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The personnel services of the Armed Forces and their components (subsystems) in the dimensions of the Russian–Ukrainian War

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Abstract

Using the examples of Russia and Ukraine, this article shows how universal human values, the civilisational choice of the state, and the related political regime (democratic or totalitarian) exert a decisive influence on the formation and orientation of personnel services systems in the armed forces. It demonstrates how the state's attitude towards the human person, life, and dignity shapes the structure and direction of personnel services in the armed forces. Particular attention is given to the key differences between the Ukrainian subsystem of religious support for service personnel and its Russian counterpart.

The article explains why a personnel services system with moral support and religious support subsystems exists and continues to develop in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. It also shows how values generally accepted in society shape moral readiness to choose good and justice in the conditions of war and in the repelling of aggression.

Keywords

personnel services, religious support, psychological support of personnel in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, combat and operational stress control, moral readiness of a serviceman, moral choice in wartime, Russian–Ukrainian War

Ukraine's struggle for existence has simultaneously become a struggle for its right to make a civilisational choice: the desire to join European civilisation and adapt to its norms and values (Rafalskyi and Maiboroda 2023, 669–670). According to Ukrainian sociologists, the ongoing Russian–Ukrainian War is a civilisational conflict that has continued for many centuries and has a long history of struggle between the settled West and the nomadic East. The conflict between the two civilisations arises from fundamental differences in values, economic and social organisation, attitudes towards freedom and power, and the desire either to live in peace or to engage in constant struggle (Rushchenko 2015, 243–244).

The purpose of this study is to show why this type of personnel services system exists and is developing in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, including its moral support and religious support subsystems. For this reason, the article applies axiological and civilisational approaches and draws on philosophy, sociology, and the history of military development.

1. Axiological dimension

An axiological, or value-oriented, approach provides the basis for understanding personnel services. Universal human values and the state's attitude towards them — whether compliance with or neglect of them — determine the architecture of the personnel services system in the armed forces.

According to Ukrainian scientists, the establishment, preservation and multiplication of universal human values is a real, albeit difficult, way to consolidate a political nation. Universal worldview guidelines always find a response and support in any society. Today, these guidelines determine the fate and form the rules of life of the most successful countries, with the exception of those societies where aggressive practices of the struggle for state power or encroachment on the sovereignty of other states are actively introduced (Rafalskyi 2018, 89).

Universal human values recognised by the international community include human life, dignity, freedom and personal security, and freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948). Article 3 of the Constitution of Ukraine likewise recognises the human being, life and health, honour and dignity, inviolability, and security as the highest social value (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 1996). Every person, as a member of society, also has the right to social security and to the

free development of personality in accordance with the structure and resources of each state, including a standard of living that encompasses medical care and necessary social services.

Ukraine and Russia have chosen different paths of development. Research indicates that despite being close together on the world values map, the values of Ukrainian society are still closer to those of Europe than to Russia's (Reeskens 2022; Tamulina 2022).

According to Timothy Snyder (2022a; 2022b), a well-known researcher of Eastern European history, today Russia is implementing the ideology of modern fascism. Ukraine, on the other hand, is a democracy and has chosen a European vector of development.

After the collapse of the USSR, Ukraine was characterised by respect for human honour and dignity; tolerance towards religious, cultural, and social differences; and the non-violent resolution of crisis situations, even on a national scale (for example, the political crises in Ukraine and the Russian Federation in 1993–1995 and the methods used to resolve them). At the same time, Ukrainian society has shown a strong sense of freedom and readiness to defend it at any cost, as demonstrated by the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity (Plokhyy 2016, 420–421, 429–430, 433–437; Snyder 2020, 135).

The following have remained characteristic of Russia:

- the population's flight from freedom and libertophobia, which in turn led to the suppression of individuality, merging with the masses and collectivism, and excessive dependence on the state;
- aggression and resentment, which required militarization and constant wars. The main function — preparation and waging of aggressive wars — also determined the peculiarities of Russian society. Such a society is based on the principles of mechanical solidarity and loyalty; it is kept in submission by police force and propaganda. War is a normal state for this society; indeed, it justifies all the inconveniences and cruelty of the system.

Russian society has always been characterized by the absolute power of the supreme ruler, the state (an expanding empire), the army, ideology and propaganda, or the Orthodox Moscow religious tradition as an ideological institution (or its equivalent, a substitute, as it was during the communist period in the form of Marxism-Leninism). The population was considered a cheap resource, measured in number (for example, by army regiments and divisions), and renewed naturally (Rushchenko 2020, 25, 27–28, 174, 180–184; Yakubova 2023, 40).

The modern representative of Russia's "Eurasian civilisation" may be described, in this analytical framework, as a type of personality combining aggression and an "escape from freedom," subordination and arbitrariness, loyalty to the state and apathy towards civic affairs, superficial emotionality and irrationalism, demonstrative external openness, and concealed deceit. Such a person is not attached to a local homeland and tends to regard any territory reached by a Russian soldier as part of "great Russia," while the fate of other peoples remains of little concern. This type of social formation provides favourable human material for aggressive state policy and the colonisation of captured territories. It is therefore unsurprising that the psychological portrait of the Russian occupier who has committed large-scale aggression against Ukraine in 2022, as compiled by Ukrainian military experts in 2022–2023, largely reflects the view expressed by a Ukrainian sociologist in 2020 (Klochkov 2024, 266–267).

Therefore, it is not surprising that social processes in the territories of Ukraine temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation in 2014–2021 generally reproduced the path of development of Russian society — a mixture of military dictatorship and reincarnated communism (Rafalskyi 2018, 79–81).

According to Ukrainian researchers, Russian official ideology resembles fascism: it establishes a cult of death, justifies war, and forms a readiness for violence (Romanyshyn 2025, 54). This is also visible in the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church. For example, the declaration of the XXV World Russian People's Council, held on March 27, 2024, under the leadership of Patriarch Kirill, stated that "from a spiritual and moral point of view, the special military operation is a Holy War," in which Russia and its people defend the single spiritual space of Holy Russia and protect the world from globalism and the "West," which is described as having fallen into Satanism (Albul 2024).

The interdependence and mutual conditioning of universal human values — the basis of society, nation, and state — and the values of a specific individual are clearly manifested in military service, where they form an important personal component: moral readiness. The future decisions, words, and actions of an individual must first be weighed against the moral ideal formed in consciousness through upbringing, education, and personal growth. The result of actualisation is ethical behaviour and the development of a moral personality. The interaction of moral personalities produces mutual trust, which depends indirectly on the moral behaviour of each serviceman and is transformed into society's trust in its armed forces as a social and state institution. At the next, interstate and civilisational, level, strategic interaction is formed, involving not

only a dialogical exchange of military capabilities but also an exchange of values. Success at this level can be achieved only if a formed system of values meets generally accepted standards (Krymets 2023, 99–105).

Thus, values are formed gradually, from the personal to the strategic, interstate, and civilisational levels. Values generally accepted in society are the basis for the formation of moral readiness. The moral readiness of a serviceman is a personal formation — an intention based on the conscious and voluntary acceptance, implementation, and protection of fundamental values: culture, country, family, state, and armed forces. Moral readiness indicates the ability, in each specific situation, to distinguish good from evil and to make and implement a moral choice in favour of the good. Its motivating force is a hierarchy of overriding values. Moral readiness is the result of upbringing and education and is expressed in the individual's desire to act morally in each specific situation.

Moral readiness is manifested in moral choice — the ability to perform an act in accordance with the norms of universal or social morality. Moral choice is based on an internal conviction in the need to act in accordance with moral norms and values. In fact, moral choice is a conscious preference for one or another variant of behaviour in accordance with personal or social moral attitudes.

The ability to perform a moral act entails a choice:

- to stand up for the defense of one's state or to evade the fulfilment of a constitutional and socially significant duty;
- to be ready to fight for socially significant goals, good, proper, moral, or to stand aside and contribute to the spread of evil;
- to adhere to the norms and rules of war during combat operations, or to completely surrender to revenge and commit aggressive actions and violence;
- to try to avoid collateral damage, to limit one's actions exclusively to military necessity, or, conversely, to use the entire arsenal of weapons without restriction;
- to choose the lesser evil from among all possible options for action in order to achieve more significant social goals and values, or to reduce collateral damage.

In the terminology of Ukraine's Western partners, this type of moral choice is often called "moral courage" (FM 6–22 2006). In Ukrainian military publications, the quality is referred to as "moral bravery" (TKP 3-(00)152(03).01 2021).

The moral readiness of military personnel in the Russian–Ukrainian War also has value and civilisational dimensions, manifested in the actions of Russian

and Ukrainian troops. The genocide of Ukrainian civilians in the temporarily occupied territories and the shooting and execution of Ukrainian prisoners of war by Russian forces have become recurrent and documented phenomena, whereas such cases involving Ukrainian military personnel have been isolated and unsystematic (UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine 2024; UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine 2025; Voice of America 2025). At the same time, unlike Ukrainian personnel, Russian service personnel are often not held responsible for such actions, partly because Russia has terminated the application of certain international instruments that it considers to contradict Russian legislation.

Alongside the theoretical analysis of the moral readiness of service personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to perform combat tasks, an expert survey was conducted to clarify the impact of moral readiness on the ability of service personnel to perform combat missions in the conditions of the Russian–Ukrainian War. Military leaders of the Armed Forces of Ukraine participated as experts. According to these experts, moral readiness can reduce the impact of psychotraumatic factors of combat, such as fear, panic attacks, and unjustified aggression; reduce the impact of long-term combat conditions, including shortages of food, water, heat, sleep, and rest, as well as fatigue; and promote compliance with the norms and customs of war and the norms of international humanitarian law (Pidopryhora 2023, 82–109, 130–141). This directly affects the scope of tasks to be performed by personnel services.

2. Civilizational dimension

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948) also states that every person has duties to society, although the fulfilment of these duties should not contradict fundamental principles. In many states, one such duty is defence against military aggression.

In Ukraine, the defence and protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity are the most important functions of the state and a matter for the entire Ukrainian people; they constitute the duty of citizens of Ukraine and are entrusted to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The state ensures the social protection of citizens who perform military service.

Thus, while a person has duties to society, the nation, and the state, including the duty of defence, that person remains a bearer of general rights. When

a person fulfils such duties — particularly the defence of the state as a duty and military service as its means of implementation — the state must ensure and promote respect for human rights.

As Lyudmila Budahiants (2012, 303–308) notes, the social, political, and cultural institutions of society, including the armed forces, can and should be purposefully changed in the direction of commensurability with humanistic values. To this end, civilised states, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, create personnel services systems in their armed forces — sustainment, personnel services, and personnel support — that include various parts, subsystems, components, or functions: religious support; morale, welfare, and recreation; health service support; psychological support and recovery; combat and operational stress control; public affairs; command information; and internal communication programmes (ADP 4–0 2019; UK Ministry of Defence 2015; Joint Publication 1–0 2016; Pidopryhora and Khairulin 2018, 59).

The presence, scale, and focus of the activities of these personnel services systems indicate the level of orientation of states towards ensuring human rights in the context of fulfilling the most important social duty — defense.

In particular, in the Russian–Ukrainian War, as a measure of humanism and a civilized attitude to human rights during the performance of the duty to defend the state, it is appropriate to consider the attitude towards one's service personnel who were captured by the enemy; the attitude towards service personnel who received combat mental trauma or injuries.

As Vasyi Osodlo and Lyudmila Budahiants (2022a, 113–122) note, only a society that has “nurtured the idea of human rights and freedoms, humanism as the realization of respect for human dignity” has realized the fate of those who suffered combat mental trauma as significant for the nation and the government, and the task of “overcoming the stigmatization of veterans and not leaving them alone with the heavy echoes of harsh battles” became the responsibility of society under modern conditions. The approach to overcoming combat trauma through respect, cognitive practices and psychotherapy, rather than through shame, stigmatization, threats and punishment, was developed precisely in European countries with strong traditions of respect for human life and dignity.

We should also note that the attitude of the state towards its citizens in the context of their fulfilment of their duty to defend it (military service) in modern conditions is an important motivational factor that determines the desire of citizens to enter military service or continue it. In particular, among the main reasons why in 2019–2020 service personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

did not want to continue military service after the expiration of the first contract were ‘the lack of balance between official and free time; a condescending attitude towards a person; an outdated style of communication and “bureaucratic” management’ (Osodlo and Budahiants 2022b, 89–97). The abovementioned problems are connected with the education of officers as leaders, with the necessity of changing the philosophy of communication in the armed forces and the introduction of standards and styles of management of the NATO armed forces (Huliak et al. 2022, 105–113).

Deep civilisational orientations observed in Ukrainian and Russian society may be reflected in citizens’ attitudes towards religion. The difference between Russian and Ukrainian attitudes towards holidays traditionally celebrated in both states after the collapse of the USSR is particularly revealing. According to a sociological survey conducted in 2018, for 71% of Russians the most important holiday was Victory Day on May 9, followed by New Year (60%), Easter (31%), Women’s Day on March 8 (29%), Christmas (25%), Soviet Defenders Day on February 23 (16%), and May Day (11%). At the same time, only 16% of respondents associated Easter with religion; 30% regarded it as a cultural and historical tradition and 25% as a family tradition. This hierarchy of holidays among Russians has remained generally stable. In 2006, the five most popular holidays were New Year (82%), Victory Day (41%), Easter (35%), Women’s Day (31%), and Christmas (26%).

By contrast, in a survey conducted almost simultaneously, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology found that the most popular official holidays among Ukrainians were Easter (82%), Christmas (81%), and New Year (79%), followed by Women’s Day (45%), Trinity (35%), Victory Day (31%), and Independence Day (16%). This difference may be explained by the continued influence of Soviet ideology and propaganda on Russian society and by Ukrainian society’s return to its real values (Romanyshyn 2025, 18–23).

The attitude towards religion in Russia can serve as an example of the permanent aggressiveness of Russian society and the fascist policy of the state. It is no secret that in the armed forces of many states, religious support is a component of personnel services or a function of military command. After the collapse of the USSR, Ukraine and Russia gradually built up their subsystems of religious support. For a certain time, these subsystems of Personnel services were even somewhat similar to each other, and radically different from those existing at that time, which allowed Ukrainian specialists to single out a specific, so-called “secular” model of religious support of service personnel, inherent

only to the armed forces of the post-Soviet space. In many ways, similar “post-Soviet” approaches determined the gradual transformation of both Religious support subsystems from “secular” to a model similar to the Western European one (Pidopryhora and Khairulin 2018, 57–91, 92, 97).

However, we will highlight two key differences that, despite similar trends in historical development, still distinguish the Ukrainian religious support subsystem from the Russian one. First, the beginning of the Russian–Ukrainian War in 2014 revealed the imperfection of the then existing religious support subsystem of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which corresponded to a “secular” model for meeting the religious needs of service personnel, and prompted its gradual transformation. An important aspect of this transformation was a human-centred approach to meeting religious needs: prioritising individual work with service personnel, work in small groups, educational activities aimed at forming mental resilience to the factors of modern combat, and support for the families of service personnel.

In the Russian army, by contrast, the predominance of the ideological component in personnel services also shaped the development of religious support, particularly through the use of a theocentric approach, which reduced spiritual support mainly to rituals and collective forms of work with personnel, including agitation (Pidopryhora and Khairulin 2018, 99–100). This was connected with the fact that in order to form a homogeneous and unreflective mass population the former communist regime actively introduced collectivism and the loss of personal responsibility and self-identification.

After the collapse of the USSR, a new idea emerged in Russia: the need to protect Russian Orthodoxy from Western ideology. The Russian Orthodox Church, which functioned as the dominant official church, inherited the ideological and spiritual function of substantiating general civilisational differences. The influence of the communist regime on popular spirituality meant that post-Soviet people first sought involvement in the Church not through internal spirituality but through ritual performance; that is, external demonstrative practice. Such church activity did not require deeply educated spiritual mentors but rather performers of external ritual attributes, which formed the basis of the theocentric approach (Pidopryhora et al. 2020, 51–77).

Second — and most importantly — Ukraine, like other civilised states, used religion primarily to satisfy the religious needs of service personnel in its armed forces. In many armies, religious support is part of comprehensive personnel services for combat operations, and this is a civilised practice. Russia, by contrast,

has also used religion as an important component of information and psychological operations (PsyOps) against Ukraine and its armed forces. The decisive factor was the presence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate on Ukrainian territory, which the author considers subordinate to and controlled by the Russian Federation (Pidopryhora 2019, 36–41; Pidopryhora 2020, 122–127, 475–488, 499–500).

The Russian–Ukrainian War, launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in February 2014, revealed different orientations and approaches of the opposing sides to supporting the personnel of their Armed Forces in conditions of war and military service. We believe that the reason for this is the value orientations of Ukrainians and Russians, and, accordingly, their belonging to different civilisations based on fundamental (universal, recognised by the world community) values. The socio-cultural differences between the parties to the conflict are emerging. There has also been a certain grouping of the world's states regarding this war. As Serhii Plokhyy has noted, 'for many of Ukraine's allies, this war has become not only the largest and deadliest military conflict in the world since the Second World War, but also the first major war with clear moral guidelines after the victory over Nazism. After the global conflict of 1939–1945, this is the first war in which it is clear from the very beginning who is the aggressor and who is the victim, who is the villain and who is the hero, and whose side you want to take' (Plokhyy 2023, 312).

Ihor Rushchenko (2020, 195–196) states that the concept of civilisation has two components which are reflected, among other things, in the military organisation of the state. The first is the elements of material culture: weapons, means of warfare, the level of military science and education, statutes and guidelines that regulate the order of actions of military personnel in various situations, etc.

The second is the value and semantic structures of collective and individual consciousness and the influence of religions and moral imperatives; these are such important things as the value of human life, attitude to combat and non-combat losses, attitude to the wounded and prisoners of war, the price of victory over the enemy or moral responsibility for defeat, etc. Values are mostly not written in manuals and are not reflected in textbooks that future officers study; they are mostly not formalized but present in people's minds as facts of consciousness, and therefore affect the actions of soldiers, from commanders to ordinary soldiers.

The civilisational approach allows us to assert that the Russian–Ukrainian War has an inter-civilisational character. Ukraine remains an outpost of European

(Western) civilisation and is waging a war for its existence and its own identity (Gorbulin 2017, 251; Perepelytsia 2015, 40–41; Rushchenko 2020, 187–208).

The level of civilisational development as a set of economic, technological and military-technical achievements, and the nature of spiritual culture, basic values, affect military construction in peacetime and the state of combat readiness and military power of the state during war. Therefore, the civilisational dimension of war is gradually changing the paradigm of national security. As Oleh Rafalskyi (2018, 56) and Ihor Rushchenko (2020, 51) note in their studies, Ukraine, in accordance with its own cultural core, has made its geopolitical choice in favour of Europe. So now Ukrainians are carrying out military construction as a frontier of the Western world, and accordingly are looking for allies and positioning Ukraine as an outpost of Western civilisation. Therefore, in military construction, they should be guided by those models that exist and are practiced in the Armed Forces of the states of European civilisation — NATO and the European Union. And these models and practices, in turn, should be based on the fundamental values of European civilisation, not on the achievements of the former USSR.

At the beginning of the Russian–Ukrainian War, the personnel services generally accepted in the armed forces of NATO and European Union member states formed a system that reflected the attitude of states towards their citizens in the conditions of military service. This system usually included religious support; morale, welfare, and recreation; psychological support or combat and operational stress control; public affairs and command information, including internal communication; and legal and social support (Pidopryhora and Khairulin 2018, 57–58).

In particular, religious support was more aimed at ensuring the religious needs of multi-confessional military units, moral support of a person in war conditions, the formation of psychological readiness for the defense of the state and psychological resilience in combat conditions (Pidopryhora 2020, 106). Although religious support in a certain way explained the reasons for and necessity of using Armed Forces, the ideologizing of war and substantiating its necessity with a specific enemy (in the conditions of deployment of military units outside the borders of the state, their enemy, as a rule, was representatives of other religions) were not considered the main functions and were not the predominant areas of activity. The main approach was anthropocentrism, which, in contrast to theocentrism, involved focusing efforts not on war agitation and conducting rituals, but on individual assistance to service personnel and support for their families.

Public Affairs and Command Information (internal communication, informing personnel and communicating with commanders) aimed to clearly demonstrate combat tasks and explain all aspects of combat missions (including the law of war, international humanitarian law, and moral aspects) to build mutual trust between military command and personnel, and to inform society about the activities of the Armed Forces.

The psychological component (psychological support or combat and operational stress control) was usually not isolated and included the formation of psychological readiness for the defense of the state and psychological resilience in combat conditions: preparing the human psyche for combat operations, developing the necessary techniques and methods of action in combat, recovery and assistance after combat, and rehabilitation after prolonged combat operations, mental trauma, or injuries.

Until 2014, personnel support in Russia and Ukraine developed along broadly similar lines and included informational-propaganda (ideological), psychological, legal and disciplinary components, as well as religious support. Religious support was part of the ideological component (Pidopryhora 2020, 83, 112). From 2014 until the beginning of the Russian Federation's large-scale military invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the personnel services of the Russian Federation, Belarus, China, North Korea, and Iran remained largely similar to the former Soviet, "Eastern" model, characterised by an emphasis on political and ideological work and collective ideological and political education of service personnel (Pidopryhora and Khairulin 2018, 92–110). Such a system corresponded fully to the spirit of the totalitarian regimes operating in those states.

By contrast, the development of personnel support in the Ukrainian army in 2014–2016 began to undergo significant changes. In particular, a steady trend emerged towards the predominance of the psychological component over the informational-propaganda (ideological) component; this is a stable characteristic of democratic states and, at the same time, a distinctive feature separating them from totalitarian regimes (Pidopryhora 2020, 112; Pidopryhora 2025a, 371–378; 2025b, 114–115).

Confirmation of the predominance and priority of the psychological component over the informational or ideological one — in the Ukrainian army, the informational component has been called moral support since 2024 — can be seen in the fact that field manuals and regulations on psychological support were approved in 2024 (Procedure for conducting Psychological Support 2024; Procedure for providing Psychological Assistance 2024; Procedure for organising

Psychological Recovery 2024; Instruction on Organising Psychological Training 2024), whereas the regulation on moral support was approved only in 2025 (Procedure for organising Moral Support 2025). In addition, in 2022–2025 religious support in the Ukrainian army was separated from the informational or ideological component and became a separate function, as in NATO countries (FM 3–83(1–05) 2025). According to our survey of experts among psychological support officers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Ukrainian model of personnel support formed by 2025 was more adapted to the Russian–Ukrainian War than the previous model that had existed before 2014; 60.6% of respondents assessed it highly (Pidopryhora and Hryliuk 2025, 430–444).

If the Russian Personnel services was characterized by a return to the ideological component, the Ukrainian one increasingly took on the outlines of a system similar to the Euro-Atlantic one. Despite similar trends in the development of these personnel services systems in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation described by us using the example of religious support (Pidopryhora and Khairulin 2018, 113–114), the systems developed in two different directions. This can also be explained by the fact that despite the relative proximity of Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the world values map, researchers note significant progress of Ukrainians towards modern European values (Ukraine in WVS 2020; WVS in Ukraine 2020).

This study must also explain the factors that influenced the development of personnel services and the views and practical actions that caused the personnel services system of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to be inconsistent with the realities of the Russian–Ukrainian War.

The factors that influenced the development of personnel services were as follows:

- the predominance of the ideological component (political work) in the personnel services of the former Soviet Armed Forces (Pidopryhora 2020, 83–95);
- the method of creating the Armed Forces of Ukraine based on the use of former Soviet models (Chorny 2009, 86–87; Plokh 2016, 416–417);
- similar trends in the development of personnel services in Ukraine and Russia after the collapse of the USSR, as well as attempts by Russia to influence socio-political processes and military development in Ukraine and impose its models on Ukraine (Pidopryhora and Khairulin 2018, 113–114; Pidopryhora and Sokoliuk 2020, 73–78);

- the evolutionary transition of Ukrainian society from closed totalitarianism to open democracy, and the subsequent reorientation of military development towards the model of NATO member states as more humanistic and more consistent with the values and interests of the Ukrainian nation;

Russia's aggression and military invasion against Ukraine in 2014, which marked the beginning of the Russian–Ukrainian War and highlighted problems in the readiness of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, including personnel services, for combat operations, as well as the need to improve psychological support and develop psychological and psychophysiological rehabilitation.

In addition, another important factor influencing the development of the personnel support system should be noted: until 2014, the Armed Forces of Ukraine focused excessively on ensuring military discipline rather than on areas that would more directly determine readiness to repel the armed aggression of the Russian Federation, including military leadership, combat and operational stress control, psychological rehabilitation, and religious support (Pidopryhora 2020, 276–277; Pidopryhora and Khairulin 2018, 114–115).

Conclusions

Thus, using the example of Ukraine and Russia, universal human values, the civilisational choice of the state, and the associated political regime — democratic or, conversely, totalitarian, fascist, or racist — have a decisive influence on the development of personnel services and determine their value orientation.

1. If the person is recognised as the highest value, as is typical of modern democracies, the state continually expands the range of benefits and assistance, including greater attention to preparation for repelling armed aggression and to psychological assistance for participants in hostilities. If the person is merely an instrument of the state and is not considered the highest value, as is typical of totalitarian political regimes, expanding the range of rights and freedoms and ensuring decent conditions for military service and combat operations will not be priorities for the state. Therefore, personnel services in a democratic regime will be characterised by the predominance of the psychological component over the informational or ideological component and by the separation of religious support into an independent function, as in NATO countries. Personnel services in a totalitarian regime will be characterised by the significant predominance

of the ideological component over the psychological component, and religious support will be considered part of propaganda rather than assistance to service personnel.

2. In current conditions, modern European states have gradually become war-denying societies and are less willing to give up benefits for the sake of protection from aggression, as illustrated by a 2023 survey of German citizens (Pysanska 2017; Nesterenko 2023). This, in turn, requires more effort to form citizens' psychological readiness and psychological resilience to repel aggression, and to ensure effective psychological rehabilitation and return to peaceful life; in other words, it requires powerful psychological support.

Due to their inherent aggressiveness and resentment, totalitarian states will focus more efforts on the ideological component, part of which will be religious support.

Also, for totalitarian states, in conditions of permanent formation of the image of the enemy from other states (external enemies) or a certain part of their own citizens (internal enemies), the tolerance of citizens to violence becomes the norm — anyone can find themselves in the role of executioner or victim. Therefore, psychological trauma becomes the norm of life, and power can be built on criminal orders and relations.

Imperial-type states (such as the Russian Federation) often start wars of aggression to divert attention from their internal problems. Wars of aggression require a stronger justification, so the advantage of the ideological component in Personnel services becomes obvious.

Empires usually offer their citizens a certain set of economic benefits in exchange for their non-interference in politics (tacit consent), including the use of armed forces against other states. On the other hand, ensuring all the needs of combatants and war veterans will be mainly material (various additional payments and social preferences), as well as “public recognition” under the guise of involvement in various measures of ideological preparation of the next generation for current or future wars, rather than directing efforts and funds to overcome war trauma, psychological assistance and rehabilitation. This will turn veterans of wars of aggression into carriers of mental trauma and will generate even more violence in society.

3. In societies where the armed forces focus on saving the lives and health of service personnel, efforts are directed towards their ability to survive on the battlefield, reduce damage to civilian objects, and avoid or minimise civilian casualties. To solve these problems, significant resources are spent on protection

and equipment, including the best models of weapons and military vehicles capable of effective protection. This additionally motivates citizens for military service, builds their confidence, and requires less effort from the informational component; that is, explanation and additional motivation.

4. Moral readiness is an important personal formation that enables a soldier to make and implement a moral choice in favour of what is good, proper, and just. It promotes the soldier's observance of the norms and customs of war and the norms of international humanitarian law, while at the same time reducing the impact of traumatic combat factors on the psyche. In my opinion, the most appropriate component for forming moral readiness within the general army personnel support system is religious support.

5. The studies conducted earlier on the historical development of individual elements of personnel services have merely recorded Ukraine's attempts to orient military development towards the models of civilised states. Only in combination with axiological and civilisational approaches do the results of these studies provide an understanding of the reasons for this transformation.

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