

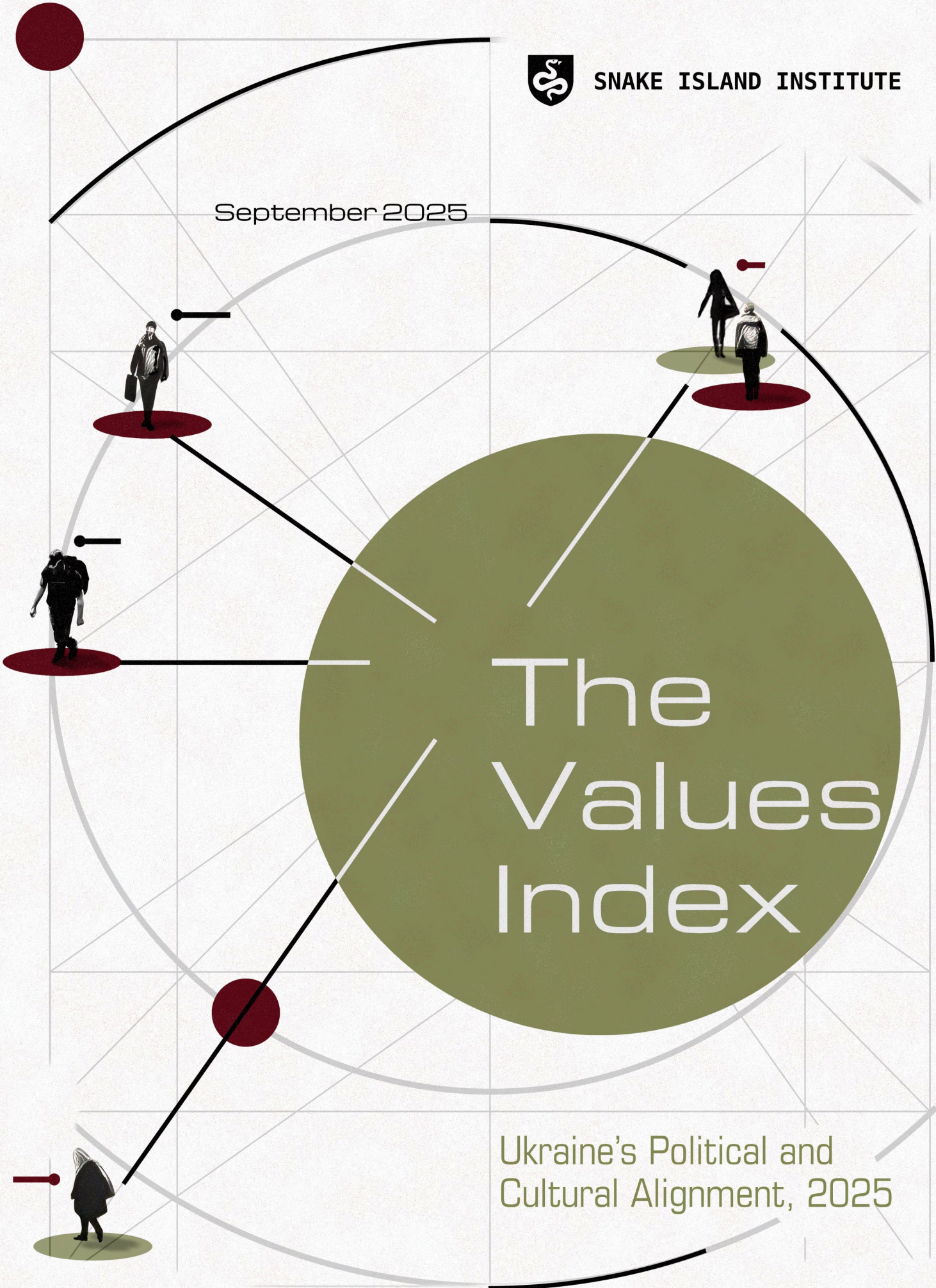


SNAKE ISLAND INSTITUTE

September 2025

# The Values Index

Ukraine's Political and Cultural Alignment, 2025





# Editor's Note

The war in Ukraine has become so thoroughly absorbed into global political frameworks—debates about NATO expansion, military aid packages, the future of Western foreign policy—that we risk forgetting something fundamental: the Ukrainian people are not simply subjects of geopolitical theories. Ukrainians have their own vision of where they belong in the world, their own internal contradictions, aspirations, and ideologies that may not map neatly onto outsider's assumptions.

When people talk about Ukraine in Washington or Brussels, they often project their own ideological categories onto Ukrainian society, or their own political narratives. There are assumptions that a country moving towards integration with European frameworks must therefore embrace every aspect of contemporary Western progressivism. Or conversely, that any deviation from the Western “norm” signals a democratic backsliding.

The data in this report reveals a society that may not fit comfortably into familiar political boxes.

Perhaps the most striking, and, in my opinion, beautiful find here is the relationship between Ukrainian patriotism and democratic institutions. National pride translates into demands for effective governance and institutional accountability. Love of country manifests as intolerance for corruption and insistence on the rule of law.

I hope that in reading this report, we can understand Ukraine with a fresh perspective, untouched by the last three years of political infighting that has turned the war into a partisan issue worldwide. Perhaps we can open up a conversation and understand Ukraine not as a symbol in political debates, but for the country that it is and the values that it has forged through the most difficult circumstances imaginable.

Catarina Buchatskiy

Director of Analytics



**SNAKE ISLAND INSTITUTE**

The Snake Island Institute is an independent defense analytics and coordination center established to strengthen the strategic partnership between Ukraine and its western allies in the security sector through:



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## Introduction

Ukraine has historically stood at the crossroads of diverse political and cultural influences, striving to preserve and affirm its national identity. Over three decades of independence, a set of widely shared views has gradually emerged within society regarding the kind of state, its core values, and the desired direction of development. This study analyzes public attitudes in Ukraine in 2025, based on a representative survey of 1,233 adult respondents. The findings reveal a society that combines respect for tradition with an aspiration for modern standards of governance—emphasizing efficiency, accountability, and justice.

Ukrainians demonstrate robust support for constitutional democracy and the rule of law, yet express overwhelming demand for stricter law enforcement and more effective state institutions. They exhibit deep attachment to their cultural values while supporting market-oriented economic policies and individual rights. They exhibit strong cultural conservatism and attachment to traditional family structures, while maintaining relatively pragmatic attitudes toward social change and minority rights. Most significantly, they show a clear preference for Western integration while insisting on preserving their national character and sovereignty.

The study captures a political culture that reflects Ukraine's gradual move beyond its Soviet legacy and post-independence oligarchic structures, toward a model emphasizing performance-based legitimacy. Citizens grant trust to institutions based on their demonstrated effectiveness rather than ideological alignment or traditional authority. This pragmatic approach to governance creates a political system oriented toward results while maintaining democratic oversight mechanisms.

Ukrainian national identity has consolidated around civic rather than ethnic nationalism, with nearly 69% of

respondents identifying primarily as “citizens of Ukraine” and over 81% expressing pride in their citizenship. This represents one of the highest levels of national identification in Europe and suggests a successful transition from post-Soviet fragmentation to coherent statehood. The attachment extends beyond symbolic patriotism to active civic engagement, indicating a mature democratic political culture.

The research also illuminates Ukrainian attitudes toward law and order, which prioritize visible justice and institutional accountability over either permissive liberalism or authoritarian control. Citizens demand both constitutional constraints on power and effective enforcement of laws—a combination that challenges assumptions about trade-offs between freedom and security in democratic systems.

Understanding contemporary Ukrainian values provides crucial insights into how societies navigate the current global ideological competition. Ukraine represents neither pure Western liberalism nor authoritarian populism, but rather a synthesis that prioritizes democratic effectiveness within a framework of cultural continuity. This model may prove influential for other nations seeking to modernize while preserving their distinctive characteristics.

These findings document a society that has chosen its geopolitical orientation not through external pressure but through the formation of internal values. Ukraine's alignment with democratic institutions reflects genuine popular preferences rather than elite imposition, creating a foundation for sustained commitment to this path regardless of short-term political changes. For scholars of comparative politics and international relations, Ukraine offers a window into how ideological preferences shape geopolitical choices in an era of renewed great power competition.

## Methodology

This study aims to generate empirical data on value orientations and social attitudes among Ukrainians. The results are presented alongside Snake Island Institute's independent analysis to contextualize findings within broader national and international trends.

The data were collected in August 2025 via a computer-assisted web interview (CAWI) survey administered by the Ukrainian sociology firm 4Service. This method ensured quality control in responses, a uniform selection process across socio-demographic groups, and a wide geographical reach.

## Sample and Geography

- **Sample size:** 1,233 respondents
- **Population:** Adult residents of Ukraine (18+) excluding temporarily occupied territories
- **Sampling method:** Quota sampling, balanced by gender, age, region, and type of settlement (urban/rural)
- **Representativeness:** The sample reflects the demographic structure of Ukraine's adult population, making it possible to generalize the findings.

## Statistical Reliability

The sample size provides a **confidence interval of  $\pm 3\%$  at the 95% confidence level**, consistent with international standards in sociological research. This ensures reliability both for nationwide trends and for subgroup comparisons (e.g., by region, gender, or age cohort).

## Ethical Standards

The survey was conducted in line with international sociological ethics (ESOMAR, WAPOR). Participation was voluntary, and all responses were anonymous.

## Analytical Approach

While the survey provides the primary dataset, this paper goes beyond simple reporting of results. Snake Island Institute applies an **interpretive analytical framework**, drawing on:

- Comparative benchmarks with international polling and existing sociological literature.
- Contextual analysis linking survey findings to battlefield dynamics, institutional reforms, and Ukraine's integration into Western security architecture.

By combining robust survey data with applied analysis, the methodology ensures both empirical grounding and policy relevance. All graphs used are from SII's survey unless indicated otherwise.



## Core Values in Daily Life

Ukrainians' core values have been forged through long periods of foreign domination, wars, and repeated struggles for independence. These experiences cultivated both deep resilience and a deep respect for freedom; since independence in 1991, surveys consistently show that Ukrainians place the greatest importance on a cluster of values centered on family, dignity, solidarity, and personal freedom. Rooted in tradition, these values have been reshaped and intensified by the demands of wartime life. In moments of crisis, they guide not only individual choices but also collective decisions essential for national survival.

Our survey reveals a clear hierarchy of values—health dominates, followed by material well-being, children, a happy family, and security and confidence in the future. This ranking reflects the concrete needs of a society under existential threat; the primacy of health and security makes immediate sense during wartime, but the emphasis on material well-being reveals a deeper tension. While 60.1% identify material prosperity as a core value, only 5.1% of respondents report having sufficient resources to meet all needs and save. There is a gap between aspiration and reality, highlighting financial insecurity as a key social challenge.

What Ukrainians prioritize less reveals as much as what they emphasize most. Personal relationships (28.1%),

enjoyable leisure (26.4%), creative or professional self-realization (24.1%), good and reliable friends (23.8%), and being useful to society (23.2%) rank significantly lower than security-oriented values—as seen in Figure 1.

From a broader comparative perspective, these findings can be interpreted through the World Values Survey framework and its Cultural Map of the World, which positions societies along two main axes:

- traditional vs. secular-rational values
- survival vs. self-expression values.

Historically, Ukraine has occupied an intermediate position on both dimensions—maintaining strong family and community orientations typical of traditional societies, while gradually moving toward more secular and self-expression values. Between 2011 and 2023, Ukraine's trajectory showed a slow but steady shift toward self-expression, similar to other post-Soviet states, though more gradual than in Central European countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, or Hungary. Modernization, economic growth, and political stability tend to foster this shift: as material security improves, societies become less bound by survival concerns and more focused on autonomy, tolerance, and democratic participation.<sup>1</sup>

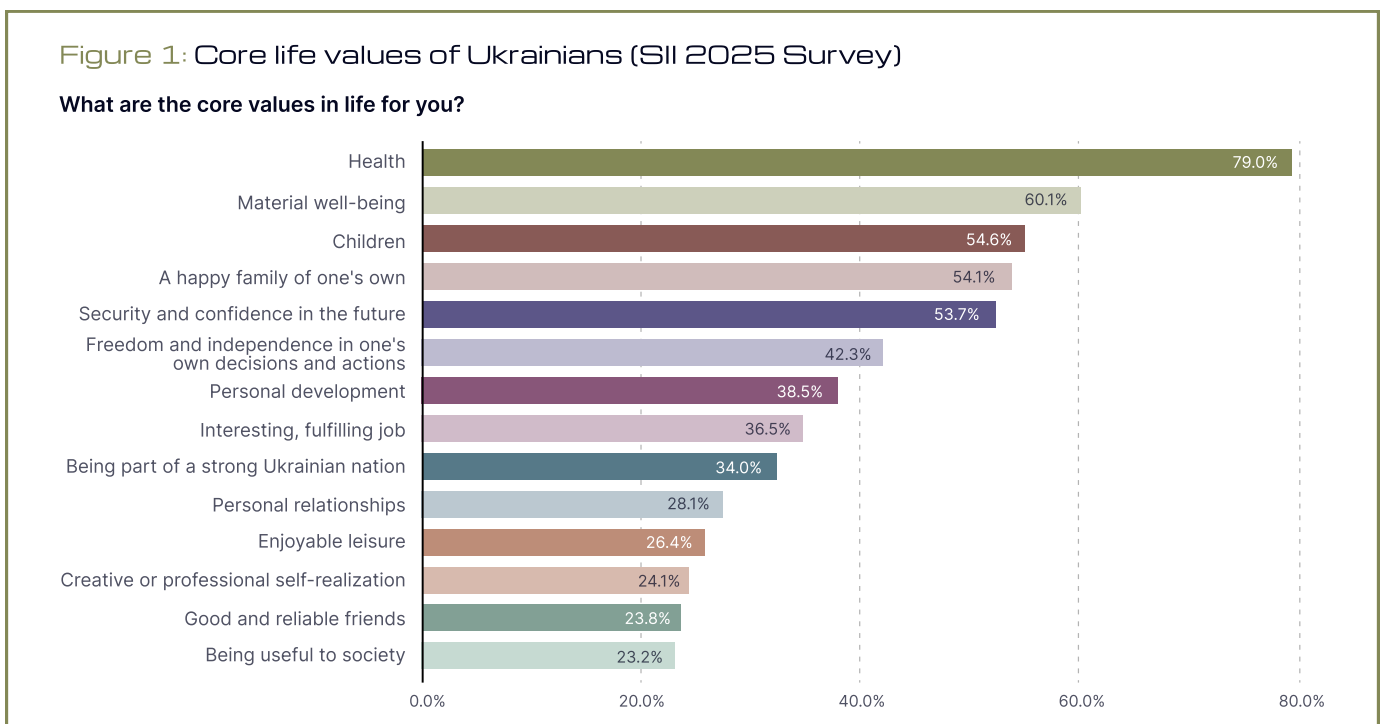




Figure 2: The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map (World Values Survey 2023).<sup>2</sup>

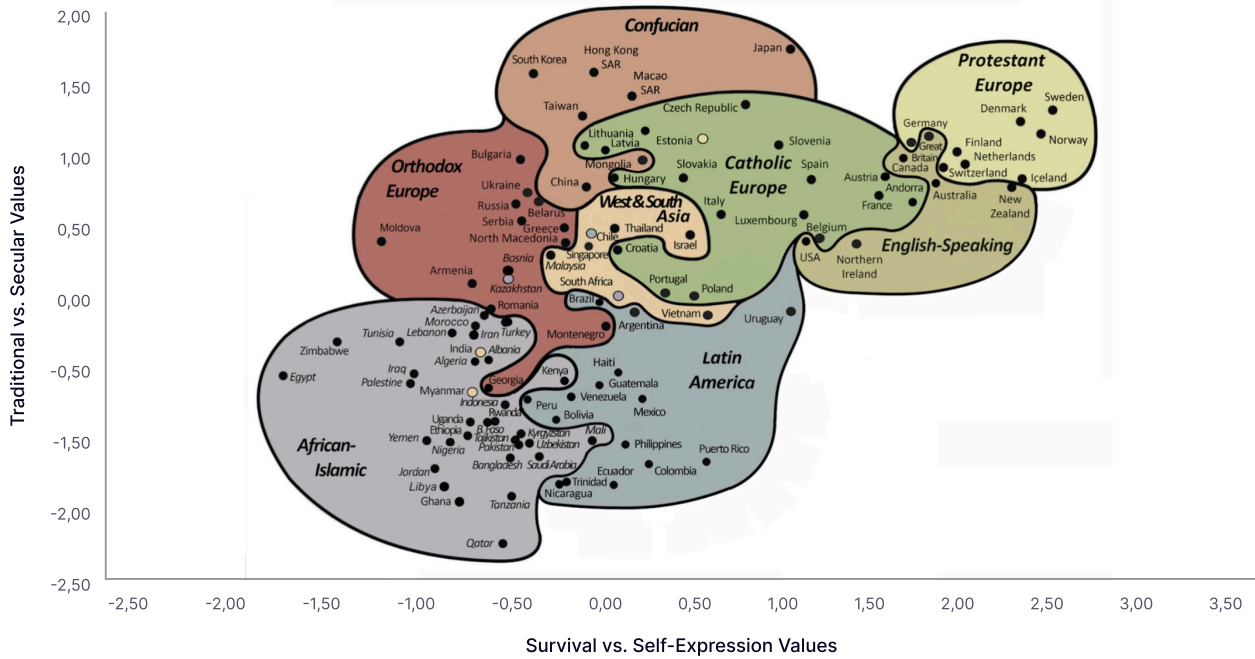
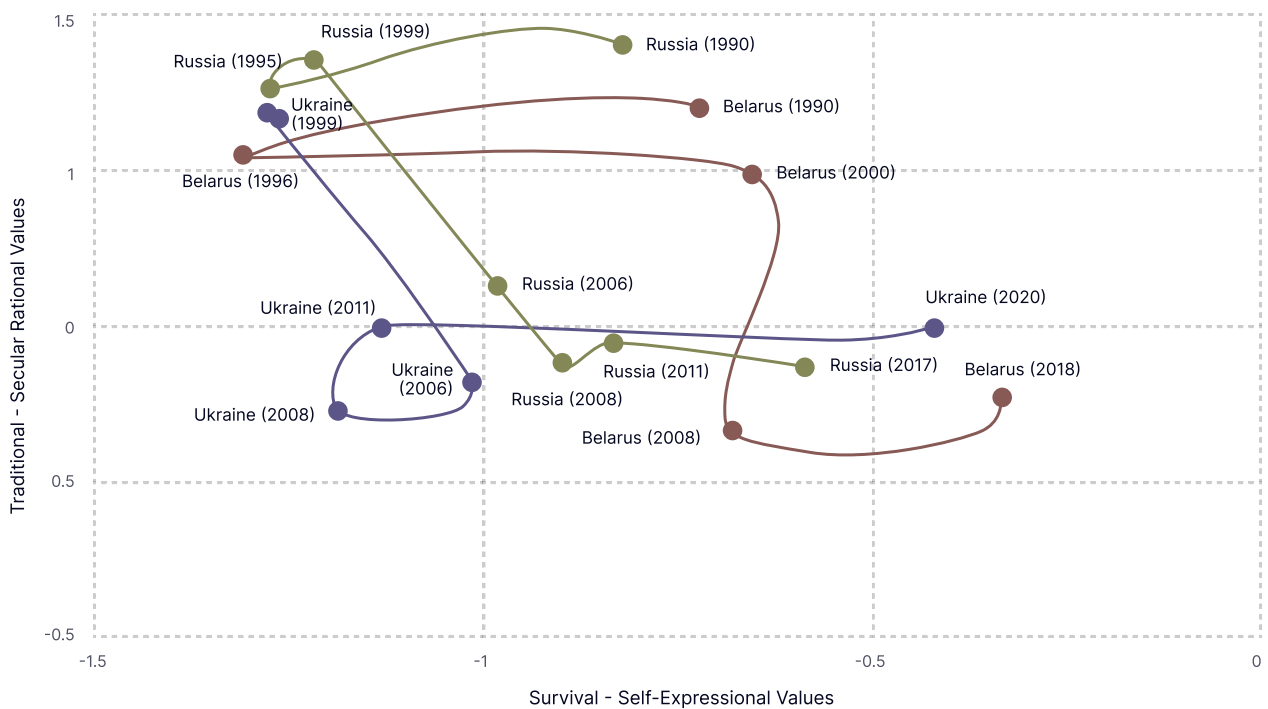


Figure 3: Values dynamic in Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus (World Values Survey: 1995-2020).<sup>3</sup>



1. Ukrainian Centre for European Policy, World Value Survey 2020 in Ukraine, 2020. [https://ucep.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WVS-UA\\_2020\\_report\\_WEB.pdf](https://ucep.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WVS-UA_2020_report_WEB.pdf)  
 2. World Values Survey. "WVS Cultural Map: 2023 Version Released," February 13, 2023. <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSNewsShow.jsp?ID=467>  
 3. Ukrainian Centre for European Policy, World Value Survey 2020 in Ukraine, 2020. [https://ucep.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WVS-UA\\_2020\\_report\\_WEB.pdf](https://ucep.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WVS-UA_2020_report_WEB.pdf)



In Ukraine, this long-term evolution has been interrupted and redefined by war. During the 2017–2020 WVS wave, respondents were asked to choose between freedom and security as competing priorities: security prevailed (65.9%), while freedom was chosen by 29.5%.<sup>4</sup> In the 2025 SII survey, participants could identify multiple core values, revealing a more complex balance—security remains central (53.7%), but freedom has risen sharply (42.3%). This methodological difference matters: the two are not seen as mutually exclusive, but as complementary foundations of a resilient society. According to a study by the Razumkov Center in 2024, 47%, choosing between freedom and material prosperity, prefer freedom (and only 24% prefer material prosperity).<sup>5</sup> The fight for freedom has become equal to defending existence itself. Rather than signaling regression toward survival values, this convergence of freedom and security reflects a society that fights not only to endure but to live on its own terms.

Although the WVS model often links rising patriotism with traditional orientations, in post-colonial contexts such as Ukraine, it more accurately reflects processes of civic solidarity rather than a revival of authoritarian traditionalism. Between 2011 and 2020, the share of citizens proud of their Ukrainian citizenship rose from 67% to 82%, and those willing to defend their country increased from 40% to nearly 57%, which, for example, is 9% higher than in Germany during the same period.

Overall, these figures were close to the EU average, signaling the emergence of a broad civic form of patriotism grounded in shared responsibility rather than imposed conformity.<sup>6</sup>

According to the SII Survey, in 2025, Ukrainians demonstrate one of the highest levels of national pride in Europe: 81.0% of respondents are proud to be Ukrainian citizens, while 30.2% are willing to join the army and defend their country. It is important to note that only 2% of the respondents were military personnel, so these numbers should be considered in the context of the ongoing war, given that those already serving are not included in this count. At the same time, the results show that only 34% of respondents name being part of a strong Ukrainian nation as a core value, and just 23% highlight being useful to society. It reflects wartime priorities, where survival, mutual aid, and close family ties temporarily outweigh more abstract civic ideals.

At first glance, Ukraine's position on the cultural map remains close to that of other post-Soviet countries. The emphasis on security, order, and social cohesion reflects both incomplete transformation and a natural response to existential threat. However, a closer look reveals signs of bigger changes, such as a strong focus on freedom and civic responsibility.

## The Religious Framework

Ukraine remains a society with a high level of religious self-identification: according to SII data, 63% of citizens consider themselves believers. Yet practical religiosity is much more selective—only 17% attend services more than once a month, while 37.3% do so just a few times

a year. For most Ukrainians, religion functions primarily as a source of meaning and moral reference points, rather than as a mechanism of behavioral regulation or a fully structured worldview.

4. Ibid.

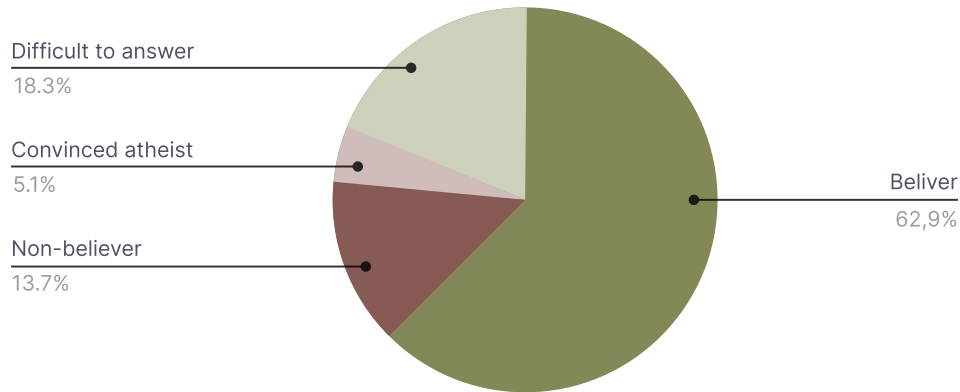
5. Razumkov Centre. "Ukrainian Citizens' Identity: Tendencies of Changes (June 2024)," July 24, 2024. <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/identychnist-gromadian-ukrainy-tendentsii-zmin-cherven-2024/>.

6. Info Sapiens. "The Results of the 7th Wave of the World Value Index in Ukraine," October 29, 2020. [https://www.sapiens.com.ua/publications/socpol-research/140/Presentation\\_WVS\\_UA\\_2020\\_27\\_10\\_all.pdf](https://www.sapiens.com.ua/publications/socpol-research/140/Presentation_WVS_UA_2020_27_10_all.pdf)



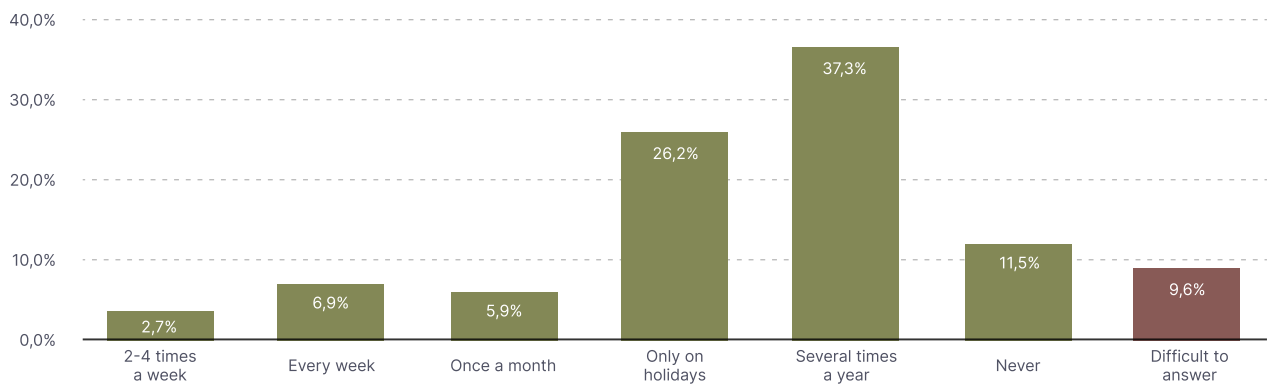
**Figure 4:** Religious self-identification of Ukrainians (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

Regardless of whether you attend church or not, would you say that you are...?



**Figure 5:** Frequency of attendance at places of worship in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

How often do you attend a place of worship (church, mosque, synagogue, temple, chapel, synagogue, church)?

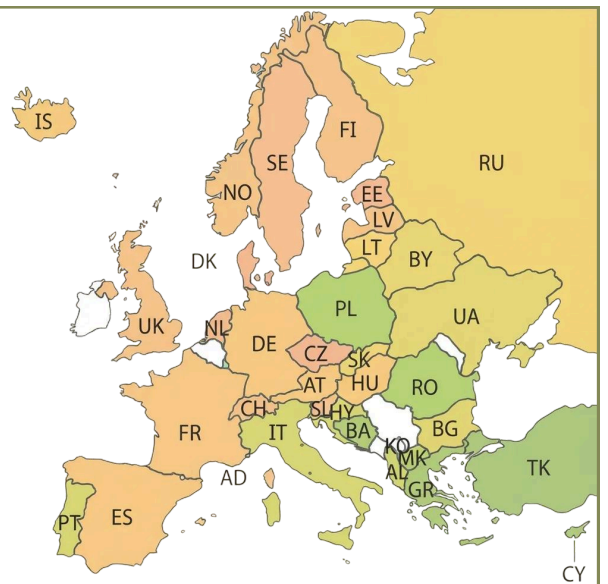
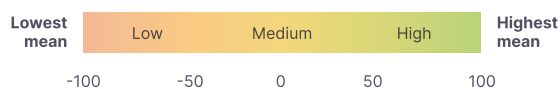


**Figure 6:** Indicator of the importance of religion in life in Europe (World Values Survey; 2017-2020).

### Important in life: Religion

Indicators:

- [+] – very important,
- [-] – rather important;
- not very important,
- not at all important.





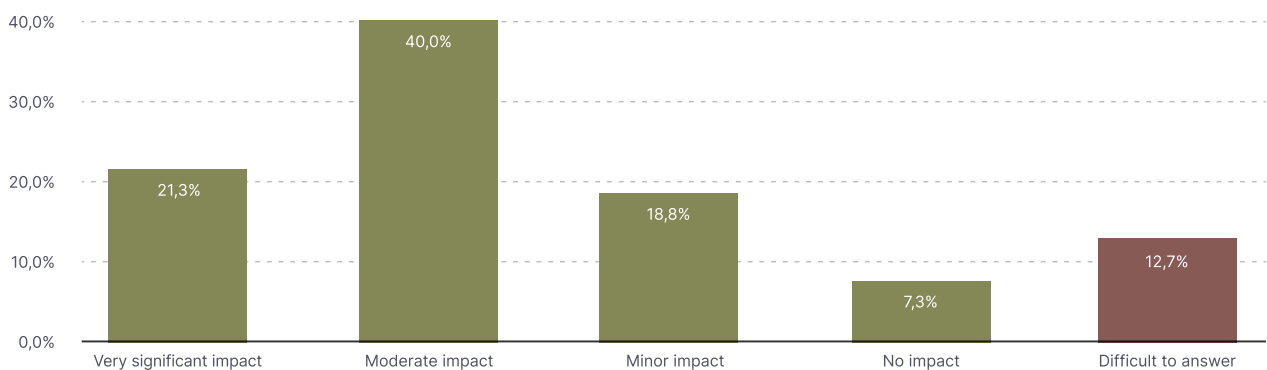
Compared with European contexts, Ukraine occupies a middle position: according to the 2020 WVS importance-of-religion index, it scores 17, higher than secular countries like France (-25) and Germany (-23), and higher than post-Soviet Russia (2), but lower than traditionally religious societies such as Poland (57).<sup>7</sup>

While the share of Ukrainians who considered religion important declined from 64% in 2011 to 56.3% in 2020,<sup>8</sup> the SII 2025 data show that religious institutions continue to carry moral weight: **61.3% of respondents believe they influence spiritual and ethical values, and 31.9% regularly take religious beliefs into account when making important decisions.** Wartime conditions appear to strengthen this moral and social role, as many turn to religious communities for emotional continuity and support.

Although many Ukrainians view religion as a moral resource, they remain wary of its political role. In our survey, 40% say religion has some political influence. This sensitivity stems partly from the long-standing use of Moscow-affiliated Orthodox structures as channels of Russian political influence in Ukraine. This context helps explain why KIIS data show strong public support for restricting religious organizations perceived as linked to Russia.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, skepticism toward clerical political engagement is longstanding: according to the ISSP 2008 study, 54% completely and another 24% partly agree that religious leaders should not influence how citizens vote.<sup>10</sup>

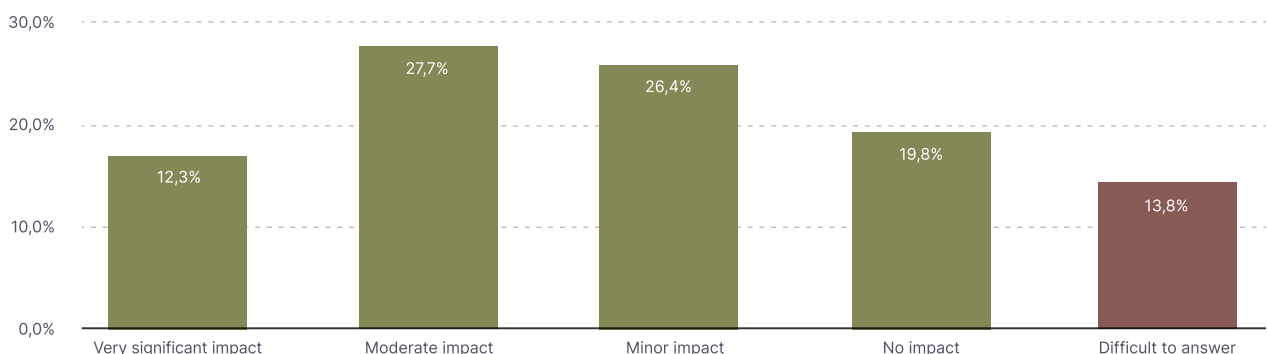
**Figure 7:** Perceived influence of religious organizations on spiritual and moral guidance in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**In your opinion, what influence do religious organizations have in Ukraine on spiritual and moral guidance?**



**Figure 8:** Perceived influence of religious organizations on political processes in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**In your opinion, what influence do religious organizations have in Ukraine on political processes?**





Significant regional contrasts also shape the landscape of Ukrainian religiosity. In Western Ukraine, 30.3% of respondents of the SII Survey consider religious influence on moral values “very important,” compared to only 14.9% in the East. The proportion of those who identify as believers is likewise highest in the West (76.3%), while other regions show considerably lower levels (57% in the Centre, 61% in the South, 64.7% in the East).

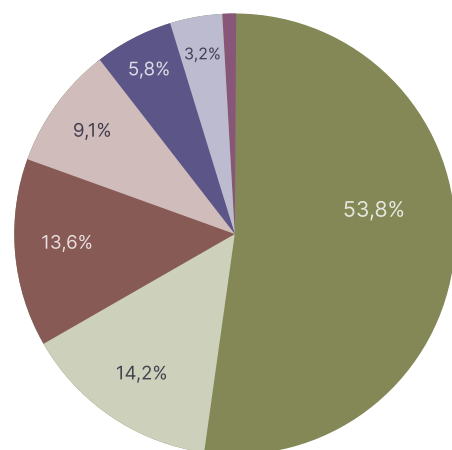
These differences align closely with denominational patterns. In the western regions, 28.9% of the population is Greek Catholics, while elsewhere their share does not exceed 1%.

Where the Greek Catholic Church is historically rooted, religion plays a visibly stronger role in shaping moral and social orientations. Survey data from the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (2013) confirm this: about 30% of Greek Catholics include religious norms among key decision-making criteria (vs. 19% among believers overall), and around 9% consider the views of spiritual leaders (vs. about 4%).<sup>11</sup> This pattern is reinforced by Western Ukraine’s comparatively limited exposure to Soviet atheization, which helped preserve stronger religious continuity. SII Survey shows that nationwide, **Ukraine remains predominantly Orthodox, with Greek Catholics at 4.5% and other denominations at 5.6%.**

**Figure 9:** Religious denomination affiliation of Ukrainians (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

Please indicate which denomination/church you belong to.

- Orthodox Church (including all patriarchates)
- Believer, but not affiliated with any denomination
- Non-believer / atheist
- Difficult to answer
- Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
- Other denomination
- Roman Catholic Church



7. World Values Survey, World Values Survey Wave 7 (2017–2022), Q6 “Important in Life: Religion”, <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>

8. Info Sapiens. “The Results of the 7th Wave of the World Value Index in Ukraine,” October 29, 2020. [https://www.sapiens.com.ua/publications/socpol-research/140/Presentation\\_WVS-UA\\_2020\\_27\\_10\\_all.pdf](https://www.sapiens.com.ua/publications/socpol-research/140/Presentation_WVS-UA_2020_27_10_all.pdf)

9. Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. Government Policy Regarding the UOC (MP). Kyiv: KIIS, May 7, 2024. <https://kiis.com.ua/?cat=reports&id=1404&lang=eng&page=1>

10. Institute of Politics and the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Religion and Religiosity in Ukraine. Kyiv: Institute of Politics; Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2009. PDF file. [https://polityka.in.ua/userfiles/religiya\\_i\\_religijynist\\_v\\_Ukraini\\_2008.pdf](https://polityka.in.ua/userfiles/religiya_i_religijynist_v_Ukraini_2008.pdf)

11. Parashchevin, Maksym. Religion in Ukraine: The Trajectory of Institutional Change. Kyiv: Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2017. PDF file. <https://i-soc.com.ua/assets/files/book/parashhevin/parashkevich-v5.pdf>



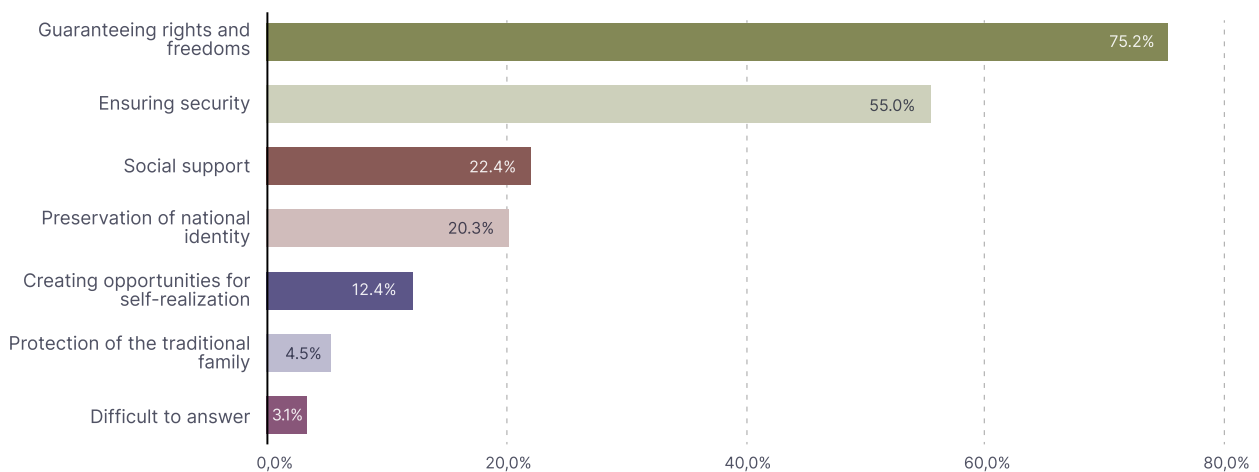
## Roles of the State

Ukraine shows a distinct view of state power that links wartime effectiveness to democratic accountability. When asked what the state is for in wartime, Ukrainians do not describe an all-powerful authority, but an institution that should protect citizens, operate within the law, and concentrate limited resources on priority tasks. In a question about the state's main purpose, **75.2% of respondents name guaranteeing rights and freedoms, and 55.0% emphasize ensuring security.**

Only 1.1% support a model in which the state “decides everything for the individual.” Instead, 40.1% want the state to establish laws and protect citizens, and 34.7% want it to actively assist, but not control. Asked about desirable qualities in Ukraine's leadership, nearly six out of ten now point to a leader **“focused on human rights and accountability”**, while almost one in four favour a **“strong leader.”**

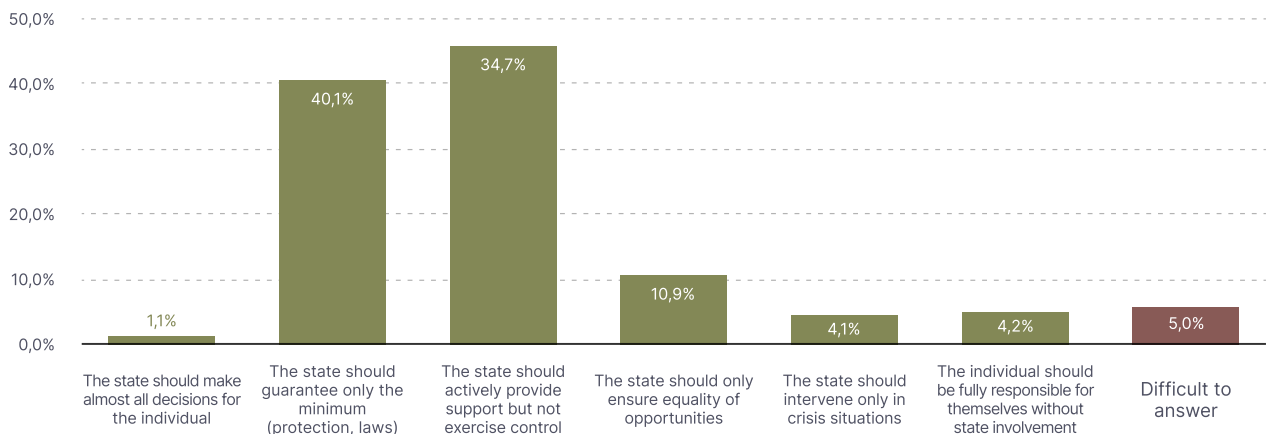
**Figure 10:** Public perceptions of the core functions of the state in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey; multiple responses allowed).

**In your opinion, what are the core functions of the state?**



**Figure 11:** Public views on the role of the state in people's lives (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey; multiple responses allowed).

**What should be the role of the state in people's lives?**



This marks a shift in how leadership is imagined, but not in the underlying attachment to freedom. In a 2021 survey by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation, almost 67% of respondents were willing to see a “strong leader” in power, yet 60% said they were not prepared to give up their freedoms in exchange for higher security or prosperity.<sup>12</sup>

Wartime behaviour broadly matches this pattern of conditional but firm boundaries. On the one hand, most Ukrainians accept temporary constraints they see as legally justified and linked to survival: in late 2023 and early 2024, between 69% and 84% opposed holding national elections during martial law and preferred that the president remain in office until the end of the war rather than force a vote in wartime.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, when a July 2025 law undermined the independence of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) and Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office (SAPO), thousands protested in Kyiv and other cities, and within days the authorities were pushed to draft and pass a new law that restored those safeguards. Together, these episodes suggest that Ukrainians are not trying to “have everything at once,” but are drawing a pragmatic line: they will **tolerate specific, time-bound wartime restrictions, yet treat core guarantees, such as independent anti-corruption bodies and basic rights, as non-negotiable even under the full-scale invasion.**

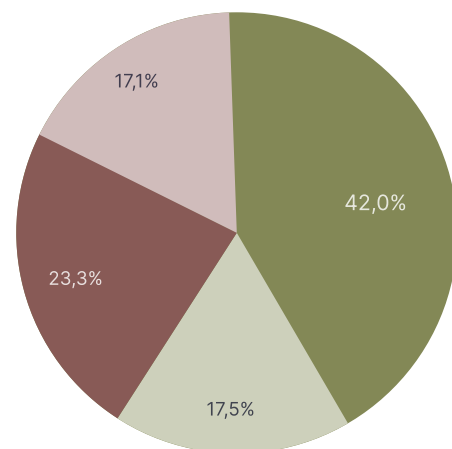
In addition to questions about power and rights, the survey asked how the state should use its financial resources. On tax policy, 42.0% support cutting taxes even if this reduces social spending, while 23.3% oppose such cuts. This means a sizeable group is prepared to trade part of social expenditure for a lighter tax burden, alongside a smaller group that clearly prioritises maintaining spending; the remaining respondents occupy intermediate or undecided positions.

In turn, a 2021 Razumkov Centre poll showed a divided picture: 32% preferred a tax model with higher taxes and free state services, while 26.5% chose lower taxes and self-funded services, with support for the low-tax option rising compared to 2020 (39% and 26.5% accordingly).<sup>14</sup> In other words, pre-war opinion was still slightly tilted toward higher taxes with more provision, but a substantial and growing minority favoured lower taxes. The wartime data suggest that, under the pressure of full-scale war and economic strain, this low-tax preference has become more pronounced, with more people willing to accept reduced social spending in exchange for lower tax burdens.

**Figure 12:** Public opinion on reducing taxes in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**Do you think taxes should be reduced now, even if this would decrease spending on social programs?**

- Yes
- Undecided
- No
- Difficult to answer



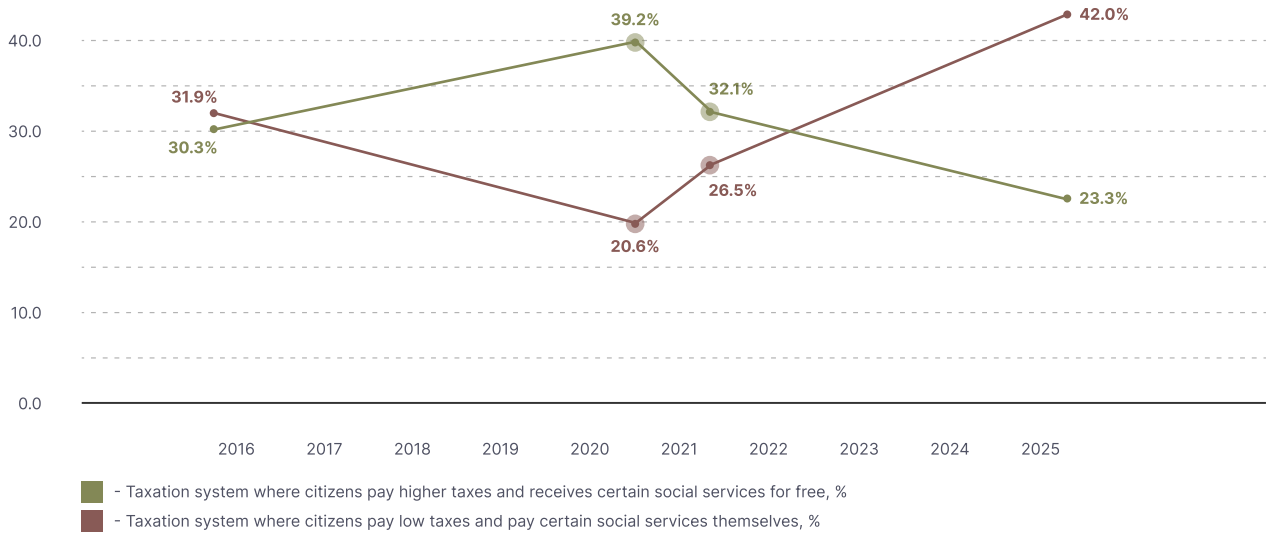
12. Ilko Kucheriv “Democratic Initiatives” Foundation and USAID “Engage.” “Do It for Me: Ukrainians Are Ready to Self-Mobilize but Make the State Responsible for Their Welfare.” Ilko Kucheriv “Democratic Initiatives” Foundation, March 27, 2021. <https://dif.org.ua/en/article/zrobi-za-mene-ukraintsi-gotovi-do-samoorganizatsii-ale-pokladayut-vidpovidalnist-za-sviy-dobrobut-na-derzhavu>.

13. Razumkov Centre. “Citizens’ Assessment of the Situation in the Country. Trust in Social Institutions, Politicians, Officials and Public Figures. Attitude to Holding National Elections in Ukraine Before the End of the War (September, 2023),” October 15, 2023. <https://razumkov.org.ua/en/research-areas/surveys/citizens-assessment-of-the-situation-in-the-country-trust-in-social-institutions-politicians-officials-and-public-figures-attitude-to-holding-national-elections-in-ukraine-before-the-end-of-the-war-september-2023>. KIIS. “Perception of the Need for the Presidential Elections,” February 20, 2024. <https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1371&page=1>.



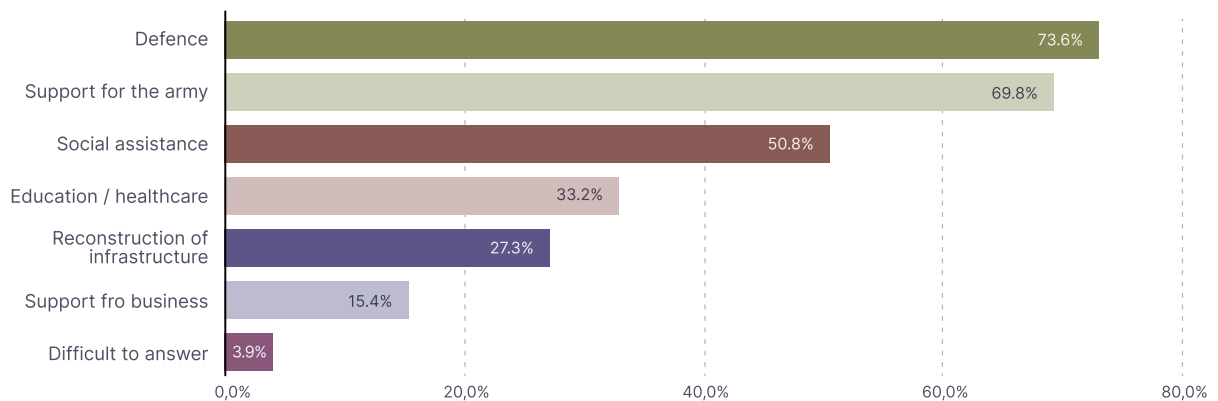
**Figure 13:** Public opinion on reducing taxes in Ukraine (Razumkov Centre 2015-2021 Surveys; Snake Island Institute 2025 Survey).

**Public opinion on reducing taxes in Ukraine (2015-2025)**



**Figure 14:** Public opinion on prioritizing state spending during wartime in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey; multiple responses allowed).

**How should the state spend limited resources during wartime?**



When asked how limited budget resources should be allocated, 73.6% favour directing them to defence and 69.8% to military support, making defence the primary spending priority in wartime. At the same time, 50.8% highlight social assistance, 33.2% mention education

and healthcare, and 27.3% point to infrastructure reconstruction. These areas rank below defence but still appear as important expectations rather than marginal demands.



## Trust in Institutions

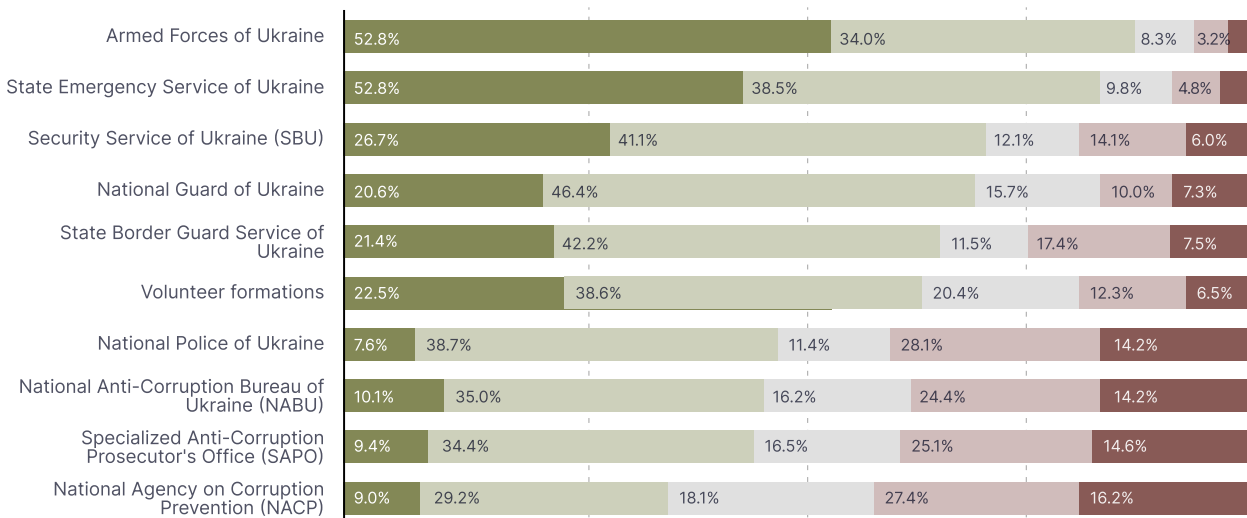
The full-scale invasion has reshaped Ukrainians' trust in state institutions. Data from 2021 and 2025 surveys show trust has increased most in institutions directly responsible for Ukraine's physical defense, especially the Armed Forces. In mid-2021, 69% of respondents expressed trust in the army (20% "completely," 49% "somewhat"), while about a quarter reported some distrust.<sup>15</sup> By 2025, trust in the Armed Forces had risen to 86.8% (52.8% "completely," 34.0% "somewhat"), with only 5% expressing distrust. The State Emergency Service, National Guard, and State Border Guard

Service also saw a similar rise, moving from moderate-to-high trust and notable distrust in 2021 to clearly high-trust institutions by 2025. This surge in public confidence is closely tied to their visible and expanded roles since February 2022, when thousands of civilians joined these agencies in response to the Russian full-scale invasion. Their contributions, such as organizing evacuations, conducting demining operations, responding to air raids, defending on the front lines, and protecting Ukraine's borders, have become widely recognized and valued, reinforcing public trust.

Figure 15: Trust in national institutions (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

How much do you trust the following institutions in the country?

Trust completely    Somewhat trust    Difficult to answer    Somewhat distrust    Do not trust at all



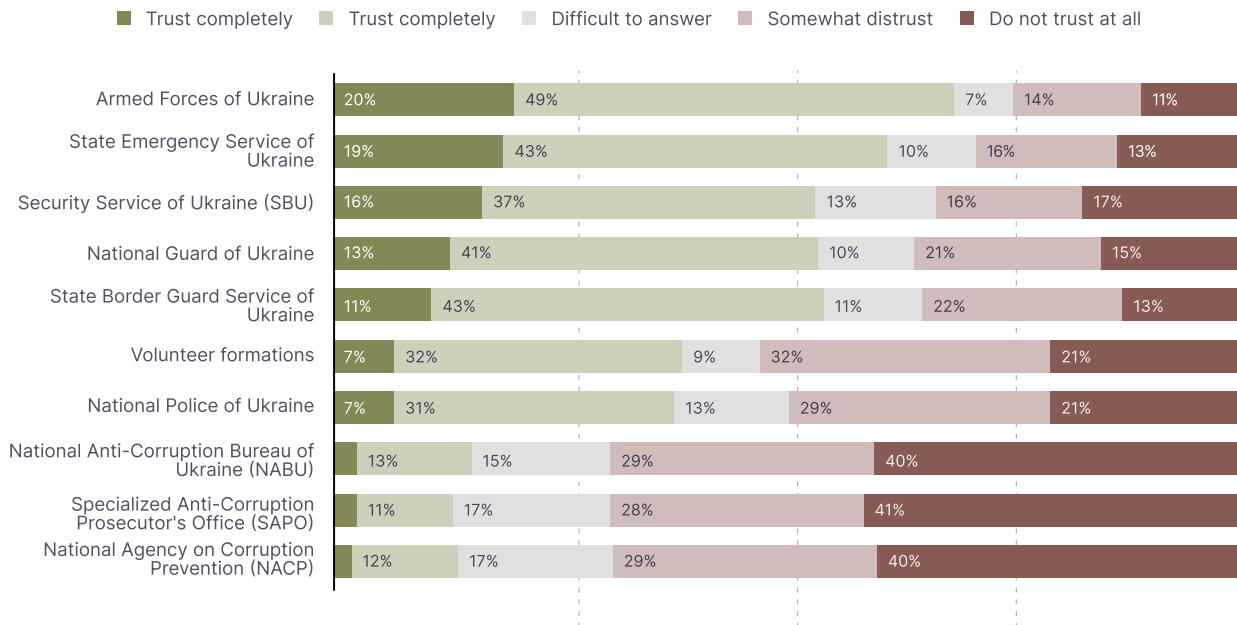
14. Razumkov Centre. "Assessing the Role of the State and Business in Economic Processes. Citizens' Demands Regarding the State's Social Policy (May 2021).," June 16, 2021. <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/otsinka-gromadianamy-ukrainy-rol-i-derzhavy-ta-biznesu-v-ekonomichnykh-protseakh-vymogy-gromadian-do-sotsialnoi-polityky-derzhavy-traven-2021r>.

15. Razumkov Centre, "Trust in Institutions and Politicians, Electoral Preferences of Ukrainian Citizens (July-August 2021)," August 10, 2021, <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/dovira-do-institutiv-suspilstva-ta-politykiv-elektoralni-orientatsii-gromadian-ukrainy>.



**Figure 16: Trust in national institutions (Razumkov Centre July-August 2021 Survey).<sup>16</sup>**

**How much do you trust the following institutions?**



Anti-corruption institutions illustrate how public expectations and institutional performance interact. In 2021, bodies such as the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), the Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO), and the National Agency for Corruption Prevention (NACP) combined low trust (well under one-third of respondents) with a majority expressing distrust.<sup>17</sup> In 2025, NABU is trusted by 45.2% of respondents (35.0% rather trust, 10.1% completely trust), SAPO by 38.8% (34.4% rather trust, 9.4% completely trust), and NACP by 38.3% (29.2% rather trust, 9.0% completely trust).

At the same time, the share of those who “do not trust at all” is lower than in 2021, and more people answer “difficult to answer”. When asked about Ukraine's effectiveness in countering corruption, almost nine out of ten Ukrainians still say the state is not efficient enough.

Still, people increasingly see these agencies as more credible than before the full-scale invasion, in part because of EU-linked conditionality for accession and several successful high-profile investigations, such as Operation Midas.

16. Razumkov Centre, “Trust in Institutions and Politicians, Electoral Preferences of Ukrainian Citizens (July-August 2021),” August 10, 2021, <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/dovira-do-institutiv-suspilstva-ta-politykiv-elektoralni-orientatsii-gromadian-ukrainy>.

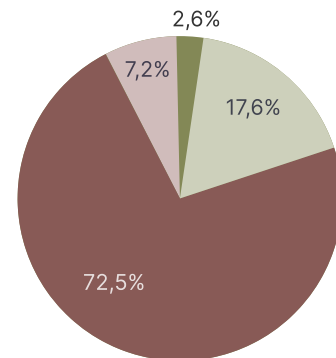
17. Ibid.



**Figure 17:** Public perceptions of the state’s effectiveness in fighting corruption (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**In your opinion, is the state fighting corruption effectively enough?**

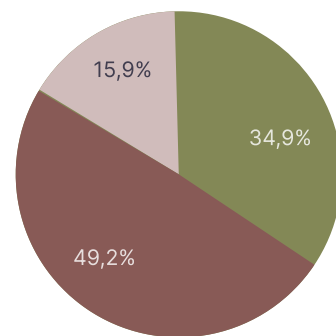
- Yes
- Partially
- No
- Difficult to answer



**Figure 18:** Personal experience with corruption in the past 12 months (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**Have you personally encountered or witnessed cases of corruption in the past 12 months?**

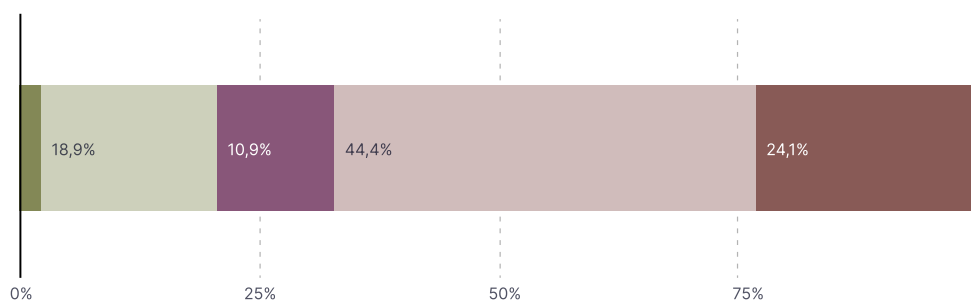
- Yes
- No
- Difficult to answer



**Figure 19:** Public trust in the judicial system of Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**How much do you trust the judicial system of Ukraine today?**

- Trust completely
- Somewhat trust
- Difficult to answer
- Somewhat distrust
- Do not trust at all



Courts remain the least trusted part of the system, with only about one-fifth expressing any trust in the judiciary. Even lower results were present before the full-scale invasion, with only 13% trusting the judicial system—whether partially or completely.<sup>18</sup>

However, it is important to emphasize once again that a low level of trust does not mean indifference—Ukrainian citizens closely monitor the performance of anti-corruption and judicial institutions and expect them to deliver tangible results.



## Law Enforcement

Public attitudes toward punishment reveal a broad consensus that current approaches are insufficiently strict. Our survey shows that almost half of citizens—49.9%—believe to some extent that punishments for serious crimes are too lenient, and 28.0% believe they are adequate.

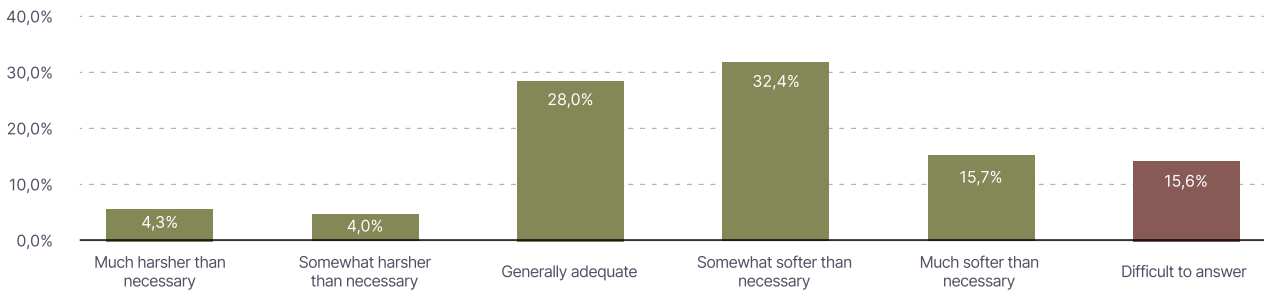
However, when asked if they would support tougher punishments for serious crimes in Ukraine, an overwhelming majority (68.7%) said yes, with another 15.7% partially supporting this idea. That is, more than 8 out of 10 Ukrainians, in one way or another, would support the state's punitive policy becoming tougher.

This shift from mixed assessment to strong support

reveals broad openness to stricter enforcement even among those initially satisfied with current approaches. While 28.0% found existing punishments adequate when asked to evaluate them, many of these same respondents expressed willingness to support tougher measures when presented as an active policy choice. This suggests that “adequate” often means “acceptable minimum” rather than “ideal level”—citizens may view current punishments as sufficient but still prefer stronger deterrents. The pattern indicates that Ukrainian society maintains a general presumption in favor of tougher enforcement, with even moderate voices willing to support stricter approaches when directly proposed.

**Figure 20:** Public assessment of the severity of punishments for serious crimes in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

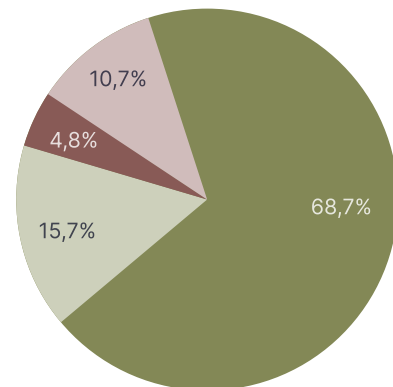
**How do you assess the severity of punishments for serious crimes in Ukraine today?**



**Figure 21:** Support for tougher punishments for serious crimes in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey)

**Do you support toughening penalties for serious crimes in Ukraine?**

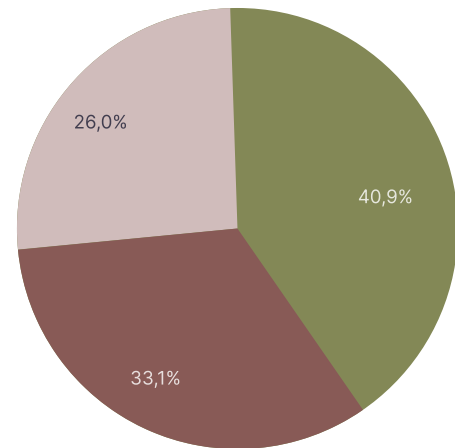
- Yes
- Partially
- No
- Difficult to answer



**Figure 22:** Support for the introduction of the death penalty in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey)

**Would you support the introduction of the death penalty in Ukraine?**

- Yes
- No
- Difficult to answer



Despite Ukraine’s constitutional ban on the death penalty, introduced in 2000 as part of its accession to the Council of Europe,<sup>19</sup> 40.9% of respondents support reintroducing executions, 33.1% oppose, and 26.0% are unsure. This does not describe a uniformly punitive society, but it does show a clear plurality willing to consider capital punishment for the most serious offences, especially in wartime. In other words, many Ukrainians consider current sanctions too mild and see stronger punishment as a legitimate response to grave violations.

At the same time, these punitive preferences sit against a backdrop of low trust in the judicial system. When people doubt that judges will reliably punish offenders, demands for tougher sanctions—including support for the death penalty—become a reaction to perceived impunity rather than just a taste for severity.

## Drug Trafficking and Drug Use

Ukrainian attitudes toward drug crime reveal strong preferences for punishment-focused strategies. Asked to assess the importance of tougher punishment compared to other measures (prevention, addiction treatment, information campaigns), 54.7% consider punishment much more important than alternatives, while 15.3% view it as somewhat more important. Only 19.3% see punishment and alternatives as equally important, and just 1.9% consider punishment less important than other approaches.

At the same time, available data suggest that drug use is not widespread across the whole population, but concentrated in a high-risk group. Pre-war estimates put the number of people who inject drugs at roughly 300-350,000 (1.7% of Ukraine’s adult population), yet high enough in absolute and relative terms to drive a long-running HIV and hepatitis epidemic.<sup>20</sup> Among 15-16-year-olds, a 2019 ESPAD study found that lifetime use of illicit drugs was in the lower-middle range compared with EU countries, with cannabis as the main substance.<sup>21</sup>

19. The Constitutional Court of Ukraine. The right to live. <https://ccu.gov.ua/storinka-knygy/421-pravo-na-zhyttya>

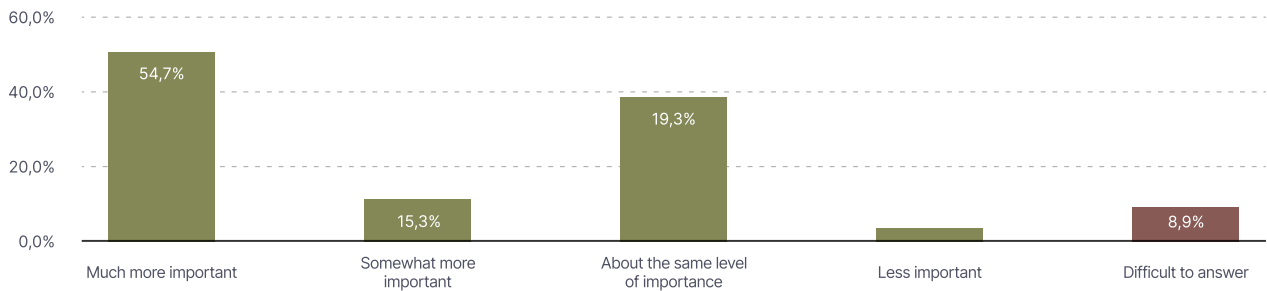
20. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. “Conflict in Ukraine: Key Evidence on Drug Demand and Supply.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, April 2022. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Ukraine/Ukraine\\_drug\\_demand\\_supply.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Ukraine/Ukraine_drug_demand_supply.pdf).

21. UNICEF. “Smoking, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Among Adolescent Students: Trends Remain in Ukraine,” October 2019. <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/reports/smoking-alcohol-and-substance-abuse-among-adolescent-students-trends-remain-ukraine>.

22. Publications Office of the European Union. “ESPAD Report 2019 - Publications Office of the EU.” Publications Office of the EU, 2020. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ca8e2be9-32bb-11eb-b27b-01aa75ed71a1>.

**Figure 23:** Perceived importance of tougher penalties for drug distribution compared to other measures (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

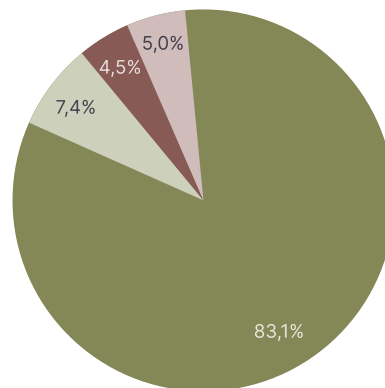
**Compared to other measures to combat illicit drug trafficking (e.g., prevention, addiction treatment, etc.), how important is strengthening the penalties for their distribution?**



**Figure 24:** Public support for tougher penalties on drug distribution in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**Do you support toughening penalties for the distribution of narcotic substances in Ukraine?**

- Yes
- Partially
- No
- Difficult to answer



This combination of a visible high-risk group and relatively limited mainstream recreational use helps explain the emphasis on punitive measures. When asked about increasing accountability for drug distribution, 83.1% of respondents support harsher penalties, another 7.4% favour partial strengthening, and only 4.5% are opposed.

In addition, 82.5% say they would not want to live next to drug-dependent or injecting drug users. Taken together, these figures suggest that many Ukrainians primarily associate drugs with addiction, illness, and criminality, and therefore tend to prioritise punishment over treatment-centred or harm-reduction approaches.



## Firearms

Despite wartime conditions that might favor individual self-defense, Ukrainians support strict state control over firearms. A substantial 74.7% favor increased state control over the circulation of civilian firearms, with only 13.5% opposing and 11.7% undecided. The majority (52.7%) believe access should be provided only under strict checks and licensing, while 14.4% support a “predominant ban” model allowing civilian possession only in exceptional cases. Complete prohibition attracts 10.6% support, while free access models receive minimal backing: 12.6% for “predominantly free access” and only 2.6% for absolutely free circulation.

This can be explained by the Soviet legacy, where the circulation of civilian firearms was prohibited, which solidified the idea of the state as the only legitimate wielder of force.

Unlike countries where weapons are associated with individual freedom (such as the US), in Ukraine, security is traditionally viewed through collective institutions—the army, law enforcement agencies, and the state in general. Public fears about criminalization, domestic violence, or abuse also restrained the idea of mass legalization. Even after 2014 and especially in 2022, when millions of Ukrainians received weapons as part of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Territorial Defense, the prevailing belief is that it is structures organized and controlled by the state that are the main guarantee of security. Therefore, today, despite the relevance of self-defense, Ukrainian society remains within a model in which the right to use weapons is concentrated in the hands of the state rather than in those of individual citizens.

**Figure 25:** Public support for stricter government control of civilian firearms in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey)

**Do you support stricter government control over the circulation of firearms among civilians?**

- Yes
- No
- Difficult to answer

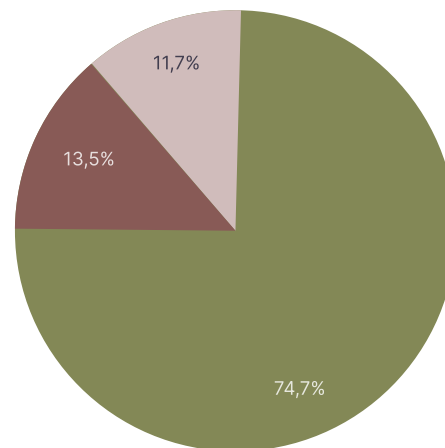
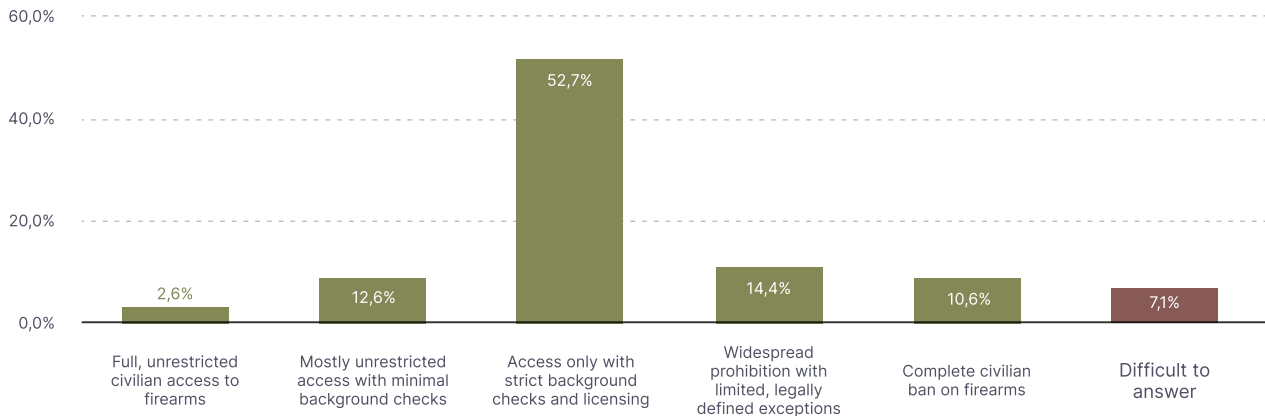




Figure 26: Public opinion on the optimal approach to firearm ownership in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

Which approach to firearm ownership do you consider optimal for Ukraine?



Overall, Ukrainian attitudes toward law and order reflect a society that views strict enforcement as essential to both daily security and democratic legitimacy. The comprehensive demand for tougher approaches spans

criminal justice, anti-corruption efforts, and institutional accountability, united by the expectation that violations must be punished and justice must be visible.

## Family and Reproductive Norms

In Ukraine, family values extend beyond preference and into cultural identity and historical survival; our survey results confirm that family, health, and dignity remain at the heart of Ukrainian identity, with 54.6% citing their children and **54.1% citing “a happy family of one’s own” as core values.**

Comparative data place this strong familial orientation in context: according to the World Values Survey (2017–2022), 85% of Ukrainians consider family “very important”—slightly below Poland (93%) and the United States (91%), but above Russia (78%).<sup>23</sup> This pattern reflects Ukraine’s historical experience: for centuries, extended families in rural communities served as key units of economic cooperation and cultural transmission, while Soviet collectivization, dekulakization, and the Holodomor (1932–1933) disrupted established patterns of intergenerational life. Since independence, these longer traditions have continued to regain visibility and social weight,

reinforcing family as a resilient and culturally anchored value.

Survey data reveal a strong attachment to traditional family models. According to our findings, 78.3% of Ukrainians agree that the nuclear family—mother, father, and children—is the only “correct” model. These attitudes vary substantially by age: agreement stands at 57.6% among respondents aged 18–24 and rises to 84% among those aged 60+. Broader sociological data confirm this pattern. A 2020 survey by the Sociological Group Rating shows persistent traditional role divisions: 83% believe a woman’s primary responsibility is caring for the home and family, while 75% say a man’s main duty is earning money. These views translate into everyday practices: women predominantly perform cooking (64%), childcare (52%), and household chores (43%), with only about 25% of families reporting equal distribution of tasks.<sup>24</sup>

23. “World Values Survey Association,” <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>.

24. Interfax-Ukraine. “Overwhelming Majority of Ukrainians Think Most Important Task for Women Is Housekeeping and Family, for Men – Making Money.” Interfax-Ukraine, March 6, 2020. <https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/press-conference/645357.html>.



Figure 27: Importance of family in life: Poland, Russia, Ukraine, the United States (World Values Survey Wave 7: 2017-2022).<sup>23</sup>

	Total	Poland	Russia	Ukraine	USA
Very important	86.6%	93.3%	77.8%	85.0%	91.0%
Rather important	11.4%	5.7%	19.3%	13.0%	7.1%
Not very important	1.4%	0.3%	2.0%	1.3%	1.6%
Not at all important	0.3%	0.3%	0.7%	0.3%	0.2%
Don't know	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	-
No answer	0.1%	0.1%	-	0.2%	0.1%

Figure 28: Levels of agreement with the statement that the traditional family is the only correct model of family relations (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

To what extent do you agree with the statement that the traditional family (mother, father and children) is the only correct model of family relations?

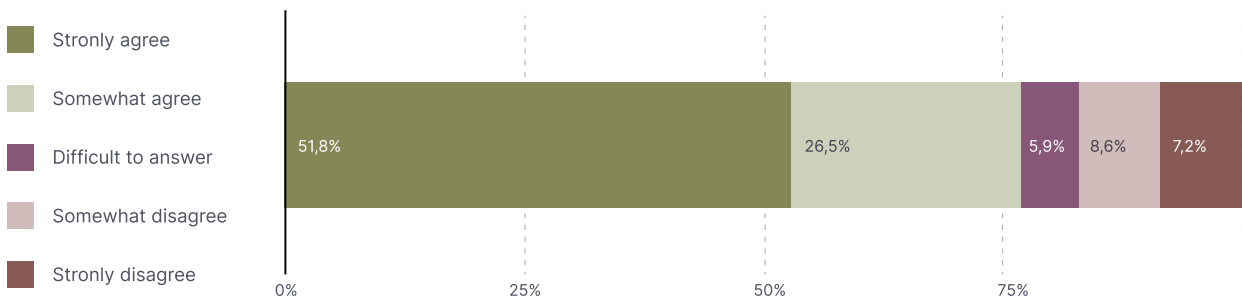
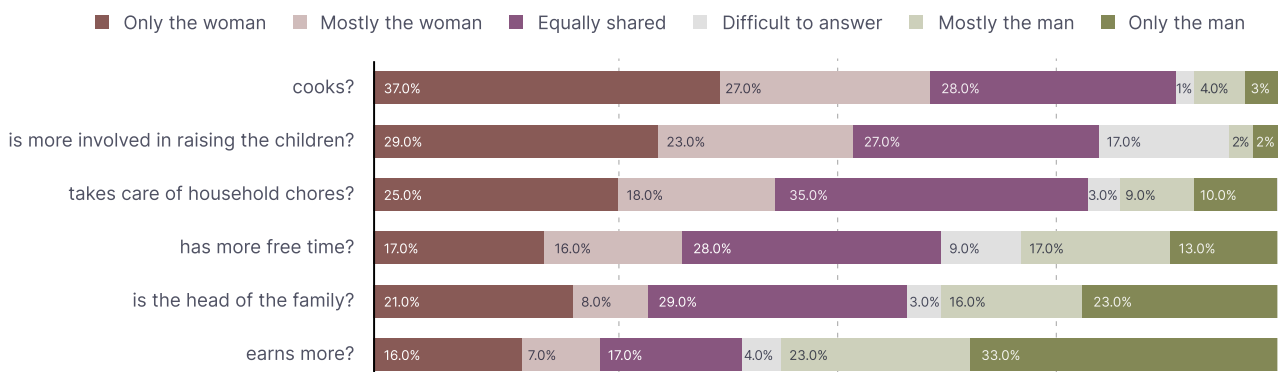


Figure 29: Division of family roles in Ukraine (Rating Group).<sup>25</sup>

Who in your family \_\_\_\_\_?





At the same time, younger Ukrainians combine traditional aspirations with more flexible partnership norms. The 2019 Family Values of Ukrainian Youth survey found that most plan to marry (82%) and have children (84%), yet 41% prefer to begin with cohabitation before marriage.<sup>26</sup> Intergenerational expectations also remain strong: according to WVS 2020, 85% of Ukrainians say it is important to make their parents proud, and about three-quarters believe children should care for parents throughout life.<sup>27</sup>

Family values also occupy a notable place in Ukraine's political agenda. In 2020, 307 out of 400 members of the Verkhovna Rada formed the inter-factional group "Values. Dignity. Family.", which declared its goal to strengthen family-based legislation and promote conservative thought within the Ukrainian public sphere.<sup>28</sup> This demonstrates that family norms serve not only as social ideals but as an explicit subject of parliamentary mobilization.

Ukraine's approach to reproductive rights reflects the legacy of Soviet-era legislation: after the liberalization of the 1950s, abortion became widely accessible and normalized, and independent Ukraine largely retained this model.

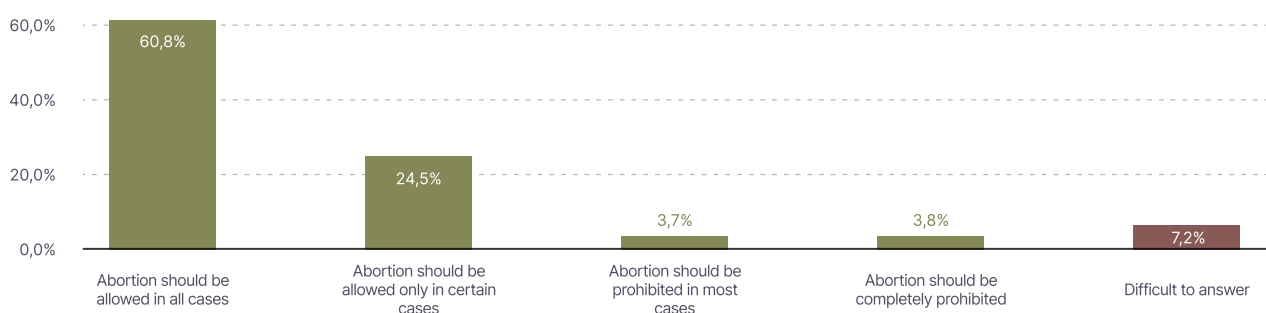
Legally, the procedure remains available on request up to 12 weeks and under specific circumstances up to 22. Public opinion aligns with this permissive framework: 60.8% support unrestricted access and another 24.5% favor access under certain conditions, while only 7.5% endorse strict limits. Support is lowest among the youngest adults (59.1% of those aged 18–24) and highest among respondents aged 60+ (68%), reflecting generational exposure to Soviet family-planning norms.

Moral attitudes, however, show a different pattern. According to WVS 2020, 53.9% of Ukrainians consider abortion unjustifiable—lower tolerance than in most EU countries—though this share has gradually declined since 2010 (from 58.1%).<sup>29</sup> Regional variation persists as well: residents of Western Ukraine express stronger moral opposition, consistent with the greater influence of religious norms in the region.

The overall abortion rate has declined dramatically since independence—from about 60% of all pregnancies to roughly 20% by 2014—and has remained near that level during 2014–2023.<sup>30</sup> This reduction is attributed primarily to rising household income, improved access to contraceptives, and expanded sexual education rather than changing legal restrictions.

Figure 30: Public views on abortion in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

Which of the following statements best reflects your views on abortion?



25. Ibid.

26. Yablonska, Tetiana, Oksana Artyukh, and Julia Gorbaniuk. "Family Values of Contemporary Ukrainian Youth in Across-Cultural Context." *Roczniki Teologiczne* 67, no. 10 (December 2020): 159–174. DOI:10.18290/rt206710-11. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348058423\\_Family\\_Values\\_of\\_Contemporary\\_Ukrainian\\_Youth\\_in\\_Across-Cultural\\_Context](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348058423_Family_Values_of_Contemporary_Ukrainian_Youth_in_Across-Cultural_Context)

27. Ukrainian Centre for European Policy, *World Value Survey 2020 in Ukraine*, 2020. [https://ucep.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WVS-UA\\_2020\\_report\\_WEB.pdf](https://ucep.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WVS-UA_2020_report_WEB.pdf)

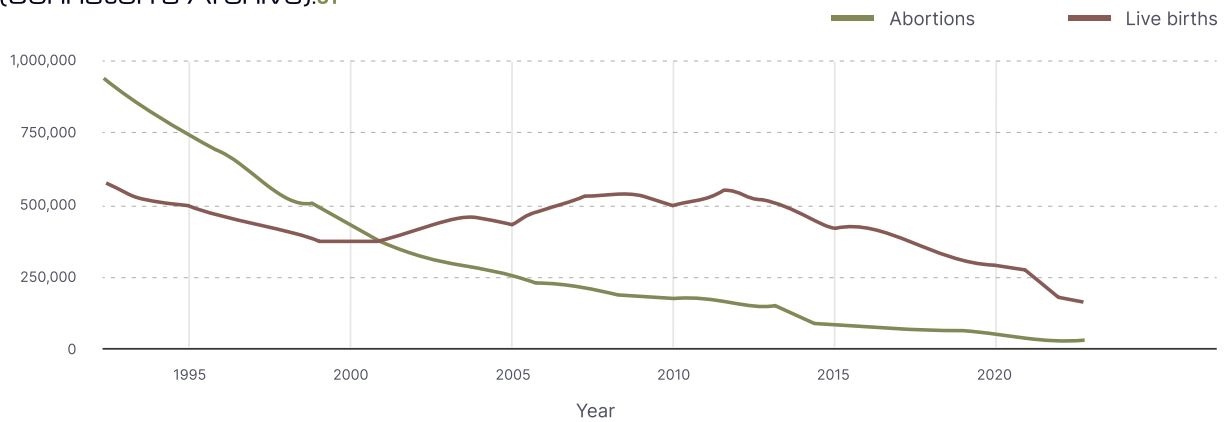
28. Rzhetska, Liliia. "Cancelling the gender: why did Ukrainian MPs start protecting traditional values", *Deutsche Welle*, 22 January 2021. <https://www.dw.com/uk/скасувати-гендер-чому-українські-депутати-взялися-захистити-традиційні-цінності/a-52095477>

29. Info Sapiens. *Ukraine in the World Values Survey 2020* (presentation, October 27, 2020). [https://www.sapiens.com.ua/publications/socpol-research/140/Presentation\\_WVS-UA\\_2020\\_27-10\\_all.pdf](https://www.sapiens.com.ua/publications/socpol-research/140/Presentation_WVS-UA_2020_27-10_all.pdf)

30. Johnston, Wm. Robert. "Historical Abortion Statistics, Ukraine." *Johnston's Archive*. Last updated January 5, 2025. <https://johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/ab-ukraine.html>



**Figure 31:** Annual number of abortions and live births in Ukraine, 1992-2023 (Johnston's Archive).<sup>31</sup>



## Attitudes to LGBT

Though Ukraine was the first post-Soviet country to decriminalize homosexuality after gaining independence in 1991, LGBT rights have developed slowly. Same-sex couples still lack legal recognition, and while some efforts have been taken to protect the rights of LGBT people in the country, including the passage of a 2015 law outlawing discrimination in the workplace, public opinion remains mixed.

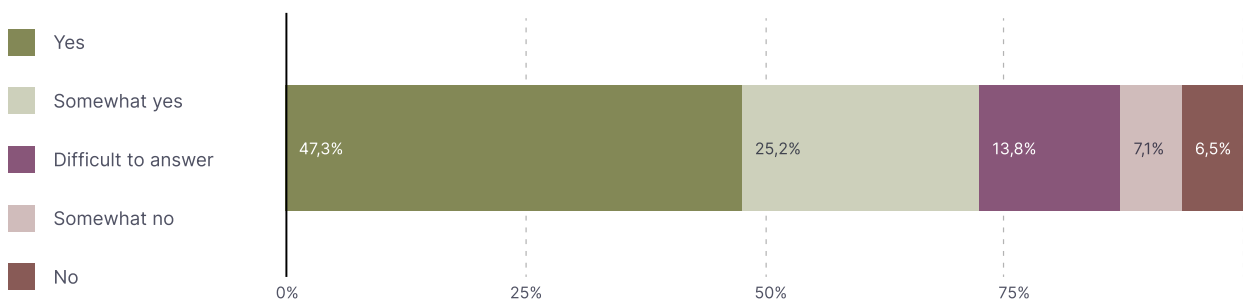
Survey data indicate broad but not deeply anchored support for equal rights: 47.3% firmly agree that LGBT people should have the same rights as other citizens, and another 25.2% “rather agree,” bringing overall support to 72.6%.

Younger and urban respondents tend to be more supportive, while older and more religious Ukrainians express more reservations. Yet this formal consensus contrasts with more hesitant personal attitudes, which remain notably less positive.

Nearly a quarter of respondents (24.6%) express fully or mostly negative feelings toward LGBT people personally. Additionally, 21.0% say they would not want to live near members of the LGBT community.

**Figure 32:** Public opinion on equal rights for LGBT people in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey)

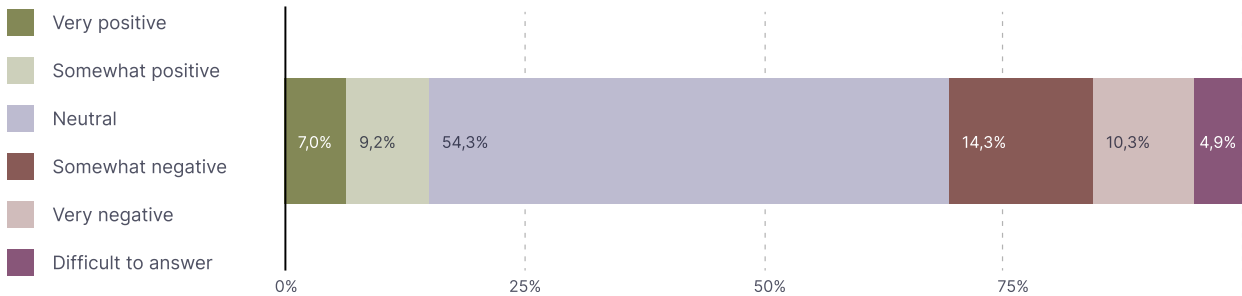
**Should LGBT members have the same rights as other citizen?**





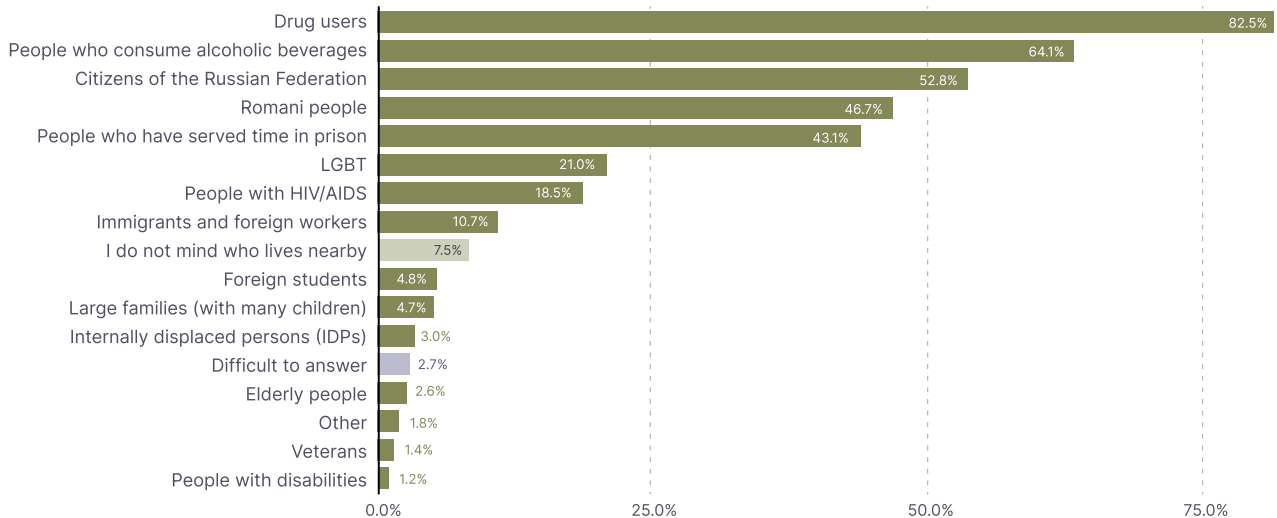
**Figure 33:** Attitudes toward members of the LGBT community in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**How would you generally describe your attitude toward members of the LGBT community?**



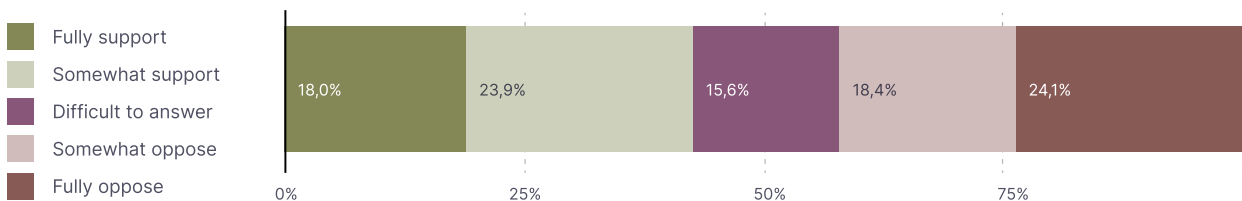
**Figure 34:** Social groups respondents would not want as neighbors (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**Which of the following social groups would you not want to live next to?**



**Figure 35:** Support for the legalization of same-sex marriage in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

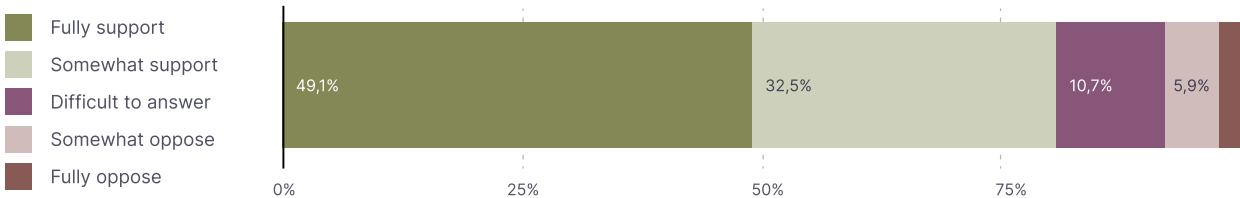
**Do you support the possibility of legalization of same-sex marriages in Ukraine?**





**Figure 36:** Agreement with the statement that Ukraine should preserve its traditions under European influence (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey)

**To what extent do you agree with the statement: "Ukraine should preserve traditions even under the pressure European changes?"**



Marriage equality remains particularly contentious. Support for same-sex marriage reaches only 41.9%, while 42.5% fully or mostly disapprove of legalization. This near-even split indicates that marriage represents a more culturally sensitive boundary than general civil rights, likely because it intersects directly with traditional family values that remain central to Ukrainian identity.

Broader value orientations also limit the pace of change. With 81.6% agreeing that Ukraine should preserve its traditions even when facing European influences, cultural resistance to LGBT acceptance remains strong, making rapid shifts in attitudes unlikely.

## Immigration

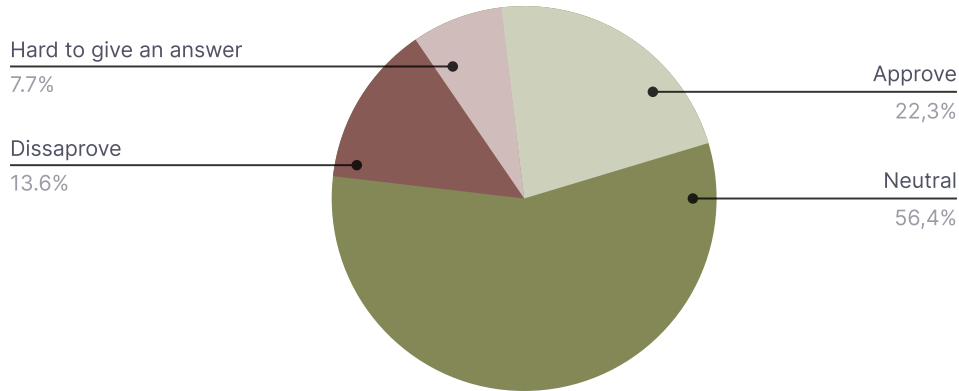
Ukrainians show a generally moderate and pragmatic stance toward immigration, rather than an enthusiastic embrace or strong hostility. Survey data reveal that most concerns center on groups perceived as threats to safety or social norms, rather than on migrants themselves. In response to Which groups would you not want to live next to? (Figure 31), aversion to immigrants and foreign workers was much lower, at 10.7%, and aversion to foreign students was at just 4.8%.

Attitudes toward labor migrants are predominantly neutral to positive: 56.4% neutral, 22.3% positive, and just 13.6% negative.

However, Ukrainians strongly favor regulated rather than open migration policies. A substantial 71.4% support "clear rules and measures of state policy regarding immigrants," with only 3.3% opposing such controls and 19.8% viewing regulation as situational.

**Figure 37:** Public attitudes toward the presence of migrant workers in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**How do you generally feel about the presence of migrant workers in Ukraine?**



**Figure 38:** Public opinion on the need for clear state policies regarding immigrants in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**In your opinion, does Ukraine need clear rules and state policies regarding immigrants?**



Ukrainian opinions on immigrant integration reveal clear preferences based on cultural and geographic proximity: 66.6% see a high possibility of integration into Ukrainian society for migrants from neighboring countries, 63.4% for other Europeans, but only 42.7% for Asians, 40.2% for Africans, and 43.0% for Middle Easterners, meaning a majority show skepticism towards non-European immigrants’ ability to integrate.

External research confirms that Ukrainian attitudes toward immigrants are conditional rather than categorical. The 2024 IOM study “Pathways for Regular Migration: Perceptions of Migrant Workers and

Recovery in Ukraine” found that support depends on immigrants bringing economic benefits and demonstrating cultural adaptation. Primary concerns include security risks, economic instability, and potential strain on employment, housing, and access to healthcare.

These findings align with broader survey patterns showing instrumental rather than humanitarian approaches to migration. Ukrainians appear willing to accept immigration when it serves national recovery needs, but expect clear benefits and cultural accommodation in return.



## Historical Memory and Soviet Legacy

Across Central and Eastern Europe, countries such as Germany, Romania, Poland, and the Czech Republic removed or relocated Soviet monuments mainly for historical or civic reasons. In Ukraine, however, decommunization has become inseparable from resisting Russian imperial influence, giving these processes a far more urgent and security-driven character. This trajectory was formalized with the 2015 laws banning Soviet symbols and toponyms, and after 2022, it expanded into a broader derussification of public space.

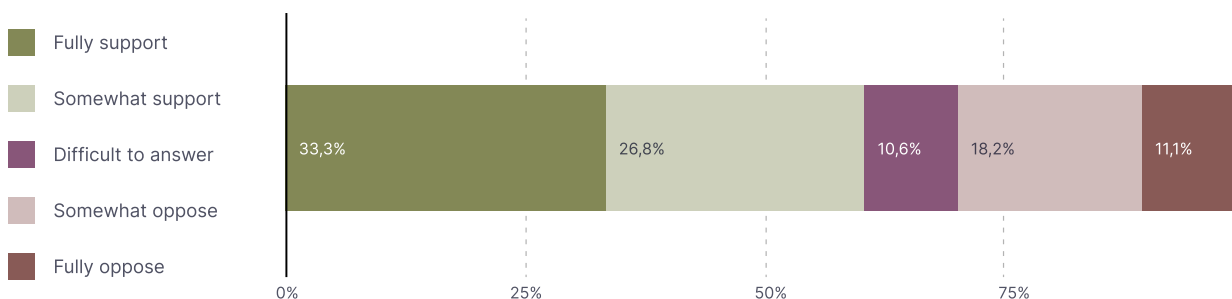
According to the SII 2025 Survey, 60.1% of Ukrainians support continuing the removal of Soviet-era symbols, including renaming streets and dismantling monuments. Opposition remains limited: 18.2% “rather disapprove,”

11.1% “strongly disapprove,” and 10.6% are undecided—a stable, though not overwhelming, majority.

Among those who do not support further decommunization, the most common rationale is historical preservation: 38.9% say Soviet elements are “part of our history/memory,” echoing broader debates about cultural erasure. Practical concerns also play a significant role: 22.1% believe the process is “not timely” during war and economic strain, 12.9% cite financial costs, and 8.7% dismiss it as ineffective (“no sense, nothing will change”). Smaller shares attribute it to corruption (4.2%) or political populism (5.0%), suggesting that resistance is driven more by doubts about implementation than by ideological attachment to communism.

**Figure 39:** Support for further decommunization in Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

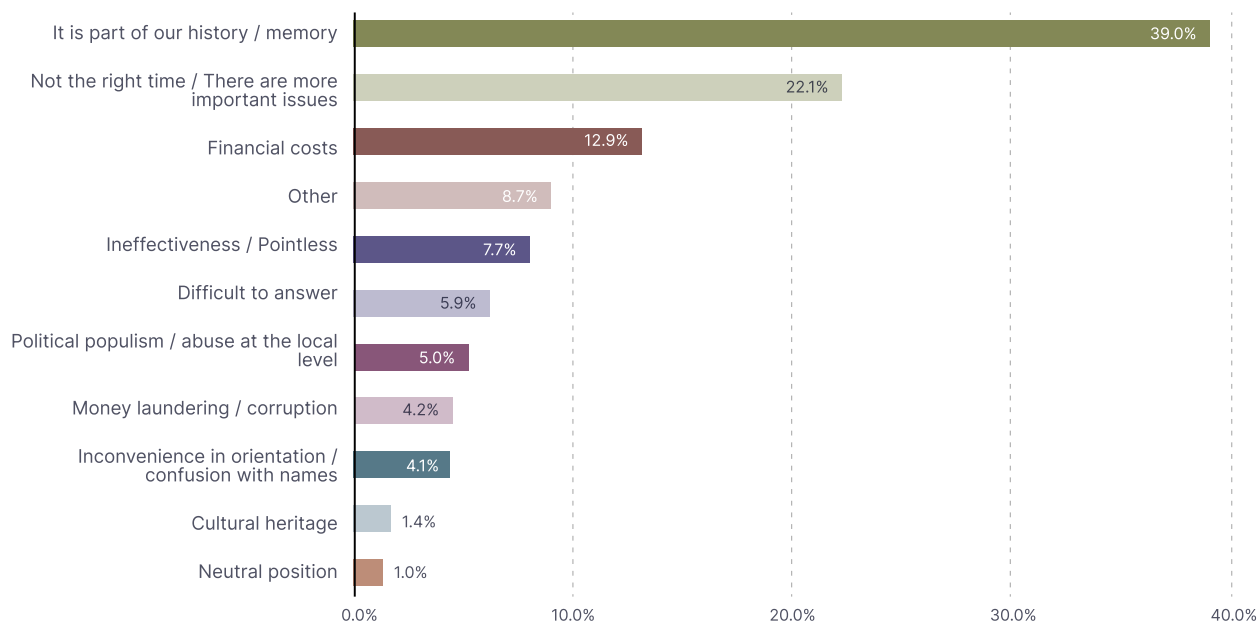
**Do you support further decommunization (renaming streets, dismantling Soviet-era monuments)?**





**Figure 40:** Main reasons for not supporting decommunization (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey; multiple responses allowed).

**If you do not support the removal of Soviet symbols or renaming, what do you think is the main reason?**



Historical polling highlights how the 2025 results continue an upward trend. In 2020, only 30% approved renaming streets and towns, while 44% disapproved and around 20% were indifferent. Support was concentrated in western regions, and older respondents were the most opposed.<sup>33</sup>

In 2022, after the full-scale invasion, attitudes had shifted sharply: 56.9% viewed renaming positively, while only 17.9% viewed it negatively. Younger respondents—previously the most indifferent group—became among the strongest supporters. Even among Russian-speaking respondents, 39% backed renaming (33% opposed). Respondents who view the collapse of the Soviet Union negatively mainly were opposed to decommunization and derussification: 52% expressed negative attitudes toward these processes.<sup>34</sup>

Taken together, data from 2020 to 2025 reveal that decommunization in Ukraine has shifted from a disputed policy to a key part of national self-definition. While a persistent minority—primarily older or more Soviet-nostalgic respondents—remains skeptical, the overall trajectory points to a broadening consensus.

These decommunization preferences align with broader patterns of declining Soviet identification. External polling by the Razumkov Centre in April-May 2025 found only 1.6% of Ukrainians primarily identify with the Soviet Union, while 60.5% identify with Ukraine itself.<sup>35</sup> The Snake Island Institute survey confirms this trend even more strongly, with 68.8% identifying first and foremost as Ukrainian citizens.

33. Iryna Bekeshkina, "The Sixth Year of Decommunization: Public Attitudes Toward the Ban on Symbols of the Totalitarian Past," Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, July 16, 2020, <https://dif.org.ua/article/shostiy-rik-dekomunizatsii-stavlennya-naselennya-do-zaboroni-simvoliv-totalitarnogo-minulogo>

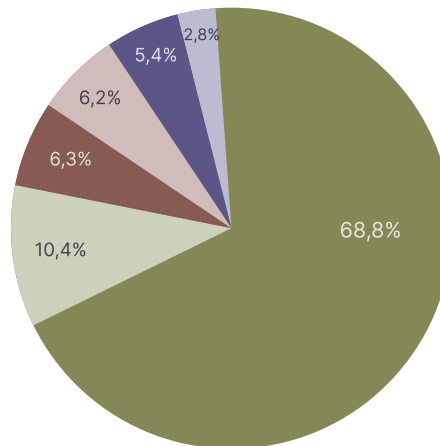
34. Iryna Bekeshkina, "How Ukrainians' Attitudes Toward Decommunization, the UOC-MP, and Nationalism Are Transforming During the War with Russia," Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, July 25, 2023, <https://dif.org.ua/article/yak-transformuetsya-stavlennya-ukraintsv-do-dekomunizatsii-upts-mp-ta-natsionalizmu-pid-chas-viyni-z-rosieyu>

35. Razumkov Centre (2025, May 13) "Red Lines for Ukraine": Public Opinion and National Convictions. <https://razumkov.org.ua/en/component/k2/red-lines-for-ukraine-public-opinion-and-national-convictions-april-may-2025>

**Figure 41:** Primary self-identification of Ukrainians (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

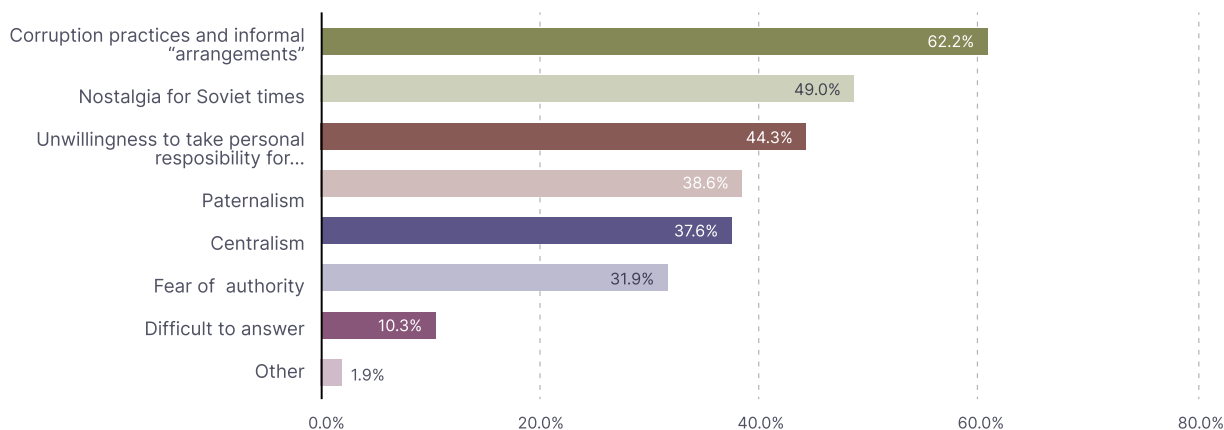
**How would you primarily identify yourself?**

- As a citizen of Ukraine
- As a resident of one's city (village)
- As a member of one's ethnic group / nation
- As a citizen of the world
- Difficult to answer
- As a resident of one's region
- As a citizen of Europe



**Figure 42:** Perceived negative features of the Soviet legacy in Ukrainian society (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**Which features of the Soviet legacy, in your opinion, still have a negative impact in Ukrainian society?**



Ukrainians clearly recognize the enduring negative legacies of the Soviet system. Majorities point to “corruption practices and informal arrangements” (61.2%), “nostalgia for Soviet times” (49.0%), and “unwillingness to take personal responsibility” (44.3%) as the most negative remnants of Soviet culture. Significant portions also highlight paternalism (38.6%), centralism (38.0%), and fear of authority (37.6%). These perceptions underscore that decommunization is not only about removing monuments or renaming streets, but about dismantling entrenched habits of governance and mentality.

These findings highlight not only dissatisfaction with Soviet legacies but also the emergence of a clear counter-ideology in Ukrainian society.

Where the Soviet system was associated with corruption, paternalism, and avoidance of responsibility, Ukrainians today place a high value on personal responsibility, initiative, and accountability. The rejection of centralism and fear of authority points to a culture that prizes civic independence and expects leaders to be constrained by law, not upheld by ideology. In this sense, decommunization is not simply a symbolic act of tearing down monuments—it is a moral and cultural repudiation of communism itself, and a reaffirmation that Ukraine’s future must be built on individual dignity, responsibility, and freedom from authoritarian control.

## Patriotism

The 2022 full-scale Russian invasion fundamentally transformed Ukrainians’ relationship with their national identity, intensifying patriotism and Ukrainians’ attachments to their state symbols and cultural heritage. With 81.0% of respondents proud to be Ukrainian citizens, Ukrainians exhibit one of the highest levels of national pride in Europe, per comparative data from 2024-2025 by Razumkov.<sup>36</sup>

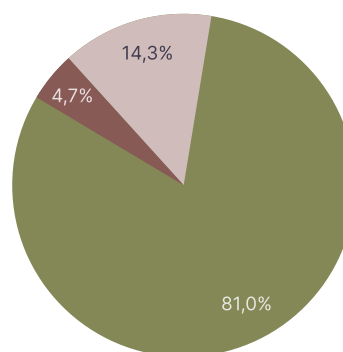
The flag commands near-universal positive sentiment, with 86.9% expressing positive feelings or pride toward the national colors. This attachment extends to linguistic identity, where 86.2% show positive attitudes toward the Ukrainian language as a cultural marker. The coat of arms, featuring the traditional trident, receives a positive response from 85.3% of citizens, indicating broad support for historical state symbols.

Ukrainians demonstrate a strong affinity for their national symbols across multiple cultural domains.

Figure 43: Public pride in Ukrainian citizenship (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

### Are you proud to be a citizen of Ukraine

- Yes
- No
- Difficult to answer





Traditional cultural expressions also generate overwhelming support. The vyshyvanka, Ukraine's distinctive embroidered shirt, attracts positive sentiment from 85.2% of respondents, while traditional songs and folklore receive 85.9% positive response. These figures suggest that Ukrainians maintain strong connections to folk cultural traditions alongside modern state symbols. The national anthem inspires positive feelings in 80.5% of citizens, and national historical figures like Taras Shevchenko command respect from 76.5% of the population.

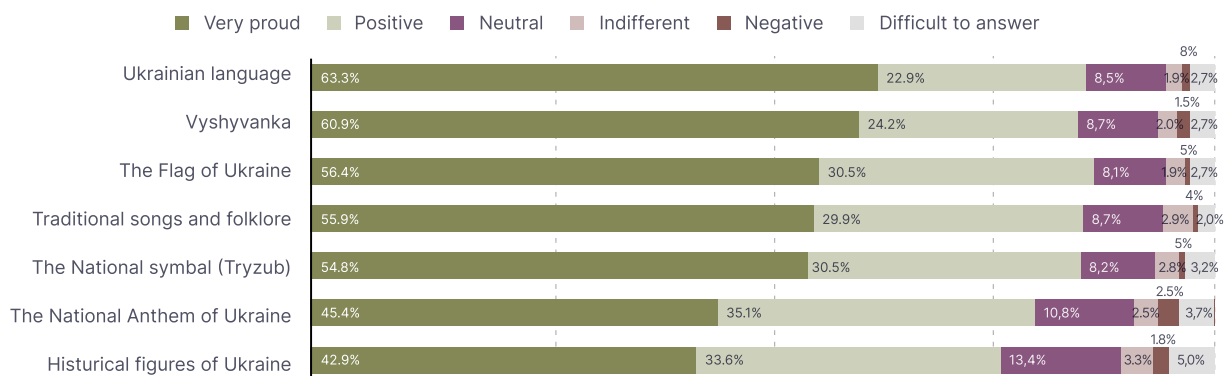
Ukrainian patriotism extends beyond current pride to future-oriented optimism despite significant economic

challenges—a substantial 61.9% of respondents want their children to live and work in Ukraine.

The hierarchy of values provides additional context for patriotic sentiment. While 34.0% prioritize “being part of a strong Ukrainian nation” as a core value, this ranks below health (79.0%) and family (54.1%) but above societal utility (23.2%) (Figure 1). This positioning indicates that patriotism functions as a communal anchor rather than an individual pursuit—important for social cohesion but secondary to immediate survival and family security needs.

**Figure 44:** Attitudes toward cultural elements of Ukrainian identity (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

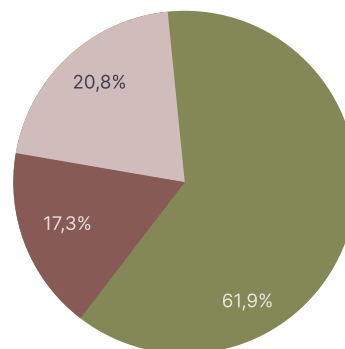
**What is your attitude toward the following cultural elements of Ukrainian identity?**



**Figure 45:** Willingness for children to live and work in Ukraine in the future (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**Looking to the future, would you like your children to live and work in Ukraine?**

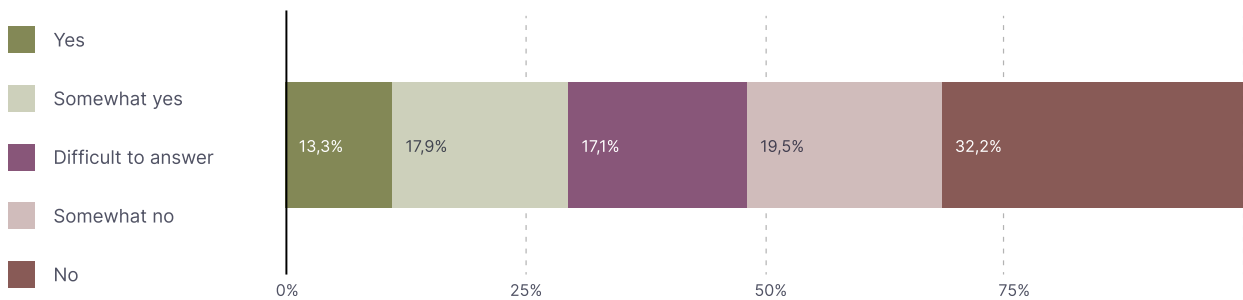
- Yes
- No
- Difficult to answer





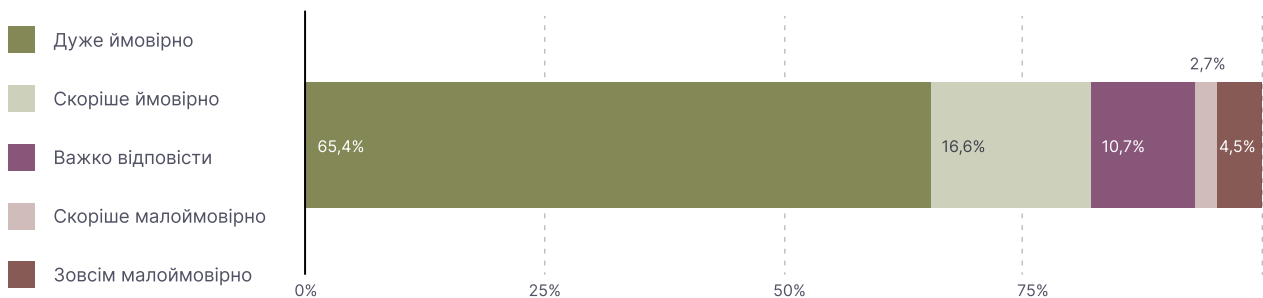
**Figure 46:** Readiness to participate in Ukraine's defense within the military (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**Are you personally ready to take part in the defense of Ukraine as a member of military units (Armed Forces...**



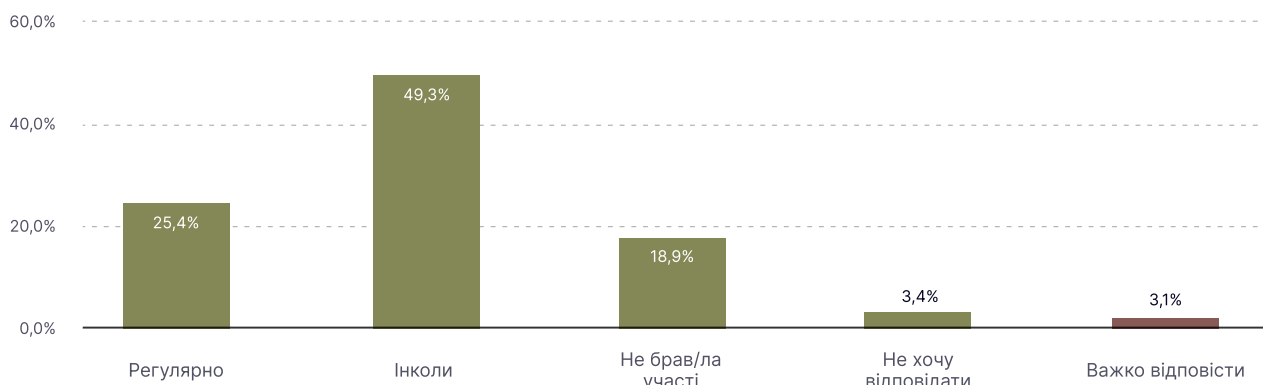
**Figure 47:** Perceived likelihood that Russia will remain the main long-term threat to Ukraine (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**In your opinion, how likely is in Russia will represent the main long-term threat to Ukraine?**



**Figure 48:** Frequency of volunteering in the past three months (Snake Island Institute, 2025 Survey).

**How often do you participated in volunteering (for example, helping the army or local initiatives) in the past three months?**





Wartime actions embody this patriotism: **31.2% willing to join military defense (Q35 T2B)**, **74.7% volunteer regularly/sometimes (Q34)**, and **82.0% see Russia as a long-term threat (Q36)**, framing pride as active resistance. A 2025 KIIS poll notes 76% believe Ukraine will win, tying optimism to patriotic resolve.<sup>37</sup>

Ukraine's patriotism is resilient and unifying, blending cultural reverence with defensive action—distinct from pre-war levels, and now integral to national survival.

## Conclusion

The Ukrainian case offers several insights for understanding democratic resilience and development: **First**, the war has temporarily strengthened the primacy of basic security values, but it has not altered Ukraine's long-term value trajectory. Despite a natural shift toward security under wartime conditions, Ukrainian society continues moving toward self-expression values—freedom, dignity, and civic responsibility. Security and freedom are not viewed as competing priorities but as mutually reinforcing foundations of national resilience. The fight for freedom has effectively become synonymous with defending the country's very existence, reinforcing broader trends toward civic engagement and societal responsibility.

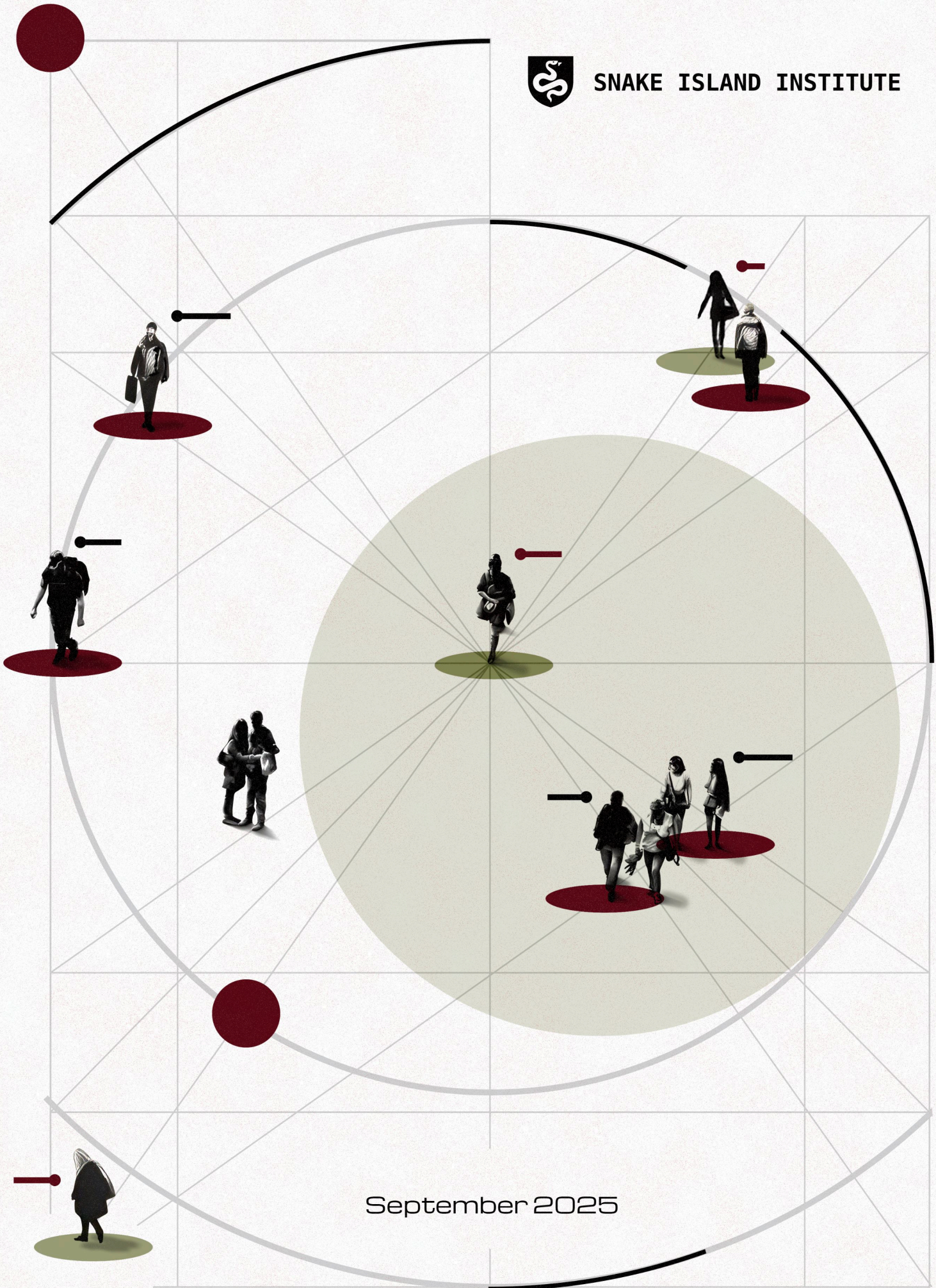
**Second**, Ukrainians judge the state in explicitly performance-based terms. Institutions that clearly protect the country and deliver under pressure—the Armed Forces, emergency services, border guards, and many volunteer formations—now occupy very high-trust positions. By contrast, bodies associated with routine governance and corruption control—courts, law enforcement, and anti-corruption agencies—enjoy trust only when they deliver visible results and face criticism when they do not. In practice, legitimacy depends less on formal status or political identity and more on whether an institution is seen as performing its core function during wartime.

**Third**, freedom sets clear red lines, even when people accept some wartime restrictions. Respondents are prepared to tolerate specific, time-bound limitations they see as legally grounded and linked to survival, such as postponing national elections during martial law. At the same time, they mobilise quickly when they perceive attempts to weaken independent oversight or change the rules in a way that outlasts the emergency, as shown by protests over efforts to curb anti-corruption institutions. In practice, Ukrainians accept targeted, temporary restrictions, but resist measures that undermine core rights or weaken independent institutions, even in wartime.

The Ukrainian model—combining respect for tradition with institutional innovation, strong governance with constitutional limits, national pride with international engagement—may prove influential for other societies seeking to modernize while preserving their distinctive characteristics. In an era of renewed ideological competition, Ukraine offers evidence that democracy can adapt to diverse cultural contexts without losing its essential character.



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