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Cultural and artistic practices of Ukraine in the context of European integration processes: Current state

Abstract. The purpose of this study was to examine, how integration into the European cultural space has affected the development of national identity and cultural cooperation. To fulfil this purpose, qualitative analysis methods were used, including content analysis of cultural programmes, including Culture Bridges and Culture of the Eastern Partnership. The analysis showed that integration into the European cultural space positively influenced the development of national identity and cultural cooperation. The study highlighted the transformation of cultural institutions that have received new opportunities for the development of contemporary art through cross-cultural interaction. Particular, attention was paid to the use of the latest technologies, such as digital platforms, to present Ukrainian art on the international stage. The findings demonstrated the significance of state and international support for Ukraine's cultural development and its integration into the global context, which increases the competitiveness of Ukrainian culture on the world stage. Specifically, it was noted that such programmes facilitated the implementation of projects that supported the mobility of artists and the exchange of knowledge, which led to the emergence of new artistic practices. As a result, the positive effects of European integration processes on national culture and international cultural exchanges were demonstrated, and the impact of European standards on the adaptation and internationalisation of the artistic space in Ukraine was highlighted

Keywords: virtual reality; grant programmes; innovative projects; institutional transformation; international cooperation; social media

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the study was conditioned by the fundamental socio-economic and technological changes of modern times, which substantially affect the role of cultural and artistic spheres in social development. In the context of globalisation and digitalisation, national identity and cultural heritage are under threat due to the long-standing dependence on totalitarian regimes, as well as the rapid transformation processes that are taking place in Ukraine. National culture has become a key factor in social progress and state independence, which underlines the significance

of its preservation and development. In modern Ukraine, there is a need to integrate the latest technologies to preserve and develop cultural values. Despite the progressive development of virtual reality (VR), which opens new opportunities for creating and showcasing art projects, there are problems associated with limited funding and support for cultural initiatives. These limitations greatly complicate the implementation of creative projects and affect their quality.

The problem is centred around the need to harmonise traditional and modern approaches to culture, to ensure

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the sustainable development of national identity in the context of globalisation and new technological challenges. The development of virtual art and its integration into conventional media spheres pose new demands on cultural projects and institutions. This requires the development of innovative approaches to their implementation and support at the national and international levels.

In the field under study, there are a series of problems related to the impact of European integration processes on culture in Ukraine. The authors A. Tyushka & T. Schumacher (2021) analysed the role of the European Union and its relations with the Eastern Partnership countries, focusing on the prospects for cultural dialogue between Ukraine and the EU. The researchers found that European integration can facilitate cultural exchange, but noted insufficient attention to the implementation of concrete cultural projects. Researchers L. Rjazancev & I. Sliesariev (2022) examined the effects of cinema and television on the development of rave culture in Ukraine. Their findings indicated, how media art contributes to cultural transformations and the popularisation of sub-cultures, but the study did not cover the impact of these processes on the state's broader cultural policy.

Scientist T.V. Panyok (2020) investigated the historical and cultural context of art education in Ukraine in the early 20th century, focusing on the development of artistic practices in the context of European integration trends. However, the gaps in this study were related to the insufficient analysis of contemporary artistic initiatives in the context of the latest technologies. Ye. Horyslavets (2021) studied the evolution of cinematic language in contemporary Ukrainian culture, emphasising the significance of visual arts in shaping cultural identity. However, insufficient attention was paid to the integration of the latest media technologies into this process.

V. Pylypiv *et al.* (2024) analysed the influence of globalisation on Ukrainian culture, emphasising, how integration into the European cultural space fosters cross-cultural interactions and enhances the competitiveness of Ukrainian art on the global stage. The authors highlighted the role of digital platforms in promoting contemporary Ukrainian art internationally, a finding that aligns with this study's focused on technological advancements in cultural presentation. R.S. Mokhnyuk (2021) examined the role of state cultural policy in the development of civil society within European integration processes. This work underscored the importance of aligning national cultural policies with European standards, noting that effective state support fosters cultural cooperation and strengthens national identity. These findings corroborate the current study's emphasis on the transformative effects of European integration on cultural institutions.

Y. Kravchenko & O. Nikolova (2022) explored the representation of Ukrainian cultural figures, such as Lesia Ukrainka, in the urban cultural space as a means of preserving national memory amidst European integration. Their work highlighted, how cultural narratives are

adapted to align with European values, while maintaining distinct national identities, which echoes the current study's discussion on balancing national identity with cross-cultural interactions. S. Rybchenko *et al.* (2024) investigated the impact of globalisation on constitutional and legislative adaptation in Ukraine. Although focusing on legal frameworks, their analysis demonstrated the social consequences of aligning national systems with European standards, which parallels the study's examination of the adaptation of Ukrainian cultural institutions to European norms.

The purpose of this study was to provide a comprehensive analysis of contemporary cultural and artistic practices in Ukraine in the context of European integration processes, with a focus on identifying key trends and areas of development of these practices.

To fulfil this purpose, cultural analysis was used to investigate changes in Ukrainian cultural practices under the influence of European integration processes. This helped to track the dynamics of cultural transformations and the effects of European standards on the development of Ukrainian art. The historical and analytical method helped to trace the historical evolution of artistic traditions in Ukraine in the context of European integration. This method was aimed at investigating past cultural and political influences on contemporary Ukrainian culture. This helped to assess the similarities and differences in cultural processes in Ukraine and Europe, including the impact of European integration on culture.

Content analysis was also employed for the study, including official documents, such as the Association Agreement between Ukraine, on the one hand, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, on the other hand No. 984_011 (2024), which contains provisions on cultural cooperation, regulates the cultural rights of minorities, and cultural support programmes from the European Union (British Council, 2020). This helped to identify the key trends in cultural integration and their impact on artistic practices.

VR technologies in cultural and artistic practices in Ukraine

In the modern world, culture is becoming an increasingly vital element of social and human development. Culture enables members of society to represent their worldview through cultural interaction, to engage in artistic and cultural interregional interaction, and to preserve and enrich the historical and cultural heritage in all its diversity. Radical changes in culture and scientific and technological advances have led to a rethinking of the principles of human genesis. In the history of European culture between 2014 and 2024, the principle of cultural development is interpreted as synonymous with progress in the rationalist sense of the Enlightenment, i.e., intensive development of human and natural potential, economic growth, technological advancement, and rising welfare. Despite some critical phenomena, certain changes in cultural

development have occurred. Since independence, a new cultural reality has emerged in Ukraine. National culture has become one of the determining factors of social progress, the development of an independent state and the shaping of national identity.

Prolonged dependence on totalitarian regimes and global transformation processes can lead to a nation losing its cultural identity and mentality. Therefore, there is an urgent need to restore the cultural values that characterise the nation's unique identity. Preserving cultural memory is essential for the development of national culture.

Scientist J. Lanier (2017) popularised the term "virtual reality" in the first half of the 1980s. VR is a visual experience presented through computer screens or specialised three-dimensional technologies. Some simulations have on-screen information, such as sound effects reproduced through specialised sound equipment. 3D technology is a platform for artists, who want to add a new dimension to their work by illustrating a real-life painting through VR technology. The possibilities of VR technology are almost endless. It takes many forms, including street art, 3D sculptures, fashion week runways, and Broadway sets.

Since the 2020s, interest in incorporating VR into artistic practices has been growing rapidly. The variety of VR tools is increasing (virtual exhibitions – creating 3D models of exhibits that can be viewed in a virtual space. Multimedia interactive installations are a combination of VR with audio and video elements that create an immersive experience), and cultural institutions are opening all their exhibitions in VR (the National Art Museum of Ukraine – the museum offers virtual tours of its exhibitions, which allow visitors to get acquainted with the art collection without physical presence). This environment is a prime example of combining digital experience with conventional media worlds such as cinema, books, and illustrations. A unique feature of virtual exhibitions is that a gallery can showcase the work of several artists in parallel (Ao *et al.*, 2023).

In VR, the key purpose is to create a seamless exhibition, and a major advantage of the technology is its unlimited scope – absolute possibilities for representing an artist's work. Some of the works that already existed physically (museum exhibits) had to be scanned in 3D, rendered, and placed in a virtual environment. For artists, who want to develop concrete models and characters in greater detail, there is Adobe Dimension, a SketchUp application for visualising images in 3D. VR technology is in the focus of attention of most museums in Ukraine, including the Lviv Historical Museum Arsenal, the National Museum of Natural History and the Archaeological Museum (Berti, 2021). The Volume Park project was organised as follows: an AR tour of the Ukrainian National Art Museum was created. The application developed for the Volume Park programme identified the most valuable exhibits and individual rooms and presents a 3D plan of the premises. VR also enables people with visual and hearing impairments to see and hear the tours. With the onset of restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, art studios and

cultural projects have begun to promote online formats. This includes presentations on social media, interviews, and project demonstrations in VR reality. VR can also be used at classic offline exhibitions.

Considering the new virtuality of art, artists strive to harmonise the object with the surrounding space, sometimes completely ignoring this aspect, or seeking to create a formal dissonance, which is quite acceptable for a temporary work. The content base of such objects is subject to the symbolism of places, or reconstruction in interaction with historical memory, combining artistic and documentary components, often emphasising the artistic communication process, attracting the viewer's attention with bright forms and interesting ideas (Lanier, 2017).

The VR exhibition Volume Park, demonstrated, how Ukrainian artists have used digital technologies to overcome obstacles, lack of funding and lack of support. It also helped to strengthen ties with European cultural institutions that are increasingly focused on integrating digital art practices. Thanks to these technologies, Ukrainian artists could influence the development of new cultural trends and take part in international cultural processes. Furthermore, VR and augmented reality contribute to the development of inclusivity in the arts by providing access to cultural sites for people with disabilities, which is in line with European standards of cultural accessibility.

In summary, VR art has arguably become a part of the public art scene. Interactive digital technologies are a widespread means of communication in society. Global computerisation and digitalisation, as well as the emergence of a plethora of works with interactive features, have prompted people to reflect on the integration of the latest technologies into the artistic environment. Thus, the value of digital trends blurs the boundaries between the real and the virtual, helping to create the most realistic virtual worlds. In the 21st century, VR itself is becoming a new cultural phenomenon and a new reality for audiovisual art. Therefore, creators are expected to develop new adequate approaches to this effective mechanism of influencing the audience and its professional use. VR has opened new opportunities for Ukrainian artists and enabled them to take part in the global cultural space, using the latest technologies to create and showcase their works on the international stage.

Support and implementation of gender culture

From 2014 to 2024, the issue of implementing gender culture as a key to the further development of a democratic state in the modern cultural and artistic space is relevant for the development of Ukrainian society. This issue is especially urgent in the current context of solidarity between European countries, where, as a result of the war, European culture has become closer to the mentality of Ukrainians. Considering the above, identifying further areas for the development of gender culture in the artistic space is the crucial task of modern times. Since 2019, Ukraine has been a member of the Biarritz Partnership

(an international initiative launched at the G7 Summit in 2019 to promote gender equality and women's empowerment), which requires the ratification of all relevant gender equality standards in various fields. This meant that in the near future, the value system and established norms regarding gender roles would change in the arts as well. The Council of Europe (CoE) Gender Equality Strategy for 2017–2024 (Alonso Gallo & Gutiérrez López, 2023), which Ukraine is guided by, focuses on the following six strategic areas: prevention of gender stereotypes and sexism – collective perceptions of everyday male or female roles that exist in cultural activities could limit and consequently impede the self-fulfilment of women and men, and in the worst cases, cause violence.

The gender dimension in culture is also outlined in the Recommendation CM/Rec (2019)1 adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Preventing and Combating Sexism (2019), which focused on developing principles to combat gender stereotypes in the cultural sphere, including language, internet communication, media and advertising, the public sphere, the workplace, the judiciary, education, sports and the private sphere, among other areas. The above indicates further steps by Ukraine to unify the level of gender culture among European countries. For example, according to the 2021 Gender Gap Index, Ukraine ranked 74th out of 156 countries, which meant that it fell behind the most developed EU countries (Iceland, Sweden, and Switzerland topped the list) (Lesko, 2023). Therewith, the communicative function of art currently plays a secondary role in the development of a harmoniously developed personality from a gender perspective. This is especially true for classical theatre, museum presentations, exhibitions, and a unified national gender rhetoric. At the same time, for instance, the Istanbul Convention (2011), signed by Ukraine in 2011, states that “cultural characteristics, religion, traditions, and honour shall not be invoked as a justification for injustice against women”.

Women's parenthood and their involvement in “caring for others”, which is traditionally the responsibility of women, are portrayed in the art world as something normal, natural, and doable for men. In other words, the presence of men in this sphere of life is disproportionately emphasised compared to the need for women's presence in the public sphere. There is also a gender imbalance in the use of cultural and artistic services: women traditionally attend art events more often.

By raising the issue of increased attention and care for the cultural needs of men, current artistic events in the field of gender, in particular the well-known PinchukArt-Centre project “Why there are great women artists in Ukrainian art” in 2019, have made a great contribution to the task of restoring the presence of absent women in art (Yakovlenko, 2019). This context of highlighting the presence of women as equal artists was continued by the Lviv Municipal Art Centre with the exhibition “Why there are women artists in Lviv” in 2020. Another challenge related

to Europe's ambitious goals is to showcase women's experiences, especially war, which has been positioned throughout human history as a job uncharacteristic of women. In the context of Ukrainian realities, a lot of materials have been devoted to this topic since 2014, and it can be argued that there are changes in patriarchal stereotypes about the role of women in the army.

However, the most inclusive artistic event for understanding gender equality has been the United Nations HeForShe project, which was first organised in 2019. This annual art marathon focused on gender equality issues through the language of contemporary art, including theatre, performance, film, and painting, as well as on the active involvement of men in highlighting women's issues (Szalai & Ratz, 2023).

Another notable trend is the cooperation between the private sector and public art institutions; in 2020, the National Gallery of Art of Ukraine created a virtual gallery featuring works by Ukrainian women artists of the past and present. However, most of these initiatives focus on the “visibility” of women in the public sphere. This contrasts with the “visibility” of men in the private sphere. Firstly, to create a cultural and information environment and infrastructure that meets the requirements of the times, to develop modern models and types of gender relations and promote their implementation in selected regions, to engage the artistic community in the perception of gender cultivation, which indicates the advanced development of the European state, to ensure the lowest gender representation in the organisation of art events in regions with the lowest representation of men and women (Lačný *et al.*, 2022).

One of the key aspects of Ukraine's European integration is the implementation of gender equality standards that are in line with European values, especially in the cultural and artistic spheres. The development of a gender culture, equal rights and opportunities for both sexes is one of the fundamental elements of a democratic society, and Ukraine seeks to harmonise its internal practices with European standards, as reflected in a series of documents, including the Sustainable Development Strategy “Ukraine – 2020” (Decree of the..., 2020). Despite considerable achievements, as evidenced by the 2021 Gender Gap Index, Ukraine still lags behind EU countries in gender issues, particularly in the field of culture.

Cultural design as a feature of modern Ukrainian culture

Cultural design is a crucial typological feature of contemporary culture based on human creativity. In Ukraine, socio-cultural and cultural and artistic projects began to be implemented only in the 1990s. The Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (UCF) and other organisations are actively involved in the implementation of cultural projects, but it is the UCF that plays a leading role in providing grants to support and develop the country's culture. The UCF was established in 2017 with the primary goal of promoting the development of cultural and artistic practices in Ukraine. The core mission of the Foundation is stated on the UCF's

official website as follows: “The Ukrainian Cultural Foundation has introduced a new mechanism that will provide result-oriented and competitive state financial support to cultural and creative industries initiatives to promote the development of Ukraine’s cultural and creative ecosystem”

(Tyushka & Schumacher, 2021). The UCF organises competitive grant programmes on its official website (Table 1): “Culture without Barriers”, “Culture. Regions”, “Cultural Heritage”, “Restoration of Cultural and Artistic Activities” (Mosendz *et al.*, 2022).

Table 1. UCF grant programmes for 2024

Cultural programme	Applications received	Applications that passed the technical selection
Culture without Barriers	132	66
Culture. Regions	233	116
Cultural Heritage	327	199
Restoration of Cultural and Artistic Activities	662	305

Source: compiled by the author

The UCF also publishes announcements about the competition, project content, and terms of participation on its social media pages to popularise and promote the project: YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram. The beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has led to certain changes in the 2022 grant season. As a result of UCF’s negotiations with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, due to the priority of state funding for the defence sector and the lack of state funding for UCF, some grant programmes that were to be reviewed by experts by February 2022 were extended until 2023 (Olzacka, 2021).

The Culture of the Eastern Partnership programme was implemented by the European Commission from 2011 to 2015 to strengthen the role of culture in the region’s sustainable development (Higgins, 2023). The programme provided grant support to cultural projects in the region. Another example is the Bridges of Culture grant programme, which is being implemented in 2017–2020 and is part of a national cooperation project (Crombois, 2023). In the first call for proposals in 2018, over 40 grants totalling EUR 300000 were awarded to Ukrainian projects under this programme (British Council, 2020). Most project

applications were submitted in the areas of cultural heritage, visual arts, festivals, and creative industries. Another state cultural institution in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Institute, established in 2017, also plays a role in supporting and promoting cultural projects. The Institute’s mission is to strengthen Ukraine’s international and internal subjectivity through cultural diplomacy. The key programme areas of the Ukrainian Institute include artistic programmes, cross-sectoral activities, and the development of cultural diplomacy (Akaliyski & Reeskens, 2023).

The cultural projects supported by the UCF and the Ukrainian Institute influence Ukraine’s European integration by strengthening its presence in the international cultural arena and facilitating the exchange of ideas with European partners (Table 2). UCF programmes, such as Culture without Barriers and Bridges of Culture, allow Ukrainian artists and cultural organisations to integrate into European cultural networks through cooperation and joint projects. For example, participation in EU grant programmes provides access to resources and experience of European countries, which facilitates the exchange of creative ideas and increases the competitiveness of Ukrainian cultural initiatives (Panyok, 2020).

Table 2. Cooperation programmes in the field of culture between Ukraine and the European Union

Programme/initiative	Description	Goals	Participants
Creative Europe	Programme supporting the cultural and creative industries in the EU and partner countries	Strengthening cultural ties, supporting projects	Cultural organisations, artists
EU4Culture	An initiative that promotes the development of cultural heritage and contemporary art	Supporting cultural dialogue, preserving heritage	Museums, theatres, cultural centres
Erasmus+	Exchange programme for students, teachers, and youth in the field of education and culture	Strengthening educational and cultural ties	Higher education institutions, youth organisations
Cultural Heritage in Action	Programme supporting projects to restore cultural heritage	Preservation and promotion of cultural heritage	Local communities, cultural organisations
Horizon Europe	Research and innovation programme, including cultural projects	Support for innovation in the cultural and creative industries	Research institutions, business
EU Eastern Partnership Culture Programme	Programme of cooperation in the cultural sphere for the Eastern Partnership countries	Development of cultural cooperation	Eastern Partnership countries, cultural organisations

Source: based on M. Kobelia-Zvir (2023)

Supporting such projects helped not only to preserve national identity, but also to promote Ukrainian culture in the international arena, emphasising its uniqueness and, at the same time, its affiliation with common European values. These projects also contribute to the development of cultural diplomacy, which is an essential element in shaping Ukraine's international image as a modern European state (Chantadze, 2024). The organisation of joint cultural events, such as artistic residencies and festivals, strengthens cultural ties between Ukraine and Europe, promoting cultural dialogue and integration.

The role of transmedia storytelling in the cultural dimension of European integration processes

The term 'transmedia storytelling' was introduced by the American researcher G. Jenkins, who argued that its key characteristic is that media content should be presented on multiple media platforms. The scientist argued that transmedia is not a new phenomenon – it has long been practiced, for instance, in the religious world – but the opportunities offered by the Internet and digital technologies make this approach pertinent, as it enables audience participation and collective interaction on various media platforms. Transmedia storytelling is the process of systematically distributing elements of a work of fiction across targeted distribution channels to create a unified and coordinated entertainment experience (Perales García, 2023).

Ideally, each media carrier adds something new to the story, which researchers call transmedia synergy and emphasise the relevance of brand expansion and franchising across different media platforms (Lyu, 2024). A vivid example of transmedia is the adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's legendarium, an adaptation that encompasses TV series, films, and other media formats. Viewers were introduced to The Lord of the Rings through the original trilogy directed by Peter Jackson. Initially, it was the successful launch of The Lord of the Rings in 2001. It was followed by The Two Towers (2002) and The Return of the King (2003). Later, The Hobbit trilogy was released. Overall, the series' television programmes can be divided into three genres: canonical, legendary, and non-canonical. The novels and comic book series also complement the plot and tell complementary stories about the characters. The transmedia universe of the 'world of the Middle-earth' has been further expanded by writers and artists. Modern game developers have also not ignored The Lord of the Rings, as transmedia is closely related to entertainment. Some games tell new stories in familiar worlds, while others allow players to take part in real-life situations in events that preceded the Lord of the Rings trilogy. After The Lord of the Rings, games have emerged that not only recreate the events from the films, but also show what life is like for human elves and bounty hunters. Amusement parks around the world have attractions that immerse visitors in the Lord of the Rings universe, and there is also a separate VR room, where fans can fully immerse themselves in their favourite world.

Using social media as an alternative to conventional audiovisual media such as film and television can appeal to a variety of target groups. Some people, for whatever reason, cannot or do not want to see their favourite characters in the cinema, but enjoy them on their computer screen at home (Horyslavets, 2021). Some people prefer to watch a film that allows them to comment and communicate directly with fellow fans, which enables them to discuss details that were not emphasised in the film itself. The transmedia nature of social media has many functional features that are not initially evident. After the start of the first Lord of the Rings trilogy, the prequel trilogy was released 9 years after the first three episodes were released in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The series was released 10 years after the start of The Hobbit in 2022. In the meantime, interest in the film has not diminished, but rather increased. This was driven by the success of social media and especially the support of fans. The Tolkien Gateway website is a kind of encyclopaedia of this universe, created by fans in 2005.

Social media can also tell the stories of characters, providing both official information and additional, possibly subjective, interpretations from the audience. The life of the protagonist can become a "diary" created by many users. As a result, the ideas of the main author become inseparable from the free imagination of the second author. That is why transmedia is a communication between various audiences, which is important for the overall understanding of the story. Because of certain "holes" in the plot, one can "think" about continuing the story (Prasektorini & Suprajang, 2023).

The requirement of transmedia means that information is presented in such a way that the consumer always has the feeling that there is something unexplained, something to see, read, or hear. Producers reveal potential plot points that are not fully explained or an extra detail that points to something. Therefore, there is usually a desire to ask someone or discuss it with others. Thus, fans of a story are hunting for information, which is, admittedly, easiest to find on social media. As a result, social media again becomes a collective creative space, where they can find further details about the lives and adventures of their favourite characters. Cross-media production has actually emerged due to the widespread use of the Internet and computers, which means that users can easily copy, paste, move, modify, and correct content. Fanfiction can be considered as an unauthorised extension of a media franchise in new ways, expressing the reader's desire to "fill in the gaps" in commercial stories. Thus, secondary worlds are created on social media. The creation of fictional worlds should stimulate the development of media franchises. This is because detailed audience profiling enables not only a harmonious combination of multiple stories, but also their endless continuation.

The term "transmedia storytelling" and the role of social media in this context are very interestingly linked to European integration processes, especially in the cultural dimension. The use of transmedia in the Ukrainian

cultural space can contribute to Ukraine's more active integration into the European cultural discourse. Trans-media allows Ukrainian artists and cultural figures to create content that is distributed through various media platforms, attracting a wide international audience. This strengthens cultural ties between Ukraine and EU countries, as common themes can be presented in a variety of formats, including film, television, social media, and video games. Social media, as a part of a transmedia strategy, helps to maintain cultural identity and enrich it with international practices. In the context of European integration, this allows Ukrainian culture not only to maintain its unique voice, but also to adapt to the common European space, in which interaction between cultures is an essential part. It also opens opportunities to create new cultural franchises that can gain international recognition and help spread Ukrainian art and history around the world.

The findings of the study revealed a series of significant trends that reflect both local and global processes that shape the current state of Ukrainian culture. First of all, European integration promotes not only political and economic cooperation, but also significantly affects cultural and artistic processes in Ukraine. The findings of the study confirmed that the participation of Ukrainian artists in international cultural projects has increased substantially, which is in line with the findings of J.L. Perales García (2023), who investigated the impact of the European Union's cultural programmes on the development of cultural diplomacy. Specifically, it was found that the number of Ukrainian art projects supported by the EU increased by 40% from 2017 to 2022. This demonstrated the positive impact of European integration processes on the institutionalisation of culture in Ukraine.

This fact is also confirmed by S. Chantadze (2024), who noted that integration into the European cultural space creates new opportunities for the development of local cultural infrastructure. Support from the European Union provides Ukrainian cultural institutions with the opportunity to modernise their practices and adapt to international standards without losing their identity. However, not all researchers shared this assessment of the impact of European integration on Ukrainian culture. N. Alonso Gallo & I. Gutiérrez López (2023) argued that European integration can lead to a loss of national identity, as Ukrainian artists are forced to adapt their projects to the standards of European grant programmes. Although the study partially confirmed the risk of unification of cultural products, it also showed that artists can preserve their identity by using new tools to promote national narratives through international projects.

Another significant aspect is the impact of European cultural policy on the transformation of Ukrainian cultural institutions. The study showed that the process of reforming state cultural institutions, which is partially funded by the EU, allows for the creation of new institutional platforms for the development of contemporary art. Y. Ayeni (2024) also noted this fact. The researcher investigated the transformation processes in European countries and

emphasised that such changes stimulate creativity and promote social cohesion.

The transformation of Ukrainian culture through the lens of European integration is also reflected in the use of social media. These platforms are becoming a valuable tool for supporting cultural projects and dialogue between Ukraine and European countries, helping to engage a wide audience in discussions of common themes and cultural identities. Thus, the findings of this study confirmed the impact of European integration processes on the cultural and artistic environment of Ukraine, although there are certain challenges related to the need to preserve national identity in the face of global change.

Thus, the development of Ukrainian cultural projects in the context of European integration has contributed to the preservation of national identity, while integrating Ukrainian culture into the pan-European cultural space. Trans-media and social media strategies have enabled Ukraine not only to preserve its cultural voice, but also to adapt it to modern European requirements, ensuring long-term integration into the common European cultural space.

CONCLUSIONS

The cultural projects supported by the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation and the Ukrainian Institute play a key role in shaping Ukraine's cultural image in the international arena and actively engaging the country in European integration processes. The Culture without Barriers and Bridges of Culture programmes not only expanded the opportunities for Ukrainian artists to take part in European cultural projects, but also create a solid foundation for the mutual exchange of ideas and practices. This contributes to the expansion of cultural ties between Ukraine and Europe, which is essential for integration into the European cultural space.

Participation in international programmes helps Ukrainian culture to transcend national boundaries, emphasising its uniqueness and at the same time proving its ability to fit into the context of common European values and identities. Cultural diplomacy, implemented through such projects, is becoming an effective tool for strengthening international relations and positioning Ukraine as an active participant in the European cultural dialogue. This increases the competitiveness of Ukrainian cultural initiatives on the global stage, which contributes not only to the preservation of national identity, but also to the shaping of a new, modern image of Ukraine as a country open to cultural innovation. Thanks to cultural programmes, Ukrainian artists have access to European resources, which opens opportunities for developing their creative potential and creating joint projects with European partners. It also stimulates the development of cultural infrastructure in Ukraine, as international partnerships require high quality standards. Thus, the projects of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation and the Ukrainian Institute are not only a means of integration into the European space, but also a crucial element in the development of Ukrainian culture in the context of globalisation.

The use of transmedia approaches allows Ukrainian artists to create content that resonates with various cultural audiences and is distributed through numerous media platforms. This not only strengthens the international influence of Ukrainian culture, but also contributes to its active integration into the pan-European cultural discourse. Transmedia projects, which include film, television, video games, social media, and other art forms, create an opportunity for a wider involvement of Ukrainian culture in the global cultural context. Social media have a dual function: they are not only a tool for distributing cultural products, but also create platforms for cultural dialogue and interaction between different audiences. This helps to create new forms of cultural diplomacy, where social media are becoming a crucial channel of communication between Ukraine and Europe. Thanks to this, Ukrainian artists can maintain the identity of their culture and at the same time adapt it to modern European requirements, promoting mutual understanding and cooperation.

This enables the country not only to demonstrate its cultural potential, but also to take an active part in shaping the pan-European cultural space, where interaction between cultures is a key condition for successful integration. Thus, the use of transmedia practices in the

cultural sphere of Ukraine contributes to active European integration, strengthening the role of Ukrainian culture in the modern European context. Social media ensure interactivity and multilayered cultural relations, creating new opportunities for creativity and cooperation with European partners, which strengthens Ukraine's international image.

Prospects for further research would include expanding the geographical context, which would allow comparing Ukraine's cultural practices with other countries that are also going through European integration processes. Research on the influence of modern technologies on cultural practices in Ukraine and their integration into the European context would be valuable areas for deeper exploration of this topic. The use of innovative methodologies, such as anthropological research, could provide a more detailed understanding of practices at the level of local communities.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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Культурно-мистецькі практики України в контексті євроінтеграційних процесів: сучасний стан

Анотація. Метою дослідження стало вивчення того, яким чином інтеграція в європейський культурний простір вплинула на розвиток національної ідентичності та культурної співпраці. Для досягнення цієї мети було застосовано методи якісного аналізу, зокрема контент-аналіз культурних програм Culture Bridges і «Культура Східного партнерства». Аналіз показав, що інтеграція в європейський культурний простір сприяла розвитку національної ідентичності та культурної співпраці. У дослідженні висвітлено процес трансформації культурних інституцій, які отримали нові можливості для розвитку сучасного мистецтва через кроскультурну взаємодію. Особлива увага була приділена використанню новітніх технологій, таких як цифрові платформи для представлення українського мистецтва на міжнародній арені. Результати засвідчили важливість державної та міжнародної підтримки для культурного розвитку України і її інтеграції в глобальний контекст, що підвищує конкурентоспроможність української культури на світовій сцені. Зокрема, зазначено, що такі програми сприяли реалізації проєктів, які підтримували мобільність митців та обмін знаннями, що призвело до формування нових художніх практик. Підсумовано про позитивний вплив євроінтеграційних процесів на національну культуру та міжнародні культурні обміни, акцентовано на впливі європейських стандартів на адаптацію та інтернаціоналізацію мистецького простору в Україні.

Ключові слова: віртуальна реальність; грантові програми; інноваційні проєкти; трансформація інституцій; міжнародна співпраця; соціальні медіа
