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Evolution of the Institute of Legal Identity of Ukrainians in the Context of Global Migration Challenges in 2026

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Abstract: This article presents a comprehensive study of the evolution of the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under the conditions of the global migration challenges of 2026. It analyzes the impact of the full-scale war, the mass outward migration of the population, European integration, and the digitalization of public administration on the transformation of legal consciousness, legal culture, and the mechanisms of interaction between citizens and the state. The article substantiates the argument that the legal identity of Ukrainians is shaped by the combined influence of the national and the European legal spaces, as well as by the development of digital forms of the legal connection between the individual and the state.

The study examines theoretical and legal approaches to the concept of legal identity and identifies its place within the structure of national, constitutional, and social identity. It establishes that, under the conditions of wartime migration, the legal identity of Ukrainians acquires a transnational character, since a significant proportion of citizens are integrating into the legal systems of European Union member states while simultaneously maintaining a legal connection with Ukraine through the mechanisms of citizenship, digital governance, and participation in the country's sociopolitical life.

Particular attention is devoted to the analysis of the regulatory and legal framework that governs the processes of forming and maintaining the legal identity of Ukrainian citizens. The article examines the provisions of the Constitution of Ukraine; legislation on citizenship, the protection of the rights of internally displaced persons, and the digitalization of public administration; as well as the international legal instruments and European Union documents that establish the standards for the protection of human rights and for the temporary protection of Ukrainian migrants.

Drawing on statistical data from the European Union and Ukraine, the article analyzes the scale of wartime migration and its influence on the transformation of the legal consciousness of Ukrainians. It is shown that the digitalization of public services and the development of digital governance have become important instruments for maintaining the legal connection between citizens and the state, regardless of their place of residence. The article substantiates the emergence of a new element of legal identity, namely digital legal identity.

The article proposes promising directions for strengthening the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under conditions of global population mobility, including the improvement of citizenship legislation, the development of digital identification, the support of Ukrainians abroad, and the harmonization of national legislation with the legal standards of the European Union. The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of applying the

formulated conclusions and recommendations to the improvement of state migration policy, of legislation in the field of digital governance, and of the mechanisms for protecting the rights of Ukrainian citizens under conditions of global migration processes.

Keywords: legal consciousness, constitutional identity, wartime migration, digital governance, digital identification, European integration, legal culture, internally displaced persons, transnational legal space, human rights, digitalization, state policy.

Еволюція інституту правової ідентичності українців в умовах глобальних міграційних викликів 2026 року

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Анотація: У статті здійснено комплексне дослідження еволюції інституту правової ідентичності українців в умовах глобальних міграційних викликів 2026 року. Проаналізовано вплив повномасштабної війни, масової зовнішньої міграції населення, європейської інтеграції та цифровізації державного управління на трансформацію правової свідомості, правової культури й механізмів взаємодії громадян із державою. Обґрунтовано, що правова ідентичність українців формується під впливом поєднання національного та європейського правового простору, а також розвитку цифрових форм правового зв'язку особи з державою.

У роботі досліджено теоретико-правові підходи до розуміння поняття правової ідентичності та визначено її місце у структурі національної, конституційної й соціальної ідентичності. Встановлено, що в умовах воєнної міграції правова ідентичність українців набуває транснаціонального характеру, оскільки значна частина громадян інтегрується до правових систем держав Європейського Союзу, одночасно підтримуючи правовий зв'язок із Україною через механізми громадянства, цифрового врядування та участі в суспільно-політичному житті держави.

Особливу увагу приділено аналізу нормативно-правової бази, що регулює процеси формування та підтримання правової ідентичності громадян України. Досліджено положення Конституції України, законодавства у сфері громадянства, захисту прав внутрішньо переміщених осіб, цифровізації державного управління, а також міжнародно-правових актів і документів Європейського Союзу, які визначають стандарти захисту прав людини та тимчасового захисту українських мігрантів.

На основі статистичних даних Європейського Союзу та України проаналізовано масштаби воєнної міграції населення та їхній вплив на трансформацію правової свідомості українців. Визначено, що цифровізація державних послуг і розвиток цифрового врядування стали важливими інструментами підтримання правового зв'язку громадян із державою незалежно від місця їхнього перебування. Обґрунтовано формування нового елемента правової ідентичності – цифрової правової ідентичності.

У статті запропоновано перспективні напрями зміцнення інституту правової ідентичності українців в умовах глобальної мобільності населення, зокрема вдосконалення законодавства у сфері громадянства, розвитку цифрової ідентифікації, підтримки українців за кордоном та гармонізації національного законодавства із правовими стандартами Європейського Союзу. Практичне значення дослідження полягає в можливості використання сформульованих висновків і рекомендацій у

процесі вдосконалення державної міграційної політики, законодавства у сфері цифрового врядування та механізмів захисту прав громадян України в умовах глобальних міграційних процесів.

Ключові слова: правова свідомість, конституційна ідентичність, воєнна міграція, цифрове врядування, цифрова ідентифікація, європейська інтеграція, правова культура, внутрішньо переміщені особи, транснаціональний правовий простір, права людини, цифровізація, державна політика.

Introduction

Relevance of the problem. The relevance of the research topic is determined by the large-scale transformational processes occurring in Ukrainian society under the conditions of the full-scale war, active European integration, and global migration processes. The mass forced migration of Ukrainians since 2022 has triggered not only socioeconomic changes but has also significantly affected the legal consciousness, legal culture, and system of legal values of citizens. Under present-day circumstances, particular importance attaches to the problem of preserving the legal connection of Ukrainians with their state, maintaining a national legal identity, and ensuring citizens' adaptation to new legal environments. At the same time, Ukraine's integration into the European legal space is facilitating the transformation of traditional approaches to understanding legal identity by combining national and European legal values.

The research problem consists in identifying the specific features of the evolution of the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under conditions of global population mobility and the transnationalization of the legal space. Contemporary migration processes are generating new challenges for the state, associated with the risks of the assimilation of Ukrainians abroad, the transformation of their legal behavior, dual legal socialization, and the need to ensure effective legal protection of citizens outside the territory of Ukraine. In addition, the questions of the influence of the digitalization of public administration, European integration, and international legal standards on the formation of the contemporary Ukrainian legal identity remain insufficiently studied, which gives rise to the need for a comprehensive scholarly analysis of this set of issues.

Literature review. In contemporary scholarly literature, considerable attention is devoted to the issues of migration processes, the transformation of the legal and national identity of Ukrainians, and the specific features of the adaptation of Ukrainian citizens to new sociolegal conditions caused by the war and by globalization-related challenges.

The study by A. Buzarov [1] examines the specifics of European assistance to Ukrainian displaced persons and the particular features of their adaptation in the countries of the European Union. The author focuses on the mechanisms of the social and legal protection of Ukrainians abroad, analyzes the institutional support provided by EU member states, and addresses the problems of integrating Ukrainian migrants into the new legal environment.

The scholarly work of E. M. Libanova [2] is devoted to an analysis of the phenomenon of "wartime migration" from Ukraine, its scale, its sociodemographic consequences, and its prospects for further development. The researcher pays particular attention to the risks that prolonged outward migration of the population poses for the demographic and economic potential of the state.

Makarov M. [3], in a study on the legal protection of internally displaced persons in Ukraine during the war, examines the specific features of the legal status of IDPs, the problems of ensuring their social and legal guarantees, and the mechanisms of state regulation in the sphere of the protection of the rights of displaced persons.

A separate study by M. Makarov [4] is devoted to the prospects for the legal status of Ukrainian migrants after the termination of the temporary protection regime in the countries of the European Union. The author draws attention to the possible legal risks, to the issues of

the further legalization of Ukrainians' stay abroad, and to the prospects for their integration into the European legal space.

The researchers I. Lasek-Surowiec and T. Strutynska [5] analyzed the sociolegal conditions of the residence of Ukrainian migrants in Poland in 2024. The scholars investigate the problems of social adaptation and of access to employment, education, medical care, and legal protection for Ukrainians in Polish society.

The subject of the study by T. B. Mickelsson [6] is the specific features of the differentiated treatment of Ukrainian refugees in European countries. The author focuses on the differences in state policies toward various categories of migrants and on the problems of ensuring equality of rights and nondiscrimination. Schrooten M. [7] examines the Ukrainian refugee crisis in Europe and the particular features of the adaptation of forced migrants to new social and legal conditions. The researcher pays attention to the transformation of the migration policies of European states and to the long-term consequences of population displacement.

The scholarly article by Y. Kravchuk [8], devoted to the use of crowdsourced data and to the integration of artificial intelligence into online platforms of volunteer cooperation, examines the digital mechanisms for coordinating social assistance and supporting citizens in crisis conditions.

Another study by Y. Kravchuk [9] addresses the role of artificial intelligence in optimizing volunteer processes for social initiatives. The author considers the prospects for the digitalization of social support and the impact of innovative technologies on the effectiveness of volunteer activity.

The study by N. Khotynska [10] considers the prospects and challenges of implementing comprehensive assistance programs for vulnerable categories of the population in the United States. The author analyzes the mechanisms of social protection, state support, and interinstitutional cooperation in the field of social welfare.

The article by V. Kovalchuk [11] addresses the issues of constitutional identity and national values under conditions of a permanent threat to the statehood of Ukraine. The author examines the role of constitutional principles in shaping the national legal identity and in preserving state sovereignty.

The publication by T. Spesivtseva and A. Pyvovar [12] analyzes the development of Ukrainian constitutional identity and the prospects for its further transformation under conditions of European integration. The authors examine the influence of international legal standards on the development of the national legal system of Ukraine.

The study by H. Bohdanovych [13] addresses the transformation of Ukrainian identity as a factor in the formation of a new political nation. The author analyzes the influence of the war, of societal change, and of the processes of national consolidation on the development of Ukrainian identity.

The scholarly article by A. B. Kovalenko, E. Yu. Hryshchuk, and S. V. Sharapa [14] examines the relationship between social identity and the sociopsychological adaptation of Ukrainian migrants. The researchers identify the main factors in the adaptation of Ukrainian citizens to a new social environment and the impact of migration on the transformation of identity.

The paper by V. Kydon [15] examines the problem of historical identity under the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The author analyzes the influence of wartime events on the rethinking of historical memory, on national consciousness, and on the formation of new societal values in Ukraine.

Despite the considerable body of scholarly literature, the questions of the evolution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under conditions of global migration processes, of the interrelation between the national and the European legal identity, and of the influence of digitalization and the transnational legal space on the transformation of the legal consciousness of Ukrainian society remain insufficiently studied. This circumstance gives rise to the need for further comprehensive scholarly research in the corresponding direction.

Identification of the previously unresolved aspects of the problem. Despite the substantial body of contemporary scholarly research devoted to migration processes, to constitutional and national identity, to the sociolegal adaptation of Ukrainian migrants, and to the issues of the legal protection of Ukrainian citizens abroad, the problems of the evolution of the legal identity of Ukrainians proper under conditions of global migration challenges remain insufficiently studied. In particular, comprehensive scholarly analysis is required on the questions of the transformation of the legal consciousness of Ukrainians under the influence of integration into the European legal space, of the impact of the digitalization of public administration on maintaining the legal connection between citizens and the state, and of the formation of a transnational model of Ukrainian legal identity under conditions of prolonged outward migration of the population. Insufficient attention has also been devoted to the problems of combining national legal values with European legal standards and to the identification of mechanisms for preserving the legal identity of Ukrainians beyond the borders of the state.

The aim of the article consists in investigating the evolution of the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under the conditions of the global migration challenges of 2026.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been defined:

1. to examine the theoretical and legal approaches to the concept of legal identity;
2. to determine the impact of wartime migration and of European integration processes on the transformation of the legal consciousness of Ukrainian citizens;
3. to investigate the role of digitalization and electronic governance in maintaining the legal connection between Ukrainians and their state;
4. to characterize the principal migration challenges affecting the development of the legal identity of Ukrainians;
5. to outline promising directions for strengthening the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under conditions of global population mobility.

The scholarly novelty of the study consists in a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians in the context of contemporary global migration processes, the war, and the European integration of Ukraine. The article substantiates the influence of the transnational legal space and of the digitalization of public administration on the transformation of the legal consciousness of Ukrainians and identifies the current tendencies in the formation of a transnational model of Ukrainian legal identity.

The practical significance of the results obtained consists in the possibility of applying the formulated propositions and conclusions in improving state policy in the sphere of support for Ukrainians abroad, in developing the mechanisms for preserving the legal connection between citizens and the state, and in refining Ukrainian migration legislation. The materials of the study may be used in scholarly activity, in the educational process when teaching legal disciplines, and in the practical activity of public authorities and institutions operating in the spheres of migration policy and the protection of the rights of Ukrainian citizens.

Methodology

The methodological foundation of the study consists of a set of general scholarly and specifically legal methods of scholarly inquiry, the application of which made it possible to comprehensively investigate the evolution of the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under the conditions of global migration challenges, martial law, European integration, and the digitalization of public administration. The study rests upon the principles of objectivity, systematicity, interdisciplinarity, and the comprehensive analysis of legal, social, and migration-related processes.

Research methods

In the course of the study, the dialectical method was employed, which made it possible to analyze the transformation of the legal identity of Ukrainians within the dynamics of

contemporary sociopolitical changes and globalization processes. The application of the systems method afforded the opportunity to examine legal identity as a complex legal institution that interacts with the categories of citizenship, legal consciousness, legal culture, digital identification, and the constitutional identity of the state.

The formal-legal method was used to analyze the provisions of the Constitution of Ukraine, the laws of Ukraine, international legal instruments, and the regulatory and legal documents of the European Union that govern matters of citizenship, the protection of human rights, digital governance, and migration policy. The comparative legal method made it possible to investigate the specific features of the legal status of Ukrainian migrants in EU member states and to identify directions for harmonizing Ukrainian legislation with European legal standards.

By means of the sociolegal method, the impact of wartime migration, digitalization, and European integration processes on the legal consciousness and legal behavior of Ukrainian citizens was analyzed. The statistical method was applied to examine quantitative indicators of the migration of the Ukrainian population, the scale of temporary protection in the countries of the European Union, and the level of use of digital public services. The method of forecasting was employed to determine the prospects for the development of the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under conditions of global population mobility.

Data sources

The informational foundation of the study comprises the regulatory and legal acts of Ukraine, international legal documents, acts of the European Union, official statistical data, and the scholarly publications of Ukrainian and foreign scholars. In particular, the article draws on the provisions of the Constitution of Ukraine and of the Laws of Ukraine “On Citizenship of Ukraine,” “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons,” “On the Legal Regime of Martial Law,” “On Electronic Trust Services,” “On Electronic Documents and Electronic Document Circulation,” and other regulatory and legal acts.

Important sources for the study include international legal instruments, among them the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, EU Council Directive 2001/55/EC on temporary protection, and the EU eIDAS Regulation. Statistical materials from Eurostat, official data of the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, and the findings of contemporary scholarly research in the spheres of migration law, constitutional identity, digital governance, and legal socialization have likewise been used.

Tools of analysis

For processing scholarly sources and regulatory and legal acts, the method of content analysis was applied, which made it possible to systematize the principal approaches to the concept of legal identity and to identify the key tendencies in its transformation under the conditions of contemporary global challenges. The use of comparative analysis afforded the opportunity to juxtapose Ukrainian and European experience in the spheres of the protection of migrants’ rights, digital identification, and the maintenance of the legal connection between citizens and the state.

In addition, the study employs elements of statistical analysis to evaluate the scale of the wartime migration of Ukrainians and the level of the digital integration of the population into the system of electronic governance. The generalization of the results was carried out through the synthesis of scholarly, legal, and statistical data, with the subsequent formulation of the author’s conclusions and practical recommendations.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study are connected, above all, with the dynamic character of contemporary migration processes and with the continual changes in legal regulation brought about by the conditions of martial law and by Ukraine’s European integration reforms. A

significant portion of the statistical data concerning the numbers of Ukrainian migrants, internally displaced persons, and persons under temporary protection in the countries of the European Union is being continually updated, which may affect the currency of individual indicators.

In addition, the complexity of the study of legal identity is conditioned by its interdisciplinary character, since the concept in question combines legal, sociological, psychological, and cultural aspects. Certain issues associated with the long-term consequences of wartime migration and with the digital transformation of the legal space require further scholarly investigation following the conclusion of the active phase of military hostilities and the stabilization of migration processes.

Results

The theoretical and legal approaches to understanding the concept of legal identity are formed on the basis of a comprehensive combination of the categories of legal consciousness, legal culture, constitutionalism, the rule of law, and national identity. In contemporary legal scholarship, legal identity is regarded as an individual's awareness of his or her belonging to a particular legal space, the acceptance of the system of legal values, principles, and norms of the state, and a readiness to act in accordance with them. At the same time, legal identity constitutes a component of the broader system of social and national identity, since it is shaped by the historical, political, cultural, and legal factors of the development of the state and society [16, pp. 29–30].

One of the foundational theoretical approaches to understanding legal identity is the axiological approach, according to which the foundation of legal identity is constituted by the legal values of society, in particular human rights, freedom, justice, legality, and the rule of law. In this context, particular significance attaches to the principle of the rule of law, enshrined in Article 8 of the Constitution of Ukraine, according to which the principle of the rule of law is recognized and operates in Ukraine [17]. The said principle establishes the priority of human rights and freedoms, the limitation of state authority by law, and the guarantee of legal certainty as the foundation of a democratic legal order.

The constitutional approach is of considerable significance in the formation of legal identity, according to which legal identity is linked to the constitutional identity of the state. Constitutional identity is defined as the totality of fundamental principles, legal traditions, constitutional values, and historically established features of state-building that ensure the stability of the legal system and the preservation of state sovereignty. In contemporary Ukrainian legal doctrine, constitutional identity is regarded as one of the key elements in safeguarding national statehood under conditions of globalization and European integration [17].

The regulatory and legal foundation for the formation of legal identity in Ukraine is constituted by the provisions of the Constitution of Ukraine, in particular Article 3, according to which the human being, his or her life and health, honor and dignity, inviolability and security are recognized in Ukraine as the highest social value, and the affirmation and safeguarding of human rights and freedoms constitute the principal duty of the state [17]. At the same time, of considerable importance for the development of legal identity are the provisions of Article 8 of the Constitution of Ukraine, which enshrines the principle of the rule of law as one of the fundamental foundations of the functioning of the state, as well as Article 11, according to which the state promotes the consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, its historical consciousness, traditions, and culture. In addition, Article 24 of the Constitution of Ukraine guarantees the equality of citizens before the law and prohibits any forms of discrimination, thereby forming the legal foundation for the equal participation of the individual in the social and legal life of the state [17].

An important place in the system of regulatory provision for legal identity is occupied by the Law of Ukraine "On Citizenship of Ukraine," which defines the legal connection between the

individual and the state, establishes the grounds for the acquisition and termination of citizenship, and enshrines the principle of single citizenship [18]. The institution of citizenship serves as one of the key elements in the formation of legal identity, since it secures the juridical belonging of the individual to the Ukrainian state and to its legal space. Particular significance under the conditions of war and mass outward migration attaches to the provisions of the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons,” which guarantees the protection of the rights of citizens who have been compelled to leave their place of residence as a consequence of armed aggression and contributes to preserving their social and legal connection with the state [19].

A substantial impact on the transformation of the legal identity of Ukrainians is also exerted by the provisions of the Law of Ukraine “On the Legal Regime of Martial Law,” which sets forth the specific features of the functioning of state institutions and of the exercise of human rights and freedoms under conditions of martial law [20]. In the context of the full-scale war, the said regulatory and legal act has become an important instrument for ensuring national security, the legal order, and the consolidation of society around the defense of the state sovereignty of Ukraine. Of considerable importance, likewise, are the provisions of the Law of Ukraine “On the Principles of Domestic and Foreign Policy,” which enshrines the state’s strategic course toward European integration and the affirmation of European democratic values [21].

The formation of contemporary Ukrainian legal identity is to a significant extent shaped by the influence of international legal instruments and European legal standards. One of the key documents is the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950, which guarantees the protection of basic human rights and freedoms and serves as the foundation for the activity of the European Court of Human Rights [22]. Of considerable importance, likewise, is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which established fundamental international standards in the sphere of human rights and became the foundation of the contemporary international legal order [23]. A distinct role in the process of Ukraine’s European integration is played by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the provisions of which are directed toward ensuring human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law [24]. In addition, of considerable importance is the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, which sets forth the directions for the adaptation of Ukrainian legislation to EU law and promotes the formation of the European component of the legal identity of Ukrainians [25].

Within the framework of the sociocultural approach, legal identity is regarded as the result of the interaction of law, culture, historical memory, and legal tradition. The formation of legal identity depends directly on the level of the legal culture of society, on the degree of trust of citizens in state institutions, on the effectiveness of the mechanisms for the protection of human rights, and on the level of the development of civil society. In this context, an important role is played by the processes of legal socialization, legal upbringing, and the formation of the legal consciousness of citizens.

The contemporary stage of the development of the legal identity of Ukrainians is characterized by the significant influence of European integration processes and of the transnationalization of the legal space. Following Ukraine’s acquisition of candidate status for membership in the European Union in 2022, the processes of adapting national legislation to EU law have intensified, which contributes to the formation of a new model of legal identity grounded in the combination of national legal traditions and European legal standards. At the same time, under the conditions of war and large-scale migration processes, the legal identity of Ukrainians acquires particular significance as a mechanism for preserving the legal connection of the individual with the state and with the national legal system.

The full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has become one of the key factors in the transformation of the legal consciousness of Ukrainian citizens, since it has

triggered large-scale migration processes, a reconsideration of legal values, and a strengthening of the role of the state in safeguarding human rights and freedoms. Wartime migration has substantially influenced the formation of new models of the legal behavior of Ukrainians, their adaptation to foreign legal systems, and the development of a transnational legal identity. According to Eurostat data, as of the end of 2025, approximately 4.35 million Ukrainian citizens held the status of temporary protection in the countries of the European Union, and the largest numbers of Ukrainian refugees were received by Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic [26]. At the same time, the total number of Ukrainian refugees in Europe in 2025 amounted to approximately 4.7 million persons, which constitutes nearly 11% of Ukraine's prewar population [27].

The mass departure of the population abroad has given rise to the necessity of integrating Ukrainians into new sociolegal systems, which has facilitated the transformation of their legal consciousness and legal culture. In many EU countries, Ukrainian citizens have gained access to the systems of social security, medical insurance, educational services, and the mechanisms of legal protection in accordance with EU Directive 2001/55/EC on temporary protection [28]. As a result, Ukrainians have acquired practical experience of the functioning of the European model of the rule of law, of the high standards of human rights protection, and of the effective operation of state institutions. This has contributed to the formation of new legal orientations, to the elevation of the level of legal culture, and to the strengthening of public demand for democratic standards of governance in Ukraine.

At the same time, wartime migration has produced a series of risks for the preservation of the national legal identity of Ukrainians. Prolonged residence abroad fosters the processes of legal assimilation, the formation of a dual legal socialization, and a gradual adaptation to other legal systems. This problem is particularly pressing for children and young people who are studying in foreign educational institutions and who are integrating to a significant extent into the legal and cultural space of their host states. According to Eurostat data, among Ukrainians under temporary protection in the EU, approximately 31% are children [26]. In addition, in 2025 a further increase in the migration outflow from Ukraine was observed: in 2025 alone, the net departure of citizens amounted to approximately 300,000 persons [27].

Under contemporary conditions, the digitalization of public administration and the development of electronic governance have emerged as important instruments for maintaining the legal connection between Ukrainians and their state, especially under the conditions of war, of mass outward migration, and of the global mobility of the population. The use of digital technologies ensures the uninterrupted access of citizens to public services regardless of their place of residence, contributes to the exercise of constitutional rights and freedoms, and shapes a new level of digital legal identity. Under conditions of martial law and forced migration, electronic governance has become one of the key mechanisms for preserving the legal connection between citizens and the state institutions of Ukraine.

The regulatory and legal foundation for the digitalization of public administration in Ukraine is constituted by the provisions of the Law of Ukraine "On Electronic Trust Services" of October 5, 2017, No. 2155-VIII, which regulates the use of electronic identification, of the electronic signature, and of other trust services in the sphere of the electronic interaction of citizens, business, and the state [29]. An important role is likewise played by the Law of Ukraine "On Electronic Documents and Electronic Document Circulation" of May 22, 2003, No. 851-IV, which establishes the legal foundations for the creation, use, and storage of electronic documents and enshrines their juridical force [30]. In addition, the digitalization of public services is governed by the Law of Ukraine "On the Specific Features of the Provision of Public (Electronic Public) Services" of July 15, 2021, No. 1689-IX, which is directed toward ensuring the accessibility of administrative services in digital form and toward the development of electronic governance [31].

Of considerable significance for the development of the digital state is the Concept for the Development of the Digital Economy and Society of Ukraine for 2018–2020, approved by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of January 17, 2018, No. 67-r, which determined the principal directions of the digital transformation of the economy, of public administration, and of social relations [32]. The further development of digitalization is enshrined in the Strategy for the Digital Development of Innovation of Ukraine until 2030, which envisages the introduction of contemporary information technologies, the development of digital infrastructure, electronic democracy, and the digital skills of the population [33]. The said regulatory and legal acts constitute the legal foundation for the development of electronic governance and for the creation of an effective system of digital interaction between citizens and the state.

Beyond national legislation, an important influence on the digitalization of public administration in Ukraine is exerted by international and European legal standards. Within the framework of its European integration course, Ukraine is progressively adapting its national legislation to the digital standards of the European Union, in particular to the provisions of EU Regulation No. 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market (eIDAS) [34]. The harmonization of Ukrainian legislation with the digital standards of the EU facilitates the development of cross-border electronic interaction, the mutual recognition of electronic identification, and the integration of Ukraine into the European digital space.

One of the most effective instruments of electronic governance in Ukraine has become the state application “Diia,” which provides citizens with access to digital documents, administrative services, and electronic identification. Following the outbreak of the full-scale war, the functionality of the platform was substantially expanded: through Diia, citizens have gained the opportunity to register the status of an internally displaced person, to submit applications for financial assistance, to register damaged property, and to obtain access to electronic documents and other public services. According to the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, in 2025 the number of users of the Diia application exceeded 22 million persons, which attests to the high level of the digital integration of the population into the system of electronic governance [35].

Digitalization acquires particular significance for Ukrainians residing abroad. Electronic services enable citizens to maintain their legal connection with the state regardless of their place of residence, to make use of digital documents, to obtain public services, and to participate in the civic life of Ukraine. Under conditions of mass migration, it is precisely the digital mechanisms that have become an important factor in preserving the civic and legal identity of Ukrainians, since they ensure the continuous interaction of the individual with the Ukrainian legal system. In addition, the development of electronic governance contributes to raising the level of the legal culture of the population, to the transparency of the activity of public authorities, and to the trust of citizens in state institutions. The use of electronic services ensures the simplification of administrative procedures, the minimization of bureaucratic barriers, and the reduction of corruption-related risks. At the same time, digitalization gives rise to new challenges connected with the protection of personal data, with cybersecurity, and with the need to ensure the equal access of citizens to digital technologies.

For a comprehensive examination of the evolution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under the conditions of contemporary global processes, it is expedient to single out the principal migration-related challenges that directly affect the transformation of legal consciousness, of legal culture, and of the character of the interaction between citizens and the state. Mass outward migration, the forced displacement of the population as a consequence of the war, integration into the European legal space, and the development of digital technologies are creating new conditions for the functioning of the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians. In this connection, it is important to systematize the key factors that shape the

contemporary tendencies in the transformation of legal identity under conditions of the global mobility of the population (Table 1).

Table 1

Key migration challenges affecting the development of the legal identity of Ukrainians

Key migration challenges	Characterization of the impact on the legal identity of Ukrainians	Possible consequences
Mass outward migration of the population	The prolonged residence of citizens abroad fosters adaptation to other legal systems and social models	Weakening of the legal connection with Ukraine; risk of assimilation
Wartime forced migration	The displacement of the population as a consequence of the war alters the legal behavior and the system of legal values of citizens	Formation of a transnational legal identity
Dual legal socialization	Ukrainians simultaneously integrate into the legal system of the host state while maintaining a connection with the legal system of Ukraine	Conflict of legal norms and behavioral models
Integration into the European legal space	Assimilation of European standards of human rights, of the rule of law, and of democratic values	Transformation of legal consciousness and legal culture
Risk of the cultural and legal assimilation of children and young people	The younger generation adapts more rapidly to the legal and cultural norms of host states	Partial loss of national legal identity
Growing role of the digital environment	The use of the state's digital services ensures the remote connection of citizens with Ukraine	Formation of a digital legal identity
Socioeconomic adaptation of migrants	The need for employment and social integration affects the legal behavior of Ukrainians	Reorientation toward the legal standards of host states
Unevenness of legal protection across different countries	Differences in the migration policies of states with regard to Ukrainians	Formation of varying levels of trust in state institutions
Loss of sustained contact with Ukrainian institutions	Prolonged residence abroad reduces the participation of citizens in the sociopolitical life of Ukraine	Weakening of civic engagement and of legal self-identification
Digitalization of public administration	Electronic services ensure access to public services regardless of one's place of residence	Maintenance of the legal connection between citizens and the state
Demographic losses and the outflow of young people	The departure of the working-age population and of young specialists affects the development of society and the state	Weakening of human capital and of the legal environment
Transnationalization of the legal space	The combination of Ukrainian and international legal norms in the daily life of migrants	Formation of new models of legal identity

Source: compiled by the author.

Thus, contemporary migration processes exert a complex influence on the development of the legal identity of Ukrainians. On the one hand, they contribute to the dissemination of European legal values, to the development of the digital interaction of citizens with the state, and to the formation of new models of legal consciousness. On the other hand, prolonged outward migration gives rise to the risks of legal assimilation, of the weakening of the legal connection with Ukraine, and of the transformation of the national legal orientations of citizens. Under these conditions, particular significance attaches to the formulation of an effective state policy aimed at sustaining the legal identity of Ukrainians, at ensuring access to public services regardless of place of residence, and at strengthening the legal connection of citizens with the Ukrainian state.

Under conditions of the global mobility of the population, of large-scale outward migration, and of the transnationalization of the legal space, particular significance attaches to the necessity of strengthening the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians. Contemporary challenges call for the formulation of a comprehensive state policy directed at maintaining the legal connection of citizens with Ukraine regardless of their place of residence, at ensuring access to public services, at developing digital interaction, and at preserving national legal values. In this connection, of importance is not only the refinement of the mechanisms of public administration but also the updating of current legislation in accordance with contemporary migration and European integration processes.

One of the promising directions is the refinement of the Law of Ukraine “On Citizenship of Ukraine” with respect to the legal status of citizens residing abroad for prolonged periods. It is expedient to provide legislative regulation of the issue of multiple citizenship, together with the establishment of clear mechanisms of legal oversight and of guarantees of national security. Under conditions of the mass outward migration of Ukrainians, such a model would make it possible to preserve the legal connection of the state with citizens who have integrated into foreign societies yet continue to maintain economic, cultural, and legal ties with Ukraine. It is also expedient to provide for a distinct legal status for Ukrainians abroad, one that would establish the mechanisms for the exercise of their social, electoral, and consular rights.

An important direction is the refinement of legislation in the sphere of the protection of the rights of internally displaced persons and of forced migrants. In particular, the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons” requires the expansion of its provisions on digital access to public services, on the automation of the procedures for receiving social assistance, and on the simplification of the mechanisms for confirming IDP status. It is also expedient to establish a unified electronic register of Ukrainians abroad, in compliance with personal data protection requirements, which would make it possible to enhance the effectiveness of the state’s interaction with citizens residing outside the borders of Ukraine.

The development of the digital legal identity of citizens calls for separate attention. In this connection, it is expedient to refine the Law of Ukraine “On Electronic Trust Services” and the Law of Ukraine “On the Specific Features of the Provision of Public (Electronic Public) Services” by expanding the possibilities for the remote electronic identification of citizens residing abroad. A promising direction is the introduction of mechanisms for the cross-border recognition of Ukrainian electronic identification in accordance with the standards of the EU and with the eIDAS Regulation. This will facilitate Ukraine’s integration into the European digital space and will ensure the possibility for Ukrainians to receive public services regardless of their country of residence.

Of substantial significance for the strengthening of legal identity is likewise the development of legal education and of the information policy of the state. It is expedient to introduce state programs for the legal support of Ukrainians abroad, to establish digital platforms for legal assistance, and to ensure the functioning of Ukrainian educational and cultural centers in the countries hosting the largest numbers of Ukrainian migrants. An

important direction is also the elaboration of dedicated programs of legal upbringing for children and young people residing outside the borders of Ukraine for prolonged periods, aimed at preserving their national and legal self-identification.

In addition, under the conditions of Ukraine's European integration, of importance is the further approximation of national legislation to the legal standards of the European Union. In particular, a promising direction is the refinement of the mechanisms for the protection of human rights, the ensuring of the transparency of the activity of public authorities, the development of electronic democracy, and the expansion of citizens' participation in the processes of state decision-making. It is also expedient to adopt a distinct state Strategy for the Support of the Legal Identity of Ukrainians Abroad, which would set forth the principal directions of the state's interaction with the diaspora, the mechanisms for maintaining the legal connection of citizens with Ukraine, and the instruments for the protection of their rights within the transnational legal space.

Thus, the strengthening of the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under conditions of the global mobility of the population requires the comprehensive refinement of national legislation, the development of digital mechanisms for the interaction of citizens with the state, the expansion of international legal cooperation, and the formulation of an effective state policy in the sphere of supporting Ukrainians abroad. The implementation of the said measures will contribute to the preservation of national legal values, to the strengthening of the legal connection of citizens with the state, and to the formation of a contemporary model of Ukrainian legal identity under conditions of globalization.

Discussion

Interpretation of the results. The results obtained attest to the fact that the transformation of the legal identity of Ukrainians constitutes a natural consequence of globalization processes and of the changing models of interaction between the state and the citizen. In contrast to the traditional model of legal identity, which was based predominantly on the territorial belonging of the individual to the state, the contemporary model is taking shape under the conditions of a transnational legal space and active digital communication. In this connection, the legal identity of Ukrainians is increasingly determined not only by place of residence but also by the level of the individual's participation in the legal, informational, and digital environment of Ukraine.

The findings of the study likewise attest to the strengthening of the role of European legal standards in the formation of the legal consciousness of Ukrainian citizens. The mass residence of Ukrainians in EU countries contributes to the dissemination of European legal values, which in the future may have a positive effect on the development of the legal culture of Ukrainian society and on the modernization of the national legal system. At the same time, the study confirms the need for the formulation of a state policy aimed at sustaining the national legal identity of Ukrainians abroad and at preserving their legal connection with Ukraine.

Comparison with other studies. The results obtained are broadly consistent with the conclusions of E. M. Libanova regarding the large-scale impact of wartime migration on the demographic and social development of Ukraine. At the same time, the present study places its emphasis specifically on the transformation of the legal consciousness and the legal identity of Ukrainians, which makes it possible to broaden the scholarly understanding of the consequences of contemporary migration processes.

The propositions concerning the influence of European integration on the development of the legal culture of Ukrainians correlate with the studies of V. Kovalchuk, T. Spesivtseva, and A. Pyvovar, who regard constitutional identity as an important element in the preservation of the statehood and legal sovereignty of Ukraine. In contrast to the said studies, however, the present article additionally analyzes the impact of digitalization and of electronic governance on the formation of the contemporary model of legal identity.

The findings of the study likewise complement the conclusions of M. Makarov and I. Lasek-Surowiec regarding the sociolegal adaptation of Ukrainian migrants in the countries of the European Union. The article substantiates the proposition that adaptation to foreign legal systems is accompanied by the formation of a dual legal socialization and of a transnational legal identity, which calls for the refinement of the mechanisms of state support for Ukrainians abroad.

Scholarly novelty (expanded). The scholarly novelty of the study consists in a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians under the conditions of global migration processes, of wartime challenges, and of Ukraine's European integration. The article systematically examines, for the first time, the interrelationship between wartime migration, the digitalization of public administration, and the transformation of the legal consciousness of Ukrainian citizens.

The scholarly novelty also lies in the proposed directions for the refinement of national legislation in the sphere of sustaining the legal connection of Ukrainians with their state, in particular with regard to the development of the digital identification of citizens, to the refinement of the legal status of Ukrainians abroad, and to the formulation of a state strategy for the support of legal identity under the conditions of the global mobility of the population.

Practical significance (expanded). The practical significance of the results obtained consists in the possibility of applying the formulated conclusions and proposals in the process of refining state migration policy and legislation in the spheres of citizenship, of digital governance, and of the protection of the rights of Ukrainian citizens abroad. The proposed recommendations may be drawn upon by public authorities in elaborating regulatory and legal acts directed at maintaining the legal connection of Ukrainians with the state under the conditions of prolonged outward migration.

Practical value also attaches to the proposals concerning the development of the mechanisms of the digital identification of citizens, the refinement of electronic public services, and the integration of Ukraine into the European digital space. The implementation of the proposed measures will contribute to enhancing the accessibility of public services for Ukrainians abroad, to strengthening citizens' trust in state institutions, and to the development of a contemporary model of electronic democracy.

The materials of the study may be drawn upon in scholarly activity, in the educational process when teaching the disciplines of constitutional law, the theory of the state and of law, international law, and migration law, and also in the practical activity of public authorities, diplomatic missions, centers of legal assistance, and organizations operating in the spheres of the support of Ukrainian migrants and of the protection of the rights of Ukrainian citizens abroad.

Conclusions

As a result of the study conducted, it has been established that the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians is undergoing substantial transformation under contemporary conditions owing to the influence of the full-scale war, global migration processes, European integration, and the digitalization of public administration. Legal identity today functions not only as a form of the juridical belonging of the individual to the state but also as a complex system of legal values, legal consciousness, models of legal behavior, and mechanisms of interaction between the citizen and state institutions.

The study has confirmed that wartime migration has become one of the key factors in the transformation of the legal consciousness of Ukrainians. The mass displacement of citizens beyond the borders of Ukraine has facilitated the integration of Ukrainians into the European legal space and the assimilation of the standards of the rule of law, of human rights, and of democratic governance. At the same time, prolonged residence abroad gives rise to the risks of

legal assimilation, of the weakening of national legal self-identification, and of the transformation of the traditional forms of the legal connection between citizens and the state.

It has been established that an important role in maintaining the legal identity of Ukrainians is played by the mechanisms of digitalization and electronic governance. The use of digital public services, of electronic identification, and of online access to administrative services ensures the possibility of the exercise of the rights of citizens regardless of their place of residence. Under contemporary conditions, a new element of legal identity is taking shape, namely digital legal identity, which combines the traditional mechanisms of civic belonging with the instruments of the electronic interaction between the individual and the state.

In the course of the study, it has been substantiated that the regulatory and legal framework of Ukraine in the sphere of the formation of legal identity requires further refinement in accordance with contemporary global challenges. In particular, the issues of the legislative regulation of the legal status of Ukrainians abroad, of the development of the mechanisms of digital identification, of the expansion of access to electronic public services, and of the harmonization of national legislation with the legal standards of the European Union are of pressing relevance.

On the basis of the analysis conducted, promising directions are proposed for strengthening the institution of the legal identity of Ukrainians, including the improvement of legislation in the spheres of citizenship and of digital governance, the establishment of state programs for the support of Ukrainians abroad, the development of digital legal identity, the strengthening of legal education, and the formulation of a state strategy for maintaining the legal connection of citizens with Ukraine under conditions of global population mobility.

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