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Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala

ISSN: 1583-3410 (print), ISSN: 1584-5397 (electronic)

INTERACTION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY AS A FACTOR OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN THE CONTEXT OF EXTERNAL MILITARY AND POLITICAL AGGRESSION: POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

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Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială, 2025, vol. 91, pp. 174-191

<https://doi.org/10.33788/rcis.91.10>

Published by:
Expert Projects Publishing House



On behalf of:
„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University,
Department of Sociology and Social Work
and
HoltIS Association

Interaction between the Government and Society as a Factor of Social Solidarity in the Context of External Military and Political Aggression: Political and Psychological Aspects

Olha PALAHNYUK¹

Abstract

In conditions of external military and political aggression, the issue of forming social solidarity becomes particularly relevant, since stability, mobilization capacity, and resilience of society largely depend on it. The growing role of civil society, volunteer movements, and state communication policy highlights the need for a theoretical understanding of the mechanisms of solidarity. The aim of the study is to analyze the impact of interaction between the authorities and society on social solidarity in the context of external threats. The methodological basis is an interdisciplinary combination of content analysis, comparative analysis of international experience, and systematization of theoretical approaches in political psychology. The study reveals that emotional trust, social identification, perceptions of justice, and citizens' involvement in socially significant practices play a key role in maintaining solidarity. The importance of symmetrical interaction between civic initiatives and state institutions as a condition for sustainable solidarity is substantiated. A typology of psychological barriers to solidarity and possible mechanisms for overcoming them is proposed. International experience of solidarity in crisis situations is summarized and elements relevant to the Ukrainian context are identified. The practical significance of the study lies in the formulation of recommendations for state communication policy, support for volunteer initiatives, the development of indicators of emotional inclusion, and the construction of long-term strategies for social unity.

Keywords: social solidarity; social cohesion; civic engagement; political communication; crisis solidarity; political and psychological factors; public administration.

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Introduction

Modern societies face growing challenges that threaten their stability, cohesion, and social solidarity. In the context of external military and political aggression, the issue of interaction between the authorities and society takes on particular importance, as the level of public trust in state institutions largely determines their ability to mobilize, adapt, and resist crisis situations. Interaction between the authorities and civil society in such conditions becomes a key factor in social solidarity, influencing the effectiveness of crisis management, the preservation of democratic values, and the stability of state institutions. There has been a major increase in scientific interest in social solidarity and cohesion over the past years. Though “social solidarity” and “social cohesion” appear to mean the same thing, they actually function and mean things differently. Recent work in political psychology shows that social solidarity is mainly a moral concept that says people should care for, share and support each other and be willing to sacrifice for the community in hard times (Palahnyuk, 2024a). In contrast, the term social cohesion involves feelings of unity, trust and good relationships between social groups. Whereas solidarity means people work together to resist or assist, cohesion shows if social capital, integration and stability are present in the wider community. In this dimension, it is necessary to separate these terms because, while solidarity just means interactive actions, it also contains emotional and moral meanings for citizens (Palahnyuk, 2022; 2024b).

In contemporary research, the problem of social solidarity is viewed through the prism of the interconnection between political, socio-economic, informational, and psychological factors (Banting & Kymlicka, 2017; Ruvalcaba-Gómez, 2019). Particular attention is paid to the transparency of management decisions, the openness of institutions to civic participation, and the ability of authorities to ensure procedural and distributive justice as prerequisites for building trust (Trein, 2019). At the same time, in the context of protracted crises, the emotional aspects of trust, citizens’ social identity, and their sense of support from the state are becoming increasingly important. Volunteer movements and civic initiatives are studied as important carriers of solidarity practices that form horizontal ties and compensate for shortcomings in institutional interaction (Pankova *et al.*, 2016; Waardenburg, 2020). However, a number of studies indicate that even with formal openness on the part of the authorities, trust in institutions may remain low due to deep-rooted cultural, historical, and political barriers (Zheng, 2023). Therefore, it is necessary to comprehensively study the interaction between formal (legal, administrative) and informal (emotional, psychological, symbolic) mechanisms of solidarity.

The aim of the study is to comprehensively examine the impact of interaction between political authorities and civil society on the level of social solidarity in conditions of external military and political aggression. To achieve this goal, a number of analytical tasks are to be addressed: identifying the leading mechanisms

for consolidating the efforts of state institutions and public initiatives during a period of social crisis; assessing the effectiveness of information and communication policies in building public trust; identifying the role of volunteer activities as a source of psychological support, motivation for action, and mobilization of social resources for unity; and the formulation of recommendations for strengthening social solidarity based on an analysis of key political and psychological determinants. Particular attention is paid not only to the functional aspects of public administration, but also to the deep mechanisms of psychological inclusion of citizens, which ensure the stability of social ties and increase the adaptive potential of society in conditions of protracted crises.

Literature review

The interaction between authorities and society as a factor of social solidarity in conditions of military and political aggression is the subject of considerable scientific research. Lately, scholars study how political and psychological factors influence citizens' trust in those in charge, how administration performs in emergency situations and the part civil society plays in building social unity. In recent times, scholars give extra weight to the political and psychological sides of trust in the authorities. More specifically, people feel togetherness grows when the government is open, openness in government decisions exists and citizens are involved in the governing process (Ruvalcaba-Gómez, 2019; Domurath, 2013). In places where politics is unstable, people tend to trust their government less, since the situation can encourage more instability and make state communications less clear (Banting & Kymlicka, 2017).

A great deal of discussion takes place regarding public policy's effects on social solidarity in educational literature. Information from researchers confirms that social protection systems and encouragement for volunteers increase the level of unity among members of society (Sydorchuk, 2018; Libanova & Pirozhkov, 2015). It is very important that the state and civil society cooperate, especially when they join efforts to help people who have been displaced inside their own countries and the surrounding communities. As a result, local authorities team up to fund projects, set up rehabilitation plans and let the public take part in choices that affect them. For example, projects such as "Open Parliament" increase transparency among those managing the Verkhovna Rada and encourage accountability. When ministries, international groups and civil organizations partner, communities can respond better to social challenges and become more united (German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2023; Chatham House, 2024).

It is highlighted in research on crisis situations that equal opportunities for all citizens are essential for everyone to work together (Adimekwe, 2024). Ensuring people's dignity and rights is very important for public trust and stability (Dearing, 2017). Good cooperation between politics and administration is necessary for state

stability as they both contribute to solidarity (Kriukov & Maistro, 2016). It is clear from security studies that nations have to include social factors in their national security policies (Parakhonskyi & Yavorska, 2019). It has been seen in the European Union that solidarity policy in regional crises mainly depends on how much faith people have in their government and how well officials communicate with the community (Trein, 2019). Zheng (2023) points out that grassroots solidarity can lead to the formation of important tools for adapting to emergencies. Consequently, a thorough analysis of recent works shows that authors should address social solidarity through legal, managerial, security and social measures.

Information policy and the media play a key role in analyzing how people feel united with their communities. Reports have found that strong information policy can calm people's fears and increase their trust in government agencies (Palahnyuk, 2024a; Razumkov Centre, 2022). At the same time, people spreading false information and using propaganda might threaten community harmony which requires action to stop misleading stories. In studying experiences from around the world, effective social solidarity appears to link assistance for the poor, open government and active citizens in making decisions. As an example, the Scandinavian countries achieve this by using secure social support systems and democratic ways for interactions between the authorities and the public (Banting & Kymlicka, 2017). Even in critical times, Israelis trust the authorities a lot because of strong state information policies and close coordination between the military and security agencies.

According to Didenko *et al.* (2019) and Dukhnevych *et al.* (2020), studies of social, political, legal, economic, psychological and information aspects of solidarity during military and political aggression highlight that authorities and society interact best through mutual trust, taking part in decision-making and supporting at-risk groups. For the public to trust its institutions, the legal sides of governmental action on social protection, security and human rights are very important. Developing laws and policy is important for helping society adjust to chronic conflict and keep stability (Parakhonskyi & Yavorska, 2019). It has been found through social research that a high level of trust in authorities comes from the idea that public policies are fair and provide good social protection. Analytical reports indicate that policies in social security and support for people displaced inside Ukraine help foster solidarity (Novikova *et al.*, 2018; Pirozhkov *et al.*, 2017). Understanding the current situation, it is vital for state programs that assist vulnerable people in developing their economic sides.

A different field of research is studying how civil society contributes to forging social solidarity. There were mentioned earlier that the volunteer movement helps unite society. Others show that a lack of government support can slow the growth of civic participation (Waardenburg, 2020; Rodionov & Filippova, 2023). Studying experiences from other countries indicates that closely joining efforts from the government and civil society can help social policy succeed and encourage sustainability of development (Reznikova, 2022; Trein, 2019). Current

research is strongly focused on information security and gaining knowledge about disinformation. Particular attention should be paid to how authorities communicate with the public during wartime, by combating bogus news, raising the power of independent news and shaping enduring opinions. Doing things without clear explanations or using deceiving communication by government officials can cause less trust, result in instability and split the community.

In addition, the amount of support citizens show for state institutions is affected by their socio-psychological variables. Research shows that citizens trust the authorities more when they feel personally involved in decision-making, share responsibility for the country's future, and see their interests reflected in politics (Nikonenko & Lymareva, 2024; Stramousova & Syngayivska, 2023). Social identity plays a key role in strengthening trust in political authority, perceiving state institutions as representatives of public interests, and forming a common vision of the future, which contributes to greater solidarity.

Thus, contemporary research covers a wide range of aspects of interaction between the authorities and society, including political, legal, socio-economic, informational, cultural, and psychological dimensions. The main areas of state activity in this context should include strengthening social protection, supporting the development of civil society, and effectively countering information threats. At the same time, questions remain about the effectiveness of state communication strategies in times of crisis and long-term mechanisms for maintaining social solidarity after the end of military and political aggression.

Methodology

The study uses a theoretical and analytical approach based on an interdisciplinary analysis of political, psychological, sociological, and legal sources. The main method was content analysis of scientific works, analytical reports, political documents, state programs, and strategies devoted to issues of solidarity, trust in government, crisis management, and civic participation. Comparative analysis of international experience, in particular practices of ensuring solidarity in the European Union, Israel, the United States, and Scandinavia, was of significant importance. The methodological basis of the study was supplemented by principles of political psychology, which made it possible to interpret such phenomena as emotional trust, social identity, motivation to participate, and psychological resilience. Conceptual approaches (in particular, theories of identity, justice, trust, and resilience) were generalized by systematizing and comparing their application in the context of a military-political crisis. All analytical work was carried out on the basis of open sources in 2023–2024, using materials from Ukrainian and foreign scholars, as well as the results of inter-institutional research initiatives.

Results and discussion

Political and Psychological Factors of Trust and Solidarity

In times of crisis, effective interaction between the authorities and society is crucial for maintaining social solidarity. The state plays a central role in ensuring stability through political, economic, and social mechanisms aimed at reducing tensions and maintaining public trust. One such mechanism is strategic communication by the authorities, which requires openness, regularity, and accessibility of information, as well as two-way interaction with citizens. A study has shown that during military threats, communicating public information about government actions helps alleviate fear and boost trust.

Getting civic actions going, involving volunteer associations and civil organizations that support the government in helping citizens and dealing with emergencies, is just as important. Due to external active military and political actions against Ukraine, people's partnerships began to form the core feelings of unity, supporting each other and responsibility (Pankova *et al.*, 2016). Social policies that assist the most disadvantaged groups stabilise the population. When states offer targeted support and initiatives, they usually lower tensions in society and keep the trust of people in the government (Sydorchuk, 2018).

How a person feels about their government is affected by what is happening politically and mentally. Such things include clear management choices, thoughts about justice in operations and results and the available means for people to be involved in decision-making. It has been found that more information from the government and greater access to civic participation build trust in state authorities (Ruvalcaba-Gómez, 2019). Unstable politics in some countries lead to less trust and are connected to inconsistent rules and broad corruption, according to Domurath (2013). When Ukraine responds to dangers immediately, talks clearly with its citizens and ensures their safety, it is more likely that people trust their government. In the present situation, how information policy and the media operate can make people more united or divided (Razumkov Centre, 2022).

It is important to note that trusting not only with the mind, but also with one's feelings, in authorities impacts how much solidarity there is. Emotional trust means having lots of confidence, security and feelings which help in public matters and are built by former engagements with public institutions. Often, what moves individuals to help, obey and join in during a crisis is emotional trust among group members. Psychological research shows that emotional trust is a more stable factor than situational attitudes toward specific political decisions (Nikonenko, & Lymareva, 2024; Palahnyuk, 2022). People who emotionally identify with the state tend to demonstrate a higher level of solidarity, even when they disagree with certain aspects of government policy. Therefore, the effectiveness of interaction between the authorities and society should be assessed not only by formal indicators of trust, but also by the degree of emotional involvement of citizens in social

processes and the ability of the authorities to inspire a sense of support, dignity, and justice in them.

Another key factor is the level of social identification of citizens with the state. In situations of external threat, when a sense of shared destiny grows, support for government decisions increases. Studies confirm that in armed conflicts, citizens tend to trust the authorities more if they believe that the state represents their interests and cares about collective security (Palahnyuk, 2022).

An analysis of the political and psychological factors shaping social solidarity in times of crisis allows us to identify typical approaches to ensuring trust and cohesion in different countries. The scientific literature identifies several key methodological models that reveal various aspects of solidarity, ranging from identification and values to emotional, behavioral, and structural-functional aspects. Table 1 summarizes the dominant approaches to psychological support for solidarity, on the basis of which adaptive strategies can be developed for the Ukrainian context.

Table 1. Theoretical and methodological approaches to ensuring psychological solidarity in crisis situations

Theoretical approach	Methodological basis	Psychological orientation	Applied interpretation
Social identity theory (Tajfel, Turner)	Cognitive psychology, social psychology	Identification with a group, sense of belonging	Strengthening national unity through shared symbols, rituals, and “we” rhetoric
Trust theory (Hardin, Misztal)	Political psychology, sociology of trust	A sense of predictability, security, and support	Communication that reduces anxiety, predictable actions by institutions
Justice theory (Rawls, Tyler)	Psychology of justice, behavioral economics	Perceptions of procedural and distributive justice	Transparency of decisions, equal access to resources
Achievement motivation theory (McClelland)	Motivational psychology	Sense of influence, achievement, belonging	Participation in volunteer work, involvement in local initiatives
Resilience theory (Masten, Luthar)	Psychology of stress and adaptation	Emotional stability, overcoming uncertainty	Psychological support programs, crisis counseling

Communicative action theory (Habermas)	Social philosophy, critical theory	Dialogic interaction, recognition of the other	Inclusiveness in decision-making, public consultations
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Source: created by the author based on Banting and Kymlicka (2017), Nikonenko and Lymareva (2024), Palahnyuk (2022), Didenko et al. (2019), Stramousova and Syngayivska (2023), Trein (2019)

The systematization of theoretical and methodological models allows us to conclude that effective social solidarity in times of crisis cannot be based solely on institutional or economic factors. The psychological component – in particular, a sense of justice, identity, emotional security, and motivation to participate – is central to the formation of stable bonds of solidarity. The proposed approaches can serve as a basis for the development of a national solidarity policy focused not only on regulation but also on maintaining emotional and moral balance in society.

Effective interaction between the authorities and society in crisis situations is based on transparent communication, support for public initiatives, fairness in government decisions, and consistent social policy. A combination of political and psychological factors, such as political stability, social identification, and openness of the authorities, determines the level of citizens' trust in the state and, consequently, the degree of social solidarity in society. Social solidarity plays a key role in ensuring social stability, especially in conditions of external military and political aggression. As already noted, the level of solidarity among citizens is determined by a number of factors, including trust in the authorities, shared values, the activity of civil society, and the effectiveness of state policies to support the population. During periods of crisis, solidarity tends to strengthen, particularly among social groups directly involved in overcoming the challenges of wartime (Libanova & Pirozhkov, 2015).

Additional threats to solidarity are related to issues of language, religion, and historical memory, which can be used as tools of informational and psychological influence to incite hostility. In some cases, such issues are deliberately exploited by political opponents or external actors with the aim of destabilising, hindering internal consensus and discrediting the authorities during negotiations or the adoption of important political decisions. In addition, the uneven distribution of resources and access to social benefits can create a sense of injustice and contribute to the emergence of conflicts, as part of the population feels insufficiently protected or deprived of state support (Razumkov Centre, 2022).

Another serious threat is information manipulation and propaganda, which can undermine citizens' trust in each other and in the authorities. Disinformation, the spread of fake news, and the deliberate distortion of facts by hostile forces can cause divisions in society and create an atmosphere of mistrust. The elderly are particularly vulnerable to such influences, as they often obtain information from

traditional media or unreliable sources. In addition, psychological fatigue caused by prolonged stress and uncertainty can lead to passivity among the population, a decline in civic engagement, and a general weakening of social solidarity (Palahnyuk, 2024b).

Socio-Psychological Barriers and Indicators of Solidarity

Social and psychological barriers to solidarity in times of crisis are multifaceted and manifest themselves at both the individual and collective levels. Key factors hindering solidarity include emotional burnout, social isolation, frustration, loss of meaning, and moral disorientation. All of this weakens an individual’s capacity for empathy, trust, and social engagement. Prolonged stress reduces cognitive resources, making it impossible to rationally understand the actions of the state and contributing to apathy or hostility. In conditions of constant threat and uncertainty, mobilization fatigue sets in, which in turn reduces the willingness to help others, participate in initiatives, or support government policy. An additional barrier is mistrust of the intentions of institutions, which is exacerbated by disinformation campaigns or previous negative experiences. The impact of these factors is systematically presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Social and psychological barriers to solidarity and ways to overcome them

Barrier	Psychological essence	Social consequences	Potential mechanisms for overcoming
Emotional burnout	Chronic fatigue, decreased energy and interest in social activities	Passivity, withdrawal from social activity	Psychological support programs, “reboot” periods
Social frustration	Feeling of helplessness, dissatisfaction with the results of efforts	Aggression, cynicism, protest behavior	Public recognition of efforts, feedback from authorities
Moral disorientation	Loss of ideas about what is “right” and “fair”	Distrust, indifference, disappointment	Formation of a common ethical framework, value communication
Information overload	Inability to distinguish between reliable information	Decline in critical thinking, loss of bearings	Media literacy, simple and transparent communication lines
Alienation and isolation	Loss of sense of belonging to a community	Individualism, breakdown of social ties	Inclusive practices, revitalization of local communities

Anxiety and fear	Psychological tension about an unknown future	Panic, search for “culprits,” maladjustment	Preventive information, stabilizing messages from opinion leaders
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Source: created by the author based on Palahnyuk (2022), Didenko et al. (2019), Stramousova and Syngayivska (2023), Nikonenko and Lymareva (2024), Ruvalcaba-Gómez (2019)

Thus, socio-psychological barriers to solidarity in times of prolonged crisis require a comprehensive response not only at the level of political strategies, but also in the sphere of collective mental hygiene. The state must take into account the psychological vulnerability of the population by creating channels for processing negative experiences, publicly recognizing citizens' efforts, and forming a positive vision of a shared future. Reducing these barriers is only possible through communication that supports rather than traumatizes – it is precisely this model that paves the way for sustainable solidarity and social resilience.

An analysis of the political and psychological aspects of interaction between the authorities and society is key to understanding the mechanisms of social solidarity formation. In the context of external military and political aggression, it is particularly important to assess the impact of state policy on public sentiment, the level of trust in political institutions, and the degree of civic participation. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used to comprehensively study these processes. Psychological measures of social solidarity play a critical role in the formation of stable social ties, especially in conditions of prolonged instability. While formal sociological indicators are limited to recording participation and the level of trust in official bodies, psychological indicators let us assess the internal resources in citizens needed for collaboration, backing and unity. To have social trust, people depend on emotional safety, perception of equal treatment, understanding from others and faith in government actions. These indicators can be used to study the level of solidarity in different social groups and regions. They are particularly relevant in post-conflict societies, where formal institutional processes do not always correspond to the real emotional state of citizens. A summary of the key psychological indicators of cohesion is presented in Table 3.

The use of psychological indicators in empirical research allows us to broaden our understanding of the mechanisms of cohesion beyond the quantitative measurement of public participation. They make it possible to assess the latent processes that determine the stability of solidarity, the depth of trust, and the effectiveness of government communications. Integrating such indicators into national monitoring studies will make it possible to identify critical points of frustration, prevent psychological crises, and create social policies based not only on institutional reforms but also on a deep understanding of the emotional architecture of society.

Table 3. Psychological indicators of social cohesion in times of crisis

Indicator	Content description	Research potential	Connection with solidarity
Emotional security	Feeling of security and confidence in the social environment	Indicator of anxiety, vulnerability, trust	Increases readiness for interaction
Subjective fairness	Experience of equality, honesty, and impartiality	Indicator of public policy assessment	Strengthens belief in the usefulness of collective participation
Institutional trust	Belief in justice, consistency, and the competence of authorities	Assessment of legitimacy and accountability	Encourages loyalty to decisions made by authorities
Experience of mutual support	The feeling that "I am not alone," that there is someone who supports me	Interpersonal indicator of cohesion	Forms horizontal bonds of trust
Identity with the community	A sense of belonging to a community, country, or people	Social and psychological integration	Reduces alienation and disorientation
Emotional involvement	A sense of empathy, emotional involvement in events	Assessment of sincerity in addressing common problems	Promotes the development of a culture of solidarity

Source: created by the author based on Palahnyuk (2022), Nikonenko and Lymareva (2024), Didenko et al. (2019), Stramousova and Syngayivska (2023)

Civic Engagement and the Role of the Volunteer Movement

Civil society plays an important role in ensuring social stability, especially in crisis situations such as military and political aggression. The volunteer movement is one of the key factors in bringing society together, as it promotes mutual support among citizens, strengthens trust between different social groups, and increases civic engagement. In times of crisis, volunteers take on a significant part of social protection, humanitarian aid, and information support functions, compensating for the shortcomings of the state system (Pankova et al., 2016).

Contemporary political psychology emphasizes that support for the authorities is not always the result of rational approval of their decisions. It is often linked to deeper motivational and behavioral factors, such as the need for achievement, self-actualization, and social recognition. People who are involved in volunteer, civic, or initiative activities often identify their participation as a contribution to a common cause, which enhances their subjective significance. Such activities create a sense of control over the situation, especially in times of crisis, when

other forms of influence are limited. Participation in activities of moral and social importance (assisting the army, organizing humanitarian aid, local initiatives) allows citizens to feel that they are not just observers but active agents of change. This is what creates the basis for situational loyalty to the authorities, which is not always linked to political convictions but is based on inclusion in meaningful collective practices. Table 4 systematises the main motivational and behavioural factors supporting the authorities.

Table 4. Motivational and behavioral factors of situational support for the government in times of crisis

Factor	Psychological nature	Social action	Relations with government support
Need for achievement	Motivation to overcome difficulties and achieve goals	Active participation in volunteering and initiatives	A sense of significance promotes loyalty to institutions
Social belonging	Basic need to be part of a community	Collective action, shared responsibility	Support for the authorities as a mechanism of group identification
Search for meaning	Need for a higher purpose, moral compass	Involvement in value-laden activities	Positive projection of the state as a guarantor of justice
Self-actualization	Realization of potential and abilities	Initiative, leadership	Support for structures that do not interfere with implementation
Need for stability	Overcoming uncertainty	Striving for order and trust	Temporary loyalty to the authorities as a guarantor of control
Recognition	Social approval and public recognition of contributions	Participation in prestigious projects, state recognition	Loyalty as a reaction to symbolic compensation

Source: created by the author based on Didenko et al. (2019), Palahnyuk (2022), Nikonenko and Lymareva (2024), Stramousova and Syngayivska (2023), Trein (2019)

Thus, support for the authorities in crisis situations is often the result not only of trust as a rational assessment of policy, but also of deeper motivational mechanisms related to the needs for achievement, belonging, stability, and self-realization. A state that creates conditions for socially meaningful citizen participation strengthens loyalty by involving citizens in symbolically important processes such as assistance, resistance, and protection. These factors should be taken into account when developing strategies for state communication and support for civic initiatives, as they form the psychological basis for long-term social solidarity.

The state, in turn, can promote the development of civil society by supporting volunteer initiatives, simplifying legal procedures for public organizations, and involving the public in decision-making. Mechanisms for cooperation between the state and volunteer movements include joint project funding, legal support for volunteer activities, coordination of humanitarian initiatives, and information support. In Table 5, the influence of the volunteer movement on community cohesion and how it works with the government are detailed.

Table 5. The impact of the volunteer movement on social solidarity and mechanisms for cooperation with the state

Aspect	The impact of volunteerism on social solidarity	Mechanisms for cooperation between the state and civil society
Shaping shared values	Increasing mutual trust, developing a culture of mutual assistance	Creation of state programs to support volunteering
Humanitarian aid	Promoting mutual trust and developing a culture of mutual assistance	Funding and resource support for public initiatives
Local community development	Promoting local self-government and forming horizontal links	Provision of grants and subsidies for regional public projects
Psychological support	Providing assistance to conflict victims and rehabilitating military personnel	Institutional support for crisis centers and hotlines
Countering disinformation	Creating independent information initiatives and combating propaganda	Cooperation with the media, information security
Strengthening political participation	Involving citizens in important decision-making and developing active citizenship	Introduction of mechanisms for public control over the authorities

Source: created by the author based on Pankova et al. (2016), Ruvalcaba-Gómez (2019), Palahnyuk (2024b)

The study shows that the volunteer movement greatly contributes to increasing social solidarity by helping people share values, assist one another and trust public projects. Volunteers make the biggest difference in humanitarian work, mental health support and our fight against disinformation, especially during military conflicts. Good coordination between the government and civil society organizations greatly supports the power of society. For this reason, you should provide public funding, make processes for volunteer organizations easier and encourage active citizens to take part in planning. Assessing countries where many people volunteer shows that including the volunteer sector in national strategy helps promote stronger harmonious communities.

Tips for bringing people closer as a society during crises:

- Keeping communication between the government and the public as open and uniform. It is important to ensure regular, openly reasoned public information about government decisions, focused on trust rather than fear. Using dialogue instead of monologue is one of the key principles of communication strategy in times of instability.
- Expanding practices of citizen participation in decision-making. The inclusion of elements of participatory governance, particularly at the local level, will help increase a sense of responsibility and involvement in state-building processes.
- Systemic support for volunteer and civic initiatives. The state should provide not only material but also symbolic support for the volunteer movement, including public recognition, institutional partnerships, and long-term cooperation.
- Support for psychological resilience and emotional engagement of citizens. The new version of the questionnaire should include scales of emotional exhaustion, anxiety, trust in the state, sense of security, and subjective justice, as these factors directly influence the level of solidarity.
- Taking regional and sociocultural differences into account in cohesion policies. State support strategies should be adapted to local realities: experience of interaction with the authorities, level of mobilization, historical context, linguistic and religious characteristics.
- Monitoring vertical and horizontal trust structures. It is advisable to introduce indicators that measure trust in institutions (vertically) and in other citizens (horizontally), which will allow for more accurate identification of gaps in solidarity.
- Developing strategies for national symbolic recognition. It is important to institutionalize practices for recognizing the contributions of community leaders, volunteers, and defenders in building unity—this shapes a positive identity and stimulates social responsibility.
- Combating disinformation and protecting the information space. Creating digital literacy programs, independent fact-checking, and institutional communication lines capable of countering information threats that undermine solidarity.
- Integrating psychological indicator tools into social research. Moving from predominantly sociological surveys to psychologically oriented ones allows for the identification of latent barriers to solidarity (emotional exhaustion, social distrust, moral frustration).
- Formation of a culture of shared responsibility. Through educational, cultural, and media practices, the idea of solidarity should be cultivated as a moral and civic duty, not just as a reaction to a threat.

The implementation of these measures will strengthen social solidarity, increase citizens' trust in each other and in state institutions, and create sustainable mechanisms for supporting social cohesion in times of crisis.

The study found that government transparency, effective information policy, and support for public initiatives are key factors in strengthening social solidarity

in the context of external military and political aggression. Comparing the results with the positions of other researchers provides a better understanding of the nature of social solidarity as a multidimensional phenomenon. For example, Trein (2019) and Ruvalcaba-Gómez (2019) emphasize the importance of government transparency and citizen involvement in governance processes as mechanisms for strengthening solidarity. Our study confirms this position, demonstrating that transparent communication and public access to decision-making contribute to the formation of a sense of belonging and responsibility, which strengthens solidarity. On the other hand, according to Zheng (2023), real sustainability in societal solidarity comes from citizens working for themselves, not relying on state help. The approach backs up our conclusions, indicating that symmetrical interaction which includes both civil society and the state, leads to solidarity.

The study also contrasts with the positions of authors who consider economic stability to be a determining factor of solidarity. Banting and Kymlicka (2017) see state welfare guarantees as key to maintaining unity in times of social tension. At the same time, our research shows that even with economic support, solidarity can remain fragile without a sense of emotional security, fairness, and trust. Thus, psychological and identity factors play no less important a role than material resources. Another group of researchers, including Domurath (2013), emphasizes the inadequacy of legal mechanisms as a tool for solidarity. Our data are consistent with this approach and prove that the emotional component – a sense of security, support, and common purpose – is fundamental to the formation of social solidarity. This is particularly evident in times of war, when a rational assessment of the state's actions may give way to the emotional readiness of citizens to mobilize and help one another.

The results of the study confirm the hypothesis: the level of solidarity among citizens directly depends on the quality of interaction between the authorities and society, in particular on the effectiveness of state communication, the degree of citizen involvement in socially significant activities, and the perception of fairness in politics. At the same time, the study has certain limitations related to the heterogeneity of regional experience, the influence of historical traumas, and the variability of trust levels in different social groups. In this regard, further studies are needed on the evolution of social solidarity in post-crisis contexts, especially in terms of emotional burnout, moral frustration, and the role of symbolic recognition.

Thus, the discussion of the results confirms the relevance of a comprehensive approach to the study of social solidarity as both a political and an emotional-psychological phenomenon. It is not limited to formal loyalty or the fulfillment of civic duties. It is a deep sense of community, trust, and willingness to act in the interests of the collective good. Supporting solidarity requires not only government policy but also careful attention to the socio-psychological processes that shape unity in society, even in times of prolonged crisis.

Conclusions

The study revealed that social solidarity in crisis conditions is formed not so much through institutional stability as through a sense of emotional security, justice, support, and moral involvement of citizens in social processes. The analytical approach proposed in the article made it possible to overcome the narrow interpretation of solidarity as an exclusively reaction to a threat and to consider it as a multilevel system of interaction between the state and citizens. The results obtained are partly consistent with previous expectations, in particular regarding the impact of information policy and civic participation. At the same time, the identification of the role of psychological mechanisms in supporting solidarity is of particular scientific value, among which motivational and behavioral factors proved to be particularly significant, although they had previously often remained outside the systemic focus of public administration. The novelty of the approach lies in the combination of political and psychological analysis with empirical sociological indicators, which allows for a deeper understanding of the nature of solidarity as a factor in social stability. The practical significance of the work lies in the formation of a comprehensive system of guidelines for policies to support public initiatives, information security, and symbolic recognition of citizens' contributions to the common cause. At the same time, the limitations of the study are the predominantly descriptive nature of the assessment of changes in trust and the lack of detail on regional characteristics. Further work should focus on studying the dynamics of solidarity in post-conflict conditions, especially taking into account factors such as psychological fatigue, frustration, and the potential of local communities as carriers of horizontal support. The issue of institutional memory, i.e., how the experience of crisis solidarity is transformed into long-term civic participation, also requires deeper analysis. It is recommended to introduce indicators of emotional engagement into national psychological research and monitoring, as well as to develop educational programs aimed at forming a culture of responsible solidarity as the basis for democratic coexistence.

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