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Ukrainians' perceptions of social solidarity: Empirical verification of the representational field

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Abstract. The article presented an analysis of theoretical and empirical studies of social representations of solidarity among Ukrainians, carried out from an interdisciplinary perspective and using the method of free association experiment. On the basis of theoretical and empirical analysis, it was proved that solidarity is a fundamental psychological prerequisite for social change, and understanding its nature, forms and status is important for social development in general, and in particular, in the context of state-building. The empirical study of social representations of solidarity was carried out within the framework of the psychosemantic approach through the symbolic verbal mediation of these representations/perceptions and their socio-cultural context. The findings indicated a well-structured and coherent psychological structure of social solidarity representations, with a clearly defined core that extends into additional layers, suggesting a range of possible connections between solidarity and different aspects. The interpretation of these findings highlighted the dominant value-based elements of social solidarity, such as ideology, patriotism and spirituality, which were influenced by the current social reality and its willingness to accept and implement the changes necessary for successful modernisation, framed by a shift in emphasis towards subjectivity in the cultural context of action. Thus, attention was focused not only on the end result, but also on the actions that contribute to its achievement

Keywords: social solidarity; social representations; free associative experiment; nuclear and basic layers of representations, close and distant periphery of representations; associates; value-motivational dominants of solidarity

INTRODUCTION

There is a pressing demand for comprehensive theoretical and methodological approaches to the psychological regulation of socio-political relations. This includes developing a practical model for interaction among actors at various levels of the power hierarchy to promote societal consolidation and advance national interests. Equally important is uncovering a holistic understanding of social solidarity as the foundation for all unifying processes. This phenomenon represents a new, dynamic form of solidarity – flexible, cross-border, and

encompassing both physical and digital spaces. It transcends temporal limitations, lacking a definitive state and evolving continuously. The central objectives, therefore, involve identifying pathways to achieve social cohesion through fostering the responsible participation of every individual in the development of social relations. Equally crucial is designing a flexible and effective mechanism to sustain the stability of the social system, alongside tools to address internal and external threats to national security. The search for innovative forms of

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interaction is becoming increasingly relevant. These forms must uphold and preserve societal integrity by adhering to principles of mutual understanding, collaboration, agreement, tolerance, social justice, and shared responsibility among all participants. Such approaches are essential for counteracting trends of anomie, atomisation, differentiation, stratification, disintegration, and the polarisation of a society undergoing modernisation.

The concept meaning of “solidarity” has not yet been the subject of the detailed psychological analysis, and therefore to highlight its boundaries have to rely on the experience of defining this term in philosophy, political science, sociology, theology and other scientific fields. Philosophers define solidarity as one of the principles of social ethics, based on the belief that irreconcilable conflicts of interest between individuals do not exist. Its natural foundation and ontological premise lie in sociability – a deeply inherent trait of mutual assistance and cooperation, characteristic of the vast majority of social organisms (Shynkaruk, 2002). Social solidarity, as a form of unity, is a dynamic system acutely responsive to internal and external processes, phenomena, and threats, constantly striving toward cohesive monolithic integrity. Simultaneously, it serves as a persistent factor shaping the nature, quality, and direction of social, including societal (public), development and significantly influencing nearly all aspects of life.

At its core, social solidarity emerges as the outcome of a process that establishes a new value foundation for implementing transformative changes in contemporary social development. An analysis of recent literature highlights the vigorous exploration of concepts such as “social unity”, “consolidation”, and “solidarity”. These terms, often used interchangeably, are examined within diverse methodological traditions, including sociology, psychology, political science, cultural studies, philosophical anthropology, social philosophy, and religious studies. However, given the societal characteristics of social solidarity, the predominance of desolidarity or negatively directed localised solidarity tendencies (according to the type “against”), the need for a paying attention at the psychosocial level of this problem is relevant. In this view, the foundation of studying solidarity lies in social identity and intergroup relations and interactions. Contemporary Ukrainian psychology offers numerous studies relevant to the concept of social solidarity. These include works addressing issues of national and social identity, such as the formation of political and legal consciousness among youth (Dukhnevych, 2013; Sievers *et al.*, 2017), socio-psychological characteristics of communities and their developmental prospects (Vasutyńskyi, 2010), and subjective dimensions of nation-building (Tatenko, 2021). Other studies explore national consolidation in the context of nation-building (Sushyi, 2018), the social order and its psychological determinants, including norms, traditions, and attitudes (Tytarenko *et al.*, 2014), as well

as factors, types, and mechanisms of social consolidation (Ovcharov, 2011). Furthermore, group psychology and the psychological support of social transformations have been examined through the lens of role interaction and the principles of role complementarity (Sliusarevskyi *et al.*, 2020). Despite these valuable contributions, a comprehensive scientific psychological theory of social solidarity is yet to be developed. Such a theory would encompass “knowledge and mastery of individual and supra-individual mental phenomena, rooted in the historical and cultural unity of people, their interactions, and collective activities, manifesting in individual, group, and intergroup behavior” (Sliusarevskyi *et al.*, 2020).

Social solidarity is a fundamental psychological prerequisite for any social change. Understanding its nature, characteristics, and state remains a critical issue in social development. While the socio-psychological and political dimensions of solidarity and related concepts such as cohesion and conflict remain underexplored, sociological approaches to these phenomena have received greater attention. Nonetheless, scholars generally agree that social solidarity serves as the glue holding people together despite their differences. It operates intrinsically, encouraging unity not through coercion but through mutual reinforcement. This concept describes a society or community characterised by shared values, beliefs, interests, goals, norms, and functional interdependence. It fosters coherence in actions aimed at realising collective interests and goals. At its core, social solidarity is the outcome of a process that establishes a new value foundation for radical transformations in contemporary social development. It is expressed through various forms of readiness: contributing to societal well-being, demonstrating trust, care, and compassion, making responsible choices, embracing creativity and closeness, and promoting cooperation and inclusivity.

Given the theoretical and empirical importance of studying social solidarity within the framework of social psychology, several key tasks emerge, collectively aimed at shaping a new scientific theory. Chief among these is the examination of social representations of the solidarity phenomenon, especially within the Ukrainian context, which is characterised by dynamic and rapid transformations across all spheres of life. This focus is essential for understanding how solidarity is perceived, interpreted, and operationalised in a society undergoing significant change. Focusing on social representations allows for an exploration of how solidarity is reflected in public consciousness, revealing not only the evaluative attitudes of individuals and society toward various aspects of reality but also the contextual nuances of solidarity as it manifests in specific situations. This approach facilitates the identification and understanding of context-oriented solidarity, providing deeper insights into its forms and functions within a

dynamically evolving societal framework. Moreover, this approach will explore the possibilities of development and functioning of social solidarity representations, depending on the nature of human interaction with social reality. Thus, "construction of representations by the individual is his/her construction of the subjectively represented world where his/her life takes place" (Zhovtianska, 2020). This direction and organisation of the study also orients to find ways to regulate the activities of solidarity representations of the individual and the social community as a whole. So, it should be emphasised that modern reality requires from those who try to comprehend it, readiness to accept and "tame", in addition to the usual things, also that is in danger of destroying the ordinary world.

Considering the complexity of the empirical study of social representations, author has focused on elucidating the essence of this concept in psychology. Based on the analysis of the source base (Moscovici, 2001; Lindenberg *et al.*, 2006; Syniavskiy & Serhienkova, 2007; Prykhodko & Yurchenko, 2012; Hakoköngäs, 2017; Fonseca *et al.*, 2018; Batel & Castro, 2018; Goroshko & Poliakova, 2019; Buhagiar & Sammut, 2020; Jaspal & Nerlich, 2020), authors focused on the most promising and appropriate interpretation of the approach: "Mental representations as higher human cognitions are formed and expressed through symbolic mediation" (Flick *et al.*, 2015; Zhovtianska, 2020; Romaioli & Contarello, 2022). This connection between symbols and representations indicates the extent to which studies of representations are relevant to the study of cultural phenomena. The systemic development of social representations is inherently tied to the broader restructuring of society and social relations. This involves addressing fundamental questions about how individuals perceive the world, the roles they see themselves occupying within it, and the meanings they assign to their reality. These meanings, as V. Frankl (2016) suggests, serve as the "driving force of life", rather than merely being a "secondary rationalisation" of instinctual drives. Furthermore, Frankl emphasised that the pursuit of meaning and life values often generates internal tension rather than inner equilibrium, highlighting the complex and dynamic nature of this process. This perspective underscores the transformative potential of exploring representations and their role in shaping individual and collective experiences within a rapidly changing social environment. Thus, the purpose of the article is to describe and interpret the results of a study of solidarity social representations among Ukrainians on the basis of a free associative experiment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Based on the above, author has chosen the free associative experiment (FAE) as the main research method at this stage, which occupies a worthy position in the practice of psycholinguistic and socio-psychological

research. The results obtained during its implementation can be used as material for further study of socio-psychological features of social solidarity as a basis for developing its theoretical definitions, empirical methods and techniques of its research and structuring models.

Building on these principles, it was proposed that studying social representations of solidarity through a FAE could uncover both superficial and transient meanings, as well as deeper, core structures within these representations. This study included 75 participants, who were not divided into distinct groups, although they varied in socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, and place of residence. This diversity allowed for a more objective reflection of various aspects of the phenomenon, providing a broader understanding of how solidarity is perceived across different segments of society. Author emphasised only that the study covered representatives of different territorial parts of Ukraine, different professions and age categories. Author used the word-incentive "solidarity" to conduct the FAE. The study was conducted online using Google form. The respondents were explained that the purpose of the study is to investigate the individual representations of the word-stimulus, which is offered to them. They were asked to write as many words as possible that they associated with the word "solidarity". They were also told that the study was confidential. It was used free associations, where the number of updated words is not limited.

The final stage of the research procedure was the processing of word-associations produced by respondents in FAE. The procedure of processing the obtained data was to analyse the frequency of associations for the stimulus word "solidarity" and further interpretation of the obtained data. During the data processing, all responses were considered, including individual (single) reactions. A frequency analysis of the associations was conducted to identify the core of solidarity representations, which was defined as responses given by more than 20% of the participants. Additionally, author identified the base layer of solidarity representations, consisting of responses from 10% to 20% of respondents, as well as the close and distant peripheries, which included associations from fewer than 10% of participants, along with individual reactions. This approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of the structure and variation within the representations of solidarity. All survey participants were informed about how their anonymity would be ensured, the purpose of the survey, how their data would be used, and the associated risks. The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of The Declaration of Helsinki (1975).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 498 reactions to the word-stimulus were collected, of which 39 were distinct responses, and 111 were individual (single) reactions. This distribution

highlights the diversity of associations while also indicating the presence of less frequent, unique responses. The frequency analysis of the respondents' reactions for

the stimulus word "solidarity" is given below in Table 1, where the exact number of respondents who indicated the relevant associations is given in brackets.

Table 1. FAE quantitative results on social representations of solidarity among Ukrainian respondents

Stimulus word	Representations core	Base layer	Close periphery	Distant periphery
Solidarity	Support (27); Like-minded people (24).	Unity (20); Friendship (20); Brotherhood (13); Mutual assistance (17); Mutual understanding (18); Assistance (13); Altruism (12); Common thought and action (13); Respect (12); Complicity (12).	Consent (11); Side by side (11); Understanding (11); Politeness (10); Responsibility (10); Cooperation (10); Empathy (9); Patriotism (9); Common interests (9); Unanimity (8); Observance of the commandment of love for one's neighbour (9); Human centredness (8); Truthfulness (8); Defence (8); Loyalty (6); Brotherhood (8); Mutual respect (6); The spirit of sociability (6); Useless love (6); Commonwealth (6); Community (6); Equality (6); Compassion (6); Circular guarantee (6); Soldier (6).	Commonwealth, understanding, sociability, indifference, unity of interests, unity of standards, common joy, unity, the gift of being united, friendliness, purpose, devotion, solidarity, a person with the same principles, sincerity, attentiveness, wisdom, tact, resilience, nobility, courage, common goal, support, civic responsibility, co-responsibility, patience, partnership, protection, virtue, responsible, desire for good to another person, friendship, mutual love, kindness, living Christian faith, unhyprocritical love, human dignity, wisdom of life, manifestation love of Christ, fidelity to the truth of justice and mercy, passion, community, kinship, integrity, similarity, indifference, sensitivity, humanity, close, equal, contract, together, victory, purpose, self-help, flexibility, compromise, together, many, carol, gift, interaction, correctness, independence, destiny, similarity, views, contact, obedience, interests, accuracy, subordination, wealth, confidence, seriousness, costume, numerous, feel reliability, lots of, people.

Source: compiled by the author

The content of the representations core component for solidarity (two). The data reveals a shared understanding of the essence of solidarity among the respondents. The central associations highlight that solidarity is perceived as an interaction based on support and consensus (such as mutual support and like-mindedness). Among the majority of participants, solidarity is seen not as something arbitrary, but as rooted in common beliefs and opinions, which are further elaborated in other layers of representation. Subsequent layers of the solidarity representations gradually uncover the differentiation and individualisation of this social interaction. The foundational layer includes associations (nine) that emphasise key characteristics of support, such as mutual assistance, understanding, help, altruism, shared thoughts and actions, and respect, along with types of interactions associated with solidarity (unity, brotherhood, and friendship).

In the close periphery (twenty-five), respondents clearly associate solidarity with friendship, which is manifested through fraternity and brotherhood. These connections, identified in the basic representations, are elaborated in the close periphery with a range of related attributes such as agreement, companionship, understanding, politeness, responsibility, cooperation,

empathy, patriotism, shared interests, unanimity, the fulfillment of the gospel commandment to love your neighbor, humanity, honesty, protection, tolerance, mutual respect, sociability, unconditional love, commonwealth, community, equality, compassion, reciprocal guarantees, and soldierly solidarity. The distant periphery consists of single associations (seventy-four) that show even deeper engagement with the idea of solidarity as a form of interaction characterised by friendship, brotherhood, and unity. For various respondents, these connections take different forms but share a common underlying theme (see Table 1).

It should be noted that the whole range of associations are words-associations, which indicate positively oriented ideas, evaluative value and solidarity understanding by respondents as a constructive, prosocial interaction in the middle of society along the horizontal and vertical vectors of its implementation. The latter is essential for defining the phenomenon of social solidarity. Now author will analyse and interpret the results in more detail. As it was noted, the representations core of solidarity is associations "support" and "like-minded", which in the empirically isolated two-component structure not only define support as an essential quality of this phenomenon, but also indicate the predicate

of this support i.e., common views (beliefs, positions, views, etc.). The majority of respondents are convinced of this on 24% and 21,33% accordingly. Thus, to show or feel (accept from others) solidarity, for the subjects is to show or feel support, being both its subject and object, which is possible only within the limits of belonging to a social group.

This is a manifestation of the fact that human, as an object of life, including social, needs belonging i.e., the universal desire to form and maintain at least a minimum number of long-lasting, positive and influential interpersonal relationships (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Leoussi, 2014; Mensink, 2019; Healy, 2020). At the same time, it is important to say that such affiliation is often not discreetly oriented, so the main thing is to belong to a cohesive, socially satisfied group (Effron & Knowles, 2015). At the same time, groups not only meet the need for belonging, they also provide members with information, assistance and social support. That is why in understanding the psychology of social solidarity author will take into account the positions presented in the theory of social comparison, which argues that in many cases the formation of large social groups becomes the basis of identification as their members evaluate the accuracy of their personal beliefs and views (Pepple, 2020). That is, the groups help to answer the existentially significant question: "Who am I?". However, there is a reverse side to this identification in joining a group automatically "joins" its characteristics (Loobuyck, 2012), which in turn requires a certain compromise and reassessment of priorities.

Another component of the representations core layer for social solidarity among respondents is the association of like-minded people, which complements their understanding of the phenomenon under study through the prism of identification processes (later, in other layers of representations this commonality will be concretised by relevant associations). The identified location of this association suggests that it is the identification in the perceptions of the subjects is an end-to-end solidarity mechanism. Thus, author has empirically substantiated the argument in favor of the interpretation of social solidarity put forth by scholars who view it primarily as a phenomenon of consciousness, rooted in the self-identification of individuals with a community. This process is linked to group dynamics, characterised by the formation of communities that share common interests, take responsibility for their members, and distribute part of that responsibility to each individual in the group or the larger society (Tamayo Gomez, 2021). In this context, identity serves as a key parameter of solidarity, manifesting through individuals' awareness and sense of belonging to a particular community or group. The creation of a shared identity can be seen as the development of a personal "everyday theory of who I am", which is emotionally affirmed in a positive way. Solidarity, therefore, is built upon identity.

The basic layer of solidarity representations includes associations (9), which focus on the essential characteristics of support (mutual assistance (14,7%), mutual understanding (16%), assistance (12%), altruism (10,7%), common thoughts and actions (12%) and respect (10,7%)), as well as those types of interaction that are associated with solidarity (unity (17,33%), brotherhood (12%) and friendship (17,33%)). That is, at the basic associative level of solidarity representations, a detailed definitive characteristic of its nuclear associations was revealed i.e., "support" and "like-minded people". In particular, according to the generalisation of the obtained data, respondents see social solidarity as a way of social interaction, which is referred in modern scientific discourses as "universal brotherhood and social friendship" (Kaplan, 2018; Abbott, 2020; H. Blatterer, 2022; Clay-Robison, 2022). At the intersection of various social sciences, a new understanding of solidarity is emerging – one that transcends geographical and state boundaries. This form of solidarity is defined by "openness to each other and dedicated efforts to build true brotherhood, not only among local communities but also with people from different cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds, as well as varied social and economic statuses" (Katju, 2020; Romero-Iribas & Oelsner, 2022). It represents a universal dimension of solidarity, open to all individuals.

Given the current global situation, often characterised by a mix of positive values alongside hatred, indifference, extremism, violence, and bloodshed, societal consciousness, shaped by scientific research, increasingly emphasised the need for unity. This unity is pursued through dialogue or polylogue, which fosters friendship, peace, and harmony, while ensuring the protection of social (religious, cultural) freedoms – fundamental human rights that belong to every individual. In this context, social solidarity is referred to as an "open door house", as a social relationship that has an exclusively unifying essence. It is important that in these circumstances, the promotion of human dignity is also considered a solidarity basic feature. An example of such a search and pursuit of solidarity is the dream of a united Europe capable of recognising common roots and rejoicing in its diversity (Lahusen, 2020; Saracino, 2024). However, it is important to emphasise that another essential characteristic of solidarity is dynamism and balance, which will make it impossible to achieve it forever. As well as justice, solidarity must be gained every day, while overcoming the gap between the individual and the common good, which is constantly growing due to the current situation in the world and in Ukraine. After all, in terms of erasing the limitations and blurring of concepts "freedom and responsibility", solidarity is no longer associated with a sense of coercion to live with someone (authoritarian, artificial solidarity), but with the need to learn to build a common future with humanity in global, geopolitical, societal or even local

challenges (natural solidarity). The one that involves considerable effort, but first is a readiness to act.

According to the data obtained, the identified associations indicate the respondents' understanding of brotherhood, friendship and unity through the prism of mutual assistance, mutual understanding, assistance, altruism, common thoughts, actions and respect. These manifestations of support are the ground/basis of solidarity in the perceptions of the respondents. Mutual help and assistance indicate the importance for the study of "giving and receiving" in solidarity. While altruism in the identified associative series concerns the willingness to sacrifice on selfless grounds. In the psychological dictionary, this phenomenon is defined as "a principle of activity and behavior, a system of human values, where an individual selflessly cares for the well-being of others, seeks to help them, is willing to forgo personal interests for the benefit of others, shows sympathy, and wishes them well". (Callero, 2014; Gualda, 2022; Capraro, 2024). Thus, it is a selfless desire to act for the benefit of others, as opposed to selfishness. The term "altruism" was first introduced by O. Comte (Shynkaruk., 2002) to explain the integration of social elements within a system, particularly emphasising a self-affirming concern for the welfare of others. This concern does not necessarily involve sacrifices for the altruist, which led him to introduce the principle of "re-vile pour outre", meaning "to live for others". At the core of the altruism concept lies the idea of selflessness and non-pragmatic human activity that does not seek personal reward. Altruistic behavior is closely connected to prosocial behavior and social empathy, serving as a mechanism of social perception that reflects emotional empathy toward others.

The key characteristics of altruism as a personality trait include its ability to reveal the internal motivational background behind human actions. It helps identify the direction of an individual's moral consciousness and can highlight instances where seemingly altruistic actions conceal selfish desires, narcissism, or manipulative behavior. Additionally, as an emotional state, altruism can influence the emotional and volitional aspects of a person's character, offering a deeper understanding of their emotional and moral makeup (Kolers, 2016; Straehle, 2020). It becomes clear that the respondents put in the concept of solidarity a kind of precautionary mechanism, which will expose its opposition at the first signs.

Other components of support in respondents' perceptions are mutual understanding and common thoughts and actions. Although at first glance these are homogeneous, complementary characteristics. However, their chain conditionality should be considering. After all, interaction is a process of human influence that creates interrelations, relationships, communication, shared experiences and joint activities. Mutual understanding is a socio-psychological phenomenon that facilitates specific relationships between

individuals, social groups, and communities. It is rooted in the exchange of thoughts, ideas, and emotions, influencing intentions, needs, and the evaluation of others' emotional states. The interaction between people plays a central role in regulating self-esteem and social behavior, with identification occurring at various stages and expressions of this interaction.

At its core, mutual understanding involves the alignment of perspectives, goals, motives, and attitudes between individuals or groups, leading to a shared sense of closeness or similarity in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses. This alignment allows for effective collaboration in joint activities. Mutual understanding should be viewed both as a process and as a state, with several key conditions for its achievement. These include understanding the commitment of the involved parties to the subject of mutual understanding, awareness of the qualities expressed by the interacting individuals or groups, recognising the impact of the situation on the personality of the partner, developing agreements, and implementing them according to established rules while respecting each other's interests. As a result, there are mutual sympathies, trust in the relationship, psychological compatibility. The signified result acquires quite interesting manifestations and characteristics in the vertical vector of communication, in particular in "authority-people" mode (Belejkaničová, 2021; Lähdesmäki & Čeginskas, 2022; Schmitt & Rademacher, 2023; Kapsali, 2024)

Finally, respect as a basic association of solidarity is, in essence, a predicate, a proto-basis on which is built all of the above. As it has already been mentioned, respect for human dignity is a key indicator of natural solidarity. Respect is, fundamentally, the attitude toward others that, through actions, motives, and social living conditions, acknowledges the inherent dignity of each individual. It fosters justice, equality of rights, and the full satisfaction of people's interests, while being attentive to their aspirations and beliefs. Respect also entails sensitivity, delicacy, modesty, and politeness. In this sense, respect can be seen as another psychological "safeguard," alongside altruism, against the breakdown of solidarity. It serves to reinforce social cohesion and prevent fragmentation within society. Considering the indicated associate in the context of political and psychological relations in the society and between society and the authority, certain criteria and requirements for the parties of a political dialogue or polylogue are outlined, compliance with which can contribute to a successful (solidary) result (Ryabchenko *et al.*, 2019).

In the close periphery of solidarity representations (25) The findings revealed that respondents strongly associate solidarity with friendship, which is expressed through fraternity and brotherhood. These concepts hold significant positions among the core representations of solidarity. On the near periphery, they are detailed in a wide range of related

phenomena and characteristics, namely the associations: as consent (9.33%), side by side (9.33%), understanding (9.33%), politeness (8%), responsibility (9.33%), cooperation (9.33%), empathy (8%), patriotism (8%), common interests (9.33%), unanimity (8%), observance of the commandment of love for one's neighbour (8%), human centredness (6.7%), truthfulness (6.7%), defence (6.7%), loyalty (5.33%), brotherhood (6.7%), mutual respect (5.33%), the spirit of sociability (5.33%), useless love (5.33%), commonwealth (5.33%), community (5.33%), equality (5.33%), compassion (5.33%), circular guarantee (5.33%), soldier (5.33%). It seems obvious that such an extensive list indicates the possibility of its various grouping, modeling, combining, based on different socio-demographic or psychological characteristics of respondents, which eventually formed individual associative series, included in different layers of the associative field. In general, it is important for author that this list includes only a number of positive moral qualities, characteristics of constructive social interaction, including Christian and civic, patriotic principles, and indicates the performance of certain social roles (soldiers, comrades, patriot, etc.). In addition, the associates of the close periphery of solidarity representations quite concretely confirm the essence of the studied phenomenon revealed on the previous layer.

The distant periphery of solidarity representations is represented by single associations (74 positions, 1.33% each), these responses reflect a deeper and more active engagement with the concept of solidarity, viewing it as interaction, friendship, brotherhood, and unity. For different respondents, these associations take on various forms, all stemming from a shared underlying concept (Table 1). Thus, all associates of this layer of representations continue the list "initiated" on previous structures of the associative field, expanding the range of associations, completing representations of solidarity and allowing various combinations and intercommunication of essential characteristics for exclusively conjunctive content, representing various spheres of social (political, civil, professional, family) relations and groups and individuals functioning. The identified associations express the social representations of solidarity, which are characteristic for Ukrainian respondents, due to various factors (mental, socio-cultural, historical, religious, ethno-national, etc.). However, these characteristics of solidarity among Ukrainians suggest a collective search for ways to achieve unity, grounded not only in individual needs but also in shared interests, goals, and intentions of the respondents. It is interesting that a significant proportion of the surveyed attach associations the importance to trust, responsibility, liability (including civic, moral), friendliness, sociability, devotion, common goal orientation, reliance on Christian principles (faith, hope, love), human values dignity (Table 1). Such superficial structures of representations testify to the active psychological operationalisation of

these phenomena in the minds of respondents, their actualisation and readiness for implementation. Given the still actively studied distress of the Ukrainian mentality, the fixation on various defense mechanisms, crisis situations, these results can be arguments of a radically different kind and the basis of new psychological and socially significant phenomena that highlight the need for thorough study, including within the limits of social solidarity.

Nevertheless, the current stage of social development is imbued with new meanings, particularly through the recognition of the power and role of civil society in shaping these meanings. This process involves a reassessment of values, shifts in motivation, goal-setting, and the active shaping of the future. This is presented quite thoroughly within the scientific discourses, although with a variety of approaches in accordance with the areas of research. In the process of identifying the methods and means to achieve social solidarity, which involves the cohesion of large groups, the consolidation and ultimate unity of society, key value-oriented pillars of social solidarity – such as ideology, patriotism, and spirituality – become crucial. This process is unattainable without efforts to enhance the population's self-identification with various social and public institutions, as well as with the state itself, which fosters the broadest form of social solidarity as civil society. Within this framework, maintaining a value-oriented balance between the institutional and psychosocial aspects of social solidarity is vital. A society marked by solidarity, prepared for self-restraint and committed to the struggle for its own state's independence, serves as the most essential resource for its prosperity. In general, the way in which social interactions take place often indicates the constant dynamism, impermanence of unifying processes (especially public), the "atomisation" of Ukrainian society, when people are generally reluctant to focus on joint action with a common interest or goal, even in situations when it is personally important. Exceptions can be only extreme situations, when the threat is external and it carries a common danger for everyone (however, certain rules are relevant here and reaction stages to such a threat come into action).

CONCLUSIONS

The interpretation of the FAE results reveals the prominence of value-oriented dominants of social solidarity among respondents, which author believed are closely linked to ideology. Specifically, these dominants reflect the presence of emotionally charged positive (constructive) socio-national ideas, around which solidarity can be built and strengthened; *patriotism* as a manifestation of the high potential of solidarity within the relevant valence discourses of national-patriotic orientation; *spirituality* that harmoniously combines universal and Christian values, expectations, intentions, attitudes.

However, the above mentioned requires detailed research and consideration of many factors. Ukrainian society is inevitably characterised by a state of threatened security, encompassing both material insecurity – due to challenges in meeting basic needs – and psychological insecurity, stemming from “uncertainty about tomorrow” caused by the instability of societal norms. In such an environment, societal relations are often centered around survival and competition for resources, rather than the pursuit of collective well-being. Moreover, the low level of trust in society, coupled with a lack of established practices and mechanisms for association and constructive dialogue, makes autonomous (self-isolated) actions more common than collective ones. In this context, joint actions are often seen as risky, with the fear of losing personal resources or being left “outside” the group. Today, in order to unite for common goals, it is necessary to build a “credit of trust” in an environment dominated by distrust and the fear of “betrayal.” Thus, the dominant values will depend on the identified current state of society, which is determined primarily by the mode of action and interaction in it; from the readiness to accept and launch the necessary changes (those who “launched from above” should

receive legitimacy “from below” and vice versa); from the possibility of successful modernisation of Ukrainian society on the basis of shifting the cultural framework of agent actions in the direction of subjectivity; from the presence of a “critical mass” of alternative to normalised social behavior of subjective actions that begin to “be copied” and be spread in agents. Therefore, it is not just the outcome – a society unified through solidarity – that is important, but also every action that contributes to achieving it. The results of the study on social representations of solidarity underscore the need for a deeper exploration of the psychological nature of this phenomenon. Future research should aim to further elucidate the psychological nature of social solidarity and develop a new psychological theory that would fill both theoretical and methodological gaps and have practical implications in light of the challenges faced by modern society.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Уявлення українців про соціальну солідарність: емпірична верифікація репрезентаційного поля

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Анотація. У статті представлено аналіз теоретичних і емпіричних досліджень соціальних репрезентацій солідарності серед українців, проведених з міждисциплінарної перспективи із використанням методу вільного асоціативного експерименту. На основі теоретичного й емпіричного аналізу доведено, що солідарність є фундаментальною психологічною передумовою соціальних змін, а розуміння її природи, форм і статусу є важливим для соціального розвитку загалом і, зокрема, у контексті державотворення. Емпіричне дослідження соціальних репрезентацій солідарності було здійснено в рамках психосемантичного підходу через символічне словесне опосередкування цих репрезентацій/сприйняття та їхнього соціокультурного контексту. Результати вказували на добре структуровану й узгоджену психологічну структуру соціальних репрезентацій солідарності з чітко визначеним ядром, що поширюється на додаткові шари, які вказують на можливі зв'язки між солідарністю та різними аспектами. Інтерпретація цих результатів підкреслювала домінуючі ціннісні елементи соціальної солідарності, такі як ідеологія, патріотизм і духовність, що перебувають під впливом сучасної соціальної реальності та її готовності сприймати й реалізовувати зміни, необхідні для успішної модернізації, з акцентом на суб'єктивність у культурному контексті дії. Таким чином, увага зосереджена не лише на кінцевому результаті, але й на діях, які сприяють його досягненню.

Ключові слова: соціальна солідарність; соціальні репрезентації; вільний асоціативний експеримент; ядерний та основний шари репрезентацій, близька та далека периферія репрезентацій; асоціати; ціннісно-мотиваційні доміанти солідарності