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The Influence of Political Processes and the War in Ukraine on the Formation of Generation Alpha and the iGeneration (Z): Defining Specific Features

Abstract

The article attempts to analyse and define the specific features of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine in the context of the political processes and the war taking place in Ukrainian society. The article discusses the generation issues, taking into account the characteristics of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha. Assuming that a generation is an identifiable group of people who share a similar time of birth and significant events at critical stages of development, the article presents an original approach to determining the specific features of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine. The Orange Revolution (2004), the Revolution of Dignity (2014) and the hybrid war (2014-2022) and Russian-Ukrainian war (from 24.02.2022) had a significant impact on the formation of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine.

Keywords: Ukraine, political processes, hybrid war, Russian-Ukrainian war, social policy, social problems, children, young, generation, iGeneration (Z), generation Alpha

Влияние политических процессов и войны на Украине на формирование поколений Альфа и iGeneration (Z): определение особенностей

Аннотация

В статье представлены анализ и определение специфики поколений iGeneration (Z) и Generation Alpha в контексте политических и социальных процессов в украинском обществе. А также влияния гибридной войны (2014-2022) и российско-украинской войны (2022) на формирование поколений iGeneration (Z) и Generation Alpha в Украине. В статье рассматриваются вопросы формирования поколений с учетом особенностей iGeneration (Z) и Generation Alpha, поколение рассматривается как группа людей, которую объединяет время рождения и значимые события на критических этапах его развития и формирования. В статье представлен оригинальный авторский подход к определению специфики поколений iGeneration (Z) и Generation Alpha в Украине. Показано, что существенное влияние на формирование поколений iGeneration (Z) и Generation Alpha в Украине оказали Оранжевая революция (2004), Революция Достоинства (2014), гибридная война (2014-2022) и российско-украинская война (2022).

Ключевые слова: Украина, политические процессы, гибридная война, российско-украинская война, социальная политика, социальные проблемы, дети, молодёжь, поколение, iGeneration (Z), generation Alpha.

Introduction

An important foundation of any democratic state is an active, influential and developed civil society, which plays one of the key roles in implementing social change, effective governance, public administration and solving problems at the local level. Considering civil society as a space where citizens represent their interests and carry out socially important activities, taking responsibility for the common good, it becomes obvious how important it is for young people to participate in these processes.

It is the potential, energy and perseverance of young people that makes it possible to introduce important changes to protect the national interests of and build Ukraine. This is confirmed by the active citizenship of young people during the Revolution of Dignity (2014), the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, its military aggression in eastern Ukraine (2014–2022)

and Russian-Ukrainian war (2022). As Osnat Lubrani, the United Nations (UN) resident coordinator in Ukraine, says in this context, young people have unlimited possibilities for promoting innovation and change in society. This can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals that world leaders have committed to achieve by 2030 (Analytical Report: On the Situation of Youth in Ukraine, 2019, p. 5).

A generation as a social group establishes a specific bond with its members in order to create together and can thus be objectively defined as socially distinct. Individual members of the social group that forms a given generation have similar expectations of themselves and think of themselves in a similar way, thus creating a characteristic way of perceiving reality and defining the attitude to significant historical events (Karmolińska-Jagodzik, 2012, p. 194).

It is also worth noting that a generation is formed around important events, the first traumatic experience. This kind of event is the first shared conscious experience of a community that forms itself over the following years. 'A generation created by the same event will always be different from another one, shaped by another event… regardless of whether they are separated by a year or fifteen years. It is events that create generations' (Garewicz, 1983, p. 77). Each generation builds its ideals and priorities based on the existing reality and the opportunities it offers, and searches for the optimal direction of development and creation of a generation.

In this context, it is important to pay attention to 'generation-forming factors', which according to J. Petersen include: common elements of education, personal contacts, shared experiences ('generational experiences'), yielding to common leaders and a common front against the older generation (Wallis, 1959, p. 327). In relation to the processes creating the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine during the difficult political and social changes in the state, a special role is played by 'generational experiences', which Petersen sees as:

> … great spiritual shocks that fall during the years of youth and thus become the common heritage of young people, a system of stimuli to which young people naturally react the liveliest, making these stimuli a moment that distinguishes

young people from those who (due to the age difference) did not experience the shock in an equally decisive way (Wyka, 1997, p. 50).

Such 'generational experiences' of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine include: the Orange Revolution (2004), the Revolution of Dignity (2014) and the hybrid war (since 2014).

The aim of this study is to analyse and define the specific features of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine with respect to the political processes and social changes taking place in Ukrainian society.

The concept of a generation and basic generations

The creation of new generations, the shaping of a generational identity and the change of generations are phenomena that have been extensively analysed in social sciences. However, due to the research subject, this study briefly focuses on the definitions of the concept of a 'generation' necessary from the perspective of the issue under consideration.

The starting point for conceptualising the issue of a generation and defining the concept of a 'generation' is the approach of the sociologist Karl Mannheim, described in his essay entitled 'Das Problem der Generationen' (The Problem of Generations), published in the renowned journal *Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Soziologie* in 1928 (Mannheim, 1928). According to the German sociologist of knowledge, it is not enough to be born at the same time and in the same cultural area to be a member of a generation. The category of a generation as reality introduced by Mannheim refers to people who share a common place in social and historical processes. Therefore, Mannheim distinguishes separate generational units within a generation that are united by a common awareness of the experienced fate, as well as the same attitudes, goals and principles of operation and interpretation of reality (Mannheim, 1985). According to B. Gołębiowski, a generation is:

people born in a certain range of years and having specific important features – a link in cultural genealogy in relation to the previous generation – aspirations, attitudes and activities, and these features can be considered new elements of the

value system corresponding to changes in the structure and culture of society (Gołębiowski, 1980, p. 15).

On the other hand, analysing the biological and cultural criteria for distinguishing generations and the impact of value systems on this process, M. Ossowska indicates that a generation can have five different meanings:

> a link in biological genealogy; a link in cultural genealogy; a category of persons selected by treating the age variable specifically, namely by dividing a century into roughly three generations; a category of people in a specific phase of life, going through different phases of their biographies; a group of people with common attitudes and a common hierarchy of values formed through the shared experience of significant events (Ossowska, 1963, p. 51).

In this context, according to J. Mikułowski-Pomorski, 'in the cultural sense, we talk about a generation when a certain peer category of people at higher levels of mental maturation undergo a process of unification into circles based on their common interests, usually to the detriment of existing arrangements' (Mikułowski-Pomorski, 1968, p. 275). From the sociological perspective, according to H. Griese, 'a generation' is treated as 'the sum of all people belonging to a given cultural circle of more or less the same age, who, on the basis of a common historical and social situation, show similar approaches, motivations, attitudes and value systems' (Griese, 1996, p. 80). The dictionary definition describes the term 'generation' as:

> part of the age-grouped population: younger or older than the others by roughly the time that has elapsed from the birth of their parents to the birth of their children. The simplest example of a generation is age groups within a family: children, parents, grandparents and so on. However, while it is easy to distinguish individual generations in a family, it is impossible in larger groups as long as only biological or public register criteria are used. A generation… differs not in the biological age, but above all in the fact that the groups defined as old and young clearly differ from each other in terms of attitudes, views, recognised values, aspirations, the way of life and so on. It is less about differences resulting from different permanent social roles or biologically conditioned psychological

dispositions, and more about those that originate from different experiences (the so-called shared generational experience) and life perspectives (Encyclopedia, 1999).

In conclusion, it is worth emphasising that we can talk about three main factors that build a generation: age (birth time, shared childhood), shared generational experiences (positive and negative) and the existing reality.

Assuming that a generation is an identifiable group of people who share a similar time of birth and experience significant events at critical stages of development, the following basic generations can be identified:
  – the Silent Generation – born between 1922 and 1945, the so-called builders of modern Europe;
  – Baby Boomers – born between 1946 and 1964; the so-called baby boom and economic boom generation; they are driven by a work ethos; they treat job loss as a motivation to act; they live to work;
  – Generation X – born between 1965 and 1979; they grew up during the economic crisis of the 1970s; work plays an important role in their lives; they look for a golden mean and are ready to work more to earn more even at the cost of free time;
  – Generation Y (Millennials) – born between 1980 and 1994; they were raised in the era of globalisation and universal access to the internet; they work to live; after-work activities make them happy; they prefer an eight-hour workday; they are driven by work ethics; they spend about two years in one company;
  – Generation Z (iGeneration) – born between 1995 and 2009; they use new technologies that have penetrated all areas of their lives; they face remote work, a variety of tasks and challenges and a dynamic work environment.

It is worth noting that this is a conventional division of generations, which in the literature, including in different countries, is not clearly defined and does not directly reflect the replacement of generations, but concerns people born at a similar time and shaped by similar events, emotions and experiences.

Australian social researcher, demographer and futurist Mark McCrindle suggests that the term 'generation' should refer to a cohort of people who

were born in a similar period of time, are of similar age and at a similar stage of life, have been shaped by significant social events and trends that today are global due to developing technologies. McCrindle and his research team propose 15 years to be the time interval for the chronological replacement of generations from the time of Baby Boomers, regardless of events and circumstances. These post-Baby-Boomer generations are labelled with letters X, Y and Z. The new cohort is Generation Alpha, born between 2010 and 2024, followed by Generation Beta (2025–2034), Generation Gamma (2035–2049) and Generation Delta (2050–2064) and so on (McCrindle, Wolfinger, 2014, p. 5) (Table 1).

Table 1. The new generations according to Mark McCrindle: Alfa, Beta, Gamma and Delta

Generation Alpha	Generation Beta	Generation Gamma	Generation Delta
born between 2010 and 2024	born between 2025 and 2034	born between 2035 and 2049	born between 2050 and 2064

Source: own study based on: McCrindle, Wolfinger, 2014, p. 5.

IGeneration (Z) (1995–2009)

The term 'iGeneration (Z)' (Generation Z) is a combination of the letter 'i' as an abbreviation of the word 'internet' and the word 'generation'. According to M. McCrindle and A. Fell, the iGeneration (Z) is defined by five features: digital, global, social, mobile and visual (McCrindle, Ashley, 2019, pp. 10–23):

1. The digital generation. From an early age, Generation Z use new technologies that have penetrated all areas of their lives. It is almost like the air they breathe, permeating all areas of their lifestyle and relationships. For Generation Z, digital technologies have blurred the boundaries between work and social life, learning and entertainment, privacy and social life. This generation has largely been socialised by display devices, and they obtain information by clicking on their devices' screens. Generation Z lives in an 'open book' environment, they connect in a world without borders – in different countries and cultures.

2. The global generation. Generation Z is the first fully global genera-
tion. The wireless world has no boundaries, and young people are
constantly logged in and connected in it, they are influenced by the
same films, music, fashion, vocabulary, and so on. Today, all social
trends regarding lifestyle are global like never before.

3. The social generation. Today's young people are shaped by their peers
more than previous generations. Thanks to social media, Generation
Z is influenced by the network where it is active around the clock.
Digital technologies help them operate in the world of social relations
but can also have a negative impact on them.

4. The mobile generation. Young people belonging to Generation Z use
more mobile devices at home and at work. This generation is more
educated than any other previous generation, focused on continuous
training and changes in professional qualifications at work. According
to McCrindle, today's college graduate is expected to have 18 jobs and
develop six career paths. They choose a place to live, work and travel
from a global perspective.

5. The visual generation. Young people belonging to Generation Z prefer
to watch a YouTube video about a specific problem than to read an
article about it. In the era of information overload, visual messages
appear more and more often, with images and colours replacing words
and phrases.

As for other views, according to J.M. Twenge, who has conducted re-
search on young generations of American society and identified a number
of features that characterise the iGeneration, contemporary youth is imma-
ture and grows up more slowly, not wanting to take responsibility for their
lives too (Twenge, 2019, pp. 26–27). Surrounded by the excessive care of
adults, the iGeneration attaches great importance to the issue of safety, as
well as the intellectual, social and emotional spheres. This generation is also
characterised by a loss of religiosity (spirituality). The iGeneration is losing
interest in acquiring knowledge and students treat universities pragmatically
(Twenge, 2019, pp. 194–195). More young people now live alone and wait
a long time until deciding to have children. J.M. Twenge predicts that more
iGeneration representatives live alone and may not have children (Twenge,
2019, pp. 251–252).

The characteristic features of the iGeneration (Z) were also revealed in the course of the nationwide research 'Compulsive use of mobile phones: Detailed characteristics of the phenomenon of phonoholism in Poland', conducted among 22,086 students from all over Poland. Based on the research results, five generational characteristics of the iGeneration (Z) in Poland have been determined: this is a network generation, which is in love with new technologies, has a low mental well-being, high digital competences and mediated communication patterns (Dębski, 2017).

For the iGeneration (Z), the virtual and real worlds are the same reality. They cannot function without the internet and electronic media, as these are something ordinary and everyday to them. They would like to achieve a stunning professional career immediately and effortlessly. It is difficult for them to come to terms with the vision of building a long-term career by taking small steps. They look for jobs not only in their country, but all over the world, because they are mobile and know foreign languages. What is a threat to older generations is an object of fascination and a field for experimenting for the representatives of Generation Z. They do not care about stable work and they look for diversity and run away from routine. They are eager to communicate with other cultures, want to go on internships abroad, to constantly change and improve established processes and try out new methods of work. They value group work more than independent work. They can do many things at once and find it difficult to concentrate on one activity (Hysa, 2016, pp. 389–390).

Generation Alpha (2010–2024)

Generation Alpha is another demographic term that describes a group of people born since 2010, and most likely by 2025. The term 'Generation Alpha' was coined by Australian generational researcher Mark McCrindle in 2005. He adopted it from the Greek alphabet. According to McCrindle, this is the first generation to be born completely in the twenty-first century, which marks the beginning of something new, without returning to the old ('no point in going back to A'). The term 'Generation Alpha' should be used to refer to people born after 2010. It is estimated that 2.5 million Alfas are born worldwide each week, and this generation will reach a total of 2

billion by 2025 (McCrindle, Ashley, 2020, pp. 3–5). Generation Alpha are the children of the future. They differ significantly from previous generations because they were born and live in a completely different world. Despite being children, Alpha children are often busy and have tight schedules due to the emphasis on good school performance and hobbies (*Raport: Pokolenie 'Alfa'*, 2019).

The features of Generation Alpha are strongly related to technology. They are well-versed with computers, tablets and smartphones. They perfectly navigate the web, use various social networks and cannot stand boredom. It can be said that we all use technology and media, but the representatives of Generation Alpha are experts at it. For this generation, the screen is a natural form of sustaining contacts, acquiring knowledge and spending leisure time.

It is worth noting that although the World Health Organization (WHO) appeal that children under two years of age should not have contact with tablets and smartphones, we can often see toddlers in pushchairs playing with this type of electronic devices. According to the WHO's new standards, babies should not look at the screen at all for the first 12 months of life. Little changes after the first birthday. A healthy limit for a two-year-old is 20 minutes a day, but no longer than ten minutes at a time. Therefore, in the future, they will be characterised by strong self-tracking and control their lives using various devices and applications. Thus, they will regularly measure their sleep quality, the intensity of their physical activity, health, heart rate and even the contents of their refrigerators. Today's ten-year-olds already wear fitness bands on their wrists. Such control may actually be useful to them in the future because other features of Generation Alpha include reduced physical activity, exposure to deteriorating quality of food products and a habit of consuming processed foods (World Health Organization, 2018).

McCrindle also predicts that Generation Alpha, born after 2010, will be the most educated and the richest in the world and will live the longest in the smallest families (McCrindle, Ashley, 2020, pp. 3–18).

The characteristics of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine

The study entitled 'Ukrainian Generation Z: Values and Guidelines' (Results of the nationwide survey: Ukrainian Generation Z: Values and Landmarks, 2017) conducted by GfK Ukraine on behalf of the New Europe Center, has shown the persistence of both positive and negative trends among Ukrainian young people aged 14 to 29 years. The new young generation of Ukrainians still pays special attention to family and related events (marriage, birth of children), as well as work and careers. Considering the results of the study conducted in the late 1990s and the early twenty-first century, the situation has not changed in this regard (Golovenko, Yaremenko, 2002).

When it comes to attitudes towards politics, the majority of Ukrainian young people are not interested in politics. Young people are most interested in Ukraine's politics at the national level: 13% of all respondents are very interested or quite interested in it. Political activity is important only for every fifth Ukrainian. When it comes to political leaders, the level of distrust among young people is a record high – three-quarters of Ukrainian youths (74%) do not trust them at all, or do not trust them much. The majority of young Ukrainians (61%) believe that Russia is responsible for the escalation of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. Only 5% put this responsibility on Ukraine. It should also be noted that young people in the east are less happy than their peers in other regions. Young people from the east are clearly different from their peers from other regions and this difference is neither ideological nor linguistic. In the east, happiness is critically lower – young people living there are the least satisfied with their lives in general and the least optimistic about their future: only 54% expect their lives to improve in the future, compared to 62% in the south and from 7% to 86% in the remaining regions (*Results of the nationwide survey: Ukrainian Generation Z: Values and Landmarks*, 2017, pp. 6–7).

According to the study, there are two groups of problems that cause the greatest concern among young people:

a) issues of *wages and a decent standard of living*, which are the main concerns of young people in Ukraine;

b) young Ukrainians fear *war and corruption* the most, but they are ready to accept the latter (*Results of the nationwide survey: Ukrainian Generation Z: Values and Landmarks*, 2017, p. 7).

By analysing the survey results, we can broadly describe the iGeneration (Z) in Ukraine: Ukrainian young people use social networks (91%); most young people are proud or quite proud to be citizens of Ukraine (61%); most young people believe that Russia is responsible for the escalation of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine (61%); young people support Ukraine's accession to the European Union (60%); most young people completely or mostly agree that democracy in general is a good form of governance (58%); half of young people pray (50%); the best age for marriage for both women and men is believed to be 25 (46%); only one-third of young people believe that the education system and educational institutions in Ukraine meet the needs of the modern labour market (30%) (*Results of the nationwide survey: Ukrainian Generation Z: Values and Landmarks*, 2017, p. 9).

In the context of the issues under study, attention must be paid to the results of a representative study entitled 'Young People of Ukraine 2018' (Results of the survey: Youth of Ukraine – 2018, 2018, pp. 5–9, 10–17). The analysis of the results obtained shows that among the values of young people are: family happiness (59.9%); health (53%); career (36.6%); freedom and independence in making decisions (23.5%); the willingness to achieve affluence (28.2%); the ability to realise one's talents and skills (19.4%); becoming a qualified specialist (9.9%). Respondents from younger age groups are more focused on achieving family happiness and health, while those from older age groups are more focused on achieving professional success and using their potential. Most young people identify themselves as believers and have a religion. When it comes to the civic and political activity of young people, one-third of them (29.5%) are not interested in the political processes taking place in the country. The main factors affecting this apolitical attitude today are distrust of politicians and the government, distrust of their own civic position and a culture of low self-esteem. Young people believe that the most effective ways of influencing the authorities are to participate in elections and organise radical protests. Young people are ready to take up arms to defend Ukraine in the event of mobilisation (19%) and confirm their readiness

to defend the country's independence and territorial integrity by peaceful means (42%).

It is also worth paying attention to studies that concern children whose age range is the closest to that of Generation Alpha in Ukraine (children up to 11 years old). Here, it is worth mentioning the study entitled 'The Voices of Children 2018', carried out on the initiative of the 'Children's Rights in Ukraine' Coalition (*Children's Rights Report: Voices of children*, 2018). The analysis of the survey results shows (the opinions of 14-year-old children, the youngest of the respondents, are analysed here) that it is particularly important for children to work more effectively in Ukraine to ensure the welfare and best interests of children (95%). Children believe that state and local authorities should listen to the views of children (83%), a third believe that they have little opportunity to convey their views and opinions in their community (33%), and most children would like to have more influence, power and the opportunity to express their opinions about issues that concern them personally and children in general (64%). The reasons that most often caused fear and anxiety during the year were: a lack of time to complete tasks at school (41%); a lack of funds to meet the needs of families (17%); mobbing/bullying (11%); peer violence (11%); adult violence (5%); and self-harm (5%). At the same time, most children see their future very positively (33%) and positively (43%).

It should be noted that these issues are quite extensive and require detailed analysis and research into various aspects of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine. At the same time, attention should be paid to certain aspects and characteristics of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in modern Ukrainian society. Then we move directly to discuss the specific features of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in the context of political changes and the social situation in Ukraine.

The specific features of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine

Each generation has its own characteristics and specific features, creating its own ideals and priorities. It should be noted, however, that the same generation has its own specific features, depending on the socio-economic and

political conditions of a given country, in particular the political processes taking place in society. In this context, one can speak of a two-way process. On the one hand, social and political processes influence the formation of a generation and its potential; on the other hand, the potential of a formed generation influences the development of society and those political processes that make up the history of a given country. It is also important to note that certain trends, phenomena and social and political processes taking place in a country may not only positively influence the shaping of generations in a given country, but can also have a certain negative impact on them.

According to P. Sztompka, a generational community is determined by similar biographies and parallel experiences, which occur in different places, times and with different intensity, but permanently shape the mentality, attitudes and hierarchies of values of the participants (Sztompka, 2012, p. 155). If we talk about Ukraine and creating a specific generation, in particular the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha, in the context of specific factors (similar biographies, parallel experiences, attitudes and hierarchies of values), the social and political processes taking place in society have a significant impact.

We believe that in Ukraine, the Orange Revolution (2004), the Revolution of Dignity (2014) and the hybrid war (from 2014) (Table 2) had a significant impact on the shaping of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha (Table 2). All this formed the specific features of both these generations in Ukraine.

Table 2. Age characteristics of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in the context of social and political events in Ukraine

Year of the event	A social and political event	iGeneration (Z) 1995–2009	Generation Alpha 2010–2025
2004	The Orange Revolution	0–9 years old *(in 2004)* 13–27 years old *(in 2022)*	–
2014	The Revolution of Dignity	5–19 years old *(in 2014)* 13–27 years old *(in 2022)*	0–4 *(in 2014)* 0–12 *(in 2022)*
2014–2022	The hybrid war in Ukraine	5–19 years old *(in 2014)* 13–27 years old *(in 2022)*	0–4 *(in 2014)* 0–12 *(in 2022)*
since 24.02.2022	The Russian-Ukrainian war in Ukraine	13–27 years old *(in 2022)*	0–12 *(in 2022)*

Source: own study

The analysis shows that, as of 1 January 2021, the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha, that is people aged from birth to 26 years, account for 11.3 million (27.2%) of 41.6 million people (Population of Ukraine: Demographic Yearbook, 2020, p. 26); Generation Alpha is people up to 11 years of age (5.1 million people, 12.3%) and Generation Z is people aged 12 to 26 years (6.2 million people, 14.9%). It should be added that under Ukrainian legislation, in particular the Law of Ukraine 'On the Protection of Childhood' No. 2402-III of 26 April 2001, 'a child' is defined as 'a person below the age of 18, that is, the age of majority, unless they acquire the right of an adult earlier according to the applicable law' (The Law of Ukraine 'On the Protection of Childhood', 2020). The Law of Ukraine 'About assistance to social formation and development of youth in Ukraine' No. 2998-XII of 5 February 1993 defines 'the youth, young citizens' as 'citizens of Ukraine aged from 14 up to 35 years' (*The Law of Ukraine 'About assistance to social formation and development of youth in Ukraine'*, 2019). Therefore, when analysing the issues of the formation and specific features of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine, it is worth considering two age groups: 'children' in the meaning of 'people below the age of 18' and 'the youth' as people 'aged from 14 to 26 years', most of whom are students.

According to S. Frith, children are part of society in the sense that they participate in various activities, and are also part of the social structure of society and interact with other members of society in many respects (Frith, 1984). It should be noted that children cannot consciously protect themselves from danger and are unable to clearly identify threats to their existence. As the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) states: 'the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth' (*Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, 1959).

The formation of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine is influenced by two revolutions (the Orange Revolution in 2004 and the Revolution of Dignity in 2014), the Hybrid War (2014-2022) and the Russian-Ukrainian War in Ukraine (since 24.02.2022). These generations of young patriots are characterised by increased faith in a better future for the country. These young people fought, stood in the Maidan square and took an active part in voluntary work, defending their right to live in a democratic

European state. These events have given rise to the generation known as the 'generation of independence', the 'revolution generation', the 'Orange Revolution generation' and the 'Dignity Revolution generation'.

As students participating in the 2014 Revolution of Dignity recall:

– What made me go out? It seems to me that for each of us who took to the streets at that time, it was primarily a fight against injustice. When you finally have a chance for a better future, you have prospects, you have a European vector of development, and suddenly at some point you hear: 'No. Not this way. We are turning 90 degrees and going in a different direction. Therefore, in my opinion, the main motive was primarily a sense of injustice… We had urgent and systemic demands… I mean, we already understood that… we should talk about systemic aspects… Of course, Maidan has changed me, although some of these changes are not very pleasant. After Maidan, I began to trust people less. Probably because when you programme yourself for six months that you don't know who has what on their mind and you can only trust your loved ones. I hope it will pass over time. And as for positive moments… All these events have made me believe in victory. Maidan has taught me not to give up in any situation and only go forward… You have to believe. This is what Maidan has taught me (*Sofia Borysko, 1993, a student of The Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv*) (*Maidan in the first person. 45 Stories of the Revolution of Dignity*, 2015, pp. 45, 51);

– In the first hours I was just enjoying – breathing the Revolution. Then I realised that no one would convince me that it was not a Revolution… It was already breathing… I walked through it all and realised that there were some basic ideals, some intangible values that could lead people forward. Back then, the biggest threat to people was seeing those in uniforms. And when these uniformed people run away… you understand that you can do something when you want to, just direct that energy in the right direction. And thank God, at that time it was, in my opinion, directed in the right direction (*Bogdan Kuczer, 1994, a student of The National Pedagogical Dragomanov University*) (*Maidan in the first person. 45 Stories of the Revolution of Dignity*, 2015, p. 58).

On the other hand, *the hybrid war* and *the Russian-Ukrainian war in Ukraine* has led to the formation of a *'war children generation',* including children who lost their parents, lost their homes, who were falling asleep during explosions, who, so far, often cannot get rid of fear and anxiety. According to M. Lis-Turlejska, among numerous stressful events and situations, traumatic events threatening the loss of health or life, during which a person experiences intense fear and a feeling of helplessness, are of particular importance (Lis-Turlejska, 2005).

Since 2014, the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine and the occupation of the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea has been a huge challenge for the development, education, socialisation and safety of children and young people in Ukraine, as well as for the entire Ukrainian society. Thousands of displaced persons from these regions began to move to other regions of Ukraine. Society faced new challenges, new social and economic threats that had the most devastating and dangerous impact on children. This situation required rapid and concerted action by state authorities and local self-governments, as well as the development of a whole series of new state mechanisms in the areas of security, assistance, support and protection (Kryvachuk, 2019, p. 152).

In armed conflict situations, the rights and freedoms of children and young people are often violated, leading to particularly dangerous social consequences. In childhood, the main values are created in a child's mind. This period is also characterised by extreme dependence, naivety and the risk of being a victim of bullying or exploited by others. Therefore, children need effective protection of their rights and freedoms, particularly when they find themselves in situations of danger and their rights or freedoms are violated, such as during the protracted armed conflict in Ukraine (Opolska, 2015, p. 279).

It is worth noting that in 2016, Ukrainian legislation introduced a new concept of 'a child who suffers from hostilities and armed conflicts'. The Law of Ukraine 'On the Protection of Childhood' No. 2402-III of 26 April 2001 defines this concept as follows:

> … a child affected by hostilities and armed conflicts shall mean a child who was wounded, contused, injured, suffered physical, sexual or psychological abuse

or was abducted or illegally taken outside Ukraine, was involved in military formations or illegally detained, including in captivity (The Law of Ukraine 'On the Protection of Childhood', 2020).

As of May 30, 2021, 66,491 children received this status. 95 of them are due to injuries, contusions and injuries (National Social Service of Ukraine, 2021).

Due to the protracted nature of the conflict, the large number of victims, the terrifying injuries and the traumatic nature of the events in eastern Ukraine, a significant number of people, including children, experienced mental stress (*The Children of the Contact Line in East Ukraine*, 2018). The problem has been broadly described in the 'Mine Victim Assistance Needs' assessment report, developed by the Danish Refugee Council – Danish Demining Group (DRC-DDG) in Ukraine in partnership with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). In particular, it notes that the symptoms of psychological trauma can appear immediately or over time, and lead to conditions such as clinical depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (Analytical Report: Assessment of the needs of children affected by mines or explosive remnants of war, 2019). Providing any services to children and young people living along the demarcation line is difficult, often impossible, which is an important problem. More than 54,000 children live in government-controlled areas alone, which are 15 kilometres from the demarcation line (*Analytical Report: On the Situation of Youth in Ukraine, prepared by the UN Working Group on Youth*, 2019, p. 5).

On February 24, 2022, the war in Ukraine began, Russian troops entered the territory of Ukraine. March 1, 2022, is the sixth day that Ukrainian children live in basements. There they sleep, eat and play. Today, the basement is the only place where children can escape from Russian terrorists. The Russian army not only destroys Ukrainian cities and shoots at civilians, but also insidiously kills children. As of March 1, 2022, the Russians killed 16 children in Ukraine, and another 45 children were rescued by doctors (*The war of Russia against Ukraine*, 2022). Can we talk in this situation about ensuring the rights of children, first of all the main right – the right to life, the opportunity to live in safe and peaceful conditions?

UNICEF is deeply concerned that intensifying hostilities in Ukraine pose an immediate threat to the lives and wellbeing of the country's 7.5 million children. The past eight years of conflict have inflicted profound and lasting damage to children on both sides of the line of contact. The children of Ukraine need peace, desperately, now. (*Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine M. Russell on children in Ukraine*, 24 February 2022).

There are also 'children and young people who are internally displaced persons', in particular those who move from the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, the territory of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) or towns located on the battle line. It is worth noting that part of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine, children and young people, grew up under new, specific conditions related to the loss of home and territory. They had to adapt to new living and education conditions, enter new social groups, form coping skills and deal with stress and mental tension. According to the data of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine as of 1 January 2021, there are approximately 1.5 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine (Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2021). New challenges and social threats (the annexation of Crimea, military operations in eastern Ukraine) have affected all spheres of social life, leading to the emergence of a new social phenomenon in the country, that is, of internally displaced persons, including children and young persons.

When analysing the social and political processes that took place in Ukraine and their impact on the formation of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha, attention should also be paid to the issues of contemporary migration processes taking place in the country. The basic feature of modern migration in Ukraine is that it is an institutionalised phenomenon that has evolved from the traditional social movement into a structured social mechanism (a diaspora, a network of non-governmental organisations, economic migrants, the infrastructure of the migration services market, and so on). It is worth paying special attention to the problem of economic migration (*Ukrainian migration in the face of global and national challenges of the 21st century*, 2019, p. 4). Ukrainian society is affected by the consequences of four powerful waves of migration. The country is now on the threshold of a new fifth wave of migration, which is associated with the loss of migrating young people and families with children. This wave of migration involves young

people, primarily those well-educated, and, unlike previously, people now treat migration as a way of life. In addition to those who go abroad to study, more young people plan to live in another country permanently.

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, over 500,000 people have fled the attacked country. Most of the evacuating Ukrainians, more than 281,000 people, left for Poland. More than 84,500 people fleeing Ukraine found themselves in Hungary, around 36,400 in Moldova, over 32,500 in Romania and around 30,000 in Slovakia (*Wojna w Ukrainie. ONZ: pół miliona uchodźców opuściło kraj*, 2022). The Secretary-General, António Guterres, February 28, 2022 spoke at the General Assembly's emergency special session on Ukraine. He told the Assembly Members that the fighting is raging across the country, from air, land and sea, and that it must stop now. The Secretary-General underscored that this escalating violence — which is resulting in civilian deaths, including children – is totally unacceptable. According to latest figures from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), more than half a million people have already crossed the international borders, mostly towards Poland (*Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General*, 2022).

Summary

The iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine are persons from birth up to 26 years old, who account for 11.3 million (27.2%) out of 41.6 million people (Population of Ukraine: Demographic Yearbook, 2020, p. 26). Generation Alpha is people up to 11 years of age (5.1 million people, 12.3%) and Generation Z is people aged 12 to 26 years (6.2 million people, 14.9%). Their purchasing power is just taking shape and represents great potential for society. A smartphone has almost become an extension of themselves. Thanks to this device, they can be online at any time, simultaneously communicating with friends, listening to music and using applications that make life easier or provide entertainment.

The formation of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine is influenced by two revolutions (the Orange Revolution in 2004 and the Revolution of Dignity in 2014), the hybrid war and Russian-Ukrainian war in Ukraine. On the one hand, a 'independence generation', a 'revolution

generation', a generation of young patriots has been created. These young people defended their right to live in a European country. On the other hand, the hybrid war and Russian-Ukrainian war in Ukraine has given rise to the 'the war generation' and 'the war children generation' including children who have lost their parents and homes, live in the territory where there is armed conflict and often need psychotherapeutic rehabilitation. It should be noted that all this affects the specific features of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine.

When analysing the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in the context of the political situation and social changes in Ukraine, we can define specific features and subgroups of these generations. They are pro-European, patriotic, socially active ('the revolution generation'); psycho-traumatic ('the war generation'); adaptive and mobile ('the generation of internally displaced persons'); and migrants ('the migrant and euro-orphan generation').

The specific features of the iGeneration (Z) and Generation Alpha in Ukraine and its sub-generational groups are as follows:

1. *The pro-European, patriotic and socio-active generation ('the revolution generation', 'the independence generation')* – the generation of young patriotic Ukrainians; young people who believe in a better future for their country; young people who are socially active and pro-European; young people who fought and defended their ideals, values and priorities in the Maidan square; young people who were active volunteers and defended their right to live in a democratic European country.

2. *The psycho-traumatic generation ('the war generation', 'the war children generation')* – the generation of children who suffer from hostilities and armed conflicts; children affected by landmines; children who have lost their parents; children who lived and/or live in the territory of war hostilities; children and adolescents who have suffered psychological trauma and need psychotherapeutic help and rehabilitation.

3. *The adaptive-mobile generation ('the generation of internally displaced persons')* – a generation that was formed under new, specific conditions related to the loss of home and territory and had to adapt to new living and education conditions, enter new social groups, form coping skills and deal with stress and mental tension; children and

adolescents who moved from the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, the territory of the ATO or towns located on the battle line.

4. *The migrant generation ('the generation of migrants and euro-orphans)* – a generation of migrants, including migrating families with children and young people; young people migrating to study abroad; migrant workers; the problem of 'Euro-orphans' and the upbringing of the children of migrant workers; migrating families with children in connection with the Russian-Ukrainian war in Ukraine.

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