

Games in the Relationship Between the Individual and the State as a Manifestation of a Deformation of Civic Identity

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Abstract

Goal: The article aims to present the concept of capturing civic identity, and in particular, its relationship with the state, in the subject-object paradigm as a game.

Methods: Eric Berne's transactional analysis and the self-agency approach were used as the methodological basis for the author's concept of civic games. We present theoretical models of civic games and an analysis of each game according to Berne's scheme, with a detailed discussion of the players, psychological benefits, main transactions, and exit patterns. The results of the analysis were used to propose a concept of games that deform civic identity and to characterize the games according to Berne's scheme of transactional analysis: 'Persecution,' 'Patriot,' 'Offended,' 'Parasite,' and 'Heroic worker.'

Conclusion: Games replace a healthy relationship between the individual and the state, which should consist of mutually beneficial and necessary transactions. A game provides each player with psychological profit if a healthy exchange is impossible. The analysis of the game can broaden the individual's awareness of civic self-realization and provides an opportunity to 'get out of the game' and optimize the relationship with the state.

Keywords: civic identity, games, relations, state

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In recent decades, civic identity has attracted significant interest among psychologists and representatives of related disciplines. However, the concept of civic identity does not have a single definition in social and political psychology.

Civic identity is considered a type of organizational identity. It is a valuable and meaningful experience that allows an individual to identify himself as a citizen of the state (Khazratova, 2015; Petrovska, 2019b, 2021). It promotes the integration of personal attitudes toward citizenship, even as civic values/orientations change, and acts as a psychological regulator of civic behavior.

Forming civic identity is complex and non-linear (Petrovska, 2019a). As with personal development, it does not always guarantee the successful formation of civic identity. Just as an individual can reach emotional maturity in their life or fail to do so, an adult's civic identity can be both mature and immature. Moreover, civic identity formation can lead to suboptimal and even abnormal states. In the first part of the article, the approach to analyzing civic identity proposed in psychology will be discussed, followed by a perspective on gaming as a deformation of this identity.

Civic Identity as a Psychological Category

The concept of civic identity is often combined with the concepts of national and ethnic identity (Cohen & Chaffee, 2013; Constant & Zimmerman, 2012; Curticapean, 2007; Guibernau, 2007; Pittinsky et al., 1999), and it is analyzed in the broad context of political behavior (Duckitt & Sibley, 2016; Kaldor, 2013), as well as daily activities related to the formation of pro-active attitudes towards civic participation (Grabovska & Petrovska, 2017; Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz & Zalewska, 2011; Petrovska, 2016).

D. Sekulić and J. Šporer claim that civic identity is a 'broader' concept than ethnic identity (Sekulić & Šporer, 2008). L. Hristova and A. Cekik described four types of relationships between civil and ethnic identity:

- 1) both concepts are independent (do not overlap);
- 2) civic identity is a part of ethnic identity and has a secondary character;
- 3) ethnic identity is a part of civic identity;
- 4) civil and ethnic identity become 'fused', which is the ideal scenario in a civil society (Hristova & Cekik, 2013).

Identity, especially in national and civic dimensions, is a category related to space. The development of modern technologies has led to changes in social space and promoted a new understanding of identity. According to current psychological research, identity is a dynamic rather than a static construct containing different self-schemes—real, ideal, ought, possible, and working (Higgins et al., 1994).

Thus, the complexity and diversity of self-concepts, including relation to the state, may regulate an individual's relationship with the state, especially in the context of a changing political reality.

The Concept of Healthy and Deformed Civic Identity

The formation of civic identity is a continuous and discrete process during which an individual acquires the appropriate organizational identity in different stages of maturation. Civic identity is formed in a 'personality – state' dichotomy because the awareness and experience of citizenship require an understanding of the legal relationship between oneself and the state, which does not depend on a person's ethnic origin and involves a particular set of mutual rights, obligations and privileges (Sofinska, 2019).

Since the relationship between the citizen and the state is not always optimal (it can be uncooperative, non-partnership, sometimes even hurtful and traumatic), civic identity can deviate from the norm. These suboptimal options include a deformed and immature civic identity.

Deformed civic identity can manifest through distorted social perceptions of the state as a social organization, exaggerated or underestimated perceptions of the state's role in an individual's life, or through a distorted relationship between the individual and the state. For example, intolerance and opposition towards the citizens of other states and ingroup favoritism towards fellow citizens increase when the state's importance is exaggerated and the state is sacralized. Deformation of civic identity is associated with a disharmonious relationship between the individual and the state: the state severely restricts an individual's civic behavior, dictates the political outlook, and demands maximum self-sacrifice while completely ignoring the individual's civil rights.

Civic identity is immature when a mentally healthy adult is underdeveloped or absent. This is possible in cases where a cosmopolitan/civilizational identity dominates and 'absorbs' civic identity. The above can lead to conditions when an individual is internally opposed to the state but is not willing to reflect on or even acknowledge their rejection of the state. In some cases, an absence of civic identity may have adaptive value (for example, in a 'disputed' territory, where borders and sovereignty often change, the ability to change one's citizenship and identity quickly may be an important survival skill). Unformed civic identity is a manifestation of alienation from the state: a person who is a formal citizen refuses the right to self-determination and psychologically distances themselves from citizenship as an unnecessary formality.

This article focuses on a deformed civic identity dissected in categories of the game. Deformations of civic identity may differ across countries. For example, if we assume that citizens of totalitarian states tend to sacralize and glorify their countries ('My state is big and strong, and it can threaten the whole world'), citizens of other states can have a 'game' relationship with their state (and try to deceive each other).

This diversity of games is related to both historical factors as well as the political mentality of citizens and can be established in two paradigms: object-subject (where an individual is an object and the state is a subject) or, on the contrary, subject-object (where the individual the subject and the state is the object in relation). For example, in states that have historically developed as an empire, the opportunity to be proud of the state's power was traditionally offered to

citizens as compensation for civic frustrations (propaganda instead of information, lack of freedom of speech, political freedoms, etc.). The type of civic identity where this type of compensation was deemed acceptable continued to evolve. As a result, an object-subject relationship (where the individual is the object and the state is the subject) has emerged as the dominant paradigm in the relationship between the individual and the state. At the same time, an independent Ukrainian state gained popularity as an idea that has not yet been fully embodied. Due to historical factors (colonial past), the state was often perceived as weak and insufficiently stable, so subject-object relations were dominant (the individual dominates, establishes, and exploits the state). Corruption is an example because a corrupt person is active and primordial at the expense of the state's interests). This does not mean that citizens do not have healthy and mature forms of civic identity, but these forms do not apply to all citizens.

Criteria for a Healthy/Deformed Civic Identity

The selection of the criteria for assessing the deformed/health of civic identity poses an obvious problem in psychological research. These criteria are defined based on self-agency, developed for several decades in Ukrainian psychology (Tatenko, 2006), and was previously recognized even in Soviet psychology (Brushlinsky, 1996). In our opinion, Jung and later Odaynik originated the tradition of analyzing the relationship between the individual and the state in the context of self-agency. They recognized the problem of redirecting the citizen's responsibility to the state, which increases the state's primacy (activity) and is responsible for the citizens' secondary status and dependence (Jung, 1958; Odaynik, 1996).

If the concept of self-agency is analyzed about the problem identified by Jung, it can be considered four types of relationship between the individual and the state:

- 1) Object-subject – the citizen assumes the role of an object (secondary, dependent on the state) ('I am a small person, nothing depends on me'), whereas the state plays the role of a subject that makes decisions about the citizens' lives and is responsible for everything.
- 2) Subject-object – the citizen regards themselves as an active party in their relationship with the state and sees the state as an unnecessary and harmful bureaucratic mechanism. As a result, the citizen feels entitled to deceive the 'mechanism' and to 'circumvent' its laws and rules.
- 3) Object-object – is a stressful and potentially traumatic relationship. The citizen sees the state as a depersonalized senseless mechanism but also considers themselves an unnecessary and insignificant cog in this mechanism. Individuals perceive the state, its citizens, and the relationship between the state and its citizens as absurd and unjustified.
- 4) Subject-subject – the individual assumes responsibility for his/her life in the state and understands the problems and goals of the state as an organization. The state respects the citizen, and the models for developing the economy, infrastructure, and society generally aim to satisfy citizen needs.

The first three paradigms lead to the depreciation of either the citizen or the state. In the object-subject and subject-object paradigms, the relationship between the individual and the state is partially distorted (Khazratova, 2004). The object-object paradigm dehumanizes interactions and their participants and leads to the most significant distortions in civic identity. Fourth paradigm promotes equal development of both the individual and the state (Khazratova, 2004) and is optimal, but it is often adopted for ideological purposes and rarely implemented in reality.

The first two paradigms lead to surrogate (non-authentic) relationships embodied in the game interaction. According to E. Berne, social relationships often take on the form of role-playing games. A game is understood as a series of mutually complementary repeated transactions which have a hidden motive and generate psychological profits for all players (such as self-justification, self-affirmation, revenge, etc.) (Berne, 1964).

Surrogate relations (according to Berne, condition games) can occur not only between individuals but also between the citizen and the state. Their surrogacy lies in the fact that they serve as substitutes for healthy relations that involve exchanging mutually beneficial and necessary transactions. Taxation is an example of such a relationship: citizens pay taxes, and the state protects their rights. If a healthy exchange is impossible, the parties to the interaction resort to imitation: citizens pretend to pay taxes (evade taxes), and the state pretends to protect their rights (and only protects the rights of narrow groups of citizens rather than the interests of the broad public). This scenario can give rise to various games, where healthy relationships are a pretense, and mutual deception and self-confirmation at the expense of another party exist behind the scenes on each side of the interaction.

Relationship With the State as a Game

The individual rarely understands the games of the individual and the state. Games and their harmful effects can be experienced as either severe discomfort or deep frustration, the external causes of which are perceived by the personality as:

- 1) lack of opportunities for self-realization in the organizational environment of the state;
- 2) confrontation with law enforcement agencies and dissatisfaction with the state legislation;
- 3) unsuccessful emigration attempts; forced repatriation after the dissolution of an inter-ethnic marriage abroad and/or illegal employment abroad.

People rarely interpret their problems as problems arising from their distorted relationships with the state. A transactional analysis of such games could harmonize relations with the state, help in its acceptance, and find new resources for self-realization within the state.

The game analysis to be presented below is based on the schema proposed by Berne and includes: 1) thesis (the primary purpose of the game); 2) goal

(psychological gain for the leading player); 3) roles; 4) paradigm (the most critical transactions at the socio-psychological level); 5) main moves in the game; 6) rewards; 7) antithesis (the ability to stop the game, reorient the leading player to a more productive relationship) (Berne, 1964). In psychotherapy, a transactional analysis involves a detailed examination of the leading life games played by the client in this scheme to encourage the client to abandon these games and establish authentic, non-imitative relationships.

Exiting occlusion, according to the postulates of transactional analysis, always means transition to the position of the Adult (according to Berne's theory, the Adult is a sub-personality fundamentally different from the Parent and Child who enter the game through mutually complementary transactions). The Adult organizes their social interactions based on respect for the partner, apriori equality of rights with him ('You are OK, I am OK'), and mutual responsibility, so games are impossible here. From the Adult's position, it is a sincere, not a substitute partnership.

The following description of civic games is taken from the political reality of Ukraine before the 2022 war and refers to it. However, it may have a more universal nature.

Civic Games as a Deformation of the Individual-State Relationship

Persecution: 'The state oppresses me'

- 1) Thesis: *The Victim* is oppressed by the *State*. Everyone is horrified by the state's injustice. No matter what the *Victim* does, things only get worse.
- 2) Psychological gain: self-justification of passivity; moral permission for fraud against the *State*; transfer of responsibility for one's life; social approval.
- 3) Roles: a) *The Victim* is a person whose needs are systematically frustrated by the *State*. *State* bureaucrats violate his/her rights; officials and 'stupid' laws ruin his/her career; the *Victim* is treated unfairly by the *State* authorities; b) *The State* is personified by an unjust official, a bad manager, or a corrupt policeman; c) *Friends*, who constitute the victim's social environment, are horrified by state injustice, support the *Victim* and await new developments that will reinforce their victim status; d) *Instigator* (optional character) – a member of the *Victim's* social environment who gives advice or helps the *Victim* defend their rights in interactions with the *State*, which, for some reason, usually only worsens the *Victim's* situation.
- 4) Paradigm: object-subject. In this game, the *State's* role is active, and the *Victim's* role is secondary, passive, and dependent on the *State*.
- 5) Main moves: a) *The Victim* becomes engulfed in a problematic situation caused by the *State* (for example, the *Victim* fails to submit a vaccination certificate on time and is fired from his/her job / threatened with dismissal); b) *The Victim* tells *Friends* about it; c) *Friends* sympathize and support the *Victim*; d) over coffee, *Friends* play the 'What a terrible State we have!' game

- (in the *Victim's* presence), and the 'What a fool he (she) is!' game (when the *Victim* is not present); e) The *Instigator* gives the *Victim* the telephone number to a 'familiar lawyer' who 'solves all problems'; f) The *Victim* complains about the *State*, the *Instigator*, and the lawyer whose services (paid for by the *Victim*) only complicate matters.
- 6) Rewards: The *Victim* receives support and approval from *Friends*; *Friends* use the *Victim* for self-affirmation; the *Instigator* uses the *Victim* for self-affirmation and contributes to a decline in the *Victim's* social standing; the presence and influence of the *State* (personified by a manager, district doctor, official) is reinforced.
 - 7) Exit: the *Victim* transitions to Adult position, both in his/her interactions with the *State* and *Friends*. The *Victim* assumes responsibility for their role in interactions with the *State* and develops a realistic view of the situation, possible solutions, and a firm intention to solve the problem constructively. The *Victim* rejects the support of *Friends*, which is more of a 'game' rather than actual support, and seeks authentic (rather than surrogate) closeness in human relationships.

Patriot: 'Only I love my country'

- 1) Main thesis: 'Only I really love my country, everyone else is just a traitor.' A *Patriot* loves their country more than anyone else; he is surrounded by lying *Traitors*; The *State* suffers in silence.
- 2) Psychological gain: feeling like a national hero, satisfying high ambitions without hard work and without actual patriotic deeds.
- 3) Roles: *The Patriot* is usually a public figure who is active and outspoken; the *Spectators* are people who participate in political events and actions; the *State* plays a silent role, but its reproving presence is always felt; the *Enemies* are imaginary or real people, such as political opponents, representatives of foreign authorities, or foreign politicians; and the *Traitors* are the *Patriot's* social circle (mostly political or social activists).
- 4) Paradigm: subject-object. The *Patriot* is an active (and, in their opinion, the only) defender of their country homeland and assumes the passive role of a silent object of enemy machinations (can't deal on its own).
- 5) Main moves: a) The *Patriot* takes an active part in public political actions, attacks the *Enemies*, and cooperates with like-minded people; b) the *Spectators* admire the *Patriot's* patriotism; c) the *Enemies* lie to the *Patriot* and compromise with him; d) like-minded people turn out to be *Traitors* who cooperate with the *Enemies* against the *Patriot* and the *State*; e) The *Patriot* finds new associates and unites with them in a new struggle against the *Traitors*; f) the new associates also turn out to be *Traitors-2*; g) The *Patriot* remains alone and laments over the difficult fate of the *State*.
- 6) Rewards: The *Patriot* is admired by the *Spectators* and feels entitled to engage in aggressive behavior (which is justified or even sacralized by the *Patriot's* plight); the *Spectators* get a political show; the *Enemies* and the

Traitors use the *Patriot* for self-affirmation; the *State* improves its image (it is not bad, just unhappy; it is worth fighting for).

- 7) Exit: the *Patriot* renounces excessive ambitions, aggressive behavior, and harsh condemnation of others; the *Patriot* continues their political struggle without excessive noise and self-advertising.

Offended: 'If not for this State'²

- 1) Main thesis: 'I am not valued by the state, I will prove my worth in a different, better state'. The *Offended Citizen* reproaches the *State*, accuses the *State* of preventing them from achieving self-realization, of failing to provide adequate standards of living, etc.³
- 2) Psychological gain: a sense of moral superiority, the right to an apology and compensation from the *State*, self-justification for destructive behavior towards the *State*, passivity, and a negative outlook on the *State*.
- 3) Roles: a) the *Offended Citizen* scolds and accuses the *State*; b) the *Supporters* acknowledge and support the *Offended Citizen's* arguments; c) the *State* is weak and underdeveloped, and it loses its citizens; d) a *Better State* (an optional character) – the object of the *Offended Citizen's* emigrant aspirations; a *Better State* will shelter the *Offended Citizen*, appreciate them as a citizen, and provide them with an opportunity to realize their dreams and plans.
- 4) Paradigm: object-subject. The *Offended Citizen* assumes the role of a victim. In this case, the *State* is associated with a bureaucratic machine/inefficient administrative apparatus. The *Offended Citizen* disregards the *State's* real problems. At the same time, the *Offended Citizen* feels that they have a 'right to self-agency' and want to be the author of their life.
- 5) Main moves: a) the *Offended Citizen* develops a plan (for example, to earn a lot of money to buy an apartment); b) the implementation of the plan is frustrated by circumstances related to the condition of the *State* (for example, inflation destroys their savings); c) the *Offended Citizen* is forced to abandon their plan; d) the *Offended Citizen* complains to their *Supporters* (and family members living in a small apartment) about the *State*, and lists everything they could accomplish (how much they earn and saves), 'if it weren't for this damned state'; e) the *Offended Citizen* regularly plays the 'If it wasn't for this country' game with the *Supporters*, plans to emigrate and build a new life in the *Better State*; f) the *Offended Citizen* refuses to undertake constructive activity in the organizational space of the *State*.

² It is equivalent to the game described by Berne (1964). People who play the game condemn and criticize their country often talk about their intentions to emigrate, although they do not always carry them out.

³ The game has its roots in childhood (Berne, 1964) when a child felt traumatized by punishment or rejection from parents: 'I will leave thee. You will regret it, but then it will be too late!'

- 6) Rewards: The *Offended Citizen* has a moral advantage (they were not evaluated on their merits), and so do the *Supporters*; the *State* asserts itself by remaining indifferent and wielding power over the *Offended Citizen*; constant comparisons with the motherland *State* improve the image of the *Better State*.
- 7) Exit: letting go of resentment, understanding the *State's* problems and experiencing solidarity with it; constructive planning of future activity in its organizational environment; the ability to experience failure.

Parasite: 'You'll pay me'

- 1) Main thesis: 'You owe me, and you will pay!' Here, the role of the persecutor is played by the *Parasite*, who is diligently looking for opportunities to receive support from the *State* to collect benefits, including through fraud.
- 2) Psychological gain: implementation of hidden aggression against the *State*, social parasitism, and self-affirmation.
- 3) Roles: the *Parasite* usually works in the public sector and never hesitates to declare their 'rights'; for example, a Chernobyl victim, a single mother, a widow of an ATO veteran; *State Representatives* – for instance, trade union employees, tax inspectors, accountants; *Colleagues* – for example, employees who do not have benefits and self-affirm in another way.
- 4) Paradigm: subject-object. The *Parasite* is an active, dissatisfied, and aggressive consumer of *State* services. The *State* is the object, and the *Parasite* has no interest in the *State's* problems.
- 5) Main moves: a) the *Parasite* declares their rights; b) develops an aggressive attitude to any objections from *State Representatives*; defends their privileges even when they do not give him a pragmatic benefit; c) enters into a hidden confrontation with the *Colleagues*, possibly to compensate for the fact that the *Parasite* is not fully entitled to their benefits and 'rights'.
- 6) Rewards: the *Parasite* expresses hidden aggression and receives a material and financial benefit. *The Colleagues* become asserted by the *Parasite's* loss ('Don't be a parasite, earn with professionalism') if they are opposed to him/her or become asserted by the *Parasite's* success ('He proved his/her rights to our fraudulent state'), if they support them.
- 7) Exit: satisfaction from well-deserved earnings; trust in one's potential; experiencing solidarity with the *State's* problems; working towards a solution to the *State's* problems.

Heroic worker: 'I make such a sacrifice for you'

- 1) Main thesis: 'I perform my civic duties better than anyone else and work selflessly for the sake of the State.' An individual dedicates their time and energy to make a voluntary sacrifice to the *State* and becomes seriously ill

as a result, which testifies to their moral superiority and enables them to blame others.⁴

- 2) Psychological gain: silent love for the *State* leads to a sense of moral superiority over others and devotion to the organization; a Heroic worker as a *Model Citizen* takes revenge for the lack of proper attention.
- 3) Roles: a) the *Model Citizen* – outwardly conscientious and humble to the point of sacrifice actively works for the benefit of his organization or *State*, often ‘lends his arm’ when there are shortcomings on the part of the *Co-workers* or *Management*. *State* benefits from the results of the work of the *Model Citizen*, remaining indifferent to the imbalance in his public life, illness, or death, is interested in spreading this kind of example to others, and therefore supports the *Model Citizen’s* status in work; *Co-workers* and *Management* – their roles are similar in this game: they give the appear friendly, on the surface they perform their duties diligently, but often accidentally shift their responsibility to the *Model Citizen* or overburden him as a result of negligently performing their work. It is more convenient for them to compensate for these shortcomings by showing concern for the *Model Citizen* in a momentary situation than to work in accordance with the regulations.
- 4) Paradigm: object-subject. *The Model Citizen* adopts a passive and dependent attitude, whereas the *State* appears large and valuable (but indifferent to the *Model Citizen*). The *State* is the subject, and the *Model Citizen* is the object in this relationship.
- 5) Main moves: The *Model Citizen* is modest and unassuming, works for their organization/State all the time, neglects their family and personal life, and damages their health. The *Model Citizen* has significant work achievements and continues to work until they need emergency medical assistance. Then, *Colleagues* and *Management* temporarily focus their attention on the *Model Citizen* as a valuable employee and try to ‘compensate’ for their losses. The *Model Citizen* leaves the hospital, immediately returns to work and impresses everyone with their modesty and heroic worker (until the next health emergency).
- 6) Rewards: The *Model Citizen* develops a sense of moral superiority and receives admiration from *Colleagues* and *Management* (and takes revenge for the previous lack of attention). The *State* (and State organizations) derives benefits from the *Model Citizen’s* loyalty and self-sacrifice. The *Colleagues* and *Management* can shift the workload to the *Model Citizen* and reward them with only occasional attention.

⁴ Bern described this game in the family setting: a family member works selflessly for the family and makes themselves sick to get revenge for the lack of required attention, and can assert themselves. In our opinion, this game is typical in some organizational cultures but rare in others. For example, similar behaviors were widespread in the Soviet organizational culture with its ‘Stakhan movement’ and ‘heroic workers.’ The ‘fulfillment of a five-year plan’ was not enough; one had to ‘overachieve,’ and achieving world standards was considered ordinary. This psychological game is still being played in the 21st century: in modern Japan, many organizations struggle with *karoshi* – death from overwork.

- 7) Exit: recognizing the boundary between work and sacrifice; willing to demand a decent financial reward for one's work without having to depend on emotional and psychological compensation.

Discussion

Certain regularities characterize the described games. One of their common features is repeatability, even if the games take place under different circumstances and with other partners and if they produce undesirable results for the player.

According to Berne, games are often the basis of life scenarios, which provide the player with a blueprint for interacting with the social world and determining their fate (Berne, 1964). If 'marital games' program an individual's family life and work games program their career and life in an organization, then 'civic games' program an individual's civil life and relationship with the State. For example, the 'If it was not for this State' game might provoke a citizen to adopt a socially passive attitude and emigrate (by redirecting responsibility for their failures to the *State* and comparing it with a *Better State*), but the decision is not based on adequate information or a realistic assessment of one's prospects in a foreign country but on emotions, such as feelings of resentment, professional (emotional) burnout, etc.

The object-subject and subject-object paradigms prevail in the described civic games. At the same time, citizens more often see themselves as subjects than objects in their relations with the State.

Of course, we should focus on clarifying the role of players and the specifics of the role of the *State*. Usually, the more supportive the players (*Spectators, Friends, Colleagues*), the more attractive the game. When a game has a large number of participants, the emotional context becomes significant and quite profound. *Auxiliary Players'* social expectations force the *Main Player* to take further steps by following the logic of previous game transactions. As a result, the game 'drags on,' and the *Main Player* can no longer stop, even if they are threatened with real problems, illness, or death (as is the case of *Model Citizen* in the 'Heroic Worker' game).

Auxiliary Players usually receive a psychological payoff from the game interaction; therefore, they consciously or unconsciously enhance and deepen that problem. The problem that gave rise to the game (usually a non-partnership relationship, objectivization of the relationship between the individual and the *State*) only becomes more complicated. In 'civic games,' an individual can solve the problem and 'exit the game' by distancing themselves and becoming detached from their relationship with the *State*, which triggers the interaction. The *State* is not an object of direct perception or interaction, and the individual is not always aware of its presence internally; they resist for a long time and denies that they are playing the game. In this case, the individual is unable to exit the game.

Some psychological prerequisites for 'exiting the game' are universal for civic games involving various types of civic identity. In psychological terms, the

player can successfully 'exit the game' by becoming aware the game and transitioning to Adult position. In 'civic games,' the player can exit the game by consciously distributing responsibility (rather than shifting it to the state), finding a balance between what they are ready to do for the State and what, in their opinion, the State should do for its citizens. This cannot happen without a sincere recognition of the State's role in an individual's life, as well as the recognition of one's importance for the functioning of the State and the community of citizens.

The presence of the *State* as a player in psychological civic games is partly symbolic. In the game played by any given individual, the *State* is present only as a concept resulting from the individual's subjective social perception. In this concept, the *State* can be represented in different ways – as strong or weak, as an aggressor or a victim, and this portrayal is usually consistent with the *Main Player's* standard behavior. In a citizen's mind, the *State* is often personified as a representative of the authorities: a policeman, a manager, a state official. At the same time, the citizens – the *Main Player* and the *Auxiliary Players* – appeal specifically to the *State* in their narratives; they engage in civic activities on behalf of the *State* (such as the *Patriot*); they condemn the *State* (the *State* and the government are condemned separately), and enter into an internal dialogue with the *State*. The above implies that people do not confuse power with the *State* but actually enter into relations with the *State* as citizens. This also means that in 'civic games,' the *State's* role is dictated by the citizen's (primarily unconscious) choice.

At the same time, the State can also derive real benefits or losses from 'civic games.' Even if the State appears aggressive (the *Persecutor*) or weak ('If it were not for this State'), it may benefit from these perceptions because they enable the State to compensate for organizational defects. Every State makes at least minimal efforts to encourage active citizenship. This isn't easy to implement in a State with an authoritarian political regime that violates the rights of citizens. Therefore, fear is the unifying and motivating factor in such states (*Persecuting State*).

Some games are motivated by State ideological systems and individual ideologies. It is no accident that the image of the Soviet Man (*homo sovieticus*), a modest individual who was conscientious and devoted to work at the expense of his personal life, was sacralized in the USSR. In the ideology of the United States, the image of a hero who is devoted to their work and risks their life to ensure the safety of their fellow citizens was similarly sacralized. The hidden meaning of these ideologies is to encourage citizens to participate in games that benefit the State, such as 'Heroic worker.'

In some cases, the line between citizens' gaming and non-gaming behavior is very thin. The *Model Citizen's* enthusiastic approach toward work can be sincere and based on respect for the *State*, its values, and the desire to implement them. However, excessive enthusiasm (which harms health or interferes with other important personal needs) indicates a psychological imbalance and internal conflict. This approach also generates psychological gains, and it can be adopted, for example, to compensate for the lack of recognition and attention from others or lack of fulfillment.

The above indicates that the *State's* participation in the game is not only a metaphor. A game interaction, which substitutes for healthy, mutually responsible relations between the individual and the *State*, is a two-way process. It is supported by the *State*, which promotes certain ideologies and organizational values that prompt the citizen to engage in a specific type of game behavior.

A game analysis conducted during a psychological consultation expands the client's understanding of his civic self-realization and enables him/her to 'exit the game' and optimize his/her relations with the State.

The war against Russian aggression sheds new light on the analysis of 'game' civic behavior. Ukrainian society experienced self-actualization, solidarity, and cohesion at the beginning of the war. Nevertheless, in our opinion, war itself hardly creates fundamentally new forms of civic behavior and identity. Instead, it acts as a powerful catalyst for civic behaviors that have been developing for years and decades. During war, the relationship between the individual and the state is 'laid bare' and becomes more pronounced. The above applies to the relationship with both the invading state (from the actualization of political fears and subordination to hatred and confrontation) and the motherland (from finding protection and a sense of purpose to disillusionment). Accordingly, very different dynamics of civic behavior can be observed during wartime: self-sacrifice for the sake of the State, volunteerism, civic solidarity, but also desertion, corruption, and collaboration with the enemy. It is difficult to predict which trends will dominate in the evolution of civic identity, but armed resistance to Russian aggression is likely to become an important experience of a self-agency for Ukrainians: a self-agency that is attributed not only to the citizens but also to the State and is essential for building a relationship with the State.

This article presents only some theoretical aspects of 'gaming' civic identity. The presented games can provide material for empirical research, in which their prevalence, mechanisms, and consequences for the individual and the state will be verified.

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