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### **COMMON SENSE AS IDENTITY HEALTH: TOWARD A REFLECTION ON THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR**

**Abstract.** In the broadest sense, the purpose of the article can be defined as outlining the relationship between common sense and national identity in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The subject specificity emphasizes the problem of forming and nurturing the mental field of modern Russians as a painful state of their identity: common sense as a marker of identity health. The article structurally reflects and develops the idea of the study of common sense as a phenomenon that affects the formation of identity, which was first presented in the study "*Identity Security: from the Problems of Sectoral Definition to the Peculiarities of Didactic Definition*" (ISBN: 978-617-7600-61-8).

The methodological basis is the phenomenological guideline for direct study of the situation, which in this study is specified as a systematic analysis of experience that conveys value and political priorities.

The authors propose three contexts of analysis – semantic, practical philosophy, and philosophy of knowledge – according to which they establish criteria for determining the state of health of identity. Concluding that it is important to constantly analyze the mental field of modern Russians, the authors point out that this is a matter for a special research complex of human security. The conclusion is the thesis that the modern Russian identity is "sick" with a worldview disease, and that its "treatment" must take place through the shared responsibility of all Russians, through their repentance and rethinking.

The key provisions of the article were developed in an ongoing discussion and academic dialog between the authors.

**Keywords:** war, ideology, common sense, identity, identity security.

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**Introduction.** The world is reluctant to believe in the perilous state of the Russian mental spirit, and mostly speaks only of the radical outburst of Russia's political leadership. The war in Ukraine was not noticed in 2014 – a game of blindness; later, high diplomacy: "at Putin's "kilometer-long table" all leaders were shown only the interior of their countries' traditions" (Mudrakov (Introduction), 2022, p.11) – a game of comedy; finally, a regular Ramstein meeting and Moscow exile, but unfortunately, much longer discussions about *Atacms* or *Taurus* than the radius of their reach – a game of delayed reality. Ukrainians would like everything *earlier, faster, and more*, and it's understandable why, because they are paying with the lives of their heroes. The world is with Ukraine, but far from it.

The opposing sides are well aware that this war is a war for identity, Ukrainian identity: the Russians want to destroy it, and the Ukrainians want to preserve it. Therefore, the causes of the war are rooted in something that lies much deeper – in the history of the common and the history of difference, and thus in the formed mentalities, ways of cultural existence and social experience of the two peoples. That is, along with the *earlier, faster, and more*, we need to think about the *deeper* issues. We are talking about the origins and specifics of the formation of cultural, existential, and life priorities of the two peoples; we are talking about the mental cross-section of identities. However, it seems that this aspect continues to be either overlooked, silenced, or postponed by the international community. Is it blindness, comedy, and postponed reality again? Doesn't the world understand the problem in the "mysterious Russian soul," calling only the "Putin regime" to account and calling this war *his personal war*? These are not rhetorical questions, so this is a space of tasks for the humanitarian front of scholars, cultural and political researchers.

We should talk about its urgency as a necessity for the worldview and security of the whole of Europe. Undoubtedly, philosophy has great potential here. It is not for nothing that leading expert on European and transatlantic security E. Lucas notes that philosophers, literary critics and other specialists should be involved in developing tools to overcome Russian aggression (Lucas, 2022). Indeed, under these conditions, one needs to look *deeply* and understand the diversity of images not only of artistic but also of real content. Therefore, philosophy, in concentrating on such problems, goes back to the questions of the foundations of mental, cultural, existential, and belief priorities of large groups or the whole nation. It seems to us that the problematic specification of these areas is appropriate through the concept of "common sense", because its rather broad meaning includes such content blocks-concepts as "correctness", "common meanings", "common feelings" (Bruger, 2013, p.79).

**The purpose of the article** is to philosophically comprehend the concept of "common sense" as something that stands behind national identity, structurally and qualitatively influencing it. The quality of such meta-determination essentially specifies the state in which the national community is. Therefore, we call this state "identity health," which we define through the correlation of the concepts of "human" and "ideological" (Mudrakov, Liutko & Pavlyk, 2023). First and foremost, of course, we are talking about understanding the mental slice of the identity that came to Ukraine to take away the right to exist from another identity, the one that brought the war – the Russian identity. Therefore, it would be logical to outline these in the context of the defense of Ukrainian identity, that is, what we call "identity security" (Mudrakov, 2022).

**Analysis of the recent research and publications.** The understanding of "common sense" can be traced, in particular, to such classics of philosophical

thought as D. Hume (Hume, 2003) and A. Shaftesbury (Shaftesbury, 2000). Without their research, it will not be possible to approach it as a conceptually defined phenomenon. Similarly, we cannot do without interpretations of the semantic nature of this concept, which we will find in the *"Lexicon of Untranslatability"* (Bruger, 2013).

Understanding the mental dimension of identity as a "state of health" involves delving into the topic of "ideology as a determining factor" in relation to the interests of social groups. In this sense, the work of the German philosopher K. Duncker has become a canvas for us: he calls for "critical reflection on ideological concepts" (Duncker, 2006); he tries to bring the concept of ideology to the forefront, pointing out its close connection with the problems of epistemology and history; the concept of "ideology" is defined as a system of ways of representation that implicitly or explicitly claim to be absolute truth. However, the work of V. Yermolenko *"Fluid Ideologies"* is also a fundamental reference point in this topic (Yermolenko, 2020) about the deep variability of ideologies, their flow into each other, which leads to the value and anthropological criterion as a parameter of analysis, because this *fluidity* levels the political science framework of classifications of ideologies.

It can hardly be said that the palette of "common sense" research in this particular vein is too broad. Rather, the situation is the opposite. However, as an advisory reference that can form a certain list of references for the study of "common sense" as a phenomenon, it is worth mentioning the work of P. Pepinsky *"Worlds of Common Sense: Equality, Identity, and Two Modes of Impulse Management"* (Pepinsky, 1994), which was published at the end of the last century and offers a look at building and maintaining alternative worlds of common sense, comparing different models and pointing out that the contrast between them is a problem of future conflict at the intercultural level. We can only confirm this with our own life experience.

The article S. Prodanović *„The Structure of Common Sense and Its Relation to Engagement and Social Change – A Pragmatist Account"* (Prodanović, 2022) was a confirmation for us of the idea of interpreting "common sense" as an identity problem in the security dimension, as it confirms our call for social engagement in the development of security strategies, and on the other hand, emphasizes the actualized pragmatism of the approach. And the idea of the security state of communities as a state of "common sense" is to some extent revealed in the section of the monograph on identity/cultural security (Mudrakov, 2022).

The collective monograph offers a whole range of different studies *"Scientific Challenges to Common Sense Philosophy"* (Peels, Ridder, & Woudenberg, 2020). In it, the following publications are theoretically important for familiarization with this topic N. Lemos – by one of the most influential contemporary proponents of the common-sense tradition, who offers a general overview of the nature and scope of common sense beliefs. Equally important for the direction we have chosen from this collection are the materials that offer views on "free will and identity", "rationality", "morality, and religious beliefs".

In general, this prompted reflections on the manipulative use of "common sense" beliefs in the interests of political ideologies or even the construction of ideological and political concepts on them as such that form identity politics (in the negative sense of this concept: the politics of hatred of other identities).

#### **Formulation of the main material.**

##### *1. Features of the concept of "common sense"*

The capacity of the concept of "common sense" – "correctness", "common

meanings", "common feelings" – is somewhat scattered, so let us pay attention to the guidelines for the semantic combination of these senses: "the spectrum of meanings of English sense (as well as French sense) is so rich that it cannot be reproduced in all contexts by a single [...] equivalent [for example in other languages – *Authors*]. [...] seeing the phrase "common meanings" in the text, to think and feel in it also "correctness" and "common feelings" and seeing "common feelings", to think and feel in it also "common meanings" and "correctness", and so on, in fact, these are not three alternative concepts, but different sides of one multifaceted English concept" (Bruger, 2013, p.76). It is also worth noting that "common sense" as a common expression refers to a form of common human common sense, and also denotes a generally accepted opinion. "Common sense" is also understood as a concept, and even as a philosophical concept, the interpretation of which is reduced to a set of obvious truths on issues that all people should agree on. Typical examples of the first and second meanings are, respectively, the works of D. Hume (Hume, 2003, p.488) and A. Shaftesbury (Shaftesbury, 2000, pp. 29-69).

Therefore, we should continue to think of common sense as a concept that, in our context, reflects the content of the generally accepted human opinion on the principle of the absolute value of a person – the preservation of his or her life, rights and freedoms, which should not be leveled by any ideological and patriotic guidelines (Mudrakov, Liutko & Pavlyk, 2023). That is, the design of worldviews and the construction of social life through education and science, culture and art, religion, and political and ideological aspects should take place without deviations from this principle. Analyzing these deviations and preventing them is the subject of human security thinking, and it also constitutes the preventive component of security in general.

As for the security aspect, it is worth being more specific: We explained common sense through the concepts of "reasonableness" and "morality" and emphasized that it is produced by education and science, culture and art, religion and politics, and, of course, the quality of the media through the prism of cultural tradition (Mudrakov, 2022). Therefore, common sense, as a product of the functioning of these means, is the *object* of protection/understanding of cultural security, and its socio-cultural selfhood expression – identity – is the *subject* of protection/understanding. The peculiarities of the object and subject of protection can be productively interpreted through the sphere of *practical philosophy* and *philosophy of knowledge*.

## 2. "Common sense" in practical philosophy

The framework of practical philosophy focuses primarily on the concept of "morality," or rather "moral sense" ("correctness") as a necessary condition for the *worldview health* of society; this sense means both the *inclination* and the *ability* to form adequate ideas about the moral good as a fundamental element of the humanity of the group's worldview. That is, such a common value orientation should serve as a safeguard against perverted anti-human ideologies. The social and political equivalent of a "moral sense" is a "common feelings" as a necessary condition for *collectivity*; this sense means both the *inclination* and the *ability* to form adequate ideas about the public good as a characteristic feature of one's own identification. The peculiarity of its manifestation is through cultural and political activity, which is supposed to serve as a tool of self-defense, that is, through identity. Both history and modernity show us how anti-

human ideologies dampen the common sense of society and stupefy all its layers. Thus, the last century is a vivid example of the fusion and confrontation of such ideological monsters as communism and Nazism, between which one cannot discern a difference in terms of common sense, because the *fluidity* of these *ideologies* (Yermolenko, 2020) is equally dominated by brutal radicalism in relation to the human being as such. However, there is no need to go far back in history. Comprehending the above constructions in the orbit of the current Ukrainian defense, we note the *symbiotic reincarnation* of these monsters in the form of ruscism<sup>1</sup>, which is doctrinally formalized by the concept of the "russian world." This ideology has completely dehumanized modern russians: the *ability* to form adequate ideas about the moral and social good has been dimmed, as evidenced by such identity-mental markers as "*not everything is so clear*" and "*if it were not for us, there would be more victims of the war*", "*my country, right or wrong*", "*I justify russia, no matter what it does*," as well as "*nothing depends on us*", "*I am a small person*"<sup>2</sup>. The *inclination* in this formation arises from a belief in one's own moral right, or even a higher historical calling to destroy the entire Western world as degenerate and leading everyone to total moral decline: the ancient myth of the Western enemy. The political and cultural content of this ideology has been nurtured almost always and has become more acute over the past eight years with a particular dynamic, i.e., during the birth of the political Ukrainian nation and the "hot phase" of the war (from 2014 to the present): self-aggrandizement at the expense of humiliation of others<sup>3</sup>. In other words, one identity in its collective consciousness *normalizes*, that is, considers its superiority and superiority over other identities to be morally correct: the thesis of "the special moral task of modern russians in confronting (fictional) evil", which is legitimized, in particular, by moral authorities.

### 3. "Common sense" in philosophy of knowledge

The framework of the philosophy of knowledge focuses on the concept of "judgment", or rather "the quality of the meaning of this judgment" as a sign of the *health of the rationality* of society<sup>4</sup>; the quality of shared meaning refers to the *degree* of judgment that makes a common space possible. "It is a certain kind of common intelligence (intelligence commune) that spontaneously reaches a

<sup>1</sup> Following the official recognition of the russian political regime as the ideology of racism, we emphasize that, in our opinion, racism as a political ideology and social practice of the ruling regime of russia in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in our view, racism as an ideology and social practice of the russian regime of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century appeared as a symbiotic reincarnation of communism and nazism, as it is essentially based on the ideas of the "special civilizational mission" of the russians (nationalist myth) and the "seniority of the brotherly people" (tsarist-soviet myth): Both myths assert intolerance to elements of the culture of other nations; on soviet-style totalitarianism and imperialism, the use of russian Orthodoxy as a moral doctrine, and on geopolitical instruments of influence, primarily energy carriers for European countries, and military aggression against the countries that form the so-called post-soviet space. The doctrinalization of racism by the "russian world", among other things, combines the ideas of pan-Slavism, Eurasianism, messianism and imperialism.

<sup>2</sup> A good selection, classification, and analysis of such identity-mental markers was made by the BBC-Ukraine journalistic service, namely by E. Focht (Focht, 2022). We consider the study of such formulations to be a separate sphere of identity, which, in relation to the chosen context, gradually creates a methodological research base – *identity markers of writing* (Mudrakov, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> We explored this ideological and imperial narrative in the objectifications of literary meanings of different times in the soviet period and published it in the article (Mudrakov et al., 2020).

<sup>4</sup> We are referring to Habermas's idea of the *rational variability* of ideological systems that offer different ideological and worldview doctrines and emphases in achieving social progress (Habermas, 1981, pp. 445-446).

certain number of objects of knowledge. In this respect, such activity of the mind or the use of judgment is more or less developed in everyone, depending on how much one has more or less practice in such judgment [...]" (Bruger, 2013, p.78). The socio-cultural content of practices in self-positioning and especially in relation to different practices is a manifestation of the quality of the meaning of the judgments of collective identity – the worldview and rational bases of identification. By worldview and rational bases of identification we mean the whole range of means for explaining and justifying one's own identity in terms of cultural, historical, and political grounds: history, culture of memory, political tradition, etc. In this way, the main narratives of worldview, values, and ideology are produced and established. That is, in essence, the quality of judgments of a collective identity is a tool for forming a common moral background, ethical norms of self-positioning of this identity.

The last century is a source of examples in this sense: the aforementioned clash between communism and nazism is a competition in the *regulation* of common sense, that is, in the power of propaganda manipulations<sup>5</sup>. However, these examples have already been surpassed by russia's propaganda war against Ukraine, which has been going on for many years. The common intelligence (intelligence commune), which is *governed* by ideology, is based on narratives about a "special path", "great culture", etc., which are necessarily accompanied by ideas that flow into theses about a "fake people", "non-existence of Ukrainians" or "Ukrainians as wrong russians", to whom this great culture is like an older brother, i.e., russians and Ukrainians are one people<sup>6</sup>. One identity tries to absorb or destroy the other. This ideology has finally cynicized modern russians – the state of *health of the rationality of society*; what M. Kaldor called "a kind of privatization of violence" has taken place (Kaldor, 1999, p. 8), which is justified on the moral and general thinking level.

**Conclusions.** The concept of "common sense" in its semantic richness unites those characteristics of worldview and self-understanding that create a certain framework for the process of identity creation. Moreover, this framework can have both negative and positive markers for this progress, which accordingly fixes the "state of health of identity". The key criterion for determining these qualities is the principle of the absolute value of a person – the preservation of his or her life, rights and freedoms, that is, the quality of the correlation between the concepts of "human" and "ideological" in the creation of the mental

<sup>5</sup> Soviet propaganda was based on the ideology of Marxism-Leninism (stalinism), as well as the pragmatic interests and current goals of the state imperial power and the soviet party nomenclature. The propaganda was developed and directed by special party and state bodies and institutions and was officially called "*Propaganda and Agitation*", "*Propaganda and Mass Information*", "*Ideological and Educational Work*", and "*Education of the Masses*". The main goal of Soviet propaganda was to inspire the inevitability of the victory of communism around the world. The task was to instill in the Soviet people negative ideas about the West and to develop their ideological immunity to the harmful influence of the West.

The main themes of National Socialist propaganda were racism and anti-Semitism, the ideology of the "one German people" and military heroism, the image of the National Socialist woman, and the unconditional cult of the Führer. Film policy played a central role in National Socialist propaganda. Mass public events and marches, school education, and "*Hitler-Youth*" and "*German Girls' Union*" organizations, as well as material benefits for the population, also played a leading role. The main body responsible for disseminating and controlling National Socialist propaganda was the District Ministry of Public Education and Propaganda, headed by Propaganda Minister J. Goebbels.

<sup>6</sup> An example from history textbooks, scholarly monographs, or clumsy propaganda television programs would be too unconvincing, and thus a weak argument. That is why the most successful example of the main narrative here is putin's pseudo-article.

foundations of identity. Analyzing these processes is a task of identity security.

Practical philosophy defines the criterion of "identity health" as the "moral sense" and "common feelings" of the group. This made it possible to explain the quality and tactical and strategic priorities of the national identity of modern russians in relation to the war against Ukraine: according to these criteria, modern russian political ideology and social practice of ruscism is a rather deep "worldview disease" that was especially exacerbated during the war by terrible atrocities, and which emerged from an unreconciled political mythology that justifies violence in every way possible, and normalizes immoral acts as its special right. The philosophy of cognition defines the criterion of "identity health" as, among other things, "the quality of the meaning of judgments". This makes it possible to speak of a intelligence commune of modern russians as being shaped by a propaganda barrage of hatred against Ukraine. Therefore, the ideology of the "russian world" is a "worldview disease" of the modern russian, which consists of the template judgments of propaganda: he hates the world and, above all, his neighbor, trying to destroy it. It is therefore obvious why this ideology required the use of "privatized violence" as the main tool in domestic and international relations: all means of identity formation "heated" the situation to the point of explosion, and thus turned into pretexts for war.

Therefore, we define the study of the quality and style of such judgments, narratives, and perceptions as one of the key segments of identity (national) security, which, depending on the level of mastery of the methodology and the quality of implementation, should be a way to diagnose and prevent worldview diseases and combat identity politics. The main thing in this direction is to bring the world even closer to Ukraine by means of fundamental objective research, pointing to the historical experience that the cure for such diseases is the assumption of joint responsibility by all russians, their repentance, and rethinking both what they have done and their own indifference.

*Conflict of Interest and other Ethics Statements*

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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**Віталій МУДРАКОВ, Олена ГАПЧЕНКО, Світлана КОЗАЧЕНКО**

**ЗДОРОВИЙ ГЛУЗД ЯК ЗДОРОВ'Я ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ:  
ДО ОСМИСЛЕННЯ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ**

**Анотація.** У найширшому сенсі мету статті можна позначити як окреслення співвідношення «здорового глузду» та національної ідентичності в умовах російсько-української війни. Предметна конкретизація увиразнює проблему формування та плекання ментального поля сучасних росіян як хворобливого стану їхньої ідентичності: «common sense» як маркер здоров'я ідентичності. Стаття структурно відображає та розвиває думку дослідження common sense як феномену, що впливає на формування ідентичності, яка вперше презентовано в дослідженні «Гуманітарна безпека: від проблем галузевої визначеності до особливостей дидактичної визначеності» (ISBN: 978-617-7600-61-8). Методологічною основою є феноменологічна настанова щодо безпосереднього вивчення ситуації, що у цьому дослідженні конкретизується як системний аналіз досвіду, який транслює ціннісні та політичні пріоритети. Автори пропонують три контексти аналізу – семантичний, практичної філософії, філософії пізнання – відповідно до яких встановлюють критерії для визначення стану здоров'я ідентичності. Висновуючи про важливість постійної аналітики ментального поля сучасних росіян, автори вказують, що це справа спеціального дослідницького комплексу гуманітарної безпеки. Висновком є теза про те, що сучасна російська ідентичність «хвора» світоглядною хворобою, і що її «лікування» мусить відбуватися через спільну відповідальність усіх росіян, через їхнє каяття та переосмислення. Ключові положення статті напрацьовано в постійній дискусії та науковому діалозі авторів.

**Ключові слова:** війна, ідеологія, здоровий глузд, ідентичність, гуманітарна безпека.

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