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TRANSFORMATION OF THE RELIGIOUS NETWORK IN WESTERN EUROPE FROM FEBRUARY 24, 2022

The article presents the changes that have taken place in the religious environment of Western Europe since the beginning of the open armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022. It is traced that the invasion of Ukrainian territory resulted in a million-strong flow of Ukrainian refugees to the countries of Western Europe. Since the beginning of the war, there has been an increase in the number of believers in the religious organizations of Western Europe at the expense of Ukrainian refugees. Some researchers see in this process a certain religious revival and transformation of the religious networks of Western countries. The difference between the religious mentality of Ukrainians and residents of European countries is traced. The useful role of religion for displaced persons who have suffered various property and social losses is noted. It is noted that in the environment of the religious community, refugees, including Ukrainians, can receive public recognition, respect and prospects for religious service and be attracted to communities that help to recover from the losses experienced. The transformation of the liturgical practices of European denominations through the creation of special religious services for Ukrainian refugees is described. The concept of “religious network marketing” is presented as a method of studying the features of the revival and transformation of Western religious networks. The concept of “transformation” in a religious context is noted, and it is emphasized that it has a two-way focus, since changes are taking place not only in the European interfaith network, but also there is an adaptation of Ukrainian refugees to Western culture. Information is provided on the method of collecting data on the religious identity of Ukrainian refugees. It is also proposed to create with the help of software comparative graphs of the transformation of the religious network of Western Europe.

Key words: religious transformation, Western European countries, Ukrainian refugees, modern religious situation, religious education, history of religion.

Formulation of the problem. The invasion of Russia trying to occupy Ukraine launched a large-scale process with the arrival of war refugees in Europe. Ukrainian refugees became the center of attention of most European countries. “Taking in such a large number of refugees poses numerous challenges and uncertainties for European states: (1) a logistics and coordination challenge; (2) an economic challenge both for the member states and the EU; (3) an integration challenge; and (4) unanimous support for providing refuge” [2].

A hypothesis on the emergence of the phenomenon of a mixed religious network, when the dominant religious tradition tries to take into account the needs of the minority. The basis for the hypothesis is the creation of Ukrainian religious communities on

the territory of Western Europe. The purpose of the research project is to visually depict aspects of the seeming “renaissance” and the causes of transformational processes in the religious networks of Western Europe.

Why does this project require immediate implementation? For the reason that the identification and description of differences in religious networks within one denomination is a very fleeting phenomenon. Inside religious denominations, believers who come from countries with other religious traditions quickly adapt and integrate into their confession. However, in the process of integrating a large number of believers in one short period of time, such short-term phenomena as the Renaissance and the Transformation of the religious network as a whole appear.

A timely description of these phenomena will create a qualitative academic basis for studying future mass migrations of refugees from other religious countries.

Purpose of the study. To identify the aspects for the phenomenon of the transformation of the Religious Networks in Western Europe as a result of the acceptance of a large number of religious emigrants from Ukraine.

The main results of the study. One of the decisive tools in the integration and adaptation of refugees is religion. Religion creates a sense of belonging to a community, the complicity of “others” in the hardships of loss, and the restructuring of a way of life. Religious organizations that offer diverse beliefs, as well as communities where immigrants of the same nationality gather and form networks of mutual support that act as a psychological anchor, help to alleviate the stress and trauma from the accumulation of various problems. One of the needs that does not require special material investments on the part of the host country is the satisfaction of the religious needs of newly arrived refugees. Before Russia’s war against Ukraine, Ukrainians and Europeans shared many religious beliefs and practices. Existing religious networks [13] before the war made it easier for fellow believers to travel around the world. However, with the outbreak of hostilities on the territory of Ukraine, European religious networks experienced a significant transformation.

Religious organizations help immigrants get many things they need to survive and be included in the new society. In his study of the assimilation of Jews, Catholics Protestants, immigrants from Europe in the years after World War II, Will Herberg noted: “It is mainly in them and through ... religions that he (the immigrant), or rather his children and grandchildren, will find an identifiable place in ... life” [10]. Today, when the forced immigration of Ukrainians brings new diversity to the cultural landscape of Western Europe, Herberg’s ideas remain relevant, but adjusted for a wider range of religious criteria in the adaptation of the modern generation. Researcher Charles Hirschman emphasizes that a significant proportion of immigrants became Americans only through participation in the life of specific religious organizations [9].

As a result of the acceptance of Ukrainian refugees in the churches of Western Europe, there was a revival of the practical religious assistance to the latter. There is transformation of the worldview of Ukrainians and adaptation to the norms and religious traditions within the religious networks [13] of Western Europe [19]. Some have described it as a renaissance

of Western religious networks due to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees.

Why is it important to study this phenomenon in the context of the Religious Network Religious groups in Eastern Europe are not a newly created phenomenon. They have their own history, traditions, followers, and most importantly, its pronounced Western mentality. That is why Religious Networks in Western Europe often act as an alternative source of respectability for Ukrainian refugees. This is especially important for those who seek social recognition but have been forced by immigration to downgrade their professional status. Being part of a religious community and having a good reputation in it brings respect, as well as opportunities for leadership and service (within the activities of a religious community), which is considered quite prestigious. Communities reinforce and sometimes change the ethnic identity of immigrants. Religion is presented as a socially acceptable form through which they can express, reformulate and transmit ethnic culture and identity.

So far, the term “transformation” has been used largely regardless of its scope. However, we have associated it with religion [17]. The reason for this connection is the level of religiosity of Ukrainian refugees. Arriving in European countries, the bearers of Christian religious beliefs quickly transformed the religious network of Western Europe due to the large number. At the same time, Ukrainian refugees also adapted to the customs and traditions of churches in Western European countries. That is why the term “transformation” is most appropriate, since it includes two-sided changes: the Religious Network of Western Europe and the Ukrainian refugees who have become part of it. By Religious Network we mean a global interfaith network of religious organizations and individuals. Various religious networks are engaged in popularizing their doctrines, protecting, satisfying the interests and needs of their adherents. The transformation of Europe’s religious networks has taken place through a rapid reorientation to meet human needs of millions of refugees, from the primary satisfaction of spiritual needs to the provision of practical (physical) needs of Ukrainians [1]. It is important to note that religious networks tend [16] to be deeply embedded in political and economic networks [16].

Grace Davie is Professor Emeritus in the Sociology of Religion at the University of Exeter and the co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Europe* called Ukraine a religious country. This means that in Ukraine the official religion is Orthodoxy, which is recognized by the state as the official religion of the country, which is practiced by the

majority of 76% [18]. In a short period of time, three important processes took place because of Ukrainian refugees' interaction with the modern history of the religion of Europe. The first is the revival of churches in the countries of Western Europe. The second is the transition from the formal performance of religious rites to the provision of practical assistance to Ukrainian co-religionists.

Grace Davie has noted "the incapacity of Western minds to grasp the continuing significance of religion in much of the modern world" [4]. In order to objectively assess the phenomenon of the transformation of the religious network in Western Europe after February 24, 2022, one must clearly understand the religious worldview of Ukrainian refugees. The religious worldview of Ukrainians differs from the worldview of citizens of Western Europe due to the fact that Ukrainians value religion more because of 70 years of atheistic propaganda of the former Soviet Union. The third is the transformation of the liturgical practices of European churches through the creation of special services for Ukrainian refugees. This aspect is more felt among Protestant churches. And most important aspect is the strengthening and creation of strong religious networks [13] between Europe and Ukraine through the family ties of Ukrainian refugees.

Despite the fact that the religious rites of the European churches are similar to the rites of similar churches in Ukraine, there are differences in traditions, customs, and mental constructs in the attitude towards religion of Ukrainians and Western Europeans. For example, there are only 336 Orthodox churches throughout Germany [8], while in Ukraine there are more than 7,000. This is without taking into account the churches belonging to the Moscow Patriarchate (12,500) [15]. In Germany, the Lutheran and Reformed churches are widespread, while on the territory of Ukraine, they are rare and confessions of late Protestantism are more numerous: Baptists, Pentecostals, and Adventists. Protestantism in Western Europe is more liberal than in Ukraine. Ukrainian Catholicism is more similar in form of worship to Ukrainian Orthodoxy, as it has adapted to the needs of the former Orthodox, while Western Catholicism does not have the influence of the Orthodox tradition [7]. Based on several of the differences mentioned above, a forced transformational phenomenon [11] occurred in European religious networks, namely a forced fusion of two religious forms on the basis of established Western and Eastern religious traditions in Europe [19].

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The project "Transformation of the Religious Network in Western Europe from February 24, 2022" will show the modern transformational processes of religious networks in Western Europe through the introduction of modern adaptive factors. Such examples might be, quick contact with fellow believers through social networks, the use of modern translators to establish linguistic connections between multilingual members of the church, or the reorientation from spiritual help to practical humanitarian through modern means of transferring help.

Therefore, the timely exploration of the phenomenon of the transformation of religious networks aspects a foundation for Western researchers [5] who will be able to analyze and perhaps predict transformational processes in the future if they again encounter similarly forced emigration of refugees from different countries. The project Transformation of Religious Networks in Western Europe offers a vital analysis for researchers of contemporary religion and students of faculties studying politics, economics, society, and the consequences of emigration processes [6].

Religious network marketing or multi-level religious marketing is a method proposed by the author of the project to study the short-term phenomenon of the revival and transformation of religious networks due to the arrival of war refugees. This is a concept based on the principle of the implementation of religious services operating in previously created religious networks. In other words, believers from various churches in Ukraine, after moving to European countries, independently contacted and joined their religious denominations. Thus, religious denominations are independent distributors of similar religious practices, each of which has an equal right to attract their believers from the churches of Ukraine. At the same time, the choice of each member of the religious network contains a number of compromises with which both sides of the believer from Eastern

Europe and the church that received him from Western Europe must come to terms.

The selection aspects for countries are based on statistical data on the number of admissions of Ukrainian refugees. Most of the refugees from Ukraine were accepted by Poland almost 1.5 million people are registered there. A little over a million Ukrainians have been taken in by Germany since the beginning of the war. The largest number of refugees was registered in March (431000) and April (198000). In third place in terms of the number of Ukrainian refugees is the Czech Republic just over 455000 of our citizens are registered there. The top ten countries to which most Ukrainians left the war also included: Italy (171500), Spain (150400), France (118900), Slovakia (99300). Less than 10,000 Ukrainian refugees have registered in Slovenia, Luxembourg, Malta and other EU countries.

The collection of information about the religious affiliation of Ukrainian refugees is carried out using social messengers created for Ukrainians in each of the host countries (“Ukrainian Luxembourg” social network on Facebook for Ukrainian refugees) [20]. We are familiar with the “General Data Protection Regulation” [4] document, so the data collection will be anonymous. Moreover, we do not use long forms of questionnaires, but an instant question. What does it mean? Once a week, Ukrainian social media followers need to answer a quick question with a single click. For example, due to the fact that each EU country has already created a group on social networks for Ukrainian refugees. We know exactly where Ukrainians live at the moment. Now our task is to find out who attends which church with the help of a quick questionnaire. What is the difference between the religious traditions of Ukraine and Western Europe? Example of a quick response. It is enough to choose:

a. in appearance, b. in the form of worship, c. With. in relation to worship, etc.

Using state of the art software for the visualization of geo-spatial data, comparative graphs-chronicles will be created to identify certain aspects of the Renaissance phenomenon in the religious networks of Western Europe, in our case, because of the influx of Ukrainian refugees [12]. This will help to reveal the hidden tendencies that have generally influenced the modern phenomenon of the religious renaissance in Western Europe by connecting with believers who have an Eastern religious experience. Using the “Easel.ly” software product, templates will be created that will visually demonstrate the transformation processes and individual religious elements that came from Eastern Europe (Ukraine) and influenced the transformation of religious networks in Western Europe. The Stat Planet program will help overlay statistical data on maps of countries in Western Europe and reveal the invisible connections that have taken place in the religious networks of Western and Eastern Europe since February 24, 2022.

Conclusions. Thus, in the conclusions, we note several important aspects. Firstly, the transformation of the religious network of the countries of Western Europe was the result of the movement to these territories of a significant number of Ukrainian refugees, who by origin are a religious nation. Secondly, Ukrainian refugees are going through a two-way process of adaptation. On the one hand, they adapt to the requirements of Western culture, and on the other hand, due to the quantity, they bring their own habits and mentality. Thirdly, the study of changes in the religious network of Western European countries requires an in-depth application of software products for collecting statistical data and recording important information that is part of the modern history of religion.

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Куриляк В.В., Слюсаренко А.Г., Яценко С.Л. ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ РЕЛІГІЙНОЇ МЕРЕЖІ У ЗАХІДНІЙ ЄВРОПІ ПІСЛЯ 24 ЛЮТОГО 2022 РОКУ

У статті представлено зміни, які відбулися у релігійному середовищі Західної Європи з початку відкритої збройної агресії Російської Федерації проти України з 24 лютого 2022 р. Простежено, що наслідком вторгнення на українську територію став мільйонний потік українських біженців у країни Західної Європи. З початку війни в релігійних організаціях Західної Європи відбулося збільшення кількості вірян за рахунок українських біженців. Окремі дослідники вбачають у цьому процесі певне релігійне відродження та трансформацію релігійних мереж країн Заходу. Прослідковано відмінність релігійного менталітету українців та мешканців країн Європи. Підмічено корисну роль релігії для переміщених осіб, що зазнали різноманітних майнових та соціальних втрат. Відзначено, що у середовищі релігійної спільноти біженці, у тому числі українці можуть отримати суспільне визнання, повагу та перспективи виконувати релігійне служіння та бути залучені до спільнот, які допомагають відновлюватися після пережитих втрат. Описано трансформацію літургійних практик європейських деномінацій через створення спеціальних релігійних служб для українських біженців. Представлено поняття «релігійний мережевий маркетинг» як метод дослідження особливостей відродження та трансформації західних релігійних мереж. Відзначено поняття «трансформація» у релігійному контексті, і підкреслено, що воно має двосторонню направленість, оскільки відбуваються зміни не тільки у європейській міжконфесійній мережі, але й також спостерігається адаптація українських біженців до західної культури. Подана інформація про метод для збору даних щодо релігійної ідентичності українських біженців. Також запропоновано створення за допомогою програмного забезпечення порівняльних графіків трансформації релігійної мережі Західної Європи.

Ключові слова: релігійна трансформація, сучасна релігійна ситуація, релігійна освіта, історія релігії, західні країни Європи, українські біженці.