

# XX ISA World Congress of Sociology

Spotlight session: “War in Ukraine: a Sociological Perspective”

Melbourne, July 1, 2023

## Power of Freedom and Activism: Ukrainian Alternative to Militant Authoritarianism



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Ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant  
"Where they make a desert, they call it peace"

Publius Cornelius Tacitus, I-II centuries AD



- Massive damage of infrastructure, including more than 50% of energy infrastructure of Ukraine is damaged), housing, agriculture, industry, cultural, etc
- Massive war crimes against civilians, captured, imprisoned, people's imprisoning, tortures, killings and deportation
- More than 11000 of children were forced deported from occupied territories of Ukraine to russia
- Ecological catastrophe: impact of war to ecosystems, fires and air pollution, chemical attacks and pollution after missels&bobming etc
- Mass changes in population: depopulation, internal displacement, refugee, war\occupation trauma...
- Destruction by shelling and bombing:
  - more than 2.6 thousand educational institutions,
  - About 600 objects of cultural heritage, cultural and religious buildings...
- Nuclear threat: nuclear power plant (Chernobyl, Zaporizhzhia NPP is the largest in Europe) occupied and bombed by russia; russia's terrorism with threatening to use nuclear weapons

# Content:

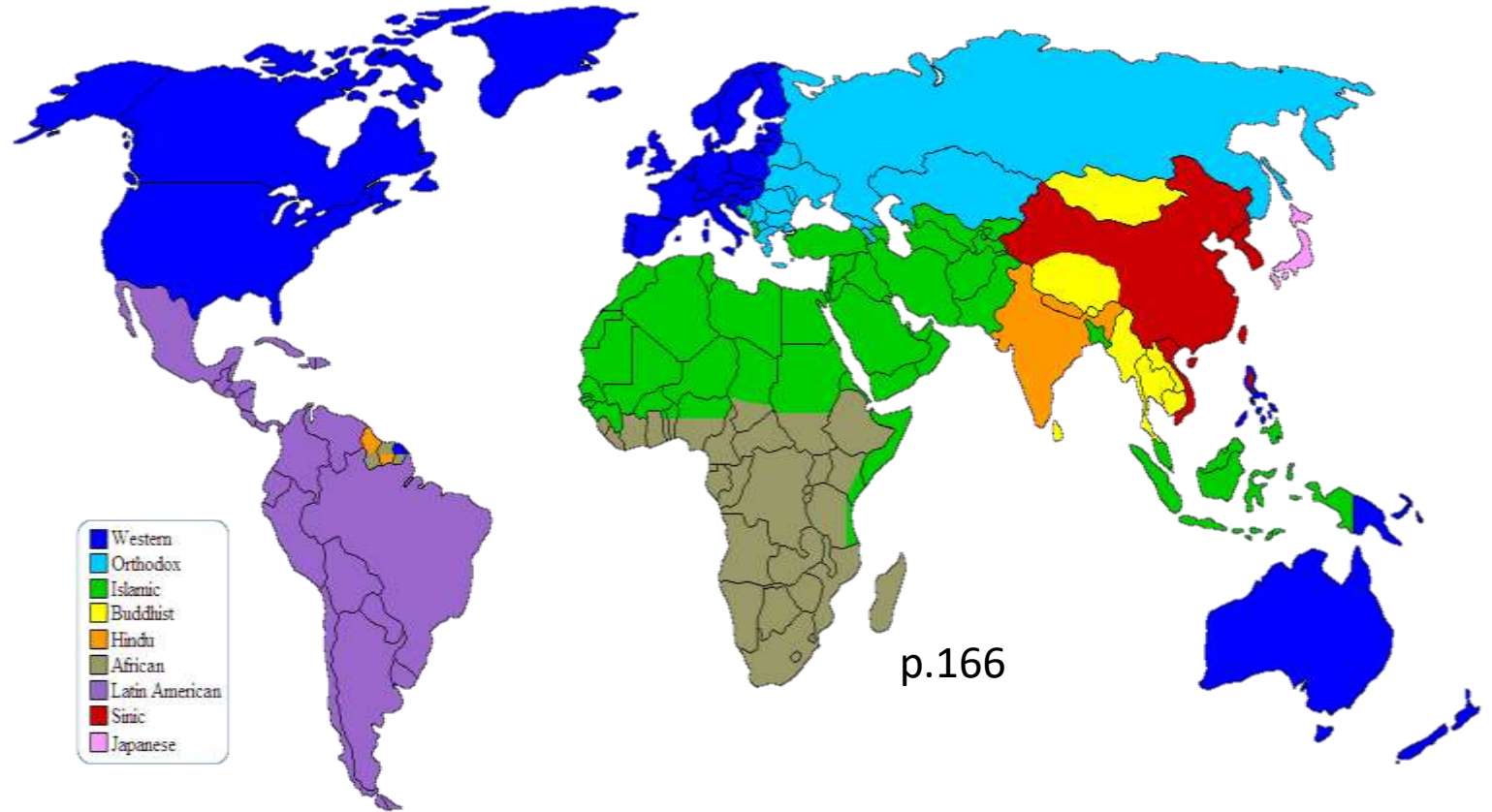
Introduction: russia's war against Ukraine

1. Two-fold theoretical framework and analytical dimensions
2. Dilemma of civilizational choice: Ukrainian case
3. *Longue durée* legacy, or what does the Ukraine's path to independence tell about?
4. Ukrainian alternative to militant authoritarianism: pillars of resilience

Conclusions and points for discussion

The Russia's war against Ukraine is not a local war conflict.

It is a war of civilizations!



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*Nine Civilizations Global Model:*

Samuel M. Huntington "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order", 1996

*The Eastern Boundary of Western Civilization*

# Two-fold theoretical framework:

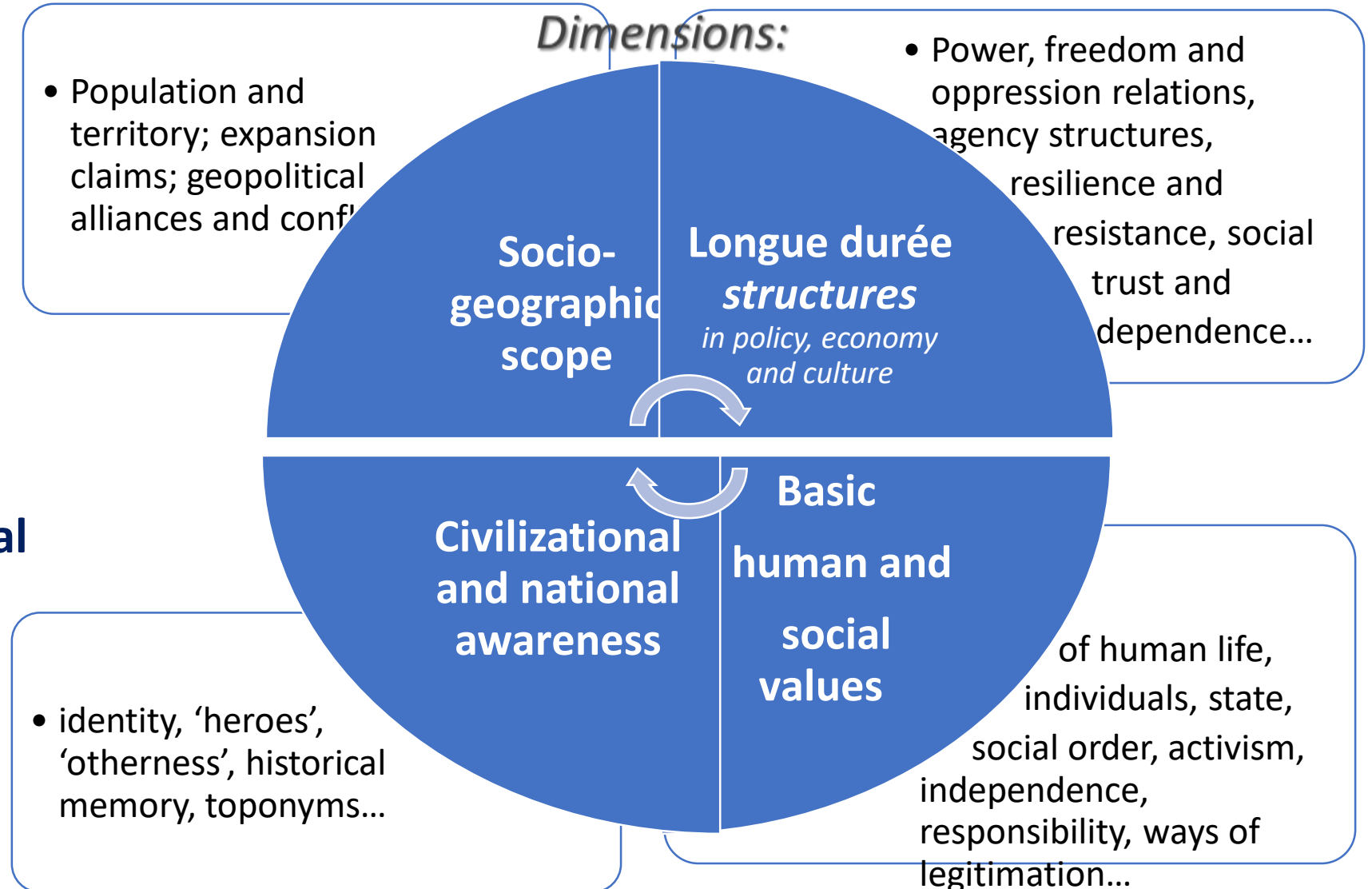
## I. Civilizational analysis in cultural and complexity-oriented version

*O. Spengler, N. Elias, F. Braudel, SN Eisenstadt, S. Huntington, Said Amir Arjomand, E.A. Tiryakian...*

## II. Imperialism and Postcolonialism conceptual lens

*A.G. Frank, Samir Amin, ... Homi K. Bhabha, Edward W. Said, Gayatri Ch. Spivak...*

- ✓ **Civilization** is a complex cultural-historical formation with a unique system of interpretive, behavioral and institutional models for social, cultural, and spiritual life, representing a specific way in which society evolves throughout history.





# European VS. Eurasian (Russian) some basic civilizational differences



1. Self-consciousness: Europeans, unique civilization
2. Political and social order: Embedded democracy, active (strong) civil society
3. Values of human life and individual freedom
4. Legal consciousness
5. Institutionalization of power, rational bureaucracy
6. Violence rejection

1. Self-consciousness: Russians, unique civilization
2. Political and social order: Embedded autocracy inclined to totalitarianism, lack (weak) of civil society
3. Etatistic values (state as a single space of power distributed hierarchically; strong state dependence of the individuals)
4. **Illegal consciousness**, rule avoidance
5. Personalization of power, patrimonial bureaucracy
6. Violence acceptance of , abuse

*Habermas, Z.Bauman, U.Beck, M.Castells, S.Žižek, M.Foucault, Ch.Taylor, R.Rorty, N.Fraser...*

*N.Berdyayev, P. Sorokin,... A. Dugin, D.Likhachev, A.Panarin, O.Shkaratan...*



**"We are all militarists and imperials. War is the self-affirmation of the nation".**

*Hermitage's director Mikhail Piotrovsky gave an interview to Rossiyskaya Gazeta.*

<https://meduza.io/feature/2022/06/24/vse-my-militaristy-i-impertsy-voyna-eto-samoutverzhdenie-natsii>

- ✓ VCIOM, **March 2023**: 62% of Russians say they have felt more pride in Russia over the recent year;
- ✓ 68% support the war against Ukraine in 2023, that even higher than at the beginning of the war, which was 65% (**May 2022**).

*"If Moscow regains control over Ukraine with its 52 million population and large resources, as well as access to the Black Sea, then Russia will automatically again receive the means to transform into a powerful imperial state spread across Europe and Asia"*



**Zbigniew Brzezinski**

"Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century", 1990

# Longue durée legacy: Ukraine's struggle for national identity and independence



Ukrainian Cossack (military-community) Council, 15-18 c. *painting by M. Ovechkin*



Proclamation of the Act of Unification of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Kyiv, 22 Jan., 1922



Declaration of independence of Ukraine, 24 Aug., 1991



from Kyivan Rus  
Principality,  
9-13 centuries

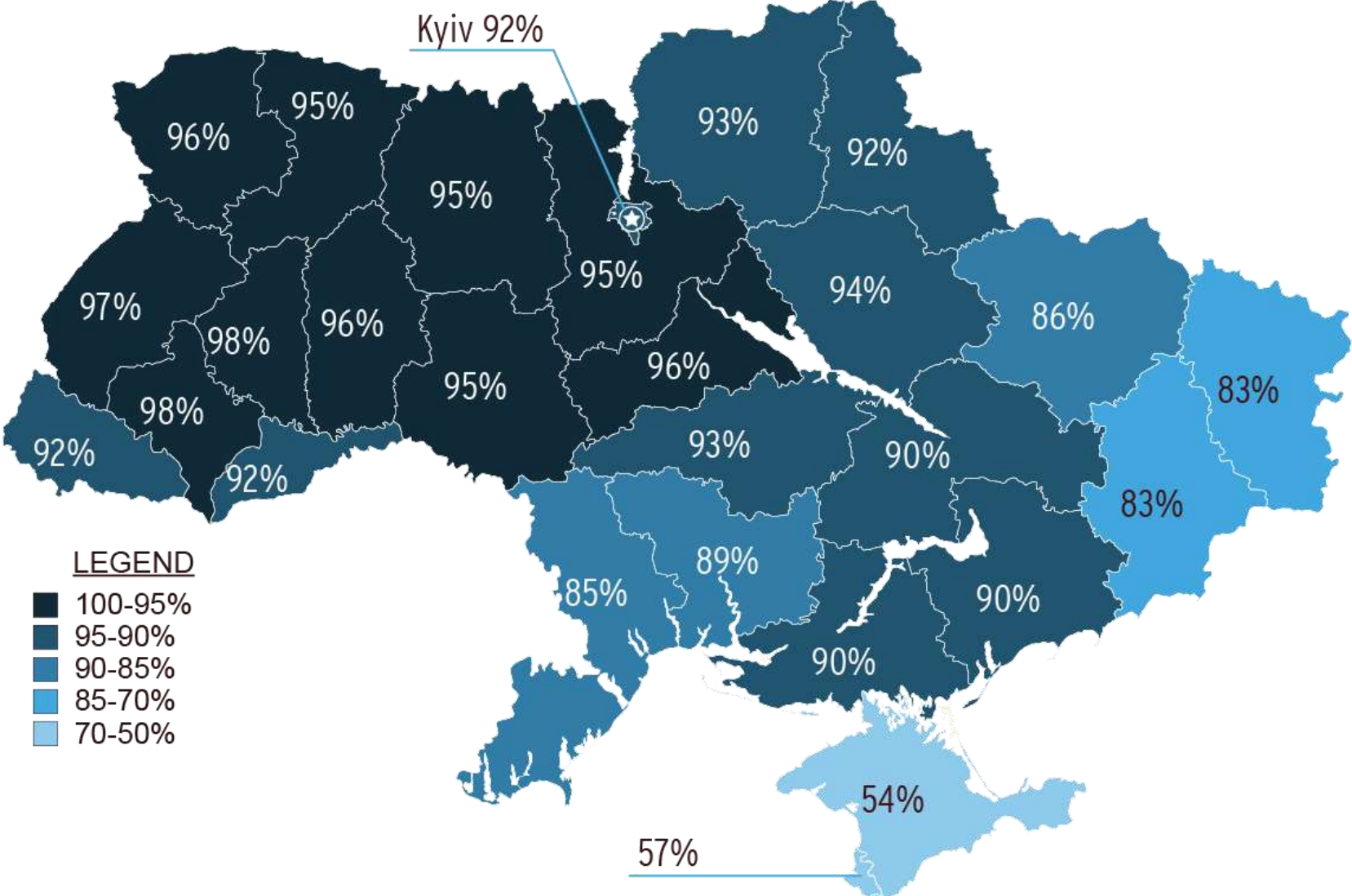
to Ukraine  
1991 - .....



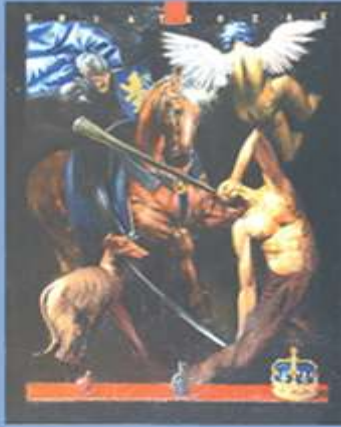


# 1991 Ukraine Independence Referendum: approval by regions

1991 Ukrainian Independence Referendum by Region  
31,891,742 VOTES — 92.3% APPROVED



Source: Data from Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council) of Ukraine and the State Archival Service of Ukraine



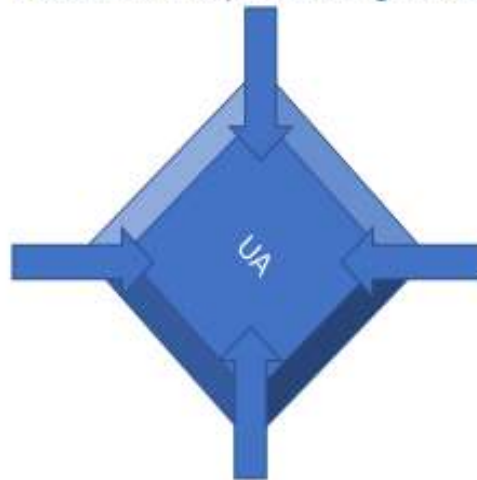
# One, two, three... how many 'Ukraines'?

- **“Divided society”** refers to a society characterized by deep-seated social, cultural, and political divisions that often result in conflict, polarization, and the inability to establish consensus or a shared sense of national identity.

*Lijphart (1977), McGarry and O'Leary (1993)....*

## Factors contributed to identification of Ukraine as a divided society

- **Linguistic and cultural** (*Ukrainian- \ Russian-speaking; imperial-colonial legacy; Soviet \ Ukrainian independence generations...*)
- **Political polarization and fragmentation** (*electoral preferences; party affiliations ...*)
- **Geopolitical attitudes** (*pro-European \ pro-Russian; pro-\ contra-NATO*)
- **Regional economic disparities**
- **Historical memory** (*historical heroies; outstanding history.events; post-soviet nostalgia; the famine memory; memory of the WW II..*)



*Ryabchuk, M. (2000, 2003, 2015)*

*D'Anieri, P. (2015).*

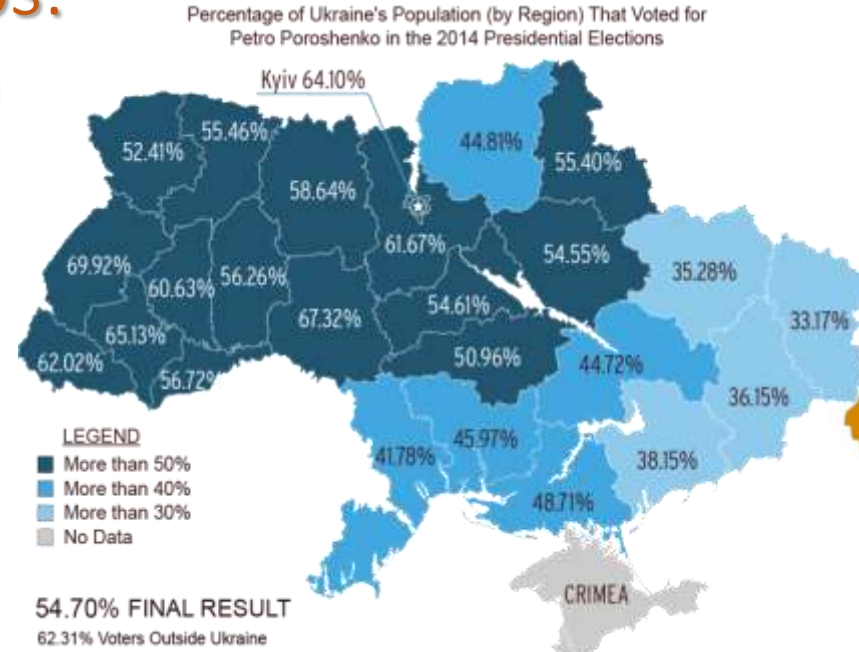
*Shyrokykh, K. (2017)*

*Protsyk, O. (2018)*

# Ukraine electoral maps: from split to cohesion

2004 - 2010 - 2014 - 2019

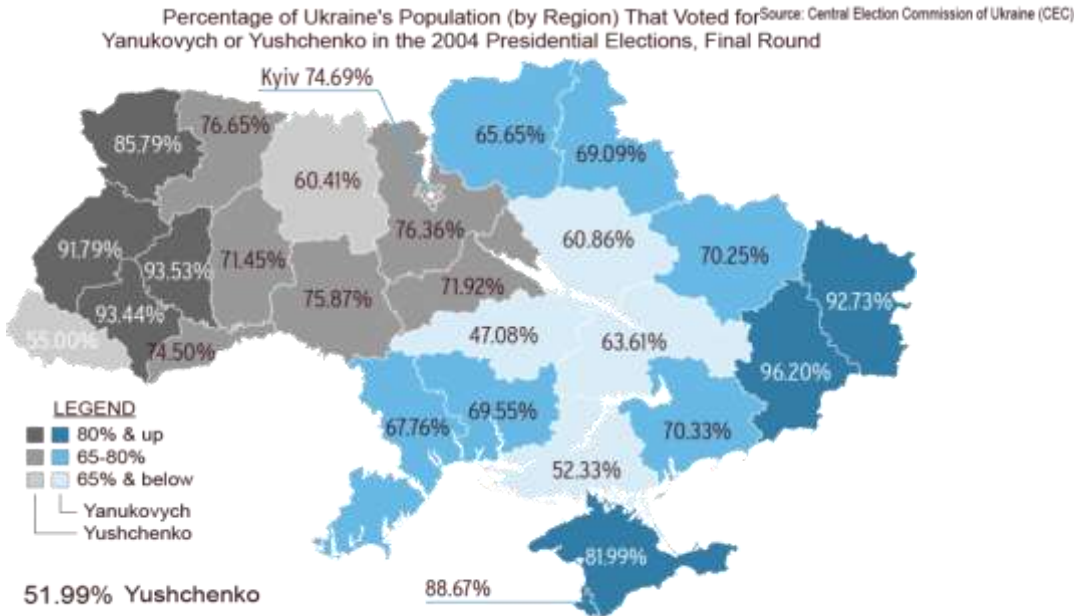
2014



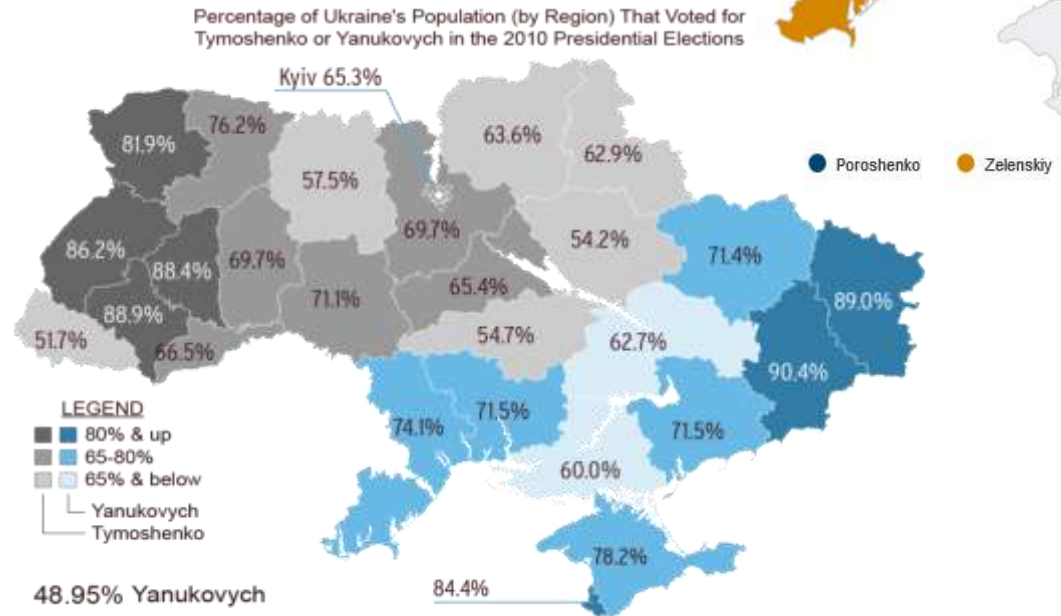
2019



2004



2010



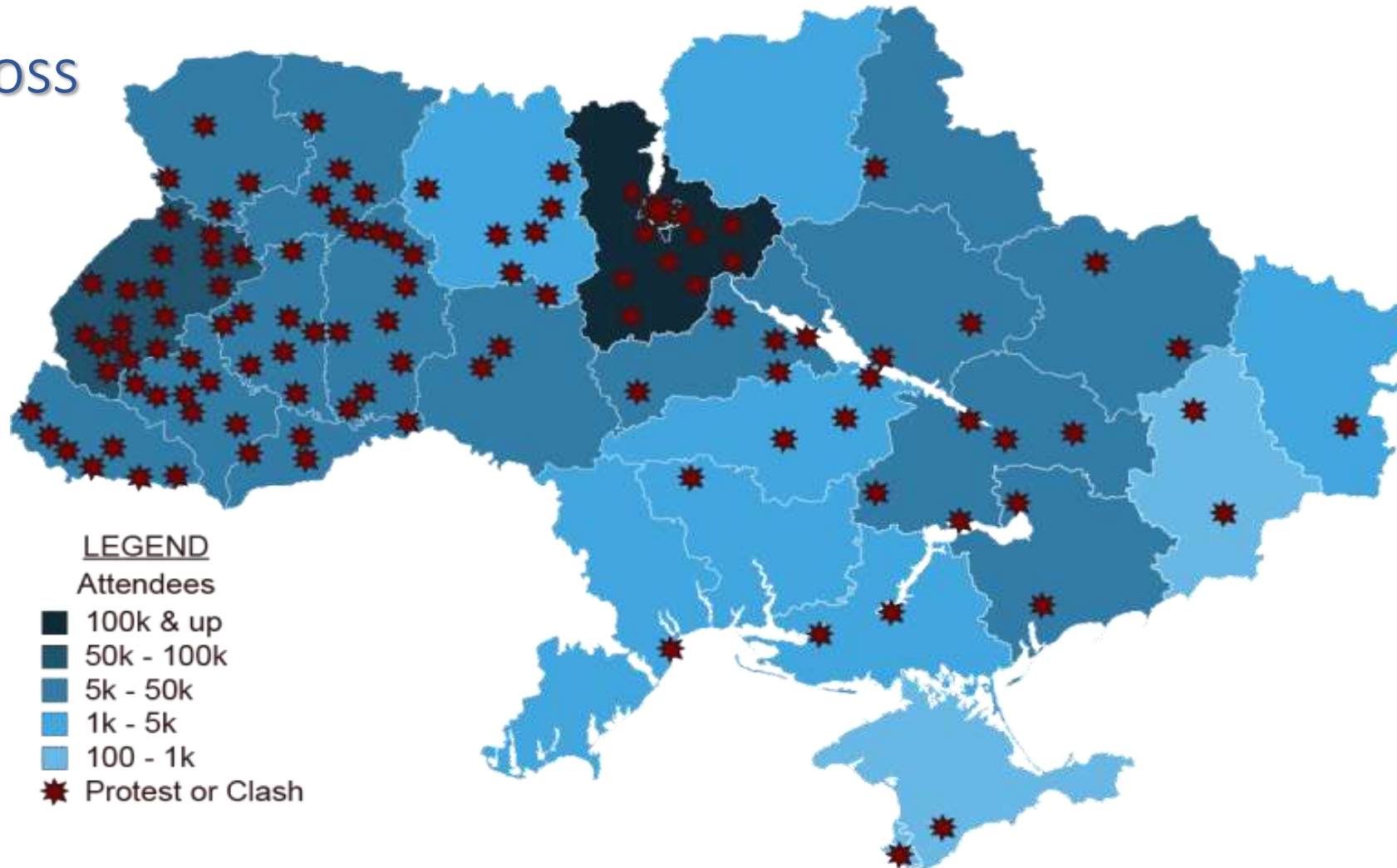
Source: Central Election Commission of Ukraine (CEC)

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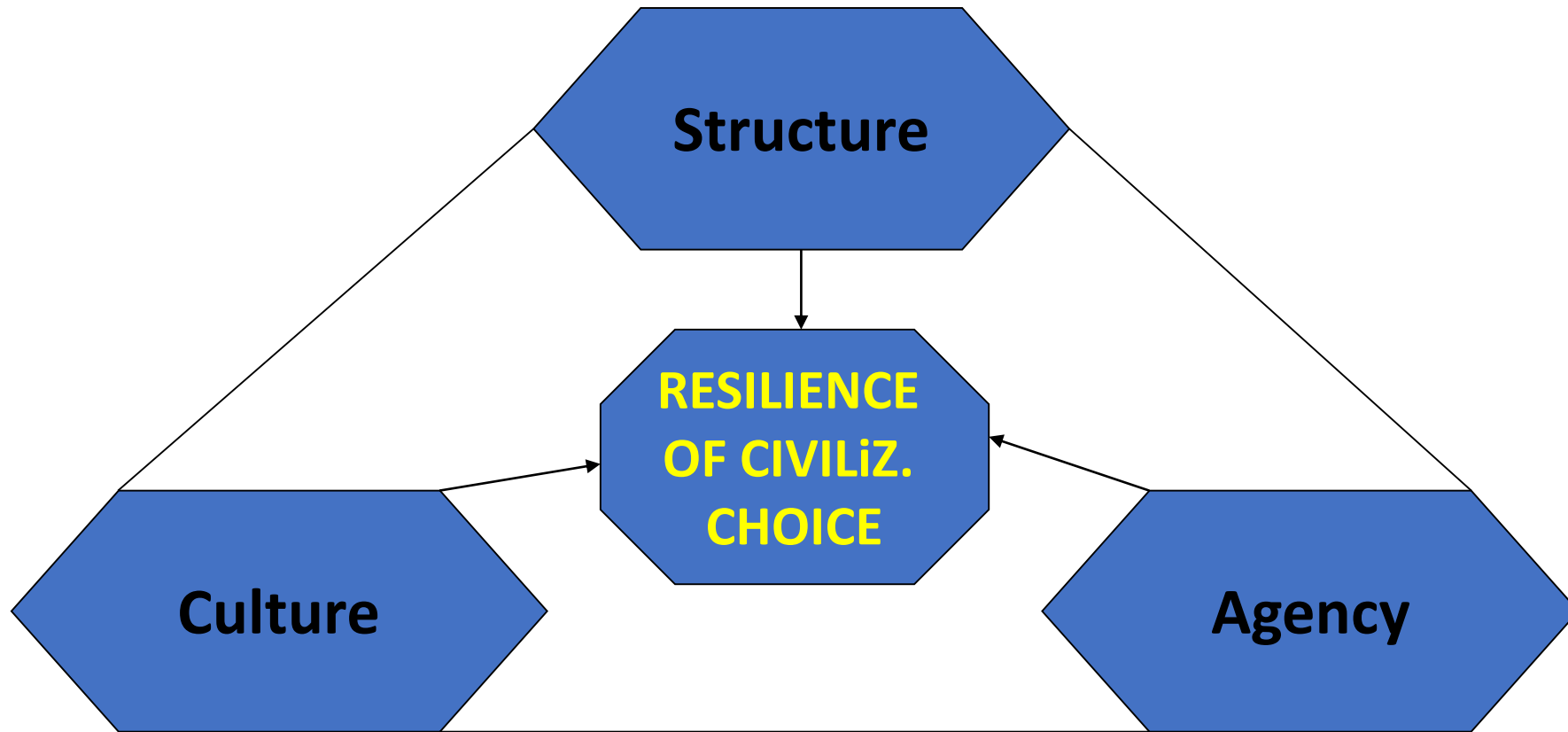
# Power of Freedom: *from a divided society to national cohesion for European civilizational choice*

Euromaidan protests across Ukraine, Nov.2013 – Feb.2014

Euromaidan Protests Across Ukraine  
November 2013 – March 2014



➤ What indicates a society's civilizational choice and its resilience?



Structuration theory (E.Giddens) & Morphogenetic approach (M.Archer):  
*intersection of structures, culture and agency*

## Ukraine's resilience formula:

*or unexpected consequences of the russia's war against Ukrainian*

- a. Reinforcement of national spirit and identity
- b. Rallying around key values, trust and believes: *freedom, democracy, pro-EU and pro-NATO orientations, Ukrainian culture, believe in Victory*
- c. Sense of personal belonging to the national resistance to the enemy (=“russians”), successful coping strategies of personal resilience
- d. Civic activism, affirmation of responsible civil society
- e. Strengthen grass-rooted democracy, legitimacy of political leadership, main institutions and authority

# a. Dynamics of National-Ethnic Self-Identification of the Ukrainians, %

Institute of Sociology National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine's all-national annual surveys, 2002 - 2022



Ukrainian



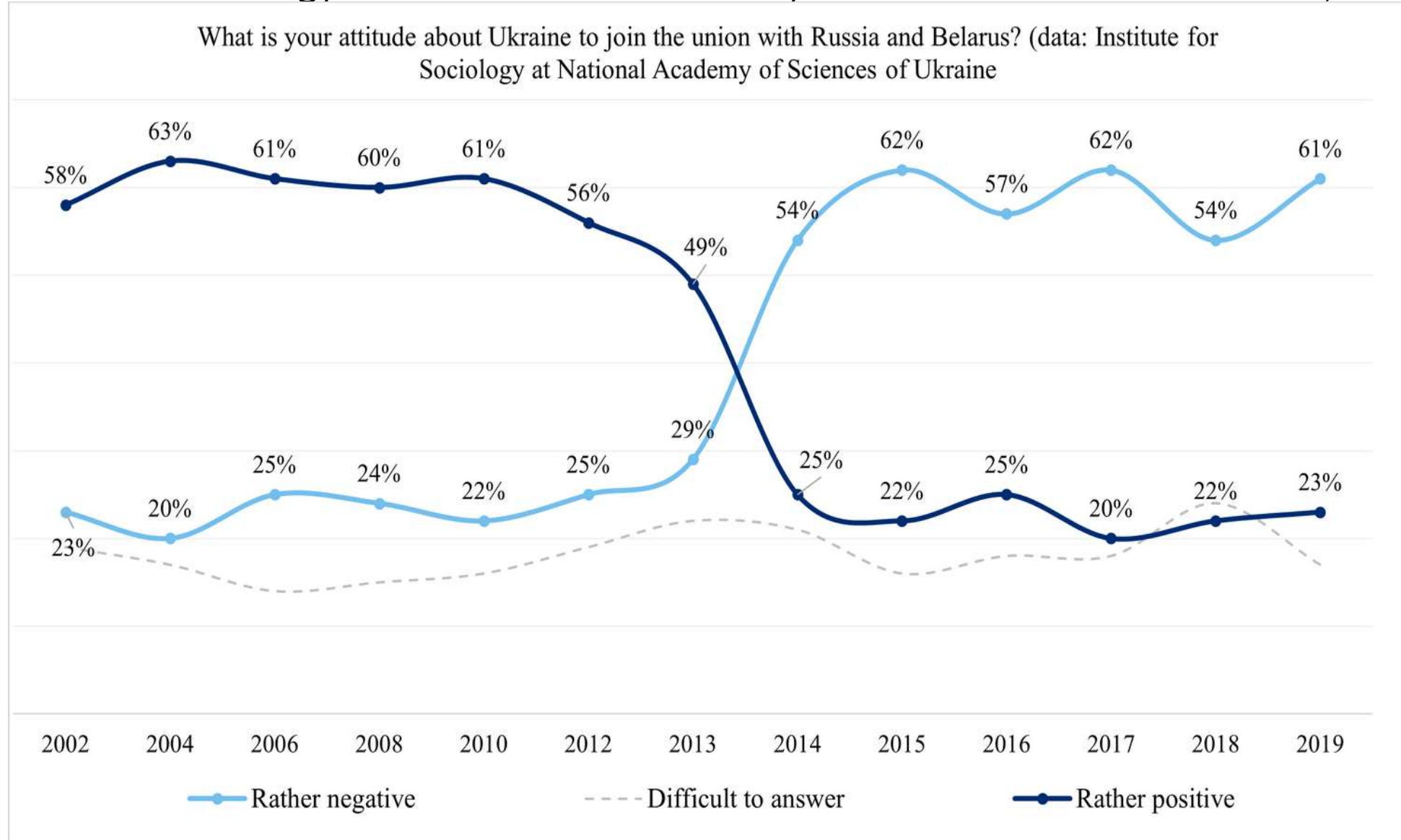
Russian



Other

# b. Geopolitical attitudes

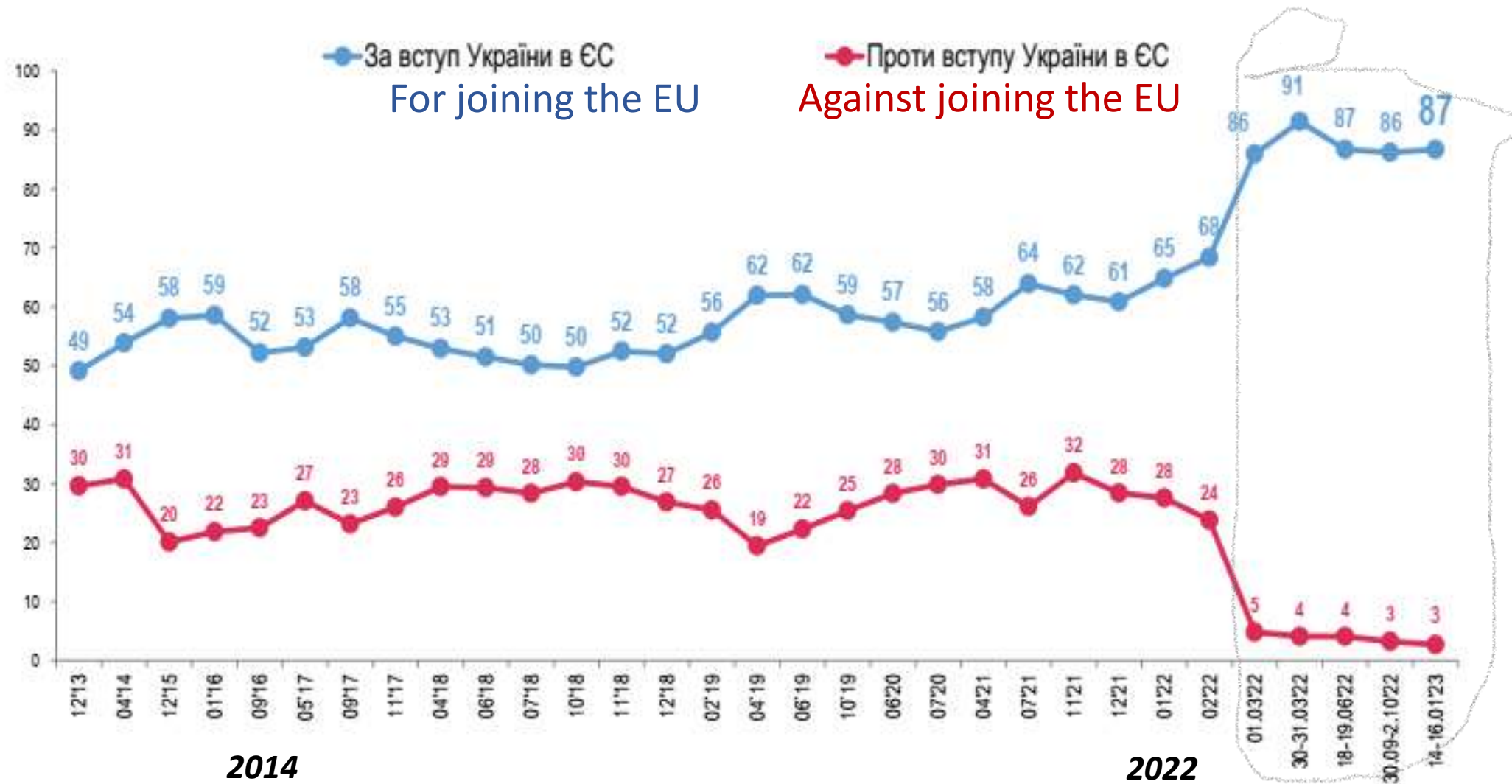
Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Science of Ukraine's data, 2002-2022



Source: <https://isnas.org.ua/en/>

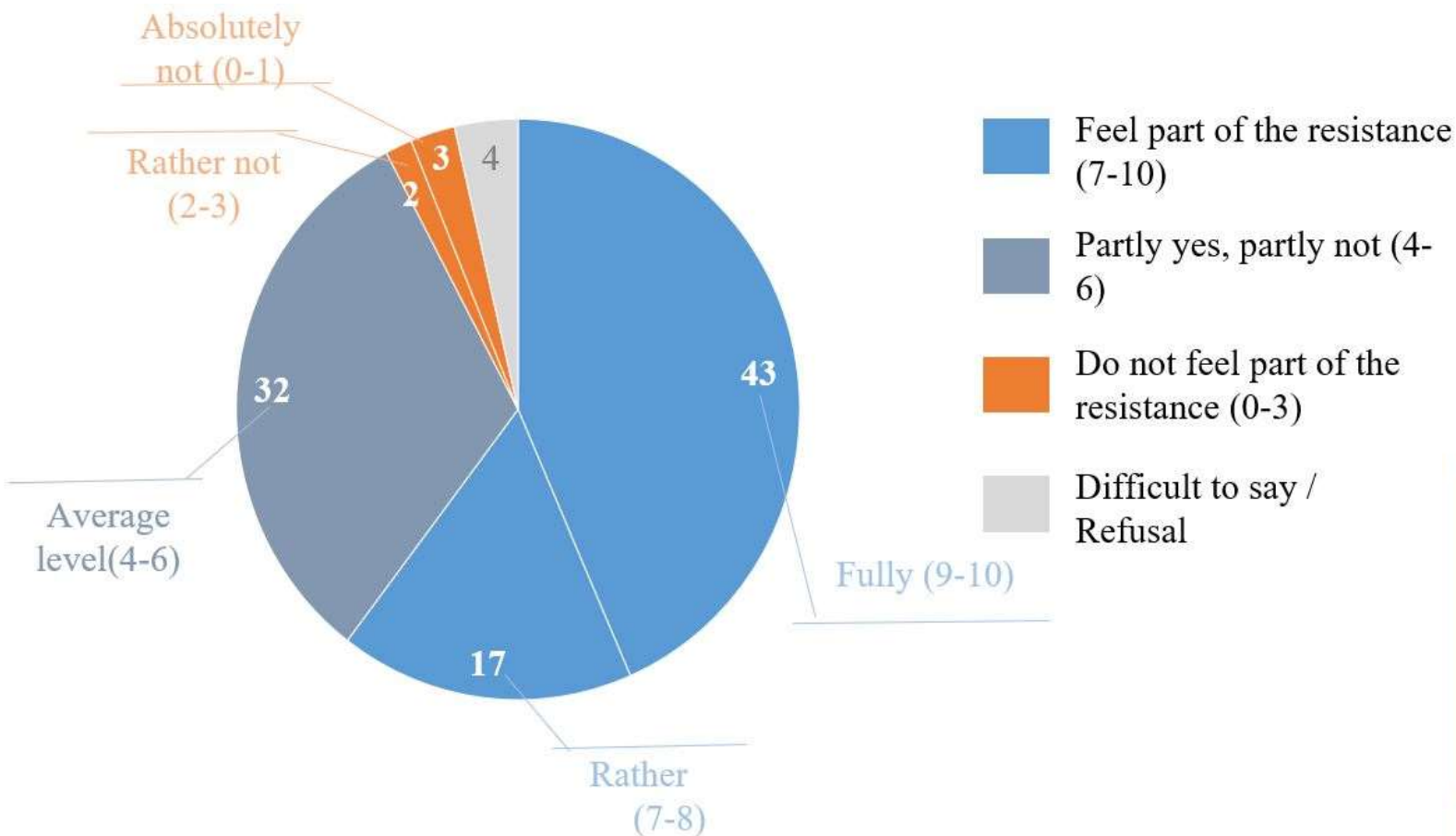


# Support of Ukraine's joining the EU, Sociological Rating Group's data, Dec.2013 – Jan. 2023

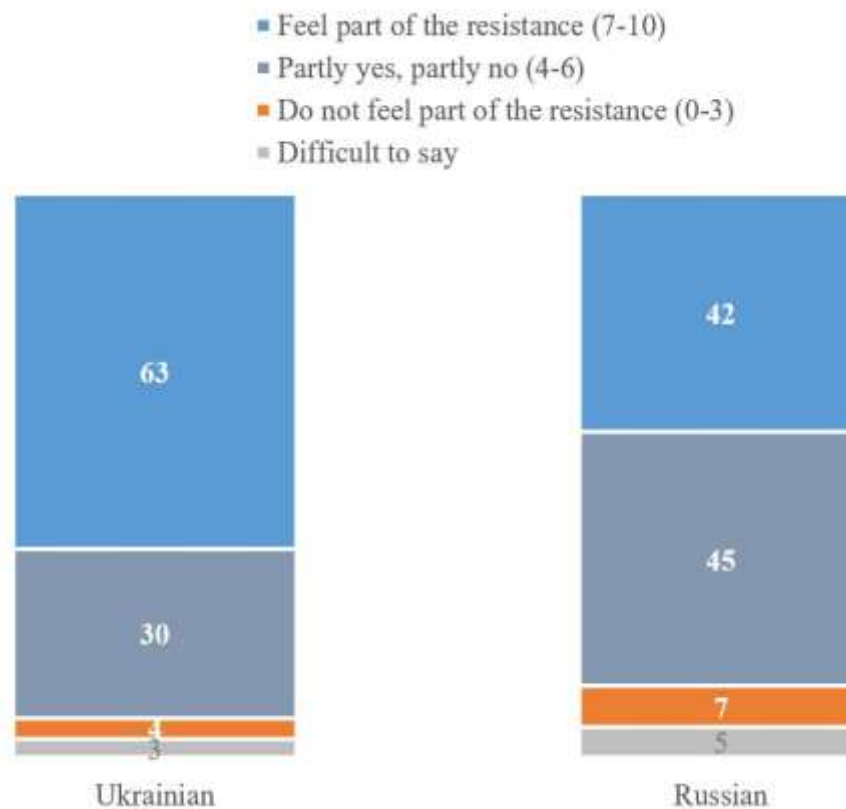


Source: Rating Group, CATI, N=1000, Ukraine

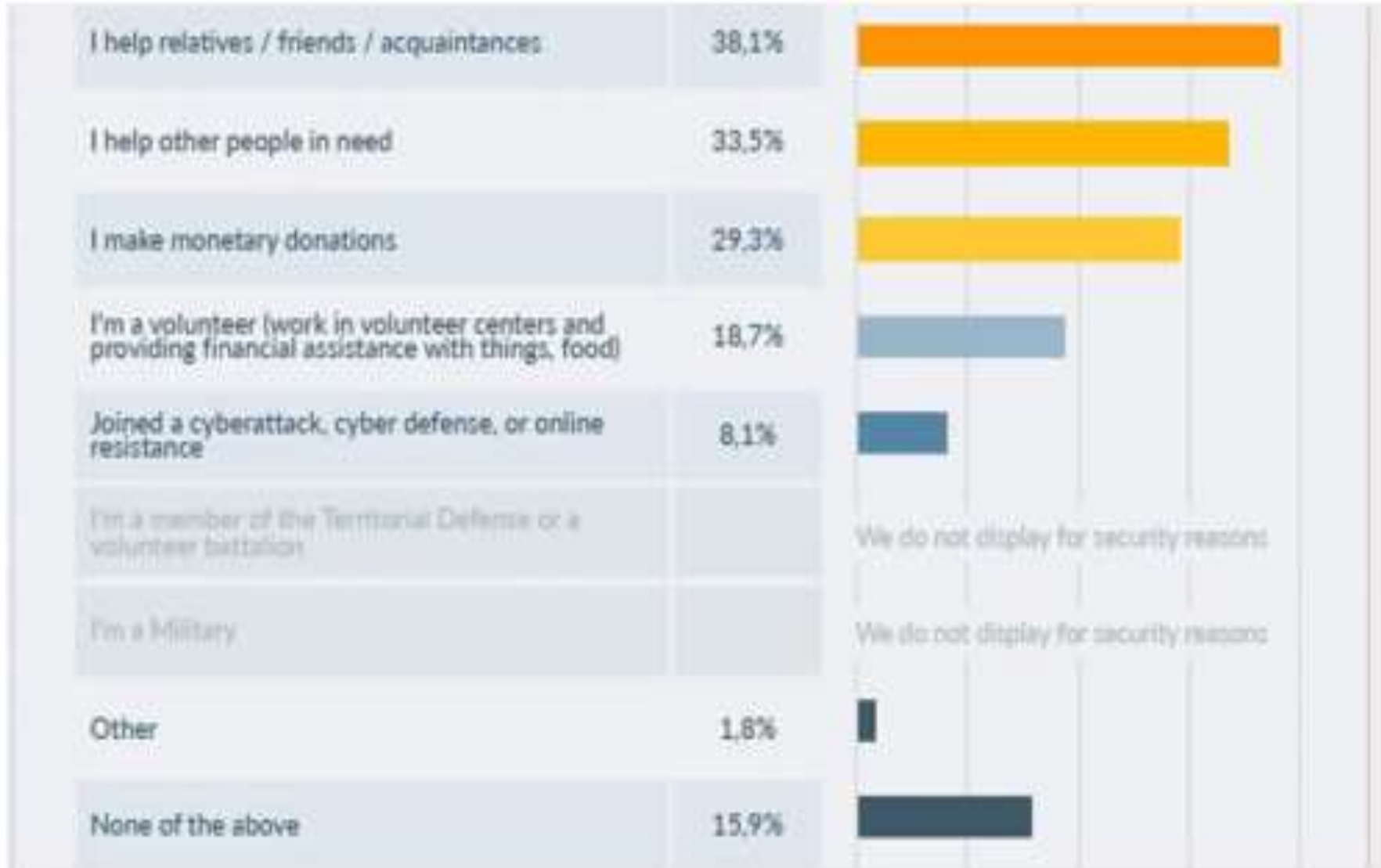
## c. Sense of belonging to the Ukrainian national resistance to the enemy , Kyiv International Institute of Sociology's data, Oct. 21-23, 2022



### Sense of belonging to the national resistance among Ukrainian or Russian speaking respondents



d. Activism: volunteering as mass practices of resistance and a part of national identity, Kyiv International Institute of Sociology's data, Sept. 2022



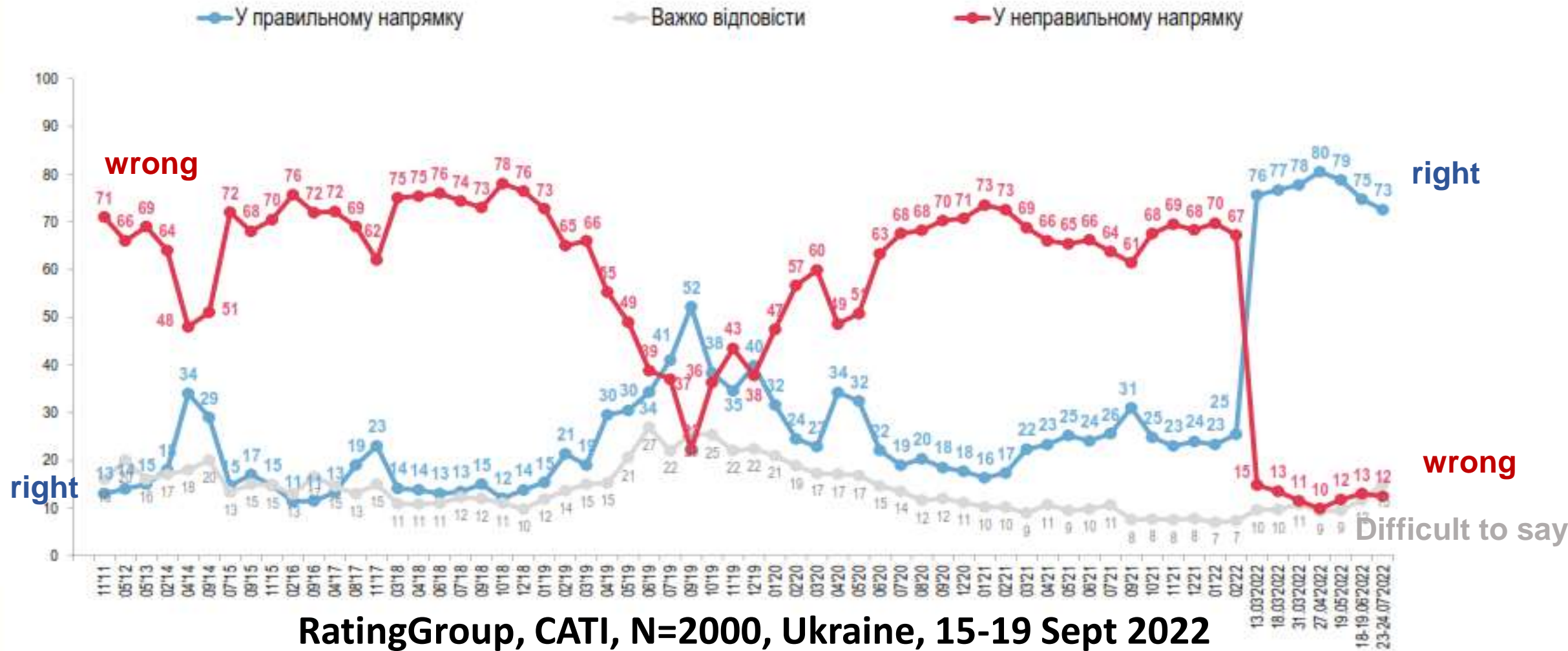
Source: Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, Sept. 2022

How important is it to you that Ukraine becomes a fully functioning democracy? (q12 X Settlement)  
"Very important/important" only



# Paradoxes of public opinion in Ukraine

Як Ви вважаєте, в цілому, справи в Україні йдуть у правильному чи неправильному напрямку?  
 How do you think, are things going right or wrong direction in Ukraine in general?



RatingGroup, CATI, N=2000, Ukraine, 15-19 Sept 2022

# Conclusions:

- For centuries, Ukraine has balanced between two civilizations: European and Eurasian. The struggle for national identity and independence has been the leitmotif of Ukraine's millennium-long history.
- During post-Soviet transformations, through three revolutions and the Russia' war, Ukraine made its civilizational choice in favor of European civilizational prospect
- The Russia's war against Ukraine since 2014 is driven by its neo-imperial ambitions to maintain dominance over Ukraine and to keep it within the realm of Eurasian civilization
- This war has become a catalyst for Ukraine's rational choice of embracing the European civilizational prospect
- The pillar of resilience in this choice is a constellation of:
  - values of European geopolitical choice, freedom and national independence,
  - personal belonging to national resistance force,
  - civil responsibility and activism,
  - trust in key institutions and a positive vision of society's prospects
- The remarkable transformation of Ukrainian society is not only about a transformation of Ukrainian nation. It is also about the extension of European values to the east.

STAND WITH  
UKRAINE

The Ukraine's civilizational track is chosen.  
*But what are the risks of civilizational choice  
and the factors of its resilience after the war?*

Thank you for attention !



*Kharkiv-city: the central square after russi'a missiles attack*

# *Afterward*

“This [war] is about freedom. Freedom for Ukraine, freedom everywhere. It’s about the kind of world we want to live in and the world we want to leave our children”.

*U.S. President Joe Biden, speech in the White House, Jan. 25, 2023*

“This war [in Ukraine] ... is about establishing principles for the twenty-first century. It is about policies of mass death and about the meaning of life in politics. It is about the possibility of a democratic future”

*Timothy Snyder, 2022*

[https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/ukraine-war-democracy-nihilism-timothy-snyder?check\\_logged\\_in=1&utm\\_medium=promo\\_email&utm\\_source=lo\\_flows&utm\\_campaign=registered\\_user\\_welcome&utm\\_term=email\\_1&utm\\_content=20230203](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/ukraine-war-democracy-nihilism-timothy-snyder?check_logged_in=1&utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=lo_flows&utm_campaign=registered_user_welcome&utm_term=email_1&utm_content=20230203)