

Signs of progress: Local democracy developments in Ukrainian cities¹

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Abstract

Decentralisation reforms presuppose the transfer of powers from central to local authorities. From being a highly centralised state, since 2015 Ukraine has taken some important steps towards reforms of local government with more influence assigned to the local level. But has the decentralisation reform had any impact on how ordinary people perceive their interaction with their local authorities, and has it increased participation in local politics? This chapter looks into citizens' perceptions of and interaction with local authorities in the period from before the decentralisation reform was announced and some years into the reform. It presents results from two local democracy surveys carried out respectively in early 2014 and at the end of 2017 in 20 Ukrainian cities.

The chapter shows that both in terms of citizens' perceived responsiveness of local authorities as well as, and in particular, citizen political participation at local level there are signs of progress in most cities. A caution is that we see improvement mostly in inhabitants' assessment of the way local authorities distribute resources and information, but a negative tendency when they evaluate their own possibilities for influencing politics locally. Still, people participate more actively in different forms of local politics according to our survey data.

The survey reveals considerable differences between individual cities. Correspondent analysis is applied to make typologies of this interaction as seen from citizens' perspective, and developments for individual Ukrainian cities are identified. In terms of local authority responsiveness there are no large differences between the eastern and the western parts of the country, but citizens in the west participate more actively in local politics. In general people are quite supportive of the initiated decentralisation reforms. Finally, we discuss the implications of the findings for the ongoing reforms and prospects for stability.

Introduction

The effective functioning of local self-government is considered a key factor of democracy (Melo and Baiocchi 2006). From the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 and until the so-called Euromaidan revolution in 2013-14, when the infamous Yanukovich regime fell, Ukrainian authorities were not eager to do away with the centralised governance structure inherited from the Soviet period. The political colour of the government or the president was hardly significant: Those in power did nothing or very little to decentralise. Power was further recentralised when Yanukovich took office in 2010,

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when important responsibilities were transferred back from rayons and oblasts to central ministries (Jarábik and Yesmukhanova 2017).

However, after the Maidan popular uprising and demands for democratisation, the new authorities responded by introducing more fundamental decentralisation reforms (Chaisty and Whitefield 2017). As shown by [Editors: please add relevant references] in this volume, the reform was also meant as a tool to mitigate the conflict in Donbass and restrict the expressions of separatism. Instead of a federal model, which it was feared could lead to demands for enhanced regional autonomy and possibly further disintegration, the authorities instead have **chosen** a model where power and resources are being transferred to the local, municipal level. Simultaneously, in the new set-up the relative influence of regions (*oblasti*) and districts (*rayony*) is being reduced [Editors: please include other references from this volume if applicable] (Levitas and Djikic 2017)].

For proper local democracy to develop, however, it is not enough that meaningful authority is devolved to local units of governance. A condition for a good local democracy is that the local authorities² (hereafter LAs) are accessible and accountable to the local citizenry (Blair 2000). This requires both active citizens who make their voices heard, as well as LAs that are responsive to citizens' concerns. Such interaction between citizen participation in political processes at the local level, and the perceived responsiveness of LAs toward their concerns, is the topic of this chapter.

A nation-wide local democracy surveys carried out in 20 Ukrainian cities in the summer of 2014 found that people in general had a rather negative perception of the responsiveness of their local authorities. Also, the survey showed relatively low activity levels among ordinary Ukrainian citizens, in terms of their political activity, participation in civil society organizations, as well as perceived influence on local politics. Differences between individual cities, however, were striking, where some cities displayed much better quality of the interaction between citizens and local authorities than others (Aasland and Lyska 2016).

Since the survey was conducted, a long awaited decentralisation reform has already got started. Its implementation has not been straight forward. So far the reform has been deprived of a proper legal foundation, since the inclusion of controversial provisions from the Minsk agreements about the special status of Donetsk and Luhansk has resulted in a failure to pass the necessary amendments in the constitution. Thus, the reform is still precarious and can be changed or revoked by a simple majority of the parliamentarians. Strong regional elites fight to preserve their power status and try to influence reform outcomes. In addition, more poorly developed areas with low levels of income from taxes have so far seen few benefits of the reform (Aasland and Larsen 2018).

On the other hand, municipalities can now keep much more of the tax income generated at their territory and are also in a position where they have much more autonomy over their budgets. Thus, a preliminary verdict by both national and international experts is that decentralisation is among the most successful reforms undertaken in Ukraine since the Maidan revolution (Makarenko 2017). Especially Ukrainian cities of oblast' significance are said to be the greatest beneficiaries of the reform process (Levitas and Djikic 2017:3).

It is probably too early to assess the effects of the ongoing decentralisation reform on the quality of local democracy. Besides, citizens' perception of local democracy is also influenced by several other

²Since members of the public are not always able to distinguish between appointed officials of local self-government bodies and elected council members at the local level, in this chapter (and in the two surveys that the chapter builds on) we do not make a strict distinction between them and use the concept of Local Authorities (LA) to combine the two.

factors, such as developments in living conditions, the fight against corruption, rule of law and the interaction with national politics. Still, we believe it is worthwhile to examine how people perceive developments of local democracy from the turbulent period just after the Maidan revolution until the present. Do people experience progress compared to the rather bleak picture revealed by the 2014 survey? Or have unfulfilled expectations and, for many, no improvements in economic well-being resulted in a further negative trend? To provide an answer, a new survey was conducted at the end of 2017 in exactly the same cities as the 2014 survey.

Data and methods

The chapter builds on results of two nation-wide opinion surveys on local democracy carried out in July 2014 and November-December 2017 respectively³. Professional pollsters conducted the interviews, with local interview corps throughout Ukraine⁴. The data were collected in the form of personal interviews in the respondents' homes, using questionnaires that could be answered in Ukrainian or in Russian. On average an interview took about 30 min. The data were transformed into computer-readable form using advanced statistical software (SPSS).

The two-stage samples were based, first, on purposeful selection of 20 Ukrainian cities, chosen to provide variation in terms of geographic location, population size, and administrative status. The sample included the capital, ten cities of oblast significance, and the remaining nine cities of rayon significance. Of the latter nine cities, the majority (seven cities) have more than 100,000 inhabitants. Second, a total of at least 100 respondents were then interviewed in each city. The respondents were randomly selected, but to ensure representative data we applied quotas for age and gender groups, as well as geographical distribution in the city. In total, 2,000 (in 2014) and 2,120 (in 2017) respondents were interviewed. Though not fully representative of Ukraine as a whole, due to the large number and variation of cities as well as the large number of respondents included, we feel confident that much of the variation among the Ukrainian urban population has been covered. Several identical questions were asked in a national telephone survey among 1074 respondents conducted by the same pollster in parallel with the city surveys in 2017; the survey results can thus be compared to the national average.

As in any survey, data reliability is also affected by the response rate. For this survey, the response rate was 37% in 2014 and 38% in 2017. On the whole, there is good reason to assume that the survey provides a fairly reliable picture of how urban residents in Ukraine perceived local governance at two different points of time. However, we cannot rule out a certain bias for univariate distributions on key dependent variables. However, such bias is much less of an issue when examining relationships in multivariate analyses where, as in this chapter, a variety of background variables are controlled for (Rindfuss et al. 2015).

³ The surveys were initiated by the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) and organized in collaboration with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research at Oslo Metropolitan University within the framework of the project "Evidence-Based Local Government Policy Development in Ukraine," financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. The project home page with more details on the project and links to its publication is <http://www.ks.no/fagomrader/samfunn-og-demokrati/internasjonalt-samarbeid/prosjekter/cooperation-project-in-ukraine/>.

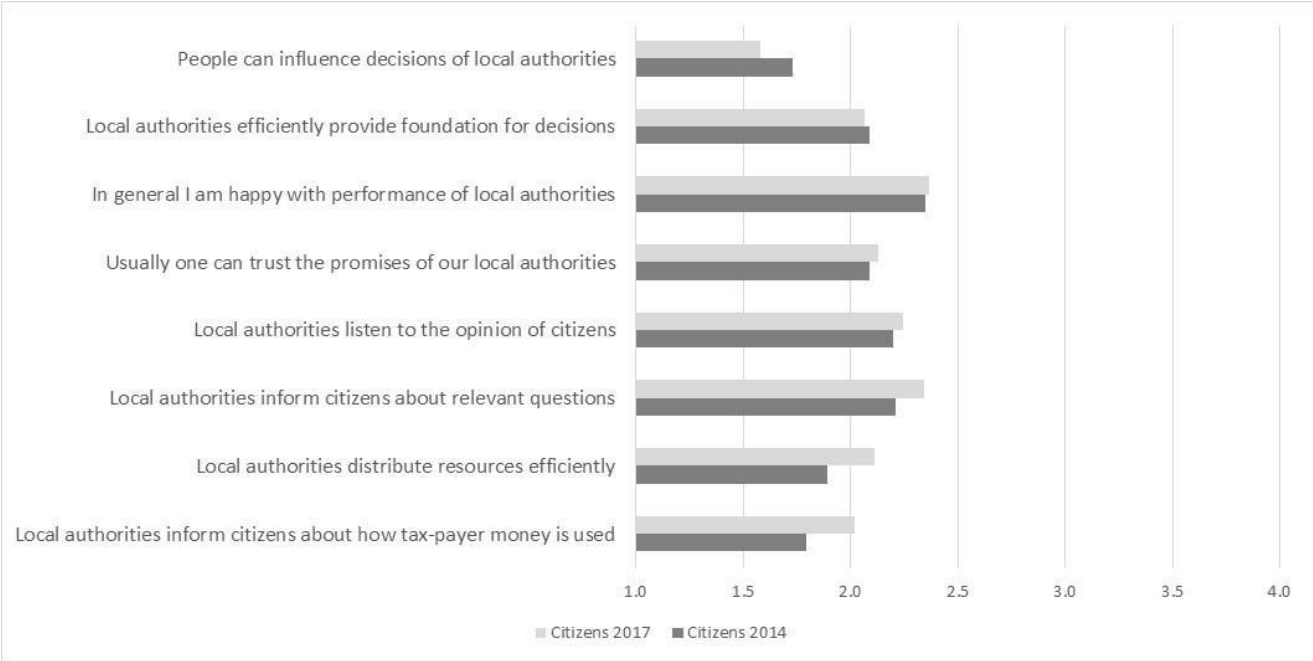
⁴ In 2014 the survey was carried out by Socioconsulting (based in Kyiv), while in 2017 Operativna Sotsiologia (Dnipro) conducted the survey.

The collection, storage, and analysis of the survey data are based on compliance with ethical standards and protection of the rights of the survey participants regarding voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality.

Perceptions of local authority responsiveness: Trust is the key factor

Responsiveness presupposes that elected representatives are accountable to the local population (Smith 2007, 105). The survey respondents were presented a series of statements about the responsiveness of the LAs to citizens and asked to what extent they agree with each of the statements according to a 4-point scale ranging from fully disagree to fully agree. Figure 1 shows the average responses in the 20 surveyed cities in respectively 2014 and 2017.

FIGURE 1: RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS ABOUT LOCAL AUTHORITIES RESPONSIVENESS AMONG CITIZENS OF 20 UKRAINIAN CITIES IN 2014 AND 2017. AVERAGE LEVEL OF AGREEMENT ON A SCALE FROM 1 (FULLY DISAGREE) TO 4 (FULLY AGREE)



*Responses ‘do not know’ and ‘refuse to answer’ (between 7% and 26% for individual items) have been removed.

Source: AUC Local Democracy Surveys 2014 and 2017.

Taking into account that a neutral average for each item would have been 2.5, the level of responsiveness of Ukrainian local authorities in 2017 as assessed by urban citizens can still be considered to be rather towards the negative side of the scale. The most positive assessments are given for the general satisfaction with the performance of LA and for LAs’ ability to inform citizens about relevant questions. Most negatively people assess their own possibility to influence LA decisions.

Despite the rather negative picture, there are also some promising signs. For most items we can observe a slow progress in the 2014-2017 period. This is particularly the case when it comes to LAs’ ability to inform the citizens about relevant questions and especially about the use of taxpayers’

money. It also concerns citizens' assessment of LAs' efficiency in the distribution of resources.⁵ One item stands out with significantly worse results in 2017 than in 2014, and that is the mentioned assessment of citizens' possibility to influence LA decisions.

When comparing results in the surveyed cities in 2017 with results from the telephone survey at national level that took place in parallel, we find that results are quite similar. However, there is a tendency that respondents nationally are somewhat more satisfied with the local authorities than are respondents in the surveyed cities when it comes to distribution of funds and listening to the opinion of citizens. Mean responses for the statements for which there were identical questions are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS ABOUT LOCAL AUTHORITIES RESPONSIVENESS AMONG CITIZENS OF 20 UKRAINIAN CITIES AND THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN 2017. AVERAGE LEVEL OF AGREEMENT ON A SCALE FROM 1 (FULLY DISAGREE) TO 4 (FULLY AGREE)

	20 cities	National survey
People can influence decisions of LA	1.58	1.57
LA listen to the opinion of citizens	2.25	2.53
LA inform citizens about relevant questions	2.34	2.43
LA distribute funds effectively	2.11	2.30
Information about tax money	2.02	2.00

Further analysis (reliability analysis) confirmed a very high correlation between the eight items⁶, making it reasonable to assume that the battery of questions provides a robust and reliable measurement of respondents' perceptions of the responsiveness of LAs. An index was made, "LAs responsiveness," ranging from 1 (respondent fully disagrees with all 8 statements) to 4 (full agreement with all items)⁷. The mean index score was respectively 2.06 (2014) and 2.11 (2017), which is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$). For both years we observe the average tendency of partial disagreement with the listed items in both surveys.

Moving from overall results to results in individual cities, we see some interesting developments. Table 2 shows the results in 20 cities in respectively 2014 and 2017, sorted by the difference between the two years. Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Ivano-Frankivsk are the cities that have had most progress in the period between the two surveys, while the largest regress has been observed in Pervomaisk, Borispyl and Berdiansk. Berdiansk, which had an extraordinarily high score in 2014, is

⁵ Another sign of progress is the answer to a question whether people need to pay under the table for services locally: while 53 percent acknowledged this to be the case in 2014, in 2017 this had been reduced to 46 percent.

⁶ Chronbach's Alpha of respectively 0.90 (2014) and 0.87 (2017).

⁷ Only those with at least four valid responses (not including 'do not know' and 'refuse to answer') were included in the index.

still among the cities that stand out with highest scores in 2017, together with Chuhuiv and Korosten. At the other end of the scale we find Borispyl, Rivne and Pervomaisk. Again we stress that the results can only be considered as indicative since the number of respondents in each city is relatively small and margins of error therefore considerable. Nevertheless, differences between cities with a high and a low score are more than large enough to be statistically significant.

As can be seen from the table, a high score in 2014 is no guarantee for a corresponding high score in 2017, and vice versa. Thus, LA responsiveness, as perceived by citizens, is not something that is achieved once and forever, but a quality that needs to be subject to continuous attention from local authorities.

TABLE 2: LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSIVENESS INDEX IN 20 UKRAINIAN CITIES, 2014 AND 2017, AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO YEARS. MEAN INDEX SCORE

	2014	2017	Difference
Kharkiv	1.79	2.23	0.44
Mykolaiv	1.65	2.04	0.40
Ivano-Frankivsk	1.86	2.24	0.38
Chuhuiv	2.08	2.42	0.34
Kryvyi Rih	1.89	2.19	0.30
Chernigiv	1.85	2.12	0.27
Korosten	2.08	2.33	0.25
Pavlograd	1.95	2.18	0.23
Kyiv	1.84	2.02	0.18
Cherkasy	1.83	1.97	0.14
Lutsk	2.10	2.11	0.00
Lviv	2.14	2.10	-0.04
Dnipro	2.05	1.95	-0.10
Kamanetsk-Podilski	2.37	2.26	-0.11
Vinnytsya	2.28	2.17	-0.12
Rivne	2.08	1.87	-0.21
Kremenchug	2.22	1.89	-0.33
Berdiansk	2.75	2.41	-0.34
Borispil	2.29	1.87	-0.42
Pervomaisk	2.13	1.69	-0.44

*Responses 'do not know' and 'refuse to answer' (between 7% and 25% for individual items) have been removed.

Source: AUC Local Democracy Surveys 2014 and 2017.

What factors can explain the individual scores on the index? Regression analysis provides some hints. We performed a multiple linear regression with the index score as the dependent variable, and the following independent variables that one would expect could have an effect on the outcome on the dependent one:

Year of survey (2014 or 2017)

Size of city (small; ordinary city; city of regional significance, capital city)

East or west Ukraine⁸
Gender
Age (in years)
Household standard of living, subjective (four-point scale)
Political activity (index)
Level of education (four-point scale)
Interest in local politics (four-point scale)
Trust in societal institutions (index)

Table 3 presents the results of the linear regression analysis. The explanatory power of the model is rather strong, indicated by an adjusted R squared of 0.31. This means that close to one third of the variation on the index score can be ascribed to the responses to the independent variables in the model. Several of the independent variables have a statistically significant correlation with the dependent variable (responsiveness index) when controlling for the other variables in the model.

The level of trust in a variety of societal institutions is clearly the independent variable in the model with the strongest correlation with people's perception of the LAs' responsiveness, as seen by the value of the standardized coefficients. The more people express trust in these institutions, the more are they inclined to report that the LAs are responsive to the needs of the citizens. The link between degree of social trust and evaluation of LAs is hardly a surprising finding, but it is worth noting that Ukraine is among the European countries with the lowest levels of trust in institutions and the government (Zmerli 2012, 120). According to our survey, trust in institutions has been reduced from an already low level in the 2014-2017 period.

TABLE 3: MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION. DEPENDENT VARIABLE: RESPONSIVENESS INDEX.
HIGH VALUE = PERCEIVED HIGH RESPONSIVENESS

	Unst. coeff	Std. err.	Stand. coeff.	Significance
Constant	0.73	0.09		0.000**
Survey year (low = 2014)	0.15	0.02	0.12	0.000**
Small city (vs. city of regional significance)	0.13	0.03	0.06	0.000**
Medium city (vs. city of regional significance)	0.16	0.02	0.12	0.000**
Capital city (vs. city of regional significance)	-0.08	0.05	-0.03	0.062
Eastern or western location (low = East)	-0.03	0.02	-0.02	0.157
Gender (low = women)	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.846
Age (in years)	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.466
Educational level (4-point scale)	0.04	0.01	0.06	0.000**
Living standard (4-point scale)	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.025*
Participation in political activities (index)	0.02	0.00	0.06	0.000**
Interest in local politics (4-point scale)	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.261

⁸ In line with the division made in the survey 2014 which was an operational definition based on election preferences, i.e. whether majority voted for Yanukovich or Timoshenko in the 2010 presidential elections.

Institutional trust (index)	0.40	0.01	0.53	0.000**
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**Significant at 0.01 level

*Significant at 0.05 level

***Individuals with responses to less than four of the responsiveness items were not included in the regression.

Source: AUC Local Democracy Surveys 2014 and 2017.

The low level of trust may be one of the explanations of the rather poor evaluation of LA responsiveness in the survey. What is the cause and what is the effect could be debated, however, since poor responsiveness on the part of government institutions may correspondingly explain the low level of trust expressed by Ukrainians. Of the eleven institutions listed in our survey, highest trust levels were in 2017 expressed toward the city mayor, followed by civil society organizations, local councils and deputies from own constituency. At the other end of the scale we find that lowest trust is expressed towards the national parliament, the government, to judges, and to the president. It is worth noting that the latter enjoyed the highest level of trust in the post-Maidan 2014 state of affairs. In 2017, LAs on average enjoy considerably higher trust levels than other listed government institutions.

Participation in local political activities increases the likelihood of expressing a positive opinion on LA responsiveness. Such civic participation can, in addition to trust, be considered a dimension of social capital (Bjørnskov 2006), which appears to have a positive effect on perceptions of LA responsiveness. However, personal political interest, as expressed subjectively by survey respondents, does not have a statistically significant effect on the responsiveness index score, as shown by Table 3.

The alleged east/west divide in Ukraine has been a recurrent theme in analyses of Ukrainian politics (Barrington and Herron 2004; Kubicek 2000; Holdar 1995). It is therefore worth noting that our survey results indicate that residence in the western or eastern part of the country has no statistically significant effect on the LA responsiveness score. The great variation among individual cities was shown in Table 2, and it is important to stress that these differences do not have a systematic east-western pattern.⁹ The size of the city, however, appears to matter, where inhabitants of cities with the status of regional significance perceive LA performance to be better than those without this status. Whether or not this has to do with selection of cities rather than size is, however, hard to say due to the limited number of cities in the sample. The finding is, however, in line with the claim that exactly these cities have benefited the most from the decentralization reform (Levitas and Djikic 2017, 3)

While education and a higher living standard have a positive effect on the score on the dependent variable (people with more education and better living standard give a more positive evaluation of LA performance), demographic variables such as gender and age do not have statistically significant effects on the responsiveness index score, after controlling for all the other variables in the model.

⁹ The east-west division is a simplification of a more fine-masked regional division for which our survey data do not allow us to control due to the limited number of cities in different regions of the country.

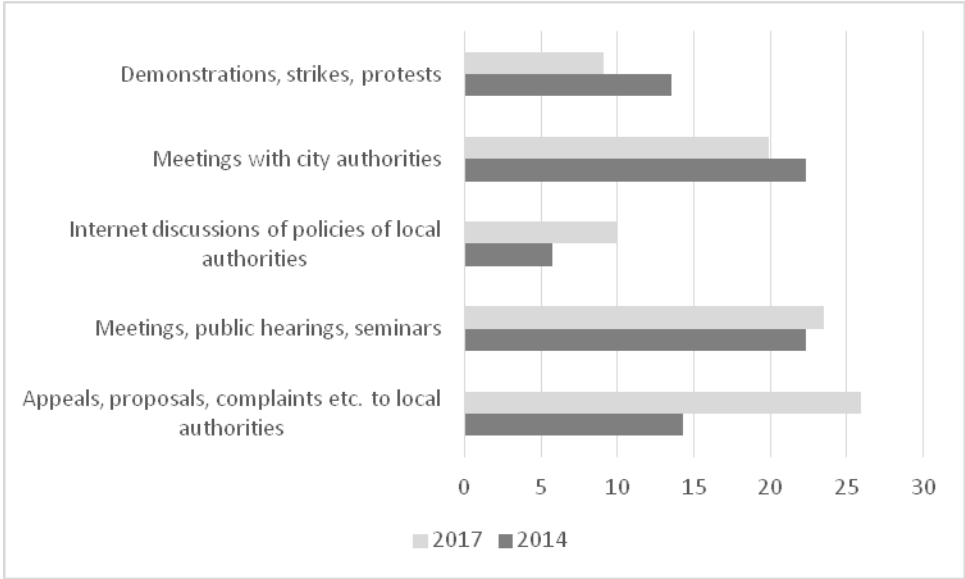
Citizens’ participation builds on political interest but not trust

A good quality local democracy requires active citizens who make their voices heard. Citizens’ participation at the local level may take many different forms. It is common to operationalize the concept by differentiating between community or social participation, usually in the civil society sphere, on the one hand, and political participation in the form of voting, political party, and other political activities on the other. Full citizenship can be realized only if people have opportunities for actual influence on political processes.

We have chosen to concentrate on two aspects of civic participation that are relevant for local democracy. First, we look at different forms of political participation. Second, we examine membership and involvement in different types of civil society organizations and political parties.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents that participated in various forms of political activity locally during the previous 12 months in respectively 2014 and 2017. As the figure demonstrates, some types of activities have become more widespread, particularly various forms of appeals, proposals and complaints to local authorities, the participation in such has almost doubled to include from 14 to 26 percent of the respondents. Though at a lower level, internet communication has also become much more widespread (from 6 to 10 percent participation). That different types of protest activities have become more rare (from 14 to 9 percent) can probably be explained by the special situation in the months preceding the survey in 2014 when many people were engaged in Maidan and post-Maidan demonstrations.

FIGURE 2: REPORTED PARTICIPATION IN DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC ACTIVITIES AT LOCAL LEVEL IN 2014 AND 2017



The biggest obstacles that people said prevent them from having an impact on decision making are the belief that their efforts would anyway be useless (37%), lack of time (17%), an alleged poor legislative base (15%) and lack of knowledge of the relevant legislation (12%). In addition, 10% of the respondents said they were simply not interested in these types of activities. There were not any big differences in the frequencies of reasons given between 2014 and 2017.

An index was computed based on a more detailed question of participation in different types of activities as reported by the respondents.¹⁰ We included only participation items with a high internal

¹⁰ Examples: Appeals, inquiries, petitions, public hearings, political speech, local initiatives, public discussions, seminars, internet discussions, meetings with mayor or local deputies.

correlation to ensure that we have a robust one-dimensional measurement.¹¹ The index ranges from 0 (participated in none of the listed activity types) to 16 (participated in all). While in 2014 66% of the respondents had not participated in any of the activities, this was a case with 58% of the respondents in 2017. Similarly, while the mean number of activity types in 2014 was 0.9, in 2017 it had increased to 1.5. At the same time the variation (as measured by the Standard deviation) between respondents was higher in 2017 than in 2014.

When comparing participation levels in the 20 surveyed cities in the autumn of 2017 with the results from national survey that was conducted in parallel, we find that the proportion having participated in demonstrations was very similar (9.1 percent in the surveyed cities and on average 9.3 at national level). Participation in internet discussions was more common at the national level (20.3 vs. 9.9 percent in the surveyed cities), and so was participation in meetings, public hearings and seminars (33.8 vs. 23.5 percent respectively). This could have to do with the large activity surrounding discussions on amalgamation of territories that at the time affected smaller municipalities to a much larger degree than cities. On the other hand, participation in meetings with city authorities were more common in the 20 surveyed cities (19.9 percent) than the national average (12.3 percent).

Table 4 gives an overview of activity levels in individual cities for the two survey years, and again we have sorted it according to the difference between the two years. As was the case with responsiveness, there is considerable variation between the cities also when it comes to citizen participation. The overwhelming majority of cities have seen a positive development in the sense that participation has increased considerably in the 2014-2017 period. Only five of the cities have seen a negative development, and most of them with a moderate decline. Only Berdiansk has seen a very large reduction in citizen participation, and it is noteworthy that this city was at the top of the list in 2014 but was lowest by 2017. Chernigiv, Pervomaisk, Boryspil and Mykolaiv are cities with the largest positive improvements. It is, however, Kyiv that ranks highest on the participation index in 2017, followed by Chernigiv, while Kharkiv and already mentioned Berdiansk stand out at the other end of the scale.

Another observation is that it is not necessarily the same cities that have a high participation score that have a high score on the responsiveness index (Table 2). In fact there is a negative correlation between the two (Pearson’s R = -0.16) which is not, however, large enough to be statistically significant given the small number of cities included in the study.

TABLE 4: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION INDEX IN 20 UKRAINIAN CITIES, 2014 AND 2017, AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO YEARS. MEAN INDEX SCORE.

	2014	2017	Difference
Chernigiv	0.51	2.65	2.14
Pervomaisk	0.34	1.95	1.61
Boryspil	0.74	2.27	1.53
Mykolaiv	0.50	1.88	1.38
Kyiv	1.89	2.73	0.84
Vinnytsya	0.58	1.29	0.71
Pavlograd	0.78	1.48	0.70
Chuhuiv	0.77	1.38	0.61

¹¹ This means that protest activities, which are not correlated with the other items, were not included in the index. Such activities are, however, included in the correspondence analysis presented below. We were left with an index with a Chronbach’s Alpha of 0.85.

Kamanetsk-Podilski	0.69	1.28	0.59
Kryvyi Rih	0.48	1.01	0.53
Dnipro	0.78	1.28	0.50
Korosten	0.83	1.31	0.48
Rivne	1.61	2.08	0.47
Kremenchug	0.62	1.00	0.38
Kharkiv	0.08	0.42	0.34
Cherkasy	0.93	0.91	-0.02
Lviv	1.18	1.12	-0.06
Ivano-Frankivsk	2.01	1.90	-0.11
Lutsk	1.45	1.21	-0.24
Berdiansk	2.03	0.66	-1.37

*Responses 'do not know' and 'refuse to answer' (between 7% and 25% for individual items) have been removed.

Source: AUC Local Democracy Surveys 2014 and 2017.

Again we are interested in the factors that can help to explain individual scores on the participation index. To help us with providing an answer, we performed another multiple linear regression, this time with the participation index as dependent variable and the same independent variables as in the previous regression (exchanging the responsiveness and the participation indices as respectively dependent and independent variables). Results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5: MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION. DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PARTICIPATION INDEX. HIGH VALUE = PARTICIPATED IN MANY ACTIVITIES

	Unst. coeff	Std. err.	Stand. coeff.	Significance
Constant	-2.25	0.34		0.000**
Survey year (low = 2014)	0.58	0.07	0.13	0.000**
Small city (vs. city of regional significance)	0.03	0.12	0.00	0.779
Medium city (vs. city of regional significance)	-0.04	0.09	-0.01	0.669
Capital city (vs. city of regional significance)	0.93	0.17	0.09	0.000**
Eastern or western location (low = East)	0.36	0.08	0.08	0.000**
Gender (low = women)	-0.02	0.07	0.00	0.798
Age (in years)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.928
Educational level (4-point scale)	0.31	0.05	0.11	0.000**
Living standard (4-point scale)	0.11	0.05	0.04	0.021*
Perceived LA responsiveness (index)	0.27	0.06	0.08	0.000**
Interest in local politics (4-point scale)	0.55	0.04	0.23	0.000*
Institutional trust (index)	-0.10	0.05	-0.04	0.045*

**Significant at 0.01 level

*Significant at 0.05 level

This regression gives a rather different picture from the one derived on LA responsiveness (Table 3). Initially it should be mentioned that the strength of this model is considerably lower; with an adjusted R squared of 0.11, only 11 per cent of the variation on participation among respondents can be ascribed to the score on the independent variables. Still, there are many statistically significant effects. Again we find that the difference between the survey years is robust and confirmed also in the multivariate analysis: people participate more in 2017 than in 2014 also after controlling for the other independent variables in the model.

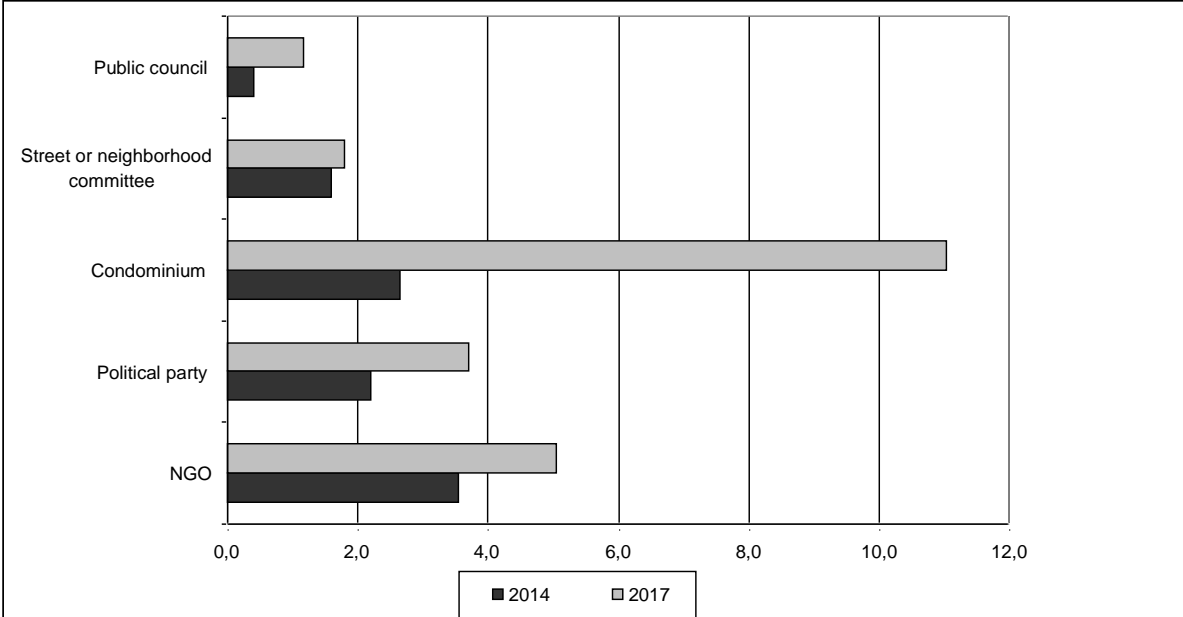
The largest effect (as shown by the unstandardised coefficients) is from the level of interest in local politics. This is reasonable, given that people who are interested tend to engage more also in political activities.

A perhaps surprising finding, however, is that institutional trust, which had a strong and positive effect on LA responsiveness, has a minor *negative* effect on participation levels. It seems people participate locally regardless of their trust in authorities and public institutions. One possible explanation could be that people, to ensure that their voices are heard, see a need to participate more when they do not find public institutions trustworthy. Education as well as subjective living conditions are both positively associated with participation, though for living conditions the effects are quite small. The effects of other demographic characteristics (age and gender) are negligible. There is little difference between cities of different sizes, though people in the capital Kyiv participate considerably more than the average of other city types also after controlling for the independent variables. While location in the east or west of the country was not decisive for the score on the responsiveness index, when it comes to participation, respondents living in the west of Ukraine tend to demonstrate higher levels of political participation than do respondents from cities in the east. Differences in social capital and civic culture between the west and the southeast of Ukraine could be a likely explanation of this finding, analogous to what Putnam (1993) found in southern and northern Italy. Finally there is no surprise that there is an association between the responsiveness index and the participation index which was pointed to also in the first regression.

The 2014 survey confirmed a low level of organizational membership in Ukrainian cities, though it is perceived important for development of local democracy (Putnam, (1993)). In 2017, we observe positive changes among all institutions mentioned in the questionnaire (NGO, political party, condominium, street committee, neighborhood committee, and public council). The most dramatic changes can be observed for membership in condominiums (it increased in more than 4 times¹²), political parties and NGOs (Figure 3). Moreover, in the all categories of organizations, the survey demonstrates the increase not only in the percentage of respondents who participate in the institutions in a formal way, but also of those who are actively involved in these organisations. The number of actively involved persons in 2017 doubled with regard to membership in political parties (up to 1.5% of the respondents) and tripled as regards condominiums (up to 3.1%). The percentage of active members of NGOs increased 1.5 times – up to 3.2% of the respondents.

¹² During the same period (2014-2017) the number of condominiums in Ukraine increased 1.7 times – from 16.2 thousand to 27.4 thousand.

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING MEMBERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS



*Responses ‘do not know’ and ‘refuse to answer’ (less than 1% for individual items) have been removed.

Source: AUC Local Democracy Surveys 2014 and 2017.

For each city, we calculated the mean scores¹³ of membership in each institution, and then calculated differences between 2017 and 2014. It turned out that the difference between the two years of the citizen participation index has a rather strong and statistically significant positive correlation with the difference of the mean scores of memberships in political parties (Pearson’s R = 0.67), street committees (R = 0.67), and public councils (R = 0.46). This means that the changes in respective memberships are associated with the changes in the participation index. On the other hand, the correlations between the difference in the participation index and changes in the membership in NGOs, condominiums and neighbourhood committees are much smaller and not statistically significant.

Finally, it should be noted that even with rather strong signs of progress during the 2014-2017 period, the current level of organizational membership in Ukrainian cities remains quite low.

Correspondence analysis

A complex picture has emerged from regression analysis on citizens’ perception of local authorities’ responsiveness and their own participation in political activities at local level. While these are internally correlated, the predictors of the two phenomena are not the same, and sometimes even contradictory. To obtain a better grasp of the association between the different variables, and some other variables that we believed could further expand the picture, we conducted an exploratory

¹³The 3-point scale ranges from 0 (no membership) to 2 (active membership).

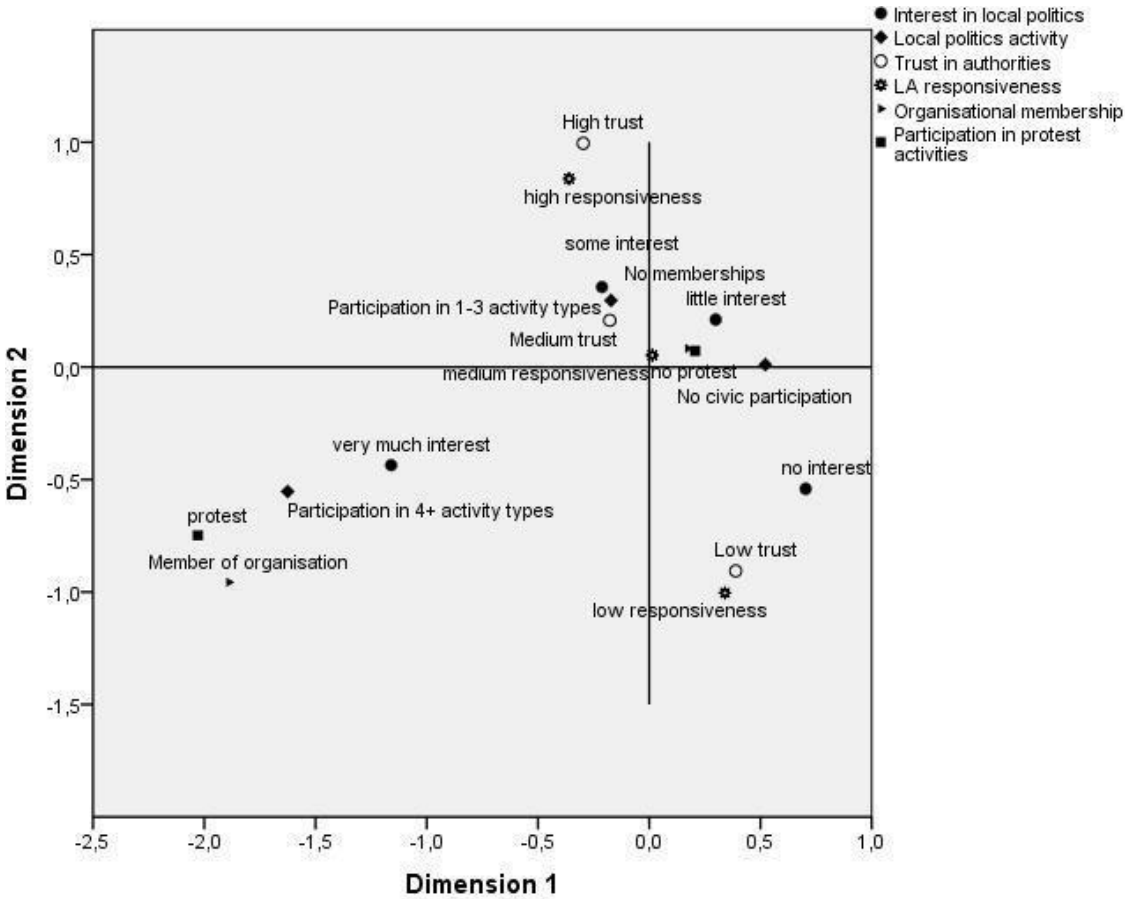
correspondence analysis. In order not to mix the two survey years, we constricted the analysis to the 2017 data.

Correspondence analysis is a data analysis tool that enables underlying structures in a dataset to be revealed. It summarizes the relationship among categorical variables in a large table, and provides a visual presentation that facilitates a holistic interpretation of trends in the data. Categories with similar distributions are represented as points that are close in space, whereas categories with very dissimilar distributions are positioned far apart (Clausen 1998).

In addition to the variables included in the regression analysis we included protest activity to see if protest activity and other types of political activities are part of the same dimension or not. We also included organisational memberships to see how it relates to local political activities.

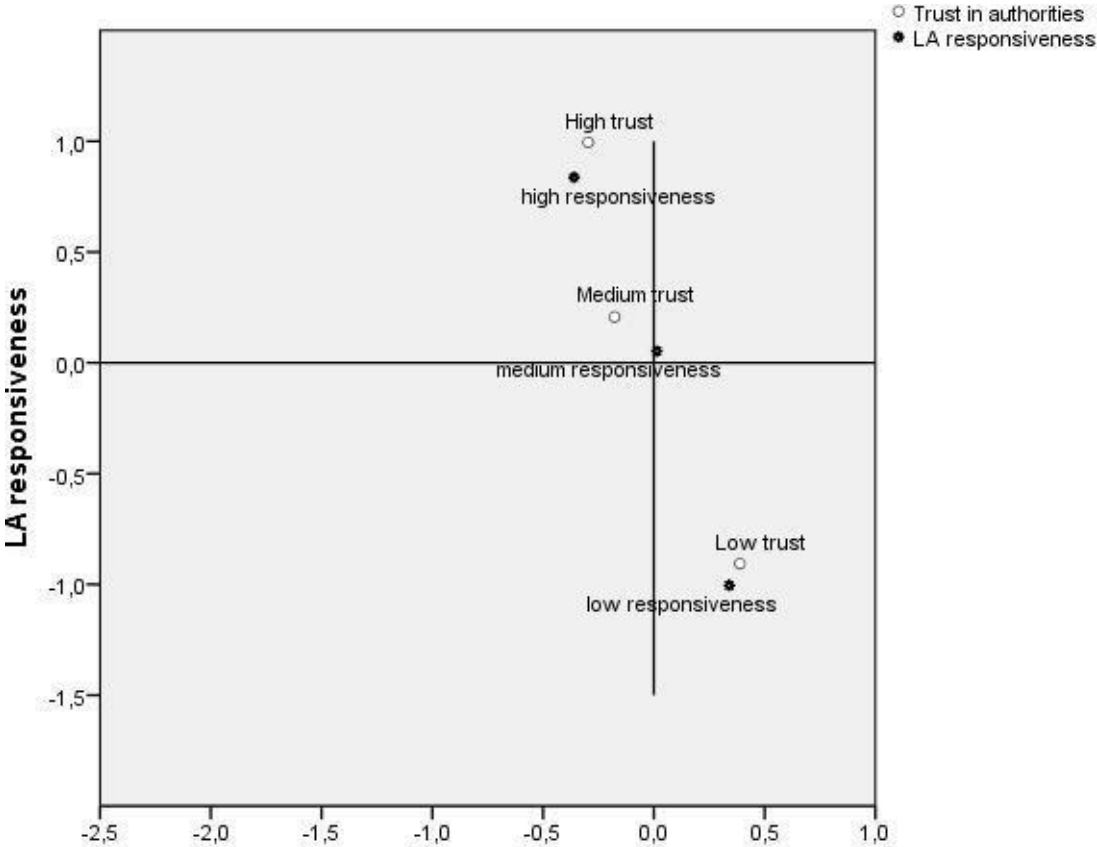
The results of the correspondence analysis are illustrated in the Correspondence Analysis Plot (Figure 4). As the plot is by first sight rather complex, we will go through it step by step.

FIGURE 4: CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS PLOT



The correspondence analysis produces two dimensions. The horizontal dimension we interpret as largely reflecting political engagement and activity levels of the individual. On the right-hand side (the seemingly illogical direction of the dimension where low level of engagement is associated with positive values was produced by our Statistical software) are people who lack interest in local politics, who report no organisational membership, and who have participated in few political activities. On the left-hand side are the politically active (relatively speaking) citizens, with interest in local politics, and higher-than-average participation levels. We term this dimension “civic

FIGURE 6: CORRESPONDEND ANALYSIS PLOT: LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSIVENESS DIMENSION

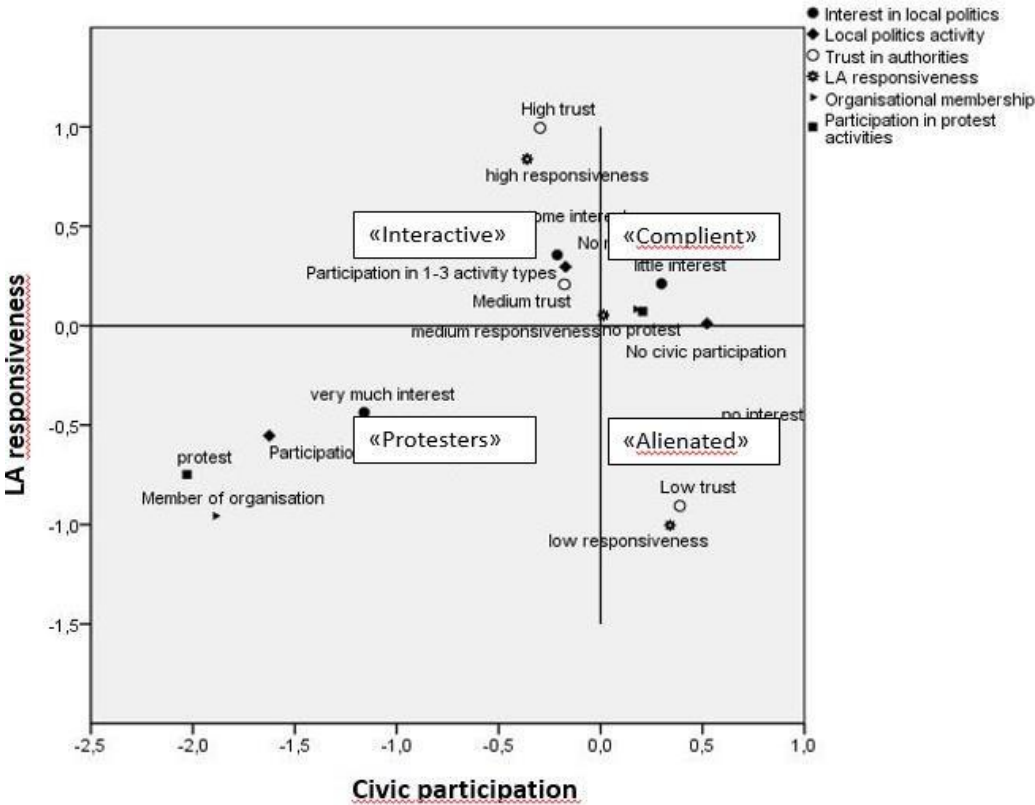


It should be noted that the location in the plot gives average positions of the different groups and categories, and may hide considerable internal variation among different categories of respondents. Moreover, an apparently high score on one dimension does not necessarily represent a high score in objective terms, as both responsiveness and engagement levels are low in Ukraine, and the plot reflects relative levels. Furthermore, since, as we showed in the regression analyses, participation and responsiveness are statistically associated, the categories do not completely match the x- and y-axes of the two dimensions in the plot.

Based on the score on the two dimensions we can identify four “ideal types” of citizens, taken from Aasland and Lyska (2016) (see Figure 7). In the lower right part of the plot, we find the “alienated” citizens. These are people who are dissatisfied with the local authorities and have low trust in institutions. Still, they do not engage in political or civil society activities and do not follow politics. In the lower left end of the scale we find the “protesters”. They have a high level of political and civil society activity (including protests), but tend not to trust the authorities and give a weak assessment of LA responsiveness. In the top left we find the “interactive” citizens, who are engaged individuals who interact with and tend to respond positively regarding the LAs. At the top right are people who we could call “compliant.” They are not overly unhappy about the performance of local government,

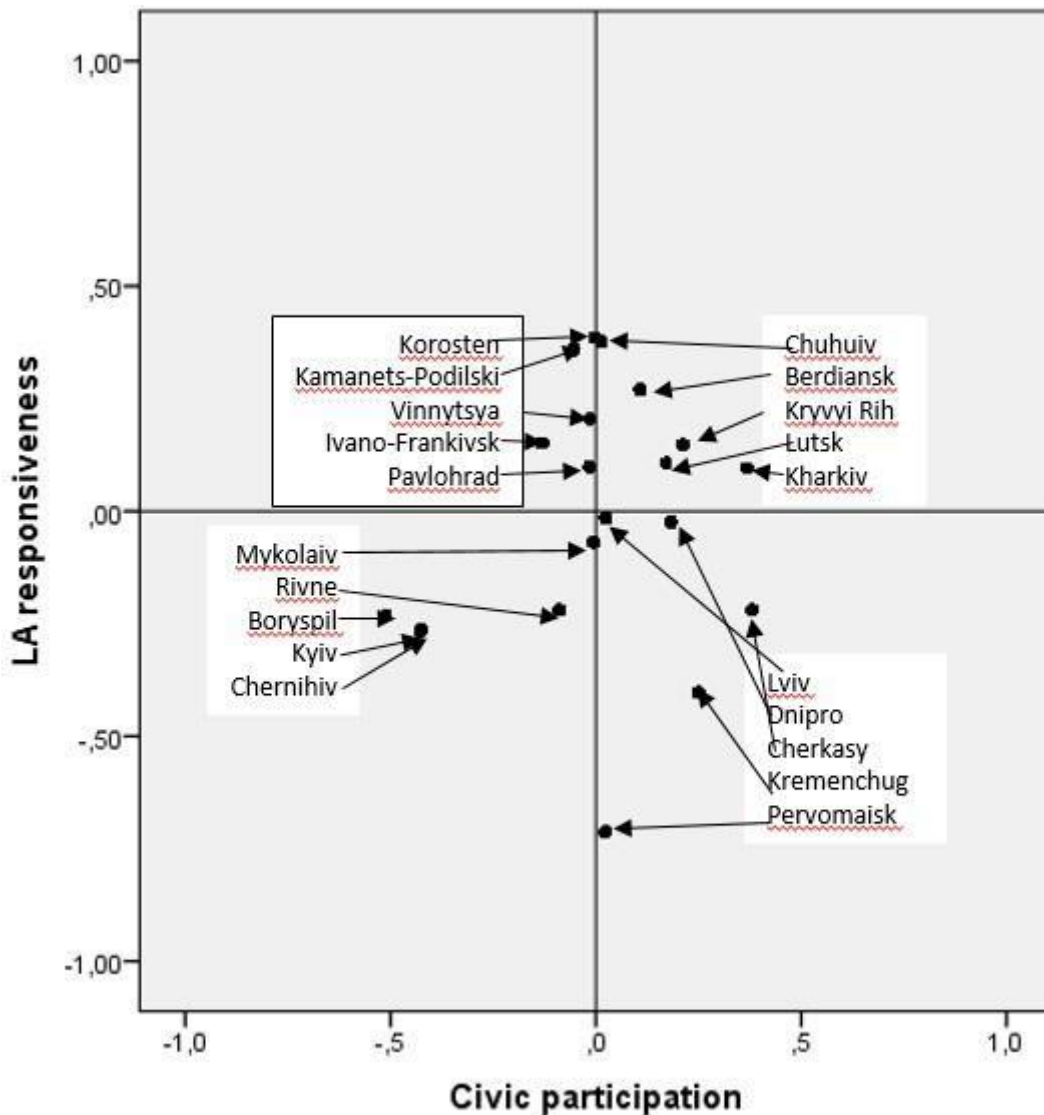
but they are passive and are neither interested nor involved in political or civil society activities themselves.

FIGURE 7: CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS PLOT: TYPOLOGY OF CITIES



Based on mean scores of inhabitants of individual cities, we have positioned the cities into the correspondence analysis plot (Figure 8). Five cities are located in the 'alienated' part of the plot: Pervomaisk, Dnipro, Kremenchug, Cherkasy and Lviv. Five are compliant: Lutsk, Chuhuiv, Kryvyi Rih, Berdiansk and Kharkiv. Then we have five cities of the 'protester' type: Chernihiv, Boryspil, Kyiv, Rivne and Mykolaiv. The final five cities fall into the 'interactive' category: Vinnytsya, Korosten, Pavlohrad, Ivano-Frankivsk and Kamanets-Podilski.

FIGURE 8: CORRESPONDEND ANALYSIS PLOT: CITY LOCATION IN THE PLOT



It should be stressed that these results are indicative and should be read with some caution, and we again emphasise the exploratory nature of the analysis. As shown by the plot, many of the cities have results for one or both the dimensions close to the mean (0), and the relatively low number of respondents in each city furthermore makes our estimates somewhat uncertain. Cities that are near each other in the plot are grouped in different categories, and with cities that are further apart from them when it comes to position in the plot. However, for the most distinctive cities within each of the categories the findings are likely to be robust, as differences between cities on both dimensions are more than large enough to be statistically significant.

This should also be kept in mind when comparing the results of 2014 with those of 2017. Table 6 shows the distribution of cities in the two survey years. We see that the majority of cities have changed position, only 7 out of the 20 surveyed cities have remained in the same position over the two surveys. None of the “interactive” cities from 2014 have moved into the “alienated” position, and three of them have remained “interactive”: Vinnitsya, Korosten and Kamanets-Podilski. Pavlohrad has seemingly had the most dramatic, and argueably positive, move from being “alienated” to becoming “interactive”. However, when looking at the plot, this city is close to the

mean on both dimensions. Cherkasy is the only city that has remained “alienated” in the two surveys. However, it should be noted that the results are relative and that the plots give average scores in 2014 and 2017, where the mean in both years is 0 on both dimensions. Thus, the improvement on the two dimensions that has been recorded in the period between the two survey years is not reflected in the correspondence plot.

TABLE 6: PATTERNS OF “CITIZEN TYPES” IN 20 UKRAINIAN CITIES IN 2014 AND 2017 SURVEYS, BASED ON CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS RESULTS.

		2017			
		Alienated	Compliant	Protesters	Interactive
2014	Alienated	Cherkasy	Chuhuiv, Kryvyi Rih	Chernihiv, Mykolaiv	Pavlohrad
	Compliant	Pervomaisk, Dnipro, Kremenchug	Kharkiv		
	Protesters	Lviv		Kyiv, Rivne	Ivano-Frankivsk
	Interactive		Lutsk, Berdiansk	Borispyl	Vinnytsya, Korosten, Kamanets-Podilski

There could be many reasons for the change of position from 2014 to 2017. Cities that have seen an improvement may have targeted the interaction between citizens and local authorities as one of the priorities in LA work and introduced qualitatively new measures to this end. However, also cities that observe a relative deterioration may have done many of the right things, but people’s expectations may have risen resulting in a more critical assessment. Furthermore, some objective conditions may have changed, e.g. labour market or economic issues, with a negative impact on the public mood. Thus, one should be careful about making a direct link between LA performance and citizens’ assessments and political involvement. While explanations for the results of individual cities vary, this is outside of the scope of this chapter.¹⁴

Better or worse?

What do the results from the local democracy surveys of 2014 and 2017 tell us about local democracy developments during the post-Euromaidan period? As shown in previous sections, both in terms of citizens’ perceived responsiveness of local authorities as well as, and in particular, citizen political participation at local level we have seen signs of progress in most cities. A caution is that we see improvement mostly in inhabitants’ assessment of the way local authorities distribute resources and information but a negative tendency when they evaluate their own possibilities for influencing politics locally. Still, people *do* participate more actively in politics according to our survey data. The question then is what they get in return for their participation.

¹⁴ As part of the project dissemination researchers visited 10 of the cities participating in the survey.

While differences in citizens' responses between 2014 and 2017 for the most part appear as relatively modest, a clear sign of progress is also reflected in respondents' answers when they in a direct question are asked whether the performance of local government has improved or deteriorated since the start of decentralisation reform (i.e. April 2014). Only 11 percent say that the LA performance is worse, 39 percent that it is as before, 41 percent claim that it has improved, while the remaining 9 percent are undecided. Again it is trust in authorities that is the strongest predictor of respondents' assessments. Whether or not people themselves participate actively has no statistically effect on the response to this question. It is noteworthy that neither is eastern or western location relevant for citizens' opinion on progress. However, in line with the above-mentioned argument that cities of oblast significance have benefited the most from the decentralisation reforms (Levitas and Djikic 2017), it is exactly in these cities where people are most satisfied with the LA post-Euromaidan performance. Older people are more negative than the younger generation, but gender, educational level or living conditions are of little relevance.

Another promising sign, at least from the authorities' perspective, is that people are positively inclined towards the ongoing Ukrainian decentralisation reform: 39 percent support it, 30 percent are neutral, and only 18 percent express opposition (the remaining 13 percent are undecided or did not want to answer). Again we performed a regression analysis (not shown here), and the results demonstrate that experienced improvement at local level is the most decisive item for predicting support to the reform. This is a clear indication that the reform needs to have a positive impact on people's local lives to be supported. The size of the city does not affect the results, perhaps surprisingly given the claim that the larger cities of regional significance have benefited more than smaller cities and towns. However, it may be explained by the fact that the territorial aspects of the reform have until now for the most part affected smaller geographical units. Neither is east/west location relevant; people all over the country are equally supportive. Trust in authorities, not unexpectedly given the previous results, is positively associated with support to the reform. Women are more positively inclined towards the decentralisation reform than men are, but we do not observe any strong generational differences. The well educated and those with a higher living standard are the most supportive, perhaps because they have been reaping more benefits of the reform.

Our analysis has shown that even if there have been clear signs of progress, people at the end of 2017 were still in general more negative than positive towards LA performance. One should not underestimate the importance of the fact that decentralisation reforms have been introduced under very difficult circumstances, with an ongoing violent conflict in the eastern part of the country and with economic setbacks and turbulence for many. The mass acceptance of and even support to decentralisation reform as indicated in the survey is therefore highly desirable, and possibly necessary to secure stability. At the same time our survey results indicate that the extremely low level of trust expressed in public institutions, and especially at national level, is likely to be a hindrance for even faster improvements. Ukrainian authorities have the daunting task of handling the conflict in the east while at the same time proceeding with pressing domestic reforms, including meaningful decentralisation. To enhance public trust the battle against corruption and arbitrary exercise of power seems particularly important as the goals of territorial and fiscal decentralisation are unlikely to be reached unless fundamental anti-corruption measures are undertaken.

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