A Country-Specific Analysis of Social Trust Formation: The Case of Ukraine

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Abstract

While social trust is seen as an important factor for political, economic and social progress in the world, its country-specific mode of formation still remains under-researched. This study focuses on Ukraine as a primary subject of analysis and attempts to define major predictors that contribute to yielding or undermining trust levels in this country's peculiar context. A special attention is paid to the impact that the recent war with Russia has conducted on the patterns of social trust building among the Ukrainian population. The analysis is based on applying a multilevel model to the World Values Survey (WVS) data from the pre-war and the in-war periods (2011 and 2020). The results are used to argue that the process of social trust emergence is largely influenced by political conditions in Ukraine and closely linked by the Ukrainians to the issues of national identity and liberal democracy.

Keywords: social trust, Ukraine, democracy, military conflict, WVS

A Country-Specific Analysis of Social Trust Formation: The Case of Ukraine

The role that social trust performs at the individual and societal levels is well-recognized in research. Social trust promotes economic growth, raises the quality of democracy and contributes to the institutional stability in a country.[1] While acting as a foundation for cooperation, trust in others enables social inclusion and fosters social cohesion in society.[2] Considering the importance of social trust, it is not supersizing that a large number of studies attempt to define its factors and mechanisms of formation. In spite of the significant controversy that exists around this issue, researchers generally agree that the process of trust building is often a country-specific phenomenon. Determinants that can be crucial for social trust emergence in one country may turn to be insignificant or only conduct a marginal effect in the context of another state.

This study focuses on Ukraine and seeks to detect key predictors that shape social trust levels in this country's peculiar political, economic and social conditions. The choice of Ukraine as a subject of analysis is interesting for three reasons. First, this nation belongs to the group of post-soviet economies that have experienced a membership in the Soviet Union with the long-lasting adherence to the collectivist values and equality. Usually, both experiences lead to the prevalence of pro-social behavior in society, yielding more trust and a certain specificity in the patterns of its formation. Second, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country embarked on a stable path toward democracy and a market economy. Since these processes have ultimately been gaining in intensity in the last decade, Ukraine constitutes a good case for studying how the new modes of political and economic governance could influence social trust levels or change the distribution of weights among the key trust determinants in the course of transition. Third,

while the recent turn to the West caused a military confrontation with Russia, Ukraine may provide a contemporary example illustrating the mechanism in which a war may affect social trust formation among the local population.

Social Trust Formation: A Brief Literature Overview

Trust is a complex and elusive concept. Limited to trust in strangers, social trust is often seen as a partly habituated, embodied way of engaging with others and the world.[3] In classifying major sources of trust formation, literature usually offers two broad approaches — the dispositional and the experiential. The dispositional theories reduce social trust to a trait of one's character or disposition formed in a country's specific conditions and often understood as a cultural attribute.[4] Defined as an internal characteristic, trusting is often linked to one's psychology and emotions that influence confidence in others by regulating the level of positive affect for the object of trust. Both view social trust as a subject to genetic transmission, while referring to the family as a source for early trust experiences. Children are believed to learn from their parents whether or not to trust strangers or in which particular situations trust can be displayed.[5] The intergenerational connections are also justified by psychological and neural predispositions as mechanisms through which social trust can be genetically predefined and transmitted from the parent to the child.[6]

Alternatively, the dispositional approach examines social trust in relation to one's social position that endows the individual with a certain perspective on the world. In this case, social trust formation is directly linked to the concept of self-perception[7]. Analyzing others through oneself produces trust by allowing the trustor to feel competent in judging trustworthiness of strangers[8] or by drawing similarities in social identities with others.[9]

The experiential approach rests on the premise that social trust is an action. Since the action requires an interaction with others, the experiential theories focus on socialization as the most important source of social trust formation.[10] Framed through the experiences with others, the process of trust creation and maintenance is often reduced to the assessment of others' trustworthiness. Trust is expected to emerge from judging others as trustworthy people,[11] or from calculating the probability of being deceived as generally low.[12] Information about others serves as the foundation for the evaluation of trustworthiness that tends to accumulate as one's social interactions grow in numbers. The individual gathers information about outcomes from previous interactions and feeds it then back into appraisal of new ones,[13] making trust an experiential phenomenon that evolves over time.

Although many experiential studies question the importance of the individual's dispositional characteristics, they still recognize that one's intelligence level is an influential factor in trust building. Individuals with better intelligence are argued to be more able to define the probabilities of both potential gains and losses in social interactions and are hence more likely to trust others.[14] The analysis of intelligence is though often externalized from the individual's endowments to the experience with education. Higher education is viewed as effectively raising one's chances of separating trustworthy from untrustworthy behavior[15] or developing risk-taking involved in the interactive processes.[16]

Unlike the dispositional approach, the experiential perspective goes beyond the individual and incorporates the environment into the analysis of trust formation. By limiting the environment to formal settings, the institutional theory brings forward the state and argues that social trust is defined by the quality of national institutions in terms of just administrative procedures and civil servants.[17] For people to trust each other, the state should be just and fair in

the eyes of the citizens.[18] In addition to institutions, the environmental view includes the issue of inequality as the foundation for creating bonds, and hence trust, among the individuals in society.[19] The initial research focuses on economic polarization as a source for a loss of a great deal of trust in others.[20] More recent research expands the concept of inequality beyond its economic relevance to language and ethnic diversity by framing these forms of fractionalization in society as influential factors creating imbalances in interactions among individuals.[21]

The environment is also studied in terms of security that the individual feels in the process of defining trust levels. In a narrow sense, the notion of security is limited to one's community or neighborhood. Making the individual feel secure is necessary, if not sufficient, when placing trust into their co-citizens.[22] In a broader sense, security is expanded to military conflicts and includes the impact that wars produce on social trust in society.[23] Logically, wars are argued to negatively correlate with trust levels among the respondents, while their ultimate effect is seen as a subject to the character of the conflict. Ethnic wars are expected to yield more trust in society via the state's discourse on collective threat. Ideological wars, by contrast, are shown to undermine social trust since they lack a similar discourse on a common aggressor but increase personal insecurities and losses.[24]

Applied to the scope of my analysis, trust theories suggest that there are two key sources for social trust formation in Ukraine. On the one hand, there are dispositional factors stemming from culture and characterized as relatively inflexible. On the other hand, there is an environment, shaped by political, economic and social conditions, that is a more dynamic concept able to alter over relatively short period of time. In order to clarify how both types of determinants should enter a trust model in the case of Ukraine, I first focus on overviewing major feature and events that characterize the local society and national context.

Ukraine's Context for Trust Building

With the independence proclaimed in 1991, Ukraine has commenced to build a national state by promoting democratic forms of governance and a free market economy.[25] The democratization process as "the government by the people" required the definition of "the people" and thus raised the question of national identity.[26] Defining the contours of the nation was supposed to become the priority for politicians and a part of the state-building strategy. The lack of experience with democracy, aggravated by political and economic uncertainty, pushed, however, the nation-building aspirations to the margins of the agenda. While *de jure* independent, Ukraine *de facto* continued to be significantly influenced by Russia.

The first decade of post-communist transition was marked by a pseudo unification framed as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The new entity was expected to replace the former Soviet Union and legitimize Russia's power in the entire post-soviet area.[27] Within the CIS, Russia acted as a "significant other"[28] that resumed the promotion of collective identity on the CIS members and subverted any attempt for their separate existence.[29] In the 1990s and the early 2000s, the identity dominant among the Ukrainian population was increasingly associated with the idea of a "Russian world" – an imagined community based on the Russian language, the Russian culture and the common glorious past.[30] As a consequence, the Ukrainian society appeared to be not united and had no real notion of "us".[31]

In the course of transition, Russia gradually slid toward authoritarianism as an outcome of a hegemonic national identity, adopted by the main political players and society at large. Unexpectedly, more liberal and democratic aspirations emerged among a considerable part of the population in Ukraine. The two countries' polar visions about the future patterns of development

commenced to contradict the nature of their mutual relations. The Orange Revolution of 2004–2005 revealed the existence of pressure for political change, primarily regarding the extent of Russia's influence in Ukraine.[32] Ukraine begun to seek a separate existence, bringing forward the questions of national identity again.[33] In search of a common denominator that would unite the population, the government turned to the Ukrainian language.[34] The single language was expected to achieve both goals — to stress the similarities of the in-groups and draw the differences with those outside of the national community.[35] By introducing a more aggressive language policy and enforcing monolinguistic public education, the state actively promoted Ukrainian as a symbol of nationhood in the country.[36]

Gradually, it became obvious that the nation-building process through language is insufficient in the case of Ukraine. The prevalence of Russian during the Soviet times produced a large discrepancy between ethno-cultural identity and language use, as a result of which the identification with the Ukrainian nation was not associated with speaking Ukrainian.[37] After the onset of independence, this trend only persisted and the strengthening of national identity was not accompanied by a commensurate increase in using Ukrainian.

The collision of conflicting narratives on 'what Ukraine is' and 'what it should be' unveiled the population's dissatisfaction with the country's state- and nation-building processes.[38] The negative sentiments reached their highest point in 2013, when the Ukrainian government's decided to suspend the signing of an association agreement with the European Union in 2013 while instead choosing closer ties to Russia. Large protests were held not just in Western Ukraine, but throughout the East as well, where there is a significant Russian-speaking minority.[39] This time, the major motivation of the Ukrainian population to revolt was the support for democratic values and the desire to trigger the ultimate turn of Ukraine from the

Russian-driven collective identity and authoritarian way of development toward a definite way of the "West". [40]

In response to the anti-Russian movements, Russia invaded Crimea and eastern Ukraine in 2014. The confrontation in the East gradually developed into a "frozen conflict" that could ensure stability of Russia's control in the post-soviet area.[41] Instead of provoking the collapse of Ukrainian statehood, Russia's military aggression succeeded, unexpectedly, in intensifying the process of ethnic identity building to the extent that none would previously imagine possible.[42] More specifically, Russia's aggression promoted a further detachment of language use from national identity.[43] Many Russian-speakers came to identify strongly with the Ukrainian nation without abandoning their accustomed language or even adding Ukrainian as an active part of their communicative repertoire. In parallel, there was a strong mobilization of Ukrainian Russian-speakers on the side of the government. Rebels of the East were suspected of violating or disregarding socio-cultural, ideological, and religious values of their ethnic group, encouraging Russian-speaking minority to reconsider their sense of national identity. Third-party (Russia's) pro-rebel intervention only aggravated the situation and triggered mass ethnic defection.[44] The Ukrainian population begun to see Russia as the aggressor in a war that threatened national independence. The presence of an external aggressor contributed to uniting the population and boosting their sense of ethnic belonging and pride.[45] Taking into account recent events in Ukraine, I argue that the country-specific mode in social trust building lies in the local context's characteristics and the high pace of their change in the last decade. More specifically, these contextual peculiarities can be summarized into five district features.

First, there was a significant turn to the western type of development in the last decade. Ukraine's recent aspiration for liberal democracy and independent state/nation-building can

bring about a certain distinctiveness in the relationship between social trust and political variables. The stark adherence to the democratic type of governance and the idea of Ukraine as an ultimately independent state suggest an increased role that any democracy-related variables should play in social trust formation among the local population.

Second, initially low levels of identification with the Ukrainian nation point out to a weak process of bonding in society. Social trust requires feeling common bonds with others and hence trust emergence in Ukraine can be closely related to the process of national identity formation. The government's recent focus on promoting the identification with the Ukrainian nation should contribute to uniting the population and creating a closer society of "us." The identity building should also yield more trust in society as a whole, by creating more connections among the population.

Third, Ukraine is characterized by the presence of a large Russian-speaking minority that produces a substantial level of language fractionalization in the country. The latter can be a source for serious imbalances in interactions among the local population, undermining social trust formation in society. People display more trust when they feel connected to their co-citizens, while speaking the same language is a strong way to bond with other individuals. Considering the size of the minority group (50 percent), along with the relative homogeneity of their members (mostly Russian-speaking individuals), language fractionalization can be expected to have a strong negative impact on trust scores in Ukraine, exceeding the data found for other countries.

Fourth, the war with Russia is presumably the most distinct feature that Ukraine possesses at the moment. Since the current military conflict is defined as an aggression by another country, the need to defend common interests may strengthen bonds among the local

population. Increased bonding caused by the presence of a common aggressor should contribute to raising social trust in society. More specifically, I anticipate a rise in social trust levels among Ukrainians in the aftermath of the war between Ukraine and Russia.

Fifth, the recent military confrontation with Russia is an important source of change in the country's political, economic and social characteristics that have caused a substantial redefinition of values and preferences among the local population. As such, the recent war represents a break in the path of Ukraine's development that should inevitably influence the pattern of social trust formation, as well. In particular, I anticipate that there should be substantial differences in the mode of social trust building between the pre-war and the in-war periods.

In line with the defined directions of specificities in Ukraine as a state and society, I hypothesize that:

H.1.: A more positive evaluation of democracy is related to more social trust among the Ukrainian population.

H.2.: Individuals who tend to identify themselves with the Ukrainian nation or have a stronger sense of national pride are characterized by higher levels of social trust.

H.3.: Individuals who use the Ukrainian language as the main language of communication at home have more social trust than individuals who speak other languages at home.

H.4.: The war is associated with a positive impact on social trust among the population of Ukraine.

H5.: The pre-war period differs from the in-war period in the pattern of social trust formation among the population of Ukraine.

Data and Methods

I use data from the World Values Survey to analyze social trust formation in Ukraine. Two most recent waves are employed in the analysis – 2011 and 2020. The wave of 2011 is referred to as a pre-war measurement point since it was characterized by stability in Ukraine-Russia relations, along with the dominance of pro-Russian sentiments among the Ukrainian population. The wave of 2020 is taken as an in-war data source since this period envisaged a sharp deterioration in the two countries' mutual relations and the presence of a military conflict in the East of Ukraine. The sample includes 1846 cases in total, out of which 1134 cases correspond to 2011 and 712 cases correspond to 2020.

A multilevel model is used to account for the data's hierarchical structure,[46] with regions (oblast) constituting a second level of analysis. The need to control for the regional level is justified by historical specificities of Ukraine's territorial formation. Partitioned between many countries, Ukraine experienced their heterogenous influence in the course of its political and social development, with regions effectively capturing patterns of these differences. The base model takes the following form:

$$Social\_trust_{ij} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 Religious_{ij} + \gamma_2 Religion\_types_{ij} + \gamma_3 Health_{ij} + \gamma_4 Happiness_{ij}$$
$$+\gamma_5 Democracy_{ij} + \gamma_6 Ethnic\_group_{ij} + \gamma_7 National\_pride_{ij} + \gamma_8 Language\_group_{ij} +$$
$$\gamma_9 Market\_values_{ij} + \gamma_{10} Feel\_insecure_{ij} + \gamma_{11} War\_dummy_{ij} + \gamma_{12} War\_worries_{ij} + \gamma_{13} X_{ij} + m_{0j} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Here, *Social_trust* is the measure of social trust operationalized through the question "generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people?" Trust is codified as a dichotomous variable that takes the value of one if

the respondents believe that “most people can be trusted” and the value of zero if they think that “you need to be careful when dealing with people.” Experimental studies demonstrate that the survey question, that assesses trust in imaginary strangers, provides objective and empirically valid measures of confidence to others.[47]

Dispositional determinants of trust are limited to religiosity levels (*Religious*) and religion types (*Religion_types*). Attachment to God has been found to contribute to the definition of self and others and thereby to the feeling of trust.[48] One’s religiosity is approximated through the frequency with which one attends religious services. The initial responses are provided on an eight-point measurement scale and are further recorded to vary between zero “more than once a week” and one “never.” Religion types are captured by five dummies taking the value of one if the individual adheres to the respective religious denomination: Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim or other religions. Atheists are used as a reference category.

In addition, I include H*ealth* and *Happiness* variables. Health is a self-defined score reflecting one’s health condition varying from one “very good health” to five “very poor health.” Happiness refers to a four-point scale capturing the extent to which the respondents feel happy. The initial responses are used to create a dummy that takes the value of one if the respondents feel “very happy” or “quite happy” and the value of zero if the respondents choose “not really happy” or “not at all happy.”

Democracy is operationalized through the question asking the respondents to evaluate the level of democracy in their country by using a ten-point scale. The responses are recorded to vary between zero “not at all democratic” to one “completely democratic.” *Ethnic_group* describes ethnic fractionalization in society and is measured through three dummies — Ukrainian, Russian and other ethnicities. The dummies take the value of one if the respondents

choose the relevant ethnicity group as a group they feel to belong to. *National_pride* is measured through the WVS question about the extent of pride that the individuals feel about the Ukrainian nation. The responses are combined into a dichotomous variable by assigning the value of one to positive choices ("quite proud" and "very proud") and the value of zero to the initially negative responses ("not really proud" and "not at all proud"). *Language_group* captures the extent of language fractionalization and is operationalized through three dummies derived from the question that asks respondents to specify which language (Ukrainian, Russian or other languages) they use to communicate at home.

In addition, I include *Market_values* that represent a set of variables approximating the extent to which the responds adhere to liberal values and include five items. The first refers to the preference for economic differentiation in society. The responses vary from one "incomes should be made more equal" to ten "we need larger income differences as incentives." The second describes one's preferences for private versus state property and includes responses that change from one "private ownership should be increased" to ten "government ownership should be increased." The third measures the attitude toward competition, with values ranging from one "competition is good" to ten "competition is harmful." The fourth describes the level of self-reliance that the respondents consider acceptable as opposed to the state support. The responses change between one "people should take more responsibility" to ten "the government should be made more responsible." The fifth estimates the preference for democratic values, with responses fluctuating between one "democracy is not at all important for society" and ten "democracy is absolutely important." The five items' initial responses have been recorded to vary between zero and one, while retaining their ten-point response scale.

Feel_insecure captures insecurity at the local level and is measured through the question asking the respondents to indicate how secure they feel in their neighborhood. The initial responses are combined into a dummy taking the value of one if the respondents feel "very secure" or "quite secure" and the value of zero when the respondents feel "not really secure" or "not at all secure." The level of national security is captured by a *War_dummy* that separates the in-war from the pre-war periods. It takes the value of one if the responses belong to the year of 2020 and the value of zero if the responses belong to the year of 2011. Also, I include *War_worries* that describe the individuals' worries that a lasting war with any other country can occur on their country's territory. The initial responses are recorded into a dummy with the value of one corresponding to "very much worried" or "a great deal worried" and the value of zero corresponding to "not really worried" or "not at all worried."

X is a set of control variables including migrant background and age. In addition, *Income* controls for the individuals' income levels, with the responses changing on a ten-point scale between zero "fully dissatisfied" and one "fully satisfied." Finally, m_{oj} is the country-level variance, while ε_{ij} is the individual-level variance. The STATA *gllamm* command is utilized to calculate the model's parameters. Since social trust is an ordinal variable, the *ologit* link is specified together with the *binominal* family sub-options. Additionally, I specify the *adapt* option, which causes adaptive quadrature to be used instead of ordinary quadrature. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the key variables used in the analysis.

Table 1 near here

Empirical Results

Model 1 (see Table 2) suggests that dispositional factors play a great role in forming social trust in Ukraine, while their effect is in line with the previous findings. The level of religiosity has a positive impact on trust scores, with trust increasing among more religious individuals. Starting to attend a church once a week from never can increase the odds of trusting by 2.117 times. The Orthodox denomination prevails as a religion type among the population and is associated with less trust than atheists. The individuals adhering to the Orthodox religion are 1.551 times less likely to trust strangers than atheists.

Among the individual-level determinants, the respondent's health condition has the strongest negative effect. The odds of trusting are 3.669 times lower among the individuals with poor health than among the individuals in good health condition. The lack of a credible health insurance system, managed by the state, or well-functioning private insurance leads to the situation in which the individuals with health problems need to fund their treatment and pay medicine alone. In combination with low income and pension levels, this produces a lot of financial and psychological strain in society, undermining social trust. In line with previous studies, feeling happy yields more trust among the respondents in Ukraine, probably through raising one's optimism levels. The odds of trusting others are 1.408 times higher for those who feel absolutely or to a great extent happy rather than for those who describe themselves as unhappy.

Table 2 near here

Model 2 (see Table 2) presents a trust regression augmented by the political factors. Logically, democracy is positively associated with social trust levels among the Ukrainian

population. The odds of trusting are 1.578 times higher among the respondents who assign better values to the quality of democracy. In spite of the statistical significance of 5 percent found for the democracy variable, I consider this to be evidence supporting Hypothesis 1. A relatively recent experience with democracy, along with the immaturity of democratization as a process, may explain a low significance level found for the democracy variable in the case of Ukraine.

An opposite effect has been established for another political variable – ethnic identification. The phenomenon has been on the rise over the analyzed period, contributing to creating bonds in the Ukrainian heterogeneous society. Despite this, the respondents who identify themselves as Ukrainians feel less trust, while those feeling Russians have higher trust levels than any other ethnic groups. The odds of trusting are 1.490 times lower among the individuals who identifying themselves with Ukrainians rather than with Russians. This finding negates Hypothesis 2 and points out to the fact that Russians should be well integrated into the Ukrainian society to be so trusting. At the same time, the sense of pride for Ukraine yields more trust in strangers, regardless of the ethnic identity held by the respondents. This can be considered a partial support for Hypothesis 2.

Surprisingly, there is no evidence pointing out to some relationship between the language spoken at home and social trust levels that would support Hypothesis 3. This suggests that language is not a good strategy for uniting the nation and strengthening bonds in society, at least in terms of social trust. Similar to language fractionalization, economic fractionalization (income inequality) shows no association with social trust among the Ukrainian population. The lack of any relationship can be explained by low levels of earnings among the vast majority of the population that results in a very small variation of income across the major population groups.

Interesting is also the fact that the individuals adhering to liberal values are characterized by higher trust levels. More specifically, those in favor of private ownership have the odds of trusting that are 1.782 times higher than for those in favor of public ownership. This effect becomes even stronger after including additional control variables. The deviation from the collective to more liberal norms, that is recently taking place in Ukraine, can thus be expected to contribute to raising trust levels in the country.

Model 3 (see Table 2) includes a set of security variables. At the local level, changing from feeling insecure to feeling secure raises the odds of trusting by 2.186 times. Low confidence that Ukrainians have to the police and courts, along with the poor quality of their services, can explain the strong relationship that feeling secure develops to social trust in society. At the national level, individuals who worry about a lasting war in Ukraine have significantly lower trust levels than others (-0.434). In line with the expectations, controlling for the war dummy shows that social trust has increased in the in-war period compared to the pre-war period. The odds of trusting are 1.616 times higher in 2020 than in 2011. The war with Russia brought about an unexpected positive effect by uniting the country's population against the common aggressor. This supports Hypothesis 4.

What strikes most is that the conventional factors capturing socio-demographic characteristics of respondents or their household do not play a significant role in predicting trust among Ukrainians (see Table 2, Model 4). The migration background does not show any relation to the level of social trust. Age only has a marginal effect on trust scores: Older people tend to have slightly higher social trust levels, which is in line with the previous studies. In contrast to other countries' findings, there is only a weak association that the Ukrainian respondents'

satisfaction with income develops to social trust. This can be justified by relatively low and homogenous incomes among the vast majority of the population.

The upper-level error term suggests that there must be some variation in social trust across regions. To account for this variation, I switch to a logit regression and introduce the regional dummies into the social trust regression (see Table 2, Model 5). The five territorial dummies capture the geopolitical division of Ukraine into West, East, Center, South and Kiev and are constructed based on the geographical division map provided by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Administrative_divisions_of_Ukraine#/media/File:Ukraine_KIIS-Regional-division2.png). The autonomous republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, that had a special status and were part of Ukraine in 2011, are included in the South dummy. The results point out that the Eastern regions of Ukraine have higher trust levels than Western, Southern or Central regions. The East of Ukraine does not differ significantly in their social trust only from Kiev, the capital of the country.

Note that the impact of the recent war between Ukraine and Russia goes much beyond the direct effect on social trust. The open confrontation with Russia signified a path break in the institutional, economic and social development of Ukraine and marked the country's embarkment on a definite way toward the liberal democratic governance. This immediately becomes obvious when comparing the mean values for the key variables between the pre-war and the in-war periods (see Table 3). The war enhanced the attachment to more liberal values by requiring more self-reliance from the respondents and legitimizing income inequality. The conflict increased the importance assigned by the individuals to democracy as a form of governance in their country (see Table 3). The war also raised the sense of national identity and

pride and encouraged people to use Ukrainian as the main language of communication. Similarly, the evaluation of democracy and local insecurity levels show an upward trend, especially regarding one's worries about a war (see Table 3).

Table 3 near here

To see whether the war also caused a break in the patterns of social trust formation, I analyze social trust models for the two periods separately (see Table 4). The results show a substantial change in the set of factors defining trust levels in each period, which supports Hypothesis 5. More specifically, religiosity was an important factor of social trust formation in the in-war period while it had no effect in the pre-war period. Similarly, the negative impact of poor health was stronger after the beginning of the Russian aggression. Being seek in a country, where not only national wealth but also personal incomes are collapsing due to inflation caused by the war, can be a dangerous and traumatizing experience that strongly undermines trust in others. Language fractionalization did not affect social trust in any period, while ethnic fractionalization commenced to reduce trust levels after the outbreak of the conflict. Living in the war made people who identify themselves with the Ukrainian nation feel less trust compared to people who identify themselves with Russians, while national identity was a neutral factor in the pre-war period. By contrast, national pride was important for social trust in the pre-war period but showed no relation to social trust in the in-war period.

The actual quality of democracy was necessary for trust building only before the war while during the war, social trust became more sensitive to the extent of importance that the Ukrainian population assign to democracy as a form of governance in their country. A similar

pattern was also found in the case of preferences for state ownership. The war terminated its influence on social trust, while two new variables came into play — state responsibility and to some extent income inequality. Individuals who legitimize income inequality and believe that the state and not individuals should take more responsibility were characterized by lower trust levels.

The negative impact of insecurity on social trust was established in the in-war period while worries about a war strongly related to trust scores in the pre-war period. Interesting is also the fact that the war eliminated the differences in social trust levels across the regions of Ukraine. If the East could be characterized as very different from other regions in the pre-war period, these differences did not re-appear in the in-war sample of 2020. This can be explained by the rise of national identity and patriotism, as well as the internal migration caused by the war, that changed the geopolitical map of social trust in Ukraine. Finally, household income showed a certain relationship to social trust before the war but turned out to be insignificant in yielding trust in the war context. Presumably, economic collapse that occurred with the outbreak of the conflict has eliminated the importance of economic factors for trust building in society bringing political determinants in the forefront of the Ukrainian context.

Table 4 near here

Conclusions and Discussion

This study demonstrates the peculiarities in the patterns of social trust building in the case of Ukraine. A relatively recent turn to religion, that became possible only after the collapse of the Soviet Union, explains the specific pattern that religiosity and religion types develop to trust levels. Poor economic prosperity and relatively immature democratic settings justify a weak role

that these factors play in yielding social trust. The inability of the government to build and enforce a single social security system that would support people in the case of illness or disability can explain a strong impact of heath on the process of social trust formation. The tense relations with Russia, combined with the weak national defense system, justifies the large extent to which worries about a war influence social trust levels among the population.

In addition, social trust formation patterns underwent a profound change in Ukraine in the aftermath of the Russian aggression that impacted not only the country's economic and political systems but also the society as a whole. On the one hand, the war has terminated the impact of conventional determinants of trust, such as democracy, household income, and national identity. Instead, the war has brought forward the issues of security and the importance of liberal democratic values, making them decisive factors in the trust building process. The war also demonstrated the government's inability to handle the conflict and the indifference of the world toward Ukraine, that all in all made Ukrainian people turn to the God and increased the role of the religion-related factors in society.

Future research needs to focus more on exploring the patterns in which the impact of political, economic and social conditions on social trust should vary across countries or country groups. This aspect still remains beyond a close attention and only poorly addressed by research, constraining the understanding of social trust formation processes to the full extent. In addition, the analysis of heterogeneity should be based on longitudinal data in the case of social trust. A longitudinal approach can enable unveiling country-specific modes of trust building, while controlling for the problem of endogeneity and timing in the relationship between various factors and social trust scores.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for the Key Variables

VARIABLES	Mean	St. dev.	Min.	Max.
Social trust	0.276	0.447	0	1
Religious	0.446	2.039	0	1
Religion types				
Atheist	0.099	0.087	0	1
Catholic	0.078	0.268	0	1
Protestant	0.015	0.120	0	1
Muslim	0.004	0.065	0	1
Orthodox	0.768	0.422	0	1
Other	0.036	0.188	0	1
Health	2.694	0.835	1	5
Happiness	0.756	0.429	0	1
Democracy score	0.475	0.248	0	1
Ethnic group				
Ukrainians	0.884	0.458	0	1
Russians	0.093	0.290	0	1
Other	0.023	0.150	0	1
National pride	0.782	0.413	0	1
Language group				
Ukrainians	0.450	0.329	0	1
Russians	0.545	0.498	0	1
Other	0.015	0.123	0	1
Market values				
Income inequality	0.469	0.293	0	1
Government ownership	0.644	0.273	0	1
Competition	0.432	0.268	0	1
State responsibility	0.734	0.272	0	1
Democracy importance	0.800	0.227	0	1
Feel insecure	2.081	0.710	1	4
Worries about a war	0.805	0.396	0	1
Born in the country	0.930	0.255	0	1
Age	47.389	17.467	18	89
Income	0.474	0.238	0	1

Source: Author's own calculations using the WVS (2011 and 2020).

Table 2

Key Determinants of Social Trust Formation in Ukraine

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Religious	-0.750***	-0.596**	-0.723***	-0.701***	-0.825***
	(0.222)	(0.239)	(0.251)	(0.252)	(0.263)
Religion types					
Atheist	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.
Orthodox	-0.439**	-0.508***	-0.612***	-0.611***	-0.662***
	(0.171)	(0.181)	(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.195)
Catholic	-0.313	-0.430	-0.625**	-0.617**	-0.583**
	(0.240)	(0.264)	(0.280)	(0.281)	(0.288)
Protestant	-0.207	-0.055	-0.189	-0.214	-0.254
	(0.405)	(0.418)	(0.440)	(0.442)	(0.443)
Muslim	-0.479	-1.234	-1.231	-1.226	-1.261
	(0.821)	(1.169)	(1.175)	(1.181)	(1.176)
Other	-0.976***	-0.892**	-1.177***	-1.128***	-1.168***
	(0.331)	(0.368)	(0.392)	(0.393)	(0.395)
Health	-1.300***	-1.268***	-1.105***	-1.331***	-1.371***
	(0.311)	(0.343)	(0.357)	(0.407)	(0.409)
Happiness	0.342***	0.257*	0.307**	0.286**	0.293**
	(0.125)	(0.135)	(0.142)	(0.146)	(0.146)
Democracy score		0.456**	0.471**	0.433*	0.456**
		(0.210)	(0.220)	(0.222)	(0.224)
Ethnic group					
Russian		Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.
Ukrainian		-0.399**	-0.543**	-0.621***	-0.614***
		(0.201)	(0.215)	(0.229)	(0.231)
Other		-0.344	-0.443	-0.438	-0.335
		(0.478)	(0.490)	(0.491)	(0.491)
National pride		0.329**	0.300**	0.282*	0.308**
		(0.137)	(0.145)	(0.146)	(0.146)
Language group					
Russian		Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.
Ukrainian		-0.085	-0.152	-0.156	-0.019
		(0.117)	(0.122)	(0.123)	(0.147)
Other		-0.023	-0.076	-0.069	-0.134
		(0.516)	(0.523)	(0.525)	(0.528)
Market values					
Income inequality		-0.049	-0.377*	-0.382*	-0.449**
		(0.191)	(0.219)	(0.220)	(0.223)
Government ownership		-0.578***	-0.670***	-0.684***	-0.703***
		(0.192)	(0.200)	(0.203)	(0.207)
Competition		-0.336*	-0.283	-0.307	-0.315

		(0.198)	(0.208)	(0.208)	(0.210)
State responsibility		-0.238	-0.147	-0.119	-0.172
		(0.199)	(0.211)	(0.213)	(0.215)
Democracy importance		0.026	0.046*	0.045*	0.056**
		(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.026)
Feel insecure			-0.782**	-0.748**	-0.721**
			(0.317)	(0.318)	(0.319)
War dummy			0.480***	0.457***	0.495***
			(0.132)	(0.133)	(0.135)
Worry about a war			-0.434***	-0.426***	-0.437***
			(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.139)
Born in the country				0.298	0.309
				(0.268)	(0.269)
Age				0.006*	0.006*
				(0.003)	(0.004)
Income				0.320	0.291
				(0.254)	(0.258)
Regions					
East					Ref. cat.
West					-0.624***
					(0.213)
South					-0.526***
					(0.172)
Center					-0.462**
					(0.191)
Kiev					-0.404*
					(0.208)
Constant	0.270	0.752	1.538***	1.017*	1.433**
	(0.320)	(0.490)	(0.536)	(0.595)	(0.610)
Log likelihood	-1309.735	-1141.121	-1057.581	-1050.129	-1047.589
Between-class variance	0.184*	0.244	0.194*	0.186*	
	(0.084)	(0.115)	(0.095)	(0.092)	
R sq.					0.059
Number of level 2 units	27	27	27	27	
Number of level 1 units	1,846	1,846	1,846	1,846	1,846

Source: Author's own calculations using the WVS (2011 and 2020).
Notes: Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 3

A Juxtaposition of Mean Values for the Key Variables between 2011 and 2020

VARIABLES	2011	2020
Social Trust	0.249	0.307
Religious	0.571	0.542
Religion types		
Atheist	0.143	0.035
Orthodox	0.755	0.788
Catholic	0.063	0.101
Protestant	0.019	0.008
Muslim	0.005	0.003
Other	0.015	0.068
Health	0.551	0.525
Happiness	0.713	0.806
Democracy score	0.451	0.504
Ethnic group		
Russian	0.140	0.037
Ukrainian	0.827	0.951
Other	0.033	0.012
National pride	0.716	0.855
Language group		
Russian	0.481	0.392
Ukrainian	0.501	0.596
Other	0.018	0.012
Market values		
Income inequality	0.348	0.616
Government ownership	0.666	0.616
Competition	0.445	0.414
State responsibility	0.798	0.657
Democracy importance	0.781	0.821
Feel insecure	0.516	0.525
Worry about a war	0.695	0.928
Born in the country	0.907	0.957
Age	47.000	47.000
Income	0.454	0.497

Source: Author's own calculations using the WVS (2011 and 2020).

Table 4

A Comparative Analysis of Social Trust Formation in Ukraine between the Pre-War and In-War Periods

VARIABLES	2011	2020
Religious	-0.125	-1.479***
	(0.338)	(0.444)
Religion types		
Atheist	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.
Orthodox	-0.335	-0.897**
	(0.226)	(0.445)
Catholic	-0.142	-0.951*
	(0.390)	(0.546)
Protestant	0.153	0.120
	(0.516)	(0.988)
Muslim	-0.457	-0.685
	(0.984)	(1.820)
Other	-0.124	-1.733***
	(0.595)	(0.643)
Health	-0.903*	-1.994***
	(0.548)	(0.671)
Happiness	0.185	0.383
	(0.182)	(0.276)
Democracy score	0.649**	0.339
	(0.307)	(0.363)
Ethnic group		
Russian	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.
Ukrainian	-0.252	-1.311***
	(0.268)	(0.503)
Other	-0.343	-0.312
	(0.554)	(1.292)
National pride	0.450***	-0.024
	(0.174)	(0.302)
Language group		
Russian	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.
Ukrainian	-0.297	0.342
	(0.183)	(0.275)
Other	0.798	0.367
	(0.629)	(0.539)
Market values		
Income inequality	-0.053	-0.627*

	(0.299)	(0.370)
Government ownership	-0.943***	-0.436
	(0.258)	(0.392)
Competition	-0.401	-0.066
	(0.274)	(0.374)
State responsibility	0.240	-0.783**
	(0.297)	(0.356)
Democracy importance	0.041	0.098**
	(0.032)	(0.047)
Feel insecure	-0.493	-1.224**
	(0.415)	(0.560)
Worry about a war	-0.427***	-0.331
	(0.155)	(0.357)
Born in the country	0.375	0.051
	(0.321)	(0.532)
Age	0.008*	0.004
	(0.004)	(0.006)
Income	0.640*	0.083
	(0.332)	(0.467)
Regions		
East	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.
West	-1.228***	0.275
	(0.279)	(0.423)
South	-0.560***	-0.236
	(0.204)	(0.372)
Center	-0.495**	-0.097
	(0.233)	(0.397)
Kiev	-0.690**	0.317
	(0.274)	(0.406)
Constant	-0.214	3.493***
	(0.765)	(1.244)
R sq.	0.075	0.107
Log likelihood	-607.814	-408.542
Observations	1,134	712

Source: Author's own calculations using the WVS (2011 and 2020).
Notes: Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

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