Analysis of cultural and identity transformations in the modern world

Tetiana Nedashkivska[a] ✉ | **Oleh Zarichanskyi**[b] | **Volodymyr Pugachov**[c] | **Viktor Shostak**[d] | **Nataliia Stoliarchuk**[d]

[a]Department of Slavic and Germanic Philology and Translation, Educational and Research Institute of Philology and Journalism, Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine.
[b]Department of Problems of Informational and Psychological Confrontation, Research Center, Military Institute of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine.
[c]Food Department, Institute of Agrarian Economics, Kyiv, Ukraine.
[d]Department of Cultural Studies, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Lutsk, Ukraine.

Abstract The issue of identification is becoming critical in the context of globalisation. On the one hand, globalisation stimulates the processes of cultural rapprochement and mutual infiltration. On the other hand, it is sharply criticised because of the desire to preserve one's culture and, accordingly, one's identity from "Westernization." The development of digital media exacerbates the problem of self-identification and socialisation of people through integration into virtual reality and the formation of online identities. This requires identifying the main trends of modern cultural and identity transformation and their careful analysis in the context of globalisation and the formation of the information society. The main methodological approaches of our study include constructivism, which allows us to identify the critical areas of identity construction in the global world, and structuralism, which identifies its main elements. Primary research methods: analysis of documents and sociological survey data, correlation analysis and case studies, synthesis, deduction, induction, generalisation, and systematisation. The study found that migration is a critical factor in modern identity transformations. Thus, it contributes to the launch of diametric processes: on the one hand, it influences the emergence of a hybrid identity as a product of cultural synthesis, and on the other hand, it actualises the processes of ethnic, religious, cultural, and national identification. Cultural globalisation promotes the exchange and borrowing of cultural values between peoples. At the same time, it increases resistance to Westernization by introducing practices of cultural isolation and a return to traditional values (cultural and religious). The formation of internet identity brings to attention the problem of constructing a virtual identity that is significantly different from the real one.

Keywords: cultural transformation, identity, migration, digital technologies, anti-corruption culture, corruption

1. Introduction

The modern world is experiencing a turbulent political, economic, and social transformation, resulting in a seriously challenging society. Globalisation, which began in the XX century, accelerated the internationalisation of economic life and contributed to economic growth. Countries that recently belonged to the "third world" now successfully compete with leading states. Digital media have opened a "window to the world" for billions of people who, through their smartphones, engage in other cultural practices. Significant ethno-demographic changes are occurring in various societies due to migration processes. They create the groundwork for multiculturalism while simultaneously increasing social tension due to growing anti-immigrant sentiments. Cultural globalisation is perceived by many countries as "Westernization," threatening national identity and promoting the formation of new strategies for protecting authentic culture.

These processes significantly influence societal identification processes, raising questions about hybrid identity. Studying contemporary transformation trends allows for a better understanding of the complexity of modern society's structure, considering its diversity, which is the basis for forming new approaches to strengthening cultural understanding and social cohesion.

According to Castells (2010), the central concepts of modern scientific discourse are "globalisation" and "identity." These concepts are the core of our research since globalisation defines the main trends in social development and influences cultural and identity transformation processes.

Contemporary globalisation researchers identify three main aspects: economic, political, and cultural (Hoffman, 2002). According to some theorists, the ultimate goal of globalisation is to create an integrated society based on information-economic networks (Fukuyama, 1992). Theorists see cultural globalisation as a complex process of integrating national cultures that is uneven and asymmetrical. Since cultural globalisation precedes economic and technological globalisation, there is a risk

of dominance of the cultures of the most economically and technologically advanced countries. Therefore, cultural globalisation is often associated with Westernization, which is the spread of Western values.

Tompson (1997) believes that cultural globalisation de facto implies cultural imperialism, which involves the dominance of one cultural identity—Americans. However, Hoffman (2002) notes that globalisation initiates cultural pluralism and synthesis processes, which help restore national cultures (glocalisation).

Recognition of the value of national culture and diversity forms the basis of multiculturalism theory. Taylor defined two main approaches to identifying recognition. The first is the politics of equal dignity, aimed at recognising all based on the principles of universalism and granting equal rights. The second approach emphasises differences and proposes recognising the uniqueness of a person or a group, which has unique characteristics, i.e., a unique, authentic identity, to help overcome cultural discrimination (Taylor, 2013).

Globalisation influences the transformation of identity, which remains one of the most relevant and debated concepts in scientific discourse. According to symbolic interactionism theorists, identity is born during an interaction when a person seeks his or her own "self" through interactions with "others." In other words, the essence of identity lies in the fact that a person sees themselves through the eyes of others, forming a generalised idea of themselves, i.e., a social "self" (Mead, 2000).

Tajfel (1982) views identity as understanding their place in a social group, considering their emotional state and the values conferred by group membership. Huntington (2004) defines identity as an individual or group feeling that means the individual ("I") or group ("We") simultaneously possesses a set of specific qualities distinct from others ("you" or "them").

Social constructivism theorists consider identity in the context of human socialisation, allowing individuals to "try on" various roles and use them for specific purposes. Accordingly, in modern society, identity is primarily seen as a manifestation of role manipulations by people in their interactions. As a result of such individualisation, social uncertainty increases, complicating identification processes. It becomes more difficult for people to determine their true "self" as they can utilise different social types to construct their identity (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). According to Fukuyama (2018), identity is a multidimensional concept comprising various components, including personal, ethnic, cultural, religious, national, and civic, indicating its pluralistic nature.

Values, which are a vital element of culture, are transforming under the influence of globalisation. R. Inglehart suggested considering the transformation of identities through the prism of the evolution of the value system toward postmaterialism, where self-expression values play a crucial role. New value paradigms influence people's political, economic, sexual, and religious behaviour (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

The gradual spread of self-expression values indicates a "more likely" triumph of democracy worldwide and strengthens personal independence, lending a more humanistic character to society (Inglehart & Norris, 2004). However, the rise of authoritarian tendencies worldwide compels Fukuyama (2018) to view these processes from the perspective of "thwarted identity," which is a consequence of critical changes that have occurred on the planet in recent decades.

Consequently, despite the large number of studies devoted to modern sociocultural transformations, they focus mainly on specific problems, avoiding identifying the main trends of these processes. Therefore, our study aims to identify and thoroughly analyse the modern world's leading cultural and identity transformation trends.

3. Methodology

The primary methodological approach of our research is constructivism, which allows us to study key concepts (identity and culture) as products of societal development, considering the various changes brought primarily by globalisation. The second approach, structuralism, enables us to focus more closely on the structure of defined definitions. Combining these two methodological approaches allows us to analyse the essential nature of complex concepts and their mutual influence.

Several methods were used during the research. Document analysis and secondary analysis of sociological survey data allow us to analyse the dynamics of cultural processes and their impact on identification. Correlation analysis helps to identify the presence or absence of specific dependencies between critical factors that influence the processes of identity formation. Individual cases were analysed using the case study method to reveal aspects of the mutual influence of cultural identification processes. Auxiliary methods include synthesis, deduction, systematisation, abstraction, and generalisation.

4. Results

The research allows us to identify several key trends in cultural and identity transformations. Migration plays a vital role among them, as it is becoming a defining trend in the modern world. During 1970–2020, migrants increased 3-fold—from 84.5 to 280.6 million people, equal to 3.6% of the world's population (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). However, migration flows are unevenly distributed. The vast majority of these countries are in the United States, Asia, and Europe, with 58.7 million, 85.6 million, and 86.7 million people, respectively. As a result, the identification processes for these regions need to be updated. Recently, the migration problem has become particularly acute in the United States and the EU, where the policy of multiculturalism is being implemented. In the United States, it is being implemented in three directions. First, the "salad bowl" model was introduced instead of the "melting pot" model. The latter implies the maximum preservation of identities (Reno,

2014). Second, American liberalism calls for recognising different cultural practices and a unique sexual identity (Young, 1990). The latter is the active integration of African Americans into American society and culture ("affirmative action"). Implementing these directions becomes possible due to the peculiarities of forming the United States as a state of migrants. To some extent, this neutralises ethnic identity in favour of civic identity.

However, it does not exclude interracial and interethnic contradictions in the United States. This led to the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, which emerged after a series of police killings of African Americans. According to statistics, African Americans and Latinos are much more likely to be killed than whites: 13% of the African American population in the United States accounts for 23% of police killings (What are the protesters in the United States dissatisfied with?, 2020). On the other hand, "whites" also feel offended by an inevitable deterioration in their socioeconomic status amid growing social polarisation.

From 2008 to 2018, the number of wealthy households in the United States doubled, as did the number of billionaires. The growth of the wealth of the rich occurred at the expense of the poor, indicating the transformation of American society into an oligarchy (Tomasky, 2019). At the same time, the American middle class, which is the social pillar of democracy, is being "washed out." The number of people earning between 50 and 150% of the median income decreased from 58% to 47% of the population during 2000–2014. The financial crisis of 2008 further exacerbated this polarisation of society (Alichi et al., 2017).

According to Fukuyama, such a situation intertwines economic injustice with self-identity issues. This aggravates anti-immigration sentiments among Americans and contributes to the rise of the power of the right-wing populist D. Trump (Fukuyama, 2018).

In Europe, the policy of multiculturalism has specific unique characteristics. It is implemented against the background of forming European Communities. First, the "founding fathers" of Europe dreamed of a gradual "extinction" of national identities in favour of postnational ones, which was supposed to be a safeguard against aggressive ethnic nationalism of the first half of the XX century (Habermas, 2001). However, these attempts were unsuccessful. The unified EU Constitution was not enacted due to the failure of its ratification in referendums in France and the Netherlands, and single EU citizenship remains only on paper. The referendum on Britain's exit from the EU further exacerbates the problem of Europeans' national identity. This problem is especially acute against the backdrop of growing migration flows: during 2015–2020, the number of migrants in the EU grew by 16%.

The war in Syria provoked a migration crisis in Europe, which demonstrated the lack of unity between countries in addressing the issue of migrant reception. The main reason for the growth of anti-immigration sentiment in the EU is the reluctance of migrants to integrate into local communities. Accordingly, large enclaves of African, Asian, or Arab populations have formed in Western European countries, which are losing interest in sociocultural integration due to fears of assimilation. Racial, ethnic, and religious groups fight to preserve their right to exist, defending their identity (Toffler, 1990).

On the other hand, the EU's fears of migrants are growing against the backdrop of terrorist attacks in European capitals, which are usually carried out by radical Islamists who are citizens of European states. According to Roy, these two problems are interconnected. Even though young European Muslims are representatives of the second generation of migrants who are accustomed to living in the secular world, they have not been able to integrate into local societies. Some of them are trying to find a way out by returning to Islam, which takes place in various formats, from emphasising their identity by wearing religious clothing (hijab) to committing terrorist acts. Radical Islam requires this in exchange for acceptance into the community and the return of dignity (Roy, 2016).

However, such theses are disputed by other researchers who emphasise the radicalisation of Islam through the spread of its radical trends across the world (Keppel, 2017).

The correlation analysis between the Globalization Index and the level of social distance in the EU reveals a weak inverse relationship (Pearson's coefficient equals -0.584). Consequently, a higher level of globalisation in a country has little effect on reducing social distance (Figure 1).
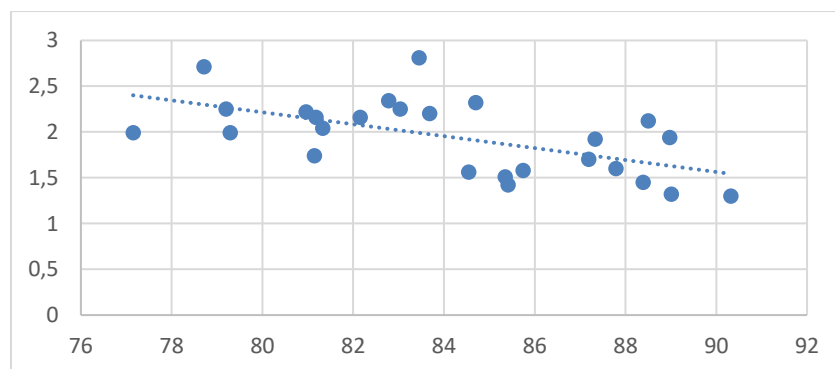
Figure 1 Correlation between the Globalization Index and the level of social distancing.
Source: Top 50 countries in the Globalization Index, (2023); Tsai & Tzeng, (2022)

At the same time, the low level of social distance does not prevent the growing popularity of right-wing parties and politicians in these countries. They are primarily united by anti-immigration rhetoric. For example, in the French presidential election, for the second time in the last ten years, the leader of the far-right National Rally (until 2018, the National Front), Marine Le Pen, reached the second round, increasing her result from 34% in 2017 to 41.5% in 2022. The Nationalist-Conservative Brothers of Italy party won the 2022 parliamentary elections with 26% of the vote in Italy. In Hungary, in 2022, the national conservative party Fidesz, led by V. Orban, will again win, with the support of more than 52% of Hungarians. The far-right parties Alternative for Germany and the Party for Freedom are elected to the parliaments of Germany and the Netherlands, with more than 10% of the vote.

Accordingly, the European scientific and sociopolitical discourse recognises severe problems with implementing multiculturalism policy, primarily due to its significant shortcomings. First, multiculturalism emphasises the self-assertion of a group through the requirement of recognising its originality in the context of equality (Taylor, 2013). However, this can cause discontent from other groups who feel offended. Multiculturalism focuses on respecting differences while ignoring commonalities. Thus, while migrants can choose whether to integrate into local communities or preserve their identity, the local community does not have this choice. Therefore, in tidy Bavarian villages, they complain about Muslims who not only build mosques that contrast sharply with the provincial German style but also protest against the mass consumption of pork during Christmas (Korsunskyi, 2020). In other words, respect for one community's rights violates another. Second, multiculturalism de facto absolutes the role of culture, levelling the sociopolitical aspects that overwhelmingly constitute the basis of social conflicts and crises. Young Muslims are turning to radical Islam not only because they want to join a community of fellow believers but also because they cannot find themselves (the unemployment rate among Muslim youth in the EU is the highest, ranging from 30 to 40%).

Recently, there have been noticeable dynamics in the leading indicators of cultural heritage in the most significant global Western European cities, such as the number of libraries and bookstores (Tables 1 and 2). The values presented for 2022 are higher than in previous years, indicating active cultural progress within the global community.

Table 1 Key Cultural Heritage Indicators of the Largest Global Western European Cities.

City	Number of public museums	Number of private museums	Number of art galleries	Number of visitors to the five most famous museums and galleries (million people)	The number of objects of cultural heritage
Amsterdam	8	143	182	4,5	3
Berlin	18	140	421	4,7	3
London	11	162	85,7	25,3	4
Madrid	7	52	299	8,3	0
Paris	24	113	104,6	23,4	4
Stockholm	29	70	120	4,1	3

Source: Fytsyk, (2022)

Table 2 Number of Libraries and Bookstores in Global Western European Cities.

City	Number of public libraries	Number of public libraries per 100,000 people	Number of bookshops	Number of second-hand bookshops
Amsterdam	82	3	165	-
Berlin	88	2,5	245	4
London	383	5	802	68
Madrid	46	1,5	497	32
Paris	830	7	1625	282
Stockholm	90	4,2	70	20

Source: Fytsyk, (2022)

The problem of cultural diversity raises the issue of forming a "global culture" that combines countervailing aspects: cultural pluralism and the homogenisation of ethnic, religious, and cultural meanings. This significantly complicates the process of preserving the authenticity of national cultures. Fukuyama, at the end of the XX century, predicted further "westernisation" of the world and the victory of "universal," i.e., Western values (Fukuyama, 1994).

The analysis of cultural and identity transformations in the modern world reflects the complex and multifaceted aspects of the fight against corruption. Corruption, one of the most pressing social problems, is complicated by the influence of cultural norms and practices that justify corrupt relations (Cooray & Schneider, 2018). The situation is further complicated by global political instability and conflicts, such as the events in Syria, Israel and the full-scale war in Ukraine, which lead to an increase in corruption and negatively affect the public perception of this phenomenon. As a result, the population's participation in corrupt schemes is growing, which may contribute to forming relevant cultural norms and traditions that regulate the rules of

behaviour in corrupt transactions (Serzhanov et al., 2022). Among the negative consequences of this process is not only the promotion of manipulation of public sentiment but also a decrease in the perception of the attractiveness of corrupt transactions for participants. For this reason, it is essential to create an anti-corruption culture in society to reduce the attractiveness of corrupt transactions and increase the transaction costs of their conclusion. This approach will help build a society based on the principles of integrity, which is essential in developing the state and society (Abramov, 2020).

In the era of globalisation, trends in innovative cultural forms are usually set by leading countries, which, in a certain way, impose their cultural norms and patterns on others. This evokes various reactions, from cultural assimilation to self-isolation, to protect one's culture. Researchers of cultural globalisation have identified four sociocultural meta-trends of the modern world: "cultural assimilation," "cultural polarisation," "cultural hybridisation," and "cultural isolation." Cultural assimilation is typical of countries with weak national identification and strict migration policies that require migrants to adopt standard cultural practices gradually. Cultural polarisation is typical of European countries where migrants refuse to integrate into local society, preserving their cultural peculiarities. Cultural isolation arises as a reaction to external threats and demands the protection of national interests and culture (Hoffman, 2002).

The most popular trend in the world is "cultural hybridisation" (or "creolisation"). It leads to new communities, cultural convergence, and the emergence of trans-local cultures—diaspora culture—which does not aspire to national-state identity (Wallerstein et al., 2013).

In the Middle East and Central Asia, the promotion of Western values provokes resistance in the form of Muslim fundamentalism. Weak national identity is replaced by religious identity, which manifests in various ways—from self-isolation (Iran) to the spread of radical Islamic ideas worldwide (ISIS). Fear of democratisation processes forces authoritarian regimes in North Korea and Russia to implement self-isolation policies. It focuses on ideological or cultural aspects (return to folk culture and Orthodox canons).

Therefore, despite the popularity of Western cultural products and universals, they do not become dominant, and cultural pluralism in the world is preserved. However, this approach does not exclude cultural conflicts that arise in various formats, such as cultural trauma and shock, between traditional and new forms of culture, cultural anomie and cultural lag.

Accordingly, cultural globalisation initiates conflicting processes that make the world more complex and mosaic-like. In some aspects, its consequences can be destructive since national culture is relegated to the stage of "experimental testing for strength." This is extremely dangerous for processes of national identification (Danylian & Dzoban, 2017).

Digital technologies are fundamentally changing the perception of communication in the modern world, shaping broad opportunities for sociocultural integration on a planetary scale. The digital revolution has created new possibilities for communication and interaction among people from different regions and countries, resulting in the exchange of cultural ideas and practices.

As a result of these processes, a global information culture is formed, and it has three key features: universality, technicality, and timelessness (Smith, 1995). Global information culture paves the way for powerful cultural influence and the formation of a hybrid international culture as "a mixture of Asian, African, American, and European cultures" (Piterze, 2008).

Social networks open new horizons for expressing one's identity through communication or self-presentation to many people. However, there are severe issues due to reality simulation through digital technologies. According to Baudrillard, this process leads to losing connection with reality, transitioning from a state of visibility to a state of simulation. "Virtual space for the modern individual becomes an environment without censorship and control, where the individual deals not with real objects, but with their simulations" (Baudrillard, 1994).

VR creates opportunities for individuals and groups to disseminate content, which opens up both new communication formats and lays the groundwork for "fakes" and "post-truth," "where objective facts are less influential in the process of forming a societal position than appeals to emotions" (Lynch, 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating the transition to distance learning, which allows learning in any city that has only a smartphone but raises questions not only about the quality of such education and the loss of personal connections between teachers and students but also about secondary socialisation, which plays a vital role in shaping a person's social skills.

Against the background of forming a global information society, a new type of identity is emerging. Internet identity (online identity or online personality) is the identity of individuals created online (social networks, internet forums, online chats). Virtual identity may differ significantly from real identity, projecting the ideal self (to impress others). This can increase a person's self-esteem. However, it creates problems with real life, which differs from virtual reality (in fact, being a simulation of it).

Social networks open pathways for uniting people based on common positions, values, ideological beliefs, and cultural preferences. They become platforms for daily communication with friends and job searching, conducting business, and implementing public projects (Hart et al., 2007).

Global communication infrastructure sometimes serves as a resource for activating civil activity and political transformations. Revolutionary events in the Middle East and Euromaidan in Ukraine began with posts on social networks ("network revolutions"). However, much more often, internet communication is used for slacktivism ("lazy activism"), where virtual activity substitutes actual posts and "likes" on social networks, signing petitions, and flash mobs. This is another

simulation of real actions that brings satisfaction to internet users and simulates their involvement in social life, further isolating them from social activity.

Thus, the virtual world becomes a severe challenge for humanity due to the possibility of a person's complete dissolution in an artificial reality, where simulation takes the place of sociability.

4. Discussion

Globalisation has significantly influenced identification processes. It creates conditions for forming a hybrid identity, which combines elements of different cultures, traditions, or social groups. It has emerged against the backdrop of migration, interethnic marriages, and the development of digital technologies that accelerate the processes of cultural globalisation and the creation of a global informational culture. This, in a certain way, refutes the ideas of Thompson (1997) about the dominance of a universal cultural type (American) over time and confirms the opinions of Fukuyama (1992) about the gradual formation of an integrative society, where an integral type of identity will play an important role.

Hybrid identity is based on multiculturalism principles and supports diversity in all its manifestations, from cultural to sexual. At the same time, the problem of self-identification is becoming increasingly complicated amid the growth of social roles, which increases sharply during the transition from modern to postmodern society. Therefore, the approach defined by Taylor (2013) regarding the understanding of identity through the uniqueness of the individual loses its relevance due to the gradual disappearance of this uniqueness. At the same time, we cannot but agree with the opinions of Fukuyama (2018) about the multiplicity of the modern type of identity, which combines socioeconomic, ethnic, cultural, national, religious, sexual and other aspects, which creates a person the problem of choosing his own "I" and the desire to protect him. Recognising the right to marriage as a social institution for members of LGBT communities testifies not only to the simple provision of their property rights but also to the desire to be equal to representatives of traditional sexual relationships. On the other pole, there is a return to traditional values in the context of protecting one's own national, cultural, or religious identity. This leads to cultural isolation or, conversely, breeds Islamic fundamentalism with its desire to conquer the world. In general, the growth of manifestations of radical nationalism and fundamental currents indicates the prematureness of Inglehart's (2005) predictions of a gradual movement toward the predominance of postmaterial values.

All these processes are taking place against the backdrop of forming an information society, where digital technologies play a crucial role, expanding the boundaries of communication and promoting Western universals. However, digital media provides unprecedented opportunities for Islamic terrorists to achieve global "recognition" through executions in live broadcasts. Authoritarian regimes have learned to defend themselves against unwanted information by restricting access to information. Meanwhile, the internet is creating a new type of virtual identity that differs significantly from the authentic "self."

5. Conclusion

The analysis allows us to identify the most problematic aspects of contemporary cultural and identity transformations. Globalisation has opened up opportunities for socioeconomic integration. New technologies have expanded humanity's communication capabilities and contributed to a "global culture." Migration is becoming one of the main problems of the globalised world, as it affects identification processes in different societies. Western democracies are trying to solve emerging problems by implementing a policy of multiculturalism. This policy emphasises respect for cultural diversity, which should contribute to further cultural convergence and increase social tolerance. However, implementing such policies faces serious challenges not only in European countries with a high national identity but also in the United States, where civic identity dominates national identity.

Cultural globalisation has two consequences: interpenetration and cultural synthesis and, conversely, distancing from Western universals through a policy of self-isolation or a return to "fundamentals" (Islamic fundamentalism). Accordingly, the weakness of national identity forces communities to seek other means of protection and turn to religious, linguistic, or cultural identification.

The development of digital technologies expands communications and creates opportunities for self-presentation (and, consequently, self-realisation). As a result of such changes, internet identity is formed as a search for one's own "ideal self," which differs significantly from the authentic self. Thus, integrating a person into the virtual space replaces objective reality with its simulacra. It complicates the processes of communication and socialisation.

Ethical considerations

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Conflict of interest

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