

THE PROBLEMATICS OF VALUE ORIENTATIONS IN THE DISCOURSE OF CONTEMPORARY UKRAINE

AS PROBLEMÁTICAS DAS ORIENTAÇÕES DE VALOR NO DISCURSO DA UCRÂNIA CONTEMPORÂNEA

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Abstract. The relevance of the chosen topic is based on the importance of understanding how values influence individual and societal behavior, particularly in times of crisis. The shift in values in response to social crises and global transformations demands detailed analysis to understand how they adapt to new conditions and which factors have the most significant influence on this process. In this study the problem of value orientations in Ukrainian society under martial law was analyzed. The following methods were used: the method of abstraction and generalization; the method of analysis and synthesis; a systems approach; axiological approach; sociocultural analysis. Research on value orientations in Ukrainian society shows that their transformation is directly linked to social, political, and military events that have affected societal priorities and individual beliefs. Following the outbreak of the full-scale war, the values prioritized by Ukrainians have become security, protection, freedom, independence, solidarity, and patriotism. These values have come to the forefront as society faces an existential threat, prompting a reevaluation of previous orientations. In this context, national identity has gained particular importance, with Ukrainians perceiving it not only as cultural and historical heritage but also as the foundation for their fight for the right to exist. Another significant aspect is the shift away from material values. In times of war, moral categories such as honor, responsibility, humanity, helping others, volunteerism, and collective actions take precedence. The relationship between society and government has also changed, with heightened demands for transparency, honesty, and accountability from political leaders. Values provide direction for actions and serve as benchmarks for comparing reality with desired outcomes (during crises, such as war, they become guiding principles, influencing priorities and decision-making). In times of war or social instability, values related to security, stability, and protection take precedence, altering people's priorities and behavioral strategies. Media, politics, and other social factors can significantly influence the formation and transformation of values, which is especially evident during an information war. Finally, during periods of profound social change, the breakdown of old value systems can lead to anomie (social disorganization) and polarization within society.

Keywords: value orientations, Ukrainian society, martial law, full-scale invasion.

Resumo. A relevância do tema escolhido baseia-se na importância de compreender como os valores influenciam o comportamento individual e social, especialmente em tempos de crise. A mudança nos



valores em resposta a crises sociais e transformações globais exige uma análise detalhada para entender como eles se adaptam às novas condições e quais fatores exercem maior influência nesse processo. Neste estudo, analisou-se o problema das orientações de valor na sociedade ucraniana sob a lei marcial. Foram utilizados os seguintes métodos: abstração e generalização; análise e síntese; abordagem sistêmica; abordagem axiológica; e análise sociocultural. Pesquisas sobre orientações de valor na sociedade ucraniana mostram que sua transformação está diretamente ligada a eventos sociais, políticos e militares que afetaram as prioridades sociais e as crenças individuais. Após o início da guerra em grande escala, os valores priorizados pelos ucranianos passaram a ser segurança, proteção, liberdade, independência, solidariedade e patriotismo. Esses valores ganharam destaque à medida que a sociedade enfrenta uma ameaça existencial, levando a uma reavaliação das orientações anteriores. Nesse contexto, a identidade nacional ganhou importância particular, sendo percebida pelos ucranianos não apenas como patrimônio cultural e histórico, mas também como base para sua luta pelo direito à existência. Outro aspecto significativo é o afastamento dos valores materiais. Em tempos de guerra, categorias morais como honra, responsabilidade, humanidade, ajuda ao próximo, voluntariado e ações coletivas ganham prioridade. A relação entre sociedade e governo também mudou, com maior exigência de transparência, honestidade e responsabilidade por parte dos líderes políticos. Os valores orientam as ações e servem como referências para comparar a realidade com os resultados desejados (durante crises, como a guerra, tornam-se princípios orientadores que influenciam prioridades e tomadas de decisão). Em tempos de guerra ou instabilidade social, valores relacionados à segurança, estabilidade e proteção tornam-se prioritários, alterando as estratégias de comportamento das pessoas. Mídia, política e outros fatores sociais podem influenciar significativamente a formação e transformação dos valores — algo especialmente evidente durante uma guerra de informação. Por fim, em períodos de profundas mudanças sociais, a quebra dos antigos sistemas de valores pode levar à anomia (desorganização social) e à polarização dentro da sociedade.

Palavras-chave: orientações de valor, sociedade ucraniana, lei marcial, invasão em grande escala.

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of value orientations in the discourse of contemporary Ukraine is a complex and multifaceted topic that encompasses both individual and societal levels. Over the past few decades, Ukraine has undergone significant changes in its socio-political context, which has profoundly influenced the formation and rethinking of value orientations among its citizens. Following independence, subsequent revolutions, and external political challenges (such as the war in Donbas and Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022), Ukrainian society faces the need for a deep reevaluation of its identity and priorities. In this environment, new value orientations have emerged, rooted in concepts of freedom, national identity, democratic principles, and human rights.

At the same time, the Ukrainian societal discourse is heterogeneous, as noted by Y. Holovakha, and often features conflicts between different groups with divergent values. One of the key issues is the clash between traditional patriarchal and conservative values, which held significant influence in the past, and modern liberal, pro-European ideas championed by the younger generation and a segment of the political elite. This creates a divide between generations and various social groups, intensifying political polarization and social tensions.

Moreover, external propaganda, particularly Russia's information aggression, plays a significant role in shaping value orientations. This propaganda attempts to impose an alternative set of values on Ukraine, centered around the revival of Soviet nostalgia and authoritarianism. In these circumstances, Ukrainians must actively foster critical thinking and national consciousness to defend their values and democratic choices.

In light of this, the full-scale war that began in Ukraine in 2022 has drastically altered the value orientations of Ukrainian society. The war has served as a catalyst for deep changes in the public consciousness, forcing both personal and collective priorities to be redefined. Values



such as patriotism, solidarity, freedom, and independence have come to the forefront. A key aspect has been the strengthening of national identity, as Ukrainians increasingly see themselves as a united nation fighting for their existence, language, culture, and sovereignty.

Freedom, always an important value, has gained even greater significance. The war has shown Ukrainians how crucial it is to protect their statehood and their right to live in a democratic country, where society chooses its own path of development. This realization has also led to a stronger rejection of the authoritarian models promoted by Russia, and reinforced support for Ukraine's European course, which is focused on democracy, human rights, and freedom of speech.

At the same time, the value of life and security has shifted. Society has begun to place greater importance on moments of peace, stability, family relationships, and the support of loved ones. Under the constant threat to life and physical safety, each day is now perceived as especially precious. Solidarity and mutual assistance have also reached new heights, as Ukrainians have united to support the army, engage in volunteer work, and help displaced people and those affected by the war.

Additionally, the war has led to a reevaluation of material values. A large portion of society has realized that wealth or success holds little importance in wartime, when survival, helping others, and dedication to the common cause take precedence. Material goods have been overshadowed by moral values such as honor, responsibility, and humanity.

In these circumstances, the relationship with the government and political elites has also shifted. Public demands for transparency, honesty, and effective governance have grown. Citizens expect concrete actions from the government aimed at protecting the state, not just declarations.

Overall, the full-scale war has shaped (and continues to shape) new value orientations, where the primary focus is on defending freedom, national identity, mutual support, and the right to self-determination.

Thus, the issue of value orientations in Ukraine encompasses a struggle between the past and the future, between traditional and new perspectives, and between external pressures and internal aspirations for change (Kavalerov, 2001; Zlobina & Shulha, 2017). Society is in a phase of actively searching for and reevaluating its identity, and in this process, it is crucial to maintain a balance between preserving its traditions and the need for integration into the global democratic space.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The issue of value orientations in contemporary Ukrainian society has been the focus of numerous studies by Ukrainian sociologists. Researchers analyze the impact of social, political, and economic changes on the transformation of values, especially following events like the Euromaidan, the Russo-Ukrainian war, and global processes. The theoretical foundation of our research is based on the fundamental work of several Ukrainian scholars:

Yevhen Holovakha – studies transformational processes in Ukrainian society, including the issue of value orientations. His work focuses on analyzing changes in values in transitional societies, particularly in the context of post-Soviet transformation.

Natalia Panina – conducted extensive research on value orientations in Ukrainian society, using empirical data to analyze public sentiment, moral values, and social justice.

Valeriy Khmelko – examines electoral attitudes, political ideologies, and their influence on the value orientations of Ukrainians, and studies the impact of socio-political changes on the moral priorities of the population.



Oleh Panchenko – analyzes shifts in value orientations amid globalization and the influence of modern technologies on Ukrainian society. He has also explored changes in ethical and moral frameworks driven by the information society.

Vitaliy Sereda – researches issues of identity, including the formation of value orientations during military conflicts and internal migration. He considers the impact of the war in Eastern Ukraine on social cohesion and the transformation of public values.

Among foreign researchers, the following scholars stand out:

Ronald Inglehart – studied global shifts in values across various societies, including post-Soviet countries like Ukraine. His research focuses on the transition from materialistic to post-materialistic values and the impact of economic and political changes on the formation of value priorities.

Shmuel N. Eisenstadt – explored modernization and globalization processes and their influence on value orientations. While his work primarily focuses on different countries, his concepts are valuable for understanding value changes in post-Soviet contexts, including Ukraine.

Pierre Bourdieu – analyzed how social institutions and structures shape values and orientations. Although he did not directly study Ukraine, his theories of habitus, social field, and cultural capital are widely applied to analyze societies undergoing transformation.

Richard Pipes – researched political culture, totalitarianism, and their impact on values in post-Soviet countries. His work provides insights into how prolonged authoritarianism influences civic and political values.

Ken Jowitt – studied post-communist transformations and value shifts in societies after the collapse of the Soviet Union, analyzing the impact of these changes on political and social structures.

Francis Fukuyama – examines how democratic changes and globalization influence the formation of new value orientations, particularly in countries transitioning from authoritarianism to democracy.

However, in light of the new challenges and threats facing society, particularly the state of war that has persisted across Ukraine for the third consecutive year, there is a pressing need for further theoretical and practical exploration of this topic. The existing theoretical frameworks developed by researchers do not encompass the full spectrum of issues that contemporary Ukrainian society has faced since February 24, 2022. This gap in the literature has prompted the choice of this research topic.

3. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the article's objective, the following general scientific methods for studying social phenomena and processes were employed: abstraction and generalization – used to examine specific phenomena and their reflection in society (such as national ideas and civic values) and, based on this, to formulate generalized conclusions regarding the transformation of value orientations in Ukraine; analysis and synthesis – applied to study individual aspects of value orientations (political, moral, cultural) and integrate them into a broader picture to understand how they shape contemporary Ukrainian discourse; systemic approach – utilized to investigate how different values interact with one another and influence the formation of the overall sociocultural space in Ukraine, especially under conditions of war or social transformations; axiological approach – used to identify which values (national, moral, religious) are central in the current Ukrainian discourse and how they evolve under the influence of political and social events; sociocultural analysis – applied to analyze how historical events (such as the Euromaidan or the war) and contemporary social transformations



affect the development of new values or the transformation of existing ones in Ukrainian society.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Individuals' behaviors in any situation are determined by their needs and interests. Values represent the ideal goals of society, social groups, or individuals. They provide direction for people's actions and thoughts, serving as benchmarks for assessing and comparing the desired and the actual state of affairs (Kostenko, 1993). In particular, most people share common values regardless of their racial, national, or other affiliations, although the degree of their significance may vary. During a full-scale war, as is currently happening in Ukraine, priorities such as security and protection become paramount for the population. These values are essential for everyone, regardless of gender, age, or social status. In times of military crisis, when a country faces destruction, threats to life, and changes in power, people's value orientations significantly transform, prioritizing issues of survival and stability.

V.A. Poltorak provides the definition of "value orientations", stating that they are a relatively stable, selective attitude of an individual or social group toward the entirety of material and spiritual goods and ideals viewed as the objectives of human life and the means to achieve them (Poltorak, 2000). In turn, A.O. Ruchka notes that when analyzing value orientations, it is necessary to focus on various aspects of their content. In a sociological context, for instance, value orientation can be associated with the actual behavior of individuals, the direction and content of their social activity, and the stability of their life goals, among other factors (Ruchka, 2011). The author emphasizes that value orientations are a significant factor that substantially influences the formation of an individual's personality during periods of societal crisis.

Value orientations are characterized by properties such as awareness, stability, and a positive emotional component. During a period of societal crisis, they play a crucial role as one of the key elements of mass consciousness. Personal experiences gained from resolving complex situations and individual values are reflected in how people perceive and respond to issues concerning their community or society as a whole.

Values that define the meaning of a person's life cannot be artificially created; however, they can be revealed or acquired through external influences, such as media or government (Berehova et al., 2024; Soltani & Salami, 2023). In times of societal crisis, value orientations become part of cognitive processes. They possess a dual nature: on one hand, they are formed through personal experience, and on the other hand, they are shaped by social factors such as media, rumors, and public sentiment. To better understand how value orientations influence decision-making in society, it is essential to focus on key concepts put forth by researchers in this area.

An analysis of the terminology related to value orientations in the sociological works of scholars (both Ukrainian and foreign) indicates that each researcher employs own conceptual framework, definitions, and contexts to explain how value orientations are formed, changed, and impact society. Let us examine the scientific contributions of scholars regarding value orientations.

R. Inglehart (1998) is known for his theory that divides values into two categories: material values (focused on physical safety and economic well-being) and post-material values (oriented toward self-expression, participation in public life, environmental concerns, and personal development). He argues that as the economic prosperity of society increases, people tend to lean toward post-material values since their basic material needs are already met.

S. Eisenstadt (1978) examined modernization as a process that transforms traditional value systems into more rational, democratic, and individual rights-oriented frameworks. He



introduced the concept that emphasizes that the process of modernization is not uniform across all societies, meaning that value orientations can change depending on cultural and historical contexts.

P. Bourdieu's (2023) concepts help explain how social structures shape stable value orientations in Ukrainian society, particularly in the context of inequality and the struggle for social capital. The scholar introduced key concepts that have become defining in the study of societal value orientations, namely: *habitus* – which refers to a set of stable, socially conditioned value orientations, habits, and practices formed under the influence of the social environment and which affect individual behavior; *social field* – describing structured systems of relationships among social agents acting in specific contexts; and *cultural capital* – resources related to education, cultural knowledge, and practices that define an individual's social status and orientation toward certain values.

R. Pipes (Pipes, 1999; Rudnev, 2008) analyzed values related to civil rights and freedoms and how their suppression by totalitarian regimes shapes collective and individual value orientations. K. Jowitt (1971) studied values through the lens of political culture, examining how changes in political systems influence the transformation of value orientations. He also analyzed the impact of democratic reforms on changes in societal values, emphasizing the importance of civic engagement and political freedom.

The analysis of scientific work on value orientations in Ukrainian sociology indicates that Ukrainian scholars have developed their approaches based on the specifics of post-Soviet transformations, national characteristics, social processes, and interactions with global trends. In particular:

Research by Ye. Holovakha (2002) emphasizes the transitional processes in Ukrainian society, where old value systems are fading away, and new ones have not yet fully formed. This includes:

- **Social Changes:** The scholar studied the impact of social and political changes in Ukraine on the formation of new value orientations. He examines the transition of Ukrainian society from totalitarianism to democracy, which is accompanied by shifts in worldview and values.
- **Social Disorganization:** This term describes a temporary state of society during crisis periods (for example, after the collapse of the USSR), when traditional value systems are dismantled but new ones have not yet emerged.
- **Acceleration of Change:** This term refers to the speeding up of social and value transformations in the context of globalization and modernization.
- Research by N. Panina (2007) helps explain how social crises and conflicts contribute to the formation of new values while also creating deep polarization between different groups. In particular:
 - **Anomie:** She uses this term to describe social instability and the loss of norms that accompany transformational processes in Ukrainian society. Anomie is associated with uncertainty in forming new value orientations during the transition from one social order to another.
 - **Value Polarization:** This term describes the division of society into groups with differing value orientations, which is characteristic of Ukrainian society during the transition from Soviet to new democratic values.
 - **Value Modernization:** This concept examines the process of modernization as a transition from traditional to contemporary democratic and liberal values.

Research by O. Ruchka (2011) helps analyze how economic and social reforms are changing the orientations of Ukrainians, particularly regarding the shift from collective to



individual values. Ruchka studies the relationship between traditional values (based on collectivism and paternalism) and modernist values (oriented towards individualism and a market economy) in Ukrainian society.

I. Bekeshkina (2019) examined the political orientations of Ukrainian society, including its attitudes toward democracy, political leaders, and electoral processes. She analyzed value changes through the lens of political consciousness, also paying attention to the formation of democratic values in Ukraine, particularly through participation in elections, revolutions (the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan), and political changes. Her research on political culture and values is key to understanding how Ukrainian society responds to political challenges and transformations.

Research by M. Shulha (2014) focuses on how long-term social and economic changes affect value orientations in Ukrainian society, particularly during transitional periods. The scholar also analyzes how significant societal transformations (such as Ukraine's independence and the war in Donbas) influence changes in value systems.

O. Vyshniak (2000) investigates the value orientations of the Ukrainian electorate, analyzing how voters evaluate political parties and leaders based on their value priorities.

The analyzed scientific concepts allow us to conclude that value orientations play a significant role in shaping individual and collective behavior, especially during crisis periods when society experiences social, political, or economic upheaval. In such conditions, value attitudes undergo substantial changes, impacting the structure of public consciousness and altering the priorities and strategies of action for individuals and social groups. The value dynamics landscape in these conditions has the following dimensions:

Values as the Foundation of Social Behavior

Values serve as the basis for forming an individual's sense of life and the direction of his activities. They are ideal goals that society or an individual strives to achieve, while also acting as benchmarks for evaluating reality. The significance of particular values may shift during different periods in the lives of society or individuals, which is reflected in their priorities and behaviors.

Society's behavior is determined not only by its material needs but also by the ideal goals it deems important. As noted by V.A. Poltorak (2000), value orientations are relatively stable attitudes of an individual or social group toward various material and spiritual goods, which are regarded as important life objectives. In crisis situations, such as war, values can transform into guiding principles for making critical decisions.

The Impact of Crisis Situations on Value Orientations

During social and political crises, such as the ongoing full-scale war in Ukraine, the significance of certain values becomes more apparent. Safety, protection, stability, and survival come to the forefront, regardless of individual characteristics or social status. These values gain greater importance due to the threats that challenge the very existence of individuals and entire communities.

According to R. Inglehart's (Inglehart et al., 1998; Norris & Inglehart, 2009) concept, values can be divided into two categories: material and post-material. In the context of war or other crisis events, material values, such as physical safety and economic well-being, become priorities. In peacetime, on the other hand, society tends to focus on post-material values, such as self-expression and social justice.

The Influence of External Factors on the Formation of Values



Values are not static or unchanging; their formation and modification depend on various external factors, such as media, political systems, social changes, and economic conditions. Sh. Noy Eisenstadt, while studying the process of modernization, emphasized that the transformation of traditional values occurs under the influence of rational and democratic ideals. In particular, media and state structures can significantly shape societal attitudes, especially evident during information wars.

In contemporary Ukraine, the information war is a crucial factor influencing mass consciousness. Mass media, social networks, rumors, and propaganda serve as tools through which certain values or attitudes can be imposed from the outside. This creates a new cognitive space in which new behavioral models and responses to social challenges are formed.

The Bidirectional Nature of Value Orientations

Value orientations possess a complex bidirectional nature, as they are formed based on both personal experience and the influence of external social factors. As it was mentioned above, P. Bourdieu (2023) developed the concept of “habitus”, which helps explain how social structures shape stable value orientations. Habitus refers to a set of enduring socially conditioned values, habits, and practices that influence an individual’s behavior. This implies that even during periods of radical change, some value orientations remain stable due to the influence of past experiences and social environments.

Conversely, external factors such as media, politics, education, and economic conditions can significantly impact the rethinking or alteration of value priorities. During times of war or social instability, this influence becomes particularly pronounced, as society seeks new benchmarks in changing circumstances.

Transformation of Value Orientations During Periods of Crisis

In the context of profound socio-political crises, old value systems may disintegrate, while new ones have yet to be fully established. This leads to a temporary disorganization of society, accompanied by anomie - a state of social disorientation and loss of norms. Ukrainian sociologist Y. Holovakha (2002) emphasized this phenomenon while examining the transition of Ukrainian society from totalitarianism to democracy.

Anomie is characterized by uncertainty and contradictions in the formation of new value orientations, which can result in deep polarization among different social groups. Such fragmentation is particularly evident in societies undergoing significant political changes or social conflicts, as seen in Ukraine following the Revolution of Dignity and during the war in Donbas.

Thus, value orientations are not only a personal choice but also the result of a complex interaction between personal experience and external social factors. During crisis periods, such as war, values undergo significant changes, adapting to new realities and needs. Understanding these changes is crucial for studying mass consciousness and social behavior, as value orientations dictate the directions of actions and reactions of society amid crises and social transformations.

5. CONCLUSION

Value orientations play a key role in shaping societal behavior, especially during crisis periods such as war or social upheaval. Values define ideal goals, serve as guidelines for action, and act as benchmarks for assessing reality. In times of war and social crises, values such as security, protection, and stability come to the forefront, shifting people’s priorities and their attitudes toward reality.



At the same time, values have a dual nature: they are shaped both by personal experiences and by external social factors, such as media or governmental structures. External circumstances, particularly information warfare, can significantly influence the value orientations of society. In the context of deep social changes or crises, the breakdown of old value systems may occur, leading to a state of anomie and social disorientation, resulting in polarization between different social groups.

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