



PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH IN UKRAINE UNDER WARTIME CONDITIONS

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Public Opinion Research in Ukraine Under Wartime Conditions

Eduard Klein and Heiko Pleines (both Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen)

DOI: 10.3929/ethz-b-000675216

Abstract

Public opinion surveys reflect how fundamentally Ukrainian society has changed and consolidated after Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. However, measuring these developments became much more challenging, especially in the first year of the invasion, as pollsters faced not only methodological, but also logistical, organisational, financial, and staffing difficulties. More than two years into the full-scale war, however, the major pollsters have adapted quite well to the new circumstances and continue to produce reliable public opinion research. This is essential not only for academic research on Ukraine, but also for political debates in the country in general.

Introduction

Russia's war of aggression has caused fundamental societal changes and a strong political consolidation of Ukrainian society. Two years into the full-scale invasion, democracy and EU-/NATO-integration are commonly accepted goals across all regions, age groups and social strata. The Ukrainian language is more spoken than ever before (cp. Ukrainian Analytical Digest (UAD) No. 1); Ukrainian music and art is more popular than ever. The Russian atrocities and war crimes, as well as the gloomy situation in the occupied territories (UAD No. 3), where kidnapping, deportation and torture of Ukrainians are daily routine, have made compromises regarding possible peace negotiations with Russia unpopular (UAD No. 4).

Representative opinion polls are an important instrument for recording and analysing these and many other changes of Ukraine's society. Thus, they are of great importance for academic research about Ukraine (UAD No. 2). For this reason, the data project *Discuss Data: Archiving, Sharing and Discussing Research Data on Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia* aims to archive the complete original data ('raw data') for as many surveys from Ukraine as possible in open access for secondary research.

In contrast to traditional repositories, Discuss Data attempts to integrate the academic community into the archiving process and into the discussion about data-related issues, such as data quality, methodological or ethical considerations, or possibilities for re-using data. For each dataset, curators support the preparation and uploading of data collections and check them before publication, thus safeguarding data quality, disciplinary, legal, ethical or other requirements, and best practices.

The authors of this commentary are curators at Discuss Data, including of opinion polls data. So far, about twenty data collections presenting Ukrainian opinion polls have been published. Since the data collections are published by topic and sometimes include the results of

several surveys from different years, Discuss Data thus offers free access to dozens of representative surveys of the Ukrainian population reaching back to 1994 like, for example, a data set on 'Inter-Ethnic Prejudice in Ukraine from 1994–2023'. Within the scope of an institutional cooperation between Discuss Data and the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) as well as the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF), Discuss Data regularly publishes new public opinion data from these institutions, including (as of April 2024) seven nationwide surveys conducted since spring 2022 as well as three surveys of internally displaced persons. Moreover, Discuss Data also hosts several large collections of protest- and identity-related narrative interviews conducted in Ukraine since 2014.

Problems with Data Collection in the First Year of the Full-Scale Invasion

In the months after the full-scale Russian invasion began on 24 February 2022, a third of the Ukrainian population fled their homes and communities, vast regions in the south and east of the country had become combat zones, and 25% of Ukraine's territory had been occupied by Russia (nearly 20% remaining under occupation as of May 2024). Under these circumstances, it was hardly possible to conduct representative surveys among the entire population. The major Ukrainian polling organisations did not restart their polls until May 2022. KIIS, the largest and most renowned institution in Ukraine when it comes to public opinion research, declared on 23 May 2022 that it would resume representative surveys with telephone and online interviews and could also conduct surveys in the form of face-to-face interviews 'in some regions and localities'.

DIF, another renowned institution in Ukraine that commissions surveys, limited its survey in May 2022 to 11 of Ukraine's 26 regions. The survey did not reflect the opinion of the population in the centre, south and east of the country. By August, however, the situation

had improved, and DIF was able to commission face-to-face interviews in 22 of the 26 regions. The survey was representative of the population in those parts of the country controlled by Ukraine.

The major polling institutions assumed that they provided reliable results—for the population in government-controlled areas—from summer 2022 onwards, with a standard sampling error of less than 3 per cent. However, due to the large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs; in August 2022, the UN counted 7 million IDPs, and at the end of 2023 there were around 3.7 million IDPs in Ukraine, or around 10 per cent of the population) and continued frequent changes of residence, for example caused by return migration, an additional uncertainty factor remains.

As a result, small differences over time in the distribution of answers should not be overrated. However, many surveys show changes of over 10, and in some cases up to 50 percentage points in the distribution of answer options between 2021 and 2023: most prominently, trust in President Volodymyr Zelenskiy increased from less than 30% in late 2021 to over 80% in late 2022. Thus, even if changes in the lower single-digit range are only meaningful to a limited extent, the surveys nevertheless show clear trends. This assessment is confirmed by the fact that different renowned polling institutions arrive at very similar results for similar questions.

The commercial opinion research institute Info Sapiens took a new approach in an online survey in October 2022. It surveyed the same people who had already taken part in surveys the previous year. But now, a large proportion of the responses came from abroad. This is an interesting approach, as it also captures the opinions of people who have fled abroad. However, the reason for this approach was probably pragmatic: Online surveys are the least expensive option and this particular survey used a sample for which the mailing list had been created earlier.

However, this limits representativeness in two respects. Firstly, as Info Sapiens itself writes, the survey is representative of the Ukrainian population as of January 2022, not the population at the time of the survey. Secondly, only 5 per cent of responses in the survey came from abroad, whereas according to the UN Refugee Agency, around three times that many Ukrainians had to that point fled Ukraine. This is probably due to the fact that a smaller proportion of those who fled abroad took part in the survey. This population is therefore clearly underrepresented.

The problems are even greater if the entire population is not to be sampled in surveys, as in DIF's surveys among internally displaced persons in Ukraine. Under current circumstances a representative survey is not possible, as there is no central register for the selection of

survey participants. As a 'workaround', DIF's surveys were conducted in the regions where the most IDPs live. They were randomly selected from typical locations such as refugee shelters or waiting rooms in railway stations. Using this approach, a total of 1,000 IDPs were surveyed. Even if these surveys are not representative, they provide the state and relief organisations with important information on the situation, needs and integration of IDPs at their new places of residence. For researchers, it is interesting to record changes in the political attitudes of this group. The surveys alone do not provide comprehensive answers, but they do offer important suggestions for further research questions.

Difficult but Improving Situation for Pollsters

The following section is informed by a short inquiry to four institutions that regularly conduct public opinion research, namely KIIS, DIF, the Sociological Group Rating, and Info Sapiens, who were asked by the authors of this paper about their situation after the full-scale invasion.

Especially in the first year of the full-scale Russian invasion, the survey institutes faced extremely difficult organisational, technical, financial and other challenges under the new wartime conditions. All institutions are based in Kyiv. In the first days and weeks of the invasion, when the outskirts of the capital were occupied, large parts of the core staff fled Kyiv, and many males joined the Territorial Defense Forces. After the liberation of the north of the country, the staff mostly returned, apart from those who continued to serve in the Armed Forces. Some of them were even captured by Russia, as for example one employee of KIIS (luckily, he was released; however, after rehabilitation, he returned to the army).

The regular Russian air strikes led to permanent air alerts, power outages, and power cuts. This was especially the case in the winter of 2022/23, when Russia specifically targeted Ukraine's electrical infrastructure. This also made communications unstable, making telephone and online interviews difficult, as well as recording, processing and securing the resulting data. Due to security concerns and the flight of interviewers based in the regions, especially from the east and the south, face-to-face surveys were even harder to conduct. Due to these technical problems, all institutes had to conduct fewer surveys, which means less income. However, after the provision of air defence systems by Ukraine's Western partners, this situation significantly improved over the course of 2023, though the situation had deteriorated again in spring 2024.

The enormous (e)migration movements, as well as the military draft, resulted in shortages of high-skilled professionals in general and in the sphere of public

opinion research in particular, as experts could not be easily replaced. A newer challenge comes from the fact that an increasing number of international/humanitarian/non-governmental organisations are now active in Ukraine. They attract skilled experts and often can pay wages in US Dollars or Euro instead of the devaluated Hryvnia, which adds to their attractiveness. Rating, which opened a new office in 2023, and Info Sapiens, which grew from 40 employees in 2022 to 60 employees in 2023, thus had difficulties recruiting qualified staff.

Financially, especially commercial survey institutes, which are also very active in the field of market research, have lost a large part of their customer base, and therefore their income. Ukrainian clients, affected by the sharp economic decline (GDP fell by nearly 30% in 2022), substantially decreased their orders for new surveys. To make matters worse, under the difficult security and staffing circumstances, the costs for conducting public opinion research have also significantly increased.

In this difficult domestic situation, international partners and clients have filled the gap and became much more important. Rating, for example, has experienced a fivefold increase of international clients, and the ratio of Ukrainian to international clients, which used to be approximately 80:20, has now completely reversed, being approximately 20:80. KIIS's international clients made up 90% of its business in 2023, about ten per cent more than in 2022.

Currently, the polling institutions regard the following as their greatest challenges: long term uncertainty that hinders strategic planning; possible mobilisation of male employees; short-term projects (their share increased due to uncertainty, which means that new sources of financing are needed more frequently); physical insecurity, particularly due to missile attacks; shortage of regional interviewers and coordinators due to pre-war staff moving abroad, becoming IDPs, or join-

ing the army; mental health issues of staff; rising prices/inflation; more bureaucracy (esp. in international/tender projects); and also a 'fatigue' among the population, which demotivates them from participating in survey and makes the interviewers' work more difficult.

Summary

The work of the Ukrainian survey institutes is not only important for academic research, it also contributes to political debates in Ukraine. Especially in times of rapid and fundamental societal change, as has been the case in Ukraine since 2022 due to Russia's full-scale invasion, it is important to know the positions and expectations of the population.

The war, however, made it much more difficult to conduct representative public opinion surveys. The major polling institutions reacted differently to the new circumstances, but on the whole adapted to the new methodological challenges quite successfully. KIIS is, in economic terms, back to its pre-COVID-19 level, Info Sapiens increased revenues in 2023 by nearly 50% compared to 2022, the situation of Rating has also 'improved considerably' and DIF is now at least in a 'somewhat more stable' situation. Importantly, all four institutions expect—if the current overall security, political and economic situation in the country doesn't considerably deteriorate—a positive outlook for the future, in which case they will be able to continue their work, which is more important than ever.

Thus, if one wants to run a representative survey in Ukraine, this is organisationally doable, and despite the war, survey results are trustworthy. And while the Ukrainian survey institutes and media feed selected survey results into the country's political debates, Discuss Data aims to make the raw data of as many Ukrainian surveys as possible freely accessible for academic research.

About the Authors

Dr. *Eduard Klein* is an academic researcher at the Department of Politics and Economics at the Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen. He is responsible for outreach and communication at Discuss Data and editor of the Ukrainian Analytical Digest and the Ukraine-Analysen.

Prof. Dr. *Heiko Pleines* is Head of the Department of Politics and Economics at the Research Centre for East European Studies and Professor of Comparative Politics, University of Bremen. He is one of the project leaders of the Discuss Data online repository.

Discuss Data is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and is a joint project of the Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen and the Göttingen State and University Library. In 2023, it started a new cooperation project with KIIS and DIF. The project aims to on the one hand provide long-term financial support for both institutions, and on the other make those institutions' unique data freely accessible to the scientific community and all interested parties on the Discuss Data platform. Discuss Data also regularly awards 'Data Preparation Grants' for individual researchers which support the preparation and documentation of their data for open access publication on Discuss Data.

Conducting Surveys During Wartime: A Personal Reflection

Inna Volosevych (Info Sapiens, Kyiv)

DOI: 10.3929/ethz-b-000675216

This contribution, written by Inna Volosevych in the summer of 2023, describes the personal experiences of the deputy director of Info Sapiens in conducting surveys in Ukraine during the first year of the full-scale invasion. It is an excerpt from the forthcoming book “Russia’s War in Ukraine 2022. Personal Experiences of Ukrainian Scholars”, edited by Tetiana Kostyuchenko and Tamara Martsenyuk. The edited volume will be published in the “Ukrainian Voices” series by Ibidem later in 2024.

The Ukrainian Analytical Digest is grateful to the publisher, the editors and the author for permission to publish the following passages.

CATI Surveys in Wartime: Methodology and Organization

“I hope you, your colleagues, families, and friends are safe during these very difficult times. What is the current state of Info Sapiens and are you still operating? Please let us know your situation so we can plan accordingly.”

When I received this message, I asked my colleagues if they wanted to work, and most of them did—in the first three months of the war there was even a competition between them for taking the job because jobs were a rarity those days. I was very lucky that we had Wi-Fi in our bomb shelter and I was able to work—this was the only thing which prevented me from going insane. Our telephone interviewers said the same thing: they wanted to work, because work creates an illusion of normality in this nightmare.

The COVID-19 epidemic did not paralyze Info Sapiens’ work: in 2020, we arranged remote work and launched our “Virtual CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews) Studio” through which interviewers work at home and number dialing, recording and control are organized centrally.

The first challenge was methodological: How can we build a sample in a situation of unprecedented external and internal migration? The only solution was to build it according to pre-war settlement, so we had to ask two questions: 1) Where did you live before the onset of the full-scale war?; 2) Have you moved since then and, if yes, where do you live now? We also added a question asking whether the respondent is currently living on territory occupied in 2022.

Our first surprise was that the response rate was three times higher than it was before the war (and as of January 2023 it is still higher than the baseline). There are at least four possible explanations for this trend:

- People desire to inform the world about Ukraine (as we explained that this data will be published in Western media)

- People wish to share their experiences, emotions, and thoughts in this extreme situation.
- Increased empathy in Ukrainian society due to the war: people becoming kinder to each other, more helpful—even to telephone interviewers
- Increased free time due to higher unemployment (the response rate increased three times after the beginning of the invasion, and still sitting at twice pre-war)

The second surprise was language: 23% chose to have their interview conducted in Russian, while before the war 33% did this (and by the end of 2022 this figure further decreased to 14%). This was not particularly surprising, as over half of Info Sapiens employees are historically Russian-speaking (though most of them were bilingual and had always switched to Ukrainian while talking to Ukrainian-speaking colleagues), and after February 2022 most switched to using Ukrainian.

But the greatest shock were the results: Ukrainian society had changed drastically in a single week. Directly after the start of the invasion, suddenly 56% were against any promise that Ukraine not join NATO, even if such a concession would end the war (Info Sapiens, 2022a).¹ Before February 24, 2022, only 48% had supported NATO membership... (Nova Yevropa, 2020). Additionally, after February 24, 2022, 79% of Ukrainians were against the official recognition of the previously occupied areas of the Donbas region as part of Russia and 75% against the official recognition of Crimea as part of Russia, even if it ends the war.

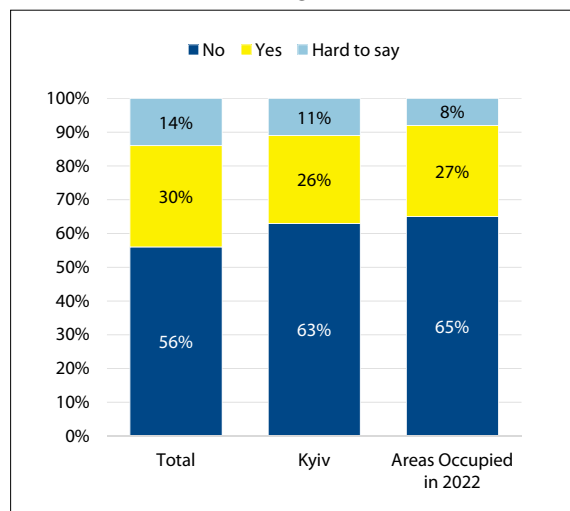
I lived near the town of Vasylykiv, about 20 km away from Kyiv, during the first days of the full-scale invasion. For eight days, dozens of rockets and bombs destroyed houses, schools and hospitals, and Russian paratroopers landing in our village shot civilians. During this time, I personally was ready to accept anything just to end the war. That’s why I was impressed by the courage of

¹ Later polls showed 85% support for NATO membership, almost twice as high as pre-2022 support—see “62% ukrayintsiv vvazhayut’, shcho viyna tryvatyme pivroku i bil’she, ale neprymyrymist’ shchodo postupok Rosiyi zrostaye.” 14.08.2022, Info Sapiens. <https://www.sapiens.com.ua/ua/publication-single-page?id=239>

Ukrainians who refused to accept Putin's conditions in order to end the war: not to enter NATO (though NATO doesn't call us), and not to maintain our claims on Crimea and the occupied Donbas (though at that time we did not have the military capacity to regain control over these territories).

I even supposed that people who reject Putin's conditions were those who didn't suffer from the bombs, but no: specifically among people in Kyiv who suffered from numerous rocket attacks and explosions, 86% are against recognizing the previously occupied areas of Donbas as part of Russia, 81% are against recognizing Crimea as a part of Russia, and 63% are against a ban on Ukraine entering NATO. What's more, these figures are also higher among residents of occupied areas than among the general population:

Figure 1: If It Guaranteed an Immediate End to the War, Which of the Following Scenarios, If Any, Would You Be Willing To Accept, Even If Reluctantly? [Statistics for Answer: "A Ban on Ukraine Entering NATO"]



Source: *Info Sapiens*, 2022a.

I personally agree with public opinion—if we accept Putin's requirements, evil will remain unpunished and the terror and atrocities will continue. Since 1991, Russia has launched 12 (!) local wars (Tsentr protydyi dezinformatsiyi pry RNBO Ukrayiny, 2022)—we have to stop this.

Before its publication, I unofficially asked a friend from the President's office whether they are all right with publication of this data and received no objections. That was the first survey on attitudes to Russian conditions for peace—it was even published in the *Washington Post* (*Washington Post*, 2022). At the same time, we received some critiques and concerns, specifically:

- One famous journalist wrote that wartime surveys have high volatility level and that we cannot trust them. Time has shown that he was wrong: the cited figures proved rather stable, and only slowly increased from March 2022 to the following January (and similar figures were later obtained by other research organizations): see Figure 2 on p. 8
- Our research colleague wrote that the question about acceptance of Russia's conditions is risky: what if we don't agree for neutral status 10,000 people would die? What about 100,000? I answered that we don't know how many people would die if we agree to neutral status and become even more defenseless given that Russia's promises are always lies. So we have agreed that it is hard to find an ideal formulation in this regard. He also asked from whom we had received permission to conduct this survey, and I said that we didn't receive prohibition, and we have agreed that, though according to the law there are no restrictions on conducting surveys during martial law, we still have to be careful with publishing the survey data

After receiving the survey results, we could immediately see that both Ukrainians living abroad and those living in areas occupied in 2022 are underestimated. Only 1% of respondents had moved abroad because of the war, compared to the official UN estimate of 1.5 million refugees (about 4% of the Ukrainian population). We also knew that in some occupied settlements there was no mobile connection during the sampling period. We have thus summarized the limitations of the wartime surveys compared to the surveys in 2014–2021 in the following way:

- Insufficient coverage of Ukrainians abroad (mainly due to roaming costs). In subsequent surveys we tried to compensate respondents for additional connection costs or to send a link to the questionnaire, but the coverage of this group was still insufficient—the only way to cover it is building an additional sample group (see in more details below)
- Insufficient coverage of residents of the areas temporarily occupied by Russia after February 24, 2022, in addition to previously occupied after 2014 (and where, as a result, Ukrainian mobile operators do not provide mobile telephone services).

As no one could ascertain the sex/age structure of emigrants/residents of occupied areas, the only solution was to use the pre-war demographic structure. The unweighted CATI sample in wartime conditions does not significantly differ from the pre-war sample (there was a small increase in the male population and fewer youth, but the difference is not drastic). Also, most surveyed Ukrainians abroad plan to return, and most surveyed residents of previously occupied areas want to

live in Ukraine, so we expect that the social structure of the country after the war will be close to its pre-war structure.

The blackouts in November–January created serious barriers for CATI surveys:

- Interviewers often didn't have electricity.
- Respondents often didn't have electricity and didn't want to drain their phone batteries by using them. Additionally, if they did have electricity, they were often in a hurry to complete household chores before it was cut off again.

Our solutions to these problems:

- Whereas in 2020 we had mothballed our CATI studio because of COVID-19 and organized a virtual one, in 2022 we had to restore it because of the war—that's how life in Ukraine looks like. We also have a generator in the office so the interviewers don't have to depend on the electrical grid to complete their work.
- We used CATI only for short surveys; for the long ones, we use the face-to-face method (f2f).

Photo 1: Operation Managers Preparing the CATI Studio

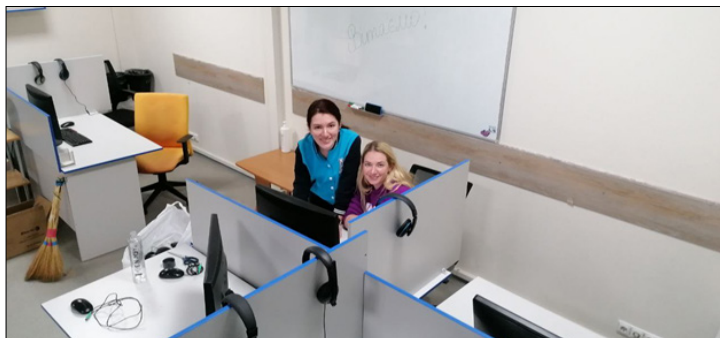


Photo: Ivan Hadji, 20.11.22

Surveys of the Groups Not Covered by National CATI: Residents of Occupied Areas and Refugees

The Info Sapiens team conducted numerous surveys on occupied areas of Donbas and Crimea in 2014–2021, but in 2022 the repressions in these areas became much worse than those of the 2014–2021 period. As a result, we have taken the following decisions:

- To filter out the responses to political questions of residents of currently occupied areas answering all-Ukraine surveys, because answering political questions can be dangerous for them (as was mentioned above, the surveyed dwellers of areas occupied in 2022 were radically anti-Russian)
- Not to include political questions in surveys targeting occupied areas. In 2022, Info Sapiens conducted three surveys in Crimea and areas occupied in 2022, but these results are closed.

Also, when we perform qualitative surveys in occupied areas we never use video-recording—only audio or written notes.

As for the refugees, the only way to conduct representative surveys of this population is via mobile numbers. Almost all refugees still use Ukrainian mobile numbers for messengers—even if they switch off the mobile call services, they can still receive SMS messages. The mobile operators send SMS messages with the link to the survey to the owners of randomly selected mobile numbers in all countries proportionally to the amount of Ukrainian numbers located there, forming a representative sample. Info Sapiens has conducted three representative surveys of the Ukrainians abroad as of spring 2023.

Face-to-Face Surveys in Wartime: Methodology and Organization

The first f2f surveys in wartime were launched in August 2022, but these were regional. The interviewers also reported a higher response rate compared to the pre-war period and as compared to CATI.

Info Sapiens possesses a nationwide network of interviewers and supervisors of about 700 persons and more than 200 devices (tablets) for CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviews). This network was recovered in November 2022 when we launched the first all-Ukraine face-to-face survey (f2f). In 2023, f2f interviews were conducted in government-controlled areas of all oblasts of Ukraine except for Luhansk, which is totally occupied, and Donetsk and Kherson, which are mostly occupied.

We have also faced methodological challenges: if the CATI method provides simple random selection of respondents, CAPI requires building a sample in advance. The logical solution is to build sample according to recent CATI results of geographical distribution of the population (as it constantly changes) and then to weight the data on the basis of pre-war settlement. So, just as in CATI interviews we have put two questions to the respondents: 1) Where did you live before the full-scale war?; and 2) Have you moved and, if yes, where do you live now? From March 2022 to January 2023 the share of IDPs remained rather stable, varying from 15% to 19%. At the same time, the distribution of IDPs across oblasts varied significantly, some people leaving their homes, some returning to them, some relocating permanently.

The other challenge is blackouts, but these have a smaller negative influence on CAPI than on CATI.

Qualitative Surveys in Wartime: Methodology and Organization

The respondents of quantitative and qualitative surveys have different levels of traumatic experiences, but the standard format of quantitative interviews is generally less sensitive. If the respondent begins to worry we teach interviewers the following:

- To suggest to take a pause in the interview (or to stop it entirely)
- To provide the contacts of hotlines for free psychological support or support of vulnerable groups

The qualitative surveys are much more complex, and moderators should take into account the emotional and psychological state of the respondents—for these reasons, we organize additional trainings for them. We also use additional, more in-depth screening of the potential respondents for loss and injuries due to the war, using advanced screening to gain a more in-depth understanding of a potential respondent’s profile.

In 2022, the proportion of IDIs (in-depth interviews) was higher in qualitative research because the most sensitive issues and topics should be studied by IDIs.

The respondents’ reflection can have different degrees and levels of emotional manifestations and reactions, especially critical for Focus Group Discussions (FGD)—depression, indignation, and tears.

The following basic behavior models for moderators/ interviewers are possible:

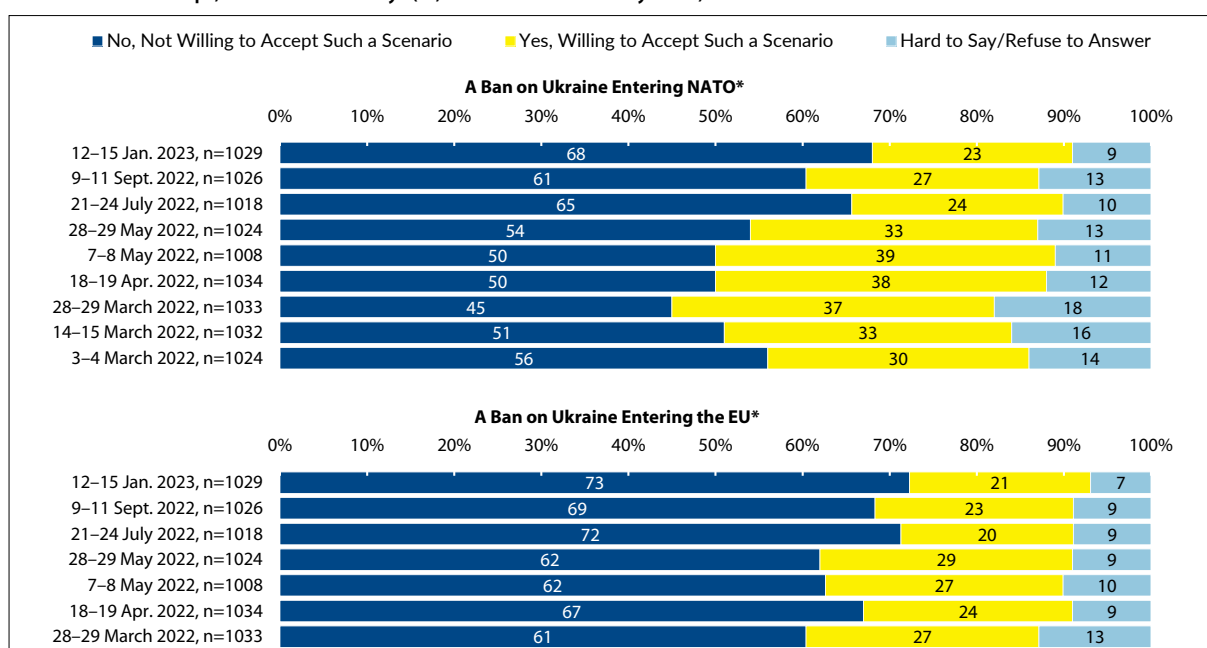
- Deep empathy—showing compassion and support, taking time to balance the respondent’s condition. Advantages: the respondents feel more trust and open up more. Disadvantages: the emotional atmosphere can interfere with the dynamics of FGD, which will lead to losses in terms of the amount of information received.
- Neutral behavior—average level of empathy, transition to less emotional issues. Advantages: the overall calmer atmosphere of the group is preserved, the dynamics are not lost. Disadvantages: individual respondents who had vivid emotional reactions may shut down, which will lead to the loss of some information.

We also use the CETA questionnaire provided by Center for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support of National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, which we are very grateful for, to check the psychological support needs of the interviewers/moderators and respondents.

About the Author

Inna Volosevych has a Master’s degree in Sociology from the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and is the Deputy Director of Info Sapiens research agency. She has more than 15 years of working experience in survey research and has managed more than 1,000 social research projects. During March 2023 – February 2024 she was a ZOiS fellow in Berlin, where she worked on a research project monitoring the impact of the war on the Ukrainian population.

Figure 2: Most Ukrainian Don’t Accept the Ban on Entering NATO and EU as a Condition of the War’s End If It Guaranteed an Immediate End to the War: Which of the Following Scenarios, If Any, Would You Be Willing to Accept, Even If Reluctantly? (% , March 2022 – January 2023)



*During the 5th wave of research, we were criticized for the word “ban” because it provokes protest and formally no one can forbid Ukraine from joining one or another union. We believe that Russia is blackmailing Ukraine by murdering and torturing Ukrainians, so the word “ban” is appropriate. At the same time, we conducted an experiment when half of the respondents were asked about the “ban on joining NATO/EU”, and half about “Ukraine promises not to join NATO/EU”. The differences are statistically insignificant.

Source: Presentation by Inna Volosevych: The main changes in the Ukrainian society after the launch of the full-scale war

Methods for Data Quality Assessment in Wartime Surveys in Ukraine

Volodymyr Paniotto (Kyiv International Institute for Sociology, Kyiv)

DOI: 10.3929/ethz-b-000675216

Abstract

Two major criteria for assessing the quality of sociological data are a) whether the data is representative and b) whether the respondent's responses can be trusted. Sociological surveys in wartime Ukraine face challenges that may significantly affect these two criteria—and thus data quality—due to factors such as mass migration, occupation, or increased patriotism. This contribution assesses how systematic errors can be assessed with different methods that mitigate impacts, ensuring survey reliability amid challenging conditions. As a result, it can be stated that systematic errors associated with problems of representativeness and respondent sincerity increase under wartime conditions, but not to such an extent that they put into question the main survey results.

Introduction

In the context of the current war, there are factors that deteriorate the quality of data from sociological surveys compared to earlier peacetime surveys of Ukrainians. These include mass migration out of and within the country (nearly a third of Ukraine's population has changed their place of residence in the last two years), occupation of part of Ukraine's territory by the enemy, additional dangers of conducting surveys in areas of active combat, increased level of patriotism (and hence a higher pressure of prevailing public opinion towards socially desirable answers), and the adoption of laws providing for criminal liability for certain statements (for example, the law adopted in Ukraine on March 3, 2022, providing for criminal responsibility for denying the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine).

To understand what follows, it should be noted that the main method of conducting surveys during the war in Ukraine is the computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI).

To assess the quality of data, The Total Survey Error Approach is often used. It involves identifying various components of the total error and evaluating each of them. The war does not affect some of these components, for example, the statistical error of sampling, but has a strong influence on others (for example, on coverage or frame error).

The two main questions for assessing the quality of sociological data during the war (compared to usual quality assessments in peacetime) are

- whether we can call our data representative (are we surveying all population categories proportionally to their numbers?) and
- whether we can trust the responses of the respondents we survey (the problem of response sincerity).

Representativeness of Wartime Surveys

Demographers distinguish between “permanent” and “present” populations. The “present population” includes

people actually present in the region at the time of the survey, and excludes temporarily absent permanent residents. Sociologists usually survey not the permanent, but the present population, i.e., the population residing in Ukraine during the survey period (sometimes refugees are surveyed and analyzed separately but are not combined into the dataset containing the responses of the present population).

To assess additional systematic biases introduced by migration and military actions, it is necessary to estimate the size of population groups that arise as a result of the war and which are difficult or impossible to survey by phone. The wartime population of Ukraine can be divided into the following groups:

1. The main group—the population that has not changed its place of residence since the beginning of the war, available for survey;
2. Combatants (participants in combat operations)—approximately 2% of the population, partially available for survey;
3. Population residing in active combat zones along the front line: 1–2% of the population, partially available;
4. Refugees (accessible but difficult to ensure a representative survey; however, they are not included in our target population);
5. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)—these are fully available for telephone surveys;
6. “Newly Occupied”—the population of newly occupied territories (those occupied after February 24, 2022). At the beginning of the war, they could still be surveyed, but later the occupiers disconnected Ukrainian mobile operators (this is 3–5% of the population);
7. “Old Occupied”—people living in territories occupied in 2014 (Crimea and parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions); now and before the full-scale war, they were not included in our target population.

Thus, the surveys in Ukraine are representative for the 91–94% of the population currently residing in the territory of Ukraine. Thus, the additional systematic error of representativeness during the war can be estimated by formula (1):

$$E(\text{error}) = (p_1 - p_2) * IT * 0.01 \quad (1)$$

where

p_1 = the percentage of a given characteristic for the population of accessible territories

p_2 = the percentage of a given characteristic for the population of inaccessible territories

IT = (inaccessible territory) the percentage of the population living in territories inaccessible for survey

Of course, we cannot know p_2 precisely, but sometimes we can roughly estimate the difference ($p_1 - p_2$) based on pre-war data. For example, if $p_1 - p_2 = 20\%$ and 7% of Ukraine's population is inaccessible for survey, then the additional error of representativeness $E(\text{error}) = 20\% * 7\% * 0.01 = 1.4\%$. We see that even if the difference is relatively large at 20%, but the percentage of the inaccessible population is small, the additional error does not exceed 1.5–2%.

Sincerity of Respondents' Answers

Two factors most significantly affect the sincerity of respondents: administrative pressure (fear of persecution for expressing an opinion) and the so-called “spiral of silence” described by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, a phenomenon in which people prove reluctant to express their opinions if they feel they are in the minority.¹ Before the war, our population was very critical of the government and did not fear administrative pressure; survey results very accurately matched election outcomes. For instance, in the first round of the last presidential elections in 2019, a survey conducted by KIIS two weeks before the elections differed from the actual results by only 2.6%. Since the legislation in this regard has hardly changed with the onset of the war, we assume that the population does not fear administrative pressure.

As for the Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann effect, it existed before the war, but has significantly intensified since the war began as unity on certain issues has increased, support for certain opinions now reaching 70–90%. Before the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine there was significant regional, linguistic and ethnic differentiation in most of the characteristics that we studied; after the start of the war, this differentiation almost disappeared.² It thus seems the pressure of public opinion on respondents has significantly increased. Let's consider possible methods for assessing insincerity:

It is assumed that if people do not want to answer sociologists' questions, then after the war begins, either the response rate or the socio-demographic profile of those who answered should change. In our studies, this did not happen, while other methods showed that the Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann effect indeed exists.

One part of our methodology involves attempting to get a response from the respondent on whether all their answers were sincere; sometimes such a question is asked at the end of the survey, promising not to ask which questions were involved. Here's an example of a survey using the adaptation of the “railroad test” used by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann herself, a technique Vladimir Zvonovsky and Alexander Khodykin replicated: in a survey representative of the population of Russia, they first asked a direct question—“Do you personally support or not support the ‘military operation’ in Ukraine?”. They then asked opponents of the war (which continues to be called a “special operation” in Russia) the question: “Suppose you have to spend several hours on a train and someone in your compartment starts speaking in support of the ‘special operation’. Will you engage in a conversation with this person about the situation in Ukraine or ignore it?” (a similar question was posed to supporters of the war). It turned out that opponents of the military confrontation prefer to remain silent about it significantly more often than supporters: 77% versus 55%. This is considered evidence of the presence of the Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann effect.

However, the main method of assessing insincerity is the formation of two equivalent representative subsamples—surveying one subsample through a direct question, the sincerity of which is assessed, and in the second subsample using a method that yields a sincere response. In this approach, methods for assessing sincerity and methods for increasing sincerity are thus interconnected. Let's look at some of these methods:

1. Option to Not Answer a Question

In one of the subsamples, the question is posed directly, as usual, while in the other subsample, the phrasing of the question emphasizes that the respondent may choose not to answer this question. At the same time, the response options were the same. For example, in Elena Koneva's study in Russia, the questions were phrased as follows:

- Subsample 1: “Please tell me, do you support or not support the military operation of Russia on the territory of Ukraine?”

1 Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. The Spiral of Silence A Theory of Public Opinion.—Journal of communication, Volume24, Issue2, June 1974, Pages 43–51

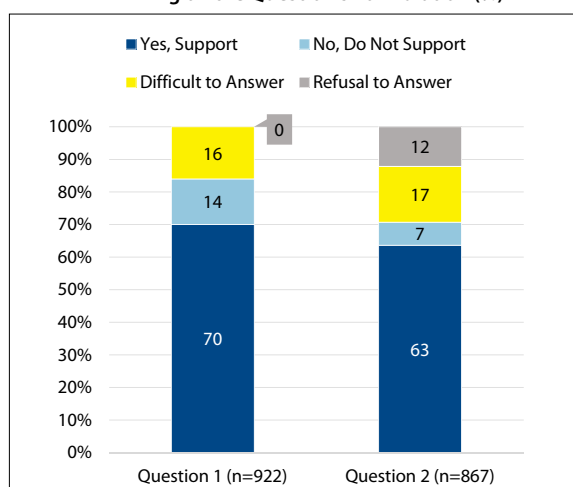
2 See for example GEOPOLITICAL ORIENTATIONS OF RESIDENTS OF UKRAINE: RESULTS OF A TELEPHONE SURVEY CONDUCTED ON JULY 6–20, 2022, KIIS site, part Overcoming interregional differences and consolidation of public opinion of Ukrainians regarding Euro-Atlantic integration

- Subsample 2: “Please tell me, do you support or not support the military operation of Russia on the territory of Ukraine, find it difficult to answer unequivocally, or do not want to answer this question?”

The results are shown in Figure 1.

It is assumed that the answers to the second question are more sincere, and thus support for the military operation is lower than the results of some studies would suggest.

Figure 1: Distribution of Answers on Support Depending on the Question’s Formulation (%)



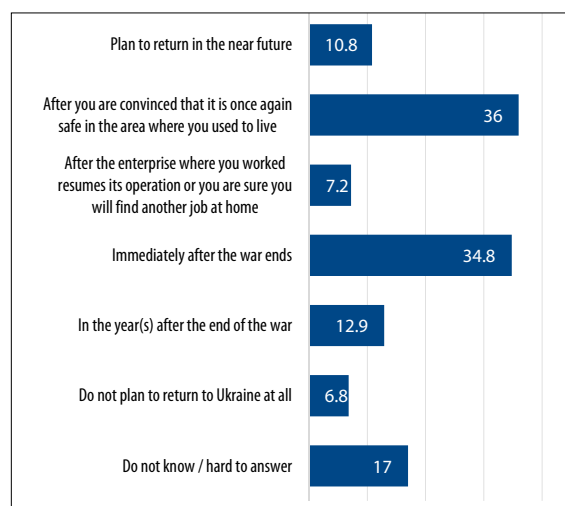
2. Option to Choose an Equivalent, but More Socially Acceptable Alternative

For example, in a study of Ukrainian refugees³ in the summer of 2022, the response options to the question “Do you plan to return to Ukraine, and if so, when?” included, alongside the answer “I do not plan to,” which would likely be viewed by many Ukrainians as unpatriotic, another option: “I will return in the year(s) after the end of the war.” This is essentially equivalent to “I do not plan to,” but more socially acceptable (“I do not plan to” was chosen by 7% and “in the year(s) after the end of the war” by 13%, totaling 20%) (see Figure 2).

3. The List Method

Two lists of answer options differ by only one “sensitive” option—one includes it, the other does not. Respondents are asked not to name the items they agree with, but rather their total number. All differences in agreement are due to this sensitive question. An example also from research at the Levada Center in Russia:⁴ “I will now list several decisions made by the authorities of the Russian Federation over the last few years. How many of the listed decisions do you support?”

Figure 2: Do You Plan to Return to Ukraine, and if So, When?



Subsample 1

1. Pension reform,
2. Introduction of lockdown due to the spread of COVID-19,
3. Adoption of amendments to the Constitution of the RF.

Subsample 2

1. Pension reform,
 2. Introduction of lockdown due to the spread of COVID-19,
 3. Adoption of amendments to the Constitution of the RF,
 4. Conducting a special military operation in Ukraine.
- The difference between the average in Subsample 2 and the average in Subsample 1 is the support for Item 4. Direct question support for the special military operation (SMO) was 76%, while by the list method, it was only 44%, almost 30% less.

4. Use of a Panel Survey to Study Characteristics of Non-Respondents

In wartime conditions, those in Ukraine unwilling to respond to our study questions might hold pro-Russian views. In this case, their share should decrease after the war begins. But how can this be determined? The decrease in the number of pro-Russian respondents—is it due to a change in values, or due to refusals to participate in the survey? This bias was assessed at KIIS in an experiment conducted by KIIS Executive Director Anton Grushetsky.

A pre-war survey was selected that allowed calculating the number of pro-Russian respondents (Survey 1, Questionnaire 1, Dataset 1). A panel survey of the same

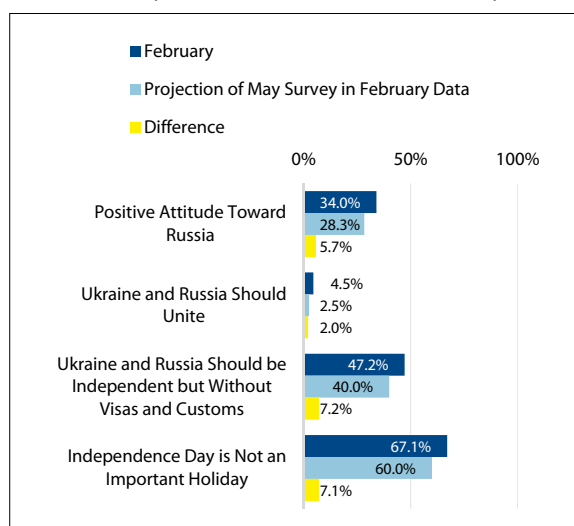
³ Настрої та оцінки українських біженців (липень–серпень 2022р.). Razumkov center site.

⁴ “Доверие опросам о «специерации».” Levada Center site.

respondents was conducted based on this survey’s sample, now on the questions for which we want to assess sincerity (Survey 2, Questionnaire 2, Dataset 2). Some respondents refused to answer questions. We then see how the respondents of the second survey answered in the first survey—this is a projection or image of the second survey in the first survey (Survey 1, Questionnaire 1, Sub-dataset of Dataset 1 consisting of those who answered in Survey 2). We then compare the percentage of pro-Russian respondents (see Figure 3):

Figure 3 shows that among those who did not respond, there may be 6–7% more respondents with a pro-Russian orientation.

Figure 3: Assessment of Bias Due to Non-Responses, February–May 2022 (Indicators of Pro-Russian Sentiment)



5. Imaginary Acquaintance Method

Developed at KIIS in 1996 by V. Paniotto and V. Khmelko, the Imaginary Acquaintance Method was initially used to study informal employment. Respondents are asked to think of someone they know very well (it can be themselves) and, after being promised that they would not be asked who they had thought of, then asked about opinions or activities of this person. This provides the respondent with complete anonymity (a special experiment showed that in most cases, the respondent has themselves in mind).

In July 2022, KIIS conducted an assessment of biases on the question of agreeing to territorial compromises in exchange for peace with Russia using this method. In two subsamples of 1,000 respondents each, different questions were asked: in one, the question about compromises was posed directly, and in the other, the question was as follows:

“Now there will be a somewhat unusual question. Please think of someone you know well—it could

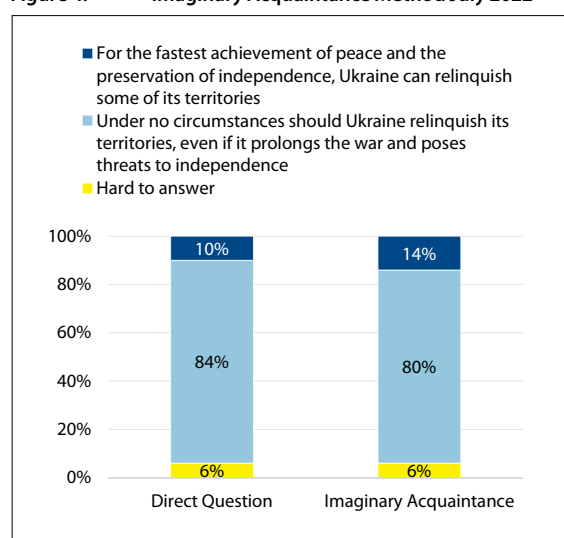
be yourself, a family member, a colleague, a friend, an enemy, etc. Have you thought of someone?

[AFTER ‘YES’]: In your opinion, which of these statements regarding possible compromises for achieving peace with Russia would this person you thought of agree with more?

1. ‘For a quicker achievement of peace and maintaining independence, Ukraine may give up some of its territories’ OR
2. ‘Under no circumstances should Ukraine give up its territories, even if it means a longer war with greater threats to independence.’”

Figure 4 shows the results:

Figure 4: Imaginary Acquaintance Method July 2022



As we see, using the method of the imaginary acquaintance, the answer perceived as less patriotic, suggesting giving up territories, gained 4% more (the difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level).

In face-to-face surveys, it’s also possible to use the method of randomized response and the method of secret ballot or sealed envelope, but in a telephone survey, these become difficult or even impossible. To assess the reliability of survey data, it is also advisable to supplement the survey with qualitative methods (in-depth interviews, informant surveys, acquaintance surveys, and analysis of social networks).

Conclusions

It can be said that the systematic errors associated with problems of representativeness and respondent sincerity during the war increase, but not to the extent of putting into question the main results of the surveys. It is advisable to approach the planning and interpretation of survey results more carefully during wartime. In particular, the following actions can be taken:

Firstly, for the most sensitive questions, methodological experiments should be conducted to assess systematic measurement errors.

Secondly, for these questions, it makes sense to use one of the described methods to increase the sincerity of responses, for example the “imagined acquaintance method.”

About the Author

Prof. Dr. *Volodymyr Paniotto* is Director of the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology and Professor at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

Thirdly, when interpreting survey results, it should be kept in mind that we cannot consider only the statistical significance of differences. We must also take into account the systematic error and only describe those differences that exceed the combined sum of the statistical and systematic errors.

COMMENT

Surveys in Ukraine in the Context of the Russian Full-Scale Invasion: Organizational Problems and Methodological Challenges

Serhii Dembitskyi (Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv)

DOI: 10.3929/ethz-b-000675216

It is evident that in conditions of large-scale military confrontation, both certain democratic rights within a country and the possibilities of sociological research of its society are limited. Below are a few thoughts on the impact of the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 on the research capabilities of Ukrainian sociology.

When it comes to the study of public opinion in times of war, Ukrainian sociology has faced a number of ontological problems, of which three are discussed below: 1) knowledge about the general population as a historical artefact; 2) deterioration of the ability to reach respondents; 3) no alternative socio-cultural dominant and its derivatives. Let us consider each in more detail.

The General Population as a “Historical Artefact”

Our information about the general Ukrainian population is rather a convention of the sociological community based on the available data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (‘Ukrstat’) than actual reliable knowledge. This was mostly the case before the war. That is why sociologists were looking forward to the next census. The last census—and the first in independent Ukraine—was in 2001, and a census planned for 2023 was not carried out because of the war; no census is allowed during martial law and in the first six months after its end.

Now this convention on the general population has turned into a historical artefact, leaving no other alternatives for the sociological community to rely on when it comes to representative surveys. Basically, the “embalming” of the demographic structure from the past works satisfactorily due to a number of pragmatic reasons: 1) the changes in public opinion compared to the period before the large-scale invasion are too strong and comprehensive for systematic errors to distort them significantly; 2) we compare samples that follow the same demographic determinants, i.e., we use an analytical approach to longitudinal analysis—we use, in a sense, “pseudo-panels”; 3) when using certain research designs and methodological approaches, it is quite justified to ignore the demographic structure of the general population that existed before the full-scale invasion.

In general, this unusual situation for stable societies (i.e., those not at war) indicates that the general population can be not only a statistical population, but also an analytical one. The statistical population, in this case, is the current population that we are able to cover with our research. With “analytical population” we mean a typologized population constructed on the basis of available data for a specific research purpose (for example, to track changes in society). This analytical approach opens up additional opportunities for us to understand the dynamics of social phenomena and processes in Ukrainian society.

Respondent Coverage Capabilities

In my personal opinion, under current conditions, the ability to reach respondents—if we are considering surveys that claim to have a sufficient degree of sample data reliability—is determined by the functionalities of CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) surveys with random generation of mobile numbers. Obviously, this approach leads to under-coverage of certain categories of respondents (for example, residents of rural areas with poor mobile connectivity or people that still use only landline phones), and, as a result, creates objective limitations in studying their opinions on socially important issues. However, such categories constitute only a small minority of the general population, and the inability to reach them in the study should not fundamentally distort the results of nationwide surveys.

Socio-Cultural Dominance

The socio-cultural dominant reflects the prevailing moods in society and functions as a filter through which public opinion is represented. The consequences of a socio-cultural dominant are self-censorship of respondents, narrowing of socially permissible research topics, and superficial discursive uniformity. Due to this socio-cultural dominant, completely neutral research, in the academic sense, can potentially become a cause of social disturbance or conflict.

In addition, methodological challenges arise from the fact that in the current situation, with the security risk posed by the hostilities, it is too difficult to carry out face-to-face studies or surveys based on questionnaires for self-completion (again, if interviewers are involved). And although CATI largely compensates for these shortcomings, it significantly limits the scope of

the sociological toolkit and the characteristics of the questions due to direct contact (and its non-alternativeness) between the interviewer and the respondent, which may cause excessive caution of the respondent. Accordingly, an urgent methodological challenge is to create new survey designs that would combine wide coverage of the population with the possibility of using sociological questionnaires that include a sufficient number of coding items and have no restrictions on the specifics of the questions due to their sensitivity.

The experience of the all-Ukrainian survey of the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in 2023 indicates that one of the forms of implementation of such surveys could be a mixed mode design consisting of two consecutive stages: CATI -> CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview). The first (very short) stage involves recruiting a respondent for the survey and recording their basic demographic information. At the second stage, the respondent receives a link to an online questionnaire with basic questions. This design allows for both increasing the scope of the toolkit and weakening the effect of social desirability of answers. The problematic part of this design is the insufficient involvement of the oldest age group of respondents (70 years and older) in the study.

Implications

Thus, in the near future, conducting reliable all-Ukrainian surveys will depend on the following conditions: 1) accurate data on the demographic structure of the Ukrainian population; 2) controlled narrowing of the general population of the study; and 3) overcoming the obstacles of socio-cultural dominance in obtaining responses.

About the Author

Dr. *Serhii Dembitskyi* is Deputy Director and Lead Researcher in the Department of Methodology and Methods of Sociology at the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. He specializes in designing sociological tests and data analysis, and his research interests include political culture and individual well-being.

Shifting Social Cleavages in Ukraine Against the Backdrop of Full-Scale War

Serhii Shapovalov (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Kyiv)

DOI: 10.3929/ethz-b-000675216

Abstract

Amid Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine, profound shifts in social cleavages are reshaping Ukrainian society. Previously divisive issues like foreign policy alignment or cultural identity have unified as the external existential threat galvanized national solidarity. However, new social tensions may emerge, for example, disparities between those who remained in Ukraine and those who fled. As Ukraine undergoes this critical transformative period, survey research becomes crucial to understanding new societal dynamics and addressing emerging conflicts.

Major socio-political shocks have the power to, in one fell swoop, make changes to social institutions that would normally take decades. Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, unleashed on February 24, 2022, was just such a shock (though not the first one in the history of independent Ukraine, probably already the one with the most significant consequences).

Against the backdrop of such events, social values are undergoing dramatic changes: some old social cleavages are vanishing, while new lines of social conflict are emerging. In times of war, it is extremely important for Ukrainian social scientists to monitor the development of existing and potential lines of internal social conflict. This is important not only because of its scientific relevance, but also for the sake of national security, as Russia, as it had already proven before 2022, will take every opportunity to inflame contradictions within Ukrainian society and between Ukraine's society and government to disrupt national unity, which is essential for the continued effective resistance to Russian aggression.

Vanishing of the Cleavage over Ukraine's Foreign Policy Course

Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014—the annexation of Crimea and the de-facto occupation of the Donbas via pro-Russian “People's Republic” puppet regimes—has significantly increased the share of supporters of Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration, to the detriment of the supporters of a course towards rapprochement with Russia and the CIS countries. Before the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, supporting Ukrainian accession to NATO was not an very popular opinion, even in the Western and Central regions of Ukraine. In the East and South of Ukraine, however, finding even a single supporter of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration was at that time challenging task.

After Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014, pro-Western views became prevalent in the West and Central regions of Ukraine. In the East and South of Ukraine, a third of citizens now held pro-Western views, but this was still far from a majority. The plurality in these regions were supporters of “non-aligned status of Ukraine.”

Figure 1: Which Way of Guaranteeing the National Security of Ukraine Would Be Best for Ukraine? (April 2012, in %)

| | Ukraine | West | Center | South | East |
|--|---------|------|--------|-------|------|
| Joining NATO | 13 | 38 | 13.5 | 6.2 | 1 |
| Military Union with Russia and Other CIS Countries | 26.2 | 8 | 17.9 | 30.5 | 43.4 |
| Non-Bloc Status of Ukraine | 42.1 | 33.8 | 44.2 | 52.1 | 40.8 |
| Other/Hard to Say | 18.7 | 20.2 | 24.5 | 11.1 | 14.9 |

The survey was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center sociological service from March 30 to April 4, 2012. Two thousand nine respondents aged 18 and older were interviewed in all regions of Ukraine, including Kyiv and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, using a sample representative of the adult population of Ukraine in terms of key socio-demographic indicators. The theoretical sampling error (excluding the design effect) does not exceed 2.3% at the 95% confidence level.

This became a stretched term, as the “non-aligned” camp could include: people who simply did not care; rational supporters of non-aligned status; nationalists who liked neither Russia nor the EU; and supporters of Russia who no longer expressed their views openly against the backdrop of the Russian occupation of Crimea and the war in Donbas.

Figure 2: Which Way of Guaranteeing the National Security of Ukraine Would Be Best for Ukraine? (December 2021, in %)

| | Ukraine | West | Center | South | East |
|--|---------|------|--------|-------|------|
| Joining NATO | 53.2 | 81.5 | 58.7 | 30.4 | 29.9 |
| Military Union with Russia and Other CIS Countries | 7.6 | 2.1 | 5.7 | 6.7 | 15.7 |
| Non-Bloc Status of Ukraine | 26.1 | 7.7 | 20.6 | 42.1 | 43.6 |
| Other/Hard to Say | 13.1 | 8.7 | 15 | 20.8 | 10.8 |

The national survey was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the Razumkov Center sociological service on December 17–22, 2021, in all regions of Ukraine except Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions. Two thousand eighteen respondents aged 18 and older were interviewed. The theoretical sampling error does not exceed 2.3% at the 95% confidence interval.

In other words, until Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the cleavage over support for a pro-Russian foreign policy course or Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic integration remained relevant. This is evidenced first of all by the clear regional polling differences in opinions on this issue.

Secondly, political parties that united the electorate with both pro-European and pro-Russian views also continued to be active in Ukraine in this 2014–2022 period. The Poroshenko-led “European Solidarity” parliamentary party made Euro-Atlantic integration a core concept of its ideology. Zelenskyy’s ruling presidential party “Servant of the People” was also a supporter of pro-European views, although it did not emphasize this as much in its election campaign. “The Opposition Platform—For Life,” in turn, united the electorate with pro-Russian views and, at its peak, in surveys almost caught up with Servant of the People in the fall of 2021 with 17–18% voter support.

However, after Russia’s full-scale invasion, there was no longer any sense in asking respondents the question as it had been formulated earlier (see the chart with the new wording used in the [December 2022 poll](#) below). Moreover, it could have even been dangerous for interviewers, as they could have faced aggression from respondents outraged by the mere fact that the questionnaire contained the option “alliance with Russia.”

Figure 3: Which Option to Guarantee the National Security of Ukraine in the Context of the Russian Aggression Do You Consider Best? (December 2022, in %)

| | Ukraine | West | Center | South | East |
|--|---------|------|--------|-------|------|
| Ukraine’s Joining NATO | 48.9 | 59 | 51.8 | 31.3 | 38.2 |
| Agreement on Strategic Defense Cooperation with the USA | 6.7 | 6.1 | 7.2 | 5.3 | 7.1 |
| Agreement on Strategic Defense Cooperation with Several Allies (e.g., Poland, Baltic states) without the United States | 9.3 | 7.7 | 9.3 | 8.7 | 11.8 |
| Non-Aligned or Neutral Status with International Security Guarantees for Ukraine | 8.5 | 6.5 | 4.9 | 13 | 16.7 |
| Development of own Armed Forces and Defense Industry (Following the Example of Israel or Switzerland) | 16.8 | 11.8 | 17.9 | 29.8 | 14.2 |
| Other | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Don’t Know | 9.4 | 8.5 | 8.8 | 11.1 | 11 |

Results of the sociological survey conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation together with the sociological service of the Razumkov Center from December 13 to 21, 2022. The face-to-face survey was conducted in territories controlled by the Ukrainian government and where no hostilities were taking place. All in all, 2018 respondents aged 18 years and older were surveyed. The theoretical error in sampling does not exceed 2.3%. At the same time, additional systematic deviations in sampling may have occurred due to the consequences of Russian aggression, in particular the forced evacuation of millions of citizens.

Thus, the “eternal dilemma” of Ukraine’s foreign policy course was finally and unequivocally resolved on February 24, 2022 for the medium-term future. In December 2022, about 79% of Ukrainians supported Ukraine’s accession to the EU, and this number continues to grow, reaching 84% in February 2024. There are still differences between the regions, but these differences are far smaller than they were before the start of the full-scale war.

Figure 4: Do You Support Ukraine’s Accession to the European Union? (December 2022, in %)

| | Ukraine | West | Center | South | East |
|------------|---------|------|--------|-------|------|
| Yes | 79.3 | 85.2 | 83.1 | 73.6 | 66.4 |
| No | 7.9 | 4.2 | 6 | 12 | 14.5 |
| Don’t Know | 12.8 | 10.5 | 10.8 | 14.4 | 19.1 |

The survey was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation together with the sociological service of the Razumkov Center with the support of the MATRA program from December 13 to 21, 2022. The face-to-face survey was conducted in all regions of Ukraine except for occupied territories and areas where active combat actions were taking place. Overall, 2018 respondents over the age of 18 were surveyed. The theoretical sampling error does not exceed 2.3% at the 95% confidence interval. At the same time, additional systematic deviations of the sample may have occurred due to consequences of Russian aggression, in particular, the forced evacuation of millions of citizens.

Vanishing Cleavages over Ethno-Cultural Factors of Identity and Historical memory

For many years, the existing contradictions in Ukrainian society regarding cultural factors of identity (language, historical memory, etc.) have been further artificially inflated by Russia. Messages about the “oppression of the Russian language” and “forced Ukrainization” were used to incite hostility between residents of different regions of Ukraine on the basis of cultural identity markers.

To some extent, this was effective. These topics were regularly raised in the public space, leading to heated debates, and a regional split in attitudes toward the state language policy and the policy of historical memory was observed. Even before the full-scale invasion, the majority of people in the Western and Central regions of Ukraine supported the state language policy and, in particular, the introduction of compulsory use of the Ukrainian language in the service sector (in supermarkets, cafes, cinemas, etc.). However, the opposite was true in the South and East of Ukraine:

Figure 5: Do You Support Making Use of the Ukrainian Language Compulsory in the Service Sector? (February 2021, in %)

| | Ukraine | West | Center | South | East |
|---------------------------|---------|------|--------|-------|------|
| Fully/Rather Support | 54.3 | 80.8 | 57.5 | 37.4 | 32.6 |
| Rather/Not Support at All | 36.1 | 12.9 | 30.4 | 56.2 | 56 |
| Don’t Know | 9.7 | 6.3 | 12.2 | 6.4 | 11.4 |

The nationwide survey was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the Center for Political Sociology on February 16–27, 2021. A total of 2003 respondents were interviewed in a sample representative of the adult population of Ukraine (excluding the occupied territories). The sample is representative in terms of gender, age, type of settlement, and region of residence. The maximum random sampling error does not exceed 2.2% at the 95% confidence interval.

Unfortunately, after the outbreak of the full-scale war, this question was never again asked using the same wording in national surveys, though it was asked using a similar wording in regional surveys in Kharkiv and Odesa Regions, which count among the most populated and densely populated regions of the South and East of Ukraine (where negative attitudes toward the state language policy used to prevail). Now, attitudes even in these areas are mostly positive, meaning that there is no longer a significant split on this issue between residents of different regions of Ukraine: see Figure 6 overleaf.

Significant changes have also taken place in the area of historical memory. Without delving into discussions about the assessment of specific events or personalities in the history of Ukraine, let us consider only the attitude of Ukrainians toward the collapse of the Soviet Union, the event that led to the formation of modern independent Ukraine: see Figure 7 overleaf.

As we can see, in 2020, “Soviet nostalgia” prevailed in the South and East of Ukraine. However, in 2022, Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine motivated Ukrainians to rethink the history of their country and reevaluate Russia’s role in it. The formerly diametrically opposed interpretations of the Soviet era of residents of South and East Ukraine vs. those of Central and West Ukraine have disappeared (though some regional differences remain): see Figure 8 overleaf.

Figure 6: How Do You Feel About the Compulsory Use of the Ukrainian Language in the Service Sector (Shops, Cafes, Hairdressers, Entertainment Venues)? (in %)

| | Odesa Region (July 2023) | Kharkiv City (September 2023) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Fully/rather positive | 59 | |
| Fully/rather negative | 13 | |
| Indifferent | 17 | |
| Don't know | 12 | |

The chart presents the results of two polls. The first one was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the Razumkov Center sociological service on September 11–21, 2023 in Sumy and Chernihiv Regions, and Kharkiv City using the CAPI method. The regional survey in Odesa Region was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the Center for Political Sociology on July 10–21, 2023. In Odesa region, 708 respondents aged 18 and older were interviewed face-to-face. The first study was conducted in the framework of the MATRA program, funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ukraine. The study in Odesa region was funded by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Project Office Ukraine.

The same applies to a more recent chapter of Ukraine’s history—the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, which resulted in the ouster of the corrupt pro-Russian President Yanukovich from office (and from Ukraine). Russia invested a huge amount of resources to discredit this event through its media channels in Ukraine, framing it as an illegal and fascist/nationalist coup d’état.

Figure 7: In Your Opinion, Was the Collapse of the Soviet Union a Positive or a Negative Event? (August 2020, in %)

| | Ukraine | West | Center | South | East |
|-------------|---------|------|--------|-------|------|
| Positive | 49.1 | 82.7 | 53.1 | 20.7 | 25.8 |
| Negative | 31.7 | 8.4 | 27.5 | 44.8 | 52.9 |
| Hard to say | 19.2 | 9 | 19.4 | 34.4 | 21.3 |

The survey was conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the Razumkov Center sociological service on August 14–19, 2020 in all regions of Ukraine except Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions. Overall, 2018 respondents were interviewed. The sample is representative in terms of gender, age, type of settlement, and region of residence. The maximum random sampling error does not exceed 2.2% at the 95% confidence interval.

Figure 8: How Do You Assess the Collapse of the Soviet Union? (December 2022, in %)

| | Ukraine | West | Center | South | East |
|-------------------------|---------|------|--------|-------|------|
| Very/Some-what Positive | 73.3 | 92.3 | 71.3 | 48.3 | 65.2 |
| Very/Some-what Negative | 12 | 2 | 12.2 | 22.9 | 19.7 |
| Hard to Say | 14.6 | 5.7 | 16.5 | 28.8 | 15.2 |

The survey was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the sociological service of the Razumkov Center on December 13–21, 2022, in all regions of Ukraine except for Luhansk and Donetsk Regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. In Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson regions it was conducted in government-controlled areas and areas where no combat actions were taking place. Overall, 2018 respondents aged 18 and older were interviewed. The theoretical sampling error does not exceed 2.3% at the 95% confidence interval. At the same time, additional systematic sampling deviations may have occurred due to the consequences of Russian aggression, in particular, the forced evacuation of millions of citizens. The survey was supported by the MATRA program.

Polls before the start of the full-scale war showed that residents of the Center-West of Ukraine had diametrically opposed assessments of the Revolution of Dignity compared to residents of the South and East (see Figure 9 overleaf).

However, after the outbreak of full-scale war, attitudes toward the Revolution of Dignity converged. The South and East of the country in particular experienced increases in the percentage of respondents viewing the movement as a “righteous uprising,” though more in the latter than the former. Nevertheless, even in the South, supporters of the Russian version of the “coup d’état” no longer constitute even a plurality of the population (see Figure 10 overleaf).

Of course, there are valid methodological concerns around comparing responses from macro-regions that are now partially occupied with those from before the full-scale war, when these macro-regions were fully accessible to the survey. However, it is difficult to deny the changes in Ukrainians’ worldview against the backdrop of a full-scale war. The situation no longer exists in which Ukrainians from different regions have diametrically opposed opinions on a number of very sensitive issues, despite the best efforts of Russian interference.

Figure 9: Choose the Interpretation of the Event That Best Reflects Your Personal Opinion: (August 2020, in %)

| | Ukraine | West | Center | South | East |
|--|---------|------|--------|-------|------|
| The events on the Maidan in late 2013 and early 2014 were the Revolution of Dignity, a righteous uprising of the people against authoritarian rule | 54.1 | 87.1 | 64.2 | 23.3 | 23.5 |
| The events on the Maidan in late 2013 and early 2014 were an illegal coup d'état, a seizure of power by a group of armed people | 30.7 | 5.8 | 22.8 | 49.6 | 56.1 |
| I disagree with both options/ Hard to say | 15.2 | 7.1 | 13 | 27.1 | 20.3 |

The survey was conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the Razumkov Center sociological service on August 14–19, 2020 in all regions of Ukraine except Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions. Overall, 2018 respondents were interviewed. The sample is representative in terms of gender, age, type of settlement, and region of residence. The maximum random sampling error does not exceed 2.2% at the 95% confidence interval.

Figure 10: Choose the Interpretation of the Event That Best Reflects Your Personal Opinion: (December 2022, in %)

| | Ukraine | West | Center | South | East |
|--|---------|------|--------|-------|------|
| The events on the Maidan in late 2013 and early 2014 were the Revolution of Dignity, a righteous uprising of the people against authoritarian rule | 66.8 | 81.9 | 72.2 | 36.1 | 50.4 |
| The events on the Maidan in late 2013 and early 2014 were an illegal coup d'état, a seizure of power by a group of armed people | 12.3 | 5 | 9.7 | 24.4 | 21.8 |
| I disagree with both options/ Hard to say | 20.8 | 13.1 | 18.1 | 39.5 | 27.8 |

The survey was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the sociological service of the Razumkov Center on December 13–21, 2022, in all regions of Ukraine except for Luhansk and Donetsk Regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. In Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson regions it was conducted in government-controlled areas and areas where no combat actions were taking place. Overall, 2018 respondents aged 18 and older were interviewed. The theoretical sampling error does not exceed 2.3% at the 95% confidence interval. At the same time, additional systematic sampling deviations may have occurred due to the consequences of Russian aggression, in particular, the forced evacuation of millions of citizens. The survey was supported by the MATRA program.

War-Related Potential Social Cleavages

Despite the fact that the old lines of social conflict are losing their relevance against the backdrop of a full-scale war and that Ukrainian society is more unified than ever before, new lines of social cleavage will, of course, emerge. Currently, we can make hypotheses about potential cleavages based on observations of contemporary social reality and gradually test them in practice.

Some social conflicts can be externally inspired. For example, Russia, through its “bot” network, has already conducted a campaign on Ukrainian social media accusing the central government in Kyiv of using most of the air

defense equipment provided by partner countries to protect the Ukrainian capital, while leaving other cities defenseless against shelling. The effectiveness of such an artificial dividing narrative was not very high, as public opinion polls have shown.

However, one can imagine many other potential lines of conflict that could organically arise as a result of war. Firstly, there may be misunderstandings or divergent perspectives between civilians and the military. This could come in the form of traumatic experiences suffered by military personnel during the war and which civilians do not understand, or, for example, in accusations by the military against civilian men who evaded military service during mobilization.

Secondly, there is an “experience gap” that might lead to tensions between people who stayed in Ukraine and lived under wartime conditions, with its many risks and insecurities, and those who fled to secure, often relatively wealthy countries all over the world. There is already significant scorn for and accusations against citizens who have left Ukraine present on social media. They are accused of taking advantage of the war as an opportunity to leave and build their futures in developed Western countries, instead of defending their homeland. At the same time, their compatriots did not leave their country at its most difficult moment, they lived under shelling and continued to work and support the country’s army and economy.

Thirdly, residents of frontline communities may feel abandoned, the merciless Russian shelling resulting in a completely destroyed sense of security, often no basic utilities, etc. Mutual grievances may also arise between people who lost loved ones/homes/property in the war and those who were not so badly affected by the war, whose relatives evaded military service, etc. Certain decisions of the authorities can also exacerbate domestic contradictions. For example, the idea of excepting citizens who pay a certain amount of taxes from mobilization, which was discussed in the context of a new law on mobilization, is potentially dangerous for the emergence of conflict between wealthier and less wealthy.

Summary

Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine has fundamentally changed the public opinion of Ukrainians. In the face of an existential threat, some factors which traditionally divided Ukrainian society, like foreign policy vector and cultural markers of identity, stopped being polarizing issues.

However, this does not mean that there will be no more social conflicts in Ukrainian society. We can already see the sprouts of new social conflicts and “experience gaps” between the military and civilians, between residents of frontline regions and those far from the front, between those who stayed in Ukraine during the war and those who left. These are just a few of the possible lines of future (and in some cases already existing) social conflicts that will emerge and develop in Ukraine against the backdrop of a full-scale war.







We are convinced that the reader can at this point reasonably assume other lines of internal social conflict in a society that has been struggling for its survival and freedom for more than two years now. Given the current circumstances of rapid and fundamental societal change in the country, survey research is more important than ever in order to track these changes, as well as identify emerging social conflicts and propose ways to address them.

About the Author

Serhii Shapovalov is an analyst at the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF) in Kyiv. He researches public opinion trends and coordinates DIF projects in the areas of identity (in particular regarding language policy and national memory policy) and social cohesion.

All surveys quoted in this contribution have been uploaded by the author to the Discuss Data repository and are available in open access: https://www.discuss-data.net/dataset/search/?q=shapovalov&countries=&keywords=&language=s=&categories=&methods_of_data_analysis=&methods_of_data_collection=&disciplines=

Figure 11: Do You Agree with the Statement That the Ukrainian Government Uses Air Defense Systems Provided by Partners Only to Protect Kyiv? (in %)

| | Odesa Region (July 2023) | Kharkiv City (September 2023) |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Fully/Rather Agree | 14  | 33  |
| Fully/Rather Disagree | 61  | 53  |
| Don't Know | 25  | 14  |

The chart presents the results of two polls. The first one was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the Razumkov Center sociological service on September 11–21, 2023 in Sumy and Chernihiv Regions, and Kharkiv City using the CAPI method. The regional survey in Odesa Region was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the Center for Political Sociology on July 10–21, 2023. In Odesa region, 708 respondents aged 18 and older were interviewed face-to-face. The first study was conducted in the framework of the MATRA program, funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ukraine. The study in Odesa region was funded by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Project Office Ukraine. In Odesa region, 708 respondents aged 18 and older were interviewed face-to-face.

Data on Ukraine in the Context of War

Ilona Sologoub (VoxUkraine, Kyiv)

DOI: 10.3929/ethz-b-000675216

Abstract

High-quality data is essential for policymaking, particularly during wartime, when errors are far costlier. Despite challenges like outdated census data and limited resources, Ukraine maintains a robust data collection system, notably through the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (Ukrstat). However, due to national security concerns, there are data publication delays and restrictions. Various other sources, including government agencies, NGOs, and research organizations, offer additional valuable datasets, and new open data initiatives increase data accessibility. Thus, despite wartime disruptions, ample data resources remain available for researchers.

Introduction

Perhaps there is no need to explain how important quality data are for policy-making—particularly, for the forecast and evaluation of specific policy solutions. This is most important during war, when the fiscal space is much narrower and therefore the price of mistakes is much higher than during peacetime. Ukraine has a very well-developed data collection system based on UN standards. Furthermore, the Ukrainian parliament recently adopted a new law on official statistics that harmonizes Ukraine’s legislation with EU legislation in this sphere. However, implementation of this law requires time and financing (the latter obviously lacking given Ukraine’s current prioritization of defense).

Despite some lacunes (e.g., the latest census was implemented in 2001, and later censuses were delayed—first because Ukrainian government did not prioritize it, then because of COVID and the war), generally the statistics on Ukraine are quite accurate and well developed, although some of the data, such as population data or detailed data on state budget implementation, are not set to be published until martial law is lifted. To sidestep this issue, in addition to the statistics published by Ukrstat, one can find many relevant datasets collected by government agencies and non-government organizations. In this article we will discuss each data source in turn.

Ukrstat as Main Source for Official Data

The primary source of official data on Ukraine is the Ukrainian Statistical Agency (Ukrstat). Currently the data is migrating to the new website. However, as of May 2024, the majority of data is still hosted on the old website, so for the time being it is still recommended to start there when searching for data on Ukraine. This website may look outdated, but in reality it offers a high-quality database, with the majority of datasets offered in both Ukrainian and English. The Ukrainian version of the website contains more information, although

the main sections that a researcher needs—“Statistical information” and “Publications”—are identical in both versions. However, in some cases it might still prove useful for non-Ukrainian speaking researchers to work with translation tools such as Google Translate or DeepL to translate the more extensive Ukrainian version. For example, microdata files are available only in Ukrainian version of the “Statistical Information” section, and “Express Information” section is available only in Ukrainian. In the “Statistical Information” section, researchers can find all major economic indicators for the country, and sections of the website to which new information has been recently added are clearly marked with the yellow “new” sign.

Some information is published with a delay: for example, the data on external trade is typically published with an approximately two-month delay, and quarterly GDP data can be expected at the end of the next quarter (though the most precise GDP data is published with a delay of over 12 months—for instance, Ukraine’s 2022 GDP data was given its final update on February 24th, 2024). One can consult the calendar of updates of statistical information for exact dates when information will be updated.

Naturally, Russian occupation of Crimea and Donbas in 2014 and the full-scale war have undermined the ability of Ukrstat to collect data. After 2014, Ukrstat stopped collecting data in the occupied territories, although it still provided some estimates—for example, population data include the occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, but do not include Crimea. Each statistical table contains notes that show which territories are included in the calculations. Some major indicators, such as GDP, were recalculated without the now-occupied territories for the few years before 2014 to provide more opportunities for comparison.

Since the start of the full-scale invasion, some data has gone unpublished (despite being collected as usual) due to national security reasons. For instance, popula-

tion data has not been updated, although a few months ago Ukrstat allowed respondents to fill out the Household Budget Survey and Labor Force Survey online. The reason for this is not only that it is hard to reach some population groups, such as internally displaced persons or refugees, but also that new population data would allow the estimation of Ukraine's war losses, which are not disclosed. The depersonalized microdata of these surveys for the years 2018–2021 can be found in the “Microdata” section of the website. The estimates, for example, of unemployment rely on the websites of job-search services and on surveys which are representative of the population structure as of early 2022 (see also Volodymyr Paniotto's article in this issue).

More granular information can be found in the “Publications” section of the Ukrstat website. Publications usually appear with a one-year delay, but contain significantly more data than the site's “Statistical Information” section. In the “Publications” section, one can find information grouped by different criteria, as well as some historical data (although some of the older publications are provided only in PDF format). Some regular publications previously put out by Ukrstat are no longer published there, as the data is now collected by other agencies. For example, the data on healthcare after 2017 have been collected and published by the [Public Health Centre](#), the data on books and periodical editions after 2017 published by the [Book Chamber of Ukraine](#), and the data on Foreign Direct Investment collected by the [National Bank of Ukraine \(NBU\)](#). These changes were made to reduce the workload on respondents and on Ukrstat itself, and because these specialized institutions are better at collecting the data within their particular areas. For example, the NBU compiles Ukraine's balance of payments, and thus it was natural to hand off collection of data on investment and foreign trade to it, since it owns relevant methodology and expertise.

Economic Data

The best source for macroeconomic, financial sector, and banking sector data is the website of the National Bank of Ukraine. Its English-language version is as complete as the Ukrainian version, although the information in English may appear with a small delay. The major macroeconomic data can be found in the quarterly [Inflation Reports](#), and the data on financial markets and the banking sector can be found in [Financial Stability Reports](#) which are published twice a year. Both of these reports provide downloadable Excel files with the data for tables and figures. Some data can be found only in these reports, for example, the aggregated data on the real estate market or labour market in Ukraine collected from market participants. In addition, the NBU conducts a number of [surveys](#) of banks, enterprises and

experts, the results of which, along with some general data on [implementation](#) of the State Budget of Ukraine, are also available on its website.

Previously, the detailed data on implementation of the state budget were published by the [Treasury of Ukraine](#). However, since 2022 it no longer publishes this data for national security reasons. Some data on public finance can be found on the [Ministry of Finance's](#) website, including the data on [2014–2019](#) budget implementation. One can find there statistics on the public budget and public debt (although the Ukrainian version of the website contains more information than the English version). The most recent information can be found at the “[Press Center/News](#)” section of the website. There, one can see up-to-date information on budget implementation and on financial support Ukraine has received from its international partners.

The KSE Center of Public Finance and Governance offers the most important public finance data in one place: the “[Budget Barometer](#),” a monthly publication on implementation of state and local budgets, public debt developments, etc. The [Open Budget](#) portal, by contrast, provides more detailed statistics on implementation of budgets of different public entities, but only in Ukrainian. Finally, the most refined data on public spending can be found on the <https://spending.gov.ua/new/> portal: there, one can look at transactions of a particular government agency or public institution (such as a school or hospital). The most detailed information on public procurement can be found in the [analytical module](#) of the Prozorro system (access to some data requires registration).

Open Data and Data on Specific Information

Since 2014, Ukraine has made huge progress in opening and publication of data: in 2023 it was in the [31st](#) place in the Open Data Index, above many EU countries. Ukraine has an open data portal. However, it is available only in Ukrainian, and although it contains over 30,000 datasets, it is poorly structured—to use it, one needs to know exactly what one is looking for.

On the bright side, some of this data can be downloaded automatically using API. Some companies, for example [Opendatabot](#), collect the data from this and other government portals and re-publish it in a more user-friendly form. Generally, public-private partnerships have been very productive in producing data collection platforms and analysis tools. One example is the above-mentioned Prozorro. Another example that is currently under development is the [DREAM](#) platform, which will collect data on Ukraine's recovery projects and will be useful for all stakeholders: those who want to find financing, potential investors, and watchdogs

(the platform will include tools for analysis of project implementation).

Some very specific information on certain regions or industries can be found on the websites of the relevant regions/cities, ministries or government agencies (the list of their websites is provided on the website of the Cabinet of Ministers). For example, the tax administration provides data on registered entrepreneurs, tax inspections, collection of certain taxes, etc., the customs service provides information on movement across borders, the National Agency for Corruption Prevention maintains the registry of e-declarations of officials (and other newly created anti-corruption agencies that investigate or punish corruption also provide quite detailed statistics), and the Ministry of Social Policy runs the dashboard for data on IDPs.

Additionally, there exists a large quantity of data provided by Ukrainian research organizations that has proven helpful for social science research on Ukraine. For example, the Institute for Economic Research publishes a significant amount of macroeconomic data, implements their own monthly survey of enterprises, closely follows Ukraine's EU integration, and produces a number of publications on different policy issues. The KSE Research Institute collects data on the land market and on sanctions levied on Russia, and also provides the most accurate data for war damages inflicted by Russia. The Centre for Economic Strategy collects up-to-date data on Ukraine's economy as well. The most comprehensive database of Ukraine's reforms is provided by VoxUkraine.

About the Author

Ilona Sologoub is Editor-in-Chief of the analytical platform "VoxUkraine".

In addition to the official statistics, one can look for less "traditional" sources, such as surveys, self-reporting, publications in social networks or satellite image data. A number of international organizations and foreign governments also collect statistics relevant for Ukraine: for example, the UN collects official data on Ukrainian refugees (but there are also a number of surveys of refugees by Ukrainian organizations aimed at gaining a more comprehensive picture).

Conclusion

The full-scale war against Ukraine has undermined the capacity of government agencies to collect statistics relevant to their work, and some data are no longer published for security reasons. However, there is still a large amount of data available for researchers. When working with research on Ukraine, one has to keep in mind two things: first, that communication with Ukrainian researchers may greatly simplify the search for relevant data since Ukrainian researchers are familiar with it and may recommend where to start or may already have a relevant dataset, and second, that one should think twice before publishing research results that may potentially harm Ukraine. Even the use of language may be quite a sensitive issue—for example, writing "conflict in Ukraine" instead of "Russia's war on Ukraine" supports Russian propaganda. Again, consulting with Ukrainian colleagues before engaging in research/publishing on the country (for example, asking them to review a publication or discussing a research idea with them) would be a good path to follow.

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Layout

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The Ukrainian Analytical Digest (UAD) is a bimonthly internet publication jointly produced by the Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen (www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de), the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich (www.css.ethz.ch), the Center for Eastern European Studies (CEES) at the University of Zurich (www.cees.uzh.ch), and the German Association for East European Studies (DGO). The Ukrainian Analytical Digest analyzes the political, economic, and social situation in Ukraine within the context of international and security dimensions of this country's development. All contributions to the Ukrainian Analytical Digest undergo a fast-track peer review.

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Responsible editor for this issue: Eduard Klein

Language editing: Nathanael Brown

Layout: Marin Dziallas, Cengiz Kibaroglu, Matthias Neumann, and Michael Clemens

ISSN 2941-7139 © 2024 by Forschungsstelle Osteuropa, Bremen and Center for Security Studies, Zürich

Research Centre for East European Studies • Country Analytical Digests • Klagenfurter Str. 8 • 28359 Bremen • Germany

Phone: +49 421-218-69600 • Telefax: +49 421-218-69607 • e-mail: fsopr@uni-bremen.de • Internet: www.laender-analysen.de/uad/