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Patriotism of the Young Generation in Ukraine in the Era of Hybrid War**

After the Euromaidan¹ (2013) and the war in the East of Ukraine (2014) youth in this country experienced a new situation, i.e., life during the “Hybrid War”. The article analyses the situation of the young generation in Ukraine in the frameworks of this new war. In addition to this, the author attempts to answer the question of whether there is a sense of patriotism among the young people related to the defence of the motherland during the Hybrid War. The results show the first experiences of the young people towards the unusual situation in which they find themselves. The new reality requires them to have a thorough understanding of patriotism. Patriotism is based on primary motives related to a sense of duty to their country and striving for unity of sometimes totally different parts of the country. This article shows that Patriotism not only still exists in the young generation, but it is fundamental for the myth that will influence next generations.

Introduction

Ukraine is one of the first victims on a large scale of a new type of “Hybrid” war. As a result of this, the state lost a large part of its territory (Crimea and Donbass). Furthermore, this situation has affected the young people who have a more difficult start transitioning into the adult life. The research was conducted by surveying a representative group of students (1043 questionnaires) in all regions of the country (except for the occupied territory). Most of the surveyed students were 17, 18, and 19 years old. These students were about 14-16 years old during the outbreak of the armed conflict in the East and the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. Thus, the respondents grew up in a situation of constant conflict, armed fights (with militants of the so-called Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic), and under the influence of both external and domestic propaganda

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¹ Euromaidan was a wave of demonstrations and civil unrest in Ukraine, which began on the night of 21 November 2013 with public protests in Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in Kiev.

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(aimed at strengthening patriotic feelings among the citizens). Their parents, siblings, or older friends could also serve at the front (they could be injured or killed) or as volunteers.² It should also be emphasized that the standard of living of the Ukrainian population has decreased significantly, which also affected the lives of the young people. The economies of Donetsk and Luhansk have shrunk by a half within the five years of the conflict. The GDP of the entire country has dropped by more than 15 per cent.³ The article aims to show a particular specificity of patriotism among the young people, created in the era of hybrid conflict, which may be radically different from the situation, e.g., in neighbouring Poland, where such a problem does not exist. In addition to this, the article will explain the theoretical part of the concept of patriotism and hybrid war, so the reader will get a complete picture of the currently ongoing problem in Ukraine.

1. Patriotism & Hybrid War. A Literature Review

Patriotism is an essential attitude that fundamentally affects the functioning of national communities in most countries with historically shaped nations. According to Cambridge Dictionary, “Patriotism” is “the feeling of loving your country more than any others and being proud of it” and “Patriot” is “a person who loves their country and, if necessary, will fight for it”.⁴ Nowadays this definition applies to a much wider context.⁵ Author of Polish dictionaries Władysław Kopaliński gives a broader definition. The researcher describes patriotism as “love for the homeland, own nation combined with the willingness to sacrifice for it, with recognition of the rights of other nations and respect for them”.⁶ Another definition of patriotism states that patriotism is “socio-political attitudes and behaviours expressing attachment to one’s community, in devotion to it, while respecting other communities. It is also a specific form of solidarity with the community, realized in compliance with the legal principles and norms adopted by it, including the so-called civic obligations”.⁷ Thorough analysis of

² In the initial period of the conflict, voluntary work for the army was prevalent in Ukraine.

³ Trusiewicz I. (2019, June 1). „How much does Ukraine’s economy lose in the war?”, *Rzeczpospolita*, <https://www.rp.pl/Gospodarka/306019988-Ile-na-wojnie-traci-gospodarka-Ukrainy.html>, accessed 11.10.2020.

⁴ Patriotism (n.d.), In *Cambridge dictionary*, www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/, accessed 11.10.2020.

⁵ Chmielewski J. (2006), „A modern variety of patriotism”, *Edukacja i Dialog*, no. 4 (177/2006).

⁶ Kopaliński W., (2007). *Dictionary of foreign words and phrases with almanac II*. Warsaw, Poland: Rytm Oficyna Wydawnicza, p.62.

⁷ Chodubski A., (2002), „An individual, a nation, a state” in B. Szmulik, M. Żmigrodzki (Ed.), *Introduction to the science of the state and politics*, Lublin, Poland:UMCS., p.159.

literature gives the impression that there are always two points of view in understanding patriotism. It can be subjective, which defines patriotism as a set of attitudes towards the homeland. In this case, the collective goals of the individual are the most important and they supersede the needs of the individual (e.g., the citizen). It is related to emotions and often to the region or country where the individual comes from. According to this concept, the individual has more to do with the collective than just the area where they live together or the language they speak. Individual units share their values, achievements, qualities, or merits of their nation. It includes shared history, a similar way of transmitting impressions and expressing experiences or assessing events and characteristic rites.⁸

The second theory often included in the definitions is reliability in fulfilling civic obligations. That is, living in a collective according to common standards and principles created by the national community. Fulfilling obligations and living by them is defined as striving for overall well-being and ensuring its safety.⁹ Polish Pedagogue Jolanta Szczurkowska lists three components of a patriotic attitude, namely, cognitive, emotional-evaluative, and behavioural. The cognitive component is the individual's knowledge, which is the source of his/her judgments about the homeland. These judgments concern history, culture, natural conditions, or the economic and political situation. The second component of the patriotic attitude, i.e., the emotional and evaluative one, includes the evaluation of the nation and the homeland and the resulting emotional response to these objects. Emotions associated with a patriotic attitude can vary in terms of direction, complexity, or intensity. The last component, i.e., the behavioural one, concerns behaviour, i.e., a person's readiness to take action for their homeland. The patriotic attitude can be expressed in various ways, from raising the flag on national holidays to serving in the military.¹⁰

When writing about Ukraine, it is also worth highlighting a particular definition, which is essential, if it refers to a country in an active Hybrid War. It is the reason why it is easy to find reviews that patriotism is something between cosmopolitanism and nationalism: a citizen can be a nationalist and a cosmopolitan at the same time.¹¹ It is often credited against service to nationalism, but this is not always the case. For example, a patriot may consider a war that is strongly

⁸ Stach Ł., Marzęcki R., (2014), „Fact or artifact? Patriotism in the life of young Poles”, *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Politologica*, no. 13, p. 245-262.

⁹ Moore M., (2009), „Is Patriotism an Associative Duty?”, *Journal of Ethics* 13 (4). p. 383-399. doi: 10.1007/s10892-009-9064-0

¹⁰ Szczurkowska J., (2016), „*I am a patriot. Psychology of patriotism*”, Warsaw, Poland: Difin SA, p.92-93.

¹¹ Bayram A. B., (2019), „Nationalist cosmopolitanism: the psychology of cosmopolitanism, national identity, and going to war for the country”, *Nations and Nationalism*, 25, p. 757– 781. doi:/10.1111/nana.12476.

supported by a nationalist as harmful to the country. Patriotism can be a source of national pride, but also lead to critical conclusions concerning one's nation or state, and even to feelings of embarrassment in a given state community.¹²

1.1. Hybrid War

The terms first named “hybrid activities”, and then eventually referred to as “hybrid wars”, appeared for the first time at the beginning of the 21st century. In 2002 William J. Nemeth used it in his work “Future War and Chechnya: a Case for Hybrid Warfare”. We cannot speak about Hybrid War (conflict) as a single term. This concept is collective and includes various factors and actions on different “fronts” such as cyber warfare, terrorism, piracy, international organized crime, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but also a war to undermine the morale of the civilian population. Nick Marano (Marine Corps Training and Education Command, USA) presented the major paradigm shift between traditional warfare and irregular warfare. The latter one is based on the use of indirect, non-conventional methods and means to subvert, erode, and exhaust an adversary rather than defeat him through direct conventional military confrontation. The second section presents the different focus of operations within irregular warfare on the erosion of an adversary's power, influence, and will, and gaining the support of the population (see Figure 1).

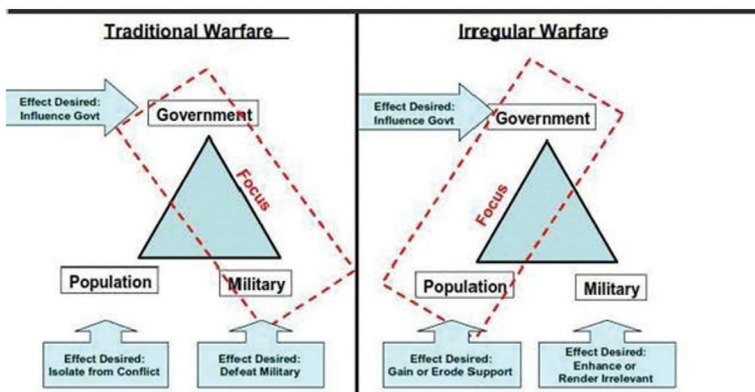


Figure 1. Differences between traditional warfare and irregular warfare

Source: Nick Marano, Building Small Unit Leaders in the Long War, Marine Corps Training and Education Command¹³

¹² Audi R. (2009), “Nationalism, Patriotism, and Cosmopolitanism in an Age of Globalization”, *The Journal of Ethics*, 13, p. 365-381. doi: 10.1007/s10892-009-9068-9.

¹³ Anton M. (2016). “Hybrid Pedagogies For Hybrid War”, *Scientific Research And Education In The Air Force*, 18, p.509-516. doi: 10.19062/2247-3173.2016.18.2.3

Many researchers look for the sources of the concept of hybrid war in the article written by General Valery Gerasimov, Russia's Chief of General Staff. In an article from February 2013, he wrote: "the very rules of war have changed significantly. The use of non-military methods to achieve political and strategic objectives has in some cases proved to be far more effective than the use of force... Widely used asymmetrical means can help neutralize the enemy's superiority. These include the use of special operations forces and internal opposition to the creation of a permanent front throughout the enemy state, as well as the impact of propaganda instruments, forms and methods which are constantly being improved".¹⁴ Not surprisingly, the article did not mention specific names like "Ukraine" or "hybrid warfare". However, as Maria Snegovaya wrote, that this article made "Gerasimov the face of Russia's 'hybrid war' approach", this opinion is mostly considered and acceptable by Western scientists.¹⁵ According to Gerasimov, broadly understood information warfare is a separate type of confrontation carried out by means of information-technical as well as information-psychological means in virtually all spheres of state activities (political, economic, diplomatic, humanitarian, military) and during war.¹⁶ The Latvian researcher Jans Berzins presents the issues of Hybrid War by using the approach of the Republic of Latvia. According to him, the Russian Federation has changed the traditional conduct during an armed conflict and moved to more complex and comprehensive operations. He emphasized that, during the Ukrainian conflict, Russia introduced the assumptions of the previously adopted concept consisting of a psychological war and influencing the environments favourable and unfavourable to the Russian invasion, intimidation, corruption, bribery of public representatives, and wide-ranging propaganda and disinformation activities in the media, including the Internet. It was aimed to weaken the resistance of anti-Russian groups.¹⁷ It is hard to disagree that this massive psychological and propaganda campaign did not affect the civil society, including the youth living in Ukraine, especially when a large part of these activities was carried out on the Internet, which is most often used by young people (it is also worth underlining that the young people living mostly

¹⁴ Gerasimov V. (2013), "The Value of Science in Anticipation", *Military Industrial Courier*, 8(476). Retrieved from <http://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>, accessed 11.10.2020.

¹⁵ Snegovaya M. (2015), "Putin's information warfare in Ukraine: Soviet origins of Russia's hybrid warfare". Washington, D.C., Institute for the Study of War, p.10.

¹⁶ Snegovaya M. (2015), Op. cit. p.11-12.; Galeotti M. (2016), *Hybrid War or Gibrinaya Voyna? Getting Russia's non-linear military challenge right*, p. 44-47.

¹⁷ Berzins, J. (2014), "Russia's New Generation Warfare In Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy", National Defense Academy of Latvia, Center for Security and Strategic Research, *Policy Paper*, 2014, no.2, 6.

in the eastern regions of Ukraine use the “Russian part of the Internet” more often than their peers in the West of the country).

1.2. Why Ukraine?

It is difficult to say whether Vladimir Putin planned to seize Crimea before Euromaidan (if so, did he intend to destroy Ukraine as a whole state).¹⁸ However, the “return of Crimea” has always been present in the media, academic and political discourse in Russia.¹⁹ The Russian President would have accepted Ukraine as a unified client-state dependent on Russia for economy and defence (with an extraterritorial Black Sea Navy Base) and as a border to the NATO countries near the Bosphorus Strait. It could have continued, but it depended on the fact that the leader of Ukraine would still be 100% subordinate to Moscow. When that surrogate suddenly faced expulsion from office, Putin recognized the fleeting opportunity to resolve the Crimean issue while bolstering his domestic popularity and he seized it. He knew that Crimea was a natural military base. It was serving the Russian Federation at that time, but this could change after the opposition would come to power in Ukraine. Putin’s inner circle determined that salvaging the pro-Russian regime in Kyiv was a lost cause as early as on 4 February 2014, two weeks before Yanukovych’s hasty departure from Kyiv. However, the general chaos presented an opportunity to manipulate the existing legal procedures to set up several Ukrainian territories for absorption into the Russian Federation, which actually happened. The Russian military aggression against Ukraine is a long-term factor affecting the Ukrainian political and economic reality, military and social sphere. Russia engaged in a new type of war in Ukraine. It is a hybrid war based on its form and an asymmetric one based on its structure. The nature of the new kind of war led to the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and then support to the local radical elements as well as the full invasion of the Russian troops in eastern regions of Ukraine.²⁰ This unresolved international conflict situation continues to this day forcing the young people to live in this predicament unlike their peers in other European countries. According to the Ukrai-

¹⁸ Coalson, R. (2015, March 11), “News Analysis: The Plot to Seize Crimea” Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, <http://www.rferl.org/content/ukraine-russia-putin-plot-seize-crimea/26894212.html> , accessed 11.10.2020.

¹⁹ The author of the article, during his studies in Moscow in 2010, often met with the theses of academic teachers or ordinary people on the need for “return Crimea to the motherland”.

²⁰ Horbulin V. (2015), “The hybrid war as a key tool of Russian geostrategy of revenge”, *Mirror of the week in Ukraine*, no. 2.

nian researcher Ihor Ruszczenko, it is more reasonable to refer to this Hybrid War as “the war of the new generations”.²¹ It is also worth mentioning that, despite the known factors, the currently ongoing conflict in Ukraine cannot be referred to as simply the Ukrainian-Russian war. Therefore, according to the author, it is better to use the term “hybrid war”. Even Volodymyr Zelensky, the President of Ukraine, does not use the term “Russian force” and refers to it as “this country” (“та сторона”).²² As Olga Wasiuta rightly notices in the case of hybrid war against Ukraine, there is one more problem, namely: the enemy is unknown.²³ We should also underline that the conflict still exists, the main target of the propaganda and psychological warfare is the citizens of Ukraine. The new war technique evidently led to such confusion in terms of definitions.

The Russian propaganda strategy aimed to form an opinion on Ukraine as a country, which would not be able to exist on its own after the 2013 Revolution. Long before the Ukrainian crisis, during the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008, Vladimir Putin reportedly claimed that “Ukraine is not even a state! What is Ukraine? A part of its territory is [in] Eastern Europe, but a[nother] part, a considerable one, was a gift from us!” Putin’s speech of 18 March 2014 marked the annexation of Crimea: he declared that Russians and Ukrainians “are one nation. Kiev is the mother of Russian cities. Ancient Rus is our common mother and we cannot live without each other.” Since then, Putin has repeated similar claims on many occasions. As recently as in February 2020 he once again stated in an interview that Ukrainians and Russians were “one and the same people”, and he insinuated that the Ukrainian national identity had emerged as a product of foreign interference. Similarly, Russia’s then-Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev told a perplexed apparatchik in April 2016 that there has been “no state” in Ukraine, neither before nor after the 2014 crisis.²⁴ The purpose of this kind of speech was to show that Ukraine was a country accidentally created by history, thus its citizens should submit to Moscow’s policy rather than oppose its will. This was intended, inter alia, to suppress the sense of patriotism among the young people, who would not

²¹ Ruszczenko I., (2015), “The Russia-Ukraine Hybrid War: Sociological Perspective”, Kharkov, Ukraine: Tim Pabasz Grup, p. 18.

²² Sereda S., Kholodov P. (2020, July 15) “That country.” Why does Zelensky avoid mentioning Russia when talking about the war in Donbass?, Radio Svoboda, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/30728032.html>, accessed 11.10.2020.

²³ Wasiuta, O. (2016), „The genesis of the concept and change of approach to hybrid war in the Western political and military discourse”, *Przegląd Geopolityczny*, 17, pp. 26-40.

²⁴ Düben B. (2020, July 1), “There is no Ukraine”: Fact-Checking the Kremlin’s Version of Ukrainian History”, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lseih/2020/07/01/there-is-no-ukraine-fact-checking-the-kremlins-version-of-ukrainian-history/>, accessed 11.10.2020.

want to defend their homeland during the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO). Furthermore, students have been the driving force behind pro-western social revolutions and changes in country practically since the independence of Ukraine in 1991.²⁵ The accent of common culture and history was also supposed to confuse young people and to create reasoning: Russian - ours, Western (including Western-Ukrainian) - enemy. These psychological-propaganda operations are used to create and model the awareness of opponents. The Russians seek to model the perception of the opponent as it is expected. In a broad sense, psychological operations are defined as the planned use of communication in order to influence the attitudes and behaviour of a particular group of people (including or especially of the young people). It consists of political, ideological, and military actions directed at the behaviour and attitudes of a particular targeted group. The purpose of such an operation is to shape the consciousness and conceptual sphere of the opponent in such a way that they both would favour the aggressor's goal.²⁶ Hybrid warfare does not change the nature of war. Violence remains at the core of hybrid warfare, as it does in any other form of war, and its aim is the same as of any other act of war, namely, to exploit the threat or to use organized violence to gain physical or psychological advantages over an opponent.²⁷

In summary, Stephen Nathanson describes patriotism as involving special affection accompanied by a sense of personal identification with, special concern for the well-being of the country and willingness to sacrifice to promote its good.²⁸ Patriotism (especially of the young generation, often of the military recruitment age) is targeted by at least two of the components of a hybrid conflict: propaganda, which is defined as "any form of communication in support of national objectives designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behaviour of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly".²⁹ Philip Taylor defines it as "the conscious, methodical, and planned decisions to employ techniques of persuasion designed to achieve

²⁵ Kamionka M. (2019), „Revolutionary patterns of behavior of Ukrainian youth student on the example of the Sumy «Revolution on the grass» in 2004”, in: Y. Kuzmenko, M. Kamionka, *Problems of European integration and democracy in awareness of Ukrainian and Polish youth*, Nizhyn 2019, pp. 80–92.

²⁶ Shleifer R. (2011), "Perspectives of Psychological Operations (PSYOP) in Contemporary Conflicts", Essays in *Winning Hearts and Minds*, Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, p. 145.

²⁷ Wither J., (2016), „Making Sense of Hybrid Warfare”, *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*. 15, pp. 73-87. 10.11610/Connections.15.2.06.

²⁸ Nathanson S. (1993), *Patriotism, Morality, and Peace*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 34-35.

²⁹ NATO Military Public Affairs Policy (2011), MC 0457/2, February, <https://www.nato.int/ims/docu/mil-pol-pub-affairs-en.pdf>, accessed 12.10.2020, p.32.

ve specific goals that are intended to benefit those organizing the process”³⁰. The second component is Psychological Operations, which are the planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behaviour of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behaviour favourable to the originator’s objectives. Interestingly, some researchers even link the propaganda on Russian TV to the frequency of shootings at the Ukrainian positions by separatists.³¹

2. Research Methodology

Two methods were used to examine the level of patriotism and other data. The first method aimed at surveying the Ukrainian students (the surveyed youth was between 17 and 24 years old) was the individual in-depth interview (IDI) method, which is an example of a classic qualitative method. The interviews were conducted with 16 students from various regions³² of Ukraine at academic centres in Uzhhorod (South-Western Ukraine), Lviv (Western Ukraine), Nizhyn (Northern Ukraine), Pereiaslav (Central Ukraine), Sumy (Eastern-North Ukraine), and capital - Kyiv. Students for in-depth interviews were randomly selected out of the most socially active students in the selected academic centre. The second method was the quantitative research method - a survey of students conducted in auditoriums (full-time) at selected universities in Ukraine. In the case of the questionnaire survey, the research sample consisted of 1043 respondents from Ukraine. Deliberate random sampling was used. The randomisation phase included multi-stage sampling. Previously defined sets were used for this purpose. Fourteen universities were selected purposefully to ensure a relatively high level of territorial differentiation of the sample. At the same time, during the randomisation phase, the first-degree sampling units were faculties, the second one: institutes, the third one: fields of study, and the fourth one: grades of the students. The qualitative research questionnaire consisted of 86 questions and a metrics, and the research was conducted from the second half of 2017 to the end of 2018 in Kharkiv,

³⁰ Taylor P. M. (1995), *Munitions of the Mind. A history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present era*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

³¹ Yuskiv B. (2017), „The role of media propaganda in the hybrid war”, *Actual problems of international relations*, 27-43. 10.17721/apmv.2017.132.0.27-43.

³² Various researchers adopt different versions of Ukraine’s division into regions.

Nizhyn, Kherson, Chernivtsi, Kyiv, Dnipro, Hlukhiv, Poltava, Sumy, Lviv, Odesa, Pereyaslav, Uzhgorod, and Vinnytsia. It is worth noting that the research was not conducted in the territory of Crimea and eastern Ukraine, which are not under the control of the central authorities.

The aim of the article is description of students' views on patriotism during the hybrid war (it should be underlined that the war is still going on, the propaganda on the Internet has become significantly intensified). The following research hypothesis will be tested within the course of the statistical analysis and the article:

H1: The young people consider themselves as patriots despite the influence of external hybrid actions and the overall situation of Ukraine.

3. Results

When asking students about patriotism, the author did not focus only on the direct question of whether they were patriots, but asked a comprehensive set of questions to capture every possible variable.³³ The author used only a part of the large amount of data collected by him within the course of the project financed by the Polish National Science Centre (grant number: 2016/23/D/HS5/00902) for the article.

Interestingly enough, the first answer could already show the attitude of the surveyed youth to the discussed topic. Thus, Figure 2 shows that over 78% of respondents were proud to be Ukrainian. About 10% of the respondents had the opposite opinion; 11% of the students were not able to answer this question. At this point, it should be mentioned that the survey research also took place in typically Russian-speaking regions, such as Odesa or Kherson (South of the country), as well as those located 10 km away from the border with the Russian Federation in a straight line, such as Hlukhiv (Sumy oblast, North-East of the country). Taking into account the above mentioned and the long-lasting hybrid war “on the minds and souls” of the young Ukrainians, this result shows that students in Ukraine are proud to be citizens of their country.

³³ In qualitative research author use questions: What does Patriotism mean to you?; Do you think young people in Ukraine are patriots? How do you evaluate their patriotism ?; And if you were to portray a real patriot, what would such a description look like?; Do you think patriotism requires some kind of sacrifice or not always?

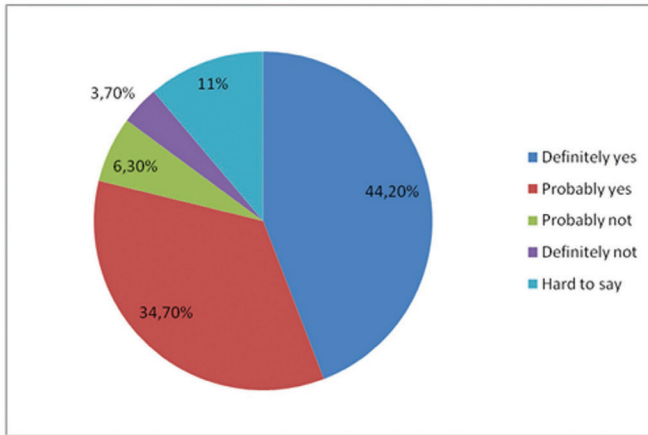


Figure 2. **Do you feel proud to be a Ukrainian?**

Source: Author's study

The students were also asked whether they considered themselves as patriots (Figure 3). The students, who answered definitely and probably yes, accounted for 67.2% of the respondents (21% of them gave a decisive answer), as opposed to the 15.4% of the young people, who answered “probably not” and 6.5% of them accounting for “definitely not”. Also, as in the case of the previous question, about 11% of the people did not answer this question. We can conclude that 11% of the respondents might not be interested in this topic of patriotism and had no established opinion about it.

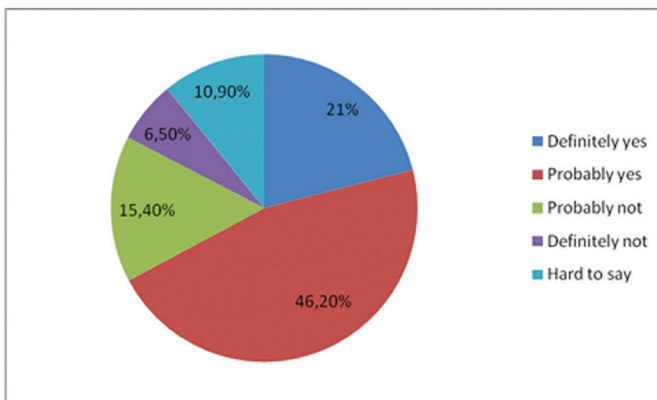


Figure 3. **Do you consider yourself a patriot?**

Source: Author's study

As a part of the qualitative research, students were also asked what patriotism meant to them and who they considered to be a patriot. This knowledge will expand the earlier results given by quantitative research. Interviews with the students confirm the results of the quantitative research. It is often reported that the surveyed students had relatively strong patriotic feelings.

In my opinion, a patriot is someone who can put the interests of the country above their own interests. How patriotic am I?.. It depends on who I would compare myself to. Well, if I considered myself as a role-model of patriotism, then surely not (Student from Lviv³⁴).

A patriot is a person who likes his country, lands and, no matter what religion this person professes, it's essential to like the place where he was born. I feel like a patriot because I like my state and I feel good here (Student from Uzhhorod 1).

Patriotism is when a person likes his country very much and does everything for it to be strong and to be on a level with other developed countries. I can call myself a patriot (Student from Nizhyn 4).

There is also some surprising information, for example, the opinion that patriotism saved Ukraine (probably in the context of the war in the East). It should be noted that the young people appreciated the positive impact of patriotism on society. Moreover, although one of the parts of the Hybrid War was the weakening of patriotic feelings and the lowering of morals, it was not successful in most of the country's territory.

For me, a patriot is a person who not only loves his country but also tries to change something in his country, wants to improve the living conditions. I feel like a patriot. I believe that if talking about patriotism was not popular now, I doubt that today Ukraine would be an independent state (Student from Sumy1).

The surveyed student from Kyiv also noted that civil society was formed in Ukraine only after the Revolution of Dignity (Euromaidan) in 2013. Civil society and the voluntary movement were incidentally the backbones of the country's defence during the initial phase of the 2014 Hybrid War. At that time, the defence was based on volunteer troops and volunteers at the front. It is also worth emphasizing that he also referred to the conservative concept of patriotism - the fight for his country.

Of course, I feel like a patriot. If we talk about civic patriotism, it is possible only in a country where a civic society is already established. Ukraine is only beginning to take shape. It was only the Revolution of Dignity that started this stage of shaping civic awareness and I cannot say what the word "citizen" means to me. For example, our parents had a completely different concept of the word. Nevertheless, in short, patriotism is love for your country and the will to fight for it (Student from Kyiv 2).

The students from Nizhyn (No. 2) and Pereyaslav (No.3) referred in their speech about the debate on patriotism vs. nationalism occurring not only

³⁴All text of the answers is preserved original.

within the country but also coming from third countries.³⁵ They want to show that Ukrainian patriots are not nationalists, what self-defence is, because the propaganda against Ukraine targeting the Russian-speaking population equalled patriots to the Nazis. Preferably, the second part of the statement is directed at another product of the propaganda, i.e., the creation of a great Ukraine by Ukrainian nationalists. However, the students' statements make it clear that, in their opinion, Ukrainian patriots see themselves as a part of the democratic West.

Yes, it is necessary to talk about it, because patriotism is not nationalism, nor is it Nazism. Especially in a country like ours, with an ongoing war, the question of patriotism becomes topical. It is known that patriotism is not such a radical political force. Even Ukrainian patriots adhere to some global European values and are oriented towards later reunification with the West (Student from Nizhyn 2).

The number of nationalist movements has also increased and it is necessary to understand that patriots are not only nationalists. However, we can observe tendencies of the increasing number of patriots after the Maidan events and after 2014 (Student from Pereyaslav 3).

Figure 4 also confirms the earlier information obtained within the course of the research. 40.2% of the respondents definitely love their homeland; a similar number of them (40.5%) rather love it instead. Only about 12% (rather and definitely) do not feel any feelings towards Ukraine. On the other hand, the number of undecided respondents decreased to 7.5%. It is the percentage of students who do not feel like patriots, but they love their country.

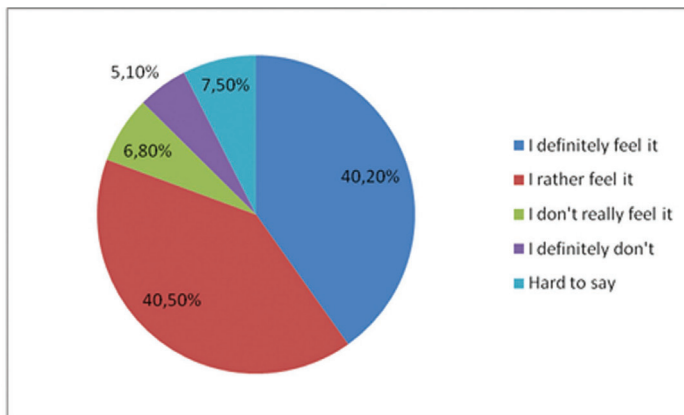


Figure 4. **Some people try to define the concept of patriotism as the “love for the motherland”. How deep do you feel the love for Ukraine?**

Source: Author's study

³⁵ Nationalists staged riots near the building of the Verkhovna Rada. (2014, October 14). Retrieved from www.actualcomment.ru/natsionalisty_ustroili_besporjadki_u_zdaniya_verkhovnoy_rady.html, accessed 11.10.2020.

Over 80% of the surveyed students love their country. It is natural now to discuss what the motherland meant to them. The majority of the surveyed youth described this as the place where they grew up and for which they have their personal feelings.

Family land where I grew up. It's a place where when I come back, I have entirely different feelings, it feels like home. I know that I am most comfortable here. (Student from Lviv 1)

Homeland is the place where you were born, the place that raised you, gave you life, it is the place where you want to keep coming back and independent of all kinds of obstacles, you love this place and you want to change it for the better (Student from Sumy 1)

The motherland is your land. It is the land where you were born, it is something different for everyone, for some it is the taste of warm milk, for others it is food, but it is something of yours, where your childhood passed (Student from Pereyaslav 1)

However, one of the surveyed students did not identify the motherland with the place of birth. He/ She described it as a place where the person feels good. What is a modernist view of patriotism?

A homeland is a place where you feel comfortable. Moreover, it is not tied to the place where you were born. (Student from Pereyaslav 3)

On the other hand, the students from Nizhyn clearly believe that the homeland is only Ukraine. They emphasized in their statements that only the place where you are from (where you were born) can be considered as the homeland.

I associate my homeland with my city, where I live, but many people refer to the homeland as Ukraine. If you are a true patriot, you would mean Ukraine (Student from Nizhyn 4).

The fatherland is Ukraine and it is a national phrase in the minds of all Ukrainians. We immediately identify the fatherland with Ukraine. The country cannot be the fatherland to people, who have left it. The word "fatherland" comes from the word "father". It means that this is where your family comes from, your roots. Ukraine is the homeland for every Ukrainian (Student from Nizhyn 6).

A student from Kyiv undeniably gave the most exciting answer. He emphasized that the culture of a country, not a region, was essential to him. However, it is interesting that he admitted that the citizens of Eastern Ukraine were also Ukrainians ... like him. The conflict in the East of the country proved it to him. It is surprising, but it could also be traced back to the fact that, after the conflict in the East, the residents of the Western and Central part of the country noticed that the regions were faithful, primarily influenced by propaganda, and separated by force with the help of the Hybrid War.

To me, the homeland is my country. As of today, it is loyalty to those defined boundaries where I was born. It is loyalty to Ukraine and its culture. It is linked to the nation. When I talked about loyalty to culture, I meant loyalty to the national culture in general, and not to the regional culture. I mean this because the boundaries between regional cultures are now very blurred, especially after the revolution of dignity. We felt like the same

Ukrainians when we lived in the East, even if they spoke Russian. When they died for Ukraine, even with “Russian words on their lips”, it forced us to reflect on this issue. Homeland is in the general context of the eastern and western civilizations. In this context, I feel like I associate with the Western European civilization more. (Student from Kyiv 1)

Table 1 presents answers about life satisfaction of students in Ukraine, and they are slightly different. Only 24.1% of the students were satisfied that they lived in Ukraine, the percentage of somewhat satisfied respondents accounted for 34.4%. The respondents, who would rather disagree with this statement accounted for 18.4% and those students, who strongly disagreed with it, accounted for 7.6% of the respondents. The results show that even when we see that there were more than 80% of students, who loved their country, only about 55% of them wanted to live in it. There were not many young people, who were satisfied with their lives, either; those, who were definitely satisfied with it, accounted only for 14.9%, while those, who were somewhat satisfied with it, accounted for 34.4% (together they made 49.3%). Students, who were not satisfied with their lives, accounted for 38.7% of the respondents, 11.9% of the respondents did not answer this question. However, more than a half of the Ukrainian youth were not satisfied with their lives at the stage of their studies. This stage is generally considered the best in life. This is alarming data which could have a negative impact on the morale of the young people. However, it is comforting that over 70% of the young people believed that the future would be better for them.

Table 1. **To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

		% with N in the column
I am happy that I live in Ukraine	I definitely agree	24.1%
	I rather agree	34.4%
	I rather disagree	18.4%
	I strongly disagree	7.6%
	Hard to say	15.5%
I am satisfied with my life	I definitely agree	14.9%
	I rather agree	34.4%
	I rather disagree	27.4%
	I strongly disagree	11.3%
	Hard to say	11.9%
I look to the future with hope	I definitely agree	39.9%
	I rather agree	32.9%
	I rather disagree	11.1%
	I strongly disagree	6.4%
	Hard to say	9.8%

Source. Author's study

Almost 80% of the participants in the survey declared their readiness to travel to other (apart from Russia) European countries to improve their living conditions, which - in itself - is an essential context of the analyzed data. Completely different moods accompany the proposal to go to Russia, with which any forms of cooperation were presented as an example of a non-patriotic attitude. The results clearly show that even though the young people were patriotic, they would not like to wait for the changes they believed in and would rather leave their homeland right now.

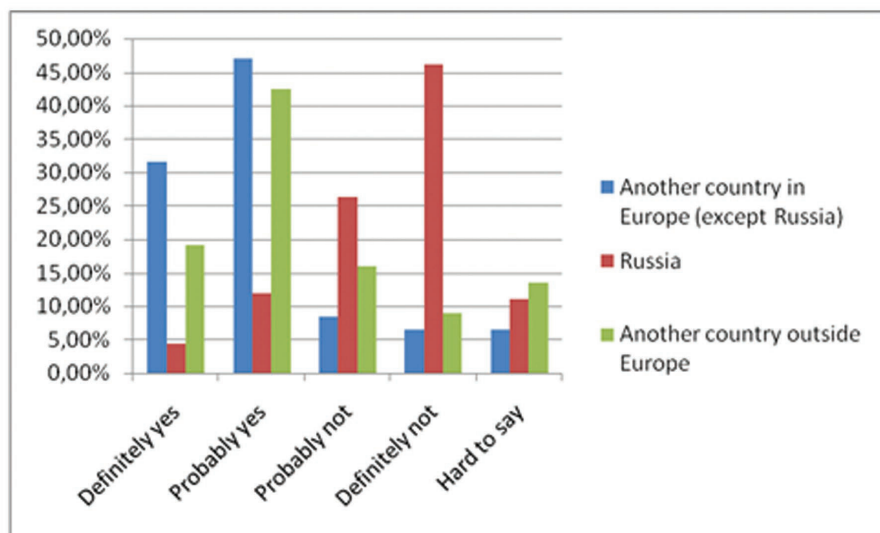


Figure 5. **If you could find a promising job and improve your living conditions, would you move to...**

Source: Author's study

Based on the students' responses, we can see that not all of them had a positive attitude towards their peers going abroad. According to them, emigration contributed to the decreasing level of patriotism in the youth, moreover, the "debt" that the young people have to their state (for example, for education) is not repaid.

Many people go abroad and they say that it is terrible in Ukraine, they do not think that they owe anything to their homeland and this is this group of the young people, who are not patriots. In a student life, the minimum requirement to go to all classes at the university is to speak Ukrainian and not work, for example, as a waiter, to earn money. Such a person has to "make up" for the money that the state invests in him, that is, to work in Ukraine after graduation, for example, to write projects and to participate in them (Student from Sumy 1).

Patriotism? I cannot even judge it, because our youth is leaving the country, now there are significantly less young people, this number is decreasing, they are going to work abroad. I think that the level of patriotism has decreased significantly (Student from Nizhyn 1).

Some people are ready to leave Ukraine, and this is not patriotism (Student from Sumy 2).

The students also directly refer to the prevailing conflict and social division in Ukraine after 2013. Nevertheless, paradoxically, they also point out that the Euromaidan bonded the society.

Recently, such “entities” as DNR, LNR, Novorossiia have been created, and people are divided on this topic. However, in general, I would not say that the division is more significant, on the contrary, people were united, they tried to find a common contact after the Maidan events and the annexation of Crimea (Student from Pereiaslav 1).

However, students see weaknesses that still exist in Ukraine, such as corruption, bribery, and poor quality of political elite. We can understand that a student from the West of Ukraine sees people, who went to war for money, even among his friends. On the other hand, a student from Central Ukraine puts the blame for the situation on the ruling elite since the beginning of the independence.

Many are not interested in anything. For example, I have friends who went to war, because they feel that it is their duty, that they are patriots of the country and want to fight for it, some went to the war because now they pay well in the army and you can earn some extra money (Student from Uzhhorod 1).

In the case of Ukraine, it is necessary to speak of patriotism. If our politicians started talking about patriotism in 1992 and emphasized that we were one independent state, no matter what language we spoke, then it is possible that we would not be at war now (Student from Nizhyn 4)

Recent statements clearly show that the strategy of the Hybrid War aimed at weakening the spirit of the nation has failed, at least in the young Ukrainian generation.

For me, patriotism is something that now holds Ukraine in unity, because if there were no patriotism, we would have lost ATO,³⁶ Alternatively, maybe it would no longer be there at all, patriotism helps us fight for our country (Student from Nizhyn 5).

The people dividing the country into the Right-bank and the Left-bank Ukraine caused the division of the country; at first this division was more notable, now it shrunk to a lesser extent. Yes, it depends on the situation: if you talk about the situation in the East, people go to war because they have a sense of patriotism, they want to defend their children, they want people to live everyday life and enjoy it rather than being afraid of getting killed. Moreover, this is the dedication and the sense of patriotism to the land where you grew up (Student from Sumy2).

³⁶ ATO- Anti-Terrorist Operation run by Ukraine in the occupied territories.

Conclusions

Romanian scientist Cătălin Alin Costea wrote in his Report “Russia’s Hybrid War in Ukraine (2014-2018)” that hybrid war triggered by the Russian Federation generated serious problems for Ukraine, which was unprepared for this kind of situation but succeeded to adapt and fight against the hybrid threats. The conflict made Ukraine a stronger state with more powerful institutions for fighting a hybrid war³⁷. The results of the research presented in this article also show that the state institutes were not the only ones strengthened by the hybrid conflict. The results show that many young people felt patriotic (about 67%) and were proud of their country (over 78%). Although the majority of them loved Ukraine (over 80%), on the other hand, they were willing to go abroad when they would get better living conditions, only about 55% of the respondents were satisfied with living in the country. Despite the ongoing hybrid war and attacks aimed at the sense of national pride, this did not break the spirits of the Ukrainian students. Thus, the hypothesis was confirmed: despite the intensified attacks in the form of external (as well as domestic) propaganda, the student youth in Ukraine were patriots. Within the course of the research they emphasized that the conflict in the East helped them understand that it did not matter what language you used or from which region you were, because all people in this challenging time were Ukrainians. The events of 2013 (Euromaidan) and 2014 (the start of the war in the East of the country) caused the creation of a “founding myth” for the young generation, which will probably build a sense of patriotism among the young people for many years to come (they will relate stories about this period to younger friends or their children). It is comforting that there were no significant differences between the answers given by the students from different parts of the country. The students themselves emphasized that Maidan and the War made it possible to blur the differences between them. Nevertheless, we cannot forget that they were aware that their living conditions were worse than those of their peers in other countries, but they were ready for the sacrifice for the sake of the next generations and they saw the future with the hope of improving their situation (over 72% of the respondents). However, the society must not forget that about 7% of Ukraine’s territory has been claimed, more than 10,000 people have died since

³⁷ Costea C., (2019), *SETA Report: Russia’s Hybrid War In Ukraine (2014-2018)*, retrieved from <https://setav.org/en/assets/uploads/2019/12/R147En.pdf>, accessed 11.10.2020.

then (including a large number of peers of the youth surveyed for the article).³⁸ So it was a considerable sacrifice made by Ukraine to build the foundation for its identity, for future generations.

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³⁸Talmazan Y. (2019. Feb. 20), "Maidan massacre anniversary: Ukraine remembers bloody day of protests, NBC",<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/maidan-massacre-anniversary-ukraine-remembers-bloody-day-protests-n973156>, , accessed 11.10.2020.