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The transformation of representations of Ukrainian national identity in the discourses of Ukrainian ruling political elites on Euro-Atlantic integration

SUMMARY OF THE PhD DISSERTATION

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Statement of the research problem

Being a crucial component of a modern state, national identity has become a part of national and international processes. The phenomenon of national identity is inherently dependent on the definition of a nation. The reason being is that the definition of which community constitutes a nation may provide grounds for the redefinition of state boundaries, as well as recognition or misrecognition of international actors.

There has been a growing interest in national identity research due to the redefinition of territorial boundaries and the emergence of newly independent states in the post-Soviet period.[1] After 30 years of independence, the territorial borders and national identities of the post-Soviet states are still in motion, which makes the research of the transformation of post-Soviet national identities a timely question. Being a part of the nation- and state-building processes[2], the study of national identity change contributes to our understanding of social and political transformations, especially if analysed from a long-term perspective.

Civil unrest and military actions are probably the most powerful factors in the process of national identity change. After gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine experienced several turning moments when its national borders and the meaning of a nation were challenged. Among them, there were the civil protests during the Presidential elections in 2004[3], and the events that started in Ukraine during the Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2013 and was followed by loss of the governmental control over Crimea and the breakout of the armed conflict in two Eastern regions of Ukraine, Donetsk

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[1] Semenenko, I. S., red. Identichnost': Lichnost', obshhestvo, politika. Moskva: Ves' Mir, 2017; Semenenko, I.S., red. Politicheskaja identichnost' i politika identichnosti. T.1: Identichnost' kak kategorija politicheskoj nauki: slovar' terminov i ponjatij. Moskva: ROSSPJeN, 2011.; Semenenko, I. S, red. Politicheskaja Identichnost' i Politika Identichnosti. T.2: Identichnost' i social'no-politicheskie izmenenija v XXI Veke. Moskva: ROSSPJeN, 2012.

[2] Semenenko, I. S., V. V. Lapkin, A. L. Bardin, i V. I. Pantin. "Mezhdu gosudarstvom i naciej: dilemmy politiki identichnosti na postsovetskom prostranstve." POLIS. Politicheskie Issledovanija, no. 5 (2017): 54–78.

[3] There is no accepted and neutral term to describe the protests and processes they unleashed during the Presidential elections in 2004. The media cliché "Orange Revolution" is often used, being one of many "colour revolutions", which, from the Western perspective, symbolized the process of democratization of non-western societies in the 2000s. In Russian academic literature, the term «оранжевая революция» is written in quote marks and with a minuscule, in order to demonstrate the misrecognition of this event as "revolution".

and Lugansk[4]. Starting from February 2022[5], the conflict escalated into a direct military confrontation between Russia, the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, on the one hand, and Ukraine supported by the West, on the other. The role of these events in the transformation of the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian national identity is an issue of academic inquiries.

In the post-Soviet period, nation-building in Ukraine has been a complex, multidimensional process which reflected the contestation of meanings of the new Ukrainian nation. The case of Ukrainian national identity has been characterised by the intertwined ethnic, linguistic, and regional identities that were associated with different understandings of the Ukrainian nation. As a result, after gaining independence, the formation of loyalties to a new state became central in the elite-driven identity politics agenda, which aimed to transform a heterogeneous Ukrainian society into a Ukrainian nation. *Identity politics* is defined as activities of actors of the political processes that shape and construct national and other forms of macropolitical identity[6]. Identity politics includes but not limited to the implementation of new policies[7], such as language policies[8] and teaching of history[9], as well as symbolic practices, such as memory politics[10], among

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[4] The meanings and references describing events since November 2013 and through 2014 are contested. All of the terms used in the media or the academy to a certain degree reflect the political view expressed in either support or opposition to these events. The word "Euromaidan" is used by the media and in the academy, which is associated with the support of the protests. Initially peaceful protests ended in violent clashes between the protesters and the governmental forces in January-February 2014 and resulted in the expulsion of the President V. Yanukovich and a change of power in Ukraine on February 22, 2014. Later, the government of Ukraine coined a new term to refer to these events as a "Revolution of Dignity". Yet, for the Russian government and some political elites of Ukraine, these events are considered a coup d'état. In April 2014, the Ukrainian government proclaimed the beginning of the "Anti-Terrorist Operation" (ATO), which is also known in Ukraine as "war with Russia", or "Russian-Ukrainian war" which started the violence in Eastern Ukraine.

[5] These events are unfolding during the time when this thesis is being presented. The conflict in Eastern Ukraine escalated into a direct confrontation between the military forces of Ukraine and Russia on February 24, 2022. In Russia, this stage of the conflict is called a "Special Military Operation" (SVO), while in Ukraine it is referred to as "aggression", "war", and "invasion".

[6] Semenenko, I. S. "Politika identichnosti." v Identichnost': Lichnost', obshhestvo, politika, pod red. I. S. Semenenko, p. 647.

[7] Miller, A. I. "Politika stroitel'stva nacii - gosudarstva na Ukraine." Politicheskaja Nauka 1 (2010): 76–99.

[8] Arel, D. "Language Politics in Independent Ukraine: Towards One or Two State Languages?" Nationalities Papers 23, no. 3 (1995): 597–622; Kulyk, V. "Language Identity, Linguistic Diversity, and Political Cleavages." Nations and Nationalism 17, no. 2 (2011): 627–48.

[9] Popson, N. "The Ukrainian History Textbook: Introducing Children to the" Ukrainian Nation"." Nationalities Papers 29, no. 2 (2001): 325–50; Poleshhuk, T. "Obraz Rosiï na storinkah shkil'nih pidruchnikiv z istoriï Ukraïni." Pedagogichna Dumka 3 (2010): 97–106.

[10] Kozlov, S.V. "Regional'nye varianty istoricheskoj pamjati postsovetskoj Ukrainy." Cennosti i Smysly 6, no. 34 (2014): 20–31; Zaharchenko, T. "Polyphonic Dichotomies: Memory and Identity in Today's Ukraine." Demokratizatsiya 21, no. 2 (2013): 241–70; Shevel, O. "The Politics of Memory in a Divided Society: A Comparison of Post-Franco Spain and Post-Soviet Ukraine." Slavic Review 70, no. 1 (2011): 137–64.

others. In the post-Soviet states, political elites played the major role in the construction of new national identities[11], particularly, the ruling elites, who defined the new criteria of belonging to a national polity and redefined the role of the state in identity politics and in the international arena. National identity may be constructed by policies and practices, either purposefully or unintentionally, which has been especially evident through the study of discursive construction of national identity.

In this work, *national identity* is understood as a collective identity of a community that considers itself a nation. Criteria for communities that could be considered a nation are situated in a historical, political and religious context, among others, and have been changing over time[12]. Being a macropolitical identity[13], national identity may include or exclude other social identities. In this thesis, *national identity* is narrowly defined as a discursive construction of meanings about the nation, which can be articulated through a combination of discursive representations of Self, expressed through articulation of sameness, otherness, and boundary construction in articulation of security and danger.

Like any identity, national identity is relational and constructed in relation to Others. Therefore, studying the transformation of national identities implies research on re-articulation of constitutive Others in discourse. For Ukrainian identity, Russia and Europe have been regarded as the most significant Others[14]. The importance of international actors to the national Self makes the national identity of Ukraine intertangled with foreign policy[15]. This is the reason why different foreign policy preferences across Ukrainian society are perceived as a problematic issue that splits the national polity[16] between the

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[11] Lane, D. "Identity Formation and Political Elites in the Post-Socialist States." *Europe - Asia Studies* 63, no. 6 (2011): 925–34.

[12] Kohn, H. The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background. Transaction Publishers, 1961; Deutsch, K. W. *Nationalism and Social Communication*. 2nd ed. Cambirdge: The MIT Press, 1962; Armstrong, J. *Nations before Nationalism*. UNC Press Book, 2017; Gellner, E. *Nations and Nationalism*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006; Smith, A. *National Identity*. University of Nevada press, 1991

[13] Malinova, O. Yu. "Konstruirovanie makropoliticheskoj identichnosti v postsovetskoj Rossii: simvolicheskaya politika v transformiruyushhejsya publichnoj cfere." Politicheskaya E`kspertiza: POLITE`KS 6, no. 1 (2010): 5–28

[14] Riabchuk, M. "Ukrainians as Russia's Negative 'Other': History Comes Full Circle." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49 (2016): 75–85; White, S. and V. Feklyunina. *Identities and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Other Europes*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; Vieira, A. "Ukraine, Russia and the Strategic Partnership Dynamics in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood: Recalibrating the EU's 'Self', 'We' and 'Other.'" *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 29, no. 1 (2016): 128–50.

[15] Prizel, I. National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia and Ukraine. Vol. 103. Cambridge University Press., 1998.

[16] Molchanov, M. A. "National Identity and Foreign Policy Orientation in Ukraine." In Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives, 227–63. Westport: Praeger, 2002; Il'in, M. V. "Jetapy stanovlenija vnutrennej geopolitiki Rossii i Ukrainy." POLIS. Politicheskie Issledovanija 3 (1998): 82–94.

East and the West. The 'European choice' seemed to be more attractive, however, cultural, historical and economic ties to Russia were evident. The antagonistic nature of this choice became particularly salient during the Presidential elections in 2004 and civil and military confrontations in 2013-2014. The ongoing military conflict between Russia and Ukraine that started in February 2022 will bring even more radical identity shifts, which are yet to be analysed in the future.

Since 2014, events, such as the loss of control over Crimea and an armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, unleashed a spin of national identity transformations. In recent studies, researchers have raised the issues of national identity change at the level of the masses[17], analysed the practices in consumption[18] and introduction of new symbolic political practices[19] by the ruling political elites. Researchers also approached the formation of the Ukrainian identity from new perspectives, analysing it as a source of security[20] and studying identity as post-colonial development with an emphasis on the study of civilizational identity[21]. The body of research on identity politics in Ukraine is particularly focused on social and political transformations in society.

However, despite a plethora of literature on the Ukrainian identity, some important problems have been overlooked. First, researchers have focused on the analysis of identity construction in a particular period. As a result, there is a lack of longitudinal studies that would illuminate the development of identity within a larger time framework. Second, due to the transformation of the security context in Ukraine after 2014, NATO has become an

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[17] Pop-Eleches, G., Robertson, G. B. "Identity and Political Preferences in Ukraine–before and after the Euromaidan." Post-Soviet Affairs 34, no. 2–3 (2018): 107–18; Barrington, L. "Citizenship as a Cornerstone of Civic National Identity in Ukraine." Post-Soviet Affairs 37, no. 2 (2021): 155–73; Arel, D. "How Ukraine Has Become More Ukrainian." Post-Soviet Affairs 34, no. 2–3 (2018): 1–4.

[18] Seliverstova, O. "'Consuming' National Identity in Western Ukraine." Nationalities Papers 45, no. 1 (2017): 61–79.

[19] Bereznjakov, D. V., Kozlov, S. V. "Simvolicheskaja politika postsovetskoj Ukrainy: konstruirovanie legitimirujushhego narrativa." POLIS. Politicheskie Issledovanija 4 (2015): 34–45; Efemishh, N.M. "Proshloe v konstruirovanii nacional'noj identichnosti: grand-narrativy Ukrainy." Vestnik Permskogo Universiteta. Politologija, no. 2 (2018): 77–90; Plehanov, "Formirovanie kalendarja gosudarstvennyh prazdnikov i pamjatnyh dat v postsovetskoj Ukraine.", 116–32.

[20] Belovets'ka, L. E. "Problema zberezhennja nacional'noï identichnosti jak skladovoï duhovnoï bezpeki ukraïns'kogo suspil'stva." Duhovnist' Osobistosti: Metodologija, Teorija i Praktika, 2, no. 77 (2017): 6–14; Szkola, S. "The Self / Other Space and Spinning the Net of Ontological Insecurities in Ukraine and Beyond: (Discursive) Reconstructions of Boundaries in the EU Eastern Partnership Countries Vis-à-Vis the EU and Russia." In *Crisis and Change in Post-Cold War Global Politics*, 225–54. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

[21] Voropayeva, T. S. "Yevropejs"ka cyvilizacijna identychnist" yak chynnyk konsolidaciyi hromadyan Ukrayiny u postkolonial"nu dobu (1991–2018 Rr.)." Hileya: Naukovyj Visnyk 138, no. 2 (2018): 139–46; Prymachenko, Ya. "Antykolonial"nyj dyskurs OUN/UPA v suchasnomu ukrayins"komu konteksti borot"by za yevropejs"ku dentychnist"." Ukrayins"kyj Istorychnyj Zbirnyk., no. 17 (2014): 328–38; Khimyak, O. "Cyvilizacijna identyfikaciya Ukrayiny." Ukrayins"ka Nacional"na Ideya: Realiyi Ta Perspektyvy Rozvytku 26 (2014): 156–63.

important Other in Ukraine's relations with the international community. However, the construction of the Ukrainian identity in its engagement with NATO has not yet been studied from an identity perspective. Instead, the views on NATO have been included as part of the European integration of Ukraine[22] despite the fact that the European Union (EU) and NATO are different organisations with distinct goals and interests. Therefore, the transformation of the regional security context and the increasing engagement with NATO could possibly have an impact on the construction of the Ukrainian national identity. The study of national identity in the context of Ukraine-NATO relations may bring understanding to political processes in regard to accession policy in Ukraine, which was claimed to be one of the reasons for military involvement of Russia in Ukraine in 2022. Third, recently there have been few studies that would pay attention to the issue of identity construction by the Ukrainian political elites. Even though the reviewed studies provide evidence of different understandings of the Ukrainian national identity, there has been insufficient attention given to the changes in ruling political elites' consensus and contestation of national identity after 2014.

In the aftermath of the social, political and security transformations that took place in 2014, the study of national identity contributes to understanding those changes. What meanings of identity were contested and changed? How do these changes allow identity continuity? And how do the transformed national identity meanings contribute to or interfere with a policy of NATO accession? In this work, the transformation of national identity meanings and their contestation among the Ukrainian ruling political elites lie at the centre of the inquiry. This work aims to contribute to the literature on the development of the Ukrainian post-Soviet identity. It intends to make a case for bridging the national with the international, demonstrating an interplay between the articulations of Self, Other, and the discursive struggle for meaning making.

Literature review

The study of identity is conducted on different philosophical grounds which reflect differences in understanding/explaining identity phenomena. Identity research is situated on diverse scientific standpoints that range from positivist[23] to post-structuralist

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[22] White, Feklyunina, *Identities and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*.

[23] Wendt, A. "Collective Identity Formation and the International State." *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 02 (1994): 384–96; Hopf, T. "Making Identity Count: Constructivism, Identity and IR Theory." In *Making Identity Count: Building a National Identity Database*, edited by Hopf, T. & Allan, B. 3–19. Oxford University Press, 2016b;

ontologies[24] supported by varied methodologies. The positivist-based ontology assumes the cause-effect relation and the possibility to establish mechanisms between the national identity construction and other social processes, actors, and factors. On the opposite, post-structuralist researchers reject the possibility to establish the causal effect of identity on other phenomena (e.g. foreign policy)[25]. However, they recognise that the way in which identity is articulated contributes to understanding of how certain political actions become possible and how discursive mechanisms of linking and differentiation help legitimise political actions[26]. In doing so, post-structuralist researchers admit a certain level of impact of identity on the 'real' world, which brings them closer to recognition of the constitutive role of identity in political processes. Understanding identity as constitutive occupies a middle ground between positivist and post-structuralist philosophical standpoints. These ontological distinctions are expressed in paradigmatic debates, however, in empirical research studies, the issues of ontology and epistemology are not always made explicit. Therefore, understanding research on identity change and interpretation of results requires a nuanced approach and insight into the researcher's philosophical view.

Depending on their understanding of identity, researchers apply different methodological approaches to studying identity change. Some prefer sociological and statistical quantitative methods[27] that could provide more exact numerical measurement of the changes. These permit measurement of the change by identity components with an emphasis on ethnicity and language[28]. In Political Science, national identity change is often

Lebow, R. N. "Identity and International Relations." *International Relations* 22, no. 4 (2011): 473–92; Clunan, A. L. *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.

[24] Hansen, L. *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. Routledge, 2006; Hansen, L. and O. Wæver, eds. European Integration and National Identity. The Challenge of the Nordic States. Vol. 29. London and New York: Routledge, 2003; Campbell, D. *Writing Security. United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

[25] Hansen, L. *Security as Practice,* 25-27

[26] Ibid.

[27] Fabrikant, M. "Sravnitel'nye kolichestvennye issledovanija nacional'noj ydentichnosti v sovremennoj social'noj psihologii." Jelektronnyj Zhurnal "Sovremennaja Zarubezhnaja Psihologija" 7, no. 4 (2018): 22–31; Kulyk, V. "National Identity in Ukraine: Impact of Euromaidan and the War (B)." *Europe - Asia Studies* 68, no. 4 (2016): 588–608; Fabrykant, M. "National Identity in the Contemporary Baltics: Comparative Quantitative Analysis." Journal of Baltic Studies 49, no. 3 (2018): 305–31; Steinhardt, H. C., L. C. Li, and Y. Jiang. "The Identity Shift in Hong Kong since 1997: Measurement and Explanation." *Journal of Contemporary China* 27, no. 110 (2018): 261–76.

[28]Stebelsky, I. "Ethnic Self-Identification in Ukraine, 1989–2001: Why More Ukrainians and Fewer Russians?" Canadian Slavonic Papers 51, no. 1 (2009): 77–100; Mikhaylov, V., Sala, S. "Subnational Identities in the Context of the Changing Internal Geopolitics. The Case of Post-Revolutionary Ukraine." Bulletin of Geography. Socio–Economic Series 39 (2018): 79–96.

measured against the shifts within the civic/ethnic dichotomy[29], in which identity may lean towards either its civic or ethnic extremity. Such an approach serves as a useful instrument to compare the changes that occur in the sentiment of national belonging. However, as a collective identity, national identity is more than an aggregate number of individual identities. That is why it should be analysed in terms of change of meanings attached to the notion of a nation and their contestation by identity entrepreneurs[30]. Therefore, as a collective identity, national identity should be regarded as possessing a more complex structure of meanings and relationships than those provided by the sociological surveys with the pre-established categories in sociological approaches. Not only is it important *if* a change is taking place, but *how* this change allows identity continuity, and how the constructed identity facilitates or inhibits certain political actions. In order to identify changes in national identity meanings, discursive approaches are more suitable.

Constitutive Others and identification of boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are important elements of identity change. Researchers investigate national identity change by analysing transformations in the construction of the significant Other(s)[31] and the construction of security and threats[32] in discourses. A radical change of relations with the Other or its disappearance[33] may transform national identity, sharply reconfiguring the roles and relationships of all levels of the national community. Therefore, the analysis of how the Other is (re)presented in discourses and who the Other is makes up an important part of the research on developments in national identity.

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[29] See Larsen, C. A. "Revitalizing the 'Civic' and 'Ethnic' Distinction. Perceptions of Nationhood across Two Dimensions, 44 Countries and Two Decades." Nations and Nationalism 23, no. 4 (2017): 970–93; Hansen, H. E., and V. L. Hesli. "National Identity: Civic, Ethnic, Hybrid, and Atomised Individuals." Europe - Asia Studies 61, no. 1 (2009): 1–28; Barrington, L. W. "Understanding Identity in Ukraine – and Elsewhere." Post-Soviet Affairs 34, no. 2–3 (2018): 179–82; Sasse, G. and A. Lackner. "War and State-Making in Ukraine: Forging a Civic Identity from Below?" Ideology and Politics 1, no. 12 (2019): 75–98.

[30] Abdelal, R., Y. Herrera, A. I. Johnston, and R. McDermott. "Identity as a Variable." *Perspectives on Politics* 4, no. 4 (2006): 695–711.

[31] Neumann, I. B. *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation*. University of Minnesota Press, 1998; Siddi, M. "An Evolving Other: German National Identity and Constructions of Russia." *Politics* 38, no. 1 (2018): 35–50; Riabchuk, "Ukrainians as Russia's Negative 'Other'.", 75–85; Esparza, D. "National Identity and the Other: Imagining the EU from the Czech Lands." *Nationalities Papers* 38, no. 3 (2010): 413–36; Kuzio, T. "Identity and Nation-Building in Ukraine: Defining the 'other'." *Ethnicities* 1, no. 3 (2001a): 343–65; Malinova, O. "Russian Identity and the 'Pivot to the East': An Analysis of Rhetorical References to the American and Chinese 'Others' in Political Elite Discourse." *Problems of Post-Communism* 66, no. 4 (2019): 227–39.

[32] Surguladze, V. Sh. Politika identichnosti v realijah obespechenija nacional'noj bezopasnosti: strategija, teorija, praktika. Moskva: Analiticheskaja gruppa STK, 2019; Fadeeva, L.A. "Sek'juritizacija Politiki Pamjati i Identichnosti." Izvestija Altajskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, S6, no. 166 (2020): 73–76.

[33] Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy.*

With the aim of providing more flexibility for identity research, Bahar Rumelili and Jennifer Todd elaborated a framework of paradoxes[34] which would support development of a research programme on identity, especially identity change in conflicts[35]. These authors proposed to reject paradigmatic debates on identity and analyse it using the paradoxes related with the identity notion such as *identity/difference*, *continuity/change*, and *consensus/contestation*. Such an analysis allows us to identify both rapid transformations and slow identity changes, as well as apply it to comparative research design.

The researchers identified some of the possible problems for Ukrainian unity in the early years of independence, among them, there were a lack of national cohesion due to historically-formed regional types of identities[36], the presence of a multi-ethnic and multilinguistic society[37], and existing political divisions across the regions[38]. Identity occupies an important place in explanation of the Ukrainian regionalism[39] shaped by historical developments[40]. After 2014, there was a new wave of interest in Ukrainian identity explained by the change of relations with Others, the succession of Crimea and the

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[34] Rumelili, B., Todd, J. "Paradoxes of Identity Change: Integrating Macro, Meso, and Micro Research on Identity in Conflict Processes." *Politics* 38, no. 1 (2018): 3–18.

[35] Todd, J. "Understanding Identity Change: Conditions, Context, Concepts." In *Identity Change after Conflict*, 17–42. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018; Rumelili, Todd, "Paradoxes of identity change:", 3–18.

[36] Miller, A. I. "Dualizm identichnostej na Ukraine." Otechestvennye Zapiski 1, no. 34 (2007): 84–96; Barrington, L. W., and E. S. Herron. "One Ukraine or Many? Regionalism in Ukraine and Its Political Consequences." Nationalities Papers 32, no. 1 (2004): 53–86; Hrytsak, Y. "National Identities in Post-Soviet Ukraine: The Case of Lviv and Donetsk." Harvard Ukrainian Studies 22 (1998): 263–81; Korostelina, K. V. "Mapping National Identity Narratives in Ukraine." Nationalities Papers 41, no. 2 (2013b): 293–315.

[37] Jakubowski, A. "Ethnic Structure of Contemporary Ukraine." Confrontation and Cooperation: 1000 Years of Polish-German-Russian Relations 2, no. 2 (2015): 4–15.

[38] Katchanovski, I. "Regional Political Divisions in Ukraine in 1991-2006." Nationalities Papers 34, no. 5 (2006): 507–32; Nikulin, V. and N. Selyutina. "Geopolitical Orientations of Ukrainian Political Elites and the Electoral Campaign of 2006." Perspectives on European Politics and Society 8, no. 4 (2007): 544–58; Pohorila, N. "Political and National Identity in Ukraine's Regions: Where Does the Center Fit?" Polish Political Science Review 4, no. 1 (2016): 18–32; Tomajchuk, L. V. "Rehyonalyzm y rehyonal"naya ydentychnost" v sovremennoj Ukrayne." Polytycheskaya Эkspertyza: POLYTЭKS 9, no. 1 (2013): 252–63; Maksymec", B V. "Uplyv nacional"noyi identychnosti na rezul"taty miscevyx vyboriv pochatku XXI st. v Ukrayini." VISNYK NTUU «KPI». Politolohiya. Sociolohiya. Pravo. 3, no. 19 (2013): 26–30.

[39] Sasse, G. and A. Lackner. "'War and Identity: The Case of the Donbas in Ukraine.'" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 34, no. 2–3 (2018): 139–57; Matveeva, A. *Through Times of Trouble Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine Explained from Within*. Lexington Books, 2017; Malanchuk, O., N. J. Chernysh, and V. I. Susak. "Forsovanyj vybir: identychnosti ta postavy do i pislya Yevromajdanu." Ukrayins"kyj Socium 4, no. 59 (2016): 8–20; Kryvyc"ka, O. "Identychnist" ukrayins"koho pohranychcha: Donbas." Naukovi Zapysky Instytutu Politychnyx i Etnonacional"nyx Doslidzhen" Im. IF Kurasa NAN Ukrayiny 1 (2017): 293–313.

[40] Sotiriou, S. A. "The Irreversibility of History: The Case of the Ukrainian Crisis (2013–2015)." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 16, no. 1 (2016): 51–70; Smoor, L. "Understanding the Narratives Explaining the Ukrainian Crisis: Identity Divisions and Complex Diversity in Ukraine." Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies 11, no. 1 (2017): 63–96.

internal armed conflict in Eastern regions. Overall, after 2014, researchers extended scientific inquiries into Ukrainian identity politics intertwined with national identity, highlighting the role of ethnicity[41] in society and conflict, the impact of language policies on national identity[42], and the new regional divisions[43]. However, a body of research based on the classic civic/ethnic dichotomy does not provide clear or nuanced insight into Ukrainian identity change. On the one hand, there is evidence that there is an inclination towards ethnic-based national identity and, therefore, Ukraine has become more Ukrainian[44]. On the other hand, in an experimental study, it was established that ethnicity was not a significant category for political choices among the masses[45]. Another research concluded that the Ukrainian identity is developing civic features[46]. That is why a more nuanced approach that would go beyond civic/ethnic division is needed, especially when analysing identity change over a longer period.

In the post-Soviet period, national identities of newly independent states were influenced by the process of Europeanisation[47]. This process was analysed from various perspectives: the institutionalist approach[48], which explained the process of EU and NATO enlargement as a result of rational choice and consensus, and the constructivist approach,

[41] Onuch, O., and H. E. Hale. "Capturing Ethnicity: The Case of Ukraine." Post-Soviet Affairs 34, no. 2–3 (2018): 84–106; Giuliano, E. "Who Supported Separatism in Donbas? Ethnicity and Popular Opinion at the Start of the Ukraine Crisis." Post-Soviet Affairs 34, no. 2–3 (2018): 158–78.

[42] Kulyk, V. "Language and Identity in Ukraine after Euromaidan." Thesis Eleven 136, no. 1 (2016a): 90–106; Peacock, E. A. "National Identity and Language: Class Differences among Youth in Western Ukraine." Global Studies of Childhood 5, no. 1 (2015): 59–73; Krasnov, L.N. "Radykal"naya ukraynyzatsyya: proekty novoj yazykovoj polytyky." Voprosy Natsyonal"nykh y Federatyvnykh Otnoshenyj 1, no. 36 (2017): 74–79.

[43] Kuzyk, P. "Ukraine 's National Integration before and after 2014. Shifting 'East – West' Polarization Line and Strengthening Political Community." Eurasian Geography and Economics 60, no. 6 (2019): 709–35; Barrington, L. "Is the Regional Divide in Ukraine an Identity Divide?" Eurasian Geography and Economics 00, no. 00 (2021): 1–26.

[44] Arel, "How Ukraine Has Become More Ukrainian", 1–4; Degtjarev, A. K. "Nacional'naja identichnost' i perspektivy ukrainskoj gosudarstvennosti."Nauchnye vedomosti Belgorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Serija: Filosofija. Sociologija. Pravo 38, no. 24 (245) (2016).

[45] Frye, T. "What Do Voters in Ukraine Want: A Survey Experiment on Candidate Ethnicity, Language, and Policy Orientation." *Problems of Post-Communism* 62, no. 5 (2015): 247–57.

[46] Sasse, Lackner. "War and State-Making in Ukraine".

[47] As a relatively new and contested notion, in academic literature, the term of Europeanisation has several usages and definitions: a) as the process of creation of new institutions of governance at the European level; b) as an attraction to form of organisation and government, which has been exported outside European territorial boundaries; c) signifies a political unification of Europe; d) as a process, where European policy-making increasingly influences the domestic politics; f) as a situation where aspects of domestic politics are transformed by distinct modes of European governance. See Buller, J. and A. Gamble. "Conceptualising europeanisation." *Public policy and administration* 17, no. 2 (2002): 4-24.

[48] Moravcsik, A. The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht. Palgrave Macmillan, 1998.

which emphasized the rhetorical nature of Europeanisation[49] and the role of identity in this process[50]. Being involved in mechanisms of socialization with the European Union, Eastern-European countries incorporated the notion of "Europeanness" into their national identity discourses[51], as well as were involved in the process of institutionalisation of their relations with the EU and NATO.

In contrast with the CEE countries, Ukraine has not been formally offered membership, neither in the EU nor NATO. However, Ukrainian society and the state have been actively involved in the process of Europeanisation[52], which raised researchers' interest in a place Europe occupied in the Ukrainian imaginary. As research results show, Europe has become a normative model for Ukraine[53] and European values have been accepted by Ukrainians[54]. However, the researchers noted that there were also different ways to understand Ukraine as a part of Europe[55]. Therefore, the meanings and importance of Europeanisation in Ukrainian society can be contested. The events that took place in 2013-2014 were largely interpreted as a result of European aspirations[56] and a clash of regional and political identities[57]. According to research, the European model became widely accepted as the opposing strategy to the Russian vector[58]. However, due to the differences in understanding Ukraine's future in Europe, the meanings of Europeanisation need unpacking, especially in the process of contestation of meanings of national identity at the collective level.

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[49] Schimmelfennig, F. The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[50] Hansen, Wæver, *European Integration and National Identity*.

[51] Rindzeviciute, E. "'Nation' and 'Europe': Re-Approaching the Debates about Lithuanian National Identity." Journal of Baltic Studies 34, no. 1 (2003): 74–91; Riim, T. "Estonia and NATO: A Constructivist View on a National Interest and Alliance Behaviour." Baltic Security and Defence Review 8, no. 1997 (2006): 34–52; Kakachia, K. and A. Markarov. *Values and Identity as Sources of Foreign Policy in Armenia and Georg*ia. Edited by K. Kakachia and A. Markarov. Tbilisi: Publishing House "Universal," 2016.

[52] About Europeanisation of non-EU coutries see Schimmelfennig, F. "Europeanisation beyond the member states." *Zeitschrift für Staats-und Europawissenschaften (ZSE)/Journal for Comparative Government and European Policy* (2010): 319-339.

[53] Orlova, D. "'Europe' as a Normative Model in the Mediatised Discourse of Ukrainian Political Elites." *Europe - Asia Studies* 69, no. 2 (2017): 222–41.

[54] Tsyrfa, I. "The Formation of the European Identity of Ukraine: Key Factors and Principles." *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 30 (2013): 43–63.

[55] White, Feklyunina. *Identities and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.*

[56] Barkanov, B. "Crisis in Ukraine Clash of Civilizations or Geopolitics." In *Power, Politics and Confrontation in Eurasia*, 210–39. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

[57] Portnov, A. "Post-Maidan Europe and the New Ukrainian Studies." *Slavic Review* 74, no. 4 (2015): 723–31; Baysha, O. "Ukrainian Euromaidan: The Exclusion of Otherness in the Name of Progress." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 18, no. 1 (2015): 3–18.

[58] Nitoiu, C. "The European Union's 'Ideal Self' in the Post-Soviet Space." *Europe-Asia Studies* 70, no. 5 (2018): 692–710.

Since 2014, Ukrainian foreign policy has undergone significant transformation. Ukraine abandoned its "multi-vector" foreign policy and its neutral status, claiming its rights to full-fledged NATO membership in addition to aspirations of integration into the European Union. However, throughout the post-Soviet period, the issue of Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine was subject to oscillation that puzzled foreign policy analysts[59]. The issue of Ukraine's accession to NATO was also a matter of concern in international politics, as Russia was constantly reminding about the lack of security guarantees from NATO. Being a process of bilateral and multilateral relations between the state and members of the military alliance, Euro-Atlantic integration goes beyond the institutionalisation of Ukraine-NATO relations. It is also a process of discursive articulation of foreign policy, construction of national contributions to the Alliance, and legitimation of the accession policy. As a contested issue, the investigation of discourses on NATO accession may illuminate the patterns of identity change and identity contestation by the ruling political elites in Ukraine, as well as reveal the constitutive role of identity in the decision-making process for NATO membership.

The literature review leads to a number of conclusions. First, in order to study national identity as a complex collective imaginary, it is necessary to go beyond methodological and paradigmatic debates. As identity is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, the philosophical worldview forms the basis of methodological approaches in identity studies. Second, even though the civic/ethnic dichotomy is a widespread analytical tool used to assess national identity change, its usage is limited in contexts where identity is highly contested, such as in the case of Ukraine. Analysing national identity as a discursive phenomenon, which consists of constructed meanings[60], may be revealing. Rarely are quantitative studies able to address such complex issues. Instead, a qualitative analysis of meanings is more suitable for unpacking the nuances of discursive national identity change. Paradigmatic debates may impose limitations on research design, therefore, it is necessary to approach identity research using a more flexible analytical framework and interpretative methods. Finally, post-Soviet countries are relatively recent entities. As a result, the longitudinal studies of national identity meanings are rare. The

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[59] Shyrokykh, K. "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of Ukraine: External Actors and Domestic Factors." *Europe-Asia Studies* 70, no. 5 (2018): 832–50.

[60] Abdelal, R., Y. M. Herrera, A. I. Johnston, and R. McDermott, eds. *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

debate on Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration has been historically divisive for Ukrainian society and lacks analysis from an identity perspective. Therefore, longitudinal research on the way identity is being constructed and changed in these debates may make a case for further development of the identity research agenda. Studying the process of identity change as a change of meanings is one of the ways to reveal the constitutive role of national identity in the policy of accession. Understanding the role of national identity transformation in a political debate may yield valuable insights into how the national is intrinsically linked with the international in a regionally and linguistically diverse society.

Research question

How was Ukrainian national identity represented and contested in the discourses of the Ukrainian ruling political elites on the issue of Euro-Atlantic integration over time?

The notion of "representation" is associated with the following meanings: 'standing for' / 'speak for' as political representation and 'depiction', as a linguistic embodiment of ideas. Both meanings become useful in this research. First, the ruling political elites, whose discourses are being analysed here, are representing the people, therefore, they assume a collective identity through political representation[61] of their nation. The second meaning is associated with the construction of national identity through discursive practice. Therefore, identity *representations* are imaginaries expressed through linguistic means[62] that may have political implications for actions and decisions.

The terminology of an (*identity) representation* is preferred to connote a greater fluidity and not a fixed nature of identity[63]. Through discursive practice, identity entrepreneurs (re)produce national identity representations that constitute the meanings of national identity. Together with representations of threat and security, national identity representations are used for the formulation and legitimation of policies by the ruling political elites[64].

The *elites* are defined as "individuals and small, relatively cohesive, and stable groups with disproportionate power to affect national and supranational political outcomes

[61] Runciman, D. "Hobbes's Theory of Representation: Anti-Democratic or Proto-Democratic?" In *Political Representation*, ed. by I. Shapiro et al., 15–36. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 26-30.
[62] Dunn, K. C. "Historical Representations." In Qualitative Methods in International Relations, ed. by A. Clotz and D. Prakash, 78–92. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 80.
[63] See Klotz, A. and C. Lynch. *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations*. New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2007, 13.
[64] Hansen*, Security as Practice*, 211.

on a continuing basis.[65]" This research is limited to the study of *ruling political elites*, who are (groups of) individuals either elected or appointed to governmental service. The object of the study is the discourses of the ruling political elites who participated in a public discussion and decision making about the policy of Ukraine's accession into NATO.

The ideas about social reality, social order and social objects, including identities, are manifested in discourse[66]. *Discourses[67]* are understood as systems of meanings that express relations of power[68]. However, discourse may have other usages, such as public discourse, political discourse, when it may either refer to a system of meanings, or to speeches. The notion of discursive practice is preferred, meaning the process of national identity construction. As national identity consists of meanings, the struggle for power is exercised through the redefinition of these meanings through contestation.

As multiple individuals participate in policy debates on NATO accession, articulation of different positions on the policy among the Ukrainian ruling elites is possible, which may present cases where the contestation of national identity and its transformation could be evidenced.

Theoretical framework

This study aligns with a social-constructivist understanding of national identity which is considered a mental construct or "imagined political community"[69]. As a collective community, national identity is not a real or objectively existing phenomenon, but exists through articulation of meanings attached to the notion of a nation. Even though national identity is not limited to its discursive representation, in this work, the research on national identity is defined as a discursive construction, i.e. national identity is "*produced, reproduced, transformed*" discursively[70]. Understood as a social category, identity is attributed meanings that may be contested in discursive practice. The meaning making of a nation is an object of power struggle for dominance and homogenization through continuous (re)production in discursive practice. In this thesis, national identity is analysed

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[65] Best, H. and J. Higley. "The Palgrave Handbook of Political Elites: Introduction." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Political Elites*, ed. by Heinrich Best and John Higley, 1–6. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 3.

[66] Bhaskar, 1989 in Fairclough, N. *Language and Power*. 3rd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2015.

[67] There are multiple definitions of 'discourse' adopted by social science researchers.

[68] Dreyfus, H. and P. Rabinow. *Michel Foucault, Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

[69] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso Books, 2006, 15.

[70] De Cellia, R., M. Reisigl, and R. Wodak. "The Discursive Construction of National Identities." Discourse and Society 10, no. 2 (1999): 149–73, 153.

as a combination of discursive representations in texts that are subject to contestation by the actors who (re)produce distinct meanings of identity.

In this research, constitutive causality between identity and a policy is adopted. According to this philosophical view, identity is one of the "causes for action"[71] and serves as a ground for legitimation of political decisions[72]. Drawing on particular representations of states and institutions, politicians are able to argue for specific policies, justify and legitimize them.

The literature on identity politics[73] implies that policies implemented by political actors, particularly, by the elites in power, aim to construct and promote a certain 'project' of national identity. The underlying idea is that the values, priorities and the worldview promoted by identity entrepreneurs may have an impact on the outcomes of political decisions and actions. However, it is challenging to empirically demonstrate causality between identity and other social phenomena, which leads to the adoption of a constitutive and not a causal role of identity in social processes[74]. The constitutive causality can be demonstrated through empirical analysis of narratives of identity, metaphors, framing of identity and other rhetorical devices, which are identifiable elements that may serve as mechanisms to support policies, justify political behaviour or actions[75].

Research design, methodology and methods

The research design is based on the intertextual model of a foreign policy debate within discourse-analytical approach proposed by Lene Hansen[76], which focuses on a wider political debate on foreign policy. The model provides "intertextual links to consider the major actors and arenas within a wider foreign policy debate", i.e. analysis goes beyond discourses of the government's policy makers and takes into account discourses produced by the opposed to the policy actors. In this model, parliamentary debates are particularly useful for analysis[77].

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[71] Bucher, B., Jasper, U. "Revisiting 'Identity' in International Relations from Identity as Substance to Identifications in Action." *European Journal of International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2017): 391–415.
[72] Hansen, *Security as Practice.*
[73] Fadeeva, L.A. "Politika identichnosti: aktory, strategii, diskursy." v Politicheskaja Identichnost' i Politika Identichnosti. Tom 2: Identichnost' i Social'no-Politicheskie Izmenenija v XXI Veke, red. I.S. Semenenko, 72–98. Moskva: ROSSPJeN, 2012.
[74] Lebow, R. N. "Constitutive Causality: Imagined Spaces and Political Practices." *Millennium* 38, no. 2 (2009): 211–39.
[75] Lebow, "Constitutive Causality."
[76] Hansen, *Security as Practice,* 64.
[77] Ibid., 55.

The flow of research consists of several stages. First, I identify the basic discourses on the Ukrainian national identity in debates of the Ukrainian political elites on Euro-Atlantic integration. According to Hansen, *basic discourses* are analytical frameworks that "are of a debate structure" aligned across political divisions[78]. They facilitate structural analysis of discourse formation within foreign policy debate[79]. Methodological identification of basic discourses is based on key representations of identity that construct radically different Others and, therefore, different Selves, and argue for adoption of different policies. Therefore, the basic discourse serves an analytical instrument and differs from the notion of the discursive practice defined above.

The second stage consists of identification and analysis of the patterns of contestation, change and continuity of national identity representations in basic discourses. At the third stage I analyse the construction of Others by the opposing basic discourses and how the national identity of Ukraine is being constructed in relation to these Others. At the last stage I analyse articulation of security, danger and threat and their role in national identity construction of Ukraine. Finally, I summarise observations on how Ukrainian identity changes and how its representations contribute/inhibit the policy of Euro-Atlantic integration.

Methodological technique applied to a selection of foreign policy debates is mapping debates around *'key events.'* These events are situations that are manifested on the media or political agenda which have power to influence the official policy-identity construction[80]. For identity being constructed in discourse, there should be events that trigger and generate those debates and discourses within different circles of society.

The research time framework encompasses the official relations of the NATO and Ukraine from 1997 to 2018. The entire time framework is divided into *four comparative moments* that correspond to changes in official foreign policy orientation of Ukraine regarding Euro-Atlantic integration in 1997-2018: period 1 (1997-2003) as multi-vector policy, period 2 (2006-2009) as a proclamation of NATO integration policy, period 3 (2010-2013) as a period of neutrality, and period 4 (2016-2018) as a resumed policy of Euro-Atlantic integration. Two periods of 2004-2005 and 2014-2015 were purposefully

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[78] Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 65.
[79] Ibid., 95.
[80] Ibid., 32.

excluded from analysis. The reason being was the prevalence of domestic issues over foreign policy in debates of the ruling political elites.

Predicate analysis is used as the principal method of discourse analysis[81]. This method previews interpretation and analysis of the parts of speech attached to a noun (nomination): adjectives, verbs and adverbs. However, in order to capture collective identity formation, coding is extended to the predicates that referred to pronouns, such as "we, they, our + noun", etc. Pronouns can be used to conceptualize collective identities group identities either as insiders or as outsiders[82]. This method focuses on meanings attached to nominations and the *unit of analysis* may vary from one word to a phrase depending on the context. The predicate analysis of the Self and Others was coded with the help of qualitative software QDA Miner Light.

Empirical data

The data covered by this research includes texts that are intertextually linked by their relation to debates on the issue of Euro-Atlantic integration. These texts were extracted using a search system and key words on the official web-sites of the political actors and institutions involved into decision-making process on the Euro-Atlantic integration. The key words used in the search were "NATO" and "Euro-Atlantic" in Ukrainian sources and "Ukraine" in NATO web-site. There principle sources are the following:

- Official web-site of the President Administration of Ukraine[83]
- Official NATO web-site[84]
- Ukrainian Parliament (Rada)[85]

Parliamentary sessions in the Ukrainian Parliament (Rada), which are *public* debates, which can be accessed by the citizens via radio, TV or the Internet. Rada also hosts a group of accredited journalists who may attend the parliamentary sessions. The representatives of the committees make statements on current affairs in Rada. The President of Ukraine and representatives of the executive branch are routinely invited to report on foreign and domestic issues. Therefore, the parliamentary sessions in Ukraine go

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[81] Milliken, J. "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods." European Journal of International Relations 5, no. 2 (1999): 225–54.

[82] Chilton, P. and C. Schäffner. "Introduction: Themes and Principles in the Analysis of Political Discourse." In Politics as Text and Talk: Analytic Approaches to Political Discourse. Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture, edited by P. Chilton and C. Schäffner, 1–41. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002.

[83] Official site of the Presidential Administration https://www.president.gov.ua/en

[84] Official NATO website https://www.nato.int/

[85] Official Rada website https://iportal.rada.gov.ua/ru

beyond a specialised legislative process, rather they serve as a platform for communication among ruling political elites.

Empirical data consists of 353 texts with the following distribution of sources: Transcripts of plenary session in Rada - 316 documents, NATO-Ukraine Commission statements – 8 documents, NATO-Ukraine statements – 11 documents, Presidential Administration (speeches) outside of parliamentary sessions - 12 texts, speeches published in the media – 6 texts. All texts containing representations of national identity within debates on Euro-Atlantic integration were considered.

There are speeches of 363 representatives of the ruling political elites, whose opinion was recorded in public speeches on the issue of Ukraine's accession to NATO from 1997 to 2018. Besides the speeches of the members of parliament and the President of Ukraine, there are speeches by the representatives of the following administrative units: State Committee of Communication and Information of Ukraine, Committee of Foreign Affairs, Committee on National Security and Defence, Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, National Institute of Strategical Research, and Security Service of Ukraine.

Some official speeches were extracted from the media sources when they were not available from the official sources. Only direct speech of the Ukrainian officials was coded in case of joint press-points and media publications. Only direct speech of the Ukrainian officials was coded in case of joint press-points and media sources. In parliamentary debates, only parts referring to NATO-Ukraine relations were coded. Genres of the texts are public statements, speeches, pieces of news, orders, normative documents, transcripts of the Ukrainian parliament (Rada) sessions, and joint press-conferences.

The research boundaries and limitations

According to the adopted definition of national identity as a discursive construct, this research focuses on investigation of the discursive change of national identity in debates between Ukrainian ruling political elites. The qualitative research is complemented with the overview of statistical data on national identity dynamics provided by the social research institute "Razumkov Centre".

Only the discourses of the political elites who were elected/appointed to the national institutions are considered, which is justified by the definition of ruling elites. This research does not include political elites of Donbass, Lugansk and Crimea. Although the

comparative analysis of national identity construction of these regions could be an interesting perspective on the issue, it lies beyond the scope of this research.

This research does not analyse the Foreign Policy of Euro-Atlantic integration as such, neither does it focus on the military cooperation between Ukraine and NATO. Nevertheless, the research literature on NATO-Ukraine relations is consulted at all times.

Scientific value and contribution to scientific field

The thesis contributes to the research problem of national identity change and contestation by providing empirical evidence of how various projects of national identity are constructed by different groups of the political elites who argue for different foreign policy agendas. Therefore, it demonstrates a contestability of national identity projects discursively and expands the knowledge about the foreign policy debates at the level of the ruling political elites.

This research provides a longitudinal study of national identity change in the post-Soviet context. It demonstrates how identity continuity is possible because of adoption and transformation of identity representations by competing discourses.

In this research it is demonstrated how the Ukrainian elites legitimise and promote the Euro-Atlantic integration policy despite the lack of a formal offer of the membership from the Alliance. The construction of Ukraine as a community with NATO and Ukraine as a part of the European civilization legitimises and enhances cooperation with NATO internationally and nationally, as well as enhances constitutional amendments.

The work is built on a diverse body of literature that draws both from the Political Science and International Relations. As a result, it establishes an interdisciplinary dialogue on identity and contributes to understanding of how national identity may be built on articulations of both cultural/civilizational belonging, that is traditionally categorised as an ethnic identity by political scientists, and foreign policy preferences, which are studied by international relations scholars.

Statements to be defended

1.   In the debates on Euro-Atlantic integration, there are three competing basic discourses, that support different foreign policies and co-relate the Ukrainian Self to different Others. According to their foreign policy orientations, they could be labelled pro-NATO, anti-NATO and In-Between. These basic discourses articulate different projects

of the Ukrainian national identity, that are based on different understanding of Ukraine's relations with NATO, the United States and Russia, as Others, and reproduce different articulations of security.

2. National identity is considered as a set of representations which are being articulated in basic discourses. The change in these representations indicates the national identity change. Some representations are (re)articulated by basic discourses; some representations may discontinue in discourse, some gain continuity.

3. Some representations of national identity have reached consensus among competing national identity projects. The uncontested representations are representations of Ukraine as a European country, a Colonised territory and a Victim. These representations contribute to identity continuity over time as they are (re)articulated by all basic discourses.

4. After 2014, the three basic discourses presented different dynamics. While the anti-NATO discourse became marginal, the project of national identity articulated by the pro-NATO discourse became dominant. In the In-Between discourse, the actors first articulated the preference for the policy of neutrality, but by 2018 there is an acceptance of the identity of Ukraine as a future/possible NATO member from the long-term perspective. The actors who articulate the In-Between discourse do not construct a national identity in relation to radical Others and their level of support of the policy is based on a balanced assessment of the positive and negative effects of Euro-Atlantic integration for the Ukrainian people and on geopolitical context.

5. The Ukrainian identity projects are formed around the contestation of representations of NATO, the Unites States and Russia as Others. Europe is not constructed as an important Other in debates on Euro-Atlantic integration, even though Euro-Atlantic integration is articulated in terms of belonging to the European community and promoting European values.

6. In debates on Euro-Atlantic integration, security articulation has evolved from being expressed in traditional military terms to being constructed as a matter of ethnic and national identity. National values, national church and the Ukrainian language have become a part of security concerns and a national identity project.

7. The representations of the decision-making on Euro-Atlantic integration in period 4 are constructed as a matter of popular will. That provides an understanding as to how it

became possible to amend the Ukrainian constitution in regard to fully-fledged membership in NATO, proposed in 2018. Even though Ukraine does not possess an offer of membership, the articulation of the domestic decision-making and the representation of the Ukrainian people as decision-makers provides grounds for justification and legitimation of Constitutional reforms.

Research approbation:

The results of the research have been published in the following peer-reviewed publications:

1. Zhyrun I.V. Change, Shift of Transformation: Analysis of Methodological Approaches to National Identity Research // Bulletin of Perm University. Political Science. 2019. No. 13 (3). p. 68-77.

2. Zhyrun I.V. Dynamics of Ukrainian national identity in debates on Euro-Atlantic integration // Bulletin of Perm University. Political Science. 2021. No. 15 (2). p. 59-70.

3. Zhyrun I.V. Formation of Ukrainian national identity: Civic, Ethnic, or Post-Colonial? // Russia and the contemporary world. 2021. No. 3(112). p. 145-164.

Academic events:

Results of this research have been presented at the following academic events:

1. FIRST Intensive Course – What it means to be a researcher, University of Helsinki and HSE (St. Petersburg, 18-24 March 2019). Report "Ukrainian national identity in presidential addresses: Continuity and change".

2. Seminar of the Doctoral School of Political Science HSE (Moscow, 15 April 2020). Report "Dynamics of National Identity Change: Euro-Atlantic Integration and the Ukrainian Self in 2008 and 2018".

3. Joint Colloquium of Research Committees 14, 28, 13, 08, and 30 of International Political Science Association (IPSA), (14-15 December 2020, online). Report "Security as a right: Ukrainian identity transformation in discourse on Euro-Atlantic integration".

Analysis of data and findings

In Chapter 1 I establish the theoretical and methodological framework for the research of national identity. In section 1.1, I discuss the disciplinary differences in national

identity conceptualisations, review the levels of analysis of national identity, the main approaches to its research, and present arguments for studying identity as a discursive construct. In section 1.2, I discuss the role of the political elites in identity politics and national identity change in the post-Soviet space. In section 1.3, I analyse sociological and discursive approaches to studying the national identity change. In section 1.4 I present a description of the analytical framework and explain stages of the research using discourse analysis.

The Chapter 2 provides the contextual and historical background to changes of national identity of Ukraine in the post-Soviet period. Section 2.1 provides the analysis of empirical studies on the Ukrainian national identity in the academia. Sociological research on national identity in Ukraine points out to several trends that indicate identity change discussed in the section 2.2. As national identity analysis should take into account historical and political context, in section 2.3, I overview the changes in foreign policy direction of the government and mass perceptions of foreign policy, as well as outline different views on NATO-Ukraine relations among the political elites. In section 2.4, there is a concise contextualisation of the role of Euro-Atlantic integration on national identity change in the region.

This Chapter 3 presents empirical research results on transformation of the Ukrainian identity in discourses of the political elites. In section 3.1, I discuss the three basic discourses that construct national identity of Ukraine in the context of Euro-Atlantic issue. Representations of the Self, contestation of the meanings of these representations by the political elites, and their subsequent changes are examined in the section 3.2. The differences in articulation of Otherness and security in basic discourses are analysed in sections 3.3 and 3.4.

Applying discourse analysis to the case of the Ukrainian national identity, I demonstrate how the projects of identity, constructed in basic discourses by the national political elites, transform through a change of representations. In this research I came to a number of conclusions:

1) I identified three basic discourses that articulate different national identity representations, juxtaposed Others and the respective foreign policies through the empirical analysis. These basic discourses were labelled as pro-NATO, anti-NATO and In-Between. The basic discourses differ in their assessment and representation of the political,

social and geopolitical costs of the Alliance membership. Integration policies are usually based on the 'yes' or 'no' positions in regard to the policy. In case of Ukraine, however, there is the third position on the policy of NATO accession that has been largely unnoticed. Literature on the Euro-Atlantic integration provides little account of alternative positions on NATO membership. Therefore, identification of the In-Between position on Euro-Atlantic integration that articulates a distinctive Self is a valuable contribution to the discussion of the Euro-Atlantic issue in Ukraine.

2) The contestation of identity projects is centred around Ukraine's relation with NATO, the impact of integration on society, and Ukraine's relations with international partners. The role of Ukraine in relations with NATO is contested discursively. Ukraine is constructed as equal to NATO, as inferior to NATO or as superior to NATO. By the period 4 the contestation between discourses became weaker. The In-Between discourse accepted the long-term possibility of NATO membership, while the anti-NATO discourse became marginal.

3) The articulation of Euro-Atlantic integration in Ukraine is constructed in terms of the social, political, and economic well-being of the national Self. Euro-Atlantic integration is expressed most eloquently in terms of civilizational values and domestic transformation that will change the national Self for so much desired European ideal.

4) The representations of the United States seem to be much more important in the Euro-Atlantic debate in Ukraine, then representations of Europe. Therefore, the dichotomy between the construction of radical Others lies between the United States and Russia, not between Russia and Europe, as it is demonstrated in research on Ukrainian identity.

5) One of the significant changes in basic discourses was the articulation of two different policies, such as the European and Euro-Atlantic integration in to a single policy direction. While NATO membership was constructed as instrumental in the European Union integration in period 2, by 2018 these two objectives merged into a single foreign policy. Therefore, a more popular policy of European integration is discursively intertwined with a less popular on NATO accession. Interestingly, the same happened in discourses on Euro-Atlantic integration in Georgia[86].

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[86] Coene, F. Euro-Atlantic Discourse in Georgia: The Making of Georgian Foreign and Domestic Policy after the Rose Revolution. Routledge, 2016

6) Analysing identity as a set of discursive representations contributes to understanding of how identity is changing. The representations of identity may acquire new meanings, may be modified or be adjusted within the competing basic discourses. Consensus is reached on representations of Ukraine as a European, democratic country with a colonial past and a victim. This research concludes that despite the social and political transformations followed in 2014, there is much continuity in representations of the Ukrainian Self.

7) The usage of representation of colonialism demonstrates how the ruling political elites may use the symbolic power through a construction of national identity. The colonisers articulated in discourse do not quite correspond to the historical facts. For instance, Poland or Austro-Hungary that included Ukrainian lands before the Soviet Union, are never mentioned as colonial powers or empires. In Euro-Atlantic debates, Ukraine is constructed as a colony of either Russia or the United States. The theme of the occupation[87] has been prominent in the literature on the Ukrainian identity after 2014.

The articulation of representations of the colonised/occupied Self contributes to the constitution of Ukraine as a victim. Victimhood has an effect of denying agency to Ukraine, therefore, Ukraine seems to bear little responsibility for its actions on the policy of the Euro-Atlantic integration. This construction of a victim is coupled with the construction of Russia as an inherently aggressive and irrational, that strives to re-establish "imperial" control over Ukraine. Constitution of radical Otherness of Russia denies Russia rationality in actions, therefore, constructs it as uncapable of being a part of rational negotiation or talks.

8) This thesis provides a more nuanced understanding of national identity construction in foreign policy debates. It underlines the importance of self-articulation and positive representation. The representations of Ukraine are positive when the adopted official foreign policy meets the expectations and negative when the policy contradicts

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[87] Chernetsky, V. "Sofiia Andrukhovych's Felix Austria: The Postcolonial Neo-Gothic and Ukraine's Search for Itself." Canadian Slavonic Papers 61, no. 4 (2019): 386–98; Primachenko, "Antikolonial'nij diskurs OUN/UPA v suchasnomu ukraïns'komu konteksti borot'bi za evropejs'ku identichnist'.", 328–38; Khimyak, "Civilizacijna identifikacija Ukraïni.", 156–63.; Efemishh, N.M. "Proshloe v konstruirovanii nacional'noj identichnosti."; Kuzio, T. "History and Memory in Post-Soviet Colonial Space." *Nationalities Papers* 30, no. 2 (2002a): 241-264; Zhyrun, I. V. "Formirovanie ukrainskoj identichnosti: grazhdanskaya, e`tnicheskaya ili postkolonial`naya?" Rossiya i Sovremenny`j Mir 3, no. 112 (2021): 145–64

them. For instance, in the period 3 Ukraine was declared a neutral state and the pro-NATO basic discourse constructed the Ukrainian identity in uniquely negative terms.

There is a certain level of agreement on the course of Euro-Atlantic integration among the elites in power in 2018. Despite the transformation of the political and social life in Ukraine, the representations of the Ukrainian national identity evidence both change and continuity in the discourses of the political elites. The pro-NATO basic discourse dominates the discussion of Euro-Atlantic integration, while the anti-NATO discourse is being marginalised from political discussions after 2014.

The discussion of the foreign policy on Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine is interwoven with discursive national identity construction, articulation of Otherness and re-definition of boundaries through security articulation. Despite the proclamation of Ukraine's firm commitment to the track of Euro-Atlantic integration, there is a continuous contestation of the meanings attached to the NATO accession. Even though the ruling political elites present a certain level of consensus on the Euro-Atlantic integration policy, there are voices of dissent and the overwhelming consensus at the level of the elites has not been accomplished. Partly, the domination of pro-NATO discourse has been achieved due to the exclusion of the political elites who opposed the NATO integration from the political sphere and implementation of constitutional amendments on Euro-Atlantic integration. All these have significantly limited the opportunities for a public discussion of the Euro-Atlantic issue in Ukraine after 2018.

In 2022, a direct military confrontation between the Russian and Ukrainian armies has become a new turning point in Ukrainian history. An existential threat from NATO membership of Ukraine to the Russian state was announced as one of the reasons for military confrontation. Analysis of debates on NATO accession in Ukraine demonstrates how the articulation of ideas about the future of Ukraine in NATO among the ruling political elites was constructed in ideational terms with a distorted perception of threats and illusionary ideas of Europeanness. Construction of the victimhood of Ukraine and construction of Russia as a radical irrational and imperial Other contributed to the promotion of NATO accession policies, as well as impeded prevention of the conflict.