National Resilience to Protracted Violence in Ukraine

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Abstract

This paper concentrates on the production of power of the Ukrainian nation, that not only deals with continuous violence within the nation, but also develops national strength to address this violence. This paper aims to explore how the Ukrainian nation develops resilience to protracted violence as a form of transformative power and what factors contribute or impede this process. The paper defines resilience as a form of power that enhances the capacity of a national community to heal from trauma, effectively resists perpetrators of violence, and positively transform intergroup relations to remove communities from contexts of chronic violence and war. Based on semi-structured interviews with twenty-six respondents and a phenomenological analysis of data, this paper shows that effective practices of resilience developed by the national community of Ukraine, including volunteerism, a critical approach to history, and dialogue, not only aid Ukrainians in the adaptation to the chronic violence but also in the transformation of the nature and the impact of the violence on the national community. At the same time, these practices not only utilize external and internal resources but shape the societal capacities and the international interventions. Finally, these practices also alter visions of the society and dynamics of relations between power agents.

Keywords: *power, resilience, nation, violence, Ukraine*

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Since Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine has been in a state of permanent armed conflict (International Criminal Court, 2017). While the intensity of the violence differs through this period, pressures on the society, including civilian devastation, military causality, and protracted displacement, continue to impact the life of Ukrainian citizens. In comparison to the analyses of the power dynamics between Russia and Ukraine represented in many research, this paper concentrates on the dynamics of power within the Ukrainian nation that help not only deal with the continuous violence but also develop the national strength to address it. Resilience "means more than effectively returning to normal functioning after a disruption, although it is critical. It is about achieving significant transformation that yields benefits" (Rodin, 2014, p. 3). While extensive scholarship addresses national resilience through the lens of critical infrastructure and national security, this paper analyzes a nation as a multilayered community and defines the process of resilience as adaptive cycles occurring at different spatial, temporal, and societal levels. National resilience is defined as addressing adversaries and crises through adaptation and transformation that preserve core national values and institutions, as well as create new innovative ways of addressing emerging needs and fragilities (Canetti, Waismel-Manor, Cohen, & Rapaport, 2013; Friedland, 2006; Kirschenbaum, 2006). The process of resilience as "never-ending adaptive cycles of growth, accumulation, restructuring, and renewal" (Holling, 2000, p. 7) is based on power dynamics within the nation. Consequently, I define and operationalize the resilience of a nation as a process enhancing a capacity of a national community to address conflict through adaptation, effectively resisting perpetrators of violence, and positively transforming intergroup relations removing communities from the contexts of chronic violence and war. This study asks what components constitute the resilience of the Ukrainian nation and what practices of resilience aim for effective trauma healing, resistance to violence, and the positive transformation of relations within this nation.

Approaches to Community Resilience

Community Resilience as a Form of Power

The most developed resilience approach—ecological—analyzes resilience as both a product of interactions between people and their environment, as well as a process that defines

this outcome (Benson & Lerner, 2003; Masten, 2001). However, some scholars have suggested that the theoretical foundations of "social-ecological systems" are problematic because they overemphasize the integrated nature of human societies and overlook the role of power, human agency, and structural arrangements (Brown, 2014; Cote & Nightingale, 2012). They also lack a commitment to the social justice framework (Aranda & Hart, 2015). Many studies underline the crucial role of power dynamics and collective action among social groups for the development of resilience. However, these studies overlook important social processes connected to contestation, power asymmetries, and social difference (Brown, 2014; Cote & Nightingale, 2012; Fabinyi, Louisa, & Foale, 2014, p. 28). The newly developed phenomenological approach to resilience advocates analyzing complex interplay of individual agency, power, situational context, and processes of improvisation in everyday life (Barton, 2005).

Despite this variety of definitions, the approaches to resilience suggest that it is going beyond an absence of pathology to embrace competencies as crucial components (Luther & Zigler, 1991). Resilience involves not only coping and successfully dealing with change, but also learning and adapting to the new environment, and changing communities based on the utilization of past experiences (Lengnick-Hall, Beck & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Näswall, Kuntz, Hodliffe, & Malinen, 2013), it represents transformative power of the communities. In this paper, I employ three core processes of resilience that reflect this type of power: (1) the capacity to heal and resist, (2) active adaptation, and (3) successful transformation.

Power dynamics within a nation include interactions between sustained institutions, social groups, and social networks producing collective actions. Nations as communities can use their capacities and external resources to establish practices that address conflict and violence as well. As open, dynamic, and adaptive systems, nations are able to adopt to or alter various political, economic, environmental, demographic, or societal pressures and to manage opportunities and risks peacefully and stably (EU, 2016). Resilience as a form of power is rooted in a national community's strategies, energies, and choices for fostering collective well-being (Rose, 1996). More complex forms of power-sharing within a nation help citizens to deal with social fragilities and violence. This power approach to resilience shifts the locus of production of knowledge and meaning from institutional actors to communities (Foucault, 101).

Resilience in a Situation of Protracted Violence

In settings where protracted conflicts expose people to continuous violence, many scholars concentrate on the coping dimension of their resilience. The scholars underscore important links between resilience, danger, and stress, and emphasize specific coping strategies in situations of armed conflict, including positive views of the future, safe havens, religiosity, community links, established routines, and clubs and schools (Charles, 2010; Cummings et al., 2011; Eshel & Kimhi, 2016; Freud & Burlingham, 1943; Masten, 2011; Sagi-Schwartz, 2008; Scott, Poulin, & Silver, 2012; Wessells, 2016). The context in which coping takes place, including relational dynamics of collective, institutional, and political spheres, is central to understanding the effectiveness of the coping strategy (Vindevogel, 2017; Yablon, 2015).

Adaptation and transformation as parts of resilience processes utilized by the victimized communities are deeply rooted in social support structures based on networks, such as the family or the community, the participation in elections, and political and other collective action within their community. For example, political involvement in the community is higher among people who directly experienced violence during war (Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Shewfelt, 2009). Specifically, community leadership is often comprised of civilians who witnessed war-related violence (Blattman, 2009). Exposure to violence is also connected to increased altruistic behavior towards members of communities and higher motivation to take risks to protect the community (Voors et al., 2012). However, as other studies show, this increased involvement of victims in political participation depends on the effectiveness of social programs (Gilligan, Mvukiyehe, & Samii, 2012). Thus, the community's involvement and political participation of the victims of both war and criminal violence depends on the social and political environment including community support and social networks.

Similarly, multiple studies sought to analyze both challenges to resilience and the social and psychological factors that contribute to communal resilience, although the findings of such studies are inconclusive. Strong community resilience has been linked to the application of long-term recovery plans, the active engagement of nongovernmental or civil society organizations, and adherence to principles of social justice (Chandra et al., 2011). Some studies underscore socio-demographic factors such as the size and type of community, age, and socioeconomic strength. For example, researchers found that urban residents mostly rely upon personal resources, while in rural neighborhoods, resilience is based on community connections (Braun-

Lewensohn & Sagy, 2014). Age also appears to be an important factor to resilience, with middle-aged residents of communities better able to cope, adapt, and transform in situations of chorionic violence as compared to a younger generation (Jaques, 1995).

Several factors were found to impact the resilience of communities, including levels of preparedness, communality, and religiosity (Goroshit & Eshel, 2013). Among Israeli communities affected by chronic rocket fire, resilience was stronger in neighborhoods with higher trust in leadership, more social support, better preparedness for emergency, and lower levels of stress related to violent attacks (Braun-Lewensohn & Sagy, 2014). Communities with the lowest socioeconomic status have less-developed resilience. Labeling, social exclusion, and the oppression of minorities reduce the ability of a community to develop resilience, while active citizenship and civic participation help disadvantaged communities become more resilient in the face of adversity (Jaques, 1955). In order to increase resilience, underprivileged communities develop practices of escaping poverty, for example, emphasizing the importance of education for their children and creating supportive community practices.

Positive resilience helps communities avoid divisiveness and engagement in conflict as well as protect their communities from perpetrators of violence. In her study of communities in Baghdad, Ami Carpenter (2014) observed that "resilience to violence is about preventing conflict escalation so as to prevent accompanying changes in how people think about themselves and each other, changes in the way groups of people behave, and ultimately changes in the larger community" (p. 2). Her study of neighborhood resilience in Bagdad concentrated on positive or "conflict resilience" that was "conceptualized as a process of managing conflict escalation so as to limit the formation of sectarian militants within bounded areas, and at the same time preventing violent sectarian attacks from militant groups outside those areas" (Carpenter, 2014, p. 64). In another conflict setting regarding the war in the former Yugoslavia, the Bosnian city of Tuzla was the only city that avoided ethnic violence despite the high concentration of internally displaced people and major problems with housing, water, waste, and transportation. Among the factors of city resilience were its culture, long history of multiethnic coexistence and opposition to oppression, and democratic policies of ethnic tolerance and good governance (Weiss, 2002). Similarly, during the sectarian conflict in Lebanon, the multicultural city of Byblos avoided descent into bloodshed and protected its Muslim minority from violence.

Communities that have higher levels of resilience are more successful in overcoming stresses and are better able to recover from trauma in comparison to communities that have a lower level of resilience (Buikstra et al., 2010; Kulig, 2000). Similarly, community resilience is strongly connected with effective post-war recovery, reducing post-war distress symptoms in places like Israel (Kimhi et al., 2012). In Lebanon, strong ideological commitment helped mothers and children cope with chronic violence (Bryce, Walker, Ghorayeb, & Kanj, 1989). For refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia residing in Canterbury, New Zealand, and Tohoku, Japan, the experience of wars, conflicts, and displacement, as well as everyday discrimination in the host country made them unexpectedly resilient to disasters (Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017).

In the midst of violent conflict, resilience helps people reduce the conflict escalation by creating perceptions of communities as robust and peaceful, establishing positive intergroup relations and cooperative behaviors within their neighborhoods, and inspiring changes in the larger community. Regarding the violent sectarian conflict, some neighborhoods in Baghdad were able to develop resilience and remain non-violent (Carpenter, 2014). They used several strategies to maintain this resilience: they organized non-sectarian security groups, acted as mediators in disputes, advocated for violence prevention and resistance to violent forces, and organized border monitoring through shifts that protected the neighborhood from outside militias.

National Resilience to Violent Conflict

On the level of the nation, resilience to persistent conflict and violence enhances the capacity of a national community to cope and adapt to incessant stressors. In this context, resilience can be understood as "capacities to foster greater social and political cohesion and to address the causes of fragility" (Ryan, 2012, p. 16). Fragility is linked to such dimensions as authority, capacity, and legitimacy. Authority is connected with the control of violence by the state, including the introduction of binding legislation, control over sovereign territory, the delivery of public goods, and the establishment of a stable and secure situation within the boundary (Gravingholt et al., 2015). A state affected by conflict can lack the authority to protect its citizens from different forms of violence (Stewart & Brown, 2010). "Capacity" has been described as "the state's ability to deliver basic services to its citizens and to organize and use resources in an effective way" (Gravingholt et al., 2015; Carment et al., 2015). Legitimacy rests on the ability of a state to present itself as the only legitimate actor, promote electoral democracy

and provide protections of civic and human rights (Milliken & Krause, 2002). Fragility is also caused by a low level of security and insufficient welfare within a state (Call, 2011). A recent shift from the focus on "fragile states" to analyses of the state-society relationship provides a more nuanced view on variations in instability and conflict (Stewart & Brown, 2010). With this shift, researchers acknowledge that "situations of fragility" can be identified even within stable and efficient states (McLoughlin, 2012; World Bank, 2011).

Social identities, as an individual's subjective identification with social groups (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), help promote both well-being and resilience among different groups (Sani, Herrera, Wakefield, Boroch, & Gulyas, 2012; Cruwys et al., 2014; Jetten, Haslam, & Haslam, 2012; Khan et al., 2014), including minorities who perceive themselves as victims of racial prejudice (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999). In situations of intergroup conflict, in-group identity has been shown to have a positive impact on well-being (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2007), however ideological commitments of specific groups can impede the development of national resilience. By way of example, among Kosovans involved in the 1999 Kosovan conflict, those who viewed the conflict as an identity-affirming rather than an identity-negating conflict exhibited a better state of mental health (Kellezi, Reicher, & Cassidy, 2009). Among a group of Israeli adolescents, a strong connection to their in-group positively contributed to psychosocial well-being, while a weak in-group identity connection contributed to anxiety, insecurity, and depression—all of which was set against the backdrop of political violence (Punamäki, 1996). Similarly, the moderation effect of ideological commitment on the impact of political violence on psychosocial well-being was found in Northern Ireland (Muldoon & Wilson, 2001).

Thus, I define and operationalize the resilience of a nation as a process that enhances the a capacity of a national community to address conflict through adaptation, effectively resisting perpetrators of violence, and positively transforming intergroup relations while removing communities from the cycles of violence and war. As the literature on national resilience shows, these processes embed contextual factors, external resources available for nations, specific characteristics of national communities, and capacities that nations develop. In the majority of studies, resilience is described as a process, thus the emphasis on interconnection between different components is crucial for understanding of resilience.

To illustrate how power of community arrives from the complex relations between these components of resilience, I propose the Four Loops Model of national resilience that is comprised of the:

1. *Structure of conflict*, including psychological, social, and structural factors (Musallam, Coleman, & Nowak, 2010);

2. *Dynamics of identity and power in national community*, including salience of the common identity, meaning of the national identity, intergroup relations, and legitimacy;

3. *External resources* as policies and actions of international institutions working with nation;

4. *Societal capacities* such as developed civic society, public trust in government, effective national policies;

5. *Specific practices* developed and exercised by different groups within a nation. These practices are employed by the national actors, including civic society, political parties, NGOs, to "restore or create effectively functioning community-level activities, institutions, and spaces in which the perpetrators of violence are marginalized and perhaps even eliminated" (Davis, 2012, p. 6). Based on my operations definition of national resilience, I define practices of resilience as the developed and maintained community-level activities and institutions that help national communities address conflict (recovery), effectively function and avoid violence (adaptation), and reclaim their nations from perpetrators of violence (transformation).

Figure 1. The theoretical concept of the Four Loops model of resilience.
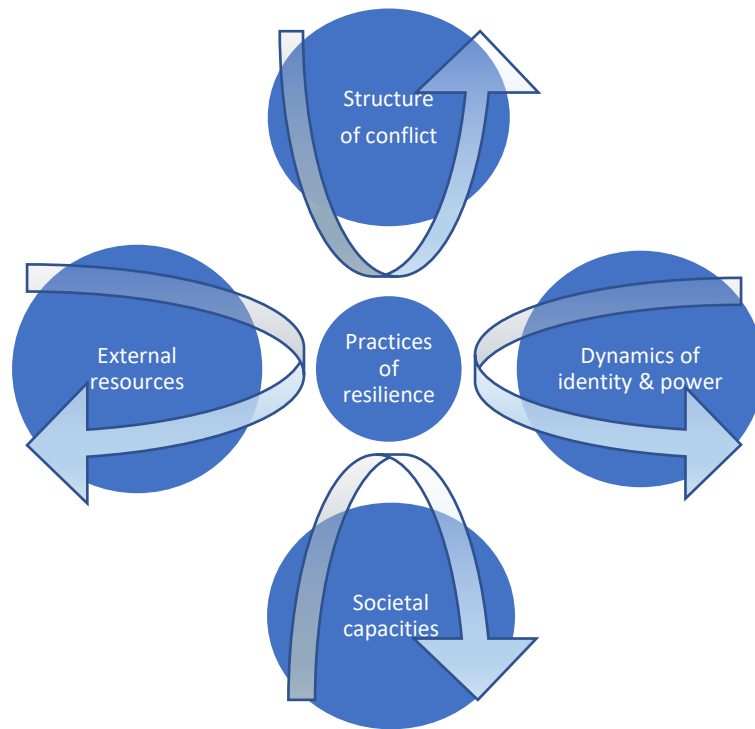
This Figure 1 illustration of the dynamic model of national resilience accentuates four continuous loops between practices of resilience and four other components of the model: (1) the structure of conflict, (2) dynamics of identity and legitimacy, (3) societal capacities, and (4) external resources. The term "loop" means that a factor, such as societal capacities, both influences practices of resilience and in turn is influenced by such practices. The model provides insights into analyzing power of a nation through an understanding of production and maintenance of practices of national resilience, as well as changes and alterations in conflict structure, dynamics of identity and legitimacy, and available resources through effective practices of resilience. The empirical study presented in the paper is not used to prove the model is right, but rather the model is employed to illustrate and explain the functioning of the power of a nation through the dynamics of resilience in Ukraine. Thus, the Four-Loop Model serves illustrative, not prescriptive, purposes and does not define correlations or statistical impact.

The Case of Ukraine

Following the Maydan events that resulted in the overthrow of the Yanukovych government, the separatist movement in the Donbas Region claimed that the Revolution of Dignity in February 2014 was illegitimate and promoted a regional agenda that fractured the unity of the nation (Shveda & Park Ho, 2015). Exploiting a power vacuum in these strongholds of Yanukovych and his Party of Regions, "unarmed and armed separatists seized and occupied regional administrations, security service (SBU), and police headquarters in Donetsk, Luhansk, and other cities and towns in the regions" (Katchanovski, 2016, p. 8). Russian military personnel, intelligence operatives, and public relations consultants supported this separatist movement by providing weapons, recruitment, training, and safe haven to separatists (Czuperski, Herbst, Higgins, Polyakova, & Wilson, 2015). Many reports also confirm direct involvement of Russian military, resulting in the hybrid character of the warfare (International Criminal Court, 2017; OSCE, 2017). While officially denying the military presence in Donbas, Russia stressed the willingness to "defend" ethnic Russians and Russian speakers who live outside the Russian Federation, thus justifying military intervention and territorial expansion. The local pro-Russian governments were elected in self-proclaimed "Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics" ("DPR"/"LPR").

In April, Kiev launched an anti-terrorist operation to retake the territories, but its fighting capacity at the time was limited. As the conflict continued, volunteer groups formed to supply soldiers and aid citizens leading to a parallel state structure (Dunnett, 2015). These "hybrid" warfare tactics of Russian operations "were accompanied by largescale (dis)information operations, cyber operations, various forms of economic pressure, international diplomacy, and so on, in order to maximize the effect of the campaign as a whole" (Åtland, 2016, p. 165).

On September 5, 2014, the first Minsk negotiations led to a ceasefire agreement that was signed by representatives of the Ukrainian and Russian governments, separatist leaders, and a representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. On February 12, 2015, following an increase in supply of heavy military equipment from Russia and Russian-led forces renewed offensive action, France and Germany brokered a second Minsk ceasefire agreement, signed by the same parties as the first Minsk agreement. However, despite the agreements, neither side has upheld the ceasefire or withdrawn all of their heavy weapons.

The Minsk agreements of 2014 and 2015 did not have a significant deterrence effect on the violence and did not create a clear path towards peace. Russia still controlled the territory and ran elections in areas of Eastern Ukraine (Radio Free Europe 2018). The neglect of the government and interests of the warlords contributed to the continuation of the conflict: "Same oligarchs who distribute humanitarian assistance to residents of the Donbas are sponsoring the violence" (Uebling, 2017, p. 266). As the OSCE mission in Ukraine reports, weapons proscribed by the Minsk agreements still have been extensively used on both sides of the contact line, including tanks, mortars, and artillery. Since the beginning of 2018, the SMM has corroborated 204 civilian casualties (39 deaths and 165 injuries), including 29 children (CMM, 2018). The major cause of civilian casualties is shelling that mostly occurs during the night. The crossing of the contact line has been complicated by a permit system and bribes by the police (Uebling, 2017). People residing in both government and non-government-controlled areas in Donetsk and Luhansk regions have "difficulties in attending court hearings, filing legal claims and gaining access to essential documents including birth and death certificates" (OSCE, 2017). The conflict also has resulted in the relocation of 1.7 million people (Beyani, 2015). The farther west in Ukraine Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) settle, the more likely they are to prefer integration, while those re-settling closer to the conflict are interested in return. The government has not addressed critical issues for IDPs, such as their rights to vote and to compensation, unemployment, and lack of housing. However, some communities developed successful resilience practices that support the integration of IDPs (Beyani ,2015). "Ukraine displays a unique mix of enthusiasm, creativity, conflict trauma, radicalism, and disappointment with the state. It is possible to describe this society in many different ways, but not as weak" (Udovyk, 2017). The aim of this paper is to understand factors that contribute or impede national resilience in Ukraine.

Methods

Data Collection

Data for the study were collected in the capital of Ukraine, Kiev, during the summer of 2018 through the use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interviews included eleven questions that explored five components of the Four- Loop Model of national resilience, including (1) the current state of the war and intergroup relations, (2) the national identity in Ukraine and relations of power and legitimacy, (3) role of international community and

peacebuilding parties, (4) strengths and capacities of national community; and (5) established and maintained practices of resilience. Each individual interview lasted between one and two-and-a-half hours.

The sample group included influential members of intellectual elite who influence the opinion in Ukraine and, at the same time, conduct research on/write about public opinion and social processes in Ukraine. The sampling method employed for the study included purposive sampling and snowballing, with several diverse entry points to ensure a diversity of views and attitudes. The final sample for individual interviews included twenty-six respondents, including nine academics (historians, political scientists, sociologists, international relation scholars who work as university professors or scholars in think tanks), six representatives of non-government organizations, six government officials, three representatives of international organizations, and two journalists. Two of the respondents were internally displaced people and five respondents recently spent significant time in the Donbass region due to their work assignments. Ten of the interviewees were female, and sixteen were male; the age of the participants varied from 28 to 60, with the largest group being approximately 40 years old.

The protocol of the study was approved by the IRB, informed consent was obtained based on the approved form before each face-to-face interview. The interviews were scheduled based on approved email or script of the phone call. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and transcribed for the purposes of data analysis. The interviews were conducted primarily in English with occasional use of Ukrainian and Russian languages. Language use was not considered as a criterion for inclusion. Given the majority of the interviewees write and communicate in English in professional and international settings, the English proficiency of most of the interviewees was high.

Data Analysis

A phenomenological analysis was employed to analyze the interview data. Phenomenological research "focuses on the need to understand how humans view themselves and the world around them" (Robson, 2011; p. 24). This method aims to answer the following question: "What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people" (Patton, 2002, p. 132). This method of data analysis enables researchers to understand what sources of resilience people perceive in their understanding of past events and experiences in the context of today's discourse. Several stages

comprise a phenomenological analysis. First, several themes were identified to manage large data clusters without losing the deep meaning of received information or the focus of the research questions (Robson, 2011; Patton, 2002; Dukes ,1984). I formed specific clusters by merging similar or related themes and making a summary table of the structured themes. These clusters were independent from the interview questions as many themes were cross-cutting across the questions. The analysis carried out on each individual interview contributed to the generation of common, general themes for all or most of the interviews (Saldana, 2009; Willig, 2008). The themes were then organized into five clusters related to five components of the model: (1) *structure of conflict*; (2) *dynamics of identity and power*; (3) *external resources*; (4) *national capacities*, and (5) *practices of resilience*. Specific attention was given to the production of power through four-loops- interconnections between practices of resilience and other four components of the model. Moreover, within each cluster, I identified subthemes which represent the factors that define the perceptions of resilience. Within each cluster, all respondents provided similar descriptions, thus one coherent narrative is presented to describe each cluster. While the participants expressed a wide variety of opinions, the application of phenomenological approach helped identify the major trends within each cluster.

The author acknowledges the limitations of the research methodology that is based on the purposive and snowballing sample and limited number of participants. The results can only be connected with the selected sample and do not represent the opinion of all Ukrainian people. Moreover, the low level of consensus among the respondents made a general conclusion almost impossible. Thus, the results of this study represent one of the possible views on national resilience using the Four-Loop Model as an illustrative mode.

Results

The majority of respondents acknowledged the fact that *Ukraine has a power as a resilient nation* and has a potential to become more resilient in the future. They stressed that while Ukraine has experienced extensive hardships, Ukrainians have demonstrated a high level of resiliency. As one of the respondents stated, "If Ukraine managed to recall the solidarity of the earlier times, there is a big source for hope." Many respondents highlighted the strength and power of Ukrainians such as "strong Ukrainian spirit," "the nature of Ukrainian people as having hope," "people are mostly optimistic and want to bring about change." The respondents stressed that the main infuser of resilience was the surge of volunteerism in response to Russia's

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occupation of Crimea and the Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine. The volunteer movement filled in the crucial gap of basic provision and procurement for the army when the state was too weak. As one respondent pointed out, volunteerism was a very powerful effort, a "nation-constructing movement," in which people helped the state survive by preventing complete invasion. Other respondents emphasized that the patriotism has grown in society because of the sacrifices and efforts made to support the country's army and displaced persons. A second strong component of resilience, according to the respondents, is collective memory and the determination to prevent violence in the future. The power of the nation arises from its ability to deal with its contentious past. Many respondents mentioned that Holodomor (the state-sponsored famine in Ukraine during 1932-33 that resulted in the death of millions of people) is an example of state-sponsored violence and should be remembered by all Ukrainians in order to avoid similar situations. As one respondent stressed, "Events like Holodomor should never happen again."

Third, the respondents outlined the critical role of well-designed dialogue in developing national resilience. According to respondents, dialogues help bring the people together to talk about the situation, to identify problems, and define mutual actions. They saw the national dialogue as a complicated process that nevertheless helped rebuild trust with the government, the rule of law, or societal trust within the community. According to respondents, this foundation will help Ukraine become a more powerful nation in the future.

The first and the most important factor that impacts power and resilience of a nation, as discussed by the respondents, is the war and violence in Ukraine. While some of the respondents described the conflict as a unifying factor against the common enemy, other respondents stressed the importance of finishing the war and reintegration of Ukrainian territories as foundational factors of national resilience. As one respondent stressed, "We could not build a resilient nation in a situation of war, we need to return all our occupied territories."

The first subtheme stressed that the war is very disempowering. A quarter of the respondents expressed a pessimistic view on the future of the conflict and stated that Donbas may be lost and a political solution would not prevail. They see conflict as a war between Russia and Ukraine and stress a need of liberation from the occupiers. As one respondent discussed, "This war will never end. Putin will never permit the liberation of this space because it would be political suicide." They do not see any current reintegration measures as feasible and assess the conflict as a long-term, low-intensity conflict. Some respondents stressed that both sides

continue to be deeply involved and committed to violence with no concerns for civilians' lives and well-being. For them, the best possible scenario is turning current war into a "frozen conflict."

The second subtheme, expressed by more than a third of respondents, represented decentralization as a form of power sharing and distribution of power from the center to the regions. Such decentralization efforts allow for the Eastern regions to remain a part of Ukraine while having a higher degree of local authority. However, the respondents stressed that a referendum that would allow Eastern Ukrainians to vote on a decentralization measure is unlikely to succeed because of the deficiency in institutional trust toward Ukrainian elections within the Eastern territory, and a sabotage by Russia.

The third subtheme described the conflict in Donbas as not rooted in ethnic identity, but as the ideological conflict between Ukraine and Russia. Among roots of conflict, almost all respondents stressed the role of Russian media and propaganda in inciting and sustaining the war. They discussed the influence of Russian media in both Crimea and the Donbas regions and emphasized the importance of fighting Russian propaganda. As one respondent emphasized, "It is a myth that if Russia leaves, the conflict will end."

According to the respondents, to succeed in this war and empower the nation, Ukraine has to win the hearts and minds of the people and to successfully reintegrate and reunite the country. Other respondents noted that the residents of Eastern Ukraine have the agency to an extent in this process and that their needs (pensions, etc.) should be recognized within a process of bringing them into the fold of mainstream Ukrainian national identity. Another respondent noted that the tie between national identity and economic conditions are strong, stressing that "we need economic methods to rebuild the national identity." For the nation to reintegrate effectively, another respondent declared simply that "People should know that if they live in Ukraine, they will live better." To reintegrate, the impression of "greater safety, better education, and a future" should be communicated to those living in Eastern regions.

The fourth subtheme underlined the tension between "justice and peace" as the main challenge to the reintegration of occupied territory. As one respondent stated, "The long-term goal for the country is not merely to eliminate or defeat Russia, but to restore justice for both victims and offenders." They discussed the debate in the Ukrainian society on whether an amnesty for perpetrators should be allowed, and to what extent war crimes should be prosecuted.

One respondent noted that "if granted, amnesty would not be tolerated. Peace is not possible if there was no punishment. People would say we capitulated before the republics, and no one was sufficiently punished." However, other respondents emphasized the importance of ending violence. Some respondents also mentioned the importance for the Ukrainians to answer the moral question and determine whether the Ukrainians from the East are "terrorists or victims." However, a quarter of the respondents expressed the doubts regarding the integration and believed that it would be better for Ukraine to allow the Donbas region to remain independent and rather invest the resources in addressing domestic problems.

The second theme discussed by the majority of the respondents is the theme of political and economic change as a foundation of national community power and resilience. The first subtheme described the fight with corruption as the most important factor of the empowerment of Ukrainian nation. Some respondents emphasized that the war on corruption has the same importance as the war in the East of Ukraine. As one respondent stated, "We have two wars in Ukraine: one in Donbas and one on corruption. And the second is even more crucial."

The second subtheme discussed the imperative role of reforms and building democratic political institutions for power and resilience in Ukraine. The respondents stressed that to build Ukraine as a modern European state, the reforms should have a strategic nature. As one respondent outlined, "Ukraine could not become resilient without complete overhaul of the political institutions and building a modern democratic state."

The third subtheme underlined the importance of public trust in Government, police, and law for developing resilient Ukraine. Many of respondents discussed the low level of trust in these institutions among Ukrainian public and stressed that the resilience in Ukraine should rest on the restoration of public trust.

The fourth subtheme outlined sharing power as a significant factor of national resilience. The respondents discussed the role of compromise and democratic deliberation in nation-building in Ukraine as well as inclusion of different political parties in the governance. As one respondent discussed, "Ukraine should include all political parties in the national dialogue, instead of excluding or stigmatizing them."

Finally, the fifth subtheme described the development of economy as a crucial foundation of national resilience. Several respondents discussed poor economic conditions and a low level of life among Ukrainian citizens. They emphasized the importance of improving the well-being

of people as a part of national resilience. As one respondent stated, to bring peace, Ukraine "must fulfill the basic human needs of all citizens." According to the respondents, the problem of unequal distribution of wealth, such as pension benefits for citizens living in the Eastern region, becomes an important problem for the Ukrainian government. As another respondent stated, "You could not build resilient and successful nation if most of its people are poor and are struggling to put a bread on their table."

The theme of shared identity, civic engagement, and common understanding as a foundation of a powerful and resilient nation was the third most common theme among our respondents. The first subtheme emphasized that nationalism diminishes the ability of the nation to become powerful and resilient. Multiculturalism was the predominant concept expressed by the interviewed participants, however the meaning of multiculturalism differed between the respondents. The first group emphasized the existence of several ethnic groups such as Russians, Hungarians, Pols, Tatars, Jews, and Romanians. The respondents believed that ethnic diversity makes it impossible to unify Ukraine as an ethnic entity. As one respondent stated, "Ukraine had no choice but to be multicultural. Thus, the best way to describe Ukraine is multicultural since it incorporates many languages and nationalities." However, many participants expressed concern that nationalism that rises in the situation of conflict diminishes the ability for the country to come together. As one respondent stated, "many Ukrainians are pro-Ukranian and insist on the Ukranian language and history as part of their narrative, rather than understanding or developing an all-encompassing concept of diversity at the core of their identity."

Another group of respondents connected multiculturalism with civic meaning of identity, emphasizing vast existence of different multi-ethnic groups within the Ukranian territory and noting that resilient Ukraine should be political and not an ethnic nation. They see Ukraine not as an ethnic territory but rather as a political entity granting citizenship to people residing in it. As one respondent stressed, "Political identity unites and strengthens the nation while nationalism divides people." Yet, another participant explained that the revolution of Maidan had mixed all people of Ukraine into one nationality.

However, some respondents stated that multiculturalism is not appropriate for Ukraine. They argued that Ukraine has historically been oppressed and the boundaries of identity are murky or vague. As one participant stressed, identity is a "chimera in that it does not exist." They

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also stated that ethnic minorities are too small to support the label of multiculturalism, and all minories, such as the Russians, will eventually disappear from Ukraine.

The second subtheme stressed the importance of common history, culture, and language for the developing of national resilience. The respondents stated that celebration of common holidays, speaking the Ukrainian language, and promotion of Ukrainian culture contribute to the strength of the nation. As one respondent noted, "Ukraine is a resilient nation as it has been able to preserve its language, culture, and identity through centuries of the occupation." The respondents also mentioned the importance of cross-regional exchange and stressed that travel to different regions and tourism contribute to growing understanding between people, as well as the appreciation of Ukraine. As one respondent mentioned, "People began to see the beauty of Ukraine, its trans-Carpathian region, and they are proud of their country." Another important outcome of such exchange, according to our respondents, is the development of common Ukrainian identity. Finally, some respondents discussed how young people can benefit from regional exchange. As one respondent stressed, "Our young people should know about their country and different regions. It will make us more resilient to external threats."

The third subtheme emphasized the importance of the development of a strong civic society and civic responsibility among the population. The respondents stressed that the EuroMaydan was a foundation for further development of the civic society, an inspiration for the nation, and a source for its power. Respondents noted that people have gone to the line of conflict to provide supplies, food, financial support and psychological support. In my observation of how these organizations provide for members of their community, I see that people have started to understand that they don't need to rely on the state for their basic needs. In support of that statement, the respondents noted that volunteerism helps people to connect with one another. As one respondent reiterated "in many cities and towns in Ukraine, people are starting to come together to discuss issues and work on resolution and development."

The respondents discussed the importance of self-awareness and education for the development of resilient nation. According to them, the state and civil society should promote understanding of citizenship and belonging to the nation among Ukrainian people. They discussed the importance of involving more young people in civic activities and raising awareness among them about their civic responsibilities. As one respondent stated, "The

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EuroMaydan has delineated the responsibility of the citizens for their country. It should be promoted among all segments of population, especially youth."

The fourth theme discussed by the majority of the respondents is that of international interventions as the most effective way to resolve the Donbas conflict. The first subtheme was supported by the overwhelming majority of respondents who stressed that Ukraine couldn't resolve this conflict alone. Almost all respondents stressed that the West needs to be better informed and more involved in Ukraine with a clear and cohesive strategy. The ignorance exhibited by the West and the international community about dynamics of this conflict were stated to be a root cause of some of the ineffective policies that are currently being enacted. One of the primary solutions to this dilemma offered by experts is the direct involvement of international institutions and international figures in Ukraine. According to the respondents the absence of coordination within the international community derives from each country having its own vision of how the process of conflict resolution should be carried out and what the future of Ukraine should look like. Overall, a majority of the respondents noted that the international involvement in the conflict "must be political" in ways that promote a more resilient and effective Ukrainian state. The respondents also would like to see more involvement of former Soviet states like Georgia or the Baltic States, and countries that have had similar experiences like Croatia.

Among the most important roles of the international community, the respondents mentioned peacekeeping and the enforcement of the Minks Agreements. The respondents described two roles of peacekeeping mission: on the line of contact, as an impartial arbiter honoring the ceasefire commitments and, on the border between Russia and Ukraine, as an administrator organizing and holding a referendum. One respondent noted, "The mechanism should be an international peacekeeping mission headed by an "international transitional administration… this is the only way."

Most the respondents had negative opinions about the Minsk Agreements and referred to the process as a "laughable political theatrics." As one respondent stated, "the Minsk process leads nowhere. The Ukrainians don't believe in the Minsk agreement;" another respondent echoed, "Minsk is a bad agreement, we should not implement it." One of the most significant reasons why the process is flawed, according to the majority of respondents, is Russia's strong influence within the negotiations as a third party, despite Putin's direct involvement and deep

interests in the conflict perpetuating. They stress that the conflict is not a civil war but rather a regional fight between Russia and Ukraine. One respondent noted that the irony of the situation is that the "Separatists are just puppets for Russia" and they do not hold power in the process of negotiation. However, some of the respondents, while being critical of the Minsk agreements, see them as the only available option. Many respondents expressed the belief that diverting from this path could result in a deterioration of the conflict resolution process.

The second subtheme was connected with the assessment of international economic sanctions against Russia. Some respondents believed that economic sanctions against Russia will put "permanent political and financial pressure" on the government as well as shift the focus on internal matters from territorial interests. Many respondents emphasized that economic sanctions need to be increased, suggesting that the current sanctions are too mild and are not holding Russia accountable. Some respondents mentioned that the West needs to be better organized and noted contradictions—with some Western powers maintaining economic relations with Russia, even in Crimea, while still imposing economic sanctions. However, other respondents emphasized the economic and cultural bonds between Russia and Ukraine assuming that the sanctions against Russia might also posit a threat to Ukraine because it is difficult to separate one from the other. As one respondent stated, "If Russia collapses, Ukraine will receive many refugees."

Many respondents also mentioned the role of foreign aid for the economic development of Ukraine and resolution of conflict. One dimension where this could potentially help is that greater economic development and improved infrastructure would make the reintegration with Ukraine a more appealing option for the territories in Eastern Ukraine. Finally, improvement in these dimensions could help to create a state that would be more resilient and better able to resist future conflict driven by both internal and external factors.

The third subtheme reflected the need to enforce the peace through military force. Recognizing that Ukraine has no military power to fight with Russia, some respondents believed that the support from the United States, the European Union, or the United Nations will provide an effective military solution in the fight against Russia. The majority of these respondents mentioned the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 as a claim for support. Some respondents urged the need for a quick return of Donbas and restoration of Ukrainian territory. They also stressed that this course of action may prevent future conflicts and tensions with Russia.

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Discussion

The production and functioning of national power through the interrelations between main components of national resilience can be further illustrated by the Four Loops Model presented in the beginning of the paper (see Figure 1). More specifically, it shows how the structure of conflict, societal capacities, external resources, and dynamics of identity and power influence national power by contributing to the development and sustainability of resilience practices. At the same time, effective resilience practices change the structure of conflict, increase societal capacities, improve effectiveness of external resources, and reduce contestations of identity and legitimacy.

A majority of respondents described Ukraine as a resilient nation that has the power to overcome many hardships. According to them, the central components of resilience- practices are (1) volunteerism, (2) critical approach to history, and (3) dialogues (as depicted in the center of Figure 2). According to respondents, these practices contribute to patriotic feelings, civic responsibility, and mutual understanding as foundations of resilience.

Figure 2: Model of national resilience in Ukraine.
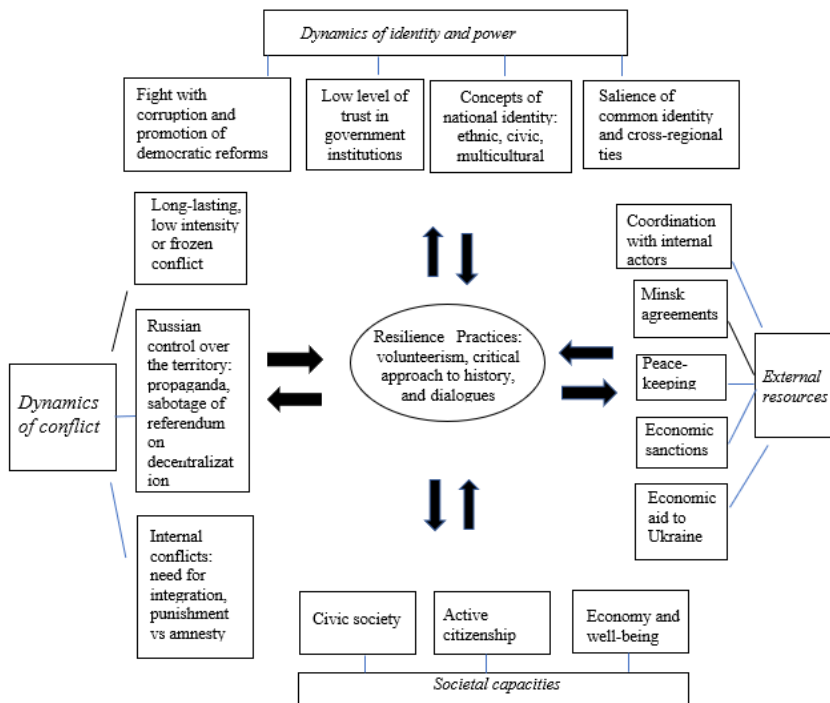
The structure of conflict is perceived as both disempowering (creating challenges) but also empowering (contributing to the resilience of the Ukrainian society). The control of powerful Russia over the occupied territory leads to the pessimistic view on the conflict as a long-term, low intensity conflict that can become frozen for decades. The decentralization approach is perceived as not probable because of the low trust of Ukrainian authorities among the population of occupied territories, and sabotage of the referendum by Russia. Another negative factor is the active role of Russian media and propaganda in inciting and sustaining the war. However, the respondents acknowledged the importance of agency for people on occupied territory and the essential need to win their hearts and minds. The support for the reintegration among these people depends on the ability of Ukraine to develop its economy and foundations for well-being for all its citizens. However, because of the economic problems and ideological differences with occupied territories, a significant part of the Ukrainian population does not want to integrate these territories back to Ukraine. Finally, respondents emphasized that the dilemma between peace and justice reflected in the debates about punishment and amnesty can posit another challenge for national resilience. The results of interviews resonate with survey results in the Ukraine SCORE (2018) study. The SCORE survey showed that many people in Ukraine experience fatigue and dissolution due to conflict (6.9 on the scale from 1 to 10)—thus supporting the point of view that the protracted violent conflict is diminishing resilience of the nation (Ukraine SCORE, 2018).

Several factors discussed by the respondents are connected with the *dynamics of identity and legitimacy* in Ukraine. The corruption was outlined as a major impediment for national power and resilience that impacts all levels of society and leads to the stagnation. These results were similar to outcomes of several other studies. The survey of International Republican Institute showed that the Ukrainian public has perceived the importance of both issues equally: the war (53 percent) and corruption (49 percent) (IRI, 2018). The importance of overcoming corruption was also shown by the SCORE survey: people of Ukraine consider it very important (7.9 on the scale from 1 to 10) (Ukraine SCORE, 2018). The results of the Public Opinion Survey of Residents of Ukraine 2018 with regard to the consequences of corruption shows that 74 percent of interviews think that corruption demoralizes the society, and 72 percent think that corruption increases social and economic inequality (Center for Insights in Survey Research, 2018).

The building of the powerful and resilient nation, according to the respondents, requires significant reforms and secure democratic political institutions. Resilient Ukraine should be a modern European state that promotes sharing power, compromise, and democratic deliberation. This opinion of respondents is also validated by the results of the SCORE survey that show a strong support for reforms (7.2 on the scale from 1 to 10). The survey of National Democratic institute also demonstrated overwhelming support for fully functioning democracy (84 percent of Ukrainian citizens) (NDI, 2018).

The meaning of national identity was discussed as one of the most important determinants of its power and resilience. The majority of respondents positioned the ethnic concept of national identity as an impediment for resilience of Ukraine, stressing that nationalism divides the country and excludes some groups of the population. This idea was also supported by the SCORE survey that show the prevalence of pluralistic national identity (7.0 on the scale from 1 to 10) (Ukraine SCORE, 2018). One group of respondents promoted multicultural meaning of national identity, emphasizing ethnic diversity and the importance of equal rights for all ethnic groups in Ukraine. Another group of respondents emphasized the importance of civic meaning of identity and equal citizenship of all people as a foundation for national resilience. Yet, a small group of respondents rejected multiculturalism as appropriate for Ukraine and emphasized the overwhelming majority of ethnic Ukrainains as a core of national identity.

The salience of common identity was also outlined as a foundation of national resilience and power. According to respondents, the salient national identity rests not only on common history, culture, and language but also on cross-regional understanding and appreciation of Ukraine as a country for all its citizens. Cross-regional exchange and in-country tourism to different regions create stronger connections and contribute to the resilience of the nation to different external threats.

Among *societal capacities* for resilience, the respondents discussed development of a strong civic society and civic responsibility among Ukrainian population. Robust and vibrant civic society was cited as a crucial foundation for national resilience. However, while EuroMaydan and volunteerism inspired many people for civic engagement, the level of civic participation is still very low. The importance of increasing civic engagement was also supported by the SCORE survey that showed a very low level of civic activities (0.6 on the scale from 1 to 10) (Ukraine SCORE, 2018). Another important capacity that needs further

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development, according to the respondents, is an understanding of citizenship and belonging to the nation among Ukrainian people. Economic development and well-being of all citizens was also mentioned as a crucial societal capacity that also requires significant improvements. The SCORE survey additionally showed the low level of economic security among Ukrainian people (4.9 on the scale from 1 to 10) (Ukraine SCORE, 2018).

The *external resources* were considered by the respondents as vital for national resilience. International interventions were discussed as the most effective way to resolve the Donbas conflict. However, the low level of understanding of the dynamics of the conflict and insufficient coordination between international actors were emphasized as impediment to the process. Peacekeeping operations were perceived as a prospective approach to the termination of violence and reintegration of Ukraine. However, the current approach to peacekeeping was described as deficient. The respondents had a very critical view of the Minsk agreements but decided that they should be followed as the only available option at this time. The policy of economic sanctions against Russia was considered a strong deterrent that has to be further increased and better executed. Sanctions should be accompanied by economic aid to Ukraine that will help the country become a more stable, successful, and powerful state. Finally, some respondents promoted the importance of military support and involvement of international military forces in the conflict.

Conclusion

This study centers on the following questions: how is power of a national community produced and exerted through dynamic interrelations between the components of national resilience? What practices of resilience aim at the effective adaptation, resistance to violence, and positive transformation of relations within the nation? In comparison with other approaches to national resilience, the Four-Loop Model provides a more comprehensive view of the concentration of a nation's power relative to the interrelationships between components of resilience, mutual impact between them, and connection of resilience to the structure of ongoing conflict and dynamics of identity and legitimacy within the nation.

The first advantage of the Model is that it increases understanding of interrelations between conflict and national resilience, stressing the interrelations between factors of empowerment and disempowerment. The Model describes practices as actions and institutions developed to address disempowering factors related to the structure of protracted violence, including (1) long-lasting

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low intensity conflict, (2) Russian control over occupied territory, and (3) internal conflict between peace and justice. In addressing these components of conflict, the Ukrainian nation has developed practices that aim to protect the nation, reduce trauma, and address the needs of the community, including volunteerism, critical approach to history, and dialogues. By employing these practices, the Ukrainian nation creates a possibility to reduce the effects of protracted violence through nation-wide activities and discussions that empower national community.

The second advantage of the Four-Loop Model of national resilience is the emphasis on the production of national power through close links between national resilience and international interventions. Some practices that increase national resilience and empower the Ukrainian nation—such as volunteerism—rest on the assessment that international intervention is ineffective in a situation of protracted violence. As military involvement and the Minsk agreements became ineffective, people of Ukraine increased their geopolitical agency. Other practices, including dialogue, strengthen the connection between national and international actors. The emphasis on economic sanctions against Ukraine and Ukrainian economic development underline the belief that economic power is as one of the most important avenues for conflict resolution in this context. It is also a dynamic which requires international assistance, as either of these strategies are unfeasible without a strong support from the international community. In turn, these practices increase trust among Ukrainian citizens in the international community and contribute to the efficacy of the international policies, including sanctions against Russia.

The third advantage of the Four-Loop Model of national resilience its recognition of the production of power through the interrelations between practices of resilience and societal capacities available within the nation. The resilience practices are built on these societal capacities, including civic society, active citizenship, and economic well-being, as they are established and maintained in a nation that is efficient in utilizing these resources. However, these practices are both built on the available societal capacities and contribute to their development. Thus, practices of volunteerism rest on, and promote, the increase of social resources, including civic society and active citizenship. The practices of dialogue and a critical approach to history are built on already developed active citizenship and help Ukrainian citizens address issues of economic well-being as a national capacity.

Finally, the fourth advantage of the Four-Loop Model is its emphasis on the production of national power through the connection between practices of resilience and identity and legitimacy dynamics in the nation. The participants underlined the crucial role of an inclusive society, multicultural or civic meaning of national identity, common culture and mutual understanding, and national self-esteem and pride as building stones for national power. For example, multicultural meaning of national identity and the need for mutual understanding suggest the need for a national dialogue. In turn, practices of volunteerism and dialogue help develop inclusive civic nation. Similarly, systemic political change, democratic institutions, reforms, and trust building contribute to critical approach to history and dialogue, while these practices help increase accountability of the government and development of public trust.

In comparison with other models that concentrate on changes in the national community related to social-psychological dimensions such as patriotism, optimism, and social integration and political dimensions such as strength of democracy and trust in leadership (Canetti, Waismel-Manor, Cohen, & Rapaport, 2013), the Four Loop Model of national resilience in Ukraine emphasizes the production of power of the nation based on interrelations between agency of national community and dynamics of protracted violence. It describes national resilience as a process of enhancing a capacity of a national community to heal from trauma, effectively resists perpetrators of violence, and positively transform intergroup relations removing communities from the contexts of chronic violence and war. Instead of seeing themselves as victims of Russian intervention and as a divided nation with the weak and corrupted Government, citizens of Ukraine were empowered to mobilize resources, capacities, and strengths of the national community to address chronic violence. The practices of resilience developed by the national community of Ukraine, including volunteerism, critical approach to history, and dialogue, do not only aid Ukrainians in the adaptation to the chronic violence but also in the transformation of the nature and the impact of the violence on the national community.

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