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# Social Changes that Occurred on the European Continent Due to the War in Ukraine

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## Abstract

The objective of this research is to examine the social changes in European countries resulting from the Russian war against Ukraine and to understand their implications for the future functioning of social institutions. The research is grounded in the theoretical framework that recognizes the significant impact of the war in Ukraine on various aspects of European societies, including emotional state, daily life, public opinion, interpersonal relationships, socio-economic status, employment, and public activity. The study aims to identify and analyze the main trends of social changes in European countries in response to the war. The research utilizes the analytic-bibliographic method to review relevant scientific literature on social changes in European countries over the past year. Additionally, it employs various analytical methods such as induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis of information, systemic-structural, comparative, logical-linguistic methods, as well as abstraction and idealization for data study and processing. An online survey conducted by the researchers was used to gather practical insights on key questions related to changes in the social status quo in Europe due to the resolution of the war in Ukraine. The research findings highlight the most important theoretical aspects of societal development trends in European countries affected by the war in Ukraine. It also investigates the perspectives of scientists and sociologists

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studying the international social sphere regarding critical aspects of this issue. The conclusion drawn from the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the social changes that have occurred in European countries as a result of the war in Ukraine. This research contributes to the broader understanding of the far-reaching impacts of the Russian war against Ukraine on European societies. The implications of this research can guide post-war European society research and aid in planning transformative changes to address the societal shifts brought about by the conflict.

*Keywords:* war in Ukraine; the modern world's contradictions; community values; world community; geopolitical upheavals; globalized world.

## Introduction

The social environment, both globally and within individual countries, has experienced significant systemic positive and negative consequences as a result of Russian aggression, which has created some short- and medium-term risks and challenges that world countries must respond to in a coordinated manner (Kaarbo, Oppermann & Beasley, 2023), (Landler, Bennhold & Stevis-Gridneff, 2022).

Ukraine, through its own struggle for freedom and independence, has set an irreversible process of awareness of the priorities of human development, the importance of protecting democracy, freedom, and justice in many countries around the world, primarily those on the European continent, and strengthened the perception of the value of civilization of the world community. Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression has reflected the peculiarities and contradictions of global processes. This has stimulated the renewal of existing alliances and institutions, the creation of new ones, the adjustment of priorities, partnership relations, the adoption of compromises, and so on (Kempe, 2022; Fouquet & Brummer, 2023).

The theoretical part of this research outlines the main trends in social changes in European countries related to resolving the war in Ukraine. The practical part of the research includes an assessment of the most common trends in public opinion on ways to reduce European countries' energy dependence on Russia and changes that have occurred due to the war in Ukraine in the perception of European community civilization values. In addition, the social changes in recognizing the difficulties in labor markets experienced by European countries during the rapid integration of refugees from Ukraine, the most developed social trends in assessing the agri-food sector of the EU, and the main common vectors of concern in society about the situation on the European continent due to the war in Ukraine are also evaluated.

According to the study results, conclusions have been drawn regarding the issues at hand. In particular, it has been established that the most prominent trends in reducing Europe's energy dependence on Russia are the diversification

of energy supplies and increased energy efficiency of alternative energy sources. Furthermore, fundamental changes in the perception of European civilization values resulting from the war in Ukraine relate to strengthening awareness and acceptance by the global community of such civilization values as democracy, freedom of choice, non-acceptance of aggression, economic and financial support for civil societies, humanitarian solidarity, and support for civil communities that have chosen the path of building an independent country and are ready to defend this choice.

Among the social changes recognized, respondents identified the challenges European countries might face in their labor markets during the rapid integration of refugees from Ukraine. However, there was a positive attitude towards the effective integration of Ukrainian workers and the potential for a social and solidarity economy within government services and social security measures, as well as recognition of the particular situation of women and children in conflict zones and after arrival in host countries, including the risks of exploitation and gender-based violence. Furthermore, the survey participants identified the increase in EU food security and the rise in prices of food and energy resources as the most prominent societal trends in evaluating the agricultural sector of the EU. At the same time, the main concerns among respondents regarding the situation in the European continent due to the war in Ukraine are the issues related to the work of EU member states in creating a joint and efficient defense system that would significantly enhance Europe's defense capabilities.

The research aims to determine the opinion of scientists and sociologists regarding the peculiarities of the social situation on the European continent related to the resolution of the Russian war in Ukraine.

## **Literature review**

A treacherous full-scale armed aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022, was caused not only by the Kremlin's foolish and unrealistic intention to restore Russia's imperial status after the collapse of the Soviet Union and to nullify Ukraine's European choice but also by the consistent course of the Ukrainian government towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration, supported by an absolute majority of Ukrainian citizens.

Thus, since February 2022, the Russian Federation has not only invaded the territory of a sovereign state (Ukraine) but has also unleashed a real "hybrid war" against Europe and the entire democratic world, against basic human rights, against all international rules of peaceful and effective coexistence in Europe and the world. This war has led to the consolidation of NATO member states, strengthening of military potential, activation of defensive activities, and expansion of NATO, including the acceptance of traditionally neutral countries, Finland and Sweden, in the face of NATO.

Overall, the Russo-Ukrainian war has harmed the global economy, which has slowly emerged from a recession caused by the two-year coronavirus pandemic since the autumn of 2019.

The Russian-Ukrainian war has significantly impacted the transformation of the entire system of modern international relations. A block approach to ensuring security characterized pre-war society. The post-modern global security system is based on a combination of hierarchical and network characteristics of the international system (Shevchuk, Vyshnevskiy & Bilous, 2022), (Zaliska *et al.*, 2022). Takes into account the international experience of national security in public administration (Akimov *et al.*, 2020), applies adaptive management of enterprises taking into account the resource planning of a specific enterprise (Akimova *et al.*, 2020). For example, for machine-building enterprises, modeling of the safety process and determination of its potential is carried out (Kryshtanovych, Akimova, Akimov, Kubiniy & Marhitich, 2021). The use of information technologies to improve crime prevention (Hubanova, Shchokin, Hubanov, Antonov, Slobodianiuk & Podolyaka, 2021), which currently affects migratory activity of the population in Eastern European region (Levytska, Mulska, Ivaniuk, Kuniyska-Iliash, M., Vasylytsiv, & Lupak, 2020). Also, provision of medical-psychological and psychiatric care to patients in the conditions of telemedicine (Koliadenko, Zhyvago & Bursa, 2022) and consideration of the emotional factor in mental burnout (Popovych, Halian, Pavliuk, Kononenko, Hrys & Tkachuk, 2022).

Taking into account the existing trends in public opinion regarding this issue, the formation of a new system of international security is complicated by several factors: inertness to any changes, as well as resolving conflicts on the principle of “one subject wins - the other loses” (Masters, 2023; Ciot, 2022).

Today, in the society of the most developed countries in the world, there is an opinion that not all subjects of the international community participate in decision-making, discipline in some areas is maintained through coercion and humiliation, mistakes are not acknowledged, creating a sense of vulnerability due to offensive and violent actions, and there is a general tendency to ignore the experience of emerging conflicts, etc. In fact, the world based on democratic rules is gradually transforming, and one of the instruments for resolving conflicts increasingly becomes various forms of violence (Karnitschnig *et al.*, 2022).

According to the data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of January 3, 2023, about 4.9 million Ukrainian refugees were granted temporary protection in Europe. This corresponds to about 1% of the EU population. Migrants from Ukraine quickly adapt to new conditions; eventually, a significant number of them get employed in new places of residence and pay taxes, which has improved the dynamics of producing goods and services and increased competition in local labor markets.

The sudden displacement of a large part of the population because of the war has posed new challenges for European countries. Their consequences should be

assessed and taken into account when developing national and local economic and social policies. European citizens' interest in politics, tolerance, and unity is growing as a consequence of the conflict in Ukraine (UNHCR, 2023).

## Methodology

A practical study of the main societal trends that have occurred in European countries due to the war in Ukraine was conducted by surveying 242 scientists and 211 sociologists who study the international social sphere and conduct research and educational activities on the basis of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and the University "KROK" in Ukraine. The survey was performed using the Surveynuts service. When selecting participants for the survey, the survey took into account their age, gender, geographic data and professional affiliation, as a result of which the percentage of gender, age and professional affiliation of respondents' sample corresponds to the respective proportions of the teaching staff of the educational institutions on the basis of which the survey was conducted.

## Results

Based on the observations and conclusions of the survey participants, today, in conditions of the particularly acute impact of the war that Russia started in Ukraine on the socio-political processes in European countries, especially the vividly expressed trends in intentions to reduce Europe's energy dependence on Russia are (Table 1): (1) diversification of energy resources supplies; (2) increase in the energy efficiency of alternative energy sources.

*Table 1. Social trends in intentions to reduce European countries' energy dependence on Russia, (%)*

Tendencies of suggestions on ways to reduce energy dependence of the European countries	According to scientists' viewpoint	According to sociologists' viewpoint studying the international public sphere
Diversification of energy supplies	49	53
Increasing the energy efficiency of alternative energy sources	52	55
Enhancing the use of renewable energy sources	35	33

*Source: compiled by the authors.*

During the survey, respondents identified changes in the perception of European civilization values that occurred due to the war in Ukraine (Table 2).

Table 2. Changes in the perception of European civilization values that occurred due to the war in Ukraine, (%)

Changes in perception of civilizational values by the European community	According to scientists' viewpoint	According to sociologists' viewpoint studying the international public sphere
More active protection of democracy, people's free choice of their own path and the right to their own destiny	47	49
Increased rejection of aggression by the democratic world community	52	53
Inadmissibility of violating the inviolability of recognized borders for politicized or manipulative reasons	37	34
Military solidarity and support	35	32
Intensify economic and financial support for civil society	52	51
Strengthening humanitarian solidarity and support for civil society that has chosen to build an independent state	54	49

Source: compiled by the authors.

Therefore, as can be seen from Figure 2, the strength and character of Ukraine's resistance in the war have led to a strengthening of the awareness and perception of many civilization values by the world community, primarily such as democracy, freedom of choice for people in choosing their path, non-acceptance of aggression, economic and financial support for civil societies, humanitarian solidarity and support for civil communities that have chosen the path of building an independent country and are ready to defend this choice. The survey allowed identifying social changes in recognizing the difficulties European countries may face in their labor markets during the rapid integration of refugees from Ukraine (Table 3).

*Table 3. Social changes in recognizing the difficulties European countries may face in their labor markets during the rapid integration of refugees from Ukraine (%)*

Social changes in recognizing difficulties in labor markets	According to scientists' viewpoint	According to sociologists' viewpoint studying the international public sphere
Participation in organizing the proper management of the resettlement process	35	34
Effective implementation of mechanisms for integrating labor force from Ukraine that take into account gender and age factors	53	51
Awareness of the need to monitor the integration of refugees into the European labor market	33	31
Implementing the potential of the social and solidarity economy within the framework of public services for social welfare measures	49	52
Appeals to preserve and expand the number of jobs even during the crisis	32	29
Recognizing the special situation of women and children in conflict zones and upon arrival in host countries	54	53

*Source: compiled by the authors.*

As research analysis has shown, changes in social attitudes related to the integration of refugees from Ukraine into their labor markets take place in the EU countries, namely the positive attitude in society towards the effective introduction of mechanisms for the integration of labor from Ukraine, the realization of the potential of the social and solidarity economy within the framework of state social security measures, recognition of the special situation of women and children in conflict zones and after arrival in host countries, including the risks of exploitation and gender-based violence.

During the research, the authors analyzed European countries' role in resolving the Ukraine conflict and determined the prospects for further development of relations between Ukraine and the EU. Also, the respondents were asked to evaluate the most prominent societal trends in assessing the agricultural sector of the EU (Table 4). The survey showed that these trends are an increase in EU food security and the rise in prices of food and energy resources. In addition, the main societal concerns regarding the situation in the European continent due to the war in Ukraine are (Table 5).



Table 4. The most prominent societal trends in assessing the agricultural sector of the EU (%)

Common trends in evaluating the agri-food industry	According to scientists' viewpoint	According to sociologists' viewpoint studying the international public sphere
Strengthening the EU's commitment to creating sustainable food systems and ensuring access to quality food	37	35
Improving the EU's food security by reducing dependence on imported agricultural products and producing imported resources	52	51
Increasing prices for food and energy	53	49
Increasing poverty in the EU countries	33	34

Source: compiled by the authors.

Table 5. The main societal concerns regarding the situation in the European continent due to the war in Ukraine (%)

Tendencies of concern on the European continent in connection with the war in Ukraine	According to scientists' viewpoint	According to sociologists' viewpoint studying the international public sphere
Expanding the use of peacekeeping instruments in the European countries	43	41
Deepening political integration on the European continent	38	39
Establishment of a unified and effective defense system by the EU member states, which will significantly strengthen Europe's defense capabilities	51	53

Source: compiled by the authors.

As shown in Table 5, the key thematic concern in society is the issues related to the work of EU member states in creating a joint and efficient defense system that would significantly enhance Europe's defense capabilities.

## Discussion

Geopolitical upheavals that occurred after Russia's invasion of Ukraine continue to reverberate across Eurasia today. Long-term political trends may lead to events related to China's disputed claims to Taiwan and Japan's claims to the Kuril Islands. In the South Caucasus, disputed claims between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh may flare up; there may be attempts to restore Georgia's territorial integrity by reclaiming its lands in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Specific geopolitical shifts already occurred in March 2022 when the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe officially declared Transnistria an unrecognized Russian-occupied zone (Maurer, Whitman & Wright, 2023), (Lkhaajav, 2022), (Mia *et al.*, 2022).

Today, the West is uniting efforts to reduce Russia's military potential by combining economic warfare and exhausting Russian forces in Ukraine. As in the Cold War, European countries will increasingly rely on the US as a guarantor of defense, and the borders of the Russian sphere of influence will be militarized. The old concept of containing Russia has been restored, the eastern flank of NATO has been strengthened, and the defense of NATO members from Romania to Bulgaria has been strengthened to counter possible Russian aggression (Papageorgiou *et al.*, 2020; Diphorn & van Staple, 2021; Mishra *et al.*, 2022).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine will have far-reaching consequences, including changes in social spheres. The situation in the world is turning into a humanitarian and socio-political crisis, with increasing geopolitical tensions related to energy supply, food instability, and energy security. There is a growing threat of cyber-attacks, the spread of disinformation, and various propaganda campaigns. Furthermore, societies in the world's most developed countries are increasingly questioning global security architecture in light of the threat of nuclear war (Bratko, 2022; Semenenko *et al.*, 2022; Biswas *et al.*, 2022; Filho *et al.*, 2022).

According to the survey conducted within the framework of the present research, the war in Ukraine has strengthened the European community's awareness and perception of numerous civilizational values, first and foremost, such as: democracy, people's free choice of their path, rejection of aggression, economic and financial support for civil societies, and humanitarian solidarity. At the same time, the issues relating to the efforts of the EU member states to develop a unified and effective defense system that will considerably improve the European Union's defense capability are the primary thematic directions of concern in the society of many countries.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of scientific literature on the research topic and the results of the survey have shown that, given the increasingly tangible trends of globalization in the world we live in, the problems associated with Russia's war in Ukraine will affect not only Ukraine but also the entire world. Furthermore, the aggression has revealed the contradictions caused by political, economic, and humanitarian competition between the democratic and authoritarian worlds and has drawn attention to the problem of interaction and confrontation between countries.

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