Constructing a Political Nation

Changes in the Attitudes of Ukrainians during the War in the Donbas

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Olexiy Haran and Maksym Yakovlyev, editors

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What effect did Russia's attack have on Ukrainian society and on public opinion? And how, in turn, did changes in public opinion and in society influence Ukrainian identity and politics? This book, prepared by the School for Policy Analysis, National University of Kyiv–Mohyla Academy with the participation of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, shows that contrary to the Kremlin's expectations, Russian aggression has in fact led to a strengthening of the Ukrainian political nation. The book covers national and regional dimensions of changes in the attitudes of Ukrainians during the war in the Donbas: identity issues, political and party preferences, approaches to decentralization and the conflict in the Donbas, economic sentiments, changes in foreign policy attitudes toward the EU, NATO, and Russia.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Up until Ukraine's proclamation of independence in 1991, many international observers considered Ukraine a terra incognita. For that reason, it is not surprising that events were explained according to a simplified scheme: the country was made up of a "pro-Western part" and the "pro-Russian East." In truth, there are regional, cultural, historical, and electoral differences in all countries of the world. The issue lies in whether politicians purposefully work to artificially deepen these differences. Up until the start of 2000, even as it was conducting its multivector policy, Kyiv was gradually moving toward Europe. Unfortunately, during the 2004 election campaign, Kremlin spin doctors were basically given carte blanche by the leadership of Ukraine at that time to take actions that would divide the country. After the Orange Revolution, Viktor Yanukovych and his Party of Regions, being in the opposition, tried to cement the notion of "a split in the country" in the public discourse. After Yanukovych was elected president in 2010, he had a chance to stitch the country back together: public opinion polls showed that if the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was signed, his electorate, which was mainly conformist in its views, would accept such actions. Unfortunately, the authoritarian, pro-Russian trends prevailed, and Yanukovych reneged on his promise to sign the Association Agreement, which led to the mass protests on the cusp of 2013–

2014 that became known as the Euromaidan or the Revolution of Dignity. Russia responded with aggression. What effect did this have on society and on public opinion? And how, in turn, did changes in public opinion and in society influence Ukrainian identity and politics?

The contributors to this book sought the answers to these questions within the framework of a project supported by the State Fund for Fundamental Research of Ukraine (SFFR). The first edition appeared in March 2017 in Ukrainian. This is now the second, updated edition and the first in the English language. In addition to the SFFR, invaluable assistance was provided by the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the International Renaissance Foundation, the Fulbright Program in Ukraine, administered by the Institute of International Education, and the Ukrainian Fulbright Circle.

The project was implemented under the aegis of the School for Policy Analysis at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy with the active participation of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF), whose research results the contributors to this book used widely. The sociological data of partner institutions, first and foremost the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, and the Razumkov Center, were also used.

One reservation should be noted. The thesis that "Crimea is Ukraine" and the conjoined observation that Russian aggression in Crimea provided the impetus for many Ukrainians to shed the illusion of a "centuries-old friendship, brotherhood, and strategic partnership" with Russia and led to a cardinal transformation of public opinion in Ukraine run through this work like a "red thread of destiny." At the same time, we could not conduct sociological polling in Crimea, and poll results are the basis of the project. Moreover, there are other research organizations that specialize in the Crimean issue. For this reason, and in accordance with the remit of the supported project, this work analyzes events in the Donbas

region and their influence on Ukrainian society. However, we insist that Crimea cannot be separated from the Ukrainian-Russian-Western knot of relations as the Kremlin is trying to do by calling for "pragmatism" in its cynical interpretation of this term.

The first chapter presents an overall picture of regional differences in the public opinion of Ukrainians, the impact of the events during the Euromaidan, and the effect of Russian aggression on public opinion. The second chapter analyzes the consequences of the Euromaidan and Russian aggression for electoral sentiments, the party system of Ukraine, and the parties' regional particularities. In chapter 3 the influence of Russian aggression on the economic sentiments of people and businesses in Ukraine is examined. Chapter 4 shows the dramatic changes in the attitudes of Ukrainians toward the EU, NATO, and the Customs Union with Russia. Chapters 5 and 6 analyze the process of decentralization that began after the victory of the Revolution of Dignity and Ukrainians' public opinion about the events in the Donbas, respectively. Finally, in the last chapter, changes in the sentiments of Ukrainian citizens toward Russia and the Russian people are analyzed.

The research points to the conclusion that, contrary to Russia's plans, Russian military aggression led to the strengthening of the Ukrainian political nation. Regarding the occupied territories of the Donbas, a majority of respondents in all the regions of Ukraine are in favor of their reintegration on prewar conditions as a preferred outcome, though the question for decision-makers is how to achieve that goal. Thus, in the afterword to this book, we present possible scenarios for Ukraine's future policy toward the occupied territories. Of course, by the time this book is published, there may well be new important political events and corresponding changes in public opinion. For that reason, this work is only the start of a serious academic comprehension of this topic. However, we believe it is important to understand how the trends outlined in this book may influence the future, how the future is forecasted, and how it is crafted.

In closing, we offer some words of gratitude. The team of authors was fortunate to collaborate with and receive invaluable assistance from true professionals and benevolent colleagues at the SFFR, the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Ukrainian Fulbright Circle and Fulbright Program in Ukraine, the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and Stylos publishing house. All facilitated our research and contributed to a successful outcome.

Olexiy Haran and Maksym Yakovlyev
Kyiv, December 2017

I. DECISIVE 2014

Did It Divide or Unite Ukraine?

Iryna Bekeshkina

No other European country in the twenty-first century has yet experienced so many tragic events as Ukraine did in 2014. The Euromaidan started as a peaceful rally to urge the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union. But in January 2014, after the unconstitutional approval of dictatorial laws by the Verkhovna Rada, the activities on Maidan Nezalezhnosti—Independence Square—transitioned to violent confrontations, and the first loss of human life occurred. Shortly after protesters were shot on the square, President Viktor Yanukovych fled the country with members of his inner circle, and the ruling power changed. That was followed by Russia's annexation of Crimea, the appearance of Russia-inspired separatists in the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine, and the formation of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic. To cap it off, Russia launched direct armed aggression and military warfare in the Donbas region.

The consequences for the economy were catastrophic and included a nearly threefold plummet in the exchange rate of the hryvnia, a sharp decrease in the standard of living, a decline in GDP by one-fourth, and the threat of default in the event that Ukraine did not receive the next tranche of an IMF loan.

All these challenges raised the question of Ukraine's ability to preserve its statehood. The essence of the external threat was

unequivocal and clearly understood—Russia's military aggression, its inspiring the separatist movement in the East, and later the Kremlin's support for the so-called DPR and LPR, initiated by the Kremlin itself. The internal threats were connected to the state of society, specifically its readiness to defend the country and its independence and integrity. And society's readiness to take a clear stand on behalf of the country in turn depended on the extent to which Ukraine was embraced as "own" state by its citizens and on how much they identified themselves with the Ukrainian state.

Furthermore, the external threat—armed intrusion of Russia and an undeclared "hybrid war"—was based on the Kremlin's concept of a "New Russia" (*Novorossiya*), referring to the Russian-speaking eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, described as "eager" to join Russia.

On March 18, 2014, Russian president Vladimir Putin stated in his address in the Kremlin: "After the Revolution, the Bolsheviks, may God be their judge, included in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic out of different considerations significant territories of the south of Russia. This was done without taking into account the national composition of residents, and today this is the modern-day Southeast of Ukraine."[1] The concepts of a New Russia and the "return of Russian lands" were supported by the Moscow Patriarchate, which on the day after Putin's address said that "the Russian nation is a divided nation on its historic territory, which has the right to be united in one state body."[2] Meanwhile, the Council of the Russian Federation came up with an eminently practical solution: on March 1, 2014, it decided to "grant consent to the President of the Russian Federation to use the armed forces of the Russian

[1] "Address of the President of the Russian Federation to deputies of the State Duma, members of the Council of Federation, leaders of the regions of Russia and representatives of civil society" [in Russian], March 18, 2014 (http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603).

[2] Quoted in Vladislav Maltsev, "Slavianskie bratia i tserkov" [Slavic brothers and the Church], *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, March 5, 2014.

Federation on the territory of Ukraine until the sociopolitical situation in that country normalizes."[3]

It was envisaged that the southeastern regions of Ukraine, where predominantly Russian-speaking people live, might experience mass unrest, acts of disobedience, the seizure of government buildings, and violent clashes (possibly even armed ones), which would justify the armed intervention of Russia.

However, such a scenario unfolded only in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, and that was because of inactivity and passivity on the part of law enforcement bodies. Earlier they had been under the control of the local government, formed by Yanukovych's Party of Regions, and after the flight of Yanukovych and his milieu they were totally confused. However, were there objective pretexts for the emergence of the notions of a New Russia and a Russian World (*Russkiy mir*), Putin's globalizing project? To what degree, and by what indicators, was Ukraine divided? How are the processes of overcoming this division or, on the contrary, its deepening, unfolding?

No country is a monolithic creation. Every country has internal diversity—in the makeup of the population, in culturally distinctive features, in different confessions practiced within the country, in the range of public opinion. Differences are often not of the same intensity. They are usually taken into account in the policy of a democratic state and do not pose a threat to the integrity of the state. But in some situations the differences may be aggravated to the point of antagonism and affect the political course of a country and its membership in broader institutions. The latest example of this is Brexit, the referendum on the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. The referendum basically divided the country: 51.9 percent of the people voted in favor of the UK leaving the EU while 48.1 percent voted against it. Moreover, opinion was divided along

[3] "Stenogram of the three hundred and forty-seventh (extraordinary) meeting of the Council of Federation" [in Russian], March 1, 2014 (http://council.gov.ru/media/files/41d4c8b9772e9df14056.pdf).

geographic lines: the majority of residents of Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, and London were against the UK leaving the EU.

Such a split, aside from future economic losses, could have serious geopolitical repercussions: Scotland was already home to a constituency strongly favoring withdrawal from the UK. Clearly, the Brexit vote outcome was the result of insufficient attention paid by the political class and society to the issues dividing the country.

During the vote for independence, Ukraine was in no way monolithically whole. The policy of the Soviet Union, ostensibly aimed at the formation of a single type of identity, "Homo Sovieticus," and a "new historic community of a Soviet people," really meant Russification. This policy was partially successful. However, the liberalization of the totalitarian regime during the Gorbachev era of perestroika incited intense debate in society regarding both historical events and the path of future development. The national rebirth in the former Soviet republics was one of the leading trends of the time and finally led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of independent states on the foundations of the former Soviet republics.

The referendum held on December 1, 1991, testified to the convincing support of the Act of the Proclamation of Independence of Ukraine in all regions of the country, including Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (it was met with 83.86 percent approval in Luhansk oblast and almost the same, 83.9 percent, in Donetsk oblast). And even in Crimea, 54.19 percent of the participants in the referendum supported the independence of Ukraine (however, only 67.5 percent of the population of Crimea participated in the referendum).

Nevertheless, it is clear that the main motives of voting were different: in some regions the motivations were a national orientation and the aspiration for an independent Ukrainian state, while in others the motivation was hope for a better life in the republic, which had the best economic potential of all the republics of the Soviet Union. It suffices to recall that one of the popular slogans urging voting in favor of independence was "Who ate our *salo*?" (The Ukrainian traditional salo is suet or pig fat.) The

implication was that if Ukrainians could eat their salo themselves, their lives would become more prosperous.

However, during the first years of independence, Ukraine suffered a severe financial and economic crisis marked by unbridled inflation, economic decline, the shutting down of enterprises and resulting high levels of unemployment, and a catastrophic decline in standard of living for most of the population. As a result, in those regions where material hopes had played a decisive role in the choice of independence, people became disenchanted and began to wish for a return to the "good old days" as part of the former Soviet Union.

In 1994, the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NASU) conducted a poll, "East-South," in eight oblasts in the East and South of Ukraine and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The question posed was, "How did you vote in the referendum on December 1, and how would you vote today?" The answers of the respondents to the first part of the question did not reflect the actual results of the referendum in these oblasts: 29 percent responded that they did not participate in the referendum, 41 percent said they voted in favor of independence, 17 percent said they voted against independence, and 12 percent, interestingly, said they didn't remember how they voted (in Crimea, 27 percent said they didn't remember). To the question of how they would vote today, among those who voted in favor of independence only half would do so again, while among those who voted against independence 90 percent would stick with their vote.[4] The results of monitoring conducted by the Institute of Sociology in 2011 (on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the independence of Ukraine) showed somewhat better results in these oblasts; however, the regional division remained intact: Kyiv, the West, the Center, and the North would have voted in favor of independence by a

[4] Polling was conducted by the NASU Institute of Sociology in April 1994 in eight southern and eastern oblasts (Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Kherson) and in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. A total of 1,200 respondents were polled. The margin of error did not exceed 3.2 percent.

considerable margin, the oblasts in the East and Crimea would have voted predominantly against independence, and in the South, public opinion was evenly divided.[5] Such results on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of independence were cause for concern.

In general, polling from year to year highlighted several key factors as dividing the country. First and foremost, these were the languages spoken and people's attitudes toward the status of the Russian language, and the choice of foreign policy orientation, either integration with the EU or integration with Russia and other CIS countries.

These real differences were first sharpened (artificially) to the point of antagonism during the presidential elections of 2004, when Viktor Yanukovych's political spin doctors, substantially aided by the spin doctors of the Kremlin, actively promulgated the thesis that Ukraine was a divided country.

After 2004 all political forces exploited these objective differences among the populace to mobilize their own supporters among the electorate. The political playing field of Ukraine became divided roughly in half, between the political forces that counted mainly on the Ukrainian-speaking electorate, which preferred the path of European integration, and those political forces whose supporters for the most part were Russian-speaking and preferred a path of integration with Russia and other CIS countries in the Customs Union. Of course, such differences in public opinion, particularly when they are politically bound to a party, have a significant impact on the political course of the state by driving attempts to simultaneously integrate in both directions, western and eastern. And the non-bloc status of Ukraine was legislatively approved during the presidency of Viktor Yanukovych.

[5] Nationwide polling was conducted by the NASU Institute of Sociology in May 2011. A total of 3,200 respondents were polled in a sample representing the population of Ukraine (18 years and older) according to such indicators as sex, age, level of education, region of residence, and type of populated settlement. The margin of error did not exceed 2.0 percent.

Such a division of the country was often perceived as a threat to the unity of the country. In keeping with the well-known concept of the American sociologist Samuel Phillips Huntington, who served on the National Security Council during the Jimmy Carter administration, Ukraine became the classic example of a country split by a conflict between civilizations.

These linguistic, ethnic, and geopolitical differences across different regions of Ukraine were exploited by Russia in its New Russia concept, which envisioned that Russian-language regions would join together to create an independent state (of course, one dependent on Russia) or would join Russia outright.

The Euromaidan became, as the data of sociological studies show, yet another factor in the division of Ukraine (*see table 1.1*).

Table 1.1. **What is your attitude toward the Euromaidan—acts of protest in Kyiv on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) and similar acts in other cities of Ukraine? (%)**

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Fully support these acts of protest	69.5	39.1	9.7	13.9	32.2
Mainly support	20.7	23.8	10.3	16.0	18.1
Mainly do not support	5.0	16.2	24.1	21.5	16.8
Against	2.0	12.3	47.2	43.6	25.7
Difficult to say	2.8	9.6	8.7	5.0	7.1

Source: Research was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center Sociological Service on December 20–24, 2013. A total of 2,010 respondents aged 18 or older in all regions of Ukraine were surveyed. The theoretical margin of error was 2.3 percent.

Note: West comprises Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, and Chernivtsi oblasts. *Center* comprises the city of Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Sumy, Khmelnytsky, Cherkasy, and Chernihiv oblasts. *South* comprises the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Mykolaiv, Odesa, and Kherson oblasts. *East* comprises Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts.

As we see, the Maidan basically split the population nearly in half: overall in Ukraine 50 percent of the people supported the protests on the Maidan and 43 percent did not support them. The Maidan was supported in the West and Center of Ukraine and not in the East and South. Attitudes toward the demands of the Maidan protestors were similarly split: 45 percent supported them (primarily residents of the West and Center), 36 percent did not support them (residents of the South and East). However, even in the latter regions a considerable part of the population supported the Maidan—nearly 30 percent in the East and 20 percent in the South.

Support for specific demands of the Maidan protestors was also regionally divided almost in half on several issues: 43 percent of respondents were in favor of disolving the Verkhovna Rada and holding new elections, 43 percent were against; 43 percent were in favor of the dismissal of Viktor Yanukovych and the holding of snap presidential elections, 46 percent were against; 40 percent supported reform of the *Berkut* special forces units, 40 percent were against; 48 percent supported the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU, 43 percent were against; 48 percent supported sacking the government of Mykola Azarov, 41 percent were against; 42 percent supported the release of Yulia Tymoshenko from prison, 46 percent were against. With respect to the proposed changes to the Constitution and a return to the constitutional reform of 2004, which limited presidential powers, 40 percent responded yes and 35 percent responded no.[6]

However, certain demands of the Maidan protestors were supported by a majority of respondents across the country: the initiation of criminal cases against all who were involved in corruption (78 percent in favor, 13 percent against), the initiation of criminal cases against those guilty of beating demonstrators on the Maidan (61 percent in favor, 26 percent against), the imposition of

[6] "Hromadska dumka: Pidsumky 2013 roku" [Public opinion: Results of 2013], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2013 (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pidsumki-2013-roku).

personal sanctions of the EU against representatives of the Ukrainian government responsible for beating peaceful citizens during the protests on the Maidan (with the sanctions to include a ban on entering the EU and the freezing of bank accounts; 59 percent supported, 24 percent did not support). And, last but not least, an absolute majority of citizens agreed with the demand to raise people's standard of living (90 percent).[7]

After the victory of the Maidan and the change of government, a significant share of the population continued to have a negative attitude toward the Maidan (35 percent of those polled in May 2014).[8] In polling conducted in March 2014, a month after the events on the Maidan and the start of the annexation of Crimea, the potential splitting of Ukraine into several parts was acknowledged as one of the three main threats to Ukraine, according to 42 percent of the population.[9] Public opinion considered the seizure of Ukraine or a part of its territory by other states (43 percent) and economic decline (42 percent) as the two other main threats to Ukraine.

Russia's aggressive policy, first and foremost in the annexation of Crimea and later in the brutal intervention in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the support of separatists through the supply of arms, and finally the direct participation of the Russian army in military actions, radically shifted public opinion in the southern and eastern regions in favor of a patriotic mood**.** This can be easily explained from a psychological perspective. Imagine you have a neighbor living next door whom you regard in a positive light, and

[7] Ibid.

[8] Nationwide polling was conducted by the Ilko Kucherive Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center Sociological Service in May 2014. A total of 2,011 respondents were polled in a sample representing the adult population of Ukraine in all regions with the exception of Crimea. The sampling error did not exceed 2.3 percent.

[9] Nationwide polling was conducted by the Ukrainian Sociology Service on March 14–30, 2014, in all regions of Ukraine (including Crimea). A total of 2,010 respondents were polled in a sample representative of the adult population of Ukraine. The sampling error did not exceed 2.3 percent.

suddenly that neighbor seizes a room in your apartment, explaining that it will be better for your grandmother living in that room to live with him. Later he beats your child and threatens to occupy the entire apartment if you do not live the way your neighbor wants. Clearly, your friendly attitude toward the neighbor will drastically change.

This is precisely what happened with Russia. *Having gained Crimea, Putin lost Ukraine.* In the situation of Russian aggression, when the issue arose as to whether Ukraine should or should not be an independent state, a large percentage of Ukrainian citizens who earlier were not at all concerned about their attitude toward Ukraine's independence, their national identity, and many other issues felt and became aware of their identity as Ukrainians.

A brilliant illustration of these changes might be the dynamics of public opinion based on the question, "If a referendum on the independence of Ukraine were held today, how would you vote?" The Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) first posed this question in 1991, on the eve of the referendum regarding independence; a second time in 2006; a third time in 2011 (on the twentieth anniversary of the independence of Ukraine); and a fourth time (in the research of the Democratic Initiatives Foundation) in July 2016, on the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of independence.

The dynamics captured in table 1.2 clearly illustrate the changes in public opinion, particularly in the southern and eastern regions.

As is evident in the data provided in the table, in 2011 a third of Ukrainian citizens would have voted against independence for Ukraine on an imaginary referendum, wherein the votes for and against in the southern and eastern regions of the country were split nearly in half. But five years later, in 2016, the result had drastically changed, and in the South and East the percentage of proponents of independence was considerably larger. However, it must be borne in mind that 21.5 percent in the southern region and 28.5 percent in the eastern region (first and foremost because of the Donbas) would have voted against independence for Ukraine.

Table 1.2. **If a referendum on Ukraine's independence were held today, how would you vote? (%)**
(*Data provided on those who were ready to participate in the referendum and had made their choice*)

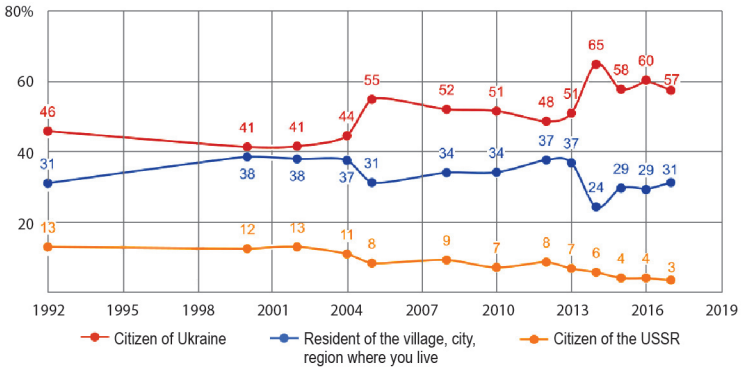
1991	**West**	**Center**	**South**	**East**	**Ukraine overall**
For the act on independence	96.9	94.4	81.6	78.5	88.7
Against the act on independence	3.1	5.6	18.4	21.5	11.3
2006					
For the act on independence	93.3	79.4	57.2	49.0	70.2
Against the act on independence	6.7	20.6	42.8	51.0	29.8
2011					
For the act on independence	95.0	72.5	47.1	53.0	67.1
Against the act on independence	5.0	27.5	52.9	47.0	32.9
2016					
For the act on independence	96.4	87.8	78.5	71.5	86.9
Against the act on independence	3.6	12.2	21.5	28.5	13.1

Source: "Ukraini—25: Dosiahnennia i porazky " [Ukraine—25: Achievements and losses], http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=643&page=1&y=2016&m=8.

Of course, people's identification with their country is the decisive factor in the unity of any country. Since 1992 the NASU Institute of Sociology has studied the issue of whom poll

respondents consider themselves first and foremost. [10] Figure 1.1 shows the dynamics of identification of the population of Ukraine.

Figure 1.1. **Whom do you consider yourself first and foremost? (%)**
(One answer)



Source: Annual polling data of the NASU Institute of Sociology, "Ukrainske suspilstvo: Monitorinh sotsialnykh zmin" [Ukrainian society: Monitoring of social changes], conducted on July 3–25, 2017. Polling was conducted in all oblasts of Ukraine (with the exception of Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts). A total of 1,800 individuals were polled. See http://dif.org.ua/uploads/pdf/2077223209599c1813b0fa85.06804039.pdf.

We are interested first in the relationship between national identification (i.e., identifying primarily as a citizen of Ukraine) and regional identification, which includes the sum of two positions—acknowledgment that one is a resident of a village or city, or of a region. In general these two trend lines move inversely,

[10] The project "Ukrainian Society: Monitoring of Social Changes" has been conducted by the NASU Institute of Sociology since 1992. Every year 1,800 individuals are polled in a nationwide survey. The sample is representative of the adult population (over the age of 18) according to such indicators as sex, age, level of education, region of residence, and type of settlement. In 1992–2014, the fieldwork for the studies was undertaken by the Socis Center; in 2015–2016 by the Intellectual Future Charity Foundation. The methodology and polling supervision are provided by the NASU Institute of Sociology. See *Ukrainske suspilstvo: Monitorinh sotsialnykh zmin* [Ukrainian society: Monitoring of social changes] (Kyiv: NASU Institute of Sociology, 2015).

with a sharp disjuncture beginning with 2004 polling, which registered the start of a large upward movement in national identification and a corresponding decrease in regional identification. Figure 1.1 also shows the trend line for identification with the Soviet Union, which in the first years of independence was quite notable, particularly in certain regions.

In 1992, national identification was significantly greater than regional identification, 45.6 percent and 31 percent, respectively, while 13 percent of the populace continued to identify primarily as citizens of the former Soviet Union. By 2000, however, regional identification (38 percent) nearly equaled national identification (41 percent), while the share of those polled who identified primarily as citizens of the Soviet Union remained almost static (12 percent). These identifications remain almost unchanged until 2005, when on the heels of the Orange Revolution the national identification rate grew by ten percentage points, to 54.6 percent, while the regional indicator fell to 31 percent. The second leap in identification as a citizen of Ukraine occurred during the post-Maidan period: in 2014 it grew from 51 percent to 65 percent.

With respect to regional identification, 2014 also proved to be a critical turning point. As shown in table 1.3, there was a significant growth of national identification after the Revolution of Dignity in all regions, including in the South and East of the country, where the Maidan was negatively assessed.

The only exception was the Donbas (represented in the polling by Donetsk oblast), where, on the contrary, the overall national identification rate changed very little and instead identification with the former Soviet Union grew sharply, from 12 percent to 19 percent. The reason is likely that polling was conducted in the summer of 2014, during intense fighting in the Donbas. A considerable part of the population of the region blamed either Ukraine or both sides, Ukraine and Russia, for the military actions. In this situation, the peaceful Soviet times of stability, employment, and certain social guarantees were nostalgically recalled by the older generation.

Table 1.3. **Whom do you consider yourself first and foremost? (2013–2014, %)**

	West		Center		South[a] (without Crimea)		East		Donbas		Ukraine overall	
	2013	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**
Resident of the village, county, or city in which you live	27.7	14.5	27.9	14.4	32.0	25.1	33.6	13.8	28.6	16.0	28.7	16.1
Resident of the region (oblast or several oblasts) in which you live	6.6	6.7	5.6	2.7	2.1	5.1	7.4	5.1	14.8	22.6	7.9	8.0
Citizen of Ukraine	**55.9**	**70.1**	**56.3**	**75.7**	**41.4**	**59.5**	**48.1**	**66.7**	**41.7**	**37.0**	**50.7**	**64.6**
Representative of your ethnos, nation	3.2	3.2	2.4	1.9	3.9	1.0	0.9	3.2	0.3	0.0	2.0	2.1
Citizen of the former Soviet Union	1.4	0.3	3.7	2.7	10.5	5.6	6.8	8.6	**11.7**	**19.3**	6.6	5.5
Citizen of Europe	2.3	3.2	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.2	0.8	0.3	1.1	1.2	1.1
Citizen of the world	2.6	1.4	2.1	1.1	2.8	3.1	1.8	1.7	1.8	3.3	2.4	2.1
Other	0.3	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.5

Sources: A nationwide polling of the population of Ukraine in 2013 and 2014 was conducted as part of the multiyear project, "Ukrainske suspilstvo: Monitorinh sotsialnykh zmin" [Ukrainian society: Monitoring of social changes]. The field surveys for both studies were conducted by the Socis Center. In 2013, polling lasted from June 27 to July 18; in 2014, polling was conducted on July 10–29. In both polls the sample was 1,800 individuals representing the adult population (aged 18 years or older) of Ukraine by sex, age, education, type of settlement, and regional division. In 2014, polling was not conducted in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea because of inability to conduct research in the annexed territory. In Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in 2014 polling was conducted over the entire territory. The margin of error in both polls was 3.04 percent.

Note: Boldface in the table indicates the most salient information.

[a] To track how public opinion of people in the regions changed, data on the South in 2013 for comparison with 2014 were provided without Crimea, where polling was not conducted in 2014.

Over the next three years, when the situation was relatively stable in the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts controlled by Ukraine, identification with the Soviet Union fell sharply, to 9 percent, while national identification grew somewhat, to 43 percent, and regional identification grew to 40 percent.[11]

It should be noted that in the three years from 2014 to 2017, certain changes occurred in other regions: the exaltation of patriotism, which had grown sharply in the summer of 2014, waned, and the overall national identification rate fell in the western region from 70 percent to 62 percent and in the central region from 76 percent to 62 percent. In the East it fell from 67 percent to 50 percent (with regional identification at 38 percent). In the South, the national identification rate in 2014–2017 fell from 60 percent to 50 percent, with regional identification at 32 percent. Interestingly, these changes were driven by the attitudes registered in Odesa oblast.[12] In general, however, the monitoring data testify to growth in the level of overall national identification compared to 2013.

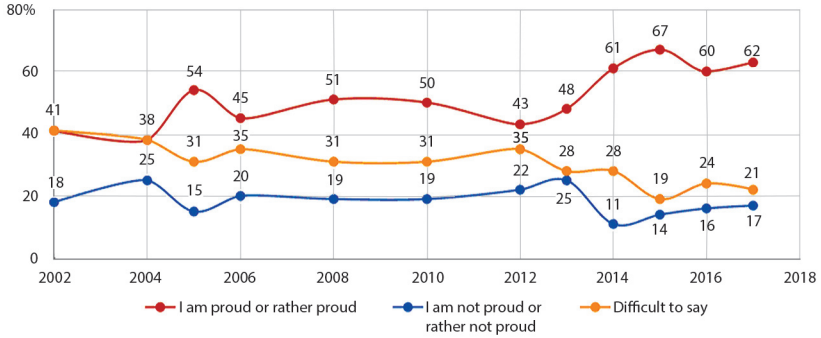
Answers to the question of whether respondents are proud of their Ukrainian citizenship serve as yet another indicator of the growth of national awareness. The dynamics of responses to this question since 2002 are graphed in figure 1.2.

In general, the same logic as with identification is observed: the first sharp rise in national pride occured after the Orange Revolution, in 2005, when it increased from 38 percent to 54 percent; the second, even more considerable rise occured after the Revolution of Dignity, in 2014, when feelings of national pride increased from 48 percent to 61 percent.

[11] According to the polling data of the NASU Institute of Sociology in its annual survey, "Ukrainske suspilstvo: Monitorinh sotsialnykh zmin" [Ukrainian society: Monitoring of social changes], conducted on July 3–25, 2017. Polling was conducted in all oblasts of Ukraine (with the exception of Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts). A total of 1,800 individuals were polled. See http://dif.org.ua/uploads/pdf/2077223209599c1813b0fa85.06804039.pdf.

[12] Ibid.

Figure 1.2. **To what extent are you proud or not proud of being a citizen of Ukraine? (%)**



Source: Same source as for figure 1.1.

The data provided in table 1.4 show that from 2013 to 2014, the greatest changes were observed in the western, central, and southern regions, where the sense of pride in Ukrainian citizenship grew respectively from 67 percent to 80 percent, from 44 percent to 74 percent, and from 44 percent to 62 percent. Indicators in the eastern region, where in 2013 the sense of pride in having Ukrainian citizenship was quite high, remained almost unchanged: 59 percent in 2013 and 56 percent in 2014. Meanwhile, in the Donbas this indicator changed for the worse: in 2013, 33 percent of those polled were proud of their Ukrainian citizenship, whereas in May 2014 only 21 percent were. But the share of those who were not proud of their Ukrainian citizenship also fell, from 30 percent in 2013 to 25 percent in 2014. On the other hand, the share of those who could not decide how they felt about Ukrainian citizenship grew to an incredible 54 percent.

Table 1.4. **To what extent are you proud or not proud of being a citizen of Ukraine? (2013–2014, %)**

	West		Center		South[a]		East		Donbas	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
Not proud at all	4.1	2.5	7.8	1.6	17.2	7.5	7.4	7.8	9.9	10.1
Most likely not proud	9.6	1.9	15.2	3.7	20.0	7.5	10.8	7.5	22.7	14.5
Most likely proud	49.0	41.1	35.0	46.9	35.0	35.8	49.7	37.1	28.4	17.0
I am very proud to be a citizen of Ukraine	17.5	38.8	8.7	27.0	8.9	26.0	9.0	18.4	5.0	4.4
Difficult to say	19.8	15.6	33.4	20.7	18.9	23.1	23.1	23.5	34.0	54.1

Source: Annual polling data of the NASU Institute of Sociology, "Ukrainske suspilstvo: Monitorinh sotsialnykh zmin" [Ukrainian society: Monitoring of social changes].

[a] Regional typology of 2013 is harmonized according to 2014 (South = without Crimea).

At the same time, over three years after 2014, certain changes took place, first and foremost in the southern region, where the percentage of those who were proud of their Ukrainian citizenship fell from 62 percent to 45 percent and the percentage of those who were not proud increased from 15 percent to 27 percent.[13] Clearly, the process that is currently under way in the

[13] According to annual polling data of the NASU Institute of Sociology, "Ukrainske suspilstvo: Monitorinh sotsialnykh zmin" [Ukrainian society: Monitoring of social changes].

southern region (first and foremost in Odesa oblast) warrants thorough study.

In general, it can be concluded that after the Revolution of Dignity, the positions of the West, Center, East, and South with respect to national identification and pride in Ukrainian citizenship became closer. The exception to this trend was seen in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. However, there it was less a matter of rejection of Ukraine than a matter of people being uncertain about their own attitude.

Now let's look at what happened in 2014 in terms of public opinion on the issues that divided Ukraine, first and foremost foreign policy orientation**.**

Over almost all the years of independence, official Kyiv tried "sitting on two chairs at once," considering integration in two directions simultaneously—with Russia and some other CIS countries in the Customs Union and with the EU. This dual approach was in line with the main trends of public opinion as the majority of the population simultaneously supported both vectors of integration. Among all the regions of Ukraine the western region stood out for its prevailing negative attitude toward integration with Russia and Belarus and its positive attitude toward Ukraine's accession to NATO, though the largest part of those polled (nearly 40 percent) did not have a definite attitude on this issue.

At the same time, an alternative phrasing of the question as an either/or question—either moving toward EU membership or moving toward some kind of unification with Russia (which took different formulations—Customs Union, economic union, etc.)—split Ukraine in half. The West and Center gave preference to integrating with Europe and the South and the East (together with the Donbas) preferred the eastern vector.

The events of 2014—the annexation of Crimea and the aggression of Russia in the Donbas—acutely changed the foreign policy orientations of Ukrainians (*see table 1.5*). The eastern vector simply collapsed, and in 2014 the only region where a positive attitude toward Ukraine joining a union with Russia and Belarus prevailed was the Donbas.

Table 1.5. **Attitudes of the population in different regions of Ukraine toward probable geopolitical unions (2013–2014, %)**

	West		Center		South[a]		East		Donbas	
Attitudes toward unions	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**
Toward a union with Russia and Belarus										
Positive	13.5	5.0	41.4	11.0	61.3	31.1	62.5	31.6	74.2	62.8
Negative	59.9	82.5	31.6	67.7	21.0	44.6	17.5	41.2	8.5	12.8
Difficult to say	26.5	12.5	27.0	21.3	17.7	24.3	20.0	27.1	17.3	24.4
Toward accession to the EU										
Positive	67.4	75.0	45.8	61.1	40.8	37.6	37.8	36.7	12.5	11.9
Negative	7.2	7.5	20.3	9.5	38.1	31.5	30.5	33.3	52.7	66.1
Difficult to say	25.3	17.4	33.9	22.4	21.0	30.5	31.7	30.0	34.9	22.0
Toward accession to NATO										
Positive	35.4	64.7	14.4	41.8	6.7	30.7	12.0	20.0	0.3	7.3
Negative	22.8	6.7	50.0	21.4	62.7	42.7	56.7	44.3	84.4	84.8
Difficult to say	41.8	28.6	35.6	36.8	31.1	26.6	31.4	17.7	15.2	7.3

Source: Same source as for table 1.4.

[a] The 2013 data for the South do not include Crimea.

However, already by the next year, 2015, significant changes had occurred in public opinion in the Donbas as well: while 74 percent of respondents had a positive attitude toward Ukraine joining Russia and Belarus in 2013 and 63 percent did so in 2014, only 41 percent selected this option in 2015. On the other hand, the percentage of those who had a negative attitude toward such a union grew over two years from 8.5 percent to 31 percent.[14]

[14] Ibid.

Changes in attitudes toward Ukraine's accession to the EU also took place, though on a smaller scale. The most striking changes were observed in the attitudes of Ukrainians toward joining NATO. The first measurements of public opinion testified more to uncertainty in attitudes toward joining NATO than to any negativism: in polling conducted by the NASU Institute of Sociology in 2000 a negative attitude toward Ukraine joining NATO was expressed by 33.5 percent of the population, a positive attitude by 25 percent, and 41.5 percent did not have a specific opinion. Such a situation persisted right up to the 2004 presidential elections, when the topic of NATO and the fabricated threats around accession to this organization became a dividing line for the political parties' mobilization of their base. As such, in the polling of the Institute of Sociology conducted in 2005, after the presidential elections, the negative attitude toward joining NATO had risen sharply, to 50 percent, while the positive attitude had fallen to 15 percent.[15] Over the ensuing years political forces oriented toward Russia instilled a constant fear of NATO in the average Ukrainian. At the same time, political forces inclined to the western vector of integration tried (at least during the elections) to skip over the topic of Ukraine's membership in NATO, as there was no unity among their supporters on this issue. Therefore, the negative attitudes toward joining NATO dominated both under the "Orange" authorities and under the successor government of Yanukovych in nearly all regions of Ukraine with the exception of the West (though even there, public opinion was almost evenly divided, with a significant share of respondents remaining undecided).

In the years before the Euromaidan, support for Ukraine's membership in NATO held steady at 14–16 percent. Ukrainians felt that the optimal way to achieve Ukraine's security would be to maintain a non-bloc status (i.e., nonalignment with any external group). The annexation of Crimea and the military aggression of

[15] *Ukrainske suspilstvo 1992–2013: Sotsialny monitorinh* [Ukrainian society 1992–2013: Social monitoring] (Kyiv: NASU Institute of Sociology, 2013), 467.

Russia clearly showed that Ukraine cannot guarantee its own security without having strong military allies. At that, support for Ukraine joining NATO grew sharply, from 14.5 percent in 2013 to 38 percent in 2014 and 43 percent in 2015.

Especially notable are the changes that took place in those regions where attitudes toward NATO membership were mainly negative. In the South, where in 2013 only 7 percent of people supported membership in NATO, by 2015 this indicator had grown to 33.5 percent; in the East it grew from 12 percent to 32 percent over the same time period. In the Donbas, polls conducted in 2013 showed that support for Ukraine's membership in NATO was almost nil, though already in 2014 this figure had reached 7 percent, and in 2015 it reached 12 percent (for more details, see chapter 4).

At the same time, according to polling conducted in June 2017, if a referendum were held regarding NATO membership, 69.5 percent of respondents would vote for it.[16] The reason for such a divergence in levels of support for NATO membership among the population in general (a NATO preference prevails, but not at such a scale) and the probable result of a referendum can be explained by the following finding: among NATO proponents, 90 percent are ready to participate in such a referendum and vote, while among opponents of Ukraine joining NATO this figure is only half. In other words, the resistance to Ukraine moving toward NATO is rather passive, while support for integration processes is active.

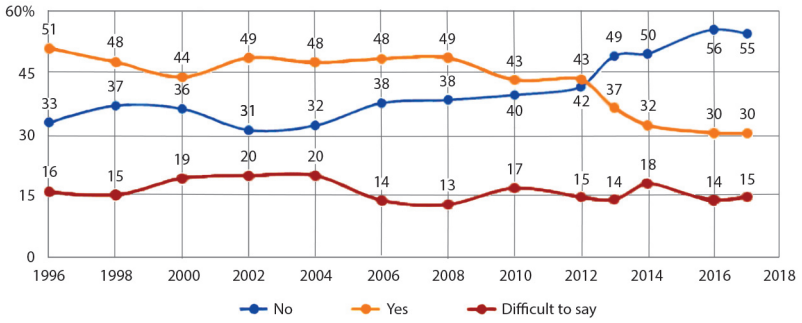
But the NATO issue will be yet another complicated problem in the integration of the Donbas into Ukrainian space. It is precisely there where steady anti-NATO bias, which formed over the course of decades of the Soviet Union, prevails. And there is no doubt that certain political forces will exploit these fears to the maximum to win back voters that the once powerful Party of Regions lost.

[16] Nationwide research was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center Sociological Service on June 9–13, 2017. A total of 2,018 respondents aged 18 years and older were polled in all regions of Ukraine, with the exception of Crimea and Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pro-nato-noviy-poglyad).

Yet another issue, and one that has persistently divided the country since independence, is the attitude toward the status of the Russian language in Ukraine and the prospect of recognizing it as the second state language, or at least an official one.

In 1996 the majority (51 percent) of poll respondents supported the need to grant the Russian language official status, while 33 percent did not support this proposition. Further, the percentage of proponents of an official status for the Russian language gradually declined while the percentage of opponents increased, with the result that in 2012 the shares were almost equal: 43 percent supported an official status for the Russian language and 42 percent did not support it. And starting in 2013, support for granting official status to the Russian language began to fall steadily, while opposition to this idea in public opinion has grown with every passing year. In 2016 the share of proponents of granting the Russian language official status fell to 30 percent, while the share of opponents increased to 55.5 percent (*see figure 1.3*).

Figure 1.3. **Do you feel it necessary to grant the Russian language official status in Ukraine? (%)**



Source: Same source as for figure 1.1.

At the same time, the issue of the status of the Russian language continues to divide the regions (*see table 1.6*).

Table 1.6. **Do you feel it necessary to grant the Russian language official status in Ukraine? (%)**

	West		Center		South (without Crimea)		East		Donbas	
	2013	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**	**2013**	**2014**
Yes	5.8	8.1	20.6	15.8	45.3	40.7	50.3	47.3	73.1	65.7
No	87.6	75.1	63.6	68.0	44.2	38.7	30.1	33.7	10.6	6.6
Difficult to say	6.6	16.8	15.8	16.2	10	20.6	19.3	19.0	16.2	27.6

Source: Same source as for table 1.4.

These data are of particular interest if one considers that the percentage of Ukrainian-language speakers (those who speak Ukrainian in their family) among the general population did not grow: it was 42 percent in 2012 and only slightly higher, 43 percent, in 2015. At the same time, the percentage of the population who speak both languages at home grew significantly, from 21 percent in 2012 to 30 percent in 2015, and accordingly, the share of "purely" Russian-speaking Ukrainians fell from 35 percent to 26 percent.[17] Clearly, a significant percentage of bilingual Ukrainians also do not support raising the status of the Russian language.

For Ukraine's West and Center, granting the Russian language official status was totally unacceptable. In the East, half of the respondents were hoping for official status for the Russian language, while at the same time one-third of the residents of this region were inclined against it. In the South, the positions for and against were split in half. And the Donbas was once again quite

[17] According to polling data acquired by the NASU Institute of Sociology, "Ukrainske suspilstvo: Monitorinh sotsialnykh zmin" [Ukrainian society: Monitoring of social changes].

particular: there the absolute majority considered that the Russian language should be granted official status. Age is also an influential factor within the regions. Youth from Russian-speaking families who learned the Ukrainian language during their school years and who are now bilingual no longer see the need for a special status for the Russian language. And clearly, the interregional conflict over the language(s) of Ukraine will gradually abate. However, the Donbas merits special attention as in this region the percentage of a purely Russian-speaking population has shown little decline in recent years.

In general, sociological research shows to what degree Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts significantly differ even from the neighboring Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv oblasts. Evidently these oblasts, and Crimea earlier, stood out for their more pro-Russian orientations compared with other oblasts in the South and East. In the spring of 2014, KIIS conducted research at the request of the newspaper *Dzerkalo Tyzhnia* (The Weekly Mirror) titled "Opinions and Views of the South and East: April 2014," which encompassed eight oblasts of the East and the South.[18] In response to the key question, "Do you support the opinion that your oblast should separate from Ukraine and join Russia?," only 15 percent of the residents of eight oblasts in the South and East regions said yes (70 percent were against). However, two oblasts clearly stood out, Donetsk and Luhansk, where 27 percent and 30 percent, respectively, said they were in favor of separating from Ukraine. Approximately the same percentages (25 percent) in these two oblasts expressed their readiness to participate in rallies and demonstrations for their region to be united with Russia. And although the majority of the population of the region did not share a separatist mood, this active minority became the basis for Russia's successful aggression and the proclamation of the so-called DPR and LPR.

[18] Inna Vedernikova, Yulia Mostova, and Serhiy Rakhmanin, "Southeast: A Branch of Our Tree," *Dzerkalo Tyzhnia*, April 18, 2014. For more details, see also chapter 6, pp. 139–140.

Meanwhile, in the remaining oblasts of the South and East, similar attempts by the separatists failed, first and foremost because they were rebuffed by local residents, and often without the support of law enforcement bodies, which chose to take a wait-and-see position.

The monitoring polls conducted in those territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts that were temporarily occupied but are currently under the control of Ukraine show that public opinion can change, and fairly quickly.

The question regarding the desired status of one's native region was included in the poll of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation conducted in January 2015.[19] This same question was posed in polling conducted a half year later in July 2015.[20] Both polls were nationwide; however, here we present only data regarding the East, South, and the Donbas.

As table 1.7 shows, in the South and East, sentiment for separating from Ukraine was almost absent. Indeed, there was negligible support for a federative system. The majority preferred a unitary Ukraine in which the regions would have expanded rights. By comparison with the rest of the regions of Ukraine, in the January 2015 polling the Donbas stood out excessively. A significant percentage of the residents of Donetsk oblast (20 percent) felt that for their region, the best choice would be to secede from Ukraine and become an independent state, while another 15 percent preferred to join another state (understood to be Russia). So, overall, 35 percent of the residents of Donetsk oblast were in favor of the Donbas seceding

[19] Research was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Ukrainian Sociology Service from December 25, 2014, to January 15, 2015. Polling was not conducted in Crimea or in Luhansk oblast. A total of 400 respondents were polled in Donetsk oblast.

[20] Research was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center Sociological Service on July 22–27, 2015. A total of 2,011 respondents aged 18 and older were polled in all regions of Ukraine, with the exception of Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

from Ukraine in one way or another. Another one-third of polled residents of Donetsk oblast wanted the Donbas to remain in Ukraine, but with an autonomous status. These attitudes can be explained by the fact that at the end of 2014 and the start of 2015, fierce battles continued in the Donbas and civilians were getting killed, especially near the Donetsk airport. Generally speaking, the future of these territories under the control of Ukraine was unclear.

Table 1.7. **What should be the status of the region you live in? (%)**

	South		East		Donbas	
Where should your region be?	**Jan. 2015**	**July 2015**	**Jan. 2015**	**July 2015**	**Jan. 2015**	**July 2015**
In a unitary Ukraine with the rights that exist today	21.5	30.2	25.1	30.3	2.5	**22.9**
In a unitary Ukraine with expanded rights	60.1	52.6	54.2	53.0	26.9	**44.0**
In a federated Ukraine, but having the status of autonomy	6.8	5.7	10.9	9.1	**30.4**	**12.0**
Withdraw from Ukraine and become an independent state	2.0	1.6	1.0	1.7	**19.8**	**0.0**
Withdraw from Ukraine and join another state	0.7	0.5	1.0	1.5	**14.8**	**4.8**
Difficult to say	8.8	9.4	7.7	4.4	5.5	16.3

Sources: For January 2015 data, polls conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Ukrainian Sociology Service from December 25, 2014, to January 15, 2015. Polling was not conducted in Crimea or in Luhansk oblast. A total of 400 respondents were polled in Donetsk oblast. For July 2015 data, polls conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center Sociological Service on July 22–27, 2015. A total of 2,011 respondents aged 18 and older were polled in all regions of Ukraine, with the exception of Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Note: Boldface in the table indicates the most salient findings.

However, within half a year public opinion had changed radically. Almost none of those polled (0.0 percent) wanted the Donbas to become an independent state, and only 5 percent wanted the unification of the Donbas with Russia. Though one can speculate about the reasons for such a drastic change in views, it is likely that the change was influenced, on the one hand, by better living conditions in the liberated territories of the Donbas, and on the other hand by the experience of living in the territories of the so-called DPR and LPR. At the same time, the notions of a federative Ukraine and of the Donbas as an autonomous entity, on which the Russian negotiators in Minsk continue to insist, have lost their appeal.

In general, public opinion in the Donbas regarding the status of this region today does not differ from the opinion of Ukrainians overall: residents prefer being a part of Ukraine, but with expanded rights for the regions. Accordingly, this is the main factor in the process of decentralization currently under way in the country.

We do not know what attitudes the residents of the occupied territories of the LPR and DPR have toward Ukraine today. However, insofar as they consume Russian mass media on a daily basis, especially television, one can assume with a high degree of probability that the prevailing attitude toward Ukraine and everything Ukrainian is negative. Nonetheless, sociological research in the liberated territories demonstrates that positive changes in public opinion in this region are entirely possible.

Sociological data are able to bring to light which problems are priorities for Ukrainian citizens and which ones are secondary. As a rule, similar polls were conducted during election campaigns. And the linguistic, cultural, and geopolitical issues that have always divided Ukrainians ended up at the bottom of a long list as the least significant ones (the exception was Crimea, where the status of the Russian language was among the top ten most important issues). Without a doubt, economic and social issues took first place on this priority list in all regions of the country.

One such national poll was conducted at the start of the presidential election campaign in March 2014 that did include Crimea

and all the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (*see table 1.8*). People were asked what a politician should do first (five priority actions) to persuade the voter (the respondent being polled) to vote for him or her.

Table 1.8. **What should a politician whom you plan to vote for in the elections for the president of Ukraine do first and foremost? (%)**
(*Respondents were to choose the top five priority actions*)

	West	Center	South	East	Donbas	Ukraine overall
Ensure overcoming the economic crisis and its consequences; economic growth	**80.3**	**76.3**	**61.4**	**84.4**	**62.3**	**74.9**
Fight against corruption	**68.1**	**60.0**	**53.3**	**72.8**	**42.4**	**60.5**
Eradicate unemployment, create job opportunities to provide steady income	**48.4**	**45.6**	**46.5**	**54.3**	**49.8**	**48.6**
Ensure a rise in the standard of living of Ukrainians	45.1	40.6	37.7	41.1	35.3	40.5
Ensure implementation of urgent social reforms: pensions, health care, etc.	38.6	36.2	40.9	45.4	40.9	39.7
Guarantee the security and defense capability of Ukraine; create a truly competent army	**32.2**	**41.1**	**31.3**	**31.2**	17.8	**33.5**
Overcome the rift between the East and the West of Ukraine	**30.3**	**39.1**	**32.1**	24.7	16.3	30.2
Care about the least protected strata of the people; ensure them the necessary assistance	20.4	30.4	27.0	13.7	**36.4**	27.3
Guarantee the rights and freedoms of Ukrainian citizens	20.4	20.8	27.4	13.4	21.5	20.1
Appoint the best and most honest professionals to positions	18.0	18.0	22.0	**27.7**	16.9	20.1
Revoke deputy immunity	15.3	15.6	27.9	24.7	19.1	19.1
Free Ukraine from the influence of oligarchs in political processes	20.7	20.7	23.4	14.0	7.5	17.6
Develop democracy; give people the possibility to influence the ruling authority	18.8	15.6	19.1	9.7	12.2	15.0
Increase the powers of local authorities in the regions	17.3	8.7	**21.5**	11.6	**21.9**	14.5

Table 1.8 (cont.)

	West	Center	South	East	Donbas	Ukraine overall
Ensure that the president is the main moral authority for the nation	14.9	10.2	17.8	23.9	9.1	14.3
Prepare the draft of a new constitution	10.3	12.9	15.8	21.2	12.5	14.2
Ensure the European direction of the development of Ukraine, movement of Ukraine toward the EU	20.9	20.5	12.1	4.3	3.4	13.9
Increase foreign investments in Ukraine	17.7	15.6	10.7	5.1	5.6	12.0
Resolve the issue of the status of the Russian language in Ukraine	2.9	9.9	**23.3**	3.0	**23.4**	10.7
Ensure reform of the law enforcement bodies and the judicial system	16.5	11.5	10.2	7.0	4.7	10.5
Ensure as much as possible close ties with Russia; accession to the Customs Union with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan	0.7	2.3	13.5	7.3	**20.0**	6.9
Ensure Ukraine's movement toward accession to NATO	13.9	5.8	3.3	1.1	0.0	5.4
Care about the development of the Ukrainian language and culture	7.7	7.7	3.3	0.8	1.6	4.9
Difficult to say	0.5	2.5	1.4	0.2	12.1	3.1
Other	0.7	1.6	3.3	2.2	1.6	1.7

Sources: National polling of the population of Ukraine was conducted on March 16–20, 2014, by the Ukrainian Sociology Service in ninety-four cities and villages of all territorial-administrative units of Ukraine: twenty-four oblasts, Crimea, and the city of Kyiv. A total of 2,010 respondents were polled by quota sample representative of sex, age, education, oblast, and type of settlement. The margin of error was within 2.3 percent.

Note: Boldface in table indicates the most salient findings.

The data provided in table 1.8 clearly show that just before the tragic events of the spring of 2014 the most important problems citizens identified were indeed the same in all regions of Ukraine: resolving the economic crisis and ameliorating its consequences, achieving economic growth, fighting corruption, overcoming unemployment, creating job opportunities that would provide a steady income, raising the overall standard of living, and implementing urgent reforms in such areas as pensions, health care, and the like.

The issues that divided the regions fell to the bottom of the list of priorities—accession to NATO, the EU, or the Customs Union with Russia; the status of the Russian language, and for that matter the status of the Ukrainian language as well. These last-place finishes do not mean that these issues are not important to people but that respondents' priorities are socioeconomic in nature.

At the same time, table 1.8 clearly shows the regional differences. In the Donbas and the South of Ukraine (Crimea was included in this poll) some 23 percent of those polled placed the status of the Russian language among the priority issues, while 21 percent in both regions felt that increasing the power of local authorities was important. Further, establishing close relations with Russia and accession to the Customs Union with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan were also significant issues for 20 percent of Donbas residents and 13.5 percent of residents of the southern region.

In their turn, 21 percent of residents of the western and central regions felt that ensuring the European direction of the development of Ukraine and moving toward accession to the EU were priorities.

Practically all the results of polls show that socioeconomic issues are seen as priorities: according to public opinion surveys in all the regions, the main reforms should be in the spheres of anticorruption, law enforcement, and economic transformations aimed at overcoming the economic crisis.

The aspiration to live in a successful, prosperous, and democratic country is what unites people in all regions of Ukraine. And this is much more important than that which divides them.

Conclusions

Right from the beginning of independence, Ukraine has exhibited significant regional differences, both with respect to language issues and foreign policy orientation and with respect to support for different political forces. These divisions nourished hope among those promulgating the concepts of a Russian World and a New Russia (most prominently Vladimir Putin) that the Russian-language population of the South and East of Ukraine, which prefers the eastern vector of integration, would demand unification of its oblasts with Russia. However, everything turned out exactly the opposite.

The majority of the population of these regions remained faithful to Ukraine, while Russian-speaking volunteers stood side-by-side to defend their Ukrainian homeland. The tragic events of 2014, associated primarily with Russian aggression, fundamentally changed public opinion in Ukraine's regions, and for the majority of citizens Russia turned from being a friend into an enemy. Indeed, Putin gained Crimea (if only temporarily), but he lost Ukraine.

In these challenging times, citizens who earlier had identified themselves first and foremost with their local place of residence began to identify above all as Ukrainians. Identification as Ukrainian citizens began for the first time to dominate in the southern and eastern regions of the country.

The eastern vector of foreign policy orientation was no longer as powerful as the western vector, which led to closer approximation of the positions of people living in the regions. Moreover, such closer approximation transpired not as a "meet halfway" move but rather as a result of changes in the East and South, which brought those regions closer to the Center.

At the same time, poll results show that some important regional differences remain, while others have surfaced only recently.

Though support for the pro-Russian vector of orientation in the East and South subsided, its former proponents did not automatically switch to supporting European integration but instead

chose the option of nonaccession to any of the unions. Similarly, those citizens who earlier felt that a military union with Russia would guarantee the security of Ukraine now clearly rejected this option, though they did not then become proponents of Ukraine's accession to NATO, preferring instead non-bloc status. Moreover, it is obvious that the latest events in the EU have only added to the skepticism of this part of the population regarding the European prospects for Ukraine, and for this reason the interregional differences in foreign policy orientations may deepen. This will not likely lead to a split, though it is entirely possible that in future elections this part of the population will support those political forces that are opposed to the European integration of Ukraine, and that objectively will mean the game is played to the benefit of Russia.

The language issue, specifically the status of the Russian language in Ukraine, differentiates the regions and from time to time evokes fierce controversy. However, it is clear that people who grew up in a Russian-speaking environment and for whom Russian is their native language cannot immediately switch to Ukrainian, while people of an older generation will probably never be able to speak Ukrainian. The policy of Ukrainianization of predominantly Russian-speaking regions should not be excessively radical and should not entail the humiliation of Russian-speaking people or their portrayal as "inadequate" Ukrainians. For state institutions and civil organizations, working with youth is highly worthwhile: the dependency of the language of communication on age, including in predominantly Russian-language regions, is glaringly obvious. For this reason, provided that the corresponding educational and cultural policy is applied, the language issue is expected to diminish in importance over the next fifteen to twenty years as the next generation arrives on the scene free of "historical friendship" with Russia.

The main problem today as far as the unity or disunity of Ukraine is concerned is the Donbas region—Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. These oblasts even earlier differed significantly from

neighboring Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv oblasts, primarily in their stronger pro-Russian orientation, the essential domination of the Russian language and culture, and the monopoly of one political party.

The tragic events of 2014, including armed military actions with the participation of Russian military forces, the occupation of parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, and the aggressive ideological influence disseminated through the Russian media, undermined the former unity of public opinion of residents of the Donbas. Today in the Donbas the spectrum of opinions and views is even greater than those extending between different regions of Ukraine.

The Donbas is seeking a new identity. For this identity to become predominantly Ukrainian, the leadership of Ukraine must clearly say "the Donbas is Ukraine," and act accordingly. A comprehensive program of reintegration of the Donbas, beginning with territories that are under Ukrainian control, is imperative. This program must include both an economic strategy of transformation as well as a humanitarian component aimed at the "soft" Ukrainianization of the region, with maximum engagement of the civil sector and cooperation with local NGOs, which enjoy more trust in the region than do state bodies.

II. THE PARTY SYSTEM AFTER THE MAIDAN

Regional Dimensions of an Unfinished Transformation

Iryna Bekeshkina and Oleksii Sydorchuk

New Outlines of the Party System of Ukraine

After the events of the Revolution of Dignity and the mobilization of society in response to Russian aggression, issues with respect to a radical overhaul of the political system, the national economy, international relations, education, and culture—in other words, issues affecting all spheres of life—moved to center stage for the general public. The need for changes in the realm of politics and the party system became particularly urgent.

In Ukraine the process of establishing a multiparty system was quite specific. After Ukraine gained independence, the emergence of new political parties was extraordinarily turbulent. Some of them had a concise ideological platform, some formed around prominent political leaders, and some had neither one nor the other. Already during the first parliamentary elections based on a mixed electoral system with a party list component (1998), at least two ideologically defined political forces ran against each other, the Communist Party of Ukraine and the Popular Movement of Ukraine (Narodnyi Rukh). Both had a well-developed structure and a fairly large membership. At the same time, other parties were formed on different principles, for example, to represent the interests of financial-industrial groups. Among the first of these were the People's Democratic Party, the Social Democratic

Party of Ukraine (United), and Hromada (Community), which won seats in parliament in 1998.

An oligarchic clan–based economy developed in Ukraine, and policy was subordinated to serving the oligarchic clans that formed and controlled the political parties. The parties became more and more transformed into specific "holdings": financial-economic groups formed the corresponding parties or factions in parliament to assert their interests in legislative power, founded or purchased mass media to gain influence over the public, and cultivated "own" cohorts inside the executive and judicial branches of power. Parties organically became part of the shadow economy market system, in which a place on the electoral list, membership in a parliamentary faction, transfer of allegiance to another faction, and voting for laws that were advantageous for certain economic corporations became the main items of trade. The parties in parliament were literally transformed into groups lobbying for the economic and political interests of large financial-economic holding companies.[1]

For several years before the start of the Revolution of Dignity, the Party of Regions (PoR) was the dominant political force in Ukraine. It garnered a relative majority of votes in three cycles of parliamentary elections in a row—in 2006, 2007, and 2012. For most of this time the party was also in the ruling coalition and formed the government. Unlike other parties, the PoR successfully adapted to the political environment through co-opting potential rivals and drawing up informal agreements with key players on its electoral playing field.[2] In particular, the PoR found an unexpected ally in the Communist Party, which performed the role of a junior partner beginning with the 2006 elections. After the victory of the leader of the PoR, Viktor Yanukovych, in the 2010 presidential

[1] Taras Kuzio, "Impediments to the Emergence of Political Parties in Ukraine," *Politics* 34, no. 4 (2014): 317–319.

[2] Serhiy Kudelia and Taras Kuzio, "Nothing Personal: Explaining the Rise and Decline of Political Machines in Ukraine," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 3 (2014): 255–265.

elections, the Communist Party once again found a place in the parliamentary coalition.

Three parties occupied the opposition niche: Batkivshchyna (Fatherland), headed by ex-prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko, the Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform (UDAR), headed by Vitaliy Klychko, and the nationalist Svoboda, under the leadership of Oleh Tyahnybok. Another notable oppositionist, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, formed his own party, Front of Changes; however, on the eve of the elections to the Verkhovna Rada in 2012 it dissolved and joined Batkivshchyna.

After the Revolution of Dignity, the first signs of major changes in the Ukrainian party system became noticeable during the snap presidential elections held on May 25, 2014. The former opposition figure Petro Poroshenko easily won the election in the first round by garnering 55 percent of the votes.[3] He headed the virtual party Solidarnist, which had not participated in any national elections since 2002. Poroshenko's victory was made possible first and foremost because the three key opposition leaders, Yatsenyuk, Klychko, and Tyahnybok, had lost popularity during the Revolution of Dignity, having borne the brunt of citizens' dissatisfaction with the passive behavior of the opposition leaders during the popular uprising. Poroshenko, who stayed in the background during the Revolution of Dignity, managed to draw the support of disenchanted voters.

Tymoshenko, who in the last days of the Revolution of Dignity was released from prison (she had been incarcerated as a result of a politically motivated sentence passed down by the court during Yanukovych's presidency), took second place in the elections with 12.8 percent of the votes. Yet another former oppositionist, Oleh Lyashko, took third place with 8.3 percent of the votes.

His political force, the Radical Party of Oleh Lyashko, did not surmount the barrier of the minimum required number of votes in

[3] The official results are taken from the website of the Central Election Commission (http://cvk.gov.ua).

the last parliamentary elections in 2012, but Lyashko himself did win a seat in the Verkhovna Rada in the single-member electoral district. Anatoliy Hrytsenko, who headed the Civil Position party, took fourth place with 5.5 percent of the votes, and Serhiy Tihipko of Strong Ukraine took 5.2 percent. While these political forces regularly participated in the parliamentary elections, they did not overcome the election barrier even once. The PoR candidate, Mykhailo Dobkin, garnered only 3 percent of the votes, which was testimony to the deep crisis in which the former ruling party found itself.

There are several explanations for the unexpected results of the presidential elections. First, they were held against the backdrop of the finale of the Revolution of Dignity, which highly discredited the former ruling political forces, the PoR and the Communist Party.

Second, the elections were conducted in conditions of Russia's aggression in the East of Ukraine, which considerably weakened the confrontational aspect of the rhetoric and behavior of the main candidates and reduced the usual polarization of electoral campaigns. It is clear that this played into the hands of the leader of the election race, Poroshenko, whom a significant portion of voters supported as a symbol of preservation of the country's unity.

Third, many former proponents of the PoR and the Communist Party simply were unable to vote in the elections as they lived in the territory of Crimea annexed by Russia or in the regions of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts occupied by pro-Russian proxies.[4]

[4] Iryna Bekeshkina, "Prezydents'ki vybory—1999, 2004, 2010, 2014 u vymirakh ekzyt-polu" [The 1999, 2004, 2010, and 2014 presidential elections in the mirror of the exit poll], in *Natsional'nyy ekzyt-pol: Prezydents'ki vybory'2014* [National exit poll: 2014 presidential elections] (Kyiv: Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2014), 42–46.

2014 Parliamentary Elections: Diminishing Regional Polarization

The transformation of Ukraine's political system continued during the snap elections to the Verkhovna Rada on October 26, 2014. In July 2014, President Petro Poroshenko dissolved parliament because of the intentional disintegration of the coalition. The reasons for such a decision were twofold: on the one hand, society's dissatisfaction with a parliament that had lost a significant share of its legitimacy reached the boiling point, especially as the sitting parliament had been elected well before the Revolution of Dignity. On the other hand, Poroshenko hoped that on the wave of his popularity he could expand his base of deputies in the new parliament who would be loyal to him.

Meanwhile, Poroshenko and the deputies that favored him had not met yet another powerful demand of the people, namely, changing the electoral system from a mixed to a proportional system with open lists. Also, even though in his pre-election platform Poroshenko had promised to secure changes to the electoral model, such a move obviously contradicted his own interests. Notably, preserving a proportional component with closed party lists would give Poroshenko the ability to retain control over the candidate list of his own party. For similar reasons, all the other leaders of parliamentary parties also supported the idea of preserving closed party lists.

Second, the preservation of a majoritarian component of the voting system, according to which 225 deputies were elected in single-member constituencies by a relative majority (plurality) of voters, was no less important for the president. In Ukrainian reality, a majoritarian system with a relative majority is the most advantageous one for ruling parties as it allows them to use administrative resources and bribe voters. Even though in the 2014 parliamentary elections abuse of both these political instruments of unfair competition was not as notable as it was

during the 2012 elections,[5] it still played into the hands of the presidential party, which received sixty-nine majoritarian deputies. For this reason, it is understandable why neither President Poroshenko nor the members of the parliamentary coalition tried to change the mixed electoral system before the October 2014 elections.

The start of the election campaign immediately showed that the main competition would be between the new political forces. In August 2014, Poroshenko renewed his party, Solidarnist, by organizing an assembly at which the party's name was changed to the Petro Poroshenko Bloc (PPB) in order to associate its results in the future elections with his personal popularity. Followers of the new president, many former members of UDAR (which merged with the PPB to participate in the elections), certain former deputies of Batkivshchyna, and some representatives of civil society, journalists, and participants in military actions joined the ranks of the new political force. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, who had become prime minister after the end of the Revolution of Dignity, also formed a new party, the Popular Front (PF), which included, besides former allies of Yatsenyuk, some former members of Batkivshchyna. Like the PPB, the PF included in its electoral list several civic activists, journalists, and commanders of volunteer battalions to enhance its electoral attractiveness.

The PPB and the PF managed to gain the top two spots in the elections. The PPB was successful, just as Poroshenko had envisioned, mainly because of the president's high personal popularity, while the PF managed to sharply increase its popularity on the eve of the election thanks to active political advertising on TV, radio, and billboards. The PF even took the

[5] Both international and Ukrainian observers noticed the difference in the scale of election violations during the 2012 and 2014 elections. See, for example, "Ukraine: Early Parliamentary Election, 26 October 2014. Election Observation Mission Final Report," OSCE/ODIHR, 2014 (http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/132556?download=true).

top spot according to the proportional part of the electoral system by garnering 22.1 percent of the people's votes. The PPB was supported by 21.8 percent of the electorate; however, owing to the considerably higher results in the single-member majoritarian constituencies, this party gained more deputy mandates than the PF, 132 versus 82.

Other parties that overcame the 5 percent election barrier were for the most part also political novices. The Samopomich party, formed by the mayor of Lviv, Andriy Sadovyi, took third place according to the proportional voting, although the party had been created only in 2012 and had not participated in the national elections. In the parliamentary elections of 2014, Samopomich garnered 11 percent of the votes. It was followed by the Opposition Bloc (OB), which was formed by former members of the PoR and took 9.4 percent of the votes.

The Radical Party garnered 7.4 percent of the votes to earn fifth place in the elections by taking advantage of the fairly high level of support for its leader, Oleh Lyashko. Batkivshchyna, having seen a sharp decrease in its popularity, barely managed to surmount the passage barrier with 5.7 percent of the votes. Meanwhile, Svoboda, which also had been represented in the previous parliament, did not manage to retain its spot, falling 0.3 percent short of the required number of votes to cross the electoral threshold (though Svoboda did manage to gain six deputy seats, thanks to its victories in single-member constituencies).

The Communist Party, which had been represented in all seven previous parliaments, won only 3.9 percent of the votes and did not gain a single deputy mandate. The parties Strong Ukraine and Civil Position again ended up out of parliament with an even lower showing of 3.1 percent of the votes.

The regional patterns of voting in the 2014 elections showed notable differences from the previous parliamentary elections. Unlike in the elections to the Verkhovna Rada in 2006, 2007, and 2012, the difference in the popularity of the main parties between regions diminished substantially.

For example, the PPB's electorate was divided rather evenly between the eastern and southern regions and the central and western regions. The PPB garnered the most votes in Vinnytsia oblast (37.4 percent), Poroshenko's native oblast, and the fewest votes in Luhansk oblast (14.3 percent). However, Vinnytsia oblast is probably an exception to the general pattern, as in all other central and western oblasts the PPB garnered from 17 percent to 28 percent of the electoral votes. Even such a difference, however, pales in comparison with the results of the elections to the Verkhovna Rada in 2012, won by the PoR. Then the difference between the best (Donetsk oblast) and the worst (Lviv oblast) results for the PoR was as high as 60 percent.

The regional differences in results for the PF were somewhat more pronounced. In the western and central oblasts the level of support for this party varied from 19.5 percent in Chernihiv oblast to 37.5 percent in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, while in the southern and eastern oblasts the level of support fluctuated from 6 percent to 16.1 percent. At the same time, the Radical Party, Batkivshchyna, and even Samopomich, the last of which was mainly oriented toward the western oblasts, demonstrated a relatively even distribution of votes all over the country, though their level of support in the East was somewhat lower than in other regions. Instead, the OB remained the only party with a clear geographic area of support: in all eastern oblasts it garnered more than 22 percent of the votes (in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, 38.7 percent and 36.6 percent of the electorate, respectively, supported this party), while in the central and western oblasts its electoral indicator fluctuated from less than 1 percent to 7 percent.

The narrowing of electoral differences between various regions of Ukraine can be explained mainly by the collapse of the PoR and the emergence of a political vacuum in the southern and eastern regions, which at one time were the PoR's electoral bastion. Many of the former proponents of this party either could not participate in the elections because of the occupation by pro-Russian forces and military actions on the territory of their residence or

simply refused to show up at polling stations. The national exit poll put the share of the latter at 37 percent.[6]

For this reason, the increased support for political forces opposed to the PoR in this region was relative and associated with an overall lower share of citizens showing up to vote. In particular, in the 2012 elections voter turnout in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts was 59.6 percent and 57.7 percent, respectively, while in the 2014 elections the figures were 32.4 percent and 32.9 percent, respectively. On the other hand, the popularity of Poroshenko's new party played a role in the electoral outcome: 25 percent of former proponents of the PoR gave their votes to the PPB during the 2014 elections.[7]

The results of the parliamentary elections in 2014 allowed the formation of a broad parliamentary coalition made up of the PPB, the PF, Samopomich, the Radical Party, and Batkivshchyna, while only the OB remained in the opposition. A simple analysis of the composition of the new parliament leads to an unexpected conclusion: of the six parliamentary parties that overcame the 5 percent barrier in the 2014 elections, only one, Batkivshchyna, had had representation in the previous parliament. Both ruling and opposition political forces, which had represented the core of the party system in Ukraine in 2013, lost much of their popularity during the Euromaidan and the armed conflict with Russia. Their

[6] The national exit poll was conducted in the 2014 parliamentary elections by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, and the Razumkov Center. The main results of the exit poll can be found here: "Parlaments'ki vybory–2014: Pidsumky Natsional'noho ekzyt-polu'2014" [2014 Parliamentary elections: Results of the 2014 national exit poll]," Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, November 5, 2014 (http://dif.org.ua/article/parlamentski-vibori-2014-pidsumki-natsionalnogo-ekzit-polu2014).

[7] Iryna Bekeshkina, «Partiyni vybory v Ukrayini: Radykal'ni zminy" [Party elections in Ukraine: Radical changes], in *Natsional'nyy ekzyt-poll: Prezydents'ki vybory'2014* [National exit poll: 2014 presidential elections], 40.

places were taken by politicians of the second echelon—Poroshenko, Lyashko, Sadovyi—who took advantage of the absence of negative factors in their background as the turbulent events unfolded at the end of 2013 and the start of 2014.

On the other hand, the novelty of Ukraine's political landscape, which the parliamentary elections in 2014 testified to, is also quite deceptive. Although practically all political forces that won a seat in parliament were new on the scene, their leaders had been present in the highest echelons of Ukrainian politics for a long time. It is quite telling that among the parliamentary parties, only Samopomich did not have a single former MP in its ranks, which provides grounds for calling it a truly new political party. All other parliamentary factions (besides Batkivshchyna, which is an old party) were simply new projects of representatives of the old political elites. And though the civil movement Chesno calculated that after the elections, 56 percent of the Verkhovna Rada consisted of new faces,[8] the elections were won by former politicians under new brand names.

The 2015 Local Elections: The Influence of Regional Players

The regular local elections, held on October 25, 2015, continued the transformation of the Ukrainian party system. Characteristically, after a coalition formed in the new Verkhovna Rada, those political parties that had become part of the majority sought to change the electoral system before the next local elections by introducing the proportional system with open party lists for elections to district and oblast councils. However, the interests of the majority of the new parliamentary parties turned out to be identical to those of their

[8] Oleksiy Bratushchak, "'Novi oblychchia' rik potomu: Lozhka medu u dizhtsi d'ohtiu" ["New faces" after a year: Spoon of honey in a barrel of tar], *Ukrayins'ka Pravda*, December 4, 2015 (http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2015/12/4/7091366/).

predecessors, which is why the parliamentary coalition did not fulfill this promise.

The deputies decided to preserve the system of a simple majority for elections to rural and village councils. On the other hand, they proposed a new system of election to city, district, and oblast councils, describing it as proportional with open lists. In truth, however, the system was not of that sort, as it gave parties the ability to retain control over their own candidate lists.

According to the new model, the elections were held in constituencies, in each of which a party could nominate one candidate or no candidate at all. The voter simultaneously voted for the party and, if the party had nominated a candidate in this constituency, for the party's candidate. Deputy seats were distributed only among those parties that, through the aggregate results of voting in all constituencies, overcame the 5 percent barrier.

Those candidates who garnered a higher percentage of votes in their constituency than did their party colleagues from other constituencies became the deputies of these parties. In this way, the authors of the new model created the illusion that the order of candidates in the party lists depended on the will of the voters. In actuality, voters could not choose from among different candidates from one party, and the new system de facto preserved closed lists, thereby satisfying the interests of party leaders. Moreover, the new model was too complicated and the results of voting often confused voters and candidates, which limited the legitimacy of such a model.

The local elections of 2015 were quite competitive, though they were marked by vote buying both by pro-government and by opposition candidates.[9] The results of the elections testified to

[9] "Zayava shchodo promizhnykh rezul'tativ sposterezhennia za cherhovymy misttsevymy vyboramy 2015 roku" [Statement on preliminary results of observation of 2015 regular local elections], OPORA Civil Network, October 26, 2016 (https://www.oporaua.org/vybory/zvity/9864-zajava-shchodo-promizhnyh-rezultativ-sposterezhennja-za-chergovymy-miscevymy-vyboramy-2015-roku).

further changes in the Ukrainian party system. First and foremost, they led to the disappearance of the regional monopoly of the parties of power that had emerged after the 2010 elections. Then the ruling PoR had managed to gain control over the overwhelming majority of oblast and key city councils, thanks to the abuse of administrative resources and bribery of voters. In contrast, in 2015 the pro-presidential PPB took first place in approximately only half of the oblasts, predominantly in the West and Center of the country. Furthermore, this party failed to independently gain a majority in any of these oblasts as the proportional system was an obstacle to doing so and thereby complicated the formation of single-party majorities. Overall, the PPB garnered 19.5 percent of the votes in the oblast council elections.[10]

The decline in support for the ruling parties becomes even more obvious if one takes into account the refusal of the PF to participate in local elections. This decision was dictated by the rapid and catastrophic drop in the popularity of this political party, which on the eve of the local elections in 2015 fluctuated within the margins of statistical error.[11]

The reasons for the PF's stunning loss of popularity can be found in the populace's increasing dissatisfaction with Yatsenyuk, who as prime minister was viewed poorly by the people because of several unpopular measures the government took, such as raising utility prices. Moreover, during the brief period of its existence

[10] The results in this section represent only elections to oblast councils and are taken from here: "Analiz rezul'tativ misttsevykh vyboriv 2015" [Analysis of results of 2015 local elections], RATING PRO Informational-Analytical Centre, November 9, 2015 (http://ratingpro.org/research/analiz_rezultativ_miscevyh_vyboriv_2015.html).

[11] Already by June 2015 the rating of the PF had fallen to 2.7 percent: "Elektoral'ni nastroyi naselennia, cherven' 2015" [Electoral attitudes of the population, June 2015], Rating Sociological Group, June 17, 2015 (http://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/elektoralnye_nastroeniya_naseleniya_iyun_2015.html). After that, the ratings of the PF continued to fall.

the PF failed to build up a regional network or recruit enough members to successfully compete with its political opponents.

Besides that, prior to the start of the elections the Radical Party left the parliamentary coalition, justifying its decision on the grounds of its disagreement with the proposed constitutional changes regarding decentralization, which, among other things, envisaged the granting of so-called "special status" to the occupied territories in the Donbas region.

Although Samopomich and Batkivshchyna remained in the coalition until February 2016, they essentially began playing the role of an internal opposition force to the PPB and the PF beginning in the middle of 2015, on more than one occasion criticizing their formal partners in the coalition. As a result, in the elections of 2015 the PPB was the only bona fide ruling party, and the results of the elections underscored a notable decline in the popularity of pro-government factions.

Just as in the parliamentary elections in 2014, the ratings of the PPB were closely tied to the popularity of its leader, Poroshenko: during a year and a half in office he remained the leader in terms of the sympathies of voters, but his ratings fell significantly.

At the same time, the decline in the ratings of the PPB did not result in the electoral revenge of former members of the PoR. Several powerful parties—not only the OB, but also the Radical Party, Batkivshchyna, and Svoboda, as well as other political groups such as Our Land and Vidrodzhennia (Renaissance) parties—competed for the support of opposition-minded voters. In the elections, the OB again failed to regain the previous support level of the PoR, though this party drew a relative majority of votes in four southern oblasts. Given the loss of a considerable part of former voters of the PoR who lived in the "Donetsk People's Republic" and the "Luhansk People's Republic," territories not controlled by Ukraine, the OB wagered on transferring its electoral base to Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts: precisely there it received the most votes (29.1 percent and 33.8 percent, respectively). However, the nationwide result for the OB was only 10.5 percent.

Meanwhile, Batkivshchyna did not gain a majority in any of the oblasts, though in many it presented strong competition to the PPB and gained slightly more votes than the OB, 12.2 percent. Traditionally, Batkivshchyna received the greatest support in the central and western oblasts, though the differences between different regions, just as in 2014, were not overly striking. Samopomich and the Radical Party, in the meantime, could not improve their electoral standings, though they took a critical position toward the ruling authorities. Samopomich gained the greatest support in the western part of the country, though it also achieved some success in nontraditional regions: in particular, its candidate became the mayor of Mykolaiv, while another one almost won in Kryvyi Rih. The Radical Party had its best results in the central region of the country. However, their insufficiently developed organizational structure was an obstacle for both parties, as a result of which their consolidated results across the country amounted to a mere 6.8 percent (Radical Party) and 6.4 percent (Samopomich).

Another important result of the elections was the emergence of new political parties, which managed to achieve high vote tallies in some regions. For example, the Ukrainian Association of Patriots (UKROP) party, associated with oligarch and former head of the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast State Administration Ihor Kolomoyskyi, gained a victory in Volyn oblast and put up fierce competition to the OB in Dnipropetrovsk oblast.

UKROP also quite successfully exploited the rhetoric critical of the ruling authorities, which allowed it to gain a presence on many local councils. Nationally, UKROP garnered 7.4 percent of the votes. In line with its traditional support, Svoboda saw its highest level of popularity in the western oblasts; however, its success in other regions was much more modest. As a result, it received only 6.9 percent of votes nationally.

Several political parties formed on the basis of informal alliances between the PPB and the local elites also had good results in the elections. The most eloquent example of such a political force was the Vidrodzhennia party, headed by mayor of Kharkiv and

ex-member of the PoR Hennadiy Kernes. It came as no surprise that this party earned a convincing victory in Kharkiv oblast and in the city of Kharkiv (it gained an absolute majority on the city council). According to the observations of local activists, Vidrodzhennia's vote result was possible thanks to the assistance of the PPB, which refused to nominate strong candidates in this region or actively support them. In other regions, the performance of Vidrodzhennia was much weaker, and nationally the party realized only 5.5 percent of the votes.

A similar picture was observed in the elections to the Khmelnytskiy Oblast Council and the Odesa City Council. In both cases, local political forces created by ex-members of the PoR (which managed to get the silent support of the PPB in its struggle against its opponents) were victorious. In Khmelnytskiy oblast, the party For Concrete Actions, headed by the former parliamentarian and businessman Oleksandr Hereha, took the top spot, while in Odesa the Trust in Deeds party, led by Odesa mayor Hennadiy Trukhanov, also took first place. However, such success was purely local, and both parties garnered less than 1 percent of the nationwide vote. The victory of another new party, Our Land, was also at the local level, although it managed to get the support of voters in different regions of the country. This political force was also associated with the PPB and was called informally the "party of mayors," as it included many city heads. Thanks to its composition, it managed to receive 4.4 percent of the votes.

The local elections of 2015 thus are testament to the disappearance of the monopoly of a single political force in different regions of the country. Even though the parliamentary parties led the electoral race, in many regions nonparliamentary forces presented them with serious competition. It is characteristic that a year after the parliamentary elections the political forces that had used the opposition rhetoric gained the absolute majority of votes, a finding that demonstrates the volatility of electoral views .

On the other hand, the ruling parties, in particular the PPB, in general managed to preserve a critical mass of electoral allegiance

in the majority of oblasts in the country, either through their own results or because of informal alliances with local political forces. It bears emphasizing again that even the new political parties that performed well in the local elections for the most part formed around experienced politicians, which calls into question whether the renewal of the Ukrainian political party system was genuine.

Old Problems of New Parties: Local Organizations Controlled by the Center

In the relatively short period that the new parties have functioned since 2014, it has already become clear that they were formed and continue to function predominantly on the same principles as the old political parties did. The majority of new parties were formed by representatives of the old political elites for the sake of participating in elections: on the eve of the parliamentary elections in 2014 the PPB, PF, and OB were such parties. The situation with respect to the Radical Party, which its leader, Oleh Lyashko, founded on the eve of the 2012 elections and which did not undertake any serious activity in the interim period between elections, was quite similar. Likewise, the activity of Samopomich from the time it was formed in 2012 up to the parliamentary elections in 2014 went practically unnoticed. Of the parties represented in the Verkhovna Rada, only Batkivshchyna and Svoboda have a long history of party work beyond the election period. The key novices in the 2015 local elections—UKROP, Vidrodzhennia, and Our Land—were also election projects of their sponsors.

The situation was similar with respect to the internal organization of new Ukrainian parties. Most of them had no or only weakly developed local organizations. For example, in their financial reports for the first quarter of 2016, the PF and the Radical Party did not point to a single local organization registered as a legal entity.

At the same time, the reports of other parliamentary parties showed that even those with a fairly well-developed network of

regional and local organizations had practically no employees.[12] On the one hand, this may indicate a desire of political parties to conceal their employees' salary expenses. However, it also points to the obvious staffing problems of these parties. It is impossible to assess the actual membership of the leading parties. Those that make such information public exaggerate the figures (e.g., Batkivshchyna reported about 600,000 registered party members);[13] however, the majority of parties do not provide information on the numbers in their membership database.

The most notable problem of new and old parties, however, is the lack of internal democracy. The decision-making mechanisms inside parties are not transparent, though the parties report to the public that they hold congresses and conferences to make important decisions. Moreover, after 2014 a number of leading Ukrainian parties began exhibiting a penchant to strengthen the roles of leaders and silence dissent. In particular, at the end of 2015 and the start of 2016 parliament either passed or began considering several legislative initiatives that threatened to impose the authoritarian practices of party management.[14]

In December 2015, parliament approved on a first reading a bill to allow parties to strip their deputies in local councils of their mandates if the deputies acted in a way contrary to the goals and interests of the parties or withdrew from their factions. Had such a norm taken effect, it would have allowed party leaders to strip the mandates of any party deputies that dared to express or take a

[12] "Zvity za pershyy kvartal 2016 roku" [Reports for the first quarter of 2016], National Agency on Prevention of Corruption, 2016 (http://nazk.gov.ua/zvity-za- pershyy-kvartal-2016-roku-0).

[13] This information comes from an old official webpage of Batkivshchyna as of July 2014: "Partiya Bat'kivshchyna: Istoriya stanovlennia" [Batkivshchyna Party: History of development], Batkivshchyna All-Ukrainian Union, June 2, 2014 (http://batkivschina.com/485-partya-batkvschina-storya-stanovlennya.html).

[14] Oleksii Sydorchuk, *Nazad vid Yevropy: Nastup partiynoyi dyktatury v Ukrayini* [A step backward from Europe: Offensive of the party dictatorship in Ukraine] (Kyiv: Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2016), 3–4.

position that was contrary to the official position of the party. The breakup of the coalition and the political crisis that began in February 2016 blocked further consideration of this bill.

The next step aimed at limiting internal party democracy occurred in February 2016, when the Verkhovna Rada approved changes to the law "On the Election of People's Deputies of Ukraine." The changes gave parties the right to exclude any candidate from their electoral lists after the official announcement of the election results but before the candidates acquired deputy mandates. Approval of the law had totally pragmatic aims: thanks to it the PPB managed to exclude from its party list one of the contenders for a deputy mandate, Andriy Bohdan, who after the 2014 elections had shifted his loyalty to the opposition party. Like the previous legislative initiative, the new law disproportionately expanded the rights of party leaders, allowing them to change the results of the people's will after the elections were over.

The law applied only to the results of 2014 parliamentary elections. However, given its attractiveness for leaders of all parliamentary parties the probability that they will try to apply its effect to upcoming electoral cycles should not be discarded.

In the end, the tendency to strengthen the role of party leaders reached its culmination in the decision of the PPB to strip the deputy mandates of Mykola Tomenko and Yehor Firsov, who had withdrawn from the PPB parliamentary faction. This decision was approved on the grounds of the imperative mandate codified in Ukraine's Constitution, which allows parties to recall their deputies if the deputies pull out of a parliamentary faction to which they have been elected. This provision has been criticized on more than one occasion by Ukrainian political experts and international organizations on the grounds that it flies in the face of democratic principles.[15]

[15] "Opinion on the Amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine Adopted on 8.12.2004," European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), June 13, 2005 (http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2005)015-e).

Largely owing to the controversial nature of this provision, it had not been applied for quite some time, though it took effect together with other constitutional amendments starting on January 1, 2006. Moreover, even though there were pragmatic motives behind the PPB's application of this norm—namely, to replace fugitive deputies with more loyal members of the faction—it created an extremely dangerous precedent.

The speed with which the decision to strip the deputy mandates from Tomenko and Firsov was made was quite telling. Although the Central Election Commission could not approve other important decisions (e.g., calling for snap elections in a single-mandate constituency after the death of MP Ihor Yeremeev) for several months, it embraced the PPB's decision immediately.

The fact that the aforementioned legislative initiatives and measures were supported by almost all parliamentary factions is the most alarming signal: in particular, the majority of deputies of all coalition factions (with the exception of Batkivshchyna regarding the voting for amendments to the law on the election of people's deputies) voted for both bills, while the OB supported one of the bills. Such intensely articulated support for dangerous initiatives underscores the serious problems afflicting the internal democracy of all parliamentary parties.

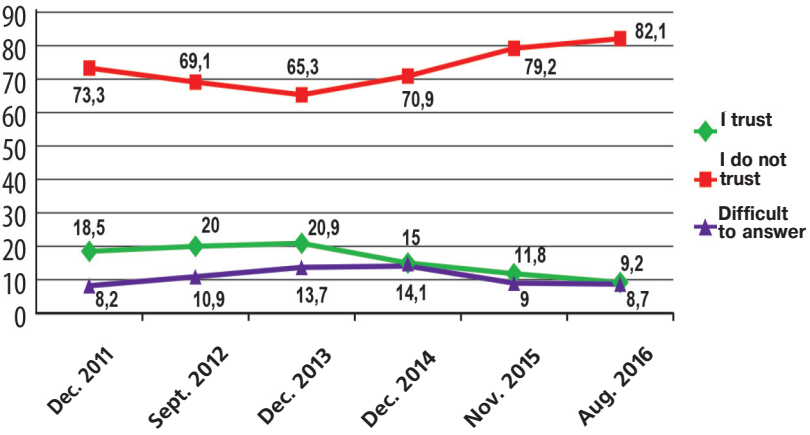
Parties in the Mirror of Public Opinion

The average Ukrainian citizen has always had a negative attitude toward political parties. Sociological data indicate the extraordinarily low prestige of political parties in the public opinion of Ukrainians. That includes attitudes toward both existing parties and political parties as institutions (*see figure 2.1*).

Let us look at the dynamics of the attitudes of Ukrainian citizens toward political parties as graphed in figure 2.1. In December 2014, following the snap parliamentary elections, people trusted political parties even less than in December 2013. Furthermore, the level of trust continued to fall, reaching a record low in July 2016: only 9 percent of Ukrainian citizens trusted political parties in

Ukraine, while 82 percent did not trust them, including the 51 percent that totally did not trust them (figures are rounded in the text).

Figure 2.1. **To what degree do you trust political parties? (%)**



Sources: Polling results are presented on the DIF website: "Vybory–2012: Politychne strukturuvannia suspil'stva ta perspektyvy bahatopartiynosti v Ukrayini" [2012 elections: Political structuring of society and prospects of a multi-party system in Ukraine], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, October 1, 2012 (http://dif.org.ua/article/vibori-2012-politichne-strukturuvannya-suspilstva-ta-perspektivi-bagatopartiynosti-v-ukraini); "Hromads'ka dumka: Pidsumky 2013 roku" [Public opinion: Results for the year 2013], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, December 27, 2013 (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pidsumki-2013-roku); "Hromads'ka dumka: Pidsumky 2014 roku" [Public opinion: Results for the year 2014], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, December 29, 2014 (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pidsumki-2014-roku); "Stavlennia ukrayintsiv do politychnykh partiy i dzherel yikh finansuvannia" [Attitudes of Ukrainians toward parties and sources of their financing], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, December 21, 2015 (http://dif.org.ua/article/stavlennya-ukraintsiv-do-politichnikh-partiy-i-dzherel-ikh-finansuvannya); "Stavlennia hromadian do politychnoi sytuatzii, vyboriv ta partiy" [Attitudes of citizens toward political situation, elections and parties], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, July 27, 2017 (http://dif.org.ua/article/stavlennya-gromadyan-do-politichnoi-situatsii-viboriv-i-partiy).

Moreover, by comparison with 2012, the percentage of citizens who felt that the activity of parties in Ukraine corresponded to democratic standards fell sharply: in August 2012, 29 percent of citizens were certain about the correspondence of the activity of parties to democratic standards. In November 2015 polling that figure had fallen to 18 percent, and in August 2016 and June 2017 it stood at 14 percent. The data provided in table 2.1 show that the main claims of citizens to political parties remained unchanged: "The parties do not defend the interests of the people, but only those of their leaders and financial-economic clans."

Table 2.1. **If you feel that the activity of political parties in Ukraine does not correspond to democratic standards, then why? (%)**
(*Several responses are possible*)

	Nov. 2015	Aug. 2016	June 2017
Parties do not defend the interests of the people, only those of their leaders and financial-economic clans	59.3	58.3	44.7
Parties are financed by oligarchs	—[a]	47.8	26.8
Parties do not follow their declared goals and programs	40.8	47.4	35.1
Parties do not have a true connection to the people	35.3	46.2	36.5
Parties do not have internal democracy and are subordinated to their leaders	23.9	25.4	17.7
Parties do not have a clear ideology	21.5	16.5	15.7
Parties do not have a clear program of action	21.4	22.3	17.6
Other	0.8	1.1	2.0
Difficult to say	8.8	2.4	8.4

Sources: Same sources as for figure 2.1.

[a] This response choice was not available.

Among other flaws, Ukrainians felt that the most significant ones were the incapacity of parties to adhere to their declared goals and programs and the absence of real ties between parties and citizens, and even more citizens noted these deficiencies in 2014–2016 than when Viktor Yanukovych was in office. Clearly, these results showed not so much any actual worsening of the "quality" of parties but an increasing discrepancy between the activities of parties and people's expectations, which climbed noticeably after the Revolution of Dignity. This feeling of dissatisfaction has significantly increased in recent years: in November 2015, only 23 percent of the population saw among political parties at least one that expressed their interests, while in August 2016 this figure fell to 15 percent, and in June 2017 it rose again, to 24 percent.

This crisis of trust in political parties leads to the constant decline in the percentage of those who express their readiness to participate in elections in the event they are held and the growth in the percentage of those who are undecided and those who prefer to cross out all parties from the voting ballots (as the option "against all" is at the moment absent).

What do voters expect from a party for which they would vote? The results presented in table 2.2 point to an interesting trend: people lowered their expectations of parties on virtually all issues except one, understanding the needs of voters.

Importantly, on this issue respondents were not limited in the number of answers and were not forced to choose the most important one—they could pick all options if they wanted to. However, for more than half of respondents, the choice "understanding problems of voters" turned out to be the most significant, and the weight of this factor grew from 57 percent to 63 percent. At the same time, it turned out that having a strong team of like-minded people was not that essential, and respondents noted that a clear party ideology was also not very important. As for the "democratic nature of decision making inside a party," only 11 percent of Ukrainians stressed its importance. The factors that increased in significance were the need to understand voters'

problems and to have frequent contact with them. Clearly, in these responses we can detect signs of paternalism, which are innate for the mass of Ukrainian voters: it does not matter what party one votes for as long as it "understands the needs of voters."

Table 2.2. **Which of the features listed below should a political party have to win your vote? (%)**

(*Several choices are possible*)

	Nov. 2015	Aug. 2016
Understanding the problems of its voters	56.9	63.2
Clear program of actions	42.9	36.2
Strong team of like-minded people	40.3	28.2
Clear ideology	32.3	24.3
Frequent contacts with voters	23.8	33.0
Well-known leader	20.1	16.1
Democratic nature of decision making inside a party	20.0	10.6
Decent financial possibilities	12.1	7.7
Well-developed network of local organizations	8.7	3.4
Access to administrative resources	5.7	4.4
Effective system of agitation	3.4	3.3
Other	5.7	1.0

Sources: Same sources as for figure 2.1.

The very same indifference of Ukrainians to problems of forming a modern multiparty system is clear from other research data. One of the major flaws of the Ukrainian political system is the nontransparent financing of political parties. Basically, parties became part of "holding companies" created by financial-industrial

groups. Consequently, parties do not fulfill their main function of representing the interests of the electorate but only serve their oligarchic sponsors.

In the polling, citizens were asked who should finance a political party. The responses can be divided into two categories: one group proposed the very same system that has existed to the present day, namely, the financing of parties by party leaders (49 percent) and businessmen (22 percent). Other variants were the financing of parties by rank-and-file party members (48 percent) and by supporters of a particular party (37 percent) *(table 2.3)*.

Table 2.3. **Who, in your opinion, should finance the activities of political parties? (%)**

(*Several choices are possible*)

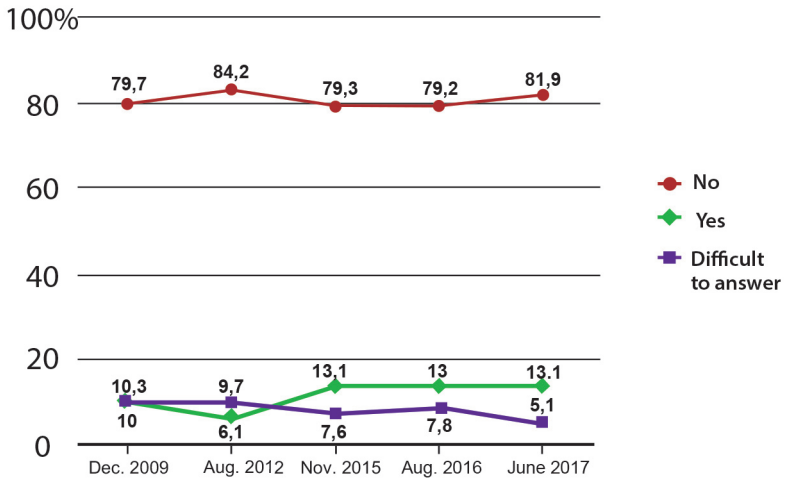
	Nov. 2015	Aug. 2016	June 2017
Party leaders	39.9	42.5	49.0
Rank-and-file party members	39.5	45.0	48.2
Supporters of a party	31.1	35	36.8
Businessmen	14.1	20.7	21.8
The state	13.0	15.1	8.0
Other	0.7	1.0	2.3
Difficult to say	17.4	14.8	8.3

Sources: Same sources as for figure 2.1.

This second model in general corresponds to modern democratic practice. However, how realistic is it in today's conditions in Ukraine? First of all, we should note that "rank-and-file party members," according to polling, in Ukraine represent only 3.5–5 percent of the population. The situation with "supporters of parties" is somewhat better if one considers those

voters that voted for political parties. In the polling, the following question was posed: "Are you personally ready to donate money to some political party if you are sure that it will defend your interests?" As the data in figure 2.2 show, only an insignificant part of the population was ready to support even an ideal party. However, in a comparison with 2012, one can see a shift in the percentage of those who were ready to financially support "their" party, and the increase was almost double. Yet 13 percent is clearly insufficient, and all the more so if one takes into account the sums of money citizens are prepared to shell out for this purpose. In 2017, according to national polling data, this sum amounted to UAH 78 per month. Moreover, those 13 percent of the population ready to support a political party were distributed across several different political parties, meaning that the possible sum for a single party would be even smaller.

Figure 2.2. **Are you personally ready to donate money to some political party if you are sure that it will defend your interests? (%)**



Sources: Same sources as for figure 2.1.

Finally, another model is financing a political party from the state budget. This system functions in almost all democratic countries in one form or another. However, in Ukraine the population negatively perceives such a proposal: in November 2015 it was supported by 15 percent of those polled and in August 2016 by 16 percent, but in June 2017 by only 10 percent. Notwithstanding this fact, on October 8, 2015, the Verkhovna Rada approved the law on financing of political parties, which stipulated the financing out of the national budget of parties that exceeded a certain threshold of the vote in the most recent parliamentary elections. Before the next parliamentary elections, only parties that overcame the 5 percent barrier in the 2014 elections are to receive state subsidies, and after the next election cycle this barrier is to be lowered to 2 percent. Although the law was positively received by international institutions, its enforcement depends to a great extent on the readiness of parties to play by the new rules and the willingness of citizens to track party funds. It is clear that until citizens understand the need for a modern party system, a stable democracy is impossible. And without a stable democracy, it will be difficult for them to gain realistic levers of influence over the ruling power.

Conclusions

After the Revolution of Dignity had wound down and Russian aggression had started, the Ukrainian party system underwent a fundamental transformation. For the most part, however, it did not have a significant impact on how political parties function or on relations between party headquarters and local organizations. The parliamentary elections of 2014 exhibited a high level of electoral volatility, as almost all parties that won a seat in parliament were political novices. The elections also testified to the collapse of the once dominant PoR, which discredited itself in the eyes of its proponents and lost a considerable part of its electoral support as a result of the Russian occupation of Crimea and some territories of the Donbas. However, the PoR did not disappear from the political

playing field since some of its former members formed the Opposition Bloc, which occupied a similar though considerably limited electoral niche. The Communist Party, which for the first time in the history of independent Ukraine failed to win any parliamentary seats, also suffered a serious blow, from which it failed to recover.

After the 2014 elections, parliament saw 56 percent new faces, though this figure is quite deceptive because representatives of the old political elites stood behind the new victorious parties—the PPB, the PF, the Radical Party, and the OB. Accordingly, society's demand for the renewal of the country's political system was only partially satisfied.

One important result of the parliamentary elections was a decrease in regional differences in voting. Only in the case of the OB did the electorate remain expressly concentrated in the southern and eastern oblasts, while differences in the level of support for other parliamentary parties in various regions substantially narrowed.

At the same time, the results of the local elections in 2015 confirmed the volatility of the Ukrainian party system. Although the parliamentary parties PPB, Batkivshchyna, and OB garnered most of the votes, in many regions the new parties UKROP, Vidrodzhennia, and Our Land, closely associated with oligarchs, local influential businessmen, and representatives of the old guard in power, put up fierce competition. Overall, political competition grew, even in the Donbas.

As a result of the introduction of a proportional system in the elections for city, district, and oblast councils, the PPB failed to gain a regional monopoly, though it did retain a sufficient level of control over a considerable number of oblasts through formal and informal alliances with local political players.

Despite the volatile nature of the Ukrainian party system after 2014, the methods of party formation and functioning for the most part remained unchanged. Party leaders preserved their disproportionately strong influence over the activity of their own

political forces, and during 2015–2016 parliamentary parties even tried to enhance the formal powers of the party leadership. The party center also retained its dominance over local organizations.

At the same time, the latest trends in the development of the party system in Ukraine did not lead to notable changes in public opinion. Just as earlier, citizens do not trust political parties and feel that their activity does not accord with democratic standards. Even though political competition in the country increased significantly after the Revolution of Dignity, voters are still convinced that parties care only about the interests of their leaders and financial sponsors, not about the interests of voters. And it is quite obvious that the negative attitudes of Ukrainians toward the financing of political parties out of the state budget are directly associated with this perception. However, the state financing of parties means not only assistance to parties but also a potentially higher level of transparency and control of their activity on the part of the state and society. Clearly, the capacity of parties to become more open and sensitive to the interests of voters will depend on the readiness of citizens to take advantage of the new possibilities of such control.

III. RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN THE DONBAS AS A FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF ECONOMIC SENTIMENTS IN UKRAINE

Ihor Burakovskiy

In this chapter, we examine the perceptions of the populace and businesses regarding the effect of Russia's military aggression in the East of Ukraine on the socioeconomic state of citizens, the conditions of doing business in Ukraine, and people's expectations regarding the content, direction, and pace of political and socioeconomic reforms in the country. The results of polls of the population and business circles form the basis for the analysis of their sentiments. Owing to the lack of credible information, this overview looks at sentiments in "mainland" Ukraine (i.e., distinct from the occupied territories), though an analysis of the sentiments and expectations of people living in the occupied territories of Ukraine would be invaluable in the political decision-making process. It is also worth noting that the results of different studies of the economic sentiments of the populace are difficult to compare, as different methodological methods were used. For this reason, we introduce data from different polls that have recently been conducted in Ukraine as reference materials on economic perceptions, though we do not compare the methods of polling and do not specify which approach might be more correct from a methodological standpoint.

There are two main dimensions to an analysis of economic sentiments. The first dimension consists of the business expectations of persons engaged in entrepreneurial activity. The main sources of information on the business expectations of entrepreneurs are polls of managers (owners) of companies (i.e., legal entities) and physical persons–entrepreneurs (PPE).

The second dimension is the economic sentiments of the populace. In general, a large number of public opinion studies exists today regarding the nature of and reasons for the military-political crisis in the East and its solution, the influence of Russian aggression on the foreign policy priorities of society, attitudes toward internally displaced persons, and so on. However, so far researchers have not paid much attention to the economic dimension of the impact of the annexation of Crimea and the war in the East of Ukraine on the attitudes of society.

Economic sentiments are formed in a certain socioeconomic context, and without referring to this context it would be difficult to understand which factors (economic, political, etc.) have had an impact on the economic assessments and expectations of people and businesses and which ones are likely to have an impact in the future.

Political–Economic Context

Ukraine went to war while the country was in the throes of an economic crisis, one that to a certain extent is systemic in nature. Though the recent, unsustainable model of economic development (characterized by, among other things, a high level of monopolization of key industries, a rigid labor market, low competitiveness, and effective state capture by oligarchs) has exhausted itself, the economic policy of that oligarchic, noncompetitive era was not oriented toward systemic institutional and structural changes.[1] The war shed a harsh light on the real scale of the many obvious institutional and economic problems, which have not been resolved to this day.

[1] A nonexclusive list of features of this economic model also includes fiscal and quasi-fiscal imbalances, a poorly developed sector of financial intermediation, a low level of international competitiveness, financial sector vulnerability to external shocks, obsolete physical infrastructure, numerous explicit and implicit social and economic benefits, a poor public investment management process, and a de facto fixed exchange rate.

The Russian aggression posed several challenges to Ukraine.

• The first challenge Ukraine faced was to subdue Russian aggression so that Ukraine could preserve its sovereignty. At the same time, the war provided politicians with an excuse not to make important decisions or to exploit the highly complicated political and socioeconomic situation to their own advantage. These factors affected economic policymaking to the fullest extent.

• The second challenge was to conduct quick and full-scale political reform, which was essentially the main demand of the Revolution of Dignity. The results of reform in the political arena should have significantly strengthened the political viability of the state, including its functions as the main economic reformer and guarantor of security of society in the military, political, economic, and social dimensions.

• The third challenge was the need to meet, at least in part, people's high expectations of change for the better, which placed significant demands on the politicians currently running the country. At the same time, high expectations are a perfect setting for the evolution of populism and the emergence of societal disenchantment.

• The fourth challenge was developing the capacity to use to good advantage the tremendous support of the international community, which continues to exhibit a high level of mobilization in response to the Russian threat. It is clear that the international community and Ukrainian citizens expect from Ukrainian policymakers the implementation of sweeping political and economic reforms in the country.

• The fifth challenge Ukraine faced was and remains the threat of greater popular support for the idea of expelling the occupied territories from Ukraine and severing ties with them.

To better understand the economic repercussions of the war in the East and the economic sentiments of society in particular, it is worthwhile assessing the place of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in the economy of Ukraine.

The traditional view in Ukrainian society is that "Donbas feeds Ukraine." Political forces such as the Party of Regions actively exploited this argument, particularly during the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity, to mobilize their base among the electorate. In essence, this thesis became the ideological pillar of the first manifestations of separatism, such as at the congress in Severodonetsk on November 28, 2004, when the delegates decided that Yanukovych had been elected in full accordance with the law and, to protect their rights with respect to the East, to hold a referendum on changes to the administrative-territorial system of Ukraine.

In general, the place of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in the economy of Ukraine can be characterized according to the dimensions listed in table 3.1.

Table 3.1. **Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in the economy of Ukraine on the eve of the Revolution of Dignity and Russian aggression (2012–2013)**

	Donetsk oblast		Luhansk oblast	
	2012	**2013**	**2012**	**2013**
Share of the oblast in the GDP of Ukraine (%)	11.7[a]	10.8[b]	4.0	3.6
GRP (gross regional product) per capita (UAH)	38.907	37.830	25.950	24.514
Share in the number of employees of enterprises in Ukraine (%)	7.7	7.3	4.7	4.5
Share in the number of employees of physical persons-entrepreneurs (%)	8.5	8.6	4.6	4.7
Share in the volume of industrial products sold (%)	17.3	16.3	6.0	5.4

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine (http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/).

[a] First place among oblasts of Ukraine.

[b] First place among oblasts of Ukraine.

With respect to foreign trade, Donetsk oblast in 2013 took first place among the oblasts of Ukraine in the volume of exports of goods and second place after Odesa oblast in the export of services (*see table 3.2*).

***Table 3.2*. Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts' share in the foreign trade of Ukraine on the eve of the Revolution of Dignity and Russian aggression (2012–2013, %)**

	Donetsk oblast		Luhansk oblast	
	2012	**2013**	**2012**	**2013**
Share in the total export of goods (%)	20.5	19.6	6.1	5.6
Share in the total import of goods (%)	4.9	5.3	2.4	2.4
Share in the total export of services (%)	5.1	4.3	1.3	1.1
Share in the total import of services (%)	9.3	8.2	1.1	2.2

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine (http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/).

These two oblasts together accounted for more than 20 percent of the country's industrial production and one-fourth of the goods exported. But their production potential was inherited from the former USSR, with all the relevant consequences, including a low technological level of production, overstaffing, and a Soviet-style work ethic. The dynamic changes in the global economy and the internal economic problems of Ukraine demanded serious structural changes in the country's economy in general and in the regions in particular. The continued absence of such changes perpetuated significant socioeconomic problems at the national and regional levels.

Despite their significant aggregate economic potential, these oblasts faced difficult ecological problems and a crisis in the coal sector, which required wholesale restructuring and was responsible for high unemployment, a degraded social infrastructure, and a high

level of sickness from different diseases. These and other problems explain why, of the twenty-five oblasts in Ukraine as of 2013, Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts were not among the leaders on the UN Development Program's regional Human Development Index (HDI), falling in twelfth and eleventh places, respectively, while Crimea was in sixth place (*see table 3.3*).

Table 3.3. **Index of Regional Human Development (IRHD) of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and Crimea (2012 ranking)**

	Block 1 "Reproduction of the population"	**Block 2 "Social environment"**	**Block 3 "Comfortable life"**	**Block 4 "Well-being"**	**Block 5 "Decent job"**	**Block 6 "Education"**	**IRHD**
Donetsk oblast	25	16	25	5	3	1	12
Luhansk oblast	21	21	18	4	9	7	11
Crimea	15	18	2	9	6	15	6

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, Regional Human Development: Statistical Bulletin (Kyiv, 2013), 40 (http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/).

Note: The year 2012 was chosen as a pre-crisis year for comparative data.

Donetsk oblast significantly lagged behind other regions on the indicators "Reproduction of the population" (twenty-fifth place) and "Comfortable life" (twenty-fifth place), while on the indicator "Social environment" it was in sixteenth place. The situation in Luhansk oblast does not look much better: it was twenty-first on the indicators "Reproduction of the population" and "Social environment" and eighteenth on the indicator "Comfortable life." On other indicators, Donetsk oblast was among the top five (it was in first place on the indicator "Education"), while Luhansk oblast was in fourth, ninth, and

seventh places on the indicators "Well-being," "Decent jobs," and "Education," respectively.

What is interesting is that according to the results of calculations of Ukraine's own national HDI in 2013, Kharkiv, Chernivtsi, Zakarpattya, Lviv, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts made it into the top five, while by the methodology of the UN the Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Poltava, Kyiv, and Kharkiv oblasts were in the top five.[2] This difference can be explained by the fact that a number of indicators (e.g., social environment, quality of the environment, demographic reproduction) that would raise the scores of the western oblasts and lower those of the eastern oblasts, notwithstanding those oblasts' relative positions according to indicators used by international methods, were included in the national method of calculation.[3]

When analyzing these indicators, the following three circumstances must absolutely be taken into account. First, the results of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts were shown as a component of the Ukrainian economy: these oblasts enjoyed Ukrainian (not international) energy and transportation prices, the mining sector received state aid, and so on, which would elevate their standing on the UN's but not Ukraine's own national index.

Second, because of the distinctive features of the economies of these oblasts (primarily the presence of a large number of coal-mining enterprises), they received considerable funds for the implementation of different types of socioeconomic programs, which may have contributed to their relatively high scores.

[2] Ukraine has two Human Development Indexes in place. One is the UN's HDI. At the same time, Ukraine calculates its own "national" HDI, which is published regularly. This domestic index is based on UN methodology, modified to capture Ukrainian social and economic peculiarities.

[3] Olena Makarova, "Vymiriuvannia ludskoho rozvytku v rehionah Ukrainy: metodolohichni aspekty ta otsinka resultativ" [Measuring human development in regions of Ukraine: Methodological aspects and assessment of results], *Ekonomika Ukrainy* 3 (2015): 47.

Third, according to the UN's HDI, Ukraine was seventy-eighth among 187 countries and territories in 2012, placing it in the uppermost tier (of four) in human development. At the same time, however, Ukraine's HDI score was at the low end of the high group (0.740 and 0.758 conditional points, respectively) and lower than the HDI of other countries in Europe and Asia (0.740 and 0.771 conditional points, respectively).[4]

All of this means that even Ukrainian regions with a high HDI score when measured on the international index nonetheless faced serious socioeconomic problems and had to radically restructure the regional economy.

It is worth noting here that these oblasts in their political and economic preferences traditionally gravitated toward Russia and the Customs Union, though with time, public opinion began evolving to favor the EU and NATO.[5]

The War in the East: The Formation of a "Dual-Sector" Economy and Its Consequences

The war has caused a division of Ukrainian enterprises into those that operate in the territory controlled by Ukraine and those that operate in the occupied territories. I refer to these two economic sectors as the "mainland" enterprise sector and the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) sector, the latter including, in addition to the occupied territories, Ukrainian territories adjacent to the front line (managed by special Ukrainian administrations) and the so-called "gray zone," a no-man's-land (no Ukrainian or other jurisdiction is exercised). (Crimea is a territory that has been annexed by Russia and is not part of the ATO zone; it is not discussed in this chapter.)

[4] United Nations Development Program, *Ukraine HDI Values and Rank Changes in the 2013 Human Development Report* (http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/UKR.pdf).

[5] See chapters 4 and 6 of this book.

If we consider that the mainland sector of the economy functions within the Ukrainian regulatory sphere, then the regulatory sphere of the ATO sector can be characterized as having a high level of uncertainty with respect to the economic rules of the game. As the point of this chapter is not to analyze the distinctive features of the economic functioning of the ATO sector as such, we will only note that it interacts with the mainland sector both in the economic format (i.e., through the commercial activity of enterprises in the occupied territory that reregistered with the regulatory regime of mainland Ukraine) and in the social format (e.g., in the partial payment of pensions and other social benefits to Ukrainian citizens who reside in the currently occupied territory in the East). The economic model of functioning of the ATO sector thus can be considered a hybrid one.

Purely in terms of functionality, regulation of the aggregate of hybrid contacts may be reduced to the resolution of two problems: first, how to regulate settlements of enterprises in the ATO sector with the state budget under conditions of a dual-sector economy, and second, how to regulate commercial production (business activity) relations between the enterprises of mainland Ukraine and the ATO sector.[6]

With respect to the financial consequences of the war in the East, according to data provided by the Ukrainian State Fiscal Service, over the period July 1, 2014, to April 1, 2016, state revenues were short by UAH 49.8 billion from enterprises operating in the ATO sector. It can be argued whether it is correct to use the same method to compare tax revenues after the drastic events of the recent past, which have negatively affected business entities, but the result quite adequately reflects the scale of the problem (*see table 3.4*).

[6] The terms "commercial production" or "business activity" in this chapter should be understood as equivalent to the IMF's "operational and commercial activity."

Table 3.4. **Budget losses in the ATO zone (UAH bn)**
(Certain types of taxes, July 1, 2014–April 1, 2016)

Type of tax revenue	ATO enterprises that stopped paying taxes	ATO enterprises that continue to pay taxes
Single social contribution (UAH bn)	8	2.7
Consolidated budget (total)	20.8	18.3
Breakdown of consolidated budget:		
State budget	13.4	14.9
Customs duty revenues	4.6	6.9
Tax revenues	8.8	8
Local budgets	7.4	3.4

Source: Halyna Kulachova, "Tsina viyny: Skilky podatkiv vtratyv budget cherez ATO" [The price of war: Amount of budget tax revenues lost due to ATO], UA News, August 30, 2016 (http://news.finance.ua/ua/news /-/383367/tsina-vijny-skilky-podatkiv-vtratyv-byudzhet-cherez-ato).

Note: The state budget plus local budgets equal the consolidated budget. Tax revenues and customs revenues together make up the state budget.

It is virtually impossible to ascertain the accuracy of tax reporting and other reports of enterprises operating in the ATO sector, and objectively assessing their real financial and economic standing is equally difficult. Both the overall economic climate and factors directly associated with economic agents operating in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine have an influence on the economic standing of ATO sector enterprises. Among specific factors affecting the economic activity of businesses in the ATO sector, it is worth noting logistical problems (especially pertaining to transport) and the need to pay taxes to the occupying power of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic (DPR, LPR).

At the same time, the available data show that the reregistration of legal entities from the ATO sector to territories controlled by Ukraine has transpired as follows: while as of July 1, 2014, there were 76,000 enterprises registered in the ATO sector, on April 1, 2016, this figure was 71,700. Regarding physical persons–entrepreneurs (PPEs), the situation looked different: while as of July 1, 2014, there were 201,511 registered in the ATO sector, on April 1, 2016, only 129,304 remained.[7] In other words, PPEs appeared to be more active in reregistering their businesses in the "mainland" Ukraine than were legal entities, though that conclusion is somewhat speculative.

The War in the East in the Assessments of Ukrainian Businesses

The military actions in the East came as a shock to Ukraine at large and influenced the attitudes of Ukrainian business owners. According to the results of the Business Enterprise Survey conducted by the Institute of Economic Research and Policy Consulting in May 2014, among the priority measures that businesses expected would improve the business environment was a successful conclusion to military operations in the ATO sector, which led other measures by an impressive margin. This is exactly what 76.9 percent of the polled enterprise managers expected *(see figure 3.1)*. Early parliamentary elections (41.0 percent) and the fight against corruption (40.1 percent) were second and third in importance, and 26.3 percent of respondents put transparency of the ruling power in fourth place.

[7] Halyna Kulachova, "Tsina viyny: Skilky podatkiv vtratyv budget cherez ATO" [The price of war: Amount of budget tax revenues lost due to ATO], *UA News,* August 30, 2016 (http://news.finance.ua/ua/news/-/383367/tsina-vijny-skilky-podatkiv-vtratyv-byudzhet-cherez-ato).

Figure 3.1. **Rating of priority economic and political measures that businesses expected from the ruling authorities (% of polled)** (*May 2014*)

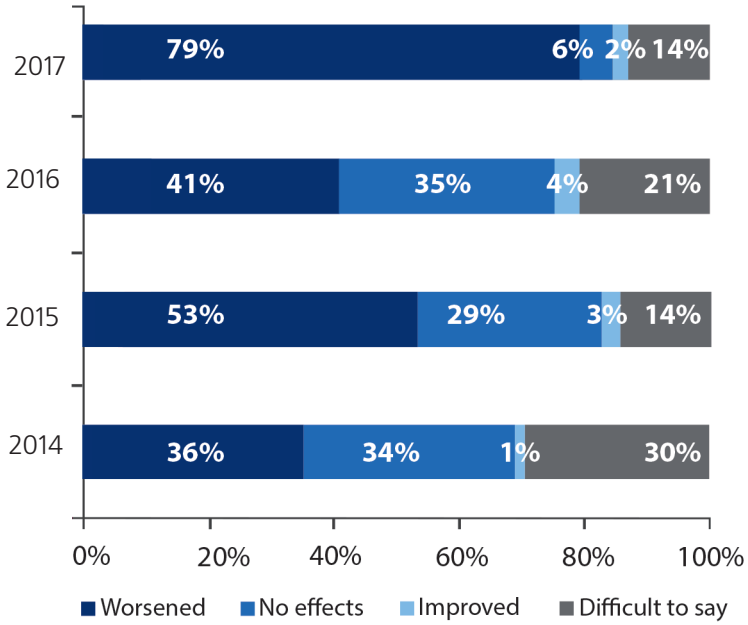
Source: Oksana Kuziakiv, "Dilovyi klimat: Jakykh zmin ochikuje ukrains'kyi biznes v umovakh vijny ta ekonomichnoji kryzy" [Business climate: Changes that Ukrainian businesses expect in conditions of war and the economic crisis] (Kyiv: Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting, September 18, 2014) (http://www.ier.com.ua/ua/publications/articles?pid=4595).

Note: The percentages in the figure sum to more than 100 because respondents could name up to five measures that in their opinion were important.

With respect to the direct influence of the war in the East on business activity, in a poll conducted from July 25 to August 15, 2014, 36 percent of Ukrainian industrial enterprise managers believed that the war was having a negative impact on the financial and economic standing of their businesses. In 2015 this figure jumped to 53 percent of respondents, with the share dropping back to 41 percent in 2016. In 2017, 79 percent of respondents said that war had negatively affected the financial and economic standing of their enterprises *(see figure 3.2)*. This high figure can be explained

by the impact of the war as well as the "crisis fatigue" of 2013–2016, though in 2016 the Ukrainian economy did demonstrate some modest growth.

Figure 3.2. **Effect of the war in the East on the financial-economic standing of industrial enterprises of Ukraine (% of respondents)**
(*Data as of August of the corresponding year*)



Source: Oksana Kuziakiv, "Vijna na Skhodi Ukrainy: Vyklyky dlia sotsialno-ekonomichnoi polityky" [War in the East of Ukraine: Challenges to socioeconomic policy]. The material was prepared based on the results of polling of managers of industrial enterprises conducted by the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting (http://www.slideshare.net/USAIDLEV/ss-65732609). Calculations for 2017 are based on the Business Tendency Survey Database compiled by the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting in 2014–2017.

Over 2014–2017, the list of problems for industrial enterprises that were caused by the war in the East also changed, but difficulties in finding new clients typically topped the list (*see tables 3.5 and 3.6*).

Table 3.5. **Top three problems caused by the war in the East (% of answers)**

	Aug. 2014	**Nov. 2014**	**Aug. 2015**	**Aug. 2016**	**Aug. 2017**
Problem 1	Difficulties with client search (44)	Difficulties with client search (37)	Mobilization of employees (47)	Difficulties with client search (49)	Difficulties with client search (52)
Problem 2	Logistical difficulties (38)	Logistical difficulties (33)	Difficulties with client search (36)	Mobilization of employees (38)	Loss of consumers from temporarily uncontrolled territories (51)
Problem 3	Difficulties working with financial institutions (28)	Break in the production chains (30)	Logistical difficulties (35)	Partners' refusal to cooperate (32)	Problems with raw materials (31)

Source: Oksana Kuziakiv, "Vijna na Skhodi Ukrainy: Vyklyky dlia sotsialno-ekonomichnoi polityky" [War in the East of Ukraine: Challenges to socioeconomic policy]. The material was prepared based on the results of polling of managers of industrial enterprises conducted by the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting, and posted on slideshare.net on September 6, 2016 (http://www.slideshare.net/USAIDLEV/ss-65732609). Calculations for 2017 are based on the Business Tendency Survey Database compiled by the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting in 2014–2017.

Table 3.6. **Effect of the war in the East on industrial enterprises of Ukraine (% of answers)**

	Aug. 2014	Nov. 2014	Aug. 2015	Aug. 2016	Aug. 2017	Aug. 2017 – Aug. 2016
Difficulties with client search	44	37	36	49	52	↗
Loss of consumers from temporarily uncontrolled territories	—	—	—	—	51	
Problems with raw materials	—	—	—	—	31	
Loss of suppliers from temporarily uncontrolled territories	—	—	—	—	28	
Partners' refusal to cooperate	26	21	19	32	20	↙
Logistical difficulties	38	33	35	31	20	↙
Mobilization of employees to the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, National Guard, etc.	14	25	47	38	13	↙
Difficulties working with financial institutions	28	18	34	23	—	
Difficulties obtaining state compensation for the payment of average earnings of mobilized workers	—	—	—	—	12	
Break in the production chain	20	30	28	19	10	↙
Constraint on activities/production shutdown	9	17	18	5	9	↗
Difficulties attracting investment	—	—	—	—	8	
Increase in military orders	5	6	5	7	5	≈

Table 3.6 (cont.)

	Aug. 2014	Nov. 2014	Aug. 2015	Aug. 2016	Aug. 2017	Aug. 2017 – Aug. 2016
Others	12	6	10	12	4	↙
Need to transfer production capacity (enterprise) to a different location	—	—	—	—	1	
Temporary alienation of property for military needs	1	3	6	7	—	
New supplier/consumers	13	8	8	9	—	
Dismissal of employees/unpaid vacations			3	3	—	

Source: Kuziakiv, "Vijna na Skhodi Ukrainy: Vyklyky dlia sotsialno-ekonomichnoi polityky." Calculations for 2017 are based on the Business Tendency Survey Database compiled by the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting in 2014–2017.

Notes: In August 2017, in the "Business Tendency Survey," new alternatives were added, including loss of consumers from temporarily uncontrolled territories (1), problems with raw materials (2), loss of suppliers from temporarily uncontrolled territories (3), difficulties in obtaining state compensation for the payment of average earnings of mobilized workers (4), difficulties in attracting investment (5), and the need to transfer production capacity (6).

Dashes in the table indicate absence of the relevant question from the poll. Empty cells indicate absence of significant data. Arrows indicate direction of change compared with the previous year.

Analysis of the aforementioned problems allows two main conclusions to be drawn:

First, in 2016 and 2017 respondents noted a growth in hardships associated with selling their products (e.g., finding markets and clients) compared to August 2015.

Second, in the same period, the acuteness of such problems as mobilization of employees, logistical difficulties, difficulties in cooperation with financial institutions, the disruption of production chains, and limitation (suspension) of production activity in general declined.

The first trend, increasing difficulty selling products, was dictated not only by the war but also by the economic crisis in the country; that is, a large-scale aggravation of problems selling products is one of the manifestations of the crisis. It is understood that the severing of production ties and the difficulties encountered in developing new customers because of the war in the East only aggravated the problems that enterprises face during times of crisis.

The second trend can be explained as the adaptation of industry to the economic conditions that arose in the country and as the result of a certain macroeconomic stabilization, along with other changes, such as changes in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) service (which was put on a contractual basis instead of a draft).

How small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) assessed the war factor warrants a separate analysis. Today this sector dominates the Ukrainian economy in number of enterprises, but at the same time by its very nature it differs in many important economic aspects from the large-enterprise sector.[8] Because SMEs are much more sensitive than large companies to shocks of any kind, economic and noneconomic, understanding the attitudes of SMEs is critical to the analysis of this chapter.

The unstable political situation has been among the major problems slowing the development of SMEs in Ukraine, but its

[8] The distinctive features of the SME sector and its role in the economy are taken up in Ihor Burakovskiy, Artur Kovalchuk, Oleksandra Betliy, et al., *Polityka rozvytku MSP v Ukraini: Jak realizuvaty potentsial maloho ta serednioho pidpryjemnytstva v Ukraini. Bila knyha* [Policy of SME development in Ukraine: How to realize the potential of small and medium entrepreneurship in Ukraine. White paper] (Kyiv: USAID Leadership in Economic Governance Program, 2015) (http://lev.org.ua/articles/SME_whitebook.html).

influence slightly diminished: in 2015 every second person polled (51 percent) agreed with this observation, while in 2016, 44 percent of respondents did so (*see table 3.7*). The factor of political instability has been more or less equally weighty for both PPEs (51 percent of the responses in 2015 and 47 percent in 2016) and enterprises—legal entities (51 percent in 2015 and 43 percent in 2016).

Table 3.7. **Factors that limited the growth of business in 2015 and 2016 (%)**

Factors	Entire sample		PPEs		Legal entities		Micro-enterprises		Small enterprises		Medium-sized enterprises	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Factors that constrain growth are absent	3	3	7	3	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	4
Lack of qualified employees	13	20	12	17	13	22	12	17	16	30	15	23
Insufficient volume of orders/insufficient sales volumes/low product demand	39	59	36	64	39	56	40	63	40	55	30	41
Shortage of raw materials	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	5	6
Liquidity problems/shortage of working capital	18	17	17	15	18	18	17	16	19	20	22	20

Table 3.7 (cont.)

Factors	Entire sample		PPEs		Legal entities		Micro-enterprises		Small enterprises		Medium-sized enterprises	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Unstable political situation (instability of the government, possibility of protest movements)	51	44	51	47	51	43	50	45	53	43	54	43
Insufficient production capacity	6	7	5	5	7	8	6	7	8	6	8	9
Low access to loans (difficult procedure for taking out a loan, meeting bank requirements)	18	19	20	19	18	19	19	18	19	22	15	18
Complicated tax administration	26	27	18	22	29	29	22	23	37	33	31	38
War in the East of Ukraine	28	20	26	18	29	21	28	21	28	20	31	18
Restrictive labor legislation	3	7	4	8	3	6	3	6	4	6	3	7

Table 3.7 (cont.)

Factors	Entire sample		PPEs		Legal entities		Micro-enterprises		Small enterprises		Medium-sized enterprises	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Corruption	23	23	27	24	22	22	25	23	21	23	17	19
Problems with electricity supply	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	3
High regulatory pressure (unclear legislation, inspections, bureaucratic procedures)	20	23	15	18	21	25	18	20	20	27	28	32
High tax rates	31	35	22	29	34	38	28	32	38	42	34	39
Obsolete technology	4	4	2	3	4	5	3	4	3	6	8	7
High interest rates on loans	15	17	16	16	14	17	15	16	11	18	18	16
Frequent changes to economic legislation	23	26	14	18	26	29	20	23	27	30	32	33
High level of competition	16	19	16	18	16	20	15	19	19	23	17	16

Table 3.7 (cont.)

Factors	Entire sample		PPEs		Legal entities		Micro-enterprises		Small enterprises		Medium-sized enterprises	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Burdensome currency legislation	9	10	10	12	9	9	10	10	7	10	9	6
Inflation	29	26	32	27	27	25	30	27	28	28	25	20
Ineffectiveness of the state apparatus	14	14	14	15	14	14	15	15	13	12	13	13
Other	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	1	2	4	1

Source: "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2015," based on the results of polling of SMEs; analytical report (Kyiv, 2016), 38 (http://lev.org.ua/articles/ABCA2015.html); "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2016," based on the results of national polling of SMEs; analytical report (Kyiv, 2017), 46–47 (http://www.ier.com.ua/files//Projects/2015/LEV/ABCA2016(full_report).pdf).

In 2015 the war in the East and its repercussions for the country occupied fifth place in the rating of factors that had a negative impact on the growth of business (28 percent of those polled), while in the 2016 polling this factor moved to sixth or seventh place (20 percent). The war as an obstacle to the business of legal entities ranked fourth (29 percent of those polled) in 2015 and ninth in 2016 (21 percent), while for PPEs it ranked fifth (26 percent of those polled) in 2015 and ninth in 2016 (18 percent).

At the same time, the relative acuity of factors that limited the growth of business also depended on when the polling was conducted. Inflation as a factor affecting business, for example, may

be more or less influential at different times. As to the factor of the war itself, its fourth to fifth place can also be explained by the fact that the activity of SMEs in Ukraine, as a rule, is limited to the local markets, meaning the inherent economic distance and geographic remoteness of many SMEs from the territory of the ATO provide a buffer against the economic effects of war.

With respect to the regional assessment of problems limiting the growth of SMEs, their rankings are more or less the same in all oblasts where this polling was conducted (*see table 3.8*). At the same time, among the polled oblasts, Kherson oblast stands out: in both 2015 and 2016 only 12 percent of respondents called the war in the East an obstacle to the development of business. This low and stable rate warrants additional research. But we may assume that such a result owes in part to Kherson oblast's geographic position: bordering Crimea, this oblast at the time of polling had already experienced a shock from Russia's annexation of Crimea and perhaps had adapted to new conditions. In Lviv oblast, the same share of respondents (28 percent) named the war in the East as a problem for business two years in a row. This phenomenon can be explained in part by the strong economic links Lviv oblast had with the East before the war and which remained in place as the war progressed.

Based on the results of a factor analysis of obstacles faced by SMEs in 2015, the military aggression of the Russian Federation and the overall instability of the political situation in the country posed the greatest obstacles to the development of SMEs in Ukraine as a whole (59 percent of respondents) (*see table 3.9*). As is evident from table 3.9, the negative impacts of the war and the unstable political situation on SMEs are assessed more or less the same by all oblasts. The same applies to the rating of other problems.

Table 3.8. **Factors that constrained the growth of business in 2015 (selected oblasts) (%)**

Factors	Ukraine		Vinnytsia oblast		Lviv oblast		Ternopil oblast		Kherson oblast	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Unstable political situation	51	44	47	38	43	51	48	42	51	37
Insufficient volume of orders/low product demand	39	59	35	60	38	59	44	62	27	51
High tax rates	31	35	36	38	27	35	36	38	27	39
Inflation	29	26	27	23	35	28	32	36	31	27
War in the East of Ukraine	28	20	25	14	28	28	24	18	12	12
Complicated tax administration	26	27	26	27	28	29	28	30	23	29
Corruption	23	23	24	22	22	26	20	26	17	16
Frequent changes in economic legislation	23	26	27	19	24	26	17	24	23	27
High regulatory pressure	20	23	20	16	19	29	21	24	15	23
Low access to loans	18	19	14	18	15	18	21	21	23	13
Liquidity problems/shortage of working capital	18	17	18	18	19	19	16	12	21	19
High level of competition	16	19	15	17	16	23	17	15	14	19
High interest rates on loans	15	17	15	17	20	19	16	25	16	11
Ineffectiveness of the state apparatus	14	14	11	14	10	9	5	16	10	4

Table 3.8 (cont.)

Factors	Ukraine		Vinnytsia oblast		Lviv oblast		Ternopil oblast		Kherson oblast	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Insufficiency of qualified employees	13	20	11	19	18	32	17	2	17	21
Burdensome currency regulation	9	10	9	7	13	12	13	9	10	5
Insufficient production capacities	6	7	7	8	9	8	7	11	8	9
Obsolete technology	4	4	4	7	3	5	7	7	5	5
Insufficiency of raw materials/materials	4	4	2	1	4	5	1	3	5	1
No factors constraining growth	3	3	6	2	4	1	1	4	4	7
Problems with energy supply	3	4	5	3	3	2	1	0	4	3
Restrictive labor legislation	3	7	5	5	1	12	7	12	4	8
Other	3	1	4	0	3	0	4	0	1	1

Sources: "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2015," 126–182 (http://lev.org.ua/articles/ABCA2015.html); "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2016," based on the results of national polling of SMEs; analytical report (Kyiv, 2017), 29–47 (http://www.ier.com.ua/files//Projects/2015/LEV/ABCA2016(full_report).pdf).

Table 3.9. **Factors that constrained the growth of SMEs in 2015: Factor analysis and regional dimension (%)**

Factor	Ukraine as a whole	Vinnytsia oblast	Lviv oblast	Ternopil oblast	Kherson oblast
War and the unstable political situation	59	55	52	62	56
Taxes and changes to legislation	54	61	56	51	50
Market-related problems	48	42	49	50	36
Access to funds	36	38	40	43	40
Corruption and regulatory pressure	36	37	40	36	27
Currency regulation and inflation	35	33	42	41	38
Lack of qualified employees and production capacities	20	18	25	26	28
Ineffectiveness of the state apparatus	17	13	10	12	14
Insufficient raw materials/materials	4	2	4	1	5
No factors constrain growth	4	6	4	1	4
Problems with energy supply	4	5	3	1	4
Other	3	3	3	4	1

Source: "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2015," 126–182 (http://lev.org.ua/articles/ABCA2015.html).

The Socioeconomic Dimension

The war in the East became a factor in the emergence in Ukraine of two new social groups and, accordingly, new forms of social payments. The first group consists of ATO veterans who have been demobilized from the ranks of the AFU and other uniformed services. For persons in this category, certain privileges and social payouts have been established.

As of August 25, 2016, nearly 250,000 participants in combat actions in the ATO zone were registered (166,000 of them were part of the AFU).[9] The number of participants in combat actions will grow, which in turn will lead to an increase in the total amount of the corresponding payments from the budget. Under such conditions, the state will face a whole series of large-scale socioeconomic challenges, in particular the following:

• First, the state must fulfill its social obligations to ATO veterans, as envisaged in the relevant legislation.

• Second, the state must create a system of psychological and social rehabilitation for ATO veterans, which will also require funding.

• Third, the state must help create jobs for the demobilized. This problem is quite acute for this category of the population: on August 1, 2016, nearly 20,000 ATO veterans were registered as unemployed.[10]

The second social group consists of internally displaced persons (IDPs), who also need state assistance. The issue concerns first and foremost payments to IDPs and providing funds for their

[9] Oksana Kuziakiv, "Viyna na Skhodi Ukrainy: Vyklyky dlia sotsialno-ekonomichnoi polityky" [War in the East of Ukraine: Challenges to socio-economic policy]. The material was based on the results of polls of industrial enterprise managers conducted by the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting, and posted to slideshare.net on September 6, 2016 (http://www.slideshare.net/USAIDLEV/ss-65732609).

[10] Ibid.

employment. These and other forms of social assistance are new to Ukraine, as there was never a need to cover such expenses in times of peace. In 2014, in anticipation of the need for state funds to help IDPs, UAH 360 million were targeted for this purpose in the national budget, and in 2015 UAH 3.3 billion. The plan for 2016 was UAH 2.8 billion, of which UAH 1.64 billion were allocated for the period January–June. Thus, over a three-year period, a total of UAH 5.3 billion was targeted for assistance to IDPs.[11]

Besides the financial aspect, the problem of IDPs has a distinctive socioeconomic dimension related to societal attitudes toward IDPs in general and relations between local citizens and people who are resettled in the same places in large numbers for the efficient delivery of services. Because both local residents and incoming IDPs need social services, there may be a perception of competition (e.g., for hospital beds or places in schools).

The attitude of local populations toward IDPs from the Donbas and Crimea is generally positive or neutral. On the whole, 43 percent of all Ukrainians said they had a positive attitude toward IDPs, while 47 percent of those polled were neutral (thus 90 percent were positive or neutral). Only 6 percent expressed a negative attitude, while 4 percent of respondents could not answer this question. In cities with the largest concentration of IDPs, the local residents have an even better attitude toward them: 58 percent of local residents receive them positively, 34 percent do so neutrally, 2 percent do so negatively, and 6 percent were undetermined in their attitude.

According to a retrospective assessment of those polled, attitudes toward IDPs have changed very little over time.[12] At the same time, 85 percent of those polled all across Ukraine and 79 percent of those polled in cities where IDPs are concentrated believe

[11] Kulachova, "Tsina viyny."

[12] "Attitudes of the People of Ukraine toward Internally Displaced Persons from the Donbas and Crimea: Results of Public Opinion Polls" (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, April 2016), 10 (http://www.kiis.com.ua/materials/pr/20160111_Shpiker-report/Rep_Internews.ukr.pdf).

that IDPs should return to their homes as soon as it becomes realistically possible to do so.

In the opinion of the polled, today in cities where IDPs are concentrated, tangible "socioeconomic" competition between the local population and the IDPs has not been observed. Only 25 percent of respondents were aware of such competition in their city, while the remaining 75 percent had not heard about such cases. (The figures given here and below pertain only to the 83 percent of respondents who were aware of the presence of displaced persons in their city.)

Among those polled, 17 percent (of the 83 percent aware of the presence of IDPs in their city) considered that there was competition for jobs, 14 percent that there was competition for affordable housing, 14 percent that there was competition for places in schools and kindergartens, 8 percent that there was competition for acceptance to state and medical institutions, and 6 percent that there was competition for assistance provided by the state and volunteer groups to vulnerable sectors of the population. But a very insignificant part of permanent residents of cities where IDPs were concentrated felt real competition from IDPs—2 percent noted competition for jobs and 1 percent noted competition for all other resources.[13]

In comparison with other cities, 31 percent of polled Kyivans know about the existence of competition for work spots, 29 percent for affordable housing, 29 percent for places in schools and kindergartens, and 14 percent for assistance to vulnerable groups. To a certain extent, this indicator can be explained by the fact that Kyiv as the center of economic activity became the first stopping point for IDPs arriving from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and Crimea who either planned to continue engaging in entrepreneurial activity or hoped to find employment in the capital. Nonetheless, the share of people in Kyiv who thought they would personally face such competition does not exceed the average level of the indicator for all of Ukraine, and is very low.[14]

[13] Ibid., 29.

[14] Ibid.

For this reason, we can conclude that today in cities in which IDPs are concentrated, the traditional economic preconditions that dictate the emergence of sharp conflicts between local residents and migrants are absent.

At the same time, among those who were aware of the presence of IDPs in their city, only 4 percent felt a positive influence on the development of business, while 18 percent thought there was an increase in crime and 12 percent felt there was an increase in social tension.[15]

Potential Scenarios and Economic Sentiments

There are two main scenarios for how the situation in the Donbas might play out. Each has its corresponding economic dimension.

Scenario 1. The military conflict continues, though its intensity may change. But the occupied territories remain beyond the control of Ukraine.

In such a situation, the main economic problem would be defining the economic regime between mainland Ukraine and the currently occupied territories.

This is important because it concerns the ability of the state to fulfill its social obligations to the people in the occupied territories and IDPs (e.g., the payment of pensions and other social welfare obligations, the provision of humanitarian aid, etc.). At issue is the source of financing of these expenditures. The volumes and regularity of payment of budget revenues from the occupied territories and the adjacent territories controlled by Ukraine have significantly declined.

The state's obligation to dispense social welfare payments appropriately has one more extraordinarily sensitive dimension for society. That is the potential for abuse in the receipt of such payouts, which leads to correspondingly negative moods in society: a negative attitude toward the state as the operator of these funds and

[15] Ibid., 28.

toward the recipients of such assistance. The perceived risk is the formation of layers of social dependence, whereby some residents of the occupied territories would try to receive social payouts from both the so-called DPR/LPR and Ukraine. Perceived or actual double dipping would have broad ramifications for society and should be avoided through clear arrangements stipulated by law.

Defining economic ties between mainland Ukraine and the occupied territories would also be important to clarify the relations of enterprises in the uncontrolled territories with counteragents in Ukraine and abroad with respect to tax payments and other budget payments, the receipt of compensation from the budget, and similar fiscal transfers. The problem of the rapid development of shady economic ties in general, especially the intrusion of the criminal element into economic ties, demands additional attention. The preconditions for the emergence of this problem are interactions between economic agents operating in the controlled territories and those operating in the uncontrolled territories, the institutional weakness of the state, and certain other factors whose discussion exceeds the scope of this chapter.

Basically, under scenario 1, Ukraine would face issues in trying to ensure economic sovereignty if part of the country's territory (and accordingly, part of the national economy) was not controlled by the Ukrainian state.

Scenario 2. The military actions end, and Ukraine regains control of the occupied territories and its border with Russia. In this scenario, Ukraine would face a major challenge in reviving these territories and ensuring their full-fledged reintegration into the socioeconomic system of Ukraine.

As a first problem, the cost of such a revival would be considerable. This begs several politically sensitive questions regarding the division of expenditures, in particular, what part of the expenditures the state (society) should pay. A basic reallocation of budget funds to finance measures aimed at renewal and reintegration of those territories that suffered from Russian aggression should be expected. At the same time, social payouts

would also continue. Some of the funds would probably have to come from the international community in the form of loans, which would risk increasing the country's debt burden.

Second, the moods of society would depend on how these funds were divided between the companies contracted to carry out work and the suppliers of services. On the one hand, an effective and large-scale program of revival could become an important factor spurring economic growth by increasing the demand for goods, labor, and services, which would have a positive impact on the moods and capabilities of entrepreneurs. On the other hand, any corruption schemes or other business abuses would be expected to reinforce the negative attitudes of people toward the state as an institution.

Clearly, social moods in this scenario would also be determined by other factors, for example, to what extent and on what conditions foreign companies would be allowed to engage in the renewal of a region.

A third problem is what forms and amounts of assistance the state would provide for IDPs returning home, how it would compensate for the loss of housing or provide assistance to start a business, and so on.

Fourth, an important factor contributing to societal sentiments would be the regime of political and economic cooperation with Russia. Today it is difficult to foresee how this regime would function, but it can be assumed that its parameters would be defined within the framework of international military-political regulation of the conflict in the East of Ukraine and resolution of the problem of Crimea, as well as the nature of the political processes in Russia itself.

The possibility of Ukraine adequately responding to the economic challenges associated with one or the other scenario hinges directly on the timing, consistency, and success of implementation of political and economic reforms in the country.

With respect to societal opinions about regulating the situation in the East, according to the results of polls conducted in November 2016 by the Razumkov Center, a relative majority of respondents (42.3 percent) felt that the issue of the status of the

temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts should be put to a vote in a nationwide referendum. Another 33.2 percent of those polled did not support this idea, while 24.4 percent were undetermined.[16] In response to other questions, 44 percent of those polled and 53.6 percent of those who would participate in a referendum were in favor of official recognition of those territories as occupied and their economic isolation until official control over these territories by Ukraine was established (*see table 3.10*).

Table 3.10. **Policy regarding the temporarily occupied territories: Opinion of Ukrainians (%*)***
(*November 2016*)

	All Ukrainians	Those who would vote in a referendum
Granting these territories special status, amnesty for participants in separatist movements who did not commit any crimes, and holding of elections before Ukraine regains official control over these territories	23.4	29.6
Official recognition of these territories as occupied and their isolation until Ukraine regains official control over these territories	44.0	53.6
Difficult to say	32.7	16.8

Source: "Attitudes of Ukrainians toward the Minsk Agreements and the Status of the Temporarily Occupied Territories in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts," results of polling conducted by the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center on November 18–23, 2016, in all regions of Ukraine with the exception of Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (http://www.razumkov.org.ua/uploads/socio/infoDonbas1116.pdf).

[16] "Attitudes of Ukrainians toward the Minsk Agreements and the Status of the Temporarily Occupied Territories in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts," results of polling conducted by the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center on November 18–23, 2016, in all regions of Ukraine with the exception of Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (http://www.razumkov.org.ua/uploads/socio/infoDonbas1116.pdf).

The data provided above can be considered a formal indication of the attitudes of society toward two alternative variants of state policy regarding the occupied territories, "special status" or recognition as "occupied", before their actual return to Ukraine's control. Precisely these two alternatives allow the sentiments of the population toward these and other components of the policy concerning the temporarily occupied territories to be clearly defined (*see table 3.11*).

Table 3.11. **Policy regarding the occupied territories (%)**
(*September 2016*)

	Support	**Do not support**	**Difficult to say**
Cessation of any economic ties between Ukraine and the territories of the so-called DPR and LPR (including social payouts, energy provision, coal purchases, etc.) until Ukraine regains full control over these territories	42.1	36.0	21.9
Granting the Donbas special status	22.7	50.0	27.3
Holding elections in the occupied territories of the Donbas before control of the Ukrainian government is reestablished	23.9	50.6	25.4
Amnesty for participants in separatist movements who did not commit any felonies	34.0	38.5	27.5

Source: "Attitudes of Citizens toward the Situation in the Donbas: Results of Sociological Research," based on polling conducted by the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center on September 9–26, 2016 (http://old.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/newsphp?news_id=780).

Public opinion on these issues has a clearly pronounced economic component. According to a September 2016 poll, 42.1 percent of those polled supported the termination of any economic ties between Ukraine and the territories of the DPR and LPR (including social payouts, supply of energy resources, and purchases of coal) until Ukraine regains full control over these territories, while 36 percent were against this option. The cessation of economic ties was supported by the majority of those polled in the western and central regions, while in other regions of the country either an absolute or a relative majority of respondents rejected this idea (*see table 3.12*).

Table 3.12. **Cessation of economic ties between Ukraine and the territories of the DPR and LPR: Regional dimension (%)**

	West	Center	South	East	Donbas controlled by Ukraine
Support	62.9	54.2	29.6	25.8	15.7
Do not support	18.1	25.9	46.3	50.0	58.2
Difficult to say	19.0	19.9	24.1	24.2	26.1

Source: "Attitudes of Citizens toward the Situation in the Donbas," Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center.

Obviously, such a division of sentiment over maintaining economic ties reflects the political-emotional perception of events in the East. But the data show that in developing a policy for regulating the situation in the Donbas, the government is obligated to conduct an open dialogue with society regarding precisely the economic value of government decisions. It is also characteristic that according to polling conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center in May 2016, only 13 percent of respondents in the Donbas felt that granting "special status" to the occupied districts could lead to peace. Instead, the successful rebuilding of a normal life on the territories of the Donbas controlled

by Ukraine should be a priority (44.8 percent of those polled selected this response).[17]

Another problem connected with the future development of events in the East is socioeconomic in nature and has to do with IDPs' attitudes toward migration.

According to the results of polling conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS), 48 percent of respondents stated they were unwilling to return to their previous place of residence, 36 percent intended to return, and 16 percent were undecided. Among those who planned to return home, 36 percent were ready to return to their previous place of residence before Ukraine regained control over the corresponding territories, 35 percent were ready to return before the renewal of comfortable living conditions, and 21 percent were ready to return even before the cessation of military actions. At the same time, 69 percent of displaced persons stated that over the preceding six months, they had not visited territories not controlled by Ukraine.[18]

Effect of the War on the Current Economic Expectations of Businesses

On the basis of an analysis of the attitudes of Ukrainian business managers, several conclusions can be drawn. First of all, on the whole, there has been a certain improvement in the business expectations of managers of Ukrainian enterprises. This result points to a certain adaptation to the economic realities that have evolved in the country today, particularly as influenced by the war in the East.

[17] For more details, see chapter 6.

[18] "Report Based on the Results of Nationwide Polling of Internally Displaced Persons and Residents of Receiving Communities" (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2016) (http://www.kiis.com.ua/materials/pr/20160111_Shpiker-report/Rep_Internews.ukr.pdf).

According to data obtained in quarterly polling by the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU), the index of business expectations of managers of Ukrainian enterprises in the second quarter of 2016 started to rise again, moving up by 10.1 percentage points compared with the first quarter of 2016 (when negative expectations prevailed), and amounted to 108.5 percent. This trend continued in 2017. When polled in the third quarter of 2017 about expectations for the next twelve months, respondents expected further growth in the production of goods and services in Ukraine, a significant slowdown in the growth rates of consumer prices, some weakening of the hryvnia devaluation process, and an increase in the need for loans. At the same time, in the opinion of respondents, the main negative factors hindering the development of enterprises remained the unstable political situation and the excessively high prices for energy.[19]

Optimistic expectations also continued to prevail among SMEs, though in 2016 the mood of entrepreneurs became slightly less optimistic compared to 2015: 47.8 percent said they planned to expand the activity of their enterprises in the foreseeable future (versus 53 percent in 2015), 42 percent planned to maintain the same level of activity as in the previous year (versus 39 percent in 2015), and only 10.2 percent planned to reduce their economic activity (versus 8 percent in 2015). In addition, the long-term expectations of SMEs regarding their business activity are significantly higher than their short-term expectations, while the level of uncertainty is fairly low, which is not typical for business expectations in Ukraine. Only 8 percent of respondents could not answer the question, "Do you

[19] National Bank of Ukraine (NBU), "Business Expectations of Enterprises of Ukraine," 42, no. 2 (2nd quarter, 2016), https://bank.gov.ua/doccatalog/document?id=33820066; NBU, "Business Expectations of Enterprises of Ukraine," 47, no. 3 (3rd quarter, 2017) (https://bank.gov.ua/doccatalog/document?id=56911036).

plan to expand the activity of your enterprise over the next two years?" [20]

At the same time, there is a certain connection between the dynamics of business development over the previous two years and business plans for the next two years. Those enterprises that increased their activity in recent times differed in exhibiting the highest level of optimism about their future prospects: 63 percent of such respondents (polled in 2016) planned to further expand their activity (versus 74 percent in 2015). And only 44 percent of enterprises (in both 2016 and 2015) that in the preceding two years had not changed their volume of activity planned to increase activity in the near term.[21]

SMEs attributed the absence of plans for expansion to such obstacles as the unfavorable economic situation in the country (54 percent and 68 percent in 2016 and 2015, respectively), the absence of financial possibilities (44 percent and 29 percent), the complexity of the tax system (44 percent and 25 percent), the absence of sales markets (53 percent and 19 percent), fierce competition (26 percent and 15 percent), high interest rates on loans (19 percent and 13 percent), the threat of being deprived of privileges (15 percent and 7 percent), the lack of production capacities (13 percent and 6 percent), and various other impediments.[22]

Of course, whether positive expectations materialize depends entirely on concrete economic results. The process is not

[20] "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2015," based on the results of polling of SMEs; analytical report (Kyiv, 2016), 33 (http://lev.org.ua/articles/ABCA2015.html); "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2016," based on the results of national polling of SMEs; analytical report (Kyiv, 2017), 36 (http://www.ier.com.ua/files//Projects/2015/LEV/ABCA2016(full_report).pdf).

[21] "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2015," 34; "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2016," 37.

[22] "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2015," 40–41; "Annual Business Climate Assessment in Ukraine: 2016," 50–51.

linear; it is conditioned by an entire set of internal and external factors that are economic and political in nature. Therefore, the government of Ukraine should ensure and support macroeconomic stability and radically improve the business climate. With respect to improving the business climate, the list of measures that business owners expect from the state is more or less traditional, though the relative priority of certain problems may change with time.

To sum up, the results of the polls presented here and other assessments of businesses' expectations reveal a handful of most salient problems:

First, businesses themselves must qualitatively change to be able to realize their commercial production potential and take advantage of new opportunities.

A second problem is that the introduction of trade barriers by Russia has forced Ukrainian businesses to seek new markets for their goods and services, both in Ukraine and abroad. Ukraine's economic sanctions against Russia and various forms of restrictions Russia has put in place against Ukrainian exporters (e.g., cancellation of the free trade regime and enforcement of a ban on the transit of goods) are dictated by Russia's aggression and therefore make Russia a high-risk trading market for Ukrainian producers. At the same time, from a purely economic vantage point, loss of the Russian market has dealt a serious blow to Ukrainian enterprises.

On the other hand, the war in the East of Ukraine has led to a severance of traditional commercial production ties within Ukraine. This situation has also forced entrepreneurs of the mainland sector to search for new suppliers and consumers in Ukraine and abroad.

The reorientation required of Ukrainian businesses is a true challenge for business owners and contributes to shaping their

respective expectations regarding the tax, trade, infrastructural, agrarian, and information policies of the state.

Current discussions of economic issues in Ukraine for the most part focus on the capacity of the state to effectively respond to the socioeconomic problems engendered by the crisis, the war in the East, and the negative influence of the socioeconomic climate. Few address the issue of businesses' social responsibility, particularly since the war broke out. The most brilliant example of social responsibility in Ukraine today is the mass voluntary provision of concrete material and financial assistance by citizens and entrepreneurs to AFU veterans of actions in the ATO sector and to IDPs. But the social responsibility of business is far from fully met by this kind of activity.

Finally, the war in the East mandated a reevaluation of the potential of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts in the context of their real contribution to the economy of Ukraine and settlement with the Ukrainian budget (the balance of budget revenues from enterprises in the region and the funds the region received from the state budget in different forms).

To conclude this analysis of the effect of the war in the East on business owners' expectations, it is worthwhile paying attention to one more extremely important aspect: in 2014, Ukrainian businesses generally selected the EU as the priority direction for the economic integration of Ukraine (*see table 3.13*). The European vector of integration was supported by the absolute majority of those polled (with the exception of the wood-processing sector, where support for the EU option and the opinion that Ukraine should not have any integration priority garnered the same number of votes). Thus, when the poll was conducted, the level of support for the European integration vector substantially exceeded the actual level of participation of enterprises in all sectors of industry on the EU market.

Table 3.13. **Priority directions for the economic integration of Ukraine (%)**

Industry sector	EU	Russia and the CIS	Integration not needed	Share of enterprises in sectors that trade on the EU market
Heavy industry	51.3	20.5	7.7	19.4
Machine-building	52.5	16.3	20.0	20.3
Wood processing	40.0	20,0	40.0	10.0
Construction materials industry	60.0	2.9	14.3	2.9
Light industry	60.6	9.1	9.1	17.6
Food industry	51.7	6.7	21.7	25.0
Printing industry	44.8	3.4	20.7	4.0
Other sectors	73.1	11.5	3.8	5.0

Source: Iryna Fedets, Torhovelna polityka Ukrainy: Pohliad biznesu. Spetzialnyi zvit [Trade policy of Ukraine: View of business. Special report] (Kyiv, 2014) (http://www.ier.com.ua/files//publications/Special_research/2015_BTS_Trade_policy_report_if.pdf).

Effect of the War on the Current Economic Expectations of People

Unlike the situation with businesses, the economic expectations of the populace were and remain predominantly negative. According to the data of the GfK Ukraine research company, only 9 percent of respondents polled in June 2016 expected an improvement in the material standing of their families, while 44 percent expected a worsening. These figures are close to those observed in polling conducted in May 2015, when 52 percent expected a worsening of their financial standing while 7 percent hoped for an improvement.

On the other hand, while 80 percent of those polled in 2015 identified a worsening of the material standing of their own family, in 2016 only 60 percent did so. The difference may be partially explained by the socio-psychological adaptation of the population to the realities of the crisis.[23]

According to surveys conducted by the Ukrainian State Statistics Service, a majority of households sampled in 2014, 2015, and 2016 expected a worsening of their material standing over the ensuing twelve months: in 2016, 44.1 percent of those polled expected a worsening (versus 50.3 percent in 2015), while 45.5 percent felt that their material standing would not change (41.6 percent in 2015), 8.7 percent expected an improvement (5.4 percent in 2015), and 1.7 percent were unable to respond to the question (2.7 percent in 2015). For comparison, 65.3 percent expected a worsening of their material standing in 2014, 28.9 percent felt it would not change, 3.5 percent hoped for an improvement, and 2.3 percent could not respond to the question.[24]

Similar assessments were registered regarding prospects for the future socioeconomic development in Ukraine overall: 10 percent of those polled in 2016 expected an improvement (compared to the 9 percent that registered this opinion in 2015),

[23] "Nationwide Polling of Citizens Regarding Democratic Changes in the Political and Social Spheres, Judicial Reform and the Process of Cleaning Up Government: Summary Results of Studies Conducted in 2016" [in Ukrainian], a USAID report, July 21, 2016, 4 (http://www.fair.org.ua/content/library_doc/FAIR_LustrSurvey_Summary_2016_UKR.pdf).

[24] State Statistics Service of Ukraine., "Self-Assessment of Household Incomes in Ukraine (According to Data from a Sample Survey of Households Conducted in January 2016)," *Statistical Digest* (Kyiv, 2016), 9 (https://ukrstat.org/uk/druk/publicat/kat_u/publdomogosp_u.htm); State Statistics Service of Ukraine, "Self-Assessment of Household Incomes in Ukraine (According to Data from a Sample Survey of Households Conducted in January 2017)," *Statistical Digest* (Kyiv, 2017), 9 (https://ukrstat.org/uk/druk/publicat/Arhiv_u/17/Arch_sdrd_zb.htm).

and 41 percent of those polled expected a worsening in 2016, a drop from the 53 percent that expected this result in 2015.[25]

Similar attitudes were observed in polls conducted by the Rating Sociological Group in November 2016: 52 percent of respondents expected that over the next two years the socioeconomic situation in Ukraine would worsen, 23 percent expected it would not change, and only 11 percent hoped for an improvement. Eighty-nine percent of those polled felt that over the preceding two years, the socioeconomic situation in Ukraine had worsened, 9 percent feel it had not changed, and only 1 percent saw an improvement.[26]

In the opinion of Ukrainians, the war in the East is one of the main reasons for the problems the country faces today. Indeed, the answers of respondents to the question, "What, in your opinion, is the main reason for the socioeconomic situation which Ukraine is currently in?," were divided as follows (the respondent could choose up to two responses): 65.9 percent of those polled named "large-scale corruption in the higher echelons of power," 40.5 percent named "the military actions in the East of Ukraine," and 33.6 percent named "disorder and nonprofessionalism of the current executive body of power."[27]

The slow pace of reforms is one of the biggest problems in Ukrainian society. In the opinion of those polled, the main reasons for the delay in reforms are the following:

[25] "Nationwide Polling of Citizens Regarding Democratic Changes in the Political and Social Spheres, Judicial Reform and the Process of Cleaning Up Government," 4.

[26] Rating Sociological Group, "Electoral Attitudes of the Population," November 2016, (http://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/elektoralnye_nastroeniya_naseleniya_i_ocenka_socialno-ekonomicheskoy_situacii_v_ukraine.html).

[27] KIIS, "Sociopolitical Attitudes of Residents of Ukraine and the Rating of Support of Parties and Political Leaders," November 2016 (http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=660&page=1&y=2016).

• First, control over the political system of the country by the oligarchs: 70 percent of those polled selected this response in 2016 (in 2015, 76 percent did so).

• Second, the absence of political will to reform the country: in 2016, 70 percent of the respondents felt this way (in 2015 the figure was 73 percent).

• Third, the aggressive actions of Russia and the situation in the East: 42 percent of the respondents selected this answer in 2016 (48 percent in 2015).[28]

Thus the war is among the top three reasons respondents selected to explain the slowing of reforms; however, it is considerably behind such factors as oligarchic interests and the absence of political will for radical political and socioeconomic change.

Summary and Conclusions

Following is a summary of the main points of the chapter.

1. An analysis of economic sentiments has two main dimensions. The first dimension is the business expectations of economic agents. The war in the East had a direct impact on the conditions of commercial production and, accordingly, on the moods of entrepreneurs. The second dimension is the economic moods of the people.

2. According to assessments of managers of industrial enterprises in Ukraine in 2014, the war in the East had a negative impact on the financial-economic standing of 36 percent of all enterprises. By 2015, 53 percent of poll respondents named the war a factor in the worsening of the financial-economic indicators of their enterprises. (In 2016 this indicator was 41 percent, while in 2017 this factor was named by 79 percent of respondents.)

[28] "Nationwide Polling of Citizens Regarding Democratic Changes in the Political and Social Spheres, Judicial Reform and the Process of Cleaning Up Government," 7.

According to the results of a factor analysis done in 2015, Russia's military aggression and the overall instability of the political situation in the country together formed the biggest problem for the development of SMEs in Ukraine.

3. The war in the East became a factor in the appearance in Ukraine of two new social groups and, accordingly, new forms of social payouts. The first group comprises veterans of the ATO; the second social group consists of IDPs. The capacity of the government to adequately respond to these new social challenges will influence the attitudes of both these social groups and society as a whole, most importantly with respect to trust in the state as a social institution.

4. With respect to IDPs from the Donbas and Crimea, on the whole, local populations have a positive or neutral attitude toward them. The attitudes toward IDPs are practically unchanging over time. In the opinion of those polled, in cities where IDPs are concentrated, tangible socioeconomic competition between the local population and IDPs is not observed. Therefore, so far the traditional economic preconditions that would incite serious conflicts between local residents and migrants are absent.

5. According to polling data, 48 percent of IDPs are unwilling to return to their former place of residence, 36 percent intend to return, and 16 percent are undecided. At the same time, despite the mostly positive attitudes toward IDPs, 85 percent of those polled across all of Ukraine and 79 percent of respondents in cities where IDPs are concentrated are of the opinion that IDPs should return to their homes as soon as is reasonably possible.

6. On the whole, business to a certain extent has adapted to the new economic realities that have developed in the country, especially under the influence of the war in the East. Indeed, according to quarterly polling data acquired by the NBU and published in 2015, respondents expected further growth in the volumes of production of goods and services in Ukraine in the next twelve months, a considerable slowdown in the pace of the growth

in consumer prices, a weakening of the hryvnia devaluation process, and an increase in the need for loans. Besides that, in their opinion, the main negative factors in the development of enterprises remained the unstable political situation and the excessively high prices of energy.

Optimistic sentiments also prevail among SMEs: in 2016, 47.8 percent of those polled said they planned to expand the activity of their enterprises in the near term (next twelve months), 42 percent planned to maintain business activity at the current level, and only 10.2 percent planned to curtail their activity. The long-term expectations of SMEs regarding business activity are significantly better than their short-term expectations, though it should be noted that the level of uncertainty is quite low, which is atypical for business expectations in Ukraine.

At the same time, there is a certain connection between the dynamics of business development over the previous two years (from the date of the polling) and business owners' plans for the ensuing two years. Those enterprises that had recently increased their volume of activity stood out for expressing the highest level of optimism regarding the future prospects: 63 percent of such respondents planned to further expand the volume of their activity, while only 44 percent of owners of enterprises that over the preceding two years had not changed their volume of activity planned to grow in the near term.

7. The imposition of trade barriers by Russia has forced Ukrainian businesses to seek new markets for their goods and services, both in Ukraine and abroad. And though the economic relations between Ukraine and Russia are formally preserved, Ukraine's economic sanctions against Russia and different forms of restriction on the part of Russia against Ukrainian exporters make this trade direction extremely high risk for Ukrainian companies. On the other hand, the war in the East of Ukraine has led to a severance of the traditional production ties inside Ukraine, which has also forced entrepreneurs in the mainland zone to seek new

suppliers in Ukraine and abroad. Such a reorientation is a true challenge for business and conditions expectations of the state's policy regarding taxes, trade, infrastructure, and the agrarian and information sectors, among others.

8. In the opinions of Ukrainians, the war in the East is one of the main reasons for the problems the country faces today. Indeed, respondents' answers to the question, "What, in your opinion, is the main reason for the current socioeconomic situation in Ukraine?," were divided as follows (respondents could choose up to two responses): 65.9 percent of those polled named "large-scale corruption" in the higher echelons of power, 40.5 percent named "the military conflict in the East of Ukraine," and 33.6 percent chose "disorder and nonprofessionalism of the current executive body of power."

9. Public opinion regarding regulation of the conflict in the East has a succinctly pronounced economic component. Indeed, as of September 2016, 42.1 percent of those polled supported the idea of ceasing any economic ties between Ukraine and the so-called DPR and LPR (including social welfare payments, energy provision, and coal purchases) until Ukraine establishes full control over these territories, while 36 percent of those polled said they were opposed to this idea. Regionally, a majority of those polled in the West and Center supported the cessation of economic relations, while in the remaining regions either an absolute or a relative majority did not support such a move. What is typical, though, is that in May 2016, only 13 percent of those polled in the Donbas felt that granting "special status" to the occupied territories could lead to peace. Instead, the successful restoration of a normal life on the territories of the Donbas controlled by Ukraine (selected by 44.8 percent of those polled) should be a priority.

10. The scale and direction of the influence of the situation in the East on sentiments in society on the whole will depend on how the military-political situation in the occupied territories unfolds in the future. There are two possible scenarios:

Scenario 1. The military conflict persists and the occupied territories remain beyond Ukraine's control. In this case, the main problem would be defining the sorts of economic ties that should exist between the mainland sector and the currently occupied territories. At the moment, the suspension of economic ties with and social payments to the occupied territories generally prevails in public opinion.

Scenario 2. Military actions end, and Ukraine regains control over the occupied territories and the border with Russia. In this situation, Ukraine would face the massive challenge of renewal of these territories and their full-fledged reintegration into the socioeconomic system of Ukraine. And here international assistance in the rebuilding of the Donbas region would be of utmost importance as it could ease the dissatisfaction of society with this additional social burden.

IV. CHANGES IN THE FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATIONS OF UKRAINIANS AFTER THE EUROMAIDAN

National and Regional Levels

Maria Zolkina and Olexiy Haran

Changes in the foreign policy orientations and in the integration preferences of Ukrainian society are important components of the transformation processes the country and society have undergone starting in 2013–2014 and continuing to the present. A first important point to note is that on the threshold of 2013–2014, problems in Ukraine's foreign policy course and indecision concerning the choice of integration pathway—whether with the EU or with the Customs Union spearheaded by Russia—became sources of friction between the official position of the state, on the one hand, and domestic social demands on the other hand. This growing friction ignited the mass protests that became known as the Euromaidan.

Even though the dynamics and intensity of relations between Ukraine and the EU prior to 2013 failed to reflect in a practical way the official aim of gaining EU membership, the change in official policy with President Viktor Yanukovych's refusal to sign the Association Agreement in November 2013 spurred consolidation of the pro-European part of Ukrainian society. The basis for this consolidation was the orientation toward European integration on the part of a relative majority of Ukrainian citizens that had built up over the period 2011–2013.

A second important point is that attitudes toward Ukraine's prospects for European or Euro-Atlantic integration prior to 2013–2014 revealed cleavages in public opinion that were most pronounced regionally. For this reason the dynamics of public opinion regarding Ukraine's foreign policy direction at the level of the macroregion are a key variable to consider in analyzing the processes of transformation.

Main Changes in Attitudes toward European Integration

Prior to the Euromaidan, the different moods in Ukrainian society with respect to the country's foreign policy orientation, in particular integration options, can be considered among the most sensitive indicia of public opinion. Indeed, support for different integration directions divided Ukrainian society into proponents of European integration, on the one hand, and advocates of a Eurasian alliance on the other.

Such a division was sufficiently stable and was strengthened by age differences. That is, young adults aged 18–29 years were more oriented toward the idea of joining the EU than were older adults. However, the changes in public opinion that occurred in parallel with the mass protests on the threshold of 2013–2014 became established trends in 2014.

The first trend observed was the formation of *a solid core of support in favor of the European direction as the main integration vector.* Support for the European vector dominated in the polls from the end of April 2011 in response to an alternative question: whether to join the EU or the Customs Union. At the same time, the period 2011–2013 was marked by a relative rather than absolute majority of poll respondents in the pro-European camp (*see table 4.1*).

Table 4.1. **Which integration direction should Ukraine take? (%)**

	Oct. 2011	Dec. 2012	May 2013	Mar. 2014	May 2014	Dec. 2015	Feb. 2017	May 2017
Accession to the EU	43.7	42.4	41.7	45.3	50.5	52.0	46.7	49.2
Accession to the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan)	30.5	32.1	31.0	21.6	21.4	14.6	14.3	10.8
Nonaccession to the EU or the Customs Union	9.3	10.5	13.5	19.6	17.4	21.3	27.9	26.4
Difficult to say	16.4	15.0	13.7	13.4	10.6	12.0	11.1	13.6

Sources: Data for 2011–2014 compiled from polls conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Kyiv. For results of a nationwide poll, "Which Integration Direction Should Ukraine Take?," conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on December 4–14, 2015, see (http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=584&page=6). For February and May 2017 data, see http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=713&page=1.

The major shift in public opinion began with the reaction of society to the refusal of then president Yanukovych to sign the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in Vilnius in November 2013. This shift marked the start of a new, second phase in the development of a steady orientation toward the European prospect. This phase was characterized not so much by a significant increase in support for the European prospect as by a dramatic decline in support for the second potential vector of integration, the Eurasian pathway.

In particular, as early as May 2014 the share of poll respondents favoring integration with the Customs Union had fallen by ten percentage points, or one-third, compared to May 2013, constituting 21 percent of responses (percentages are rounded in the text). By May 2017 the attractiveness of the prospect of Eurasian integration had fallen to 11 percent. This decline was clearly dictated by new realities in the bilateral relations between Ukraine and Russia.

At the same time, according to polls, relations with EU countries since 2012 were steadily considered the most important foreign policy option, with support ranging from 41 to 53 percent (*see table 4.2*).

Table 4.2. **Which foreign policy direction should be a priority for Ukraine? (%)**

	Nov. 2012	**Dec. 2013**	**Mar. 2014**	**Apr. 2014**	**Mar. 2015**	**Sept. 2016**
Relations with EU countries	40.8	43.4	46.0	52.5	47.7	45.8
Relations with the U.S.	1.2	1.0	2.1	1.1	6.0	4.8
Relations with Russia	35.3	34.0	24.1	16.6	10.0	12.6
Relations with other CIS countries	4.8	5,7	5.7	6.8	6.7	6.9
Relations with other countries	3.6	2.7	4.4	4.8	9.1	7.0
Difficult to say	14.3	13.2	17.7	18.1	20.5	22.9

Source: Responses to a nationwide poll, "Foreign Policy Orientations of Ukrainian Citizens," conducted by the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center, Kyiv (http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/news.php?news_id=781).

The share of respondents who considered relations with Russia to be a top priority declined from 35 percent in 2012 to 17 percent in April 2014 (the first major breakthrough) and to 13 percent in September 2016.

In polls with no alternative integration option provided (such as polls that asked only "Does Ukraine need to join the EU?"), a nucleus of EU proponents also appears to form at the level of 50 percent of the population (*see table 4.3*).

Table 4.3. **In your opinion, does Ukraine need to join the European Union? (%*)***

	June 2006	**Dec. 2009**	**Dec. 2011**	**Aug. 2012**	**Dec. 2013**	**May 2014**	**Mar. 2015**	**Sept. 2016**
Yes	43.7	42.8	46.0	42.1	48.0	53.0	52.7	49.7
No	35.9	32.8	32.9	38.6	35.9	35.5	29.6	35.3
Difficult to say	20.4	24.3	21.1	19.3	16.1	11.6	17.7	15.0

Source: Same source as for table 4.2.

The second specific trend change observed at the national level since 2014 was *growth in the share of those favoring nonaccession* over joining either the EU or the Customs Union (*see table 4.1*). At the end of 2015 it exceeded 20 percent, reaching 26 percent in May 2017.

A certain share of former proponents of Customs Union membership clearly changed position to neutral, that is, to preferring nonaccession to either a European or Eurasian union. At this time it seems highly improbable that the Eurasian vector will return to a

position of favor. And for those formerly in favor of nonaccession, a change in position in support of Euro-integration cannot be excluded at some point in the future.

The second trend is inseparably associated with the first one, dispelling any notion of the possibility of simultaneous integration in both the European and the Eurasian directions. Up to the end of 2013, a certain share of the citizenry was inclined to support Ukraine's membership in both the EU and the Customs Union. Only in December 2013, after a month of active protests on the Maidan, did proponents of Customs Union membership for the first time end up in the minority (35 percent) relative to opponents (45 percent) (*see table 4.4*, *part A*).

Table 4.4. **In your opinion, does Ukraine need to join such international organizations? (%)**

A. Customs Union (*with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan*)

	Dec. 2009	Aug. 2012	Dec. 2013	Mar. 2014	May 2014
Yes	58.1	46.5	35.1	25.7	24.5
No	20.0	34.5	45.3	53.0	61.1
Difficult to say	21.9	19.0	19.5	21.3	14.4

B. European Union

	Dec. 2010	Dec. 2012	Dec. 2013	Mar. 2014	May 2014
Yes	42.8	48.4	48.0	47.5	53.0
No	32.8	29.2	35.9	36.6	35.5
Difficult to say	24.3	22.4	16.1	15.9	11.6

Source: Data compiled from polls conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Kyiv.

Instead, the share of those who supported the idea of joining the EU increased gradually from 43 percent in December 2010 to 48 percent in December 2013 to a record high of 53 percent in May 2014 (*see table 4.4, part B*).

In September 2016, had a referendum been held on Ukraine's membership in the EU, 49 percent of respondents would have voted yes, 25 percent would have voted against, 10 percent would have abstained from voting, and 15 percent would have been undecided. At the same time, had a referendum been held on Ukraine joining the Customs Union, with no other integration option offered, only 18 percent of the population would have voted yes, 55 percent would have voted no, and 27 percent would have been undecided or would not have voted.[1]

A third trend observed from poll responses over time was *a change in the age map of attitudes toward integration with Europe.*

In 2014, after the events on the Maidan, for the first time in the history of polling in Ukraine a qualitative change was noticed in attitudes toward European integration by age cohort. Until then young adults in the age cohort 18–29 years were the most inclined toward integration with Europe. This was also the only age cohort in which half the representatives demonstrated a pro-European preference.

The change in this situation was detected as early as May 2014, when support for European integration exceeded 50 percent not only among young adults but also in the age group 30–39 years (55 percent), 40–49 years (53 percent), and 50–59 years (51 percent) (*see table 4.5*).

[1] Results of a nationwide poll, "Geopolitical Orientations of Residents of Ukraine: European Union, Customs Union, NATO (September 2016)," conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on September 16–26, 2016 (http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=650&page=1).

Table 4.5. **Which integration path should Ukraine take? (%)**
(*By age cohort, May 2013–May 2014*)

	18–29 years		30–39 years		40–49 years		50–59 years		60 years and up	
	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014
Accession to the EU	54.1	55.9	44.5	55.3	44.5	53.0	37.5	51.4	30.4	41.4
Accession to the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan)	18.8	15.8	22.3	17.9	27.6	22.3	38.7	22.2	45.0	27.8
Nonaccession to the EU or the Customs Union	13.4	17.4	16.1	18.7	13.0	16.5	13.7	16.9	11.6	17.7
Difficult to say	13.6	10.9	17.2	8.1	14.8	8.2	10.1	9.4	13.0	13.1

Source: Maria Zolkina, "Public Opinion Regarding Euro-integration: New Trends As a Chance to Consolidate Society," in *Euro-integration of Ukraine: The Experience of Neighbors and the Prospects of Unifying Society* (Kyiv: Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2014), 12 (http://dif.org.ua /uploads/pdf/1407765948_3132.pdf).

The absence of significant growth in support for European integration after the Euromaidan among younger adults can be explained by the fact that for this age group, the potentially possible maximum at that moment was reached even before the Euromaidan.

The fourth major trend observable from polling data was *a change in internal regional dynamics.* Indeed, already in May 2014 a significant decline in the level of support for the Customs Union was registered in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, which formerly were the basis for this option (*see table 4.6, parts A and B*).

Table 4.6. **Which integration path should Ukraine take? (%)**
A. South *(Odesa, Mykolaiv, and Kherson oblasts)*

	May 2013	**May 2014**	**May 2015**	**June 2017**
Accession to the EU	32.9	28.0	31.2	32.5
Accession to the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan)	39.5	25.1	14.9	10.2
Nonaccession to the EU or the Customs Union	13.8	28.4	33.0	42.7
Difficult to say	13.8	18.5	20.9	14.6

B. East (*Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts*)

	May 2013	**May 2014**	**May 2015**	**June 2017**
Accession to the EU	28.6	30.5	35.8	41.5
Accession to the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan)	40.9	29.5	25.9	18.7
Nonaccession to the EU or the Customs Union	12.6	32.2	26.4	32.8
Difficult to say	18.0	7.8	11.9	7.1

Source: Results of polls conducted jointly by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center, and the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. Data tables were compiled by Maria Zolkina.

As a result of these changes, in the spring of 2014 Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts remained the only macroregion where an absolute majority of the residents polled were in favor of joining the Customs Union. The results underscored the impossibility of uniting all eastern and southern oblasts into a unified "South-East" macrostructure, as the Russian propaganda machine had insisted.

Table 4.6 (cont.). **What foreign policy should Ukraine take? (%)**
C. Donbas *(since 2014, territories controlled by Ukraine)*

	Sept. 2013	**Sept. 2015**	**June 2017**
Accession to the EU	18.4	19.1	22.8
Accession to the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan)	61.0	38.9	23.0
Nonaccession to the EU or the Customs Union	9.5	29.9	33.4
Difficult to say	11.1	12.1	15.8

Sources: For 2013 and 2015, aggregate data on the Donbas were extracted from the corresponding polls conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. See Olexiy Haran and Maria Zolkina, "The Demise of Ukraine's 'Eurasian Vector' and the Rise of Pro-NATO Sentiments," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo* 458 (February 2017) (http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/demise-ukraines-eurasian-vector-and-rise-pro-nato-sentiment). For 2017 data, see http://dif.org.ua/uploads/pdf/629109728598333135 92f11.60155832.pdf

Over the period 2014–2017, changes in public opinion in the Donbas went in the same direction as in the South and East of

the country. Not a single macroregion remained in Ukraine in which the majority of the population opted for Eurasian integration. Even in the Donbas (the part controlled by Ukraine), the share of proponents of accession to the Customs Union decreased by almost two-thirds, from 61 percent to 23 percent (*see table 4.6, part C*).

Instead, the share of those in favor of nonaccession to either the EU or the Customs Union more than tripled, from 10 percent to 33 percent. The lion's share shifted from the category of former proponents of joining the Customs Union to the category of those preferring nonaccession.

With a sufficiently stable core of EU integration proponents and a low and stable (i.e., not increasing) level of support for the Eurasian vector, those who are undecided or in favor of nonaccession to any integration option will most likely have the greatest influence on subsequent overall changes in integration priorities.

Dramatic Shift in Attitudes toward Ukraine's Prospects of Euro–Atlantic Integration

Attitudes toward Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic prospects were among the main sensitive topics until the Euromaidan. Now Ukraine's potential Euro-Atlantic integration is one of the dimensions in which the greatest change in public opinion has transpired.

The first trend observed in the polling data concerned *cardinal changes in attitudes toward the idea of NATO membership at the national level.* From 2005 to 2014, opponents of joining NATO traditionally constituted the majority. As of 2012, for instance, the share of those favoring an alliance with NATO in a hypothetical referendum was 26 percent, while the share of those opposed was 61 percent (with a probable turnout of 58.5 percent) (*see table 4.7*).

Table 4.7. **If you had participated in a referendum on accession to NATO, how would you have voted? (%)**

(% of those who would have voted in the referendum)

	Dec. 2007	Dec. 2009	Apr. 2012	June 2014	July 2015	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Dec. 2016	June 2017
I would have voted for accession	31.8	21.0	26.2	45.4	63.9	74.9	77.7	71.5	69.5
I would have voted against accession	52.8	59.7	60.6	36.4	28.5	19.8	17.4	22.7	25.9
Difficult to say	15.4	19.3	13.4	18.1	7.6	5.3	4.8	5.8	4.6

Sources: Results of nationwide polls conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Kyiv (http://dif.org.ua/article/referendum-shchodo-vstupu-do-nato-buv-bi-vigraniy-prote-tse-pitannya-dilit-ukrainu; http://dif.org.ua/article/2016-y-politichni-pidsumki-zagalnonatsionalne-opituvannya; http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-naselennya-ukraini-pro-nato).

A fundamental change regarding Ukraine's accession to NATO was registered as early as June 2014, when the share of opponents fell by nearly half and for the first time proponents of joining NATO constituted the relative majority, at 45 percent. Clearly, such was the spontaneous reaction to the annexation of Crimea and the start of Russian aggression in the Donbas.

Further modeling of the hypothetical referendum results demonstrated an increase in support for Ukraine's membership in NATO, with a corresponding decrease in the share of those who would vote against NATO membership. Indeed, in November 2015, the share of participants in the referendum who would have voted for NATO membership skyrocketed to 75 percent, followed by a slight decrease, to 70 percent, in June 2017 polling results.

A major caveat applies to analyzing the results of a hypothetical referendum, however, and reviewers should not be led astray by such a poll. In the case of an actual referendum, the campaign in the run-up to voting would be highly politicized, and mobilization of the electorate would sweep in proponents and opponents alike. Formally, for all the current and former members of the parliamentary coalition, integration with NATO is a priority. Opponents of Ukraine's membership in NATO are currently not actively promoting nonaccession among the general public. For that reason, identifying the results of modeling with the actual results of voting would be erroneous, as not all factors that could potentially influence voting are relevant today.

A second trend observable in poll results concerning Ukraine's participation in a Euro-Atlantic alliance was *an orientation toward joining NATO as the main option that would guarantee national security*. This orientation has prevailed in the attitudes of Ukrainians since 2014 (*see table 4.8*).

Table 4.8. **In your opinion, which option to guarantee national security would be best for Ukraine? (%)**

	Dec. 2007	Apr. 2012	May 2014	Sept. 2014	Dec. 2014	July 2015	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Dec. 2016	June 2017
Accession to NATO	18.9	13.0	32.6	43.6	46.4	35.9	45.7	43.3	44.1	47.2
Military alliance with Russia and other CIS countries	31.3	26.2	13.0	14.8	10.1	7.8	8.2	7.1	6.4	6.1
Military alliance with the U.S.	—	—	1.5	—	—	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.9	—

Table 4.8 (cont.)

	Dec. 2007	Apr. 2012	May 2014	Sept. 2014	Dec. 2014	July 2015	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Dec. 2016	June 2017
Non-bloc status of Ukraine	30.7	42.1	28.3	22.2	20.9	28.9	22,6	25.1	26.4	27.3
Other	1.6	0.9	1.0	0.4	1.0	1.6	2.4	2.2	2.5	2.3
Difficult to say	17.5	17.8	23.7	19.0	21.7	22.6	17.6	19.1	16.6	17.0

Sources: Table shows aggregated results of polls conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Kyiv (http://dif.org.ua/article /gromadska-dumka-pro-nato-noviy-poglyad).

For December 2016 and June 2017 data, see http://dif.org.ua /uploads/pdf/13816462815863c78c6b27d3.47743328.pdf; http://dif.org.ua /uploads/pdf/574143415595c9b3a39c058.39544100.pdf.

In May 2014, immediately after the annexation of Crimea and the start of Russian aggression in the Donbas, a jump of more than twenty percentage points in the research results was observed. Compared with 2012, the share of those who were in favor of a NATO alliance as the key security option grew more than threefold, from 13 percent in April 2012 to 47 percent in June 2017. In parallel with the changes in favor of joining NATO, the share of those oriented toward a non-bloc status (i.e., no alliance with NATO or a Russia-led military organization) declined from 42 percent in early 2012 to 28 percent in May 2014 and to 27 percent in June 2017.

The choice of a military alliance with Russia and other CIS countries took second place in 2012 in Ukrainian public opinion, after the non-bloc choice. Of note, the changes in the perception of

this option were the most radical among polling choices since 2014. In particular, in 2012, 26 percent of the population were oriented toward this option of guaranteeing national security, while in May 2014 (the moment of the most significant pivot in security preferences) this figure fell to 13 percent, and in June 2017 it fell to 6 percent. Rejection of the non-bloc option and of a military alliance with Russia could be even more important strategically than growth in the preference for an association with NATO.

The third trend observed in polling data with respect to Ukraine joining a Euro-Atlantic alliance lay in *changes in those macroregions that are the most skeptical about NATO.*

The increase in orientation toward an alliance with NATO as a guarantee of national security for Ukraine was glaringly evident in all macroregions of the country. The most significant increase in this respect was registered in public opinion polls in the East and the Donbas. In the East in 2012, only 2 percent supported an alliance with NATO. By June 2017 this figure had risen to an amazing 32 percent (*see table 4.9, part A*).

Table 4.9. **In your opinion, which variant of national security would be best for Ukraine? (%)**

A. East *(Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts)*

	Apr. 2012	July 2015	Nov. 2015	May 2016	June 2017
Accession to NATO	1.7	20.2	36.0	29.0	32.2
Military alliance with Russia	38.3	13.5	18.3	14.8	13.1
Military alliance with the U.S	—	0.8	2.7	3.5	—
Non-bloc status of Ukraine	38.0	43.1	29.4	37.5	37.6
Other	1.3	0.8	1.6	0.6	1.5
Difficult to answer	20.7	21.6	12.0	14.6	15.6

Table 4.9 (cont.)
B. Donbas

	Apr. 2012	July 2015	Nov. 2015	May 2016	June 2017
Accession to NATO	0.8	12.0	23.3	24.4	19.8
Military alliance with Russia and CIS countries	50.2	12.9	13.6	14.4	16.6
Military alliance with the U.S	—	—	3.8	3.8	—
Non-bloc status of Ukraine	41.4	48.6	34.7	33.3	37.5
Other	0.0	4.4	3.2	1.7	0.5
Difficult to answer	7.6	22.1	21.5	22.4	25.7

Sources: Aggregated results of studies conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Kyiv (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pro-nato-noviy-poglyad; http://dif.org.ua/uploads/pdf/135075364159f1dbf211c244.95899670.pdf.

As shown in part B of table 4.9, in the Donbas, the share of NATO proponents grew by twenty-three percentage points between 2012 and 2016, from 1 percent to 24 percent.

In every region the percentage of those who see in NATO a guarantee of national security is higher today than it was on average across the entire country in 2012 (13 percent). At the same time, it is worth noting that the idea of non-bloc status, which lost popularity throughout Ukraine, is perceived differently in different regions of the country. Indeed, the non-bloc option to this day has a relative advantage as a guarantee of national security in the East (37.6 percent), the Donbas (37.5 percent), and the South (36.6 percent) (*see table 4.9, part C*).

Table 4. 9 (cont.)
C. South *(Odesa, Mykolaiv, and Kherson oblasts)*

	Apr. 2012	**July 2015**	**Nov. 2015**	**May 2016**	**June 2017**
Accession to NATO	6.6	24.2	25.2	19.1	20.1
Military alliance with Russia and CIS countries	30.6	15.3	7.0	12.2	10.9
Military alliance with the U.S	–	2.3	2.3	3.2	–
Non-bloc status of Ukraine	50.6	35.8	37.9	44.3	36.6
Other	0.6	0.5	1.9	0.4	2.5
Difficult to answer	11.6	21.9	25.7	20.9	29.8

Sources: Same sources as for table 4.9, part B.

To place these results in perspective, the unfolding of Russian aggression against Ukraine became the trigger for unprecedented changes in attitudes toward NATO, the non-bloc option, and a military alliance with Russia. On the other hand, in such a situation there are several hidden risks. Even the certain easing of pressure on the front line and a freezing of the military situation could lead to a decrease in enthusiasm for the Euro-Atlantic integration track as the advantage of collective security would lose its attractiveness, a fact to which Ukrainian society turned its attention in 2014. The rising affinity for Euro-Atlantic integration means a certain level of expectations from NATO, first and foremost regarding military assistance to Ukraine. The absence of an anticipated response could influence attitudes toward NATO. In light of this, one possible scenario could be a gradual decline in support for NATO membership to a certain level, which could be considered the level

of conscious choice rather than a reaction to contemporary events, and consequently an increase in preference for non-bloc status in the East, the South, and the Donbas.

Conclusions

Changes in the foreign policy attitudes of Ukrainians over the period 2014–2016 represent one of the most significant transformations in public opinion in recent years. They are characterized by changes in both quantitative and qualitative indicators evident nationally as well as at the regional level.

Regarding *European integration*, one can speak of the *disappearance of the polarity in integration priorities*. The choice between Ukraine joining the EU or joining the Customs Union no longer divides society. As of May 2017, proponents of joining the Customs Union in Ukrainian society amounted to a mere 11 percent. At the same time, fluctuation in support for (hypothetical) accession to the EU ended up at 49 percent (in May 2013 it was 42 percent). Basically, this suggests that *the maximum possible level of conscious support for Euro-integration given today's realities has been reached*. Any additional growth seems possible only with the emergence of new circumstances, either domestic or foreign, including positive developments in bilateral relations with the EU.

The notion of dualism disappeared in the integration priorities of Ukrainians. Until 2014, if the poll question offered no alternative option, Ukrainians predominantly supported the idea of membership in both the Customs Union and the EU. However, since the end of 2013 the balance has shifted toward those who oppose membership in the Customs Union: in March 2014 only 26 percent were in favor of this option and 53 percent were against it. Meanwhile, the proponents of membership in the EU continued to remain in the majority.

Regional changes regarding integration priorities should be considered the most significant ones. The maximum decline in support for joining the Customs Union was observed exactly in

those regions where the idea of Eurasian integration was traditionally supported by the majority of the population: the South, the East, and the Donbas.

At the same time, loss of support for the Eurasian vector of integration gradually began to merge with an increase in support for nonaffiliation with any of these unions. In other words, the greatest share of people disappointed with the Eurasian vector "swayed" either toward the nonaccession category or toward the undecided category. Support for nonaccession of any kind was greatest in the South, the East, and the Donbas, where it grew significantly over the past two years.

However, two scenarios are possible here. First, the disinclination to join any union could become constant. Then we would have a new kind of regional breakdown, in which yesterday's proponents of joining the Customs Union would simply object to the need to sway in favor of the EU. This in turn would create new regional differences, but probably less tangible than the previous ones, that is, without a high level of polarization, as in the situation with the country divided into those who favor EU accession and those who favor an alliance with the Customs Union.

In the second scenario, the position "neither the EU nor the CU" would be only temporary, an interim position, and could potentially become a resource for supplementing the ranks of EU proponents. Insofar as a nucleus of conscious proponents of EU integration can already be considered to have formed in the majority of regions, the transition from the position "nowhere" to supporting EU integration seems possible only if new circumstances arise that stimulate loyalty to the EU.

The attitudes of Ukrainians toward *Euro-Atlantic integration* have also undergone major upheavals in the period since 2014. They were even more dramatic than those regarding the choice between the EU and the Customs Union.

Support for Ukraine's membership in NATO began to grow steadily in the spring of 2014 and at the moment is at an unprecedentedly high point in the entire history of NATO-Ukraine

relations. So, if a referendum had been organized in Ukraine regarding NATO membership at any time after June 2014, it would have yielded positive results. In June 2017 the potential yes vote was registered at 70 percent among those who would have participated in the referendum (predicted 66 percent turnout).

The vision of the role of NATO also changed. In 2014, *NATO accession for the first time became the most supported option for guaranteeing the security of Ukraine.* Alongside this shift toward NATO as guarantor was a decline in the support for non-bloc status (the main security option prior to 2014) and for a military alliance with Russia (before 2014 it was in second place).

Attitudes toward NATO membership changed considerably at the regional level as well. As an example, in 2012, fewer than 1 percent of the residents of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts considered NATO membership a possible guarantee of national security. In the summer of 2015, this figure in the Ukraine-controlled Donbas grew to 12 percent, and by May 2016 it had increased to 24 percent.

At the same time, a number of risks must be considered. The steady growth in support for NATO membership is associated with the security vacuum that Ukraine got caught up in after the failure of the non-bloc policy and Russian aggression in the east of the country.

Thus, two of the most widespread security options in Ukrainian society prior to 2014, non-bloc status and a military alliance with Russia, were rejected with the emergence of new realities. However, though support for a military alliance with Russia collapsed, the non-bloc status is a different matter altogether. As an option it dropped from first place (from 42 percent in 2012 to 27 percent in June 2017), but in the South, East and the Donbas it remains the most popular option, though supported by only a relative majority. In the event of a freezing of the conflict in the Donbas, with a population accustomed to the status quo (the conflict persists, the territory is uncontrolled, Crimea has been annexed), and should adequate support from Ukraine's Western partners be lacking, a decline in the level of support for NATO affiliation and

an increase in the support of non-bloc status could be expected. Precisely this sector of the population—residents of the South, the East, and the Donbas who support non-bloc status—should be the target audience for information and awareness campaigns regarding the realities and prospects of the national security policy of Ukraine.

Moreover, the aforementioned risks will be strengthened if key political players in Ukraine return to the topic of NATO membership as the central focus of political campaigns (elections/referenda).

To sum up, society's attitudes toward European and Euro-Atlantic integration became a field of dramatic shifts beginning with the Euromaidan in 2013–2014. How the new map of society's moods in Ukraine takes shape will depend on potential changes in the critically important regions of the country, namely, the South, the East, and the Donbas.

V. DECENTRALIZATION OF POWER IN UKRAINE

Achievements and Challenges

Oleksii Sydorchuk and Marharyta Chabanna

On August 31, 2015, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine by a majority of votes approved the bill "On Amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine Regarding Decentralization of Power" on the first reading. Besides the provisions of the bill aimed at forwarding decentralization reforms, another transitional clause, Clause 18, was included in the bill: "The particularities of executing local self-government in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are defined by a separate law." In this way, the draft of the constitutional amendments on decentralization was directly tied to the Minsk process, fulfillment of a set of measures intended to regulate the conflict in the Donbas. The inclusion of this clause in the draft of the constitutional amendments extremely disturbed Ukrainian society and led to a clash outside parliament on the day of the vote during which four law enforcement officers were killed.

Decentralization reform in Ukraine was not immediately combined with the implementation of the second Minsk agreements, drawn up on February 12, 2015. Moreover, decentralization reform and executing the conditions of the Minsk agreement are two radically different tasks that should not be linked together. However, as not a single change was introduced after the preliminary voting on the constitutional amendments, the issues of decentralization and of alleviating the conflict in the Donbas remain connected in public opinion to this day. The reasons for and probable consequences of

such a perception, as well as its place in the general context of changes in the moods of Ukrainian society after the start of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the Donbas, are analyzed in this chapter.

Origins of Decentralization Reform

The need to solve a number of problems common to all the regions of Ukraine was the basis for decentralization reform. Ukrainian citizens for the most part could not receive high-quality, affordable services from public bodies. This deficit was evident in a variety of spheres, including health care, education, social security, transportation, and infrastructure. For example, more than half of territorial communities did not have the means to maintain kindergartens.[1] As a result, the network of kindergartens was sufficient to cover the needs of only 56 percent of all children in Ukraine.[2]

The shortage and the low quality of these services contributed to the negative attitudes of Ukrainians as revealed in polling. In particular, in November 2014, prior to the start of implementation of the main measures of decentralization, an absolute majority of citizens were dissatisfied with medical services (72 percent), care for socially vulnerable groups of the population (70 percent), and the functioning of municipal utility enterprises (66 percent).[3]

[1] Yuriy Hanushchak, "Polityky dumayut', shcho detsentralizatsiya—prokliata reforma" [Politicians think that decentralization is a cursed reform], *Platforma*, 2015 (http://reforms.platfor.ma/yurii-ganushchak/).

[2] "Doshkil'ni navchal'ni zaklady" [Pre-school education facilities], State Statistical Service, 2014 (http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/).

[3] "Rezul'taty zahal'nonatsional'noho opytuvannia hromads'koyi dumky shchodo problem misttsevoho samovriaduvannia ta stavlennia do detsentralizatsiyi vlady" [Results of the nationwide public opinion poll on problems of local self-government and attitudes toward decentralization of power], *Haluzevyy Monitorynh* 18 (2014) (http://dif.org.ua/uploads/pdf/1423756129_3428.pdf).

Effective communication between citizens and local authorities was also lacking. In November 2014, 74 percent of Ukrainians were dissatisfied with their ability to influence the decisions of local authorities. Moreover, citizens were not happy with the activity of the local government. In particular, only 33 percent of respondents were satisfied with the activity of mayors, 27 percent were satisfied with the activity of local councils, and 26 percent were satisfied with the activity of the local state administration.[4]

The reasons for the aforementioned problems could be found in the system of organization and the division of power and resources in the country. In accordance with Ukraine's Constitution, at a subnational level, the administrative and territorial structure of the state comprises three levels. The primary unit, at the community level, is the *hromada*. Several *hromady* together constitute a district, or *raion*. At the top level of organization are the regions (*oblasti*) and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Problems devolving from the organization of power were evident at all levels.

Fundamentally, a lack of resources was the root of all the problems. Of the 11,500 communities in Ukraine before the start of the decentralization reforms, 10,200 communities were rural. Among them, 92 percent had fewer than 3,000 residents and 47 percent had fewer than 1,000 residents.[5] Therefore, it was extremely difficult for the smaller communities to generate revenues sufficient to provide services to their residents. In addition, in the majority of these communities the lion's share of the local budget (up to 90 percent in some cases) went to covering

[4] Oleksii Sydorchuk, "Stavlennia zhyteliv mist do ideyi detsentralizatsiyi" [Attitudes of city residents toward the idea of decentralization], *Hromads'ka Dumka* 23, no. 3 (2014): 5.

[5] "Prezentatsiya zakonoproektiv shchodo obyednannia ta spivrobitnytstva terytorial'nykh hromad" [Presentation of bills on amalgamation and cooperation of territorial communities], Ministry for Regional Development, Building and Housing of Ukraine, 2014 (http://old.decentralization.gov.ua/infographics/item/id/5).

the salaries of employees of local self-government bodies. Little money was left over to cover the costs of performing other functions, as a result of which these communities became financially dependent on subsidies from the state budget. Thus it is not surprising that 96 percent of territorial communities were subsidized, meaning they needed support from the state budget to ensure they could meet their own needs.[6]

However, even getting the necessary state financing posed problems for local communities. In particular, cities (with the exception of 180 cities of oblast significance), towns, and villages could not receive subsidies from the state budget directly but only through district and oblast state administrations, which created additional bottlenecks. Moreover, the local self-government bodies at the *hromada* level were often forced to bear the responsibility for rendering key services in the spheres of medicine or education without receiving adequate financial assistance from the state. To at least partially cover such expenses, local governments had to use funds allocated for other, less important tasks, in particular landscaping, renovations, and infrastructure development. As a result, funds were not sufficient to fully cover either the first or the second category of expenses.

Some obvious flaws were also observed at the higher district and oblast levels, where the elected councils had to represent the common interests of territorial communities in the form of regional development projects. For these needs the State Fund for Regional Development (SFRD) existed, through which the state targeted money to specific territories. Before the start of reform, the division of funds was handled according to political motives, as a consequence of which some oblasts received huge sums of money

[6] "Vostok + Zapad: Detsentralizatsiya—reforma i obnovleniye biudzhetnoy sistemy v Ukraine" [East + West: Decentralization—reform and revamping of the budget system in Ukraine], UNIAN, 2015 (http://www.unian.net/multimedia/video-2/8394-vostok-zapad-detsentralizatsiyareforma-i-obnovlenie-byudjetnoy-sistemyi-v-ukraine.html).

while others were left with almost no financing at all. During the presidential administration of Viktor Yanukovych (2010–2014), Donetsk oblast and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, where the positions and interests of the ruling Party of Regions were especially strong, received disproportionately large sums of money from the SFRD. In 2011, for example, Crimea received UAH 900 million, while Donetsk oblast received UAH 343 million from the total amount of UAH 2.945 billion the state allocated for the development of all regions.[7]

In addition, the management of districts and oblasts was overly centralized. Unlike at the primary level, district and oblast councils did not have their own executive bodies. Instead, all the executive powers at this level were concentrated in the hands of the district and oblast state administrations, the heads of which were appointed by the president on submission of their names by the Cabinet of Ministers. Such concentration of powers in the hands of officials appointed in Kyiv did not foster the development of local self-government and citizens' ability to influence the decision-making process in their regions.

Decentralization versus Federalization

Despite the obvious problems entrenched in the excessive centralization of power, full-fledged decentralization reform had not been implemented before 2014, though attempts to do so were made after President Viktor Yushchenko came to power in 2005. However, only the Revolution of Dignity provided the needed impetus to jump-start genuine reform in this sphere. On April 1, 2014, the Cabinet of Ministers, headed by Arseniy Yatsenyuk, approved the regulation "On the Concept of Reform of Local Self-government and Territorial Organization of Power in

[7] Anatoliy Tkachuk, *Derzhavna rehional'na polityka: Vid asymetriyi do solidarnosti (robochyy zoshyt*) [State regional policy: From asymmetry to solidarity (Working Paper)] (Kyiv: Lehalnyi Status, 2013), 45.

Ukraine," in which the main principles and the expected measures of decentralization reform were laid out.[8]

This clearly points to the fact that decentralization reform began not only long before the signing of the first Minsk agreements on September 5, 2014, but also prior to the start of military actions in the Donbas, in particular the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) of the armed forces of Ukraine against separatists in the Donbas, which officially began only on April 14, 2014. As well, the goal of decentralization was to resolve certain objective problems of the development of the Ukrainian state, which were unrelated to the need to end the conflict in the Donbas.

On the other hand, Russian president Vladimir Putin clearly exploited the idea of expanding the rights of bodies of self-government during the separatist unrest in several eastern and southern oblasts of Ukraine over the period March–April 2014. However, in his locution such an expansion of the rights of local authorities meant not decentralization but federalization of the country—that is, the transformation of Ukraine from a unitary state to a federated one.[9] It is clear that in this case Putin used doublespeak: federalization of Ukraine meant strengthening regional governments, which carried an implicit threat of the emergence of regional political and economic clans and the intensification of centrifugal tendencies. It is quite clear that such a course of events would be beneficial to the Kremlin, as it would give it the opportunity to split Ukraine and in this way take control of a significant part of its regions.

[8] Rozporiadzennia "Pro skhvalennia Kontseptsiyi reformuvannia misttsevoho samovriaduvannia ta terytorial'noyi orhanizatsiyi vlady v Ukrayini" [Order "On Adoption of the Concept of Reform of Local Self-Government and Territorial Organization of Power in Ukraine], Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2014 (http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/333-2014-%D1%80).

[9] Bridget Kendall, "Federalizatsiya Ukrayiny v voposakh i otvetakh" [Federalization of Ukraine in questions and answers], BBC Russian Service, 2014 (http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2014/04/140402_ukraine_federation_q_and_a).

Meanwhile, the instruments and tasks of the Ukrainian version of decentralization were totally different in nature. At the heart of decentralization reform lies the need to strengthen the basic communities in cities, towns, and villages, where citizens most often need public services. As well, reinforcement of local self-government at the primary level of the *hromada* would serve as a counterweight to the regionalization of the country and limit the threat of the country disintegrating. It is worth noting that the greatest threat of separatism in Ukraine has always been posed by oblast councils, which, owing to their lack of actual administrative powers, have usually been highly politicized and whose actions have often exceeded legal limits.

At the same time, local councils at the primary level are directly responsible for ensuring the viability of their own communities, and that is why they are not interested in engaging politically sensitive topics. For this reason, unlike in the case of federalization, decentralization reform was sought to strengthen the state system of Ukraine.

It became clear rather quickly that Russia's aggressive promotion of the idea of the federalization of Ukraine did not find a response in Ukrainian society, even in the southern and eastern oblasts of the country, where Russian sympathies have traditionally been stronger than in other regions. In particular, in April 2014 only 25 percent of residents of eight southern and eastern oblasts of Ukraine felt that the country should be federalized. At the same time, 45 percent were convinced that the country should remain unitary, but on condition of the decentralization of power, and 19 percent thought that the current unitary system should be preserved without changes (detailed results are presented in table 5.1; the percentages are rounded in the text). Moreover, only 12 percent of residents of the southern and eastern oblasts indicated on polling that the Ukrainian government would have to federalize the country in order to maintain its unity. Therefore, Ukrainians from all regions understood the implications of federalization quite well.

Table 5.1. **The territorial structure of Ukraine must be … (%)**
(*April 2014*)

	Unitary—oblasts should have those rights that they now enjoy	**Unitary, but de-centralization of power must be undertaken**	**Federative**	**Difficult to say**
Dnipropetrovsk oblast	19.6	51.0	11.4	11.6
Donetsk oblast	10.6	41.1	38.4	8.7
Zaporizhzhia oblast	19.8	51.4	15.3	13.6
Luhansk oblast	12.4	34.2	41.9	7.9
Mykolaiv oblast	17.9	63.0	10.7	8.4
Odesa oblast	29.1	44.2	17.5	8.1
Kharkiv oblast	23.3	39.1	32.2	5.2
Kherson oblast	32.9	54.5	6.9	5.0
South and East combined	**19.1**	**45.2**	**24.8**	**8.8**

Source: Inna Vedernikova, Yulia Mostova, and Serhiy Rakhmanin, "Pivdennyy Skhid: Hilka dereva nashoho" [Southern East: Branch of our tree], *Dzerkalo Tyzhnia* 14 (2014) (http://gazeta.dt.ua/internal/pivdenniy-shid-gilka-dereva-nashogo-_.html).

Note: Boldface in the table indicates findings of high salience to the chapter's discussion.

Achievements and Problems of Decentralization Reform

The first serious legislative innovations that introduced the redistribution of government powers and resources to the benefit of local self-government bodies were implemented at the end of 2014. In particular, on December 28 the Verkhovna Rada during voting on the state budget for 2015 approved changes to the Budget

Code[10] and the Tax Code[11] that were directly related to the decentralization of power. The approved changes included several key new provisions.

First, revenues from several important taxes, such as the income tax paid by individual persons, were redivided to the benefit of local budgets. Second, local authorities were granted more freedom in setting local tax rates. Third, the financing of education and medical services, for which the local self-government bodies constantly lacked money, was officially attached to the respective national-level ministries. Fourth, a new system of equalization of revenues of subnational units was introduced. Previously the state had covered local budget deficits using excess funds from richer subnational units. For obvious reasons, such a system did not motivate local authorities to earn more money because the state skimmed the cream off the top anyway. The new model introduced the principle of equalization of local budgets according to their revenues. Local budgets that earned less money than the average indicator across the country received only partial subsidies from the state. Similarly, those subnational units that earned more were required to give back only part of the excess funds.

In sum, the changes to the two codes laid the foundation for financial decentralization. On the one hand, local governments automatically received new sources of revenue thanks to new taxes and the ability to retain a larger share of the tax collected. On the other hand, territorial communities received stimuli to develop local businesses and improve their investment attractiveness.

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[10] Zakon Ukrayiny "Pro vnesennia zmin do Biudzhetnoho kodeksu Ukrayiny shchodo reformy mizhbiudzhetnykh vidnosyn" [Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to the Budget Code of Ukraine on Reform of Inter-Budget Relations"], Supreme Council of Ukraine, 2014 (http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/79-19/conv).

[11] Zakon Ukrayiny "Pro vnesennia zmin do Podatkovoho kodeksu Ukrayiny ta deyakykh zakonodavchykh aktiv Ukrayiny shchodo podatkovoyi reformy" [Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to the Tax Code of Ukraine and Some Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Tax Reform"], Supreme Council of Ukraine, 2014 (http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/71-19/conv).

The continuation of the legislative provision of the reform was the approval of the law "On the Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities," passed in 2015.[12] From then on, communities were granted the right to unite with each other to strengthen their own institutional and financial capacity and also to receive additional legislative powers and resources. To this end, all oblast councils in Ukraine are to adopt the plans to form territorial communities according to the developed methodology. On the basis of these plans, communities are able to agree among themselves about amalgamation. In the event such amalgamation is successful, these communities are expected to transition to direct relations with the state budget and to receive new sources of tax revenues and a number of administrative powers. But Ukrainian legislators consciously chose not to force amalgamation of communities, and communities are permitted not to take part in this process.[13]

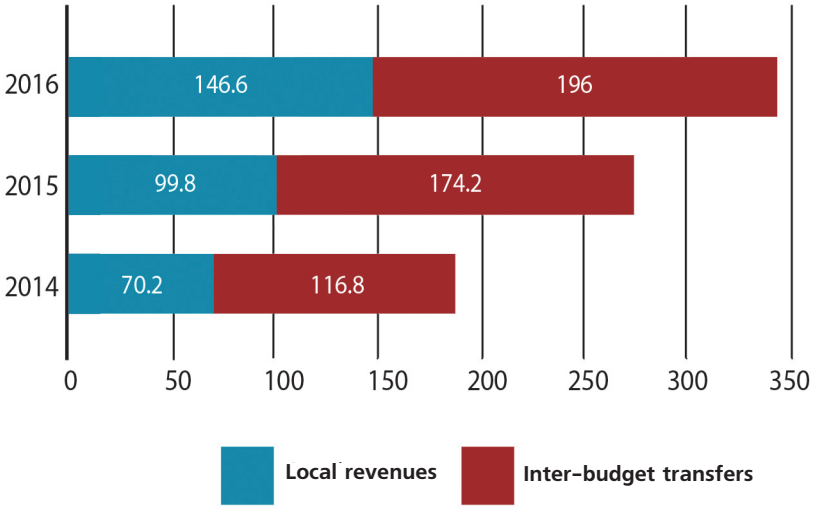
The results of both legislative innovations were immediately visible. The most notable consequence of the first steps of decentralization was an increase in revenues to local budgets. Indeed, in 2015 local budgets received 42 percent more revenues than in 2014. The total growth amounted to UAH 29.6 billion, from UAH 70.2 billion to UAH 99.8 billion, and that UAH 99.8 billion in revenues exceeded the expected level of annual revenues by 16 percent. Furthermore, in 2016 the revenues of local budgets grew by another 49 percent (or by UAH 46.8 billion) compared to 2015 (*see figure 5.1*).

[12] Zakon Ukrayiny "Pro dobrovil'ne obyednannia terytorial'nykh hromad" [Law of Ukraine "On Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities"], Supreme Council of Ukraine, 2015 (http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/157-19/conv).

[13] "Stvorennia detsentralizovanoyi Ukrayiny vyvodyt' yiyi z kremlivs'koyi matrytsi" [Creation of decentralized Ukraine takes it out of Kremlin matrix] (interview with Anatolii Tkachuk), *Halychyna*, September 19, 2016 (http://www.galychyna.if.ua/publication/policy/anatolii-tkachuk-stvorennja-decentralizovanoji-ukrajini/).

Figure 5.1. **Sources of revenues of local budgets in 2014–2016 (UAH bn)**

(On the same conditions, without taking into account territories not under the control of Ukraine)

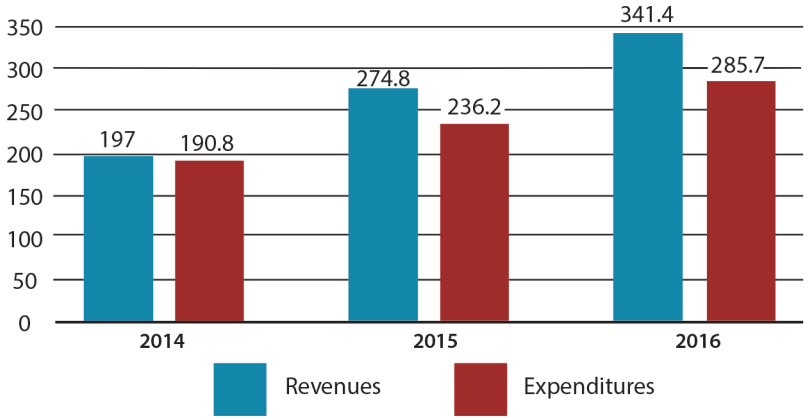


Sources: "Informatsiya shchodo stanu vykonania misttsevykh biudzhetiv za sichen'–hruden' 2015 roku" [Information on the state of performance of local budgets for January–December 2015], Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, 2016(http://www.minfin.gov.ua/uploads/redactor/files/56969ae43ec34.doc; "Informatsiya shchodo stanu vykonania misttsevykh biudzhetiv za sichen'–hruden' 2016 roku" [Information on the state of performance of local budgets for January–December 2016], Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, 2016 (https://www.minfin.gov.ua/uploads/redactor/files/ДОВІДКА (січень-грудень).docx).

Thanks to the increase in revenues to local budgets, the earnings of local self-government bodies in 2015 notably exceeded their expenditures. In 2015 the difference between income and expenditures amounted to nearly UAH 39 billion, and in 2016 it amounted to nearly UAH 56 billion, whereas in 2014 the difference amounted to only UAH 6 billion (*figure 5.2*). Though the large

differences between revenue and expenditures in 2015 and 2016 are testament to the enrichment of local budgets, they are also evidence that local self-government bodies could not effectively manage spending vast sums, which underscores the need for specifying and further expanding their powers.

Figure 5.2. **Correlation of revenues and expenditures of local budgets in 2014–2016 (UAH bn)**



Sources: "Dovidka pro vykonania misttsevykh biudzhetiv za dokhodamy stanom na 01.01.2016 (bez urakhuvannia mizhbiudzhetnykh transfertiv ta z urakhuvanniam mizhbiudzhetnykh transfertiv z derzhavnoho biudzhetu)" [Reference on performance of local budgets according to revenues as of January 1, 2016 (excluding inter-budget transfers and including budget transfers from the state budget)], State Treasury Service of Ukraine, 2016 (http://www.treasury.gov.ua/main/file/link/305326/file/Mb_12_15.xls); "Dovidka pro vykonania misttsevykh biudzhetiv za vydatkamy stanom na 01.01.2016" [Reference on performance of local budgets according to expenditures as of January 1, 2016], State Treasury Service of Ukraine, 2016. (http://www.treasury.gov.ua/main/file/link/305333 /file/Mb_ 12_ 15_1.xls). See also http://www.treasury.gov.ua/main/file/link/349856/file/Mb_12_ 16.xls; http://www.treasury.gov.ua/main/file/link/349863/file/Mb_12_16_1.xls; http://www.treasury.gov.ua/main/file/link/245416/file/Mb_12_14.xls; http://www.treasury.gov.ua/main/file/- link/245416/file/Mb_12_14.xls.

During 2015, notable results were also achieved in the voluntary amalgamation of communities. Up to the end of 2015, nearly 800 municipalities created 159 amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs), which were able to hold their first elections in October 2015.[14] At this point the pace of unification of communities significantly outstretched that of other countries that had gone through the same process (e.g., Latvia, Estonia, Denmark, Norway)[15]—in the course of half a year nearly 7 percent of communities in Ukraine united. In 2016 the process slowed down because of a delay on the part of the Central Election Commission and the lack of necessary legislative acts. However, by the end of 2016 another 208 ATCs had been formed.

The first half of 2016 stands out for notable delays in the legislative provision of decentralization reform and the process of amalgamation of communities. This was mainly associated with the collapse of the parliamentary coalition in February and the related political crisis, which formally ended with the appointment of Volodymyr Groysman to the post of prime minister on April 14, 2016. However, even after this the parliamentary coalition was not renewed because the two parliamentary factions that remained in the coalition comprised fewer than half of the MPs. As a result, the Verkhovna Rada managed to return to considering the bills on decentralization only at the start of autumn, though even then there was still a shortage of votes needed to approve the bills.

After several unsuccessful attempts, in early 2017 parliament finally approved several important laws that would simplify the process of amalgamation. The first law allowed ordinary communities to join already formed ATCs without the need to

[14] "Monitorynh prohresy reform: Zvit za 9 misiatsiv 2015 roku" [Monitoring of reform progress: Report for 9 months of 2015], National Council of Reforms (Ukraine), 2015 (http://reforms.in.ua /ua/news /opublikovano-zvit-z-monitoryngu-progresu-reform-za-9-misyaciv-2015-roku).

[15] "Stvorennia detsentralizovanoyi Ukrayiny vyvodyt' yiyi z kremlivs'koyi matrytsi" [Creation of decentralized Ukraine takes it out of Kremlin matrix].

repeat regular elections.[16] Yet another law opened the way for the amalgamation of communities located in different districts.[17] According to expert assessments, these laws will allow the creation of up to 60 percent of the planned number of ATCs by the end of 2017.[18] Overall, the government plans to reduce the number of communities from 11,500 to nearly 1,500.

Incomplete Constitutional Reform, the Main Legal Uncertainty of Decentralization

The main uncertainty in the sphere of legislative backing of decentralization reform, however, relates to the draft of changes to the Constitution, the voting for which on the first reading incited sharp political dissent. The main bone of contention in the text of the constitutional amendments was Clause 18, which envisaged the legislative regulation of particularities of local self-government in some districts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. In particular, opponents of the changes felt that in this way, a clause that allowed the granting of special status to the occupied territories of the Donbas under the control of the so-called Donetsk People's

[16] Zakon Ukrayiny "Pro vnesennia zmin do deyakykh zakoniv Ukrayiny shchodo dobrovil'noho pryyednannia terytorial'nykh hromad" [Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to Several Laws of Ukraine on Voluntary Joining of Territorial Communities"], Supreme Council of Ukraine, 2017 (http://zakon0.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1851-19).

[17] Zakon Ukrayiny "Pro vnesennia zmin do deyakykh zakonodavchykh aktiv Ukrayiny shchodo osoblyvostey dobrovil'noho obyednannia terytorial'nykh hromad, roztashovanykh na terytoriyakh sumizhnykh rayoniv" [Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to Several Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Peculiarities of Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities Situated in Neighboring Districts"], Supreme Council of Ukraine, 2017 (http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1923-19).

[18] Yuriy Hanushchak, Oleksii Sydorchuk, and Andreas Umland, "Ukraine's Most Under-reported Reform," *New Eastern Europe*, April 13, 2017 (http://neweasterneurope.eu/2017/04/13/ukraine-s-most-underreported-reform-decentralisation-after-the-euromaidan-revolution/).

Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic would be fixed in the Constitution. To substantiate their position, they pointed to the content of the law "On the Interim Procedure of Local Self-Government in Certain Areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts," which the Verkhovna Rada approved on September 16, 2014, although this law has not taken effect to this day. It envisions fundamental expansion of the rights of local bodies in control of the occupied territories, in particular with regard to the appointment of prosecutors and judges, the formation of "people's militias," and significantly greater financial autonomy.[19]

Meanwhile, proponents of these changes disagreed that introducing the corresponding provision into the Constitution would mean granting special status to the occupied territories. They noted that the proposed changes would only give the central authorities the ability to change the powers of local self-government bodies in the occupied territories. It is clear that President Poroshenko thought that adding such a provision to the text of constitutional changes would demonstrate Ukraine's fulfillment of the Minsk agreements while at the same time preserving Kyiv's freedom of action with respect to the territories of the Donbas not controlled by Kyiv. Moreover, Poroshenko anticipated that the deputies would be more likely to support that provision if it went together with the provision on decentralization of power.

As already noted, Clause 18 did not directly relate to decentralization reform, which was the main content of the bill on changes to the Constitution. This bill contained several key new provisions. The first one was intended to bring some order to the administrative-territorial system, which currently appears to be quite chaotic and to some degree not well coordinated. For this, the three-

[19] Zakon Ukrayiny "Pro osoblyvyy poriadok misttsevoho samovriaduvannia v okremykh rayonakh Donets'koyi ta Luhans'koyi oblastey" [Law of Ukraine "On the Interim Procedure of Local Self-Government in Certain Areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts"], Supreme Council of Ukraine, 2014 (http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1680-18).

tier division of the administrative-territorial system of Ukraine was legally fixed in the bill: communities, districts, and regions (twenty-four oblasts and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea). At the same time, according to the plans of the drafters of the reforms, both communities and districts were to be enlarged in coming years, which would result in a reduction in their number.

Second, the bill envisaged a new model of relations between local self-government bodies and the state administration at the district and oblast levels. In particular, it was proposed liquidating oblast and district state administrations, which today fulfill executive functions in the regions. Instead, their functions were to be transferred to newly formed executive bodies of oblast and district councils.

Third, in connection with the enhancement of powers of local self-government bodies, the institution of *prefects* to execute state control over the legality of the actions of local self-government bodies was proposed. Prefects would be granted the right to block the decisions of local bodies and simultaneously appeal to a court, which would confirm or cancel such decisions of prefects. In addition, if the decisions of local self-government bodies posed a threat to state sovereignty, territorial integrity, or national security, the president would be able to prematurely terminate the powers of these bodies, again with a simultaneous appeal to the Constitutional Court to confirm or deny the decision.[20]

The bill on constitutional changes regarding decentralization was positively assessed by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe[21] and by Ukrainian legal and economic experts. Approval

[20] Proekt Zakonu Ukrayiny "Pro vnesennia zmin do Konstytitsiyi Ukrayiny (shchodo detsentralizatsiyi vlady)" [Draft Law "On Amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine (On Decentralization of Power)"], Supreme Council of Ukraine, 2015 (http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=55812).

[21] Preliminary Opinion on the Proposed Constitutional Changes regarding the Territorial Structure and Local Administration of Ukraine, European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), 2015 (http://venice.coe.int/files/CDL-PI(2015)008-e.pdf).

of the changes to the Constitution on the second reading would immediately allow several important tasks to be concluded.

First, the proposed constitutional changes would lay the foundation for full-fledged reform of the administrative-territorial system and simplification and harmonization of the division of territories of the country into different units. This could also speed up the process of amalgamation of communities and consolidation of districts.

Second, the transfer of powers from district and oblast administrations, which the state appoints and administers, to councils that are elected by the people would allow citizens to have greater influence on the decision-making process in their regions. This would also force local bodies of power to pay greater attention to the interests of the people in their territories.

Third, the introduction of prefects would allow reinstating state control over the legality of actions of self-government bodies, something the state currently lacks. Such control is extremely important for average citizens because of the local elites' ability to violate their rights with impunity. The potential for abuse of power on the part of prefects, on the other hand, would be quite limited. This is because prefects would not have key executive powers, such as those that local state administrations currently do have, including crafting and administering the budget, managing state property, and the disposal of lands beyond the boundaries of settlements. Prefects would only coordinate the work of territorial bodies of executive power. Under such conditions prefects would simply lack the means to concentrate in their hands control over the activity of local self-government bodies.

However, the introduction of the prefect role also carries certain risks. First and foremost is prefects' de facto dual subordination to the president and the cabinet. The authors of the proposed constitutional amendments decided that the president would appoint the prefects on submission of their names by the Cabinet of Ministers. Furthermore, the proposed constitutional

amendments envisage that the president and the government will have the right to cancel certain acts of prefects. It is clear that such norms could generate conflicts between two heads of executive power, the president and the prime minister, for control over a prefect. On the other hand, it is totally probable that in such conditions the president would try to preserve his influence on bodies of state executive power in the regions, which could pose a threat to the independence of prefects and local self-government bodies.

Finally, the proposed changes to the Constitution contained yet another important provision. In particular, the obligation of the state to provide bodies of local self-government with financial resources proportional to the scope of their power was introduced to reduce the danger that the state would try to justify its unwillingness to cover the expenditures of bodies of local self-government by citing budget limitations.[22]

Owing to the politically controversial Clause 18, however, the constitutional changes regarding decentralization have to this day not taken effect. The Verkhovna Rada was to begin consideration on the second reading during its third session, which ended in February 2016. Be that as it may, President Poroshenko, facing a shortage of votes supporting the amendments, managed to postpone final voting. For this, a number of deputies loyal to the president appealed to the Constitutional Court to shift the date of final voting on the aforementioned bill. In light of the political dependence of the Constitutional Court on the head of state, its decision did not come as a surprise: deputies were permitted to resume considering the proposed constitutional changes in any session before the end of their term in office. Since then, deputies have not resumed consideration of the proposed changes to the Constitution.

[22] Oleksii Sydorchuk, *Decentralization Reform in Ukraine: Prospects and Challenges* (Kyiv: Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2015), 9.

Decentralization in the Mirror of Public Opinion

It is clear that the success of reforms depends not only on objective indicators and changes but also on the public perception of their course and possible consequences. In light of the complexity of decentralization and its long-term nature, the attitudes of citizens toward the reform should be assessed cautiously. However, even the current cross section of public opinion allows us to see early trends in the public perception of actions that the government has already managed to implement within the scope of decentralization reform.

The attitudes of Ukrainians toward the empowerment of bodies of local self-government, which are key to decentralization, are in general positive. Back in November 2014, 58 percent of Ukrainians supported the empowerment of self-government bodies, while only 13 percent were against this.[23] Citizens' assessment of decentralization reform in the form in which the government is implementing it is also mostly positive. In June 2017, the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians were aware of or at least had heard something about the initiative of decentralization: only 18 percent said they had heard nothing about this. Moreover, the relative majority of Ukrainians, 42 percent, supported the steps taken by the government within the scope of this reform, while 27 percent opposed them.[24] Against the backdrop of highly critical public attitudes toward other reformist efforts of the government and strong political opposition to decentralization reform, such an indicator points to quite strong support of this reform.

[23] Sydorchuk, "Stavlennia zhyteliv mist do ideyi detsentralizatsiyi" [Attitudes of city residents to the idea of decentralization], 7.

[24] Here and below are given the results of nationwide polls conducted in August 2016 and June 2017. See "Hromadska dumka naselennia shchodo reformy detsentralizatsiyi" [Public Opinion of the Population Regarding Decentralization Reform], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, July 24, 2017 (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-naselennya-shchodo-reformi-detsentralizatsii).

It is characteristic that the overall positive attitudes of Ukrainians toward decentralization reform go hand in hand with an understanding of its possible risks. Specifically, 18 percent of Ukrainians feel that decentralization will foster an increase in the quality of services for citizens, and another 24 percent feel that in such an eventuality, citizens would have new means to influence the government. At the same time, about the same percentage of Ukrainians are worried about the negative consequences of decentralization. Indeed, 29 percent feel that the result of decentralization will be the emergence of local "barons," while 16 percent feel that this reform will lead to the devastation of villages and small towns. This last threat can be mitigated if the reform is implemented in accordance with the government's concept of decentralization. In such a case, villages may, on the contrary, receive new stimuli, both as independent centers of economic development and as a part of city conglomerates.

Instead, the danger of concentration of excess powers in the hands of persons or entities charged with local self-government, first and foremost village, town, and city mayors, truly exists. The ability of the state to alleviate this danger will in the end depend on the approval of constitutional changes regarding decentralization, which would put in place quite effective mechanisms of control by prefects over the actions of bodies of local self-government.

Finally, polls also point to the ambivalent assessment of the results of decentralization. In August 2016, the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians (67 percent) responded that they did not sense any results from the use of additional funds received by the local government in the process of decentralization. Only 16 percent noted that they sensed changes for the better. In June 2017, the results remained virtually the same, but the share of those who felt the situation was worsening rose from 8 percent to 16 percent (*see table 5.2*). At least partially, such data might reflect the incompleteness of decentralization efforts and the fairly short period of time since the start of decentralization. The experience of other countries that have engaged in decentralization indicates this process takes a long time (as long as ten years, and in

some countries even longer).[25] For this reason, public support for decentralization may be far from immediate, insofar as a certain amount of time must pass before administrative changes can produce a noticeable improvement in the quality of services.

Table 5.2. **Over 2015–2016 the revenues of local budgets significantly increased. Did you feel any effects from the use of these funds (higher quality of services, public works, social welfare) compared to previous years? (%)**

	Aug. 2016	June 2017
Yes, I felt certain changes for the better	16.2	16.5
No, I did not feel any changes	67.2	55.4
I felt changes only for the worse	8.4	16.4
Difficult to say	8.2	11.7

Source: "Hromadska dumka naselennia shchodo reformy detsentralizatsiyi" [Public opinion of the population regarding decentralization reform], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, July 24, 2017 (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-naselennya-shchodo-reformi-detsentralizatsii).

On the other hand, in November 2016, based on the results of polling by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, as many as 46 percent of Ukrainians saw changes for the better from the enrichment of local budgets in the sphere of infrastructure, while 43 percent did not notice any changes and 5 percent thought the situation was worsening (*see table 5.3*). Such dynamics underscore the high potential of decentralization reform to quickly generate at least some benefits for citizens.

[25] Grigoriy Mesežnikov, "Reforms and Euro-Integration in Slovakia: Lessons for Ukraine," in *European Integration of Ukraine: Experience of Neighbors and Prospects of Consolidation of Society* (Kyiv: Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2014), 30.

Table 5.3. **This year as a result of reform the revenues of local budgets significantly increased. Do you see any effects from the use of these funds (landscaping, street lighting, road work) compared to previous years?**
(*%; November 2016*)

Yes, there were certain changes for the better	46.3
There were no changes, but I heard that they are planned	20.7
There were no changes and nobody is planning them	22.7
The situation became even worse	4.7
Difficult to say	5.6

Source: "Detsentralizatsiya ta reforma misttsevoho samovriaduvannia: Rezul'taty druhoyi khvyli sotsiolohichnoho doslidzhennia. Analitychnyy zvit" [Decentralization and reform of local self-government: Results of the second wave of sociological research. Analytical report], Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2016 (https://rm.coe.int/16806dcbe3).

Other polls also showed that citizens saw positive changes from the expenditure of additional funds by the local government, predominantly in the area of infrastructure. In June 2017, those polled most often referred to road repair (64 percent of those who sensed changes for the better), improvement in the sanitary state of buildings (26 percent), better conditions for spending leisure time (25 percent), the functioning of communal service enterprises (23 percent), and the functioning of public transport (20 percent saw signs of positive changes).

The previous poll on decentralization, conducted in November 2016, showed that those who saw changes for the better noted road repairs (70 percent), improved street lighting (36 percent), and better management of the social infrastructure (36 percent). At the same time, those respondents who sensed changes for the worse most often referred to a decline in the quality of medical services (63 percent), which could testify to the absence of

positive changes in reform of this sphere. The negative trends in the other areas that those polled most often recalled (the fight against unemployment was mentioned by 57 percent, care for socially vulnerable groups by 53 percent, and the fight against corruption by 46 percent) relate very little to decentralization and are more associated with the overall socioeconomic situation of the country. Therefore, while many Ukrainians have already seen improvements in infrastructure with the enrichment of local budgets, they still have not sensed any better quality in social services. The latter, however, has more to do with lagging sectoral reforms than with the process of decentralization.

The attitudes of the people toward the most notable element of decentralization reform, the voluntary amalgamation of communities, present a similar picture. In June 2017, 26 percent of those polled had heard nothing about this process, while 18 percent were well aware of it and 56 had heard something about it. The support of voluntary amalgamation of communities, however, was not as pronounced: 38 percent approved of it while 26 percent did not. In June 2017, among those Ukrainians whose community had already completed the process of amalgamation, just as was seen with financial decentralization, the majority (63 percent) did not sense any changes. The share of respondents who felt their living conditions had improved as a result of amalgamation (11 percent) was virtually the same as the share who felt their living conditions had worsened (12 percent).

In the end, the success of decentralization to a great extent depends on the readiness of average citizens to take active part in the affairs of their communities. Public opinion on this issue shows contradictory trends. On the one hand, in June 2017 an absolute majority of citizens, 63 percent, were not satisfied with the level of their influence on the decisions of the local government. Yet only 37 percent of Ukrainians were ready to take part in the management of their communities in the event the powers of local self-government bodies were expanded. Moreover, among the possible variants of community

participation, respondents most often recalled voting in elections (42 percent).

Although these responses are not directly related to decentralization, they point to one of the necessary preconditions for successful implementation of decentralization reform: the ability of the authorities to provide information to the broader public about the new possibilities for how citizens might influence local government, which the reform opened the door to. Only in this way can the initiators of reform hope that the positive potential of decentralization will be fully realized.

Conclusions

Decentralization reform became one of the few instances of reform in which the Ukrainian government was able to achieve notable results over a relatively short period of time after February 2014. Thanks to the approval and implementation of a number of legislative changes, local self-government bodies received additional sources of income and over the course of 2015–2017 significantly increased the revenues to their own budgets.

Municipalities that managed to unite with others by forming ATCs gained the most benefits from decentralization. In their new status, amalgamated communities acquired significantly greater financial possibilities by increasing their budgets by several times. Thanks to the laws approved in early 2017, the process of amalgamation of communities could be significantly accelerated.

Notwithstanding the complex and long-term nature of decentralization reform, positive shifts have already evoked a certain response in public opinion. On the one hand, citizens on the whole support decentralization and expansion of the rights of bodies of local self-government. On the other hand, while citizens see some improvements in infrastructure, an increase of the quality of social services, such as health care or social welfare, is yet to come. In general, however, in the sphere of decentralization the state has so far preserved its credit of trust from the people.

Despite the obvious successes of decentralization reform, it will remain incomplete without the approval of the proposed changes to the Constitution. Passage of these amendments into law would help bring order to the administrative-territorial system, conveying executive powers from state administrations to elected councils and reinstating state control over the legality of actions of bodies of local self-government by introducing prefects. On the other hand, the introduction of prefects is expected to carry certain risks, in particular possible conflicts between the president and the cabinet or attempts by the president to preserve his political influence over the regional government.

The main reason for the inability of the parliament to approve these changes to the Constitution, however, lies not in several controversial points in the text of the bill but in the fact that the changes are tied artificially to the obligations of Ukraine within the framework of the Minsk agreements. In truth, decentralization reform is not related to the so-called special status of the occupied territories in the Donbas (which some experts in the West believe, thereby playing Russia's game). Decentralization reform began well before the start of Russian aggression and military action in the Donbas and has distinct goals, first and foremost the strengthening of local self-government and enhancing the quality of services citizens receive all over the country, including in the Donbas.

Decentralization reform also is not related to the idea of federalization of Ukraine, which from the start of the military conflict in the Donbas was actively propagated by the Russian leadership, headed by Vladimir Putin. At that time, just as decentralization envisaged the strengthening of the lowest level of self-government responsible for resolving the economic problems of its territories, federalization meant a strengthening of power at the regional level, which posed a threat of growing centrifugal trends. Beyond that, federalization did not find support in Ukrainian society, even in the southeastern oblasts of the country, the traditional bastion of Russian influence: in the spring of 2014 only

25 percent of the population in these regions approved of federalization, while 45 percent were in favor of decentralization.

However, the conflict in the Donbas had already become an obstacle to decentralization reform. Decentralization and regulating the conflict in the Donbas to this day remain connected in public opinion. Accordingly, passing bills that introduce changes to the Constitution will be much easier once the issues of decentralization of power and implementation of the Minsk agreements are detached from one another. In that case, the tension in society regarding the (real or imaginary) threat of granting special status to the occupied territories in the Donbas under the guise of decentralization would be eliminated and parliament would in all likelihood be able to pass the changes to the Constitution on decentralization.

VI. THE DONBAS

New Trends in Public Opinion

Maria Zolkina

General changes in the public attitudes of Ukrainians in 2014–2017 are most prominently reflected at the regional level. However, it is precisely the internal regional dynamics of changes in public opinion that become diluted when indicators are averaged across an entire nation. For this reason the Donbas as a region, which became the target of external aggression, warrants special attention with respect to changes in public attitudes toward the key sociopolitical problems the region faces today, as well as some potential solutions.[1]

New Approach to Self-Awareness

Attitudes toward current sociopolitical events are an important component of societal sentiment. At the same time, changes in self-identification (with the nation versus with a subnational unit) and perceptions of communities are inherently more significant and profound for the longer term. In a period of external aggression, the essential meaning of "we," or how someone affiliates with one or

[1] The data provided in this chapter are based on research conducted in the parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts controlled by Ukraine (two-thirds of the Donbas).

another community, is quite important, and all the more so for a region that was turned into a battleground for aggression against Ukraine.

Before the breakthrough events of 2013–2014 unfolded in Ukraine—namely, the Euromaidan and the start of foreign aggression—the residents of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts were divided almost in half, into those who identified as citizens of Ukraine (42 percent), on the one hand, and those who gave preference to the local dimension of identity and felt themselves to be residents of either a populated settlement or a district (29 percent), or the region in general (15 percent), on the other hand (*see table 6.1*; figures are rounded in the text).

Table 6.1. **Whom do you consider yourself first and foremost? (%)**
(Annual polls, Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts)

	2013	**2014**	**2015**	**2017**
Resident of the village, district, or city in which you live	28.6	18.5	24.7	24.8
Resident of the region (oblast or several oblasts) in which you live	14.8	27.0	20.5	15.8
Citizen of Ukraine	41.7	34.2	38.6	43.0
Representative of your ethnos	0.4	0.7	2.4	3.6
Citizen of the former Soviet Union	11.7	13.9	5.4	8.5
Citizen of Europe	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.0
Citizen of the world	1.8	4.6	7.2	3.6
Other	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.6

Source: Annual polling conducted by the Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (2013, 2014, 2015, and 2017).

Yet another particular feature of the region was the tangible nostalgia for an unattainable Soviet past: the share of local residents

who to this day consider themselves first and foremost citizens of an already defunct state, the USSR, remained the highest in comparison with other regions; it was 12 percent in 2013 and 14 percent in 2014. But the results of polling conducted in 2017 showed a decline in this indicator to 8.5 percent.

If one considers the results of studies conducted in 2017, it might seem that the overall picture did not change significantly. Indeed, 43 percent considered themselves first and foremost citizens of Ukraine, while 41 percent primarily associated themselves with a more local unit, as residents of a populated settlement (community) or a resident of the region.

In this regard, the results of more targeted public opinion research in the Donbas are quite interesting. In the autumn of 2015, polling of residents in those parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts controlled by Ukraine showed a higher percentage identifying first and foremost as citizens of Ukraine (rather than as citizens of a more local or regional unit) than was observed in nationwide polling (*see table 6.2*).

Thus, in Donetsk oblast, 53 percent of respondents identified primarily as citizens of Ukraine, while in Luhansk oblast this figure was 62.5 percent. It is quite possible that the high percentage in Luhansk oblast can be partially explained by the fact that it is mostly the northern districts, which historically can be considered a part of Ukraine's *Slobozhanshchyna*, that have remained under the control of Ukraine.

In these northern districts, support for separatist ideas in 2014 was considerably lower, basically absent, in comparison with support in the more industrial cities and districts, which ended up under the control of Russia and pro-Russian proxies. Also, the results regarding local identification were quite distinctive between the two oblasts. In Luhansk oblast in particular, only 8 percent of the local residents affiliated themselves first and foremost with local communities, while in Donetsk oblast this figure was 19 percent.

Table 6.2. **Whom do you consider yourself first and foremost? (%)**
(October 2015 and July 2017)

	Donetsk oblast		Luhansk oblast	
	2015	**2017**	**2015**	**2017**
Resident of the village, district, or city in which you live	19.4	29.3	8.0	13.8
Resident of the region (oblast or several oblasts) in which you live	19.6	17.3	19.8	7.9
Citizen of Ukraine	52.7	40.0	62.5	61.8
Representative of your ethnos	1.4	2.8	4.0	1.2
Citizen of the former Soviet Union	4.4	5.2	0.8	7.3
Citizen of the world	1.4	4.4.	0.4	3.9
Other	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.4
Difficult to say	0.4	1.0	4.4	3.7

Sources: For 2015 data, a press release based on the results of a public opinion poll in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, "Donbas-2015." Polling was conducted on October 3–12, 2015, by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Ukrainian Sociology Service (http://dif.org.ua/article/press-reliz-po-rezultatam-sotsiologicheskogo-issledovaniya-naseleniya-donetskoy-i-luganskoy-oblastey-donbass2015). For 2017 data, a press release based on the results of a public opinion poll in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, "Public Opinion of the People of the Donbas: July 2017." Polling was conducted on July 1–11, 2017, by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Ukrainian Sociology Service (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-naselennya-donbasu-lipen2017).

Regional research in 2017 only proved that the data acquired in 2015 were not a temporary situational result. The higher level of representation in the 2017 polling allows us to see which trends are submerged in nationwide polling. First, the average level of identification as a citizen of Ukraine in the Donbas is generally higher than what nationwide polling is able to reflect. Second, the Donbas to this day remains a heterogeneous region, and the communities of people in Donetsk oblast differ from those in Luhansk oblast.

As an example, in Donetsk oblast the share of residents choosing a national orientation as their principal identification fell from 53 percent in 2015 to 40 percent in 2017, while at the same time the share of residents choosing a local identification increased (from 19 percent to 29 percent). In Luhansk oblast over this same period the share of residents choosing a local identification somewhat increased (from 8 percent to 14 percent), but the affiliation of residents with their region fell significantly (from 20 percent to 8 percent). The share of residents identifying chiefly as citizens of Ukraine in Luhansk oblast remained as high as it was in 2015, at 62–63 percent.

The results of public opinion research regarding self-identification in the cities that were occupied and in 2014 were returned to the control of Ukraine are more detailed. The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation conducted two rounds of such studies, the first early in November 2014 in Slovyansk and Kramatorsk (Donetsk oblast) and the second in late spring in 2015 in Starobilsk and Severodonetsk (Luhansk oblast).

Slovyansk and Kramatorsk in 2014 shared almost an identical recent history: these cities had been occupied, liberated, and returned to the jurisdiction of Ukraine for approximately the same period of time. However, certain differences were uncovered in the polling conducted half a year after their liberation (*see table 6.3*). The residents of Slovyansk indicated they were more locally oriented (35 percent) than the residents of Kramatorsk (15 percent). The latter to a considerably greater extent considered themselves first and foremost citizens of Ukraine (47 percent versus 33 percent of the residents of Slovyansk). This difference can perhaps be partially explained by the

fact that the occupation of Slovyansk was harsher as the city was chosen as the base for the activity of Russian and separatist forces in this part of Donetsk oblast. On liberation, the general sociopolitical confusion and some frustration on the part of residents could have been more pointedly expressed in Slovyansk than in neighboring Kramatorsk. Another reason for the more pronounced "pro-state" identity in Kramatorsk could hypothetically have been the distinctive economic structure of the city's life, as industrial activity did not envisage a severance of ties and a halt in the operation of large enterprises but rather stability and continuity in the production process. However, this is only an assumption. The main point now is that any generalizations or summarizing of the sentiments in the Donbas in a single denominator were and are poorly substantiated. The region is heterogeneous, and this fact must be taken into consideration in efforts to understand its internal variation with respect to public opinion.

Table 6.3. **Whom do you consider yourself first and foremost? (%)**
(November 2014, Donetsk oblast: Slovyansk and Kramatorsk)

	Slovyansk	**Kramatorsk**
Resident of the village, district, or city in which you live	34.9	14.6
Resident of the region (oblast or several oblasts) in which you live	19.2	17.2
Citizen of Ukraine	33.1	47.4
Representative of your ethnos	1.0	3.6
Citizen of the former Soviet Union	0.0	1.8
Citizen of Europe	7.3	5.4
Citizen of the world	0.2	0.0
Other	2.4	5.0

Source: The poll titled "Public Opinion in the Liberated Areas: Kramatorsk and Slovyansk" and conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center. Polling was conducted on November 22–27, 2014 (http://dif.org.ua/article/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-osvobozhdennykh-rayonov-kramatorsk-slavyansk).

A similar study conducted in Luhansk oblast in March–April 2015 using the same methodology showed that the overwhelming majority of residents of two cities, Severodonetsk and Starobilsk, considered themselves first and foremost to be citizens of Ukraine (54 percent and 58 percent, respectively; *see table 6.4*).

Table 6.4. **Whom do you consider yourself first and foremost? (%)**
(March–April 2015, Luhansk oblast: Severodonetsk and Starobilsk)

	Severodonetsk	Starobilsk
Resident of the village, district, or city in which you live	12.3	15.9
Resident of the region (oblast or several oblasts) in which you live	18.4	5.2
Citizen of Ukraine	53.8	57.5
Representative of your ethnos	1.4	7.7
Citizen of the former Soviet Union	0.4	6.0
Citizen of Europe	1.2	0,4
Citizen of the world	0.8	0.2
Other	11.7	7.1

Source: The poll titled "Luhansk Oblast: Needs, Fears, Assessments of the Situation and Hope for the Future," conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Ukrainian Sociology Service. Polling was conducted in March–April 2015 in the cities of Severodonetsk and Starobilsk (http://dif.org.ua/article/luganshchinapotrebnosti-strakhi-otsenki-situatsii-i-nadezhdy-na-budushchee).

Based on the results of two rounds of polling of residents of the liberated cities, certain conclusions can be drawn. The results of polling of residents of Slovyansk and Kramatorsk showed that the populace in Donetsk oblast, and all the more so in both oblasts together, cannot be considered monolithic and homogeneous.

The results of polling in Luhansk oblast, however, attest to the probability of a reverse scenario when two cities show fairly similar trends. Even though the population of the two cities reacted differently to the expansion of separatism in 2014, resistance in the

local community in Starobilsk was considerably higher and the control exercised by the pro-Russian forces manifested with different degrees of severity (Severodonetsk was fully under the control of the occupation regime). In addition, the linguistic situation was different: in Severodonetsk, 65 percent of the city's residents speak exclusively Russian, while in Starobilsk only 28 percent do.[2] Opinion polling thus only confirmed that overall national identity is not directly connected to linguistic indicators and that local residents may consider themselves to be first and foremost citizens of Ukraine regardless of the language environment in which they live and the language in which they feel more comfortable communicating.

Views on the Territorial System in Ukraine and Relations between the Regions and the Center

An important part of the Russian discourse was initially concentrated on the topic of the federalization of Ukraine. Today it is focused on granting a number of privileged powers to those territories controlled by Russia. But how do the residents of the Donbas controlled by Ukraine envision the territorial system of Ukraine?

In the summer of 2015, a majority of respondents in the macroregions of Ukraine, including the part of Donbas controlled by Ukraine, supported the preservation of a unitary form of the state, though with expanded powers granted to the regions. In the Donbas, 38 percent of local residents supported this idea; the figure increased to 40 percent in the South, 46 percent in the East, and 48 percent in the West (*see table 6.5*). In the Center, support for this option was high, 37 percent, though the relative majority of residents of this macroregion preferred preserving the unitary system, without expansion of rights at the regional level (44 percent).

[2] The public opinion poll "Luhansk Oblast: Needs, Fears, Assessments of the Situation and Hope for the Future" was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Ukrainian Sociology Service. Polling was conducted in March–April 2015 in the cities of Severodonetsk and Starobilsk (http://dif.org.ua/article/luganshchinapotrebnosti-strakhi-otsenki-situatsii-i-nadezhdy-na-budushchee).

Table 6.5. **Which option of a territorial system do you support? (%)**
(June–July 2015, national)

	West	Center	South	East	Donbas
Ukraine should be unitary (united and integral) with the regions retaining their current powers	38.1	44.1	30.6	31.7	24.7
Ukraine should be unitary with expansion of powers at the regional level	47.2	36.8	39.9	45.9	38.0
Ukraine should become a federative state in which the regions are subject to the federation	3.7	5.9	8.8	10.3	14.5
Separate regions can secede from Ukraine if their residents want this	4.3	5.3	10.4	7.9	8.4
Other options	0.0	0.2	1.6	0.0	0.0
Difficult to say	6.7	7.6	8.8	4.2	14.5

Source: Polling conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences jointly with the Intellectual Prospect Charity Foundation from June 26 to July 18, 2015 (http://dif.org.ua/article/do-dnya-nezalezhnosti-shcho-ukraintsi-dumayut-pro-ukrainu).

In the Donbas, public opinion fully accorded with the nationwide trends: Ukraine should remain a unitary state. The choice was only between expanding the powers of the regions (38 percent) or preserving regional powers as they currently stood (25 percent). Therefore, expansion of the powers of the regions, which amounts to the implementation of de facto decentralization reform in one or another form, turned out to be a national trend. However, it did not contradict the need to preserve the unitary system and was not associated with the notion of federalization of Ukraine, even for the majority of the residents of the Donbas who were polled.

The Price of Peace in the Context of Russian Aggression and Recipes for Regulating the Conflict

The most sensitive topic in the Donbas is the conflict with Russia. What is the price of peace? What price are residents of this front-line territory ready to pay in exchange for a cease-fire? Does the position of residents of the Donbas region differ from the position of those in the rest of Ukraine? What future do local residents see for the occupied territory?

Already in 2016, in the areas of the Donbas controlled by Ukraine, the dominant public sentiment was "No to peace at all costs." De facto, this meant that the residents of the Donbas were for the most part in favor of reaching a *selective* compromise; that is, not all that Russia proposed in the framework of negotiations would be acceptable to the Ukrainian leadership. As such, 29 percent of the residents of the Donbas region supported a compromise with anyone and about anything in 2016, provided that peace was established (*see table 6.6*). This figure was slightly higher in the South (33 percent) and exactly the same in the East (29 percent). However, 49 percent of the residents of the Donbas felt that efforts should be made to try to reach a compromise but that not all possible compromises would be acceptable.

Here it is important to note that beginning in 2014, a trend in poll respondents' attitudes toward the price of peace and their readiness to accept different forms of compromise was observed, namely, the closer respondents lived to the zone of active conflict, the greater was their readiness to reach an agreement with anybody and do whatever it took to end the conflict. In general, the readiness of people in the West and Center of Ukraine to reach any agreement was lower than in the South, the East, and the Donbas.

At the same time, regional research done in 2017 showed that public opinion in the controlled part of the Donbas is divided almost equally into a preference for a compromise at any cost (38 percent

in Luhansk oblast, 44 percent in Donetsk oblast) and the view that it is not worth compromising on everything for the sake of a proposed cease-fire (35 percent in Luhansk oblast, 39 percent in Donetsk oblast) (*see table 6.7*).

Table 6.6. **Currently, talks are being held on ways to resolve the armed conflict in the Donbas. In your opinion, is a compromise with Russia and leaders of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk republics necessary to achieve peace? (%)**

(May 2016, national)

	West	Center	South	East	Donbas
Peace at all costs; we must agree to any compromise with anyone and about anything	15.4	17.5	32.9	28.9	28.7
For the sake of peace it is worth agreeing to a compromise, but not all	55.5	43.8	42.1	45.8	49.0
Peace can only be established in the Donbas by force, when one of the sides wins	20.3	20.2	15.9	16.8	12.1
Difficult to say	8.8	18.5	9.2	8.5	10.3

Source: Nationwide polling conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center on May 11–16, 2016 (http://dif.org.ua/article/donbas-poglyad-naselennya-na-konflikt).

That said, it is also important that the idea of applying international pressure to Russia, which in the opinion of the relative majority of Ukrainians (38 percent) would foster peace in the Donbas, has remained intact for three years in a row (*see table 6.8*).

Table 6.7. **Currently, talks are being held on ways to resolve the armed conflict in the Donbas. In your opinion, what compromises can be agreed on so that peace is established in the Donbas? (%)**
(*July 2017, Luhansk and Donets oblasts*)

	Luhansk oblast	**Donetsk oblast**
Peace at all costs; we must agree to any compromise with anyone and about anything	38.0	43.9
For the sake of peace it is worth agreeing to a compromise, but not all	34.4	39.3
Peace can only be established in the Donbas by force, when one of the sides wins	6.7	11.6
Difficult to say	20.9	5.2

Source: "Hromadska dumka naselennia Donbasu: lypen' 2017" [Public opinion of the Donbas population: July 2017]. Polling was conducted on July 1–11, 2017, by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Ukrainian Sociology Service (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-naselennya-donbasu-lipen2017).

According to public opinion, the second most widely accepted solution for establishing peace in the Donbas is to adopt measures that would work toward the successful renewal of a full-fledged life for residents of those regions of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts that are controlled by Ukraine.

Among residents of the Donbas regions controlled by Ukraine, the orientation toward taking measures designed to reestablish a normal life prevails: in June 2017, 42 percent of residents of Luhansk oblast and 35 percent of residents of Donetsk oblast identified this as their preferred solution for restoring peace in the Donbas. In Donetsk oblast the idea of international organizations applying pressure to Russia was favored nearly as highly (32 percent).[3]

[3] "Hromadska dumka naselennia Donbasu: lypen' 2017" [Public opinion of Donbas population: July 2017]. Polling was conducted on July 1–11, 2017, by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Ukrainian Sociology Service (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-naselennya-donbasu-lipen2017).

Table 6.8. **What decisions, in your opinion, should be made so that peace can be established in the Donbas region? (%)**
(*June 2017, national; no more than 3 choices of responses*)

1. Secession of territories occupied by the DPR and LPR from Ukraine	8.8
2. Granting the DPR and LPR special status within the territory of Ukraine	11.8
3. Introducing a federative system in Ukraine	4.6
4. Successful renewal of a normal life on the territories of the Donbas region controlled by Ukraine	**28.0**
5. Holding legitimate elections in the territories controlled by DPR and LPR	11.7
6. Granting Russian the status of a second state language	4.9
7. Granting amnesty to all those who took part in the military actions in the Donbas	3.8
8. Forcing Russia to cease intervening in the conflict in the Donbas (by strengthening international sanctions and by international organizations applying pressure to Russia)	**38.1**
9. Cutting off financing of the territories occupied by the DPR and LPR (payment of pensions, salaries, etc.)	11.0
10. Rejecting the prospect of NATO membership, fixing in the Constitution the neutral status of Ukraine	6.3
11. Reinstating Ukraine's control over the DPR and LPR by military force	13.5
12. Other	3.3
13. Difficult to say	14.1

Source: Nationwide polling conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center on June 9–13, 2017 (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-stosovno-nepidkontrolnogo-donbasu-shcho-zminilos).

Sequence of Implementing Security Measures versus Political Measures in Resolving the Conflict

Public debates on the "red lines" between the security components of regulation and political measures, such as holding elections in the occupied territories, are the sharpest. Despite the formal support for a stable cease-fire as a precondition for the start of implementation of the political provisions of the Minsk agreements, in practice even those moderating the negotiations (Ukraine's Western partners), and even more so Russia itself, have tried to push Ukraine toward realizing first the political component of the Minsk agreements. In today's situation, this would mean ignoring the absence of a cease-fire and forsaking any guarantees that one would be established. Such a formula seems illogical, as implementation of the political clauses of the Minsk agreements (involving changes to the Constitution of Ukraine, the introduction of a law on elections in the occupied territories, the introduction of permanent legislation regarding the status of uncontrolled regions) before implementation of the security components makes no sense.

With respect to the sequence of implementing the security component versus the political part of the compromises, a fairly concise perception has also formed in Ukrainian society. This perception can be characterized as "security comes first."

The idea of *approving certain political decisions in the hope that they will lead to peace* does not find wide support in Ukrainian society, including in the Donbas. In particular, neither granting the so-called republics—the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic—a "special status" (selected from among multiple choices by 14 percent of respondents), nor granting amnesty to all those who took part in the military actions in the Donbas (7 percent), nor the idea of federalization of Ukraine (8 percent), nor rejecting Ukraine's membership in NATO (12 percent) would find support either in Ukraine overall or in its eastern oblasts, including Donetsk and Luhansk (which

are more ready to agree to concessions "at all costs"). Meanwhile, today the general trend is the unpreparedness of Ukrainians to apply most of these political instruments and a preference instead to focus on applying international pressure to Russia (*see table 6.9*).

Table 6.9. **In your opinion, what decision should be made so that peace can be established in the Donbas? (%)**

(Regional breakdown, June–July 2017; no more than 3 choices)

	West	Center	South	East (without Donbas)	Donbas
Secession of the territories occupied by the DPR and LPR from Ukraine	15.2	8.0	4.8	7.6	7.0
Granting the DPR and LPR special status within Ukraine	9.7	11.7	11.9	16.5	14.1
Introducing a federative system in Ukraine	0.5	3.9	7.8	9.2	7.7
Successful renewal of normal life in the territories of the Donbas controlled by Ukraine	25.3	24.0	32.4	31.0	38.3
Granting Russian the status of a second state language	1,2	2,9	13.4	15.5	14.4
Granting amnesty to all those who took part in the military actions in the Donbas	1.9	3.4	5.4	7.5	7.3

Table 6.9 (cont.)

	West	Center	South	East (without Donbas)	Donbas
Forcing Russia to cease intervening in the conflict in the Donbas (by strengthening international sanctions and by international organizations applying pressure to Russia)	49.1	43.6	20.4	28.0	21.9
Suspending financing of territories occupied by the DPR and LPR (payment of pensions, salaries, etc.)	13.3	13.0	8.9	8.7	10.2
Rejecting Ukraine's prospect of NATO membership and fixing in the Constitution the neutral status of Ukraine	1.2	3.7	13.3	12.6	12.1
Reinstating Ukraine's control over the territories of the DPR and LPR by military force	17.6	13.6	9.3	11.7	8.0
Other	4.8	4.1	2.4	0.7	5.1
Difficult to say	14.9	13.2	15.6	13.3	20.8

Source: Press release "Hromadska dumka naselennia Donbasu: lypen' 2017" [Public opinion of Donbas population: July 2017], 13 (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-naselennya-donbasu-lipen2017).

Yet another important trend is increasing approval of the idea of *having international peacekeepers help provide security* in the Donbas. Today, such an idea is supported by an overwhelming percentage of society (60 percent): from October 2015 to June 2017 support grew from 53 percent to 60 percent, while the share of opponents over the same period fell from 27 percent to 21 percent. However, the most significant changes in attitudes toward such an international force transpired at the regional level (*see table 6.10*). As can be seen from the table, the idea of an international peacekeeping mission also prevails in the macroregion that is closest to the front line, the East (which includes the Donbas).

Table 6.10. **What is your attitude toward the idea of stationing international peacekeeping forces in the Donbas? (%)**

(Regional breakdown, June 2017)

	West	Center	South	East
Positive	66.5	67.2	36.4	55.3
Negative	12.5	15.7	38.2	28.8
Difficult to say	20.9	17.1	25.4	15.9

Source: Nationwide polling conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center on June 9–13, 2017 (http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-stosovno-nepidkontrolnogo-donbasu-shcho-zminilos).

Actually, the hope that quick political decisions based on concessions will lead to a cease-fire in the war in the Donbas is steadily waning in the eastern oblasts of the country. It is totally possible that such a trend is associated with the fact that people are beginning to realize the impossibility of quick if painful applications of political instruments, as they are not fulfilling the task of ceasing the conflict and, more important, are not likely to lead to a reinstatement of the prewar state of affairs.

Holding elections in the occupied territory of the Donbas is in principle impossible in the foreseeable future: 43 percent of the population of Ukraine feel that way, and this is the most widespread

assessment of the prospects of holding elections in the territories not controlled by Ukraine. Some 35 percent of local residents in the liberated part of the Donbas are of this opinion. In the East the figure is 34 percent and in the South it is 33 percent, with the largest share of proponents of such a position in the West (52 percent) and the Center (51 percent) (*table 6.11*).

Table 6.11. **At the moment, the possibility of holding local elections in the territories controlled by the DPR and LPR is actively being discussed. In your opinion, under what conditions would this be possible? (%)**

(May 2016, national; multiple choices are possible)

I feel that elections there are absolutely impossible in the foreseeable future	**43.4**
No conditions should be set; the holding of elections must simply be announced	9.4
Elections should be held according to Ukrainian legislation	21.1
All [political] parties registered in Ukraine must be ensured the possibility of participating	13.9
The possibility of participation in these elections by those political parties and organizations not registered in Ukraine but active in the territories of the DPR and LPR should be ensured.	8.6
The OSCE and other international and Ukrainian organizations as observers should have the possibility of full control over the fairness of the elections	22.5
Elections can be held on condition that Russian troops are withdrawn from the territories of the DPR and LPR	20.2
Ukraine's control of the border with Russia should be established	18.0
Militants on the territories of the DPR and LPR should be disarmed	13.3
Other	1.4
Difficult to say	12.1

Source: Nationwide polling conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Center on May 11–16, 2016 (http://dif.org.ua/article/donbas-poglyad-naselennya-na-konflikt)

That part of the population that allows such elections to be held sets the conditions. If they are not met, the holding of bona fide elections will be impossible. The conditions poll respondents most felt were necessary to the holding of bona fide elections were full control of the process and adjudication of the fairness of the elections by the OSCE and other international bodies (22.5 percent), the holding of elections in full accordance with Ukrainian legislation (21 percent), the withdrawal of all Russian military forces from the territories of the so-called DPR and LPR (20 percent), and renewal of Ukraine's control over the border with Russia (18 percent).

Therefore, in the matter of holding elections, respondents de facto approved of the formula "security comes first," which would entail in particular renewal of at least international, if not of Ukrainian, control over the border with Russia and the withdrawal of Russian troops. Accordingly, elections cannot be held in the absence of due conditions to achieve and maintain such security measures. The approval of any decision will require internal legitimacy, while society today is fairly integrated and consolidated in its understanding of these so-called red lines.

Political Future of the Occupied Territories

The territories not under the control of Ukraine should in the future be returned to the jurisdiction of Ukraine—the majority of the population of Ukraine is convinced of this. And this position has remained fairly stable over three years (*see table 6.9* for macroregional views and *table 6.12* for the general dynamics of the trend).

Table 6.12. **Regarding the political future of the territories of the DPR and LPR, which option would you prefer? (%)**
(2015–2017, national)

	Oct. 2015	May 2016	June 2017
That these territories remain a part of Ukraine on the same conditions that were set earlier	49.1	47.9	55.0
That they remain a part of Ukraine but are more independent from Kyiv	22.4	24.6	20.1
That they become independent states	4.5	7.4	6.6
That they become part of the Russian Federation	2.0	3.2	2.1
That these territories create an autonomous unit within Ukraine	9.5	—	—
Difficult to say	12.2	16.9	16.3

Source: Data compiled from nationwide polling by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation. For 2015 data, see http://dif.org.ua/article/stavlennya-naselennya-do-podiy-na-donbasi-tsina-miru-i-shlyakhi-podolannya-konfliktu; for 2016 data, see http://dif.org.ua/article/donbas-poglyad-naselennya-na-konflikt; for 2017 data, see http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-stosovno-nepidkontrolnogo-donbasu-shcho-zminilos.

In 2017, the percentage of those who supported such a variant of the political future of the self-proclaimed republics increased to 55 percent. Meanwhile, those ready to grant these territories greater independence from the central body of power fell somewhat, to 20 percent. The main trend is that an absolute majority of Ukrainians are not ready to accept any form of separation of parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts from Ukraine.

At the same time, there is a certain paradox in public opinion that cannot be passed over without comment. On the one hand, there is the internal issue regarding the return of these territories to the

control of Ukraine. This issue is substantiated by the readiness of Ukrainians to accept some compromises as the main method of regulating the conflict. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the population remains steadfast in its opinion that those territories not under the control of Ukraine must be returned on the same conditions that were set earlier

In light of the protracted and burdensome conflict, such a prospect as the unconditional reinstatement of the prewar situation seems to be not as realistic as people want to believe or demand. And over the course of time, such unyielding sentiments of the people could harden even further. Therefore, the main challenge for any Ukrainian government will be to resolve these critical issues. That is, any formula for a solution (even one that would pose minimal threat to the internal stability of Ukraine and its political system) must be subjected to tough scrutiny. Creating effective safety mechanisms to minimize the risks and justify their adequacy and expediency will be a no less complicated task than putting pressure on Russia so that the process of resolving the conflict can finally get under way.

Conclusions

One of the most important results from public opinion polling in the Donbas is the finding of a quite strong identification of residents of the region as citizens of Ukraine. As such, 40 percent of residents of the parts of Donetsk oblast controlled by Ukraine defined themselves first and foremost as citizens of Ukraine in June 2017, while this figure was 62 percent in Luhansk oblast. In both oblasts the idea of national self-identity was the number one choice, preceding both local identity (“I am a resident of my city, town, or village”) or regional identity (“I am a resident of my region”).

Talk of the federalization of Ukraine, which the Russian side and its local satellites in the DPR and LPR tried to foment in 2014, also lacks support not only throughout the country but also in the front-line territory of the Donbas. Indeed, in the summer of 2015,

residents of the Donbas came out in favor of a unitary form of the territorial system of Ukraine, with 38 percent favoring some expanded rights of the regions and another 25 percent favoring preservation of the current powers of the regions.

One of the most sensitive topics in public opinion in Ukraine, particularly in the Donbas, was and remains the conflict with Russia.

In 2016, the view that peace could not be achieved at any cost began to prevail not only across Ukraine nationally but also in the Donbas (49 percent). But the changes and fluctuations in opinion registered by the polls are still rather ambiguous. In particular, during a regional poll in June 2017 it turned out that public opinion in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts was divided between those who were ready for peace at any cost and those who were in favor of selective compromises.

At the same time, the Donbas, like the predominant part of the population of Ukraine, believes that the steps most needed to establish peace in the region are international pressure applied to Russia and a renewal of full-fledged life in the territories of the Donbas controlled by Ukraine. The latter option is the most popular one in the Donbas.

What is extremely important is that the people of the Donbas, like those living elsewhere in Ukraine, do not believe in the efficacy of granting the LPR and DPR special status, the federalization of Ukraine, holding elections in occupied territories, or granting amnesty to those who took part in military actions during the conflict.

Instead, in the eastern part of Ukraine, including the Donbas, the overwhelming majority of local residents view positively the prospect of the presence of an international peacekeeping force in the region.

At the same time, the aforementioned “erasure” of certain lines according to which the country was divided by societal sentiment is truly happening. However, in the Donbas it has distinctive features. Indeed, the notion of Ukraine joining the Customs Union and forming a joint military-political union with

Russia and other countries of the CIS has today lost most of its proponents in the Donbas. However, on the issue of eastern versus western integration, people have not automatically switched over to supporting membership in the EU. Today the overwhelming majority of the residents of the Donbas who are disenchanted with the prospect of being part of a joint Eurasian space take a "neutral" position: neither the Customs Union nor the EU.

In the context of security options, the situation is similar. People in the Donbas became disenchanted with the possibility of a military union with Russia and other CIS countries as a guarantee of Ukraine's security (support fell from 50 percent in April 2012 to 17 percent in June 2017), but support for NATO as a guarantee of security grew (from 1 percent to 20 percent over the same time period), which testifies to the formation of a new map of sentiments of the people in the region. At the same time, a non-bloc status for Ukraine remains the most widely preferred option among the local population in the Donbas as a guarantee of security (38 percent).[4]

Determining the side responsible for the overt conflict between Russia and Ukraine remains one of the concealed risks. Indeed, the position that both countries should equally bear responsibility for the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is considerably stronger in the South of Ukraine and in the Donbas in comparison with other regions of the country: 53 percent of residents of the South and 52 percent of residents of the Donbas feel this way.[5]

Nevertheless, the Donbas is demonstrating extremely important changes. First of all, there is no longer a dominant orientation toward "peace at all costs."

[4] See http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pro-nato-noviy-poglyad; http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-naselennya-donbasu-lipen2017.

[5] Nationwide polling of the population of Ukraine was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Razumkov Center on May 11–16, 2016 (http://dif.org.ua/article/donbas-poglyad-naselennya-na-konflikt).

Second, none of the political measures within the framework of the Minsk agreements will be supported by Ukrainian society if their implementation is attempted without a stable security regime. A strong manifestation of this position is Ukrainian society's requirements for how the electoral process should be organized in the non-government-controlled territories, which include Ukrainian legislation as the basis for holding elections there, full-fledged international control over the border with Russia, and demilitarization of the occupied territory.

Third, this is the formula for the political future of these territories. There cannot be any special status or expanded powers for territories not controlled by Ukraine.

From a strategic vantage point, this implies the internal strengthening of ties in society precisely in those areas that can be considered sensitive or even painful.

VII. ATTITUDES OF UKRAINIANS TOWARD RUSSIA AND RUSSIANS

Dynamics and Main Trends

Ruslan Kermach

One of the important dimensions of bilateral relations is the dynamics of the attitudes of the citizens of the two countries toward one another. For it is possible to speak about truly healthy interstate relations only when a mutually positive or, at the very least, a neutral attitude is preserved at the level of public opinion in the respective countries.

The attitudes of Ukrainians toward their northeastern neighbor and the attitudes of Russians toward Ukraine and Ukrainians have for some time been at the center of attention of sociologists in both countries. In particular, as part of a joint project of the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) and the nongovernmental research organization Levada Center (Russia), a survey of public opinion was regularly conducted in both countries, Ukraine and Russia, that studied the attitudes of the population of Ukraine toward Russia and the population of Russia toward Ukraine.[1]

[1] We express our thanks to the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) and personally thank Volodymyr Paniotto, KIIS director and professor of sociology at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, for assistance in accessing the data of sociological monitoring of public opinion in Ukraine.

Dynamics of Public Opinion in Ukraine in the "Prewar" Period (2008—2013)

From the start of monitoring of public opinion in Ukraine and Russia to the time of Russian military aggression against Ukraine in 2014, sociologists generally noted a relative stability in the dynamics of attitudes of Ukrainians toward Russia. This prewar period of monitoring of public opinion in Ukraine regarding Russia can be schematically divided into two main stages: (1) the stage of a stable and high level of positive attitudes toward Russia (2008–2010) and (2) the stage of a certain decline in positive attitudes toward Russia (2011–2013).

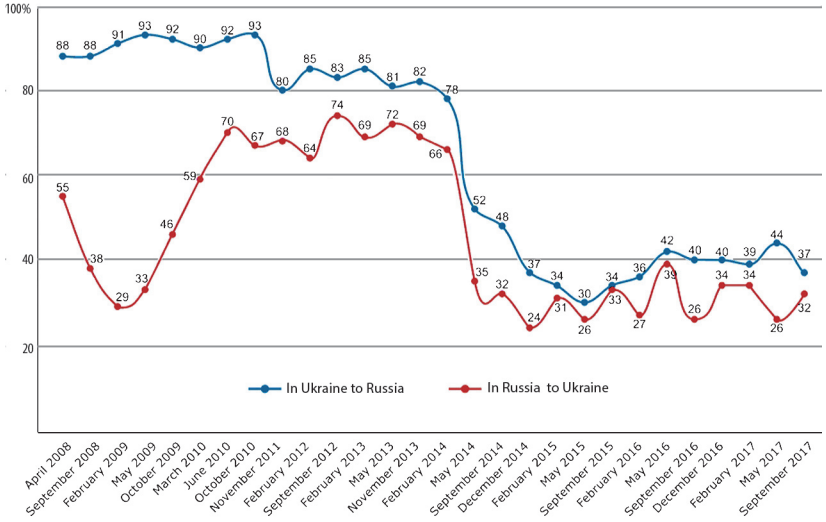
Stage of stable and high positive attitudes toward Russia (2008–2010)

As the monitoring data of KIIS show, the indicator "good attitude" toward Russia among Ukrainian citizens in the first stage (April 2008–October 2010) was sustained at a very high level; on average, 90 percent of respondents selected this option.[2] Nearly 6 percent of Ukrainian citizens on average had a "bad attitude" toward Russia in the period from 2008 to 2010. Also noteworthy is that the number of Ukrainians undecided in their sympathies or antipathies toward Russia was very low, on average amounting to 3–4 percent of the citizens polled in Ukraine (*see figure 7.1*).[3]

[2] The indicator "good attitude" is the total number (percentage) of the polled respondents in Ukraine who had a "very good" or "mostly good" attitude toward Russia.

[3] "Dynamics of the Attitude of Ukraine's and Russia's Population toward Each Other," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, March 2, 2012 (http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=92&page=35).

Figure 7.1. **Dynamics of the positive attitude of the population of Ukraine toward Russia and of the population of Russia toward Ukraine (% of those who have a very positive or a mostly positive attitude)**
(*April 2008–September 2017*)



Source: "Attitude of the Population of Ukraine toward Russia and the Attitude of the Population of Russia toward Ukraine," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, September 2017 (http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=722&page=1).

It is worth noting that in this same period, the dynamics of public opinion in Russia regarding Ukraine were not characterized by the same sustained high level of positive attitudes. Instead, less than one year from the start of monitoring of public opinion in April 2008 and continuing to May 2009, the percentage of Russians positively inclined toward Ukraine fell sharply, from 55 percent to 33 percent.[4]

[4] "Rossiyane ob Ukraine, ukraintsy o Rossii" [Russians about Ukraine, Ukrainians about Russia], Levada Center, February 25, 2010 (http://www.levada.ru/2010/02/25/rossiyane-ob-ukraine-ukraintsy-o-rossii/).

However, in the second half of 2009 the dynamics began shifting sharply in the opposite direction, and the percentage of Russian citizens positively inclined toward Ukraine reached a peak of 70 percent in October 2010.[5] The acute decline in public opinion in Russia regarding Ukraine in 2008–2009 could have been dictated in part by a number of significant international political events.

First and foremost among these potentially influential events was the NATO summit in Bucharest on April 2–4, 2008. During the summit the issue of offering Ukraine a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) was discussed; such an offer and its acceptance would have marked a step on Ukraine's path toward full NATO membership. The highest-ranking officials of the Russian Federation harshly criticized the idea and even made direct threats against Ukraine and Georgia in the event these countries were granted a MAP.[6] The MAP discussion was postponed. Another event was the outbreak of the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008, during the course of which Ukraine offered support to official Tbilisi, a move that was negatively perceived in Moscow. A third significant event was the unfolding of the so-called gas war at the turn of 2008–2009, when Moscow fully shut off the supply of Russian gas to Ukraine.[7] The Russian mass media (at the time

[5] "Dynamika stavlennya naselennya Ukrayiny i Rosiyi odne do odnoho, zhovten' 2010" [Dynamics of the attitudes of Ukraine's and Russia's population toward each other, 2010], Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, November 11, 2010 (www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=276&page=36).

[6] "Russia's Army Vows Steps If Georgia and Ukraine Join NATO," Reuters, April 11, 2008 (http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-nato-steps-idUSL1143027920080411). See also Vladimir Socor, "Moscow Makes Furious but Empty Threats to Georgia and Ukraine," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 70, April 14, 2008 (http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33544&no_cache=1#.V7MZVluLSUk).

[7] "Russia Shuts Off Gas to Ukraine," BBC News, January 1, 2009 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7806870.stm).

already controlled by the Kremlin) simultaneously went to work to discredit Ukraine in the eyes of Russian citizens.[8]

Nonetheless, despite the openly unfriendly steps of the Russian leadership, during the first stage of monitoring (April 2008–October 2010) the stable dynamics of a positive attitude of Ukrainian citizens toward Russia were maintained.

Stage of a certain decline in the positive attitude toward Russia (2011–2013)

The second stage began schematically in November 2011, when sociologists registered a thirteen percentage point decline in Ukrainians' positive attitudes toward Russia, from a maximum of 93 percent to a slightly more modest 80 percent (*see figure 7.1*) However, the next stages of monitoring in 2012 showed that the indicator of "good attitude" toward Russia among Ukrainian citizens had grown somewhat (to 85 percent), with some further fluctuation around this benchmark.[9]

The decline registered in November 2011 can be explained by both the corresponding dynamics of bilateral relations between Ukraine and Russia over this period and the overall foreign policy orientations of the Ukrainian leadership. With Viktor Yanukovych's rise to power, the pro-Russian vector of the foreign policy of Ukraine was notably activated. In particular, this was manifested in the signing of the so-called Kharkiv Accords (2010), which extended the time the Russian Black Sea Fleet would remain in Sevastopol, and securing the "non-bloc status" of Ukraine in the law "On the Principles of Domestic and Foreign Policy," which the Verkhovna Rada

[8] Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press 2009—Russia" (https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2009/russia). See also Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press 2010—Russia" (https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2010/russia).

[9] "Dynamics of the Attitude of Ukraine's and Russia's Population toward Each Other," March 2, 2012.

adopted on July 1, 2010.[10] However, such steps did not bring about the expected counter-concessions on the part of Moscow regarding Ukraine. On the contrary, beginning in 2011 the Russian side began resorting to such unfriendly measures as launching "product" and "customs" wars against Ukrainian exports.[11]

While the monitoring of public opinion in 2013 to a certain degree demonstrated a declining trend in positive attitudes toward Russia in general, it did not show sharp fluctuations either nationally or by region. The number of Ukrainian citizens with a positive attitude toward Russia continued to make up the majority in each of the major macroregions (West, Center, South, and East) and across Ukraine in general (*see table 7.1*).

Table 7.1. **Attitudes toward Russia in Ukraine: Distribution by macroregion of Ukraine (%)**

(May 2013)

	Macroregion[a]			
	West	Center	South	East
Very good/almost good	65.5	79.8	84.8	92.6
Almost bad/very bad	20.5	9.2	7.5	4.4
Difficult to say	14.0	11.0	7.7	3.0
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: "Dynamics of Ukraine's Attitude toward Russia and the Russian Population's Attitude toward Ukraine," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, June 27, 2013 (http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=177&page=25).

[a] Macroregions: *West* comprises Volyn, Rivne, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Zakarpattia, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernivtsi oblasts. *Center* comprises Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Sumy, Chernihiv, Poltava, Kirovohrad, Cherkasy, and Kyiv oblasts and Kyiv. *South* comprises Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Odesa oblasts. *East* comprises Donets, Luhansk, and Kharkiv oblasts.

[10] Law of Ukraine No. 2411-VI, "Pro zasady vnutrishn'oyi i zovnishn'oyi polityky" [On the Principles of Domestic and Foreign Policy], Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (http://zakon0.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2411-17).

[11] "Snova syr: Rossiya vvodit novyye torgovyye ogranicheniya" [Cheese again: Russia introduces new trade restrictions], Liga.net, October 9, 2012 (http://biz.liga.net/all/prodovolstvie/stati/2326677-opyat-syr-rossiya-vvodit-novye-torgovye-ogranicheniya.htm).

The last prewar monitoring of public opinion in Ukraine regarding attitudes toward Russia, conducted on February 8–18, 2014, by KIIS and the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, showed a continuing decline in positive attitudes toward Russia. Compared with November 2013, when the decline was already recorded at 82 percent, in February 2014 this indicator had fallen to 78 percent (*see figure 7.1*).[12]

Such a change in Ukrainians' attitudes toward Russia was dictated by dissatisfaction with the direct intervention of the Kremlin in the political processes in Ukraine. Then prime minister of Ukraine Mykola Azarov basically admitted the Russian factor as the chief reason for the decision to postpone the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU: "It is completely obvious that the issues of renewing normal relations with the Russian Federation and the regulation of disputed issues were of top priority for the government."[13]

In the course of the ensuing antigovernment protests, Moscow showed open support for the regime of Viktor Yanukovych. One telling confirmation of this support was the sudden decision to grant Kyiv a U.S. $15 billion loan and a discount on the price of gas imported from Russia (to U.S. $268.50 per 1,000 m^3).[14] Against the backdrop of Ukrainian citizens' rising dissatisfaction with Yanukovych, the overt game of Russia in support of the latter and

[12] "Ukrayintsi ne khochut' viz i kordoniv z Rosiyeyu, ale y ob'yednuvatysya z Rosiyeyu ne khochut' " [Ukrainians do not want visas and borders with Russia, but at the same time don't want to unite with Russia], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, February 2014 (http://dif.org.ua/ article /ukraintsi-ne-khochut-viz-i-kordoniv-z-rosieyu-ale-y-obednuvatisya-z -rosieyu-ne-khochut-zagalnonatsionalne-opituvannya).

[13] "Azarov nazval prichiny priostanovki protsessa assotsiatsii Ukrainy s ES" [Azarov named the reasons for the suspension of the process of Ukraine's EU association], *Forbes*, November 22, 2013 (http://www.forbes.ru/news /247760-azarov-nazval-prichiny-priostanovki-protsessa-assotsiatsii-ukrainy -s-es).

[14] "Putin Pledges Billions, Cheaper Gas to Yanukovych," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, December 17, 2013 (http://www.rferl.org /content/ukraine-protests-yanukovych-moscow/25203138.html).

the permanent pressure regarding the suspension of Kyiv's Euro-integration aspirations were perceived by a significant part of Ukrainians as manifestations of direct intervention in the internal affairs of the country. That perception had a far-reaching impact on public opinion in Ukraine.

Acute Transformation of Public Opinion in Ukraine as a Result of Russian Military Aggression (2014—2017)

Over almost the entire prewar period of monitoring of public opinion in Ukraine (September 2008–November 2013), practically no tangible sharp fluctuations in the overall dynamics of a positive attitude toward Russia were noted (with the exception of a certain decline in the period from the end of 2010 to the end of 2011).

Monitoring conducted by KIIS in April–May 2014, however, showed stunning changes in public opinion in Ukraine. By this time the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol had already been illegally annexed by Russia, while in the Donbas region in April 2014 the Kremlin attempted to realize its "Russian Spring" scenario. As a result, compared to polling conducted in February 2014, the indicator of Ukrainian citizens' positive attitudes toward Russia immediately fell by twenty-six percentage points, from 78 percent to 52 percent.

At the same time, according to KIIS data, the share of Ukrainians with a more negative attitude toward Russia grew nearly three times, from 13 percent to 38 percent. The steepest erosion of a good attitude toward Russia was observed in the western and central regions of Ukraine, where it declined by 40 percent and 33 percent, respectively, while in the South and East of Ukraine there was a decline of 21 percent and 15 percent, respectively.[15]

[15] "Changes in the Attitude of Ukrainians toward Russia and in the Attitude of Russians toward Ukraine," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, June 17, 2014 (http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=347&page=17).

However, as KIIS data show, the share of Ukrainians with positive attitudes toward Russia even with the onset of Russian aggression continued to constitute a slight majority (52 percent of respondents). This figure largely owed to the mood in the South and East, where the majority of citizens continued to express a positive attitude toward Russia (65 percent and 77 percent, respectively), even after the annexation of Crimea and the start of a siege of administrative buildings in a number of cities in the Donbas by pro-Russian separatists.[16]

In September 2014, sociologists registered a further decline in the positive attitude of Ukrainian citizens toward Russia. For the first time over the entire period of monitoring a positive attitude was indicated by less than half the entire population (48 percent) while the share of Ukrainians with a negative attitude toward Russia increased to 41 percent.[17]

During the May and September 2014 polls, along with the question regarding the attitudes of Ukrainian citizens toward Russia, their attitudes toward residents of the country (Russians) and the leadership of Russia were also surveyed. The September 2014 poll revealed that Russian aggression against Ukraine affected chiefly attitudes toward the leadership of the aggressor state (69 percent of Ukrainians were generally negative), while the positive attitudes of Ukrainian citizens toward Russians remained at a sufficiently high level (74 percent expressed a good attitude on the whole).[18]

In all macroregions of Ukraine without exception (from 63 percent in the Center to 91 percent in the East), the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian citizens had a positive attitude toward

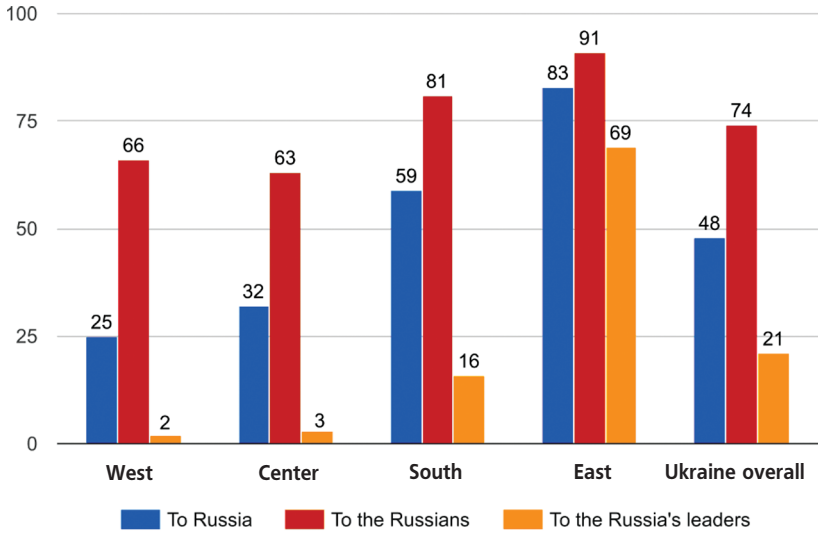
[16] Ibid. See also "Vtorzheniye v Ukrainu: Khronika za 5–15 aprelya" [The invasion of Ukraine: The chronicle of April 5–15], Liga.net (http://news.liga.net/articles/politics/1280196-vtorzhenie_v_ukrainu_poslednie_sobytiya_v_krymu_i_na_yugo_vostoke.htm).

[17] "Changes in the Attitude of Ukrainians toward Russia and in the Attitude of Russians toward Ukraine," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, October 6, 2014 (http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=404).

[18] Ibid.

Russians (*see figure 7.2*). At the same time, a positive attitude toward the leadership of Russia was expressed only in the eastern macroregion (69 percent), while in all other regions and in Ukraine in general, this opinion was shared by only a minority of citizens.[19]

Figure 7.2. **Regional differences in the attitude of the population of Ukraine toward Russia, the Russians, and the Russian government (% of those who have a generally good attitude = sum of % of answers "good" and "very good")**
(*September 2014*)



Source: "Changes in the Attitude of Ukrainians toward Russia and in the Attitude of Russians toward Ukraine," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, October 6, 2014.

Finally, in the December 2014 KIIS poll a further decline in the share of Ukrainian citizens with positive attitudes toward Russia was observed (from 48 percent to nearly 37 percent), along with a parallel increase in the share of Ukrainians with negative attitudes

[19] Ibid.

toward Russia (from 41 percent to 48 percent).[20] Therefore, for the first time over the entire period of monitoring of public opinion in Ukraine (beginning in April 2008), the share of Ukrainians with a negative attitude toward Russia exceeded the share of those with a positive attitude toward their neighbor. However, already in the second half of 2014, during the full-scale intervention of regular Russian military forces into the territory of Ukraine (August 23–24, 2014),[21] the fact of Russian aggression in Ukraine became glaringly obvious and persuasive to the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian citizens.

In the first half of 2015 the overall trend toward a decline in positive attitudes toward Russia was sustained, and by May 2015 the percentage of Ukrainian citizens with a positive attitude toward Russia had reached a nadir (30 percent), while the percentage of those with a negative attitude began reaching an absolute majority (56 percent). Only in September 2015 did the trend that emerged with the start of Russian aggression against Ukraine begin to change slightly. Monitoring of public opinion in the second half of 2015 (September) registered a certain improvement in attitudes toward Russia among Ukrainians, to 34 percent.[22]

The next monitoring of public opinion conducted by KIIS also registered an initial growth in the share of those with a positive

[20] "How the Attitudes of Ukrainians to Russia and Russians to Ukraine Have Changed," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, February 6, 2015 (http://www.kiis.com.ua/ ?lang= eng&cat= reports&id=502&page=11).

[21] "Operatyvna informatsiya Informatsiyno-analitychnoho tsentru RNBOU za 21 lystopada + Karta" [Operational information of the Information and Analytical Centre of the NSDCU from November 21 + map], National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, November 21, 2014 (http://www.rnbo.gov.ua/ news/ 1878.html).

[22] "The Dynamics of the Positive Attitude of the Population of Ukraine to Russia and the Russian Population to Ukraine ('The End of the Unrequited Love of Ukrainians to Russia')," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, October 5, 2015 (www.kiis. com.ua/?lang=eng&cat= reports&id= 550&page=8).

attitude toward Russia, up to 36 percent in February 2016 and subsequently to 42 percent in May 2016.[23] Regionally, the largest increases in positive attitudes toward Russia in May 2016 were observed in the western (from 21 percent to 28 percent), central (from 29 percent to 39 percent), and southern (from 44 percent to 55 percent) regions of Ukraine (*see table 7.2*; figures are rounded in the text).

Table 7.2. **Attitudes toward Russia in Ukraine: Distribution by macroregion of Ukraine (%)**

(May 2016)

	Macroregion[a]				
	Ukraine overall	**West**	**Center**	**South**	**East**
Very positive/mostly positive	**42.1**	**27.8**	**38.8**	**54.5**	**50.5**
Mostly negative/very negative	43.0	61.4	46.5	31.9	28.2
Difficult to say	15.0	10.7	14.7	13.7	21.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: "Dynamics of Changes in the Attitude of the Population of Ukraine toward Russia, and in the Attitude of the Population of Russia toward Ukraine: April 2008–May 2016," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, June 22, 2016 (www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=632&page=1).

[a] Macroregions: *West* comprises Volyn, Rivne, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Zakarpattia, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernivtsi oblasts. *Center* comprises Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Sumy, Chernihiv, Poltava, Kirovohrad, Cherkasy, and Kyiv oblasts and Kyiv. *South* comprises Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Odesa oblasts. *East* comprises Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts (only those territories controlled by Ukraine).

[23] "Dynamics of Changes in the Attitude of the Population of Ukraine toward Russia, and in the Attitude of the Population of Russia toward Ukraine: April 2008–May 2016," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, June 22, 2016 (www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=632&page=1).

However, the results of later polls conducted by KIIS once again established a certain decrease in this indicator, to 39 percent, in January 2017, followed by an increase to 44 percent in May and a decline again to 37 percent in September 2017 (*see table 7.3*).[24] Thus the dynamics of this trend after the decline over 2014–2015 require additional explanation and research. As Volodymyr Paniotto, director of KIIS, notes, the new trend in public opinion appeared only after the end of the active phase of confrontation (i.e., in the Donbas) and can be associated with a certain "routinization of the conflict in the East of Ukraine" and in particular with the "minimization of information in the Ukrainian mass media about the presence of Russian military forces in the Donbas."[25] One way or another, the improvement in attitudes toward Russia, as the sociological monitoring data indicate, is associated with a change in attitude toward the citizens of Russia but not at all with any change in attitude toward its leadership.

Public Opinion in Ukraine in the Context of the Annexation of Crimea

The transformation in the attitudes of Ukrainian citizens toward Russia and Russia's citizens began immediately after the military aggression of Russia on the territory of Crimea.

[24] "Dynamika stavlennya naselennya Ukrayiny i Rosiyi odne do odnoho, September 2017" [Attitude of the Population of Ukraine toward Russia and of the Population of Russia toward Ukraine," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, September 2017 (http://kiis.com.ua/?lang= ukr&cat= reports&id=722&page=1).

[25] Dmytro Shurkhalo, "Ukrayintsi staly krashche stavytysya do rosiyan, ale ne do Kremlya—Paniotto," [Ukrainians began to treat Russians better but not the Kremlin—Paniotto], Radio Svoboda, June 24, 2016 (http://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/27817038.html). See also "Dynamics of Changes in the Attitude of the Population of Ukraine toward Russia and in the Attitude of the Population of Russia toward Ukraine: April 2008–May 2016," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, June 22, 2016 (http://www.kiis.com.ua / ?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=632&page=1).

In this context it seemed expedient to also learn how Ukrainian citizens saw the future of Crimea. For this purpose, in May 2016 the DIF jointly with the Razumkov Center's Sociological Service conducted nationwide polling in all regions of Ukraine, with the exception of Crimea and the occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Table 7.3. **Attitudes toward Russia in Ukraine: Distribution by macroregion of Ukraine (%)**
(September 2017)

	Macroregion[a]				
	Ukraine overall	**West**	**Center**	**South**	**East**
Very positive/mostly positive	37.2	30.8	30.5	44.6	54.3
Mostly negative/very negative	46.0	53.5	52.5	38.9	26.4
Difficult to say	16.8	15.8	16.9	16.6	19.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: "Dynamika stavlennya naselennya Ukrayiny i Rosiyi odne do odnoho, September 2017" [Attitude of the Population of Ukraine toward Russia and of the Population of Russia toward Ukraine," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, September 2017 (http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=722&page=1).

[a] Macroregions: *West* comprises Volyn, Rivne, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Zakarpattia, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernivtsi oblasts. *Center* comprises Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Sumy, Chernihiv, Poltava, Kirovohrad, Cherkasy, and Kyiv oblasts and Kyiv. *South* comprises Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Odesa oblasts. *East* comprises Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts (only those territories controlled by Ukraine).

The results of the polling demonstrated a firm conviction on the part of the absolute majority of Ukrainian citizens (69 percent) that Crimea should be part of Ukraine. Moreover, the absolute majority of respondents in all the major macroregions of the country with the exception of the South of Ukraine (where the response was registered by the relative majority of 49 percent) shared this opinion. In the South and in the Donbas, 16 percent of those polled believe that Crimea should be part of Russia (*see table 7.4*).

Table 7.4. **Do you think that Crimea should be a part of Russia or Ukraine, or do you think it would be better for Crimea to be an independent quasi-state (such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia, or Transnistria)? (%)**
(*May 2016*)

	Ukraine overall	West	Center	South	East	Donbas
Should be a part of Russia	7.2	0.9	3.8	16.4	8.1	15.6
Should be a part of Ukraine	68.6	84.4	79.2	49.4	56.5	51.8
Should be an independent quasi-state	12.4	8.6	8.2	13.8	19.4	17.5
Difficult to say	11.8	6.1	8.8	20.3	16.0	15.1

Source: "Dumka naselennya Ukrayiny shchodo maybutn'oho Krymu" [Opinion of the Ukrainian population on the future of Crimea], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, May 2016 (http://dif.org.ua/article /maybutne -krimu-chi-mozhliva-reintegratsiya-yak-i-koli-zagalnonatsionalne -i-ekspertne-opituvannya).

At the same time, rather optimistic expectations regarding the prospects of this territory being returned to Ukraine prevailed (54 percent), though the majority of these optimists (34 percent) were inclined to the opinion that the realization of such a scenario would take a long time.[26]

This vision contrasts sharply with the vision of Russian citizens. After the annexation of Crimea it is possible to speak of the formation in Russian public opinion of a so-called "post-Crimea consensus," or nearly unanimous support for the idea that the territory of the occupied peninsula belongs to Russia (87 percent). Moreover, 79 percent of Russians are inclined to feel that Russia, through annexing Crimea, is returning to its traditional role as a great state and affirming its interests in the post-Soviet space.[27] In Ukraine, on the contrary, the relative majority (45 percent) of respondents are inclined to see in the act of the annexation of Crimea the "growth of adventurism of the Russian authorities, which in this way is trying to distract the Russian population from real social and economic problems, rampant corruption and dissatisfaction of the people in the ruling power in Russia."[28]

These diametrically opposed moods testify that the annexation of Crimea by Russia will probably remain a bone of contention in the context of public opinion of Ukraine and Russia for a long time.

[26] "Dumka naselennya Ukrayiny shchodo maybutn'oho Krymu" [Opinion of the Ukrainian population on the future of Crimea], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, May 2016 (http://dif.org.ua/ article /maybutne-krimu-chi-mozhliva-reintegratsiya-yak-i-koli-zagalnonatsionalne-i-ekspertne-opituvannya).

[27] "Crimea: Two Years Later," Levada Center, April 7, 2016 (http://www.levada.ru/en/2016/06/10/crimea-two-years-later/).

[28] "Dumka naselennya Ukrayiny shchodo maybutn'oho Krymu."

Conclusions

The data adduced in this chapter and obtained through regular monitoring of public opinion in Ukraine during the prewar period (2008–2013) confirm a fairly high level of positive attitudes toward Russia. This level persisted despite the appearance of different conflicts during the period, in particular the trade and gas wars and the openly unfriendly steps taken by the Russian authorities. In the period from 2008 to 2013 the indicator "good attitude" toward Russia in Ukraine fell slightly only once, on the cusp of 2010 and 2011.

Russian military aggression against Ukraine in 2014, initially hybrid and later open, became the determining factor in the rapid decline in the percentage of Ukrainian citizens who were positively inclined toward Russia. Moreover, the decline was observed among residents in all regions of Ukraine without exception.

At the same time, this decline was associated with the sharp exacerbation of attitudes first and foremost toward the Russian leadership, while the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian citizens continued to show more positive than negative attitudes toward Russians, even after the start of Russian aggression.

Beginning with the September 2015 polling, attitudes toward Russia saw a certain improvement, with fluctuations in both directions. It is clear, however, that the factor of military aggression of Russia cannot be quickly negated because of the logical transformations in Ukrainian sociopolitical discourse concerning the very paradigm of perception of the neighboring country.

The results of monitoring of public opinion in Ukraine and Russia regarding the future of Crimea also point to the profound and seemingly adamantine contradictions in the interpretation by the two countries' citizens of one of the determinant issues for the future of Russian-Ukrainian bilateral relations.

AFTERWORD: SCENARIOS FOR THE DONBAS AND UKRAINE'S PATH FORWARD

In the autumn of 2015, the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF) prepared an analytical paper on the main alternatives for Ukraine's policy concerning the occupied areas of the Donbas.[1] Below we present these alternatives, with certain modifications to reflect the progression of events since then.

The analysts of the DIF, as well as of the foundation Maidan of Foreign Affairs and the Center for Civil Liberties, concluded that the scenario of *soft reintegration* (*see appendix 1*) is hardly worth implementing until Ukraine fully regains control over the occupied territories. The choice of the scenario *partial isolation-2* can be justified only if the militants' leaders and their managers in Moscow meet the security and political terms of the Minsk agreements, in particular the requirement that democratic elections be held in the occupied territory, which is also not highly probable. As shown in chapter 6, the results of sociological surveys also confirm that a majority of Ukrainians (including people in the South and East) do not believe in "peace at all costs." They are in favor of the

[1] Maria Zolkina, Oleksandra Matviychuk, Oleksii Sydorchuk, and Yurij Smilianskyi, "Polityka Ukrainy shchodo okupovanykh terytoriy (Donetska ta Luhanska oblasti): Analiz alternatyv" [Ukraine's policy toward the occupied territories (Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts): Analysis of alternatives] (Kyiv: Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, September 2015), 39–51.

deployment of international peacekeepers, which may help bring peace and stability. However, Kyiv, supported by the West, demands their deployment on the whole of the territory currently occupied by Russia and on the Ukrainian-Russian border, whereas Moscow has agreed to the presence of a peacekeeping force only on the contact line. Also, the polls show that Ukrainians are not ready to pay for "reintegration" on the Kremlin's terms: they understand very well that it would become a Trojan horse, a means for undermining Ukraine from within. Ukraine's citizens do not believe that accepting Russia's terms will bring peace to the Donbas. The issue is that the Kremlin has not stopped its policy of destabilizing Ukrainian society or its attempts to play on political and regional differences and to strengthen the "fifth column," which, regrettably, abuses the democratic rules of the game in Ukraine.

The scenario of *complete isolation*, despite its clarity and consistency, breaks even symbolic humanitarian links with Ukrainian citizens in the occupied territory. Only 25 percent of Ukrainian citizens support this scenario (*see appendix 2*). Besides, its implementation would deprive Ukraine of the opportunity to use economic levers in the process of negotiations, which, as practice shows, are among the more serious levers at Kyiv's disposal to influence the other side. However, the escalation of Russia's aggression in February–March 2017, Russia's recognition of "passports" of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic, and the introduction by Russian proxies of "external state management" over enterprises registered in Ukraine may prompt the execution of this scenario.[2]

Ukrainians also understand that the liberation of the Donbas by military force is unrealistic so far. They are ready for compromises, but not at all costs. Before escalation of the conflict, in February–March 2017, there seemed to be some sense to

[2] Formally, the separatists used the "civil blockade" of the occupied territories, organized by the ATO veterans and activists, as a pretext for seizing these enterprises. In response to this action, Kyiv introduced the trade blockade.

implementing the scenario of *partial isolation-1* (with basic but minimal economic and humanitarian contacts). In fact, the trade blockade of the occupied territory, introduced by the Ukrainian authorities (in response to public demands and the "nationalization" of Ukrainian enterprises by the militants), is not a complete blockade. Humanitarian contacts are still there (in the summer of 2017, more than 30,000 people crossed the line of contact every day), as are the minimally necessary electricity and water supplies shared by Ukraine and the occupied territories (the decision to impose a blockade is supported by a majority in Ukraine as a whole, by a majority in the Center and the West, and by a minority in the East and the South). However, this scenario, like the scenario of complete isolation, would require the clear legal and political recognition of part of the Donbas as temporarily occupied territories. Such recognition is supported by a majority in all the regions of the country, including the East (it is only in the South where opinions are evenly divided). Its implementation would require resolutely fighting unavoidable smuggling and, correspondingly, reforming Ukraine's law enforcement and military structures. The main thing is that Ukraine must reform, and must prove not only its democratic nature but also its economic efficiency.

Contrary to the Kremlin's expectations, Russian aggression in the Donbas has in fact led to a strengthening of the unity of the Ukrainian polity, which has been coalescing and developing since 1991 and gained a new resoluteness during the events of the Euromaidan. Ukrainians have determined for themselves who they are in a geopolitical sense and want their country to be a member of the EU and NATO. At the same time, the best answer will come from the efficient undertaking of reforms and practical steps toward Eurointegration, which is expected to transform the country and make Ukraine's nationhood palpable for its citizens. This in turn will afford an opportunity to strengthen positive trends in public opinion and society, a natural response of Ukrainian citizens to the Kremlin's aggression. The reforms have started. However, as this book shows, using the example of transformation of the party

system (discussed in chapter 2), Ukrainian politicians' actions significantly lag behind society's demands. Such a gap poses serious risks, as positive changes in public opinion do not automatically lead to a positive outcome; they require strengthening through practical action. And this means constant monitoring and ballot-box control of politicians and helping them develop alternative solutions, a task that falls equally to academic and expert communities and to civil society. As practice shows, such pressure, combined with the positions of Ukraine's Western partners and international organizations, should push the Ukrainian authorities to undertake the reforms without which efficient opposition to Russia's aggression is impossible.

(*Appendixes 1 and 2 follow on pages 206–220*).

Appendix 1. Four Alternative Policies to the Occupied Territories of the Donbas

1. Complete isolation

Parameters	Pluses	Minuses	Risks
Domestic politics	• Saving on material and human resources • Lowered probability of terrorist acts and sabotage • Weakening of the combat capability of the so-called DPR and LNR	• Worsening attitude of the occupied territories' residents toward the Ukrainian state • Worsening attitude of the front-line territories' residents toward the Ukrainian state • Possibility of escalation of the conflict by Moscow	• Increase in smuggling and other corrupt practices
Economy	• Saving on state budget spending • Delay in additional budget spending • Impossibility of using Ukraine's economic potential to wage war against Ukraine	• Temporary losses for the single economic complex • Loss of raw material suppliers to state-owned enterprises • Decreased tax base and budget revenues	• Temporary worsening of social standards for part of the population • Increase in smuggling and other corrupt practices

Parameters	Pluses	Minuses	Risks
Economy (*cont.*)	• Stimulus for enterprises to look for new markets • Stimulus for enterprises to modernize	• Increased state budget deficit • Temporary fall in the number of jobs in the country • Impossibility of providing social and economic guarantees to a number of citizens	
Humanitarian sphere	• Establishment of legal clarity in observing human rights • Establishment of proper law and order in adjacent territories	• No protection for some of the country's citizens • Disruption of personal contacts between people on different sides of the contact line	• Worsening attitude toward the state because of abandonment of protection of the rights of some of its citizens
Foreign policy	• Strengthening of international subjecthood of Ukraine • A basis for change in the negotiations format	• Complicates support for Ukraine among international organizations	• Increasing activity from those opposed to placing more pressure on Russia • Loss of international support for Ukraine

2. Partial isolation-1 (basic but minimal economic and humanitarian contacts)

Parameters	Pluses	Minuses	Risks
Domestic politics	• Policy for the occupied territories is put in order • Increasing support of residents of occupied territories for Ukrainian authorities	• Weakening of social tensions in the DPR and LPR • Partial decrease in support for Ukrainian authorities in other regions	• Manipulation of Ukraine's policy to the occupied territories by separatisis
Economy	• Retention of the state's direct contact with its citizens • Revenues from the occupied territories are spent in the territories controlled by Kyiv • Partial decline in inflation rate • Rescheduling of additional budget payments • Impossibility of using Ukraine's economic potential to wage war against Ukraine	• Additional spending needed to establish "exchange hubs" • Additional spending needed to care for influx of IDPs • Partial nonacceptance by citizens in the occupied territories of economic development	• Smuggling and other corrupt practices strengthened

Parameters	Pluses	Minuses	Risks
Humanitarian sphere	• Preservation of certain channels of communication between the state and the people • Partial fulfillment of the state's obligations to citizens in the occupied territories • Restoration of proper law and order in adjacent territories	• Lack of correlation between the authorities' openness toward citizens in the occupied territories and those citizens' loyalty to the state • Impossibility of Ukraine controlling the observance of human rights in the noncontrolled territories • Negative impact of citizens from the occupied territories on the legal regime in Ukraine	• Accusations of parasitism directed against people from the occupied territories • Stimulus for searching for "profitable schemes"
Foreign policy	• Minimization of threat of Ukraine's international partners accusing Ukraine of reluctance to implement Minsk agreements • Humanitarian projects of international foundations and programs put in order • Formation of terms under which the international community would be ready to assume partial responsibility for reintegration	• Temporary decrease in international support for Ukraine • Attempts on the part of Russia to shift responsibility for support of the occupied territories to Ukraine	•Escalation of combat actions

3. Partial isolation-2

Parameters	Pluses	Minuses	Risks
Domestic politics	• Increased support for Ukrainian authorities on the part of residents of the occupied territories • Partial replacement of military confrontation with economic cooperation	• More contradictions within the ruling parliamentary coalition • More possibility for terrorist acts and sabotage • Improvement of the economic basis of the DPR and LPR • Less support for Ukrainian authorities in some regions	• Resistance to restoring economic contacts by radical groups on both sides
Economy	• Partial satisfaction of some owners of big capital • Partial observance of social and economic rights of the residents of the occupied territories • Increase in volumes of cashless payments in the consumer market	• Bigger burden placed on the state budget • Need to sequester the budget to reduce a number of social programs • Possibility of using Ukraine's economic potential to wage war against Ukraine • Increase in level of Ukrainian citizens' social dissatisfaction	• Payments not reaching their addressees • Manipulation of sources of payments by separatists • Impossibility of full control over the region's economy within Ukraine's current legislation • Strengthening of Russia's control of Ukraine's economy

Parameters	Pluses	Minuses	Risks
Humanitarian sphere	• Higher level of observance of human rights in the occupied territories	• Gradual legalization of the occupation regimes of the DPR and LPR • Lack of real mechanisms to protect human rights in the occupied territories • Less spent by Russia on support of the occupied territories	• Spreading of unlawful practices of the DPR and LPR to other territories of Ukraine
Foreign policy	• Ukraine fulfills its obligations under the Minsk agreements	• Opportunity for Western states to distance themselves from the conflict's resolution • Less basis to apply further pressure on Russia with sanctions • Fewer possibilities for new methods of applying pressure and to influence Russia	• Weakening of sanctions against Russia • Minimization of chances to review format and content of negotiations

4. Soft reintegration

Parameters	Pluses	Minuses	Risks
Domestic politics	• An end to combat actions • Possibility of applying instruments to stimulate divisions within the separatists' ranks	• Danger of total collapse of the ruling coalition • Significant fall in society's support for the Ukrainian authorities • Legitimization of the so-called DPR and LPR by the Ukrainian state • Danger of hotbeds of separatism emerging in other regions	• Implementation of the scenario would depend on Russian leadership's good will
Economy	• Full satisfaction of some owners of big capital • Partial observance of the social and economic rights of people in the occupied territories	• Unbalanced taxation and budget systems • Impossibility of regaining control over the economic life of the occupied areas • Impossibility of halting the economic separation of the occupied areas • Financing of the DPR and LPR bodies by the whole of Ukrainian society	• Loss of Ukraine's economic independence • Citizens' increasing social dissatisfaction • Stronger antigovernment actions

Parameters	Pluses	Minuses	Risks
Humanitarian sphere	• Creation of conditions for better observance of human rights in the occupied territories	• Impossibility of implementing the scenario single-handedly	• Impossibility of protecting human rights in the occupied areas without institutional capacity
Foreign policy	• Ukraine fulfills its obligations under the Minsk agreements	• Fewer possibilities to make Russia accountable • Idea of Crimea being returned abandoned internationally • Canceling international sanctions against Russia • Loss of international subjecthood of Ukraine	• Pressure placed on Ukraine by international partners to meet obligations under the Minsk agreements • Russia retains capability to exert pressure on Ukraine

Appendix 2. Public Opinion about the Non-Government-Controlled Donbas: What Has Changed?

The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and Razumkov Center's Sociological Service carried out this research from June 9 to 13, 2017. Polled were 2,018 respondents aged eighteen and above from all regions of Ukraine except Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The theoretical margin of error does not exceed 2.3 percent (http://dif.org.ua/article/public-opinion-about-uncontrolled-donbass-what-has-changed).

1. **Currently, negotiations on possible ways to resolve the military conflict in the Donbas are under way. Is it necessary, in your opinion, to make compromises with Russia and the leaders of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk "people's republics" for the sake of peace?**

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Peace "at any price": it is necessary to make any compromise—with anyone and on anything	9.5	16.5	22.2	25.3	17.9
For the sake of peace it is necessary to accept compromises, but not all of them	56.3	54.6	44.3	49.5	52.4
Peace in the Donbas may be restored by force only—when one of the parties wins	22.1	16.9	15.4	16.2	17.7
Difficult to say	12.1	12.0	18.1	8.9	12.0

2. Do you support the decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine on the blockade of trade with the so-called DPR and LPR?

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Fully support	38.6	18.2	15.7	19.2	23.0
Somewhat support	27.3	28.9	14.3	18.5	24.0
Somewhat do not support	11.5	26.9	19.1	20.4	20.6
Do not support at all	3.5	11.4	30.2	28.6	16.3
Difficult to say	19.1	14.5	20.8	13.3	16.0

3. Do you support the proposal to legally recognize the uncontrolled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts as "occupied"?

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Fully support	39.4	25.4	17.5	25.5	27.8
Somewhat support	24.6	33.4	17.3	23.4	26.8
Somewhat do not support	9.2	16.1	12.5	11.8	12.9
Do not support at all	3.0	4.6	21.4	16.8	9.4
Difficult to say	23.9	20.5	31.3	22.5	23.1

4. Should the Ukrainian government undertake the following steps in the field of social and humanitarian policy toward citizens residing in the uncontrolled territories of the Donbas?

4.1. Lift restrictions on social and pension payments to Ukrainian citizens residing in the uncontrolled territories

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Yes	19.2	29.8	48.5	41.3	32.6
No	51.7	46.8	20.4	37.1	42.2
Difficult to say	29.1	23.4	31.2	21.6	25.2

4.2. Simplify the crossing of the delimitation line as much as possible; simplify the procedure for obtaining passes

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Yes	25.4	33.8	47.8	52.0	38.3
No	50.8	45.9	18.8	30.1	39.6
Difficult to say	23.8	20.3	33.4	17.9	22.0

4.3. Simplify receipt of any administrative services in front-line settlements as much as possible

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Yes	39.8	42.1	50.8	58.1	46.8
No	37.7	33.4	16.0	25.0	30.1
Difficult to say	22.4	24.5	33.2	16.9	23.1

4.4. Simplify access to education in Ukrainian educational institutions of different levels for residents of uncontrolled territories

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Yes	60.5	51.1	67.7	68.0	59.7
No	20.9	26.7	5.6	16.4	20.1
Difficult to say	18.6	22.3	26.7	15.5	20.2

4.5. Provide support (financial and material) to residents of uncontrolled territories seeking to move to territories controlled by Ukraine

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Yes	54.4	52.5	66.2	69.5	59.1
No	25.6	27.3	8.0	14.5	21.2
Difficult to say	20.0	20.2	25.8	16.0	19.7

4.6. Permit trade in food products and essential goods with the uncontrolled territories

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Yes	38.1	42.3	62.9	55.8	47.3
No	37.9	35.4	12.8	24.4	30.4
Difficult to say	24.1	22.3	24.3	19.8	22.3

4.7. Strengthen control over payments to internally displaced persons in order to avoid abuse

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Yes	77.0	67.9	71.4	63.7	69.4
No	7.7	14.0	7.6	16.7	12.5
Difficult to say	15.3	18.1	21.0	19.6	18.2

5. In your opinion, what kind of policy of Ukraine toward the uncontrolled territories would be reasonable in the future?

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Officially recognize these territories as occupied and stop any trade, provision of services, payments, and contacts (including movement of people)	31.1	24.6	9.9	19.5	23.0
Keep the economic blockade but maintain humanitarian relations (movement of people, payment of pensions, water and power supply)	21.9	26.5	21.2	14.5	21.6
Permit trade in essential goods (food and water from Ukraine and anthracite coal from the uncontrolled territories) and support humanitarian relations as much as possible	19.7	22.0	18.4	25.3	21.9
Develop both humanitarian and trade relations with the uncontrolled territories as much as possible	6.7	9.1	31.7	24.2	15.2
Other	1.4	0.8	0.0	1.3	1.0
Difficult to say	19.1	17.1	18.7	15.1	17.2

6. In your opinion, which decisions should be made to establish peace in the Donbas?

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Permit secession of territories occupied by the DPR and LPR from Ukraine	15.2	8.0	4.8	6.3	8.8
Grant the DPR and LPR special status within the territory of Ukraine	9.7	11.7	11.9	14.1	11.8
Introduce a federal form of government in Ukraine	0.5	3.9	7.8	7.9	4.6
Successful restoration of normal life in Donbas territories controlled by Ukraine	25.3	24.0	32.4	34.7	28.0
Hold legal elections on territories controlled by the DPR and LPR	5.0	13.2	15.2	14.1	11.7
Declare Russian the second state language	1.2	2.9	13.4	7.3	4.9
Provide amnesty for all participants in military actions in the Donbas	1.9	3.4	5.4	5.6	3.8
Force Russia to stop intervening in the Donbas conflict (tighten international sanctions, increase international institutions' pressure on Russia)	49.1	43.6	20.4	29.0	38.1
Stop funding of the occupied territories of the so-called DPR and LPR (payment of pensions and salaries, etc.)	13.3	13.0	8.9	7.1	11.0
Reject prospect of joining NATO; declare Ukraine's neutral status in its Constitution	1.2	3.7	13.3	11.8	6.3
Restore Ukraine's control over the territories of the DPR and LPR by military force	17.6	13.6	9.3	12.0	13.5
Other	4.8	4.1	2.4	1.1	3.3
Difficult to say	14.9	13.2	15.6	14.3	14.1

7. Which option for the political future of the territories of the so-called DPR and LPR do you prefer?

	West	Center	South	East	Ukraine overall
Part of Ukraine on prewar conditions	63.5	56.2	52.4	46.8	55.0
Part of Ukraine with a greater degree of autonomy	13.1	16.4	26.4	28.8	20.1
Independent states	3.3	5.4	6.9	10.9	6.6
Accession to Russia	3.1	1.7	1.8	2.1	2.1
Difficult to say	17.1	20.3	12.6	11.4	16.3

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