukrainian nation. Cossacks – originally a frontline society, during the Cossack Revolution in the middle of the XVII century won the position of social elite in the newly created state of the Zaporozhian Cossack Army (autonomy within the Russian Empire). The heroics of the Cossack struggle formed the basis of Ukrainian identity, and the Cossack subculture became dominant. The ethnonym «Ukrainians» is the name of the population of the Cossack region, whose dialect formed the basis of the Ukrainian literary language. With the decline of ancient Russia, Ukraine was part of several states and was united in the middle of the twentieth century as part of the USSR. Only since 1991 has a modern state project been implemented in Ukraine. Nation-building began in the nineteenth century and came to an end with independence. The brake factors were the colonial legacy and the influence of the former metropolis. Being on the border between East and West, Ukraine made the final choice in favor of the latter during the revolutions of 2004 and 2014 and the large-scale Russian-Ukrainian war. Ethnic minorities rallied around Ukrainians, which was facilitated by the legal consolidation of European rights and freedoms, as well as religious tolerance. During the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, all denominations, except the UOC-MP, supported the idea of Ukraine's independence. The Ukrainian language is recognized by the only state majority of the country's population, which is an additional factor in uniting the Ukrainian nation in the conditions of Russia's political leadership's inclusion of all Russian-speakers in the «Russian world».

Key words: nation, Ukrainians, frontier, Cossacks, culture
Introduction. The division into West and East, not in a geographical but in a cultural sense, has long been a fundamental principle of humanity. Within this division, there are a number of marginal societies and even countries, most of which, after all, are still determined to be part of one of these macro-regions as full members or marginal provinces. Ukraine is also on this Great Border of West and East, but its situation has a number of peculiarities. Yes, it has not been an independent political entity for a long time. After the decline of ancient Russia and the liquidation of separate principalities in 1470, Ukrainian statehood was revived only in the middle of the XVII century – the second half of the XVIII century (as a kind of autonomy within Russia) and in 1917–1921 as an attempt to implement a modern state project. In addition, most of the late Middle Ages and all of early modern times, modern Ukraine was part of other states – the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: Poland and Hungary, the Principality of Moldova, the Russian Empire. In modern times, the territory of Ukraine was divided by Austria–Hungary and Russia, and only in the middle of the twentieth century it was united, but again not as an independent state, but the USSR.

This set of influences and challenges has led to the fact that Ukraine is closer to the West, then to the East, and even entering different parts of both macro-regions at the same time. And from the seventeenth to the middle of the twentieth century, during several territorial expansions of the Russian Empire (including the USSR), the Ukrainian lands became part of it, moving away culturally and civilizationally from the West. The Russian factor in general created for Ukrainians the prospect of complete assimilation by the Russians (except, perhaps, the inhabitants of the western region). During the implementation of the current modern project of building the Ukrainian state, the country remained at the crossroads of civilization. But the Orange Revolution of 2004, the Revolution of Dignity of 2014, and the Russian-Ukrainian war marked its final choice in favor of the West. All these factors directly influenced Ukrainian nation-building.

Modern European civil nations, unlike many non-European ones, for the most part arose on the basis of a certain ethnic community, which gave them the appropriate linguistic and cultural design [1]. Ukraine is no exception, where Ukrainians make up the vast majority of the population, although there are also ethnic minorities. Therefore, based on this premise, we do not pretend to cover the whole complex and voluminous topic of modern nation-building in Ukraine, we set the task to consider ethnic and cultural factors (both Ukrainians and minorities) as the basis for Ukrainian nation-building and circumstances its formation.

Many domestic and foreign scholars study the ethnic roots of the Ukrainian nation. Therefore, we will name only the main, in our opinion, publications on this topic, which can serve as certain guidelines [2; 3, p. 349; 4; 5]. At the same time, these works do not consider modern nation-building in Ukraine from the point of view of ethnological science. We once tried to comment on this [6]. However, since then, many extremely important events have taken place in the country, which urgently require both a revision of the stated provisions and additions.

The general methodological basis of the study is modern works on nationalism, including those that take into account the experience of Ukraine [1; 7; 8; 9], as well as provisions on the role of cultural heritage, cultural memory and the creation of new traditions in the nation-building process [10; 11]. At the same time, in our
opinion, it is expedient to combine moderate primordialist and constructivist paradigms1, which gives the best opportunity to see the role of the ethnic factor in the formation of a modern civil nation [1]. Theoretical provisions concerning the self-names of communities [13], as well as works on the study of the Great Border, taking into account the frontline position of Ukraine [14; 15] are also important for the study. It should be mentioned as methodological and provisions for the adaptation of human communities to the natural-geographical and socio-cultural conditions of their existence [16].

Main part. Ukrainians, according to the 2001 census, make up 77.8% (37.5 million). By the way, today, in the conditions of Russian aggression, the percentage of people who consider themselves ethnic Ukrainians has increased significantly due to people of mixed origin [17]. Ukrainians are mostly evenly distributed throughout the country, except in Crimea and the southeast, where many ethnic minorities live. In rural areas, make up 90% of the population, in urban areas – up to 70%. It is one of the largest nations in Europe and the second largest in the Slavic world. Ukrainians belong to the Slavic group of the Indo-European ethnonlinguistic family. The main ethnic mass of the Ukrainian people basically coincides with the territory of its formation and the state borders of Ukraine. In addition, a significant number of Ukrainians live in Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Western Europe, North and South America.

Ukrainians are a nation with a long and highly developed agricultural culture. This occupation determined the traditional way of life, material culture, the system of major holidays and ceremonies (essentially calendar-agricultural), worldview, spiritual values of the people. Traditions and way of life of the Ukrainian people, in addition to common features, have a number of territorial features. They are due primarily to the nature of the historical development of individual regions of Ukraine, natural and geographical conditions, relationships with neighboring ethnic groups. From the historical and ethnographic point of view on the territory of Ukraine researchers distinguish the following, albeit somewhat conditional, cultural and historical zones: Middle Dnieper Ukraine, Podillya, Slobozhanshchyna and Poltava, Polissya, Galicia, Prykarpattia, Volhynia, Zakarpattia, Bukovyna and South. The last zone is inhabited by several waves of migration, and finally its population was formed only in the XVIII–XIX centuries [18, p. 57, 133–144]. In addition, these regions do not remain unchanged, as well as the criteria that determine them. Ethnographic groups that have their own peculiarities in culture and language are still part of the Ukrainian people. The brightest among them are Ukrainian mountaineers (Hutsuls, Lemkos, Boykos) in the Carpathian region and Polishchucks, Pinchuks, and Litvin in Polissya. Earlier, there were more such groups among Ukrainians. Over time, and especially in Soviet times, many ancient customs and rites gradually disappeared, and new elements in the life and spiritual life of the people developed. Modern clothes, new types of housing, and tools have become widespread. At the same time, traditional elements of culture (clothing, housing, interior items, handicrafts, etc.) have become national symbols.

In Ukraine, the language, in the conditions of enrollment of Russian-speaking people by Russian ideologues in the «Russian world», is one of the markers of

1 Specifically on primordialism and constructivism, see: [12, p. 291, 293].

2023 Авторські права захищені | Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License
ethnicty. Most Ukrainians speak Ukrainian, which was formed on the basis of territorial dialects of the ancient Ukrainian language (although there are other opinions). Modern Ukrainian literary language dates back to the end of the XVIII century. At the same time, the Ukrainian spoken language has preserved its internal division into dialects (Middle Dnipro, North Ukrainian, South-Western groups of dialects). The basis of modern Ukrainian literary language at the turn of the XVIII–XIX centuries became the Middle Dnipro (Poltava–Kyiv) dialect [19]. Due to the fact that the western Ukrainian lands were part of Poland and Austria-Hungary, the language in these areas had a number of significant features, but was also understood by the inhabitants of Eastern Ukraine, where, in turn, Russian influence was felt.

Speaking about the psychological features inherent in Ukrainians, scholars identify such typical features of the Ukrainian national character as democracy, love of freedom, emotionality, religiosity, ethnic tolerance, diligence, hospitality, self–irony, introversion (this feature is manifested in a certain focus on their own inner self: to aggression and violence, focusing on their inner freedom) [20]. The freedom–lovingness of Ukrainians often grows into an «otamanschina» («atamanship») – a focus on several, opposing leaders and a certain disrespect for state institutions. Ukrainians are also characterized by stubbornness, and in acute situations the desire to avoid direct confrontation with the enemy, the tendency to say one thing and do another. Almost all modern researchers define individualism as a characteristic feature of Ukrainians, which, however, is less pronounced than that of the inhabitants of Western Europe. Many psychologists single out such a feature as the underdevelopment of social will. The predominance of emotionality, contemplation, dreaminess over will in the character of the Ukrainian, often led to the fact that the goals were not achieved or not fully realized.

Considering the formation of the Ukrainian nation, one cannot ignore the religious factor, which plays an important role in the cultural and political life of the community and the formation of individual and group identity [21]. Christianity did not appear in Ukraine as a result of the self–development of society, but was introduced in 988 from outside (from Orthodox Byzantium). Over time, Christianity entered and prevailed in the Ukrainian historical, cultural and ethnic context. The spread of various denominations (Greek and Roman Catholicism, Protestantism) was centered, which often led to the division of society, interfaith conflicts, tragedies in national history. The masses of the people were predominantly faithful to Orthodoxy and Greek Catholicism, although Roman Catholicism and Protestantism became widespread among the upper classes, but later became more widespread.

The origins of the Ukrainian nation should be connected with the events of the middle of the XVII century, when the Cossack revolution took place and the Cossack state emerged, although the beginning of the formation of a modern nation in Ukraine can be said only in the XIX century [9]. During the revolution, the Cossacks not only imposed themselves on Ukraine as the dominant social class, but also entered the history of the country with their heriocis of armed struggle. Later, the Cossack legend was the basis of the latest national myth of Ukraine, and therefore modern Ukrainian identity is built around the thesis of Ukrainians as descendants of the glorious Cossacks.

The transformation of the Cossacks into a social state and a leading social stratum and their concentration (in particular, by the senior leadership) in the hands
of political power in the Hetmanate created the most favorable conditions for the spread of the Cossack subculture among the Ukrainian population. This was facilitated by extensive migration movements, first during the Cossack Revolution, and then during the Ukrainian colonization of southern and southeastern Ukraine. Mastering these steppe areas in the second half of the XVIII – first half of the XIX century, the Ukrainian population could not do without the experience of the Cossacks, adopting forms of management and settlement, types of housing and farm buildings, tools, clothing, household items and more.

It was then in the ethnic culture of Ukrainians, pushing into the background the cultural realities of the northern and western regions of Ukraine (Polissya and the Carpathians), came to the fore such elements that were originally inherent in the culture of the Cossacks, and later became a kind of ethnographic business card. In material culture it is a hut–mazanka («white hut»), a famous Ukrainian hamlet with levadas and a cherry orchard around the house, trousers, a shirt tucked into them and a shaved beard for men; decorated with embroidery and released from under the outer garment of the lower edge of the shirt for women, in general, the cut and decoration of many elements of traditional clothing, a number of traditional dishes (borsch, various cereals, dough, meat, fish, etc.), carpets and many items of home interior, etc. [22].

The transformation of the Cossacks into a leading social group, which became famous during the struggle against the enemies of Ukraine and the Cossack Revolution, led to the fact that the Cossack, with the essential «sword», «pipe» and «faithful horse», became the central image of folk painting, especially a cross–genre (through) hero of Ukrainian folklore – from proverbs to heroic epics. The old epic in Ukraine was completely supplanted by new ones – historical songs and especially thoughts that glorified the victorious struggle of the Cossacks and promoted the heroism of the Cossack era.

The Cossack period of Ukrainian history strongly influenced the ethnic mentality of Ukrainians, forming a number of its features. This is the aforementioned «otašanschina», inextricably linked with the Cossacks, and such a feature of the «true» Ukrainian as that he frequently says one thing and does another, which dates back to the times when Ukraine bordered on the Wild Field and even was part of it (otherwise the Ukrainian would not have survived in the conditions of daily uncertainty of this border). Let us include here the so–called peace–lovingness of Ukrainians, which is not really the case. The desire of Ukrainians to avoid a head–on collision with the enemy at any cost and to overcome it by jumping in from the side is a trait here – a trait that was developed in the conditions of the same Wild Field. «Ukrainians are a nation that avoids direct action», writes Maryna Hrymych, a researcher in the ethnopsychology of Ukrainians. «This is what the Wild Field taught them. In the Wild Field, it is not the one who goes to the front that survives, but the one who maneuvers» [23, p. 159–161]. The propensity of Ukrainians to military service and military professions dates back to Cossack times. This feature was especially evident in the current Russian aggression against Ukraine.

In the XIX – early XX centuries, in Ukraine begins the so–called national revival, during which the Ukrainian intelligentsia creates a national myth as the basis of national identity. These realities of the Cossack subculture, together with the heroic events of Cossack history, were elevated by the intelligentsia, which originally mostly
came from a former Cossack officer, to the level of national myth. As a result, today not only all Ukrainians consider themselves descendants of the Cossacks, but other nations have them as such. This feature of the ethnic specificity of Ukrainians has become a national symbol. Although in fact all modern Ukrainians cannot be physical descendants of the Cossacks: on the eve of the Cossack Revolution in the region where the Cossacks lived (Middle Dnieper and Eastern Podillya), they accounted for only 25% of the population, or about 270,000 people with families [24, p. 126]. In relation to the entire population of Ukraine, their percentage was significantly lower. And at the turn of the XIX–XX centuries, in the Poltava and Chernihiv provinces, ie in the lands of the former Hetmanate, where the majority of Cossacks lived after their transformation into a separate social status, the descendants of the Cossacks were only 0.5 to 12.8% of the population (depending on the area).

The creation of modern Ukrainian literary language, which today in Ukraine also serves as a national symbol, also took place on the basis of the Middle Dnieper dialect of the former Cossack region, which is associated with its role in the national revival of XIX – early XX centuries. And if the Old Ukrainian language was marked by the features of Western Ukrainian and Northern Ukrainian dialects, in modern literary language the dialectal basis is Middle Dnieper, which was the «genetic nucleus» of the dialects of the south–eastern dialect spoken by the vast majority of Ukraine. This adverb was formed in the process of Ukrainian settlement of the southern and south–eastern territories, the path to which the Cossacks once paved.

The modern name of the people and the country is connected with the Cossack period of Ukrainian history. And the use of self–name, which is the clearest indicator of ethnic identity, always indicates certain phenomena in the ethnic life of the community [13]. The self–name of the entire Ukrainian people before the Cossack Revolution and even longer was the collective form «Rus» (plural) and «Rusyn» (singular), later «Rusyns». This form of ethnonym and its derivatives, such as «Rus's (Rusyns) people» and the like have their origins in the late twelfth – early fourteenth century (unlike the Russians, who from the XIII–XV centuries. called «Russkie») [25, p. 163–178]. This ethnonym is found in large quantities in sources from East–Central Ukraine (where the new name «Ukrayintsy» is first established) until the beginning of the XVIII century (1740), and occasionally until the nineteenth century.

At the same time, after Eastern Ukraine (the Hetmanate) became part of the Russian Empire in the second half of the 17th century, the ethnonym «Rus» / «Rusyn» was supplanted in official records by the form «Malorosiyany» introduced by the Moscow authorities. This resulted in the destruction of all–Ukrainian ethnonymy: the self–proclaimed «Rusyns» retreated to the west of Ukrainian ethnic territory. At the same time, a new ethnonym appeared in Cossack Ukraine, initially only as a regional one, which would later become an all–Ukrainian one. It means the name «Ukrayintsy» («Ukrainians»), which is directly related to the Cossacks, meaning literally «inhabitants of Ukraine», e.g. the Cossacks of the eastern Podolia–Middle Dnieper regions, and later the Hetmanate. Since then, the term «Ukrayintsy» has gradually spread as a self–name among the inhabitants of Eastern Ukraine. The first case we found of using this term in the meaning of the ethnonym dates back to 1657. In the XVIII–XIX centuries, the term «Ukrayintsy» is quite common among the population of Eastern Ukraine as a regional ethnonym.
The establishment of a new self-name as an all-Ukrainian one is connected with the rise of the national movement. Romanticizing Cossack Ukraine, the Ukrainian intelligentsia of the new era (Mykhailo Maksymovych, Mykola Kostomarov, Izmail Sreznevsky, Osyp Bodyansky, Mykhalo Hrushevsky, etc.) began to use the self-name of the population of the former Hetmanate as «Ukrainian». as opposed to the ethnonym «Rusyns» supplanted in the east and center of Ukraine by Russian officials. One of the important reasons for the Ukrainian intelligentsia's adoption of the new name was Russia's monopolization of Ancient Rus's heritage and the inability to effectively counter it in the absence of Ukrainians' own statehood after its liquidation in the second half of the 18th century. Hetman state. During the XIX – early XX century, the former Cossack ethnonymic name «Ukrayintsy» was perceived as a self-name by the masses of the population of Central Ukraine, and until the middle of the twentieth century. it is established in Western Ukraine – in Galicia, Volhynia and Bukovina. This was facilitated by the revival of Ukrainian statehood during the 1917–1921 revolution, the struggle of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, and the war of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army led by it against the communist regime of the USSR, which lasted until the mid–1950s. In Zakarpattia (Carpathian Ruthenia), the self-name «Ukrayintsy» is established only since its accession to Ukraine in 1944 [25, p. 176]. During the 2001 census, only 1% of the population of the Transcarpathian region was called «Rusyns». Thus, in the twentieth century in the process of ethno-national consolidation of the Ukrainian people, the Cossack myth was perceived as an episode, moreover, of the ethnic history of the Ukrainian population of all regions of Ukraine, including those where the Cossacks never existed, and with him was mastered and self-proclaimed «Ukrayintsy».

After the restoration of Ukrainian statehood in 1991, the nation-building process in Ukraine entered its final stage. The formation of a modern civil nation took place in the country on the basis of the Ukrainian ethnic group, the main indicator of which is the establishment of a new national identity. This process was uneven, facing a number of difficulties. The main factors that made it difficult were the legacy of the former colonial past and Russia's influence, which also began to use ethnic minorities living in Ukraine (22.2% of the population according to the 2001 census), pitting them against ethnic Ukrainians.

Russia's postcolonial influence has long manifested itself in the control of much of Ukraine's information communications, in the orientation of much of Ukraine's business and political elite, and in the phenomenon of «Russianness», which has its roots in Soviet-era (actually «Russian») identity. It turned out that «Russianness» was part of the living space, not only of ethnic Russians – citizens of Ukraine, but also of many Ukrainians. For some Ukrainians, Russian language and culture became native, others focused on the Russian Orthodox Church, for others, «Russianness» was determined by origin, relatives living in Russia, and so on.

A major problem fueled by Russian propaganda was the division of the Ukrainian people into Ukrainophones and Russophones in a ratio of about 2:1. Some scholars, especially Russians, have begun to group Russian-speaking Ukrainians with Russians into Ukrainian groups. At the same time, from the very beginning, the difference between Russian-speaking Ukrainians and Russians was clear. A number
of authors drew attention to the formation in Ukraine of a separate kind of Russian–language–Ukrainian nationalism, which they called «Creole», considering it politically Ukrainian and culturally Russian [26]. Other authors argue that Ukrainian Russophonists only look like Russians only externally (especially in the language of communication). According to their household culture, social psychology, value system, they remain Ukrainians.

At the same time, certain psychological barriers have long stood in the way of Ukrainians realizing themselves as a truly titular ethnic group in Ukraine. First of all, it is the complex of the «younger brother» in relation to the Russians, as the «older brother», which for centuries has been rooted in the minds of Ukrainians by official Russian propaganda. In Soviet times, Soviet identity was dominant over ethnic, civic, European, or universal identities. After the proclamation of Independence (1991), many Ukrainians experienced the transformation of the Soviet identity into an ethnic one, especially since it was due to the radical social, economic, legal and other changes that took place after the collapse of the USSR.

All this, and especially Russia's influence in the information space, posed significant obstacles to the transformation of the Ukrainian majority in the linguistic and cultural sphere into a dominant one. The Russian minority continued to hold disproportionately significant positions in this area.

Religion has continued to dominate Ukraine for a long time. This did not contribute to the consolidation of society. Along with Roman Catholicism and the new Christian Protestant and non–traditional denominations, there were three Orthodox denominations and one Greek Catholic denomination. One of the Orthodox, subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate, is still the leader of Moscow's policy. Some other denominations also often had different views on Ukraine's independence. The situation changed radically during the Revolution of Dignity in 2014 and with the beginning of the Russian–Ukrainian war. In the face of the threat of loss of state security, an interfaith association of religious communities of most denominations (except the Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate), including the Jewish and Muslim, was held on the basis of patriotism. The receipt of the Tomos in 2018 and the formation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which unites most Orthodox parishes) was an event of geopolitical significance, which in a predominantly Orthodox country was appreciated by public opinion and the majority as an act of justice and return to the Ukrainian church [27]. In general, Ukraine is the only country in the post–Soviet space that has gone beyond its characteristic mono–confessionalism, and the freedom of religious choice of the population is enshrined in law.

Overcoming these difficulties of modern Ukrainian nation–building depends crucially on the position of the country's political elites, who must create conditions for neutralizing the post–colonial influence of the former metropolis, especially in the information sphere [7]. They were to have a decisive influence on the establishment of the Ukrainian ethnic majority in the linguistic and cultural sphere, to fully involve ethnic minorities in nation–building, to solve the confessional problem in the direction of community unity, and to create conditions for national identity. At the same time, not all the political elite of postcolonial Ukraine was able to play the role of leader of the nation. Quite significant political forces, especially those ideologically
and economically connected with Russia and supported by it financially, continued to slow down the process of nation-building until recently. The Orange Revolution of 2004 and the Revolution of Dignity of 2014 were directed against the efforts of such pro-Russian forces (the Party of Regions, later the Opposition Platform «For Life», «Ukrainian Choice», etc.) to stop Ukraine's movement towards Europe and turn it into a puppet of Russia. Gradually, pro-Russian politicians began to lose more and more influence over Ukrainian society, and mostly patriotic forces came to power, especially as a result of the Revolution of Dignity.

The artificial division of Ukraine into a «Russian-speaking East» and a «Ukrainian-speaking West» had a significant negative impact on Ukrainian society, as did opposition to the rest of the Donbass region, where anti-Ukrainian agitation for the «Russian world» was carried out with Russian propaganda. Such a policy, formulated by Russian ideologues and developed during the presidency of Viktor Yanukovych by American political technologist Paul Manafort, was aimed at splitting Ukraine in order to facilitate its subordination to Russia. This division only partially took into account the language status of the country's population and did not take into account its historical traditions. Thus, the Russian-speaking cities of Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kirovohrad (Kropyvnytskyi), etc. were largely included in the «Ukrainian-speaking West», and the Ukrainian-speaking East included mainly Ukrainian-speaking districts of Kherson, Luhansk, Mykolayiv oblasts, and so on. This artificial division of the country finally proved unfounded during Russia's war against Ukraine in 2014, and especially during the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022, as evidenced by the patriotic stance of most East and South residents. At the same time, according to opinion polls (SOCIS and the Razumkov Center) in 2021, the majority of the population (64.5%) spoke in favor of Ukrainian as the only state and official language, while guaranteeing the free use of Russian and other minorities. But only 15.2% spoke in favor of the two official languages – Ukrainian and Russian [28].

The real driving force of the nation-building process has always been the Ukrainian intelligentsia, which, lacking the proper levers of political influence on events and proper financial support, still actively implemented the national idea in the broad masses of Ukrainian society. Of particular importance was her work to return both Ukrainian and national minorities to their historical and cultural heritage – research, access to archives, publication of documents and materials previously banned by the Soviet authorities and relating to their history, culture, achievements in branches of art and literature, etc. With the coming to power of the patriotic forces in 2014, a number of legally supported measures were taken to support domestic cinema, book publishing, music culture and oust Russian and pro-Russian media from the information sphere, defending the interests of the former metropolis, language as the state language, quotas on songs and conducting programs in the Ukrainian language on radio and television, etc.). These measures are supported by the majority of Ukrainian citizens.

Additional difficulties on the path of nation-building for Ukraine are the relative polyethnic composition of its population. In the country, in addition to the titular ethnic group, there are a number of ethnic groups that are not aimed at creating self-governing political units. The share of different ethnic groups in the country is very different. Thus, according to the 2001 census, the two largest nationalities,
Ukrainians and Russians, together make up 95.1% of the total population, although Russians make up only 17.3% of Ukraine's population (8.3 million). The next six largest groups, each numbering from 300 to 100 thousand people, total 1.5 million people or 3.1%. These are Belarusians, Moldovans, Crimean Tatars, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Romanians, Poles, Jews. Together with the first two, they make up more than 98% of the population. They are followed by Armenians, Greeks, Tatars, Roman people, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Germans and Gagauz. Each of these groups is 0.1–0.2% of the country's population, and all together – 1.1%. Thus, the polyethnic nature of Ukrainian society, as well as any modern one, is an indisputable fact. At the same time, the degree of polyethnicity of Ukraine is not commensurate with such classical polyethnic states as Russia, India or many Asian and African countries. In addition, the share of Ukrainians during the years of independence is growing (from 72.7% in 1989 to 77.8% in 2001) [29]. At the same time, the Constitution of Ukraine guarantees the promotion of the development of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of all national minorities of the country (Article 11).

Pro-Russian political forces in power did not create the right conditions to involve national minorities in the nation-building process in Ukraine. As a result, some of them (Hungarian, to a lesser extent Romanian, etc.) proved to be insufficiently integrated into the all-Ukrainian socio-political processes. Since 2014, this situation has been improving, with a number of measures taken by the Ukrainian authorities, for example in the field of education, being actively discussed by the public, which is reflected in the media and, as a result, is being adjusted. And the adoption in 2021 of the Law «On Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine» and other measures at the state and public level creates conditions for national, linguistic and cultural development of peoples recognized as indigenous: Crimean Tatars, Karaimes, the Krymchaks. These measures are aimed at correcting historical injustices, especially against the Crimean Tatars, who, after being brutally deported and repressed by the Russian Empire and especially the USSR, are now again experiencing them in the Russian-occupied Crimea. It has a positive effect on the process of modern nation-building in the information and socio-political spheres, in parallel with the use of the ethnonymic name «ethnic Ukrainians», the term «Ukrainians» to denote all citizens of the country, regardless of ethnicity.

Conclusions. Today, the vast majority of Ukrainians, despite their different political preferences, religious affiliation, language of communication, ethnicity, are proud of their country, advocate the indivisibility of Ukrainian territory and consider themselves to belong to the Ukrainian civic nation. The division of Ukraine into Western and Eastern (respectively, the zones of former Austro-Hungary and Russia) has practically lost its relevance. Such psychological traits of Ukrainians as the desire to avoid a head-on collision with the enemy and tolerance have long preserved Ukraine's widespread armed conflicts in the post-Soviet space. They also contributed to the survival of the state in the face of harsh political and information pressure from the former metropolis. As a result, modern Ukrainian statehood was strengthened by the time of Russia's open attack in 2014 and 2022, and society was united in a civic nation. As a result of the creation of new national traditions on the basis of ancient elements of culture (according to Eric Hobsbawm [11]), their own national symbols were established: embroidered clothes («Vyshyvanka»), dishes of
Ukrainian cuisine, the collective image of the Cossacks – collective ancestors of the Ukrainian people. «Russian world» (Pax Moscovita) has also become such a symbol. It should also be borne in mind that part of Ukraine at one time underwent a fairly good study of the basics of European democracy, politics and organization within Austria–Hungary [8]. And it is this European organization, introduced into Ukrainian society by Western Ukrainians, combined with the Cossack mentality of Eastern Ukrainians, that has resulted in the amazing organization of the Ukrainian revolutions of 2004 and 2014, and continues to organize the Ukrainian community against Russian aggression today [30].

References:
[27] Бондаренко, Г. (2022) Нові аспекти релігійного життя в Україні в умовах соціальних викликів XXI століття. Народна творчість та етнологія. № 1.