

Dynamics of Social Cleavages under Ongoing War in Ukraine

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Nataliya A. Vinnykova

Department of Political Science, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, 61022,
Maidan Svobody, 4, Kharkiv, Ukraine; e-mail: vinnykova@karazin.ua;
ORCID: 0000-0001-5941-7562

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Ruslan O. Zaporozhchenko

Department of Political Science, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, 61022,
Maidan Svobody, 4, Kharkiv, Ukraine; e-mail: zaporozhchenko@karazin.ua; ORCID: 0000-0001-7353-4933

Abstract

The war initiated by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in 2022 can be seen as a drastic shock event with unpredictable long-term socio-political consequences at the national, regional and global levels. This study aims to identify the impact of war-related disturbances on the dynamics of social cleavages in Ukraine, in particular the possibility of deepening or diminishing such cleavages or promoting the occurrence of new ones. For decades, the internal partition of Ukraine into East and West has been attributed to national self-identification, linguistic and religious peculiarities and the geopolitical preferences of residents of different regions. Shortly before and after the outbreak of the Russian invasion, fundamental changes in Ukrainian society and domestic politics became evident, some of which can be interpreted as signs of the mitigation of social cleavages. Our findings revealed at least two significant shifts in these 'old', traditional cleavages: one occurred after the Revolution of Dignity and the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, and the second one is emerging now, due to the full-scale war on Ukrainian territory against the Ukrainian people. More broadly, this research aims to assess the resilience of social cleavages in the face of a shock event.

Keywords

social cleavages, shock event, war in Ukraine, macro-regions, national identity, geopolitical course

Introduction

Unexpected events, such as terrorist attacks, political upheavals, natural disasters and technogenic catastrophes, generally have a comprehensive impact on society. Eventually, they also affect the public mood and preferences. Among these events, war is the most tortuous, as it can divide or unite society, amplifying some values while diminishing others, as well as causing new ones to emerge. The long-term consequences of the drastic shock event that Ukraine is currently experiencing are unknown. Nonetheless, in the short term after the outbreak of Russia's war against Ukraine, fast-paced changes in Ukrainian society and the domestic political realm have taken place that signal the significant mitigation of social cleavages. The mass transition of parishes from the Moscow Orthodox Church to the diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the high level of public support for European integration, and the loss of membership by parties that were previously tolerant of Russia are all examples of these social transformations.

For decades Ukraine's East–West division has been widely recognised as a basis both for potential domestic social tensions and a pretence for external impacts. The research carried out to date has primarily focused on the peculiarities of self-identity (Zhurzhenko 2014; Frye 2015; Onuch and Hale 2018), language (Kulyk 2016) and religion (Mudrov 2019, Bordeianu 2020) embedded in the framework of regional cleavages between Eastern and Western Ukraine. These previous studies find common ground in their assumption that historical and geopolitical factors strongly affect social cleavages in Ukraine. In particular, they focus on the predominance of the Russian-speaking population in the Eastern regions and its positive sentiments towards the development of relations with Russia in contrast to the dominance of the Ukrainian-speaking population in the regions west of the Dnipro, as well as its consistently high support for Ukraine's European integration aspirations. Some scholars believe that the geo-cultural cleavage based on 'pro-West/anti-Soviet versus

anti-West/pro-Russian positions' is frozen (Chaisty and Whitefield 2020), while others stress the temporality of these social cleavages, pointing to changes from past (Soviet) values to modern ones (Osipian and Osipian 2012). According to recent findings, since the Revolution of Dignity and Russia's aggression and annexation of Crimea (2014), a socio-cultural shift has occurred toward the consolidation of national identity and support for a one state language policy (Podolian and Romanova 2018). Still, many controversial issues regarding identity remained unresolved, and these have been actively used for political purposes by both domestic and external actors.

The ability of shock events to transform social, economic and political domains is widely recognised. Studies on whether these events reveal a global outlook for future shocks (OECD 2011) or whether they can only be examined as particular large-scale events, such as the Olympic Games (Hayes and Horne 2011) or financial crises (Margalit 2019), stress the significance of governmental readiness for rapid change – that is, the preliminary identification of vulnerabilities and potential risks – as well as post-event transitions. Other studies highlight the importance of the narratives accompanying shock events (Rohlinger 2009; Aragonès and Ponsatí 2022; Fandella, Ceccarossi and Attinà 2022). However, the interrelation between shock events and social cleavages has received little attention in the academic literature. Selway (2011) tested the effect of cross-cuttingness and cross-fragmentation on the onset of civil war. Regarding the turbulent events that occurred in Ukraine during the 2013–2014 period, such as the Euromaidan revolt, Russia's annexation of Crimea, the war in Donbass and the destruction of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, the validity of studying the impact of shock events on global affairs has also been recognised (Toal 2018). Still, at least one question remains unaddressed: Which social cleavages are resilient towards shock events?

The current research aims to determine the influence of shock events on social cleavages, that is, the deepening or overcoming of existing cleavages and the emergence of new ones. This paper focuses on the time-effect dynamics of social cleavages in Ukraine amid the ongoing war. Our assessment includes an analysis of empirical data extracted from pre-war and more recent surveys, as well as from official Ukrainian government statistics.

Conceptual framework

The theoretical background of our research draws on social cleavage theory and various conclusions from shock event studies.

To explore social cleavages and the preconditions that cause their emergence, we applied the widely recognised Lipset–Rokkan model (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), which after multiple reviews has maintained its methodological validity. According to this conceptual framework, cleavages form from the ground up; that is, social and political identities arise due to the natural evolution of society, and political actors or institutions are 'supra-entities' emerging from a broad social background. In particular, the party systems of Western Europe formed as a result of social conflicts between the centre and the periphery, state and church, city and village, and owners and employees. These social cleavages were transferred into the political system through institutionalisation. Parties' programs and electoral strategies are essentially determined by their role as amplifiers of social cleavages. On the other hand, parties themselves can influence cleavages by deepening them.

Thus, a cleavage can be defined as a long-term structural conflict in the economic, political, social, cultural or ideological realm, determined by the positions of social and political actors, political parties, institutions and government agencies. From a broader perspective, a cleavage is determined as a 'division on the basis of some criteria of individuals, groups, or organisations [between] whom conflict may arise' (Lane and Ersson 1994, p. 53). From this angle cleavages include structural and substantive components (Lawson, Römmele and Karasimeonov 1999). The structural components are 'the divisional (an existing the differentiation between among social groups); the conflictual (the consciousness about differentiation); the organisational (organisation in defence of the group's identity and goals)' (Lawson, Römmele and Karasimeonov 1999, p. 4). Substantial cleavages can be social, based on public attitudes and patterns of behaviour, or political, reflecting political attitudes and behaviours (Lawson, Römmele and Karasimeonov 1999).

We consider *social cleavages* to be characteristic of a society as well as catalysts for conflict-integrating mechanisms, thus leading to strong polarisation.

In line with previous studies on intra-Ukrainian social cleavages based on national self-identification and language issues (Podolian and Romanova 2018; Kulyk 2016, 2013, 2011; Zhurzhenko 2014), in the present work we define these two cleavage-inducing factors, along with the Orthodox confessional division, as *endogenous*. In contrast, we consider the external factors influencing the formation of social cleavages *exogenous*. In the Ukrainian context, the most significant external influence involves the actions of the Russian Federation (Matsaberidze 2015; Yost 2015), which have caused the delineation of the cleavage based on the geopolitical preferences of the residents of the Eastern and Western regions. In fact, this cleavage not only determines foreign policy priorities – namely strengthening cooperation with the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance versus strengthening cooperation with Russia – but essentially defines Ukraine’s civilisational choice.

Therefore, to reveal the dynamics of social cleavages in Ukraine, we must assess the influence of endogenous and exogenous factors on their initial emergence. We assume that those cleavages induced by exogenous factors are less resilient and thus can be mitigated.

In the context of Russia’s war against Ukraine, we argue that the turbulent fluctuations of social processes are essentially related to this *shock event*.

Shock is defined as ‘the emotional or physical reaction to a sudden, unexpected, and usually unpleasant event or experience’ or ‘a medical condition caused by severe injury, pain, loss of blood, or fear that slows down the flow of blood around the body’ (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Another definition states that shock is ‘the effect of one object violently hitting another, causing damage or a slight movement’ (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.). The term ‘shock event’ is commonly used to describe sudden happenings, most with negative, large-scale consequences. In socio-political settings one can employ the definitions of a shock event suggested by Birkland (1998: 54) as ‘an event that is sudden; relatively uncommon; can be reasonably defined as harmful or revealing the possibility of potentially greater future harms; has harms that are concentrated in a particular geographical area or community of interest; and that is known to policy makers and the public simultaneously’ (1998: 54) or Rohlinger (2009: 4), i.e. ‘dramatic changes to international and/or national systems that fundamentally alter the processes, relationships, and expectations that drive political interactions’. An additional characteristic of a shock event identified in the literature involves so-called ‘shock waves’, which cause societal transformations or institutional changes (Kaufmann *et al.* 2016). Thus, the essential components of a shock event include suddenness, scale, harmful consequences and the transformational effect on behavioural and institutional domains. Thus, we propose the following definition of a *shock event*: *a sudden happening that has comprehensive, destructive consequences for social life*.

To further analyse this phenomenon, we had to determine the scale, temporal framework and criteria for estimating its significance for social cleavages.

Scale. In our study, we assessed the dynamics (i.e. changes or absence of changes) of such cleavages as national self-identity, language, religion and geopolitical preferences at the regional level, covering residents of the Eastern and Western regions of Ukraine. Importantly, the results presented here for the Eastern regions do not include the situation in the territories of the so-called ‘Luhansk People’s Republic’ and ‘Donetsk People’s Republic’ as well as Crimea since 2014, when these territories appeared to move beyond the Ukrainian state’s control. No robust data based on official surveys exist for these territories during this period.

Temporal framework. We considered the dynamics of these issues during the pre-war period in comparison to the four-month war period at the beginning of the war, that is, before 24 February 2022 and February–July 2022, respectively.

Criteria for evaluation of changes. We determined the tendency towards convergence (a reduction of the cleavage), the absence of any changes (a plateau or stability of the cleavage), and the tendency towards divergence (a deepening of the cleavage). We also recognised the possibility of the appearance of new cleavages. Table 1 presents a summary of the criteria.

Table 1. The Criteria for the Assessment of Social Cleavage Dynamics in Ukraine

Cleavage inducer	Marker	Cleavage dynamics pattern		
		<i>Convergence tendency</i>	<i>Stability</i>	<i>Divergence tendency</i>
<i>National identity</i>	A quantitative ratio of individuals identifying themselves as Ukrainian to those who claim belonging to a local/regional/ethnic minority group	Increase	Constant value	Decrease
<i>Language</i>	Rate of public support for one-language policy and recognising Ukrainian as a major language in everyday use versus the preference for two official languages (Ukrainian and Russian)	Increasing	Remaining stable	Decreasing
<i>Religion</i>	Mutual perception between the believers of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the Moscow Patriarchy	Decrease in negative perception	Fixed state of perception	Increase in negative perception
<i>Geopolitical preferences</i>	Preferences in terms of public support for the geopolitical course	High consolidation	Fixed state	Expanding polarisation

Social cleavages in Ukraine: Pre-war conditions

As stated above, before the outbreak of war in February 2022, the most pronounced social cleavages in Ukraine had formed based on spatial factors, with a clear split between the Eastern and Western regions of the country.

National identity. The issue of national identity became fundamental for Ukraine's state-building after the country gained independence in 1991. The Ukrainian regions, which formed during particular historical periods as parts of different states, have significant dissimilarities in terms of ethnic composition and urbanisation rate. The presence of a quantitatively significant Russian minority and a notable number of Russian-speaking Ukrainians led to the phenomenon of dual identity, or the dominance of regional identity over national identity among residents of the Eastern and Southern regions. Socio-cultural dissimilarities within the context of geopolitical uncertainty – that is, the choice between Europe and Eurasia – have tended to become more acute. Moreover, the mutual perception of residents of different regions indicates the conditions of social stability.

Ukraine is largely a monoethnic state, in which 87.3% of respondents identified themselves as Ukrainians in 2021, only 9.1% self-identified as ethnic Russians, and 2.3% claimed other ethnic origins (Razumkov Centre 2021b: 373). However, the regional situation is arguably rather diverse (Tkachuk and Natalenko 2020). In the regions of Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Volyn, Rivne, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi, Vinnytsia, Kyiv, Cherkasy, Zhytomyr, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Sumy and Chernihiv, ethnic Ukrainians make up more than the country average value – over 90% of the population. In the Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson and Mykolaiv regions, the proportion of ethnic Ukrainians is about 80%, while in the Odesa, Donetsk and Luhansk regions, this proportion drops below the average but still makes up over 50% of the population. In Crimea, Ukrainians are a minority at about 25%, and in the Zakarpattia and Chernivtsi regions, their proportion is close to the country average value (Tkachuk and Natalenko 2020: 11–12).

Residents of different regions did not identify themselves equally with the Ukrainian and regional communities. As of 2012, 61% of respondents identified themselves as citizens of Ukraine, while a third of respondents (29%) reported giving priority to their regional or local identity (Rating, 2012, p. 15). Residents of the Western (75%) and Central regions (71%) self-identified first as citizens of Ukraine, while in the East and South this figure was 59% and 42%, respectively (Rating, 2012: 16).

This parameter shows the changing dynamics over the course of a decade. The dramatic events of 2014 triggered a patriotic mood, causing civic national self-identification to increase to 64.4% among respondents (Institute of Sociology of NASU, 2015: 555). Further, in 2021, the share of people who identified themselves primarily as citizens of Ukraine increased to 75% (Rating, 2021a: 10). The regional distribution indicates that civic national identity is the dominant identification for

residents of all macro-regions. Based on residents' self-identification, this identity prevails throughout Ukraine, at more than 8 points on a ten-point scale in the Western and Central regions and at 7 points in the Eastern and Southern regions (Rating, 2021a: 11).

During the same period, a remarkable decrease occurred in regional differences based on quantitative indicators, especially in the Eastern regions: from 27% in 2011 to 8.6% in 2021 (Rating 2012: 16; Reznik, 2022). In the other macro-regions, these indicators do not exceed 5% (Reznik 2022).

Civic national identification continues to be more common for ethnic Ukrainians than for ethnic Russians. Although the proportion of ethnic Russians who identified as citizens of Ukraine remained unchanged during period from 2014 to 2021 (37.4% to 38.8%), certain shifts occurred in relation to other identities. In particular, compared to 2014, regional identification among ethnic Russians decreased sharply (from 20.9% in 2014 to 5% in 2021), whereas local identification increased (from 18.7% to 26.3%) (Reznik 2022).

It should be underlined that Ukrainians report strong feelings of patriotism in all regions. In 2020, the proportion perceiving themselves as patriots was 85% in the West, 85% in the Centre, 83% in the South and 82% in the East of the country (Rating 2020, p. 5). The peak numbers for national patriotism were noted in mid-2014, when 86% respondents emphasised their patriotic self-perception (Rating 2014b: 6). Looking retrospectively at 2012, which saw an average level of patriotism of 82%, the largest increase in patriotism took place in the Eastern regions, where the proportion of self-perceived patriots in 2012 was only 78% (Rating 2012: 8).

In recent years, Ukrainian citizens have shown a tendency to shift their self-perception of cultural affinity from the East to the West (namely, their perception of the Western regions of the country and the Western neighbours of Ukraine as close in character, customs and traditions has increased, while they have shown a distancing from Russia). Again, this trend has been most evident in the Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine. The younger the respondents are, the more culturally distanced from Russia and Belarus they feel, and the more often they feel culturally close to Ukraine's western and southwestern neighbours.

The self-perception of cultural affinity between residents of the Eastern and Western regions increased from 4.4 to 5.1 points during the period from 2006 to 2021 (Razumkov Centre 2021b: 138), while the self-perception of cultural affinity with Russia and Belarus decreased accordingly in all regions. Also, in the populations of the Central, Southern and Eastern regions of Ukraine, the self-perception of cultural affinity to citizens of Romania, Moldova and Turkey – as well as to Polish people, Slovaks and Hungarians – increased, approaching the levels of these indicators recorded in the Western region (Razumkov Centre, 2021b: 139).

Over the past 15 years, the share of citizens who refer to Ukrainian cultural traditions has increased significantly: from 56% in 2006 to 73% in 2021 (Razumkov Centre, 2021b: 141). While this increase occurred in all regions, it saw the greatest increase in the South and East. The proportion increased in the South from 50% to 67.5% and in the East from 37% to 60% (Razumkov Centre, 2021b: 142).

Civic identification was somewhat higher among those who communicate at home only in Ukrainian or in both languages than among exclusively Russian speakers. At the same time, the level of regional identity among Russian speakers decreased from 14.9% in 2014 to 8.8% in 2021 (Reznik 2022).

Thus, we can conclude that the social cleavage based on the heterogeneity of national self-identification has undergone a remarkable convergence, which appeared to accelerate especially from 2014 to 2021. Political forces actively used the issue of the ethnic composition of the regions in order to form and maintain an electorate. This was also evident in the Eastern regions, Donbass, and Crimea, where parties sympathetic to Russia played up the public mood. The most salient and politicised issue involved the status of the Russian language in Ukraine in the context of the policy option of having two official state languages. Nonetheless, further analysis reveals the factitious ground of this cleavage.

Language. Interregional cleavages emerged due to the heterogeneous spread of the Ukrainian and Russian languages in different regions of Ukraine. Due to historical circumstances, in particular the migration of Russians in the 20th century to the industrialised East of Ukraine, the Russian

language dominated in these regions, but mainly in urban areas. This linguistic dominance has caused the development of a particular informational realm in the regions. Politicians sympathetic to Russia emphasised the roles of the Ukrainian and Russian languages in the frame of unity or division of Ukraine. Political lobbying to give Russian the status of a second state language fostered this cleavage, and lobbyists gained support for this idea in the East and South of Ukraine. In 2007, about 39% of respondents believed that Ukrainian should be the only state language (Razumkov Centre 2007: 5). The monolingual policy saw the greatest support in the West (77%) and the lowest in the East (13%) and South (25%) (Razumkov Centre 2007: 5). Granting both Ukrainian and Russian the status of state language was supported by 31% overall, and the idea of legitimising bilingualism was especially favoured by respondents in the Eastern and the Southern regions (50% and 46%, respectively) (Razumkov Centre 2007: 5).

The evidence points to a salient split on the issue of the state language, namely monolingual versus bilingual policy in Ukraine. The issue became even more contentious due to the bilingual population (comprising 21.5% of the total population as of 2007), which considers both Ukrainian and Russian as their native languages (Razumkov Centre 2007: 5).

Considerable changes in the public attitude towards the status of the state language took place after the Revolution of Dignity and Russia's intervention in Ukraine in 2014. In 2015, over half of respondents (56%) believed that Ukrainian should be the only state language of Ukraine, while Russian and the languages of other national minorities could be used in everyday life, whereas only 14% respondents approved of bilingual regulations (Razumkov Centre 2016: 35). Notably, support for the Ukrainian language as the only state language had increased in all regions, but this effect was most noticeable in the East (34%) and the South (37%) (Razumkov Centre 2016: 35).

In 2020, 66% of Ukrainian citizens supported the Ukrainian language's status as the only state language, while only 13% backed giving the Russian language the status of a second state or official language (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2020b). From a regional perspective, the attitude towards the status of the state language had significantly levelled off. In the Southern regions, the share of respondents who supported the single state language of Ukrainian had increased to 62%. Only in the Eastern regions had the situation changed slowly: 33% of respondents supported a monolingual policy, 31% were in favour of two state languages, and 32% supported giving the Russian language the status of an official regional language (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2020b).

Moreover, the last decade has seen an increase in the number of citizens, in particular in the Eastern and Southern regions, who consider their native language to be Ukrainian. While 52% of citizens considered Ukrainian their native language in 2006 (Razumkov Centre 2007: 4), this number had increased to 60% by 2015 (Razumkov Centre 2016: 7) and, remarkably, to 78% by 2021 (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2021). Simultaneously, the number of citizens who consider Russian their native language decreased from 31% in 2006 to 18% in 2021 (Razumkov Centre 2007: 4; Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2021).

Changes have also occurred at the regional level. In the Eastern and Southern regions, which have traditionally had a large share of Russian speakers (21% and 28%, respectively, in 2007) (Razumkov Centre 2007: 4), the number of citizens who call Ukrainian their native language had increased to 58.5% in the East and 55.6% in the South by 2021 (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2021).

Despite of the growing consensus regarding the Ukrainian language as the only state language in Ukraine, some differences remain regarding attitudes towards language rights in the country. Although more than half of Ukrainians (52%) believe that the rights of Russian-speaking citizens are not violated in Ukraine, 26% believe that the rights of Russian-speaking citizens are violated in individual cases, and 10% speak of constant violations. The West contains the largest percent of those who believe that Russian speakers' rights are not violated, at 76%, and the majority also supports this opinion in Central Ukraine. In the Eastern regions, by contrast, a significantly higher proportion of people believe that the rights of Russian speakers are breached constantly (21%) or in individual cases (40%) (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2020).

Such evaluations of the right to use a particular language reveal a conflict-generating factor. This could also signal a negative perception of certain political decisions related to the implementation of

language policy as well as an opportunity for manipulative speculation by political parties and politicians. Still, the general public approval regarding mandatory knowledge of the state language (79%) gives us reason to assume that the cleavage based on language will decrease. Respondents in the Eastern regions showed the strongest disapproval of mandatory knowledge (28%), while 65% of residents of the East supported this idea (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2020).

However, the citizens of Ukraine do not regard the language issue as a priority. In 2020, only 5% citizens considered the issue of using different languages in Ukraine to be one of the most drastic problems in the country, while 28% believed that the language issue is quite serious, but there are more urgent problems, 27% did not consider language issues critical, with some exceptions, and 32% did not consider language a problem at all (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2020a). According to various studies, during the 2012–2021 period, a maximum of 2% of citizens considered the issue of Russian language use in Ukraine a priority for the state (Rating 2021c: 14).

The adoption of the Law of Ukraine 'On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as a State Language' in 2019 ultimately laid the regulatory framework for language policy in Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2019). Notably, despite long discussions and lengthy speculation, a public consensus exists regarding the further implementation of the legal regulations of the one language policy, as 65.5% of Ukrainians support it (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2020).

Consequently, the regulatory policy of introducing the Ukrainian language into the information domain – including media, cinema production and educational services, for example – led to the mitigation of the linguistic cleavage. It should be considered that more than a year before the outbreak of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, citizens in the Eastern regions expressed concern about the violation of their rights in the context of language use. Due to the lack of in-depth research on the violation of the language rights of the Russian-speaking population of Eastern Ukraine, we can assume that this feeling of 'linguistic oppression' is linked to the increase of Ukrainian-language content and the gradual displacement of Russian-language media in Ukraine.

These steps seem appropriate in the name of protecting Ukraine's information realm from the interference of Russian propaganda. Still, the audience, primarily residents of the Eastern regions of Ukraine, who have a preference for Russian-language cinema and media productions, did not take it well. Therefore, the potential for maintaining a cleavage along the lines of language policy on the eve of Russia's war against Ukraine remained rather serious.

Religion. Ukraine has a largely Orthodox Christian population. Between the years of 2000 and 2021, the share of Orthodox Christians remained constant at 2/3 of the population (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 39). Greek Catholics are the second largest denomination, with a share of about 8% (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 39) (Figure 1).

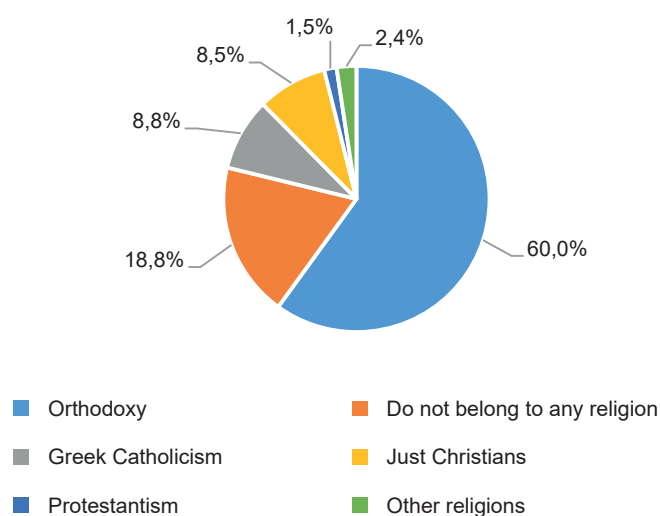


Figure 1. The confessional distribution in Ukraine (2021)

Source: Based on the results of a survey conducted by the Razumkov Center (2021c), *Specifics of religious and Church self-determination of citizens of Ukraine: trends 2000–2021 (information materials)*. KYIV-2021. URL: https://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2021_Religiya_eng.pdf.

A remarkable feature of Ukraine's religious landscape is its clear regional differences in affiliation. The majority of Ukrainian Greek Catholics live in the West (making up between 38% of the Western population in 2000 and 35% in 2021), while Orthodox Christians predominate in the Centre and East (over 60%) (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 40). The devotees of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate were mostly represented in the Eastern and Southern regions, reaching peak values in 2010 (comprising 22% and 43% of these regions, respectively) and then showing a downward trend over the next 11 years to 15% and 13% in 2021, respectively (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 44).

In December 2018, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church merged into the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), which in January 2019 received a tomos of autocephaly from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This event could have become a unifying factor in the area of religion and the Church in Ukraine. However, in May 2019 the Honourable Patriarch of the OCU Filaret withdrew his signature under the decision of the OCU establishment, and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate was restored, causing confusion related to the self-identification of devotees in 2019, when 13% of citizens identified themselves with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and 8% identified with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate. This meant that the total share of those who identified themselves with the OCU and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (21%) turned out to be smaller than the share of members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate in 2018 (29%). Simultaneously, the number of citizens who identified themselves as 'just Orthodox' increased from 23% in 2018 to 30% in 2019, and 3% did not know which Orthodox church they belonged to (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 7–8). Over the next two years, the situation improved slightly, so that the number of believers identifying themselves with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine increased to 24% (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 41).

Although for citizens of Ukraine religious identity has less significance compared to other aspects of self-identification, studies have found that members of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (80%) and the Greek Catholic Church (76%) have a stronger national identity than do members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (59%). On the other hand, regional identity is quite noticeable in the latter (34%) as a manifestation of religious identity (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 37).

An equal proportion of devotees of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (55% in both cases) believe that religion should be nationally oriented, while the share of followers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchates who agree with this idea is considerably lower (43%) (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 100).

Despite Ukrainians' tolerant attitude towards other religions (at a level of more than 40% during 2000–2020) (Razumkov Centre 2020: 2), inter-confessional tension exists among the Orthodox churches in Ukraine. In particular, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate did not condemn the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, did not recognise the Russian Federation as an aggressor state, and did not distance itself from the position of the Moscow Patriarchate, creating a risk that its network would be used for the promotion of 'Russian world' ideology. The negative public attitude towards these positions caused an outflow of believers: membership dropped from 24% during the peak year of 2010 to 12% in 2021 (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 43).

Among the country's Orthodox churches, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine enjoys the most positive attitude with 55% public approval, while 22% respondents feel indifferent and 4% have negative feelings towards the Church. By contrast, these same indicators for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate are 34%, 24% and 20%, respectively; thus, negativity is expressed more often towards this church than towards any other denomination in Ukraine (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 26) (Figure 2).

The positive attitude towards the OCU is most pronounced in the Western region (71%) and the least pronounced in the East (43%), but in all regions the share of those who have a negative attitude towards the OCU is very small (from 1% in the West to 5% in the East and 6% in the Centre) (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 113) (Figure 3).

Only in the Western regions does the share of those who have a negative attitude towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate exceed the share of those who have a positive attitude towards it (28%) (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 113). Meanwhile, only in the Eastern regions, the percentage of those with a positive attitude towards the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the percentage with a positive attitude towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is very similar (43% and 41%, respectively); in all other regions, the positive attitude towards the Orthodox Church of Ukraine prevails over the positive attitude towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 113).

Among those who believe that relations between members of different churches and religions are contentious in the area in which they live, most pointed to tense relations between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (3% of respondents) and between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate (2% of respondents) (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 125).

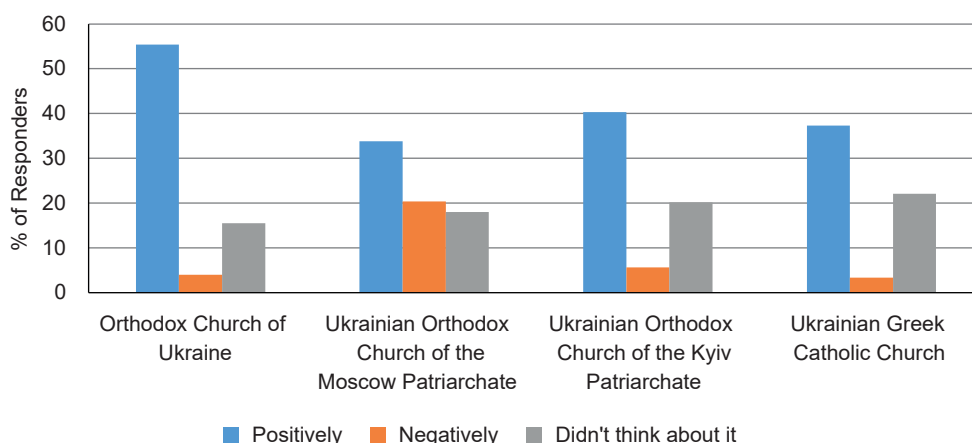


Figure 2. Attitude of Ukrainian citizens towards religious organisations, November 2021

Source: Based on the results of a survey conducted by the Razumkov Center (2021c), *Specifics of religious and Church self-determination of citizens of Ukraine: trends 2000–2021 (information materials)*. KYIV-2021. URL: https://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2021_Religiya_eng.pdf.

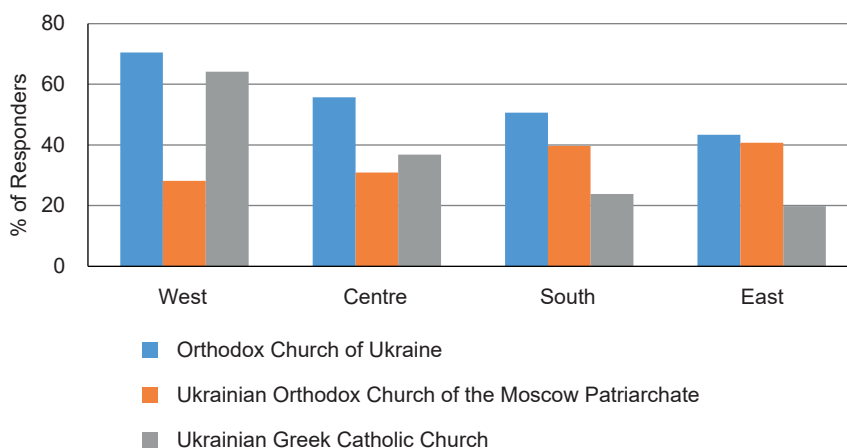


Figure 3. Attitude of Ukrainian citizens towards religious organisations by region, November 2021

Source: Based on results of survey, conducted by Razumkov Center (2021c), *Specifics of religious and Church self-determination of citizens of Ukraine: trends 2000–2021 (information materials)*. KYIV-2021. URL: https://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2021_Religiya_eng.pdf.

Notably, many citizens of Ukraine demonstrate an awareness of the political factors involved in inciting inter-confessional antagonism. In 2000, 20% of respondents recognised this role, and since then the weight of the political factor grew consistently until 2021, when 40% of respondents

reported a belief that conflicts between churches are purely political (Razumkov Centre 2021: 122). Moreover, this indicator revealed a similar position for respondents in all regions of Ukraine (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 123).

Despite the peaceful interconfessional relations in daily life reported by the majority of respondents (58%) (Razumkov Centre 2021c: 124), it is worth noting that in the event of other types of conflicts (such as political ones), the church's influence on public opinion can be actively exploited. The specific features of Ukrainian politics, under the influence of informal political practices, laid the mechanisms for actively boosting political interests through church networks. In fact, during elections, politicians use confessional affiliation to influence voters as well as to articulate social cleavages.

Geopolitical contradictions. The most distinct social split in Ukraine has formed based on disputes regarding the geopolitical direction of the country. This split is historically connected to, on the one hand, the closeness of Western Ukraine to the neighbouring EU member states, thus leading some to favour European integration, and, on the other hand, the position of the Eastern regions, which economically and socially (e.g. through family ties) gravitate towards Russia. Geopolitically, Ukraine sits on the border between the EU and the Russian Federation, that is, between two civilisational dimensions. For a long time, the political forces in Ukraine, instead of unifying the country around a particular foreign policy direction for the state's development, used this split as one of its main tools for mobilising the prejudices of residents in the Eastern and Western regions and influencing electoral sentiments. Thus, the geopolitical choice between joining the Western alliances (the EU and NATO) and unifying with the Russian Federation within the customs union effectively split the country.

However, foreign policy preferences underwent significant changes during the two decades from 2000 to 2021. In 2002, equal parts (31%) of the Ukrainian population considered relations with either Russia or the EU to be a priority, but in 2021, 52% considered the European direction a priority and only 10% favoured the Russian direction. In October 2011, 44% of respondents supported joining the EU, and 31% supported joining the Eurasian Economic Union. By 2021, the picture had changed, as 75% supported joining the EU, while 11% supported integration into the Eurasian Economic Union (Razumkov Centre 2021b: 278).

For many years, geopolitical orientations had a clearly expressed regional character: a European orientation dominated in the West of the country, while a pro-Russian orientation prevailed in the South and East. Importantly, the attitude towards European integration in the Eastern regions was not fully negative, as approximately 50% of those in the Centre and Northeast regions supported joining the EU. However, in the South and Southwest, 42% opposed EU integration, with the highest rate of opposition to European integration recorded in Donbas and Crimea at 48% (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2011).

The events of 2014 had a substantial impact on public views regarding Ukraine's geopolitical course. The eastern vector collapsed, and since then Donbas has remained the only region in which a positive attitude towards cooperation with Russia can still be found. In 2014, 45% of local respondents supported Ukraine's alliance with the Russian Federation, while in Ukraine in general, support for this alliance fell sharply. In the Eastern regions, support amounted to 27%, in the Southern regions 30%, in the Central regions 8%, in the Northern regions 2% and in the Western regions 1% (Rating 2014a).

In April 2014, 35% of respondents approved of reducing Ukrainian cooperation with Russia, while 22% preferred to enhance it. In 2021, 38% of survey participants emphasised the curtailment of cooperation with Russia, 27% supported reducing cooperation and 16% favoured enhancing it (Razumkov Centre 2021b: 278).

The public's attitude towards a Western geopolitical orientation was centred on their perception of two issues: integration into the EU and accession to NATO. In general, joining the European Union has shown higher indicators of public support in all regions of Ukraine. By contrast, political speculation around imagined threats related to potential accession to NATO caused public prejudice. This bias was compounded by the Soviet past and the ideological confrontation with the countries of the West. NATO personalised these menaces. In the years prior to Euromaidan, support for Ukraine's membership in NATO remained stable at 14–16% of respondents (Ilko Kucheriv

Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2016). Ukrainians believed that the optimal means of security would involve Ukraine's compliance with a non-aligned status. However, the annexation of Crimea and Russia's military aggression clearly showed that Ukraine cannot guarantee its security without strong military allies. Support for the prospect of Ukraine's accession to NATO increased sharply from 13% in 2012 to 33% in 2014, and then further to 43% in 2016 (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2016).

Remarkably, even in those regions in which NATO membership has been viewed mostly negatively, significant changes have taken place: in the Southern region in 2013, only 7% supported NATO membership, whereas in 2015 this number was 33%; in the East, support rose from 12% to 32% over the same time period (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2016). The most noticeable increase in positive orientation towards NATO among the public occurred in Donbass: 2% supported membership in NATO in 2012, and 24% supported membership by May 2016. Therefore, in each Ukrainian region, the share of those who saw NATO as a guarantee of security rose higher than its level in Ukraine as a whole in 2012 (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2016).

In February 2022, on the eve of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, public support for joining NATO had risen to 62% (Rating 2022b). This represented the highest level of positive perception of Ukraine's accession to NATO since 2014. The prospect of Ukraine's integration into Western structures enjoys the greatest approval among respondents in the West (81%) and the Centre (67%), with a lower approval rating in the South (48%). In the East, support for joining NATO is still lower than its opposition: 36% versus 54% (Rating 2022b: 5).

In February 2022, just before the war broke out, support for Ukraine's integration into the European Union reached its highest value since 2013 (68%), while 24% of respondents did not favour joining (Rating 2022b: 6). In the East, a parity of opponents and supporters could be found: 44% for and 45% against EU integration (Rating 2022b: 7).

At the end of 2021, only 16.6% respondents believed the country should interact with the Russian Federation, in particular by joining the Eurasian Economic Union (Razumkov Centre 2021a: 134). Among the preferred options for guaranteeing security, the largest percent of Ukrainian citizens chose joining NATO (43%), while only 10% of respondents supported a military alliance with Russia and other Commonwealth of Independence States' countries as a guarantee of security (Razumkov Centre 2021a: 135).

Apparently, on the eve of war, the cleavage based on Ukraine's geopolitical course of action also narrowed notably. However, unlike other cleavages, the geopolitical divide was preserved in the West and the East. Crucially, political forces affected public opinion by playing a 'game of contrasts' and creating images of 'external enemies' (especially in the case of NATO in the East), thus maintaining a divide within the electorate.

Electoral preferences as an indicator of cleavage dynamics

The mosaic of political representations and respective electoral preferences in Ukraine demonstrates an essential correlation with the socio-political cleavages described above. The institutionalisation of Ukraine's geopolitical direction became a catalyst of social divisions, which manifested not only in foreign affairs (including the Russian military invasion of Ukraine), but also at the local level, by strengthening the dividing lines in the regional and electoral dimensions.

The current landscape of political representation in Ukraine has been formed not along ideological borderlines, but essentially following language, geopolitical and religious differences. The map of Ukrainian political parties was initially quite dynamic and included the exit of several parties from the political arena and the banning of the activities of others (e.g. the Communist Party after the Revolution of Dignity); however, the arrangement of new parties within the electoral field has reproduced the same set of social cleavages.

Even after the convergence of some cleavages in 2013–2014, the parties failed to suggest a unifying program for the nation and instead continued to exploit the original social discrepancies in an attempt to mobilise and preserve their electorate.

Parties that advocated a monolingual policy and national centrism and supported the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (later the Orthodox Church of Ukraine) and unification with the EU and NATO enjoyed electoral support in the Western part of Ukraine. In the Eastern and Southern areas, including Crimea, the leading parties built their political programs on the idea of making the Russian language an official state language and campaigned for integration with the Russian Federation within the Eurasian Economic Union as well as the Customs Union. Thus, electoral affiliation had direct links with both regional dimensions and social cleavages. This tendency was inherited by the political players who created new parties after some of the old ones failed in the elections. These correlations between electoral and geopolitical preferences are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The association of electoral affiliations with social cleavage regarding Ukraine's geopolitical course

<i>Preferences in geopolitical direction</i>	Political parties in 2013 survey (Rating, 2013)				
	'Svoboda' ['Freedom']	'Batkivshchyna' ['Fatherland']	'Udar' ['Kick']	Party of Regions	Communist Party of Ukraine
Support for joining the European Union (EU)	79%	72%	67%	20%	6%
Support for integration with Russia	9%	14%	19%	66%	82%
	Political parties in 2017 survey (Rating, 2017)				
	'Svoboda'	'Batkivshchyna'	Petro Poroshenko's Block 'Solidarnist'	'Civic Position'	'Opposition Block'
Support for joining the EU	74%	68%	83%	75%	42%
Against joining the EU	19%	23%	11%	14%	45%
	Political parties in 16–17 February 2022 survey (Rating, 2022)				
	Sluha Narodu ['Servant of the People']	'Batkivshchyna'	'European Solidarity'	Syla i chest ['Power and Honour']	Opposition Platform 'Za Zhyttia' ['For Life']
Support for joining the EU	79%	66%	94%	85%	15%
Against joining the EU	16%	24%	15%	14%	74%

A vivid example of such an attempt to stay in politics involved the creation of the 'Opposition Block' party in 2014. This party absorbed the members of the Party of Regions, which had turned into a political 'cadaver' after the Revolution of Dignity. Notably, this new party retained a pronounced regional character, receiving the greatest support in the elections from the Eastern regions (22%), with the highest numbers in Donetsk (39%) and Luhansk (37%). In Central and Western Ukraine, its rate remained between 1% and 7% (Bekeshkina 2017: 48–49).

President Volodymyr Zelenskyi's party, 'Sluha Narodu' ['Servant of the People'], won the recent parliamentary elections and significantly changed the configuration of Ukrainian politics, particularly due to the appearance of many new faces, who did not have a negative public perception. In 2019, for the first time since independence, the main parties that entered the Ukrainian Parliament immediately developed common positions on issues which had previously caused major social and regional cleavages in Ukraine. Three parties – 'Servant of the People', 'European Solidarity' (formerly 'Petro Poroshenko's Block') and 'Holos' ['Voice'] – advocated for Ukrainian only to retain the status of state language and actively promoted Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO. Meanwhile, the party 'Opposition Block', which advocated strengthening relations with the Russian Federation and had a far more ambiguous position on the monolingual policy in Ukraine, gained 13.5% of the votes and came in second in the parliamentary elections (Central Electoral Commission 2019).

Again, for the first time in the history of independent Ukraine, the representatives of one party, 'Servant of the People', received support from the majority of the population in multiple regions.

Such a consolidated endorsement was observed both in the East (Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia) and the West (Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi) of the country. Only in two regions of Eastern Ukraine did the 'Opposition Block' gain a majority: Luhansk (49.83%) and Donetsk (43.39%). Also, in the Lviv region, 'Voice' slightly overcame 'Servant of the People'; these parties earned 23% and 22% of the vote, respectively (The Central Election Commission of Ukraine, 2019). Thus, the regionalisation of the electorate turned out to be a less important factor. Although the local elections in 2020 revealed certain confrontations between the central governmental authorities and the power of local elites in the regions, in general, social divisions on the eve of the war showed a decreasing trend.

Thus, we can consider the interval from 2014 to the beginning of 2022 to be a period of intensive reduction of the most distinct social cleavages along the lines of national identity, language, religion and the country's geopolitical course. The Revolution of Dignity, the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the creation of quasi-republics in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions formed a cluster of shocking events that affected the values and views of Ukrainian citizens, particularly among residents of the East and South. Previous contradictions between the West and the East diminished, with only the Luhansk and Donetsk regions continuing to express positions opposite to those in the rest of Ukraine. The demarcation line of the cleavages shifted in a geographical sense to the administrative borders of the Donbass.

Evidently, the shock events of 2014 had a significant impact on civil consolidation, with a clear trend towards decreasing language- and region-related contradictions. The sharpest cleavage, which formed in relation to the state language policy, has been mitigated due to *de facto* public agreement on the acceptance of Ukrainian as the only state language. This happened as a result of salient changes in the position of the citizens of Eastern Ukraine, despite their bilingualism. Also, a regional convergence of the West, Centre, East and South took place on issues of national consciousness.

The cleavage related to the issue of church affiliation persists. It gradually underwent a convergence due to the creation of a single Orthodox Church of Ukraine and, accordingly, the quantitative confessional homogenisation process on a regional scale. However, inter-confessional relations between the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate remained potentially conflictual.

The most pronounced 'repair' of social cleavages occurred in relation to the issue of Ukraine's geopolitical direction. In fact, after 2014, a consensus emerged across the country regarding European integration. Attitudes towards NATO also showed the development of a consolidated core of public opinion in the country in support of accession.

In contrast to the convergence of social cleavages between the Eastern and Western regions, the situation in the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the partially occupied Luhansk and Donetsk regions moved towards further divergence. Assessments of public opinion in these regions are rarely performed. The state of public sentiment regarding the issues causing social cleavages showed general stability in the controlled territories. We assume that this is related to the local population's frustration with the region's social conditions, as military actions took place on the territory for seven years. An additional important factor entails the propaganda of pro-Russian political forces in these regions.

An analysis of the situation has revealed the dominant influence of exogenous factors on the dynamics of social cleavages in Ukraine, namely political influence in the name of gaining and maintaining electoral support, and Russia's strong influence on the territories of its geopolitical interests. This confirms our argument that social cleavages in Ukraine have emerged as a result of the politicisation of the socio-cultural characteristics of the population of the regions.

Assessment of Social Cleavage Dynamics since the Outbreak of the War

The immediate and drastic short-term outcomes of the shock event have influenced the public mood and orientation. The combat operations, namely the non-stop missile shelling of Ukrainian cities and villages and the killing of thousands of civilians, have caused the extensive migration of the population inside the country and their exit abroad. The long-term effect of the war on the public

consciousness of Ukrainians can hardly be predicted. Still, we can explore the state of public opinion within the framework of social cleavages.

In defiance of the war's horrors, the apparent tendencies have included the ubiquitous rise of patriotism and national self-consciousness. In April 2022, 92% of citizens self-identified as Ukrainian by nationality, with only 5% of respondents identifying themselves as Russian and 3% as belonging to other ethnic groups (Rating 2022g). Ethnic self-recognition as Ukrainian reached a high frequency in multiple regions: from 97% in the West to 86% in the East (Rating 2022g: 37). Among Russian-speaking Ukrainians, this value was also high at 75% (Rating 2022g: 37).

Despite 8 years of Russian aggression and the recent outbreak of war, Ukrainians continue to express their tolerance of ethnic Russians living in Ukraine. In mid-spring 2022, 31% of respondents had a warm feeling towards Russians living in Ukraine, 39% expressed their attitude as neutral, and 27% reported treating them with coolness (Rating 2022g: 39).

Regarding the linguistic cleavage, a further steady convergence can be expected due to an observable decrease in the proportion of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine. At the beginning of the war, 18% of the population was Russian-speaking, and at the end of April 2022, this share was 16% (Rating 2022g: 50). An absolute majority of 80% of the population considered the Ukrainian language their native language (Rating 2022g: 50). Still, only half of respondents (51%) reported speaking Ukrainian at home (Rating 2022g: 48). The share of bilingual speakers was 33% (Rating 2022g: 49), and among these, as many as 74% perceived Ukrainian as their native language (Rating 2022e: 50). Even among Russian-only speakers, 30% indicated Ukrainian as their native language (Rating 2022e: 50).

Yet, from a regional perspective, a reason for the persistence of the cleavage remains, particularly on the issue of the state language(s). Despite nationwide support for naming Ukrainian the only state language (confirmed by 83% of respondents in March 2022), the distribution of this approval between Western and Eastern Ukraine reveals a remarkable divergence: 91% of respondents in the West and 63% in the East support this action (Rating 2022f: 12). Support for two state languages decreased to 7% on the national scale, while 19% of respondent in Eastern Ukraine and 13% in Southern Ukraine still support this idea (Rating 2022f: 12).

This phenomenon likely relates to the share of native speakers in one or both of the Ukrainian and Russian languages in a given region and the use of a certain language in everyday life. Unlike residents of Western regions, where 95% speak Ukrainian as a native language, only 53% citizens in Eastern regions consider Ukrainian their native language, while 39% declare Russian as their native language (Rating 2022g: 50). Moreover, the highest proportions of bilingual speakers exist in the East (47%) and the South (49%) (Rating 2022g: 48).

The mass flow of residents from East to West in Ukraine can be seen as an acute, real-life test for linguistic tolerance. One sign of a relative lack of tension is that the majority of survey participants (57%) indicated a positive attitude towards Russian-speaking Ukrainians (Rating 2022g: 39). Apart from that, most internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Eastern areas arriving in Western cities and villages attempt to speak mostly Ukrainian with the locals. In the Lviv region in particular, 67% of IDPs try to communicate with local residents only in Ukrainian, including 64% of bilingual speakers and 57% of Russian speakers (Rating 2022d).

Another sign of hope for the convergence of the linguistic cleavage is an expanding public consensus on the non-importance of the 'language issue', as 67% respondents said that there are no tensions between those who speak Ukrainian and those who speak Russian (Rating 2022f: 13). In this survey, 19% of participants did not recognise this problem as significant, and only 12% considered it a matter of national security (Rating 2022f: 13). The more alarmist attitude is predominant in the Western region (23%), where the majority of Ukrainian native speakers live (Rating 2022f: 13). The largest shares of those who believe the language issue exists, although they assess it as a non-significant issue, are in the Eastern (22%) and Western (21%) parts of Ukraine (Rating 2022f: 13). Therefore, in spite of the remarkable dynamics of the cleavage's convergence, the language issue remains on the agenda.

Thus, the war as an exogenous factor has sped up the amalgamation of Ukrainians' national identity. This shock event expedited the convergence of social cleavages based on the issues of identity and language. Notably, these dynamics occurred within bottom-up social perceptions of the

happenings in the face of war, while another social cleavage based on susceptible inter-confessional relationships has been affected by institutional interference.

As mentioned above, inter-confessional relationships in Ukraine have been marked by the strained attitude towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. The conflict-causing split has formed along the line drawn by the negative treatment of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate by the residents of Western regions.

Just after the war's outbreak, the cleavage based on inter-confessional relationships deepened. A majority (63%) of Ukrainians expressed support for the idea of severing ties between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church, while only 10% of respondents opposed it (Rating 2022a: 11). The most assertive attitudes towards this idea were expressed by parishioners of the Greek Catholic Church of Ukraine (88%) and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (68%) (Rating 2022a: 11).

Among the parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, over half (52%) also responded that they support the severing of ties with the Russian Orthodox Church, a quarter said that they do not care, and only 13% said they oppose the break (Rating 2022a: 11).

A somewhat expected tendency emerged from a cross-regional analysis: the number of those who want to cut the connections of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate with the Russian Orthodox Church increased from East to West, from 41% to 76%, respectively (Rating 2022a: 11). In a striking finding, only 7% of Eastern residents did not approve of this idea, whereas 31% expressed their ignorance of such a prospect (Rating 2022a: 11). From this, we can predict a further outflow of parishioners from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and its possible coalescence with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. The evidence comes from the transition of over 600 confessional communities from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine during the first 100 days of Russia's invasion in February 2022 (Ukrinform 2022a), with over 470 additional dioceses following by July 2022 (SFU 2022b). Still, the confessional transition and mutual treatment of both Churches' clerics were not completely peaceful. Incidents involving conflicts between priests of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate even occurred during church services (SFU 2022a).

The Russian Orthodox Church's official disapproval of Russia's war against Ukraine was declared by the Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in May 2022; moreover, a decision regarding its full independence was made and fixed into legislation documents (Ukrainian Orthodox Church 2022).

Despite the unprecedented and significant steps taken by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in trying to separate from the Moscow Patriarchate and to preserve its dioceses in Ukraine, the exacerbated public attitude and local authorities' interference in some cases caused interconfessional tension, a quantitative decrease in the number of parishioners, and a diminution of its influence on society. Radical appeals were also made to prohibit the activities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (of the Moscow Patriarchate) in Ukraine or, at least in some regions, such as Lviv (Lviv Regional Council 2022). Similar statements were made by regional and local authorities after the outbreak of the war, although the legality of such actions is questionable. According to the constitution, Ukraine is a secularised state, where political and church power are separated from each other (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 1996). In addition, the local authorities do not have the appropriate powers. According to the Law of Ukraine 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations', the activities of a religious organisation can be terminated exclusively by a court decision (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 1991). Nonetheless, the draft bill 'On the Prohibition of the Moscow Patriarchate on the Territory of Ukraine' (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2022) was introduced in the Parliament of Ukraine to undergo review procedures, a serious signal of the changing relationships between the state and the Church. In addition, an online petition calling for the complete ban of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the transfer of its property to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine appeared on the governmental portal (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2022), where just in four months it collected nearly 15,000 of the 25,000 required signatures. Thus, publicly supported legal interference may be a powerful means to resolve problems. Still, a hasty decision on such a sensitive issue as religion, especially one made during a shock event, can lead to undesired

results. In any case, we can state that the social cleavage related to confessional affinity since the outbreak of the war became highly topical and more acute.

The only split which seems to have decreased significantly during the first months of the war is that related to opinions about Ukraine's geopolitical course. Starting in March 2022, the country's accession to the EU and NATO has garnered much higher public support across the country, increasing more than 20 points in comparison to support before the war. On 1 March 2022, 86% of respondents supported Ukraine's European integration, and 76% wanted the country to join NATO (Rating 2022e). Regionally, the polls indicated support for the Western foreign policy direction in both the Eastern (72%) and Southern (81%) parts of Ukraine (Rating 2022e: 19). NATO accession was less preferable in the East (55%), but the percentage of its opponents decreased to 16% (Rating 2022e: 19).

The granting of EU candidate status to Ukraine in June 2022 (European Council 2022) reinforced public aspirations to join the EU. As of July 2022, 81% of respondents stated they would vote 'Yes' on a possible referendum on joining the EU, and only 4% would vote 'No' (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2022). Accession to NATO would be approved by 71% of respondents and rejected by 7% (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2022). The inter-regional difference in public support for joining NATO was still noticeable: from 81% in the West to 56% in the East and 65% in the South of Ukraine (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2022).

The surveys revealed that EU and NATO supporters comprise the majority among Ukrainian-speaking citizens (85% and 79%, respectively), bilingual Ukrainians (79% and 68%), Russian-speaking Ukrainians (76% and 59%) and Russian-speaking Russians living in Ukraine (53% and 51%) (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2022). Apparently, integration into the European Union has a higher rate of approval than joining NATO, which can be explained by the lack of a clear prospect for Ukraine in the foreign policy dimension.

It should be underlined that the most noticeable Ukrainian social cleavages – linguistic, ethnic and geopolitical – have decreased simultaneously since the outbreak of the current war. By the decisions of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (2022) and the Administrative Court of Appeal (2022), the activities of all pro-Russian political forces in Ukraine had been prohibited; this applies to the 'Opposition Block', the 'Socialists', 'Nashi', 'State', 'Volodymyr Saldo's Block', the 'Party of Justice and Development', the 'Socialist Party of Ukraine', the 'Left Opposition', the 'Union of Left Forces', 'Shariy's Party' and the 'Opposition Platform – For Life'. This action suppressed the most important institutional mechanism of the articulation of social cleavages, at least temporally. The only cleavage exposed to ambiguous conditions is that based on inter-confessional tensions, for which either a deepening or mitigating scenario seems possible. The actual outcome will depend on the approach that religious and governmental entities decide to implement jointly.

Apart from the cleavages mentioned above, some new social tendencies have emerged as a result of the war; these could potentially bring more tension and disunity to Ukrainian society in the near future. In particular, the huge flow of refugees from active battlefields and the occupied territories to relatively safe places within the country or abroad has had a major effect on the economic and social domains. As of July 2022, there were 6.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine, comprising about 15% of the entire population of the country (Ukrinform 2022b). The horrible experience of surviving missile or artillery shelling, coupled with the physical loss of one's family members, friends or household and the ruination of normal social ties, has caused serious psychological trauma amongst IDPs. An additional source of frustration entails their precarious status due to job loss. Thus, they have a more dramatic and acute perception of the war in comparison with those who have remained in relatively safe regions, mostly in the Central and Western parts of Ukraine. Two groups have already been identified by applying the criteria of psychological resilience to war: 'adapted' and 'not adapted' (Rating 2022). Research has revealed that people from the Eastern (58%) and Southern (60%) regions are less resilient than those who live in the Central (63%) and Western (61%) regions (Rating 2022c: 27).

Adaptation to the war is indicated by a high level of resilience, not limiting one's pleasure, low emotional stress and psychological exhaustion, and using adaptive strategies to overcome stressful situations (Rating 2022c: 26). Those who have not adapted tend to have a low level of vitality, be prone to restricting themselves, experience significant emotional stress, limit themselves in

entertainment and pleasure, and experience psychological exhaustion (Rating 2022c: 26). The most vulnerable category of the population, who are less able to adapt to the conditions of wartime, are people of old age.

In addition, one must consider the soldiers returning back from the battlefield and the victims released from captivity. These two cohorts have harsh and distinctive experiences of the war. Thus, signs of potential social cleavages are emerging – between members of the military and civilians, between victims of war and those who have managed to avoid the horrors, and between refugees and people who have stayed in their native regions. The war as a shock event promotes the elimination of the most salient cleavages in Ukrainian society, but it also creates the ground for the formation of new ones.

Conclusions

An analysis of social cleavage dynamics in the pre-war time period and during the first months of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine reveals significant transformations in Ukrainian society over a short period of time. Two shock waves affected social cleavages in Ukraine: the first was the Revolution of Dignity and Russia's aggression and annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the second was the outbreak of the war on 24 February 2022. The dynamics of the most salient cleavages, based on national identity, language, confessional affinity and the country's geopolitical course, displayed a common tendency to decrease due to the convergence of initially polarised opinions. This supports our assumption about the strong influence of exogenous factors on the emergence and maintenance of social splits. The spatial principle of dividing Ukraine into West and East has been actively used by political players to frame regional cleavages. The most influential factor in preserving the cleavages involved the political parties' activity focused on building and retaining their electoral base. Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 under the guise of defending Russian-speaking Ukrainians produced an effect opposite to the anticipated reaction within Ukrainian society. Our analysis has revealed the shifts in public attitudes, clearly directed towards social cohesion, within the framework of the issues which caused the existing social cleavages.

Ukrainian society demonstrates a high level of mutual tolerance between different categories of people embedded in the matrix of cleavages. It must be underlined that while recognising Russia as aggressor, no intensive public oppression exists towards Russian-speaking Ukrainians or even ethnic Russians living in Ukraine. Moreover, the widespread public view that the so-called 'language issue' lacks urgency makes the overt maltreatment of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine unlikely.

Meanwhile, tensions within inter-confessional relationships – in particular the negative attitude towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate – appear to be rather durable, and the latter's declared autonomy from the Russian Orthodox Church did not help to ease tension. One possible option to avoid the further escalation of inter-confessional conflict would be the coalescence of the Orthodox Churches of Ukraine without state interference.

The prohibition of political parties linked to Russia's interference in Ukrainian politics may stop the further exacerbation of existing cleavages. However, despite the trend towards repairing the cleavages related to identity, language and religion, these issues remain vulnerable enough that Ukrainians should be aware of their possible re-emergence in post-war times.

The rapid changes in Ukrainians' values and preferences, caused by the shock events in 2014 and 2022, have been mostly grounded on reactions to an external threat rather than targeted governmental policy. Thus, it is crucial to start implementing appropriate policies for maintaining social cohesion in Ukraine. This also might prevent the possible manifestation of new, war-born cleavages, signs of which can be already detected.

Different perceptions of the war among various individuals, who may or may not have had harsh personal experiences, can become grounds for social tensions. Tensions could also be reinforced on a regional basis, as the war-affected cohorts currently largely comprise those from the Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine. It has been well established that the most desired source of votes for radical political forces are people in frustrating conditions, namely refugees, victims of war, and those who have lost their relatives and property. Therefore, a complex governmental approach to

maintaining social integrity is urgently needed. The necessity of concentrating public resources on the military defence of Ukraine is indisputable, but the importance of providing special governmental programs to support IDPs must be also recognised. A policy targeting internally displaced people should be developed via cooperation between central and local authorities, including systematic surveys to determine IDPs' needs.

Further monitoring of the social cleavage dynamics in Ukraine is needed. By helping to reveal both the sources and focal points of potential social tensions, such monitoring will contribute to public and governmental efforts to mitigate the consequences of the war. In a broader context, the results of such research, including our findings, can be used to develop a matrix to understand the dynamics of social cleavages, not just during war, but after various shock events commonly experienced by contemporary societies.

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