

Zhadan I. V.,

PhD (Candidate of Psychological Sciences),
Senior Researcher, Chief Researcher
at the Department for Psychology
of Youth Political Behaviour,
Institute of Social and Political Psychology,
NAES of Ukraine

E-mail: Iryna_zhadan@ukr.net

ORCID: 0000-0001-5274-574X

THE EMOTIONAL DIMENSION OF STUDENTS' POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION: REGIONAL PECULIARITIES AND POTENTIAL FOR POST-WAR INTEGRATION

Особливості емоційної детермінації політичної ідентифікації молоді різних регіонів країни розглянуто у контексті перспектив повоєнної інтеграції. Визначено місце та функції, виокремлено індикатори емоційних репрезентацій політичної ідентичності. Результати емпіричного дослідження, проведеного методом суб'єктивного шкалювання, опрацьовано з використанням методів математичної статистики, у тому числі факторного аналізу. Встановлено, що політична ідентифікація молоді центрального і східного регіонів структурується переживаннями приналежності до країни, її культури і історії; ідентифікація молоді півночі – переживаннями приналежності до культури, здобутків і втрат свого народу; молодь півдня вибудовує свою політичну ідентичність з позитивних настанов на взаємодію з мешканцями інших регіонів; а молодь заходу – з переживання приналежності до регіону. Студентство північного, східного і західного регіонів толерує ідеали соціалізму з вкрапленнями ліберальних ідей. Молоді центру імпонують ліберальні ідеї, що не заважає їй палко прагнути справедливості та рівності. Політичні симпатії респондентів південного регіону амбівалентні. Перспективними для повоєнної інтеграції молодіжної спільноти визначено: суб'єктні настанови; відчуття здатності швидко адаптуватись до життя у будь-якому регіоні країни; відсутність упереджень щодо цінностей і ставлень мешканців інших регіонів. Загрози для інтеграційних

процесів зумовлені тотальною недовірою до влади і авторитетів, не сприйняттям експертної думки; абсолютизацією цінності особистості («особистість важливіша за державу»); толеруванням ідеалів протилежних ідеологічних концепцій, попри їх несумісність, та упередженим ставленням до симпатиків інших політичних сил.

Ключові слова: емоційний вимір, індикатори, політична ідентифікація, регіональна та національна ідентичність, особливості детермінації.

Introduction

Problem statement. During the war and in the post-war period, against the background of general exhaustion and decreased emotional stability in the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians, the emotional determinants of political identification of people from different regions can become a factor of both unifying and confrontational processes. Without a clear idea on emotional aspects of young people's regional political identity, we cannot identify problem areas of interaction or find ways to neutralize them.

The article purpose is to examine the emotional features determining the political identification of young people in different regions of our country.

Theoretical analysis

Analysis of recent research and publications. Political identity, as a set of values and motivations that determine an individual's emotional involvement in politics, is «a projection of national-civilizational, ethno-national, racial, religious, confessional, territorial, age, gender, cultural and other components of social identity» (Bevs, 2017, p. 194). Addressing a person's feelings and experiences in a study on political identity can be productive if applied stimulating material does not require special competences to work with and the social desirability of answers is not obvious. Therefore, determining the emotional features of young people's political identification depending on their regional and national identity will reveal controversial positions and suggest ways of their reconciliation.

The emotional component of identity has the following functions: signalling (marking, assessment of significance, a signal about the need for behavioural changes, etc.); defining (adequate/inadequate, effective/ineffective identity); representing (associations with identity, status

positions, etc.); motivational (reinforcement/inhibition of implementation, etc.) (Ivanova, 2013).

The political identification includes the following components: *cognitive* (awareness and understanding of belonging); *evaluative* (positive/negative sign of affiliation); *affective* (emotional attachment, feeling of belonging) and *motivational* (behavioural support/non-support of values, goals of the object of identification) (Karmazina, 2016, p.35). Three of the four listed components are mainly represented by emotionally coloured constructs: feelings, experiences, attitudes, etc.

Highlighting unresolved parts of the overall problem. Against the background of scientists' agreed position that the emotional component is important for identity, the regional emotional features determining young people's political identification have not been sufficiently studied. Without ideas how young people experiences of their belonging to a region, the country, different communities; how they assess their adaptive capabilities; how they perceive people from other regions or supporters of other political forces; to what degree they trust in authorities, experts, state bodies of different levels; what are their value preferences, etc., it is impossible to build an effective educational policy and prevent threats of confrontation, social discomfort, maladaptation (not only of forced migrants, but also of residents in regions that were not occupied).

Research methodology

Emotional aspects of political identification were studied with the subjective scaling method. We examined the following emotional indicators of political identification: emotions associated with the experienced belonging (to a region, the country, different communities); emotions accompanying interaction (with representatives of other regions, with supporters of other political forces); prejudice (regarding representatives of other regions and sympathizers of other political forces); emotions associated with the need to stay outside one's region; attitude to one's country or region, its history, cultural achievements; attitudes to the authorities of different levels; emotions associated with subjective attitudes, in particular, readiness to defend one's land from the enemy; political sympathies and value preferences. The subjective scaling questionnaire contained 39 statements. Respondents were asked to rate certain emotions, whether these emotions are characteristic for them and to what degree, on a 5-point scale.

Empirical research base. The sample consisted of 265 higher education students from five regions of the country (central, eastern, western, southern and northern) aged 18 to 32 took, 90.9% were women and 9.1% were men.

Results and discussion

Presentation of the main material. The performed factor analysis of subjective scaling data obtained in different regions revealed the emotional features of young people's political identification depending on their native regions. The peculiarities of emotional aspects of students' political identification from different regions were analysed basing on the obtained factor models and statistical characteristics of regional empirical data (average values, mean square deviation, etc.).

The emotional determinants of the political identification in the central region youth were: an experience of being Ukrainian; the feeling of belonging to the culture, history, gains and losses of Ukrainian people. Emotions concerning regional belonging (pride for well-know people-natives of the region, connections with «places of memory» and symbolic events significant for regional people) were included in the second and third factors.

The youth from the country centre tended to analyse their political sympathies, without a need for authorities to confirm their conclusions and ideas, nor for expert opinion. The respondents felt responsible for their political choice, while at the same time they did not tolerate supporters of other political forces and did not feel a desire for tolerance form their part. Authorities at all levels were rather distrusted (the EU authorities had the highest level of trust: $\bar{X}=2.98$ points).

Young people felt an emotional connection with the regional community and felt obliged to help their concitizens who were in a difficult situation; solidarized with the values of people form of all regions and felt quite comfortable in other regions

Students liked the idea that everyone controls their own lives, while young people did not feel capable of influencing events in their region ($\bar{X}=2,8$). The willingness to defend one's land from the enemy was rated relatively high on a 5-point scale ($\bar{X}=3,4$).

Expressing their commitment to liberal ideas (radical reforms and revolutionary development, the absolute value of a individuality («an individual is more important than the state»), free entrepreneurship), the youth form the centre were perhaps most aspiring to social justice, the principles of freedom and equality ($\bar{X}=4,4$; $\sigma = 17,3$).

The political identification of the youth from the south was determined by a positive attitude for coexistence in the new reality. Students did not suffer from prejudiced attitudes from representatives of other regions and did not experience negative emotions when communicating with them. Therefore, they were open to interaction and felt that they could quickly and painlessly adapt to the customs of any region. Young people hoped for the support of their compatriots and felt obliged to help people in a difficult situation; they shared the values of compatriots from other regions.

These respondents' political preferences were ambivalent: young people assessed positively the spreading free entrepreneurship, were impressed by radical reforms and revolutionary development, supported the absolute value of an individuality, and at the same time, they strived for justice, freedom and equality, they tolerated the policy of economic redistribution aimed at the social protection of the poorest.

The image of their region was positively coloured, which was confirmed by high scores for the indicators of emotional connection with «places of memory» and symbolic events ($\bar{X}=3,9$), pride for consitizens ($\bar{X}=3,6$), feeling belonging to the community ($\bar{X}=3,1$).

The emotional component of the south youth's national identification was clearly expressed, in particular, high scores received indicators of the experienced belonging to a country with a long history and a great future ($\bar{X}=3,6$) and a sense as their own the culture, history, gains and losses of the Ukrainian people ($\bar{X}=4,1$). The assessed experienced belonging to European culture was also higher than the average ($\bar{X}=3,1$).

Students from the south rather did not trust the authorities (neither local nor central), were not oriented towards regional authorities and did not feel that they could influence local events. Young people positively perceived the need to independently control their lives; highly appreciated attempts to analyse own political sympathies, although did not focus on expert opinion and did not need confirmation of their opinions by authoritative others. Willingness to defend one's land from the enemy was higher than average ($\bar{X} = 3,3$).

The political identification of the youth from the northern region was determined by experienced belonging to the culture, history, gains and losses of the Ukrainian people ($\bar{X} = 4,4$) and, to a lesser extent, by an emotional connection with regional communities ($\bar{X} = 2,9$) and «places of memory» and symbolic events significant for people of their region ($\bar{X} = 3,2$) and values of people from other regions ($\bar{X} = 3,4$). However, the emotional connection was not reinforced by a felt ability to influence

events in their region ($\bar{X} = 2,3$), besides, young people did not feel that the regional authorities cared about people's safety ($\bar{X} = 2,2$).

Students felt as citizens of the country with a long history and a great future ($\bar{X} = 3,9$), were proud of being from their region ($\bar{X} = 3,4$), felt a duty to help their consitizens in a difficult situation ($\bar{X} = 3,5$) and were ready to defend one's land from the enemy ($\bar{X} = 3,1$).

Young people shared the ideas of social justice ($\bar{X} = 4,3$) and social equality ($\bar{X} = 4,1$), economic redistribution to protect the poorest ($\bar{X} = 3,6$). In general, the young people's socialist political preferences coexisted with the belief in the absolute value of an individuality, an individuality was more important for them than the state ($\bar{X} = 3,7$).

Competence characteristics were significant for identification of the youth from the north, namely: trust (students tended not to trust any state authorities; had a negative attitude to expert opinion); *political stereotypes* (experienced discomfort when interacting with representatives of other political forces); *adaptive abilities* (the youth felt that they could quickly and painlessly adapt to the customs of any region ($\bar{X} = 3,1$) and did not feel uncomfortable while travelling to other regions)

Emotions determining political identification of the youth from the east were: the experienced belonging to a country with a long history and a great future ($\bar{X} = 3,8$), its culture, history, gains and losses ($\bar{X} = 4,1$). Probably, national identity had been actualized due to the war, the threat of loss, and in some cases, actual loss of the usual regional habitat. At the same time, young people were not ready to defend their land from the enemy ($\bar{X} = 2,8$).

Feelings of pride for concitizen and belonging to their region were overshadowed by experiences inability to influence events in their region ($\bar{X} = 2,1$). Young people felt an emotional connection with the regional community, with regional «places of memory» ($\bar{X} = 3,3$), felt obliged to support concitizen in difficult situations and shared the values of people from other regions ($\bar{X} = 3,5$) and felt that they could quickly and painlessly adapts to the customs of any region. Not experiencing significant differences between the values of people from different regions, the respondents did not perceive them as different and did not have prejudices when communicating with them. An exception was dissatisfaction and irritation when communicating with people who support other political forces ($\bar{X} = 3,3$).

Eastern students felt responsible for their own political choices, highly appreciated their propensity to analyse the motives of political sympathies ($\bar{X} = 3,6$), at the same time, they did not need expert opinion or authorities to confirm their assessments and ideas.

Respondents trusted the EU authorities more ($\bar{X}=3,2$) than the Ukrainian government ($\bar{X}=2,9$), but the experienced belonging to European culture was not characteristic for the students from the eastern region ($\bar{X}=2,8$).

The young people from the east liked ideas of political socialism (economic redistribution aimed at social protection of the poorest, social justice, implementation of the principles of freedom and equality). At the same time, the ideas of radical reforms and revolutionary development and social equality were also positively perceived. For them, the goal of radical and revolutionary efforts was, probably, to establish such equality. The idea of free enterprise was perceived positively.

Emotions determining political identification of the youth from the west were significantly more important than the cognitive component: the first two factors («emotional connection with the region» and «political preferences») described 51.3% of the total variance, while the first two cognitive factors of political identity («identification with «own» political forces» and «identification with the regional community») described only 27.2%. In the first factor, the largest factor weights had statements about discomfort while travelling to other region and pride for the well-known people from their own region ($\bar{X}=3.8$). According to their experience, students suffered from a biased attitude not only from supporters of other political forces, but also from people from other regions.

Responsibility for their political choice and obligations regarding mutual support of their compatriots were emotionally significant for the youth from the west. The respondents' political preferences were mostly socialist, except their commitment to free enterprises.

The students from the western region felt supported by the regional authorities, trusted the central and European authorities and felt like Europeans.

From time to time, respondents needed confirmation of their ideas by authoritative people, while they were rather not oriented to expert opinion and felt irritated when needed to independently control their lives ($\bar{X}=4,3$).

Value of national identification for the youth from the western region (a sense of belonging to the culture, history, gains and losses of one's people, to a country with a long history and a great future, readiness to defend one's country ($\bar{X}=2,8$)) were emotionally neutral.

Conclusions

Summarizing the presented data regarding emotions determining the political identity of young people from different regions, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Political identification of the youth from the central and eastern regions is stipulated by experienced belonging to the country, its culture and history; it of the youth from the north is stipulated by experienced belonging to the culture, gains and losses of their people; the youth from the south builds their political identity by positive interaction with people of other regions; the emotional identification of the youth from the west is based on the experienced belonging to their region.

2. Students from the northern, eastern and western regions are mainly oriented towards the ideals of socialism with some liberal ideas. The young people from the centre are impressed by liberal ideas, which does not prevent them from passionately striving for justice and equality. The political sympathies of the southern respondents are ambivalent.

3. We associate the prospects of the post-war integration of the youth community with such features of students' political identification as: subjective attitudes (readiness to be responsible for one's own political choice, tendency to analyse one's own political sympathies, a sense of duty to support concitizens, etc.); a sense of the ability to adapt quickly to the customs of any region; absent prejudices regarding the values and attitudes of people from other regions; absent discomfort while being in other regions (except the youth from the western region).

4. Integration processes are threatened because students: do not trust authorities and state bodies, are not oriented to expert opinion; absolutize the value of an individuality («an individual is more important than the state»), which, in particular, affects their acceptance of the duty to defend the country from the enemy (more than 49% of respondents were not ready for this); accept simultaneously opposite ideals, without worrying about their incompatibility; are intolerant to sympathizers of other political forces and expect hostile attitude from them; feel unable to influence events in their regions.

Declaration of conflict of interest. The author declares no potential conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

Financing. The research was carried out within the framework of the applied research project «Regional peculiarities of school pupils' and students' identification as a factor of state educational policy» (state

registration number 0122U000669), carried out by the Department of Psychology of Youth Political Behaviour, the Institute of Social and Political Psychology, the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine.

Acknowledgments. The author is grateful to the students who participated in the survey, as well as colleagues from higher education institutions from different regions who helped in its organization.

References

Бевз, Т. А. (2017). Теоретико-методологічні підходи та алгоритм дослідження політичних ідентичностей у міській громаді. *Університетська кафедра*, 6, 191–208. Режим доступу: <https://ekmair.ukma.edu.ua/handle/123456789/13345>

Жадан, І. В. (2023). Особливості структурування політичної ідентичності молоді у різних регіонах країни. *Проблеми політичної психології*, 14(28), 122–134. <https://doi.org/10.33120/popp-Vol14-Year2023-143>

Іванова, Т. В. (2013). Соціальна ідентичність та емоції. *Вісник Луганського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Соціологічні науки*, 23(3), 37–45.

Кармазіна, М. С. (2016). *Політичні ідентичності в сучасній Україні: міська громада Донецька*. Київ : ІПіЕНД ім. І. Ф. Кураса НАН України.

References

Bevz, T. A. (2017). Teoretyko-metodolohichni pidkhody ta alhorytm doslidzhennia politychnykh identychnosti u miskii hromadi [Theoretical and methodological approaches and an algorithm for the study of political identities in the urban community]. *Universytetska kafedra*, 6, 191–208. [in Ukrainian]. Retrieved from: <https://ekmair.ukma.edu.ua/handle/123456789/13345>

Zhadan, I. V. (2023). Osoblyvosti strukturuvannia politychnoi identychnosti molodi u riznykh rehionakh krainy [Peculiarities of structuring the political identity of youth in different regions of the country]. *Problemy politychnoi psykholohii*, 14(28), 122–134. [in Ukrainian]. <https://doi.org/10.33120/popp-Vol14-Year2023-143>

Ivanova, T. V. (2013). Sotsialna identychnist ta emotsii [Social identity and emotions]. *Visnyk Luhanskoho natsionalnoho universytetu imeni Tarasa Shevchenka. Sotsiolohichni nauky*, 23(3), 37–45. [in Ukrainian].

Karmazina, M. S. *Politychni identychnosti v suchasniy Ukraini: miska hromada Donetsk* [Political identities in modern Ukraine: the urban community of Donetsk]. Kyiv : IPiEND im. I. F. Kurasa NAN. [in Ukrainian].

Abstract

Zhadan I. V.,

PhD (Candidate of Psychological Sciences),
Senior Researcher, Chief Researcher
at the Department for Psychology
of Youth Political Behaviour,
Institute of Social and Political Psychology,
NAES of Ukraine
E-mail: lryna_zhadan@ukr.net

THE EMOTIONAL DIMENSION OF STUDENTS' POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION: REGIONAL PECULIARITIES AND POTENTIAL FOR POST-WAR INTEGRATION

Emotions determining the political identification of young people in different regions of the country were considered in the context of the prospects for post-war integration. The place, functions, indicators of emotional representations in political identity were determined. The empirical study was carried out with the subjective scaling method, the obtained data were processed using the mathematical statistics methods, including factor analysis. Results and conclusions: Political identification of the youth from the central and eastern regions is stipulated by experienced belonging to the country, its culture and history; it of the youth from the north is stipulated by experienced belonging to the culture, gains and losses of their people; the youth from the south builds their political identity by positive interaction with people of other regions; the emotional identification of the youth from the west is based on the experienced belonging to their region. Students from the northern, eastern and western regions are mainly oriented towards the ideals of socialism with some liberal ideas. The young people from the centre are impressed by liberal ideas, which does not prevent them from passionately striving for justice and equality. The political sympathies of the southern respondents are ambivalent. We associate the prospects of the post-war integration of the youth community with such features of students' political identification as: subjective attitudes; a sense of the ability to adapt quickly to the customs of any region; absent prejudices regarding the values and attitudes of

people from other regions; absent discomfort while being in other regions. Integration processes are threatened because young people do not trust authorities and state bodies, are not oriented to expert opinion; absolutize the value of an individuality («an individual is more important than the state»); accept simultaneously opposite ideals, without worrying about their incompatibility; are intolerant to sympathizers of other political forces and an expected hostile attitude from them.

Key words: *emotional dimension, indicators, political identification, regional and national identity, features of determination.*

Отримано – 27 травня 2024
Received – May 27, 2024

Рецензовано – 1 червня 2024
Revision – June 1, 2024

Прийнято – 7 червня 2024
Accepted – June 7, 2024