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Abstract

Conflicts generate profound shocks that destabilize political systems and erode the legitimacy of governing regimes. In the context of Ukraine, these adverse effects have taken on a distinct form, referred to here as the "Ukrainian Syndrome." The phenomenon describes the paradoxical coexistence of a strong belief in the democratic regime with a significant distrust in the political institutions that uphold it. This study seeks to explain the Ukrainian Syndrome by examining the processes of institutional trust formation. The analysis is based on data from a nationally representative survey conducted in November 2024, utilizing fsQCA as the primary methodological framework. The findings reveal that individuals tend to base their trust in political institutions on pragmatic evaluations of institutional performance, largely disregarding ideological commitments to democracy or optimism about Ukraine’s long-term statehood in these assessments. As a result, Ukrainians' aspirations for and commitment to democratic governance persist independently of their trust in democratic institutions.

Keywords: trust, institutions, democracy, Ukraine, fsQCA.

JEL Classification: C1, K4, P2.

Introduction

Ukrainians have traditionally exhibited a complex relationship with political institutions, characterized by widespread skepticism and, in many cases, outright distrust. Numerous studies have documented persistently low levels of confidence in most institutions of Ukraine, even prior to the outbreak of conflict (Izha et al., 2020). The country is often viewed as an outlier among post-communist democracies, as it consistently demonstrates significantly lower levels of institutional trust compared to other nations in the region (Mishler and Rose, 2001).

The onset of the full-scale invasion in February 2022 initially led to a significant increase in institutional trust (KIIS, 2023), reflecting heightened societal hope for transformative change. However, this surge was soon followed by a marked decline in trust across all institutions, with the notable exception of the military, underscoring a widespread erosion of confidence in political and governance structures (Ilchenko, 2023; Tamilina, 2024b).

This dynamic trajectory of institutional trust contradicts key tenets of conflict theory. External conflicts usually create a unifying shock that strengthens solidarity within society and fosters alignment between the population and the state in the face of a common enemy (Grosjean, 2014). Such shocks are theorized to catalyze radical institutional transformations, paving the way for resolving pre-existing systemic issues. These theoretical expectations were not realized in Ukraine's case. Instead, the protracted nature of the conflict exacerbated the pre-existing challenges, resulting in low levels of institutional trust.

Furthermore, this phenomenon has taken on a particularly distinct character in Ukraine. Amid a war fought for independence from Russia—and, by extension, for the preservation of democracy—individuals exhibit profound distrust in the very institutions that enable and structure the functioning of democracy, such as the government, parliament, electoral

commissions, local administrations, and courts. In parallel to this pervasive institutional distrust, Ukrainians continue, however, to uphold strong aspirations for a democratic regime. We term this paradoxical situation the "Ukrainian Syndrome," reflecting the coexistence of unwavering belief in democracy as an ideal with a deep-seated skepticism toward the institutions tasked with upholding democracy.

The current research attempts to clarify this phenomenon by attributing it to specific patterns of institutional trust formation in Ukraine. The analysis seeks to identify the various combinations of factors that contribute to both low and high levels of institutional trust. Its methodological novelty lies in moving beyond conventional regression analysis to investigate cross-individual variations in trust levels. Instead, it employs fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) as the primary analytical tool. The empirical investigation is based on data from a unique survey conducted in November 2024, involving a nationally representative sample of the Ukrainian population.

The analysis shows that institutional trust in Ukraine is primarily pragmatic, relying on evaluations of institutional performance instead of ideological considerations. Individuals' perceptions of institutions are shaped by measurable political and economic outcomes, not criteria related to ideology. This pragmatic approach enables Ukrainians to separate trust in democratic institutions from the belief in democracy itself. Consequently, Ukrainians maintain their aspirations for democracy even when they lack confidence in institutions supporting it.

The findings from this study offer a dual contribution. First, they extend the performance-based framework of trust formation (e.g., Hadarics, 2016; Zmerli, 2012; Hakhverdian and Mayne, 2017; Hooghe and Zmerli, 2011) by demonstrating that institutional performance remains a key determinant of political trust, even in contexts of conflicts that involve ideological

component. Second, the results have significant implications for policy development in Ukraine. They highlight the potential of enhancing trust in institutions through outcome-oriented policies, even if such policies deviate from national ideological narratives.

Literature review

Institutional trust refers to a faith that citizens place in political actors and institutions not to act in ways that will do them harm (Hakhverdian and Mayne, 2012; Miller, 1974). The literature identifies several mechanisms through which institutional trust is formed that can be broadly categorized into two main strands (Mishler and Rose, 2001). The first one assumes that this trust is exogenous, i.e. it originates outside of the political sphere. Specifically, it is considered a product of culture, representing long-standing and deeply ingrained beliefs rooted in cultural norms and established socialization patterns (Grönlund and Setälä, 2012). The second strand considers trust as politically exogenous (Hetherington, 1998), suggesting it results from institutional performance. From this perspective, trust in institutions is viewed as rationally based, depending primarily on citizens' evaluations of institutional performance in various domains, such as economic, political, or social (Godefroidt et al., 2017; Hadarics, 2016; Hakhverdian and Mayne, 2017; Zmerli, 2012). Accordingly, only well-performing institutions engender trust, while underperforming institutions tend to foster skepticism and distrust.

Based on these two standards, we identify six major factors in the formation of institutional trust, which will be the focus of our analysis for the case of Ukraine. The endogenous sources include interpersonal trust, political-cultural values and the extent of polarization in these values within society. The exogenous sources concentrate on evaluating institutional performance within the economy, political domain, and corruption.

Interpersonal trust

The cultural perspective conceptualizes institutional trust as an extension of interpersonal trust (Grönlund and Setälä, 2012; Hooghe et al., 2017; Inglehart, 1997; Putnam et al., 1993; Suh et al., 2012). Specifically, interpersonal trust encourages the formation of informal associations that cultivate democratic values of participation, creating a demand for representative political institutions (Hooghe et al., 2017; Suh et al., 2012). Once these institutions are formalized, they are expected to produce a path-dependent process, in which existing socialization mechanisms transmit positive or negative predispositions toward a democratic culture and institutions from one generation to the next (Guiso et al., 2004; Putnam et al., 1993).

Supporting this theory, empirical studies consistently demonstrate a positive correlation between interpersonal trust and confidence in institutions (Godefroidt et al., 2017; Hadarics, 2016; Hakhverdian and Mayne, 2017; Zmerli, 2012). However, this positive relationship is assumed to fluctuate in strength over time due to distinct dynamics of each trust type. Interpersonal trust, characterized by long-term optimism about others, tends to remain relatively stable (Uslaner, 2002). Conversely, institutional trust is more variable, reflecting short-term evaluations of institutional performance, which can be influenced by economic and political developments at both national and global levels (Inglehart, 1999; Medve-Balint and Boda, 2014; Zmerli and Castillo, 2015). Due to this, the overall level of interpersonal trust in society is believed to play a less significant role in institutional trust formation during crisis and post-crisis periods (Blind, 2006).

Furthermore, recent findings contest the whole idea that high institutional trust can only be established in societies with elevated levels of interpersonal. Numerous empirical studies

suggest that confidence in institutions exist in both low-trust and high-trust societies (Mishler and Rose, 2001; Pernia, 2021) or even be able to develop independently of interpersonal trust (Zhai, 2016). For example, Pernia (2021) illustrates that the Philippines exhibits relatively high institutional trust among individuals despite being classified as a low-trust society. The same has been found true for the majority of post-communist countries, where exists a significant lack of correlation or a very weak association between these two trust dimensions (Habibov et al., 2017; Kaasa and Andriani, 2022; Rose and Mishler, 2011).

Finally, several studies have gone even further by proposing that the causal link between two types of trust is reverse, and hence, interpersonal trust arises as a byproduct of institutional trust and not vice versa (Uslaner, 2002). Specifically, trusted public institutions can create a safety net that facilitates cooperation and trust in strangers by sanctioning those who violate their commitments (Rothstein, 2005). Additionally, positive interactions with public institutions and their officials can cultivate institutional trust, which may subsequently be generalized from institutions to interpersonal relationships, thereby enhancing individuals' willingness to cooperate with one another (Rothstein and Teorell, 2008).

Even if the causal direction of this relationship remains ambiguous, there is a prevailing belief that Ukraine, as a post-communist country, exhibit a limited radius of trust, wherein individuals tend to trust only family members and close acquaintances while largely excluding others (Grönlund and Setälä, 2012). Due to this, no existing studies on politics or political trust in this country have focused on the link to interpersonal trust. Rather, the prevailing analyses concentrate on the dynamics of trust or explore its variations based on respondents' socio-demographic and geopolitical characteristics (Ilchenko, 2023; Izha et al., 2020). Overall, the

research demonstrates a notable gap in the examination of the relationship between interpersonal trust and institutional confidence in the case of Ukraine.

Political values and polarization

The classical liberal-democratic perspective suggests that democratic values are essential for fostering institutional trust (Claassen, 2019), as they influence the criteria that individuals choose for assessing their government and its institutions (Long and Sitkin, 2024). For instance, individuals who place a high value on freedom are likely to maintain trust in newly established democratic institutions, even in the face of economic challenges. Conversely, those who prioritize economic growth may exhibit a more negative response under similar conditions (Mishler and Rose, 2001).

Democratic values have been observed to be particularly important in the context of established democracies (Norris and Inglehart, 2019), with two prevailing trends hindering this development. First, the transition to modernity leads citizens to demand more from existing political regimes, especially democratic ones, which often results in inability of institutions to meet these demands and, hence, declining political trust (Norris, 2011; Shin et al., 2012). Second, democracy inherently requires a plurality of values and opinions, necessitating that political institutions address a variety of often conflicting demands (Long and Sitkin, 2024). As governments struggle to satisfy the demands of the majority, they become susceptible to significant criticism by those whose demands have been left out, which can foster distrust in public institutions in society (Williams et al., 2024). Alternatively, if institutions attempt to implement compromise solutions, they may fail to fully satisfy any particular group, thereby perpetuating political distrust (Cook and Gronke, 2001).

This process is particularly influential in countries characterized by ideological polarization, which divides society into groups with opposing political ideologies and values regarding the government and its institutions. In such contexts, individuals are likely to adopt extreme positions in politically relevant discourses (Prior, 2013). Consequently, finding solutions becomes challenging, as one group is likely to remain completely dissatisfied (Cook and Gronke, 2001). The negative impact of ideological polarization is especially pronounced in the context of political extremism. Individuals with strong partisan sentiments and high levels of political involvement tend to perceive neutral stories as biased against their point of view. Therefore, they are likely to view policies supporting mainstream ideologies as favoring opposing partisans, making it difficult for them to trust the institutions implementing these policies (Hanitzsch et al., 2018).

Remarkably, the literature acknowledges that, in addition to democratic values, authoritarian values can also foster institutional trust (Zhai, 2016). Institutional confidence is largely indicative of support for the authorities, which does not inherently necessitate liberal-democratic values (Pernia, 2022). Some evidence suggests that expressing authoritarian values can enhance confidence in public institutions, particularly in illiberal or non-democratic regimes. For example, Pernia (2022) shows that the strong authoritarian component in the political values of the Philippines, rooted in the nation's history, can explain why these values bolster political trust across various regimes, even those perceived as populist, illegitimate, or reformist. In fact, non-democratic political values, if deeply embedded in society, are assumed to caution the impact of political regime performance, especially when there is an alignment between the political values of citizens and the type of political regime.

For Ukraine, research has primarily focused on exploring political values and ideologies independently from institutional trust. Ukraine has been recognized as having a more democratic culture compared to most former Sovie Union countries (Brudny and Finkel, 2011; Pop-Eleches and Robertson, 2018). This phenomenon has been attributed to the country's distinct historical experiences, such as occupations and territorial fragmentation. Prolonged occupation fostered a profound yearning for independence, stimulating political and civic activism (Tamilina, 2024a). Concurrently, territorial fragmentation during periods of occupation introduced a diversity of opinions and values, which promoted pluralistic ideals and social dialogue. These historical events are believed to have collectively contributed to the formation of democratic values. In spite of this pro-democratic culture, Ukraine has long been characterized by political polarization across its regions, evident in voting patterns, ethnicity, and language preferences (Onuch and Hale, 2022; Zabyelina, 2019). However, accounting for the impact of political values remains outside the scope of existing research on institutional trust in Ukraine.

Economic performance

The rational choice perspective posits that institutional trust is fundamentally strategic in nature (Uslaner, 2002). Consequently, confidence in institutions depends on the extent to which institutions and public officials are believed to operate in citizens' interest and meet their expectations (Hooghe and Zmerli, 2011). From this viewpoint, institutional trust is endogenously generated through citizens' assessments of institutional performance. When governmental policies and actions achieve the desired outcomes, citizens positively evaluate political institutions, thereby displaying institutional trust (Hadarics, 2016; Zmerli, 2012). Conversely, poorly performing institutions generate distrust.

In analyzing the evaluation process, most studies emphasize institutional performance in the economic domain, suggesting that as long as the economy functions well, citizens trust institutions and public officials (Hakhverdian and Mayne, 2017). Commensurate with this perspective, satisfaction with the national economy's operation has been identified as the most significant predictor of institutional trust in many countries (Grönlund and Setälä, 2012; Keele, 2007). Among the various economic outcomes, income inequality is the most frequently examined. Large income gaps between the rich and the poor are thought to divide society, erode social cohesion, and foster perceptions of unfairness, leading to distrust towards institutions (Kim et al., 2021). Consequently, scholars often report a negative relationship between the level of income inequality and institutional trust (Medve-Balint and Boda, 2014; Zmerli and Castillo, 2015).

This positive influence of economic performance on trust in institutions is believed to be especially strong in established democracies (Blind, 2006). When the structure and character of political institutions remain constant over extended periods, citizens tend to concentrate on the economic outcomes produced by the government and its institutions (Przeworski et al., 1996). Conversely, during regime changes, citizens are believed to assess the political performance of the new regime primarily, not the economy.

Yet, economic performance has been found to be closely linked to institutional trust even in newly established democracies, such as post-Communist countries. For example, Mishler and Rose (2001) have demonstrated that economic performance accounts for 11.8 percent of the cross-individual variation in political trust within post-Communist societies. One explanation for this is that individuals tend to be future-oriented; consequently, those who are optimistic about

the national economy and their personal incomes are more likely to exhibit higher levels of institutional trust (Clarke, 1992), even in an unfamiliar regime.

Remarkably, non-democratic regimes also demonstrate a strong positive correlation between economic performance and institutional trust. In China, improved economic conditions have been shown to create a solid foundation for citizens' trust in the Chinese Communist Party (Zhai, 2016). Similarly, in Russia, enhanced living conditions have increased support for the government, even as authoritarian governance methods have intensified over time (Kholodilin et al., 2021).

In Ukraine, economic performance plays a significant role in shaping people's evaluations of political institutions and politics in general. Economic reforms and outcomes are deemed more critical than ethnicity or language issues when assessing institutional performance or explaining citizens' voting behavior (Sasse and Lackner, 2019). For instance, research on party choice in Ukraine has found that voters' decisions are more closely related to candidates' economic policies than to their stance on ethnic or language issues (Frye, 2015).

Indeed, Ukraine has always been characterized by low income, insecure employment, and limited opportunities for career growth or social mobility (Schwartz, 2020). These factors have created poverty that, according to studies on post-communist countries, fosters distrust and skepticism toward the government and public officials (Grönlund and Setälä, 2012; Habibov et al., 2017). However, no rigorous analysis has yet been conducted to estimate the impact of these economic outcomes on institutional trust in the case of Ukraine.

Political regime performance

In addition to economic policy outcomes, citizens assess the performance of their political regime (Wang and Wan Wart, 2007). Positive perceptions of the regime's performance are usually associated with higher levels of institutional trust (Godefroidt et al., 2017; Stoyan et al., 2016; Zhai, 2018). Political regimes are trusted or distrusted insofar as they produce the desired outcomes, including freedom and impartial courts (Dong and Kuebler, 2018).

Two critical nuances emerge from this reasoning. First, citizens are more likely to evaluate the achievements of a regime positively if their political values and ideologies align with those of the existing regime (Long and Sitkin, 2024). Second, regardless of the type of political regime, there must be universally accepted principles guiding institutional operations, alongside the expectation that the institution actually performs according to these principles (Grönlund and Setälä, 2012; Warren, 1999).

The regime's performance has been recognized as particularly important if a country experiences a change in its political regime (Blind, 2006). In such cases, citizens' evaluations are often influenced by comparisons to the preceding regime. Notably, citizens are inclined to trust and support the current regime if it demonstrates superior performance relative to its predecessor (Chu et al., 2003). For example, in post-Communist countries where citizens experienced systemic repression, there is evidence that individuals developed considerable trust in new institutions that alleviated restrictions on individual liberties and enhanced personal freedoms, despite the economic challenges that arose in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse.

Yet, regime change can have a detrimental effect on overall institutional trust. New regimes often face a range of challenges associated with the transition and typically lack experience in governance (Pernia, 2022), which can lead to a performance deficit as they navigate the complexities of ruling through trial and error (Mishler and Rose, 2001). However, if

the institutions of the new regime can facilitate rapid economic growth and effectively combat corruption, institutional trust is still able to rise significantly within a few years (Blind, 2006).

For Ukraine, studies indicate that institutional trust exceeded what would be expected based on the quality of democracy at the onset of the transition and following the Orange Revolution. Nevertheless, this trust declined as the initial optimism regarding the transition diminished (Grönlund and Setälä, 2012). Many Ukrainians started to correlate the new regime's performance with public officials' effectiveness. In this respect, a significant portion of the population expressed the belief that individuals in leadership positions are incompetent, corrupt, and morally deviant, which hampers their ability to implement reforms necessary for achieving fairness and true democracy in Ukraine (Schwartz, 2020). Such perceptions are likely to further erode institutional trust among Ukrainians, a phenomenon that has not yet been empirically investigated.

Corruption

While studies indicate a significant cross-country variation in individuals' expectations (Rothstein, 2005; Rothstein and Teorell, 2008), impartiality is recognized as the most fundamental and universally accepted of all normative expectations directed at institutions (Blind, 2006). As Rothstein and Teorell (2008) rightly emphasize, "the quality of government" primarily refers to the impartiality of public institutions. Corruption is likely to undermine trust in any institution, as it fundamentally contradicts the principle of impartiality. Corrupt institutions and public officials do not treat citizens equitably; instead, they link their treatment to one's willingness and ability to engage in personal reciprocal favors (Lambsdorff, 2007; Rothstein and Teorell, 2008).

Consistent with the impartiality perspective, empirical studies have identified a strong negative relationship between corruption and institutional trust, even when controlling for citizens' tolerance and specific contextual factors within countries (Chang and Chu, 2006; Seligson, 2002). However, the overall role of corruption in generating political distrust is not straightforward and can vary depending on how citizens define and perceive corruption. In many nations, corruption is often viewed as a necessary means to navigate bureaucratic procedures, and is thus not seen as inherently wrong or harmful. Instead, corruption is perceived as an efficient mechanism for mitigating the distortions created by bureaucratic processes (Leys, 1965). Yet, for this perspective to hold, social capital must be robust, and individuals must have a general trust in one another, including strangers (Blind, 2006).

Despite the aforementioned nuances, numerous studies provide compelling evidence that corruption is negatively associated with institutional trust (Habibov et al., 2017; Lambsdorff, 2007; Rothstein and Teorell, 2008). Moreover, the detrimental effects of corruption are observed not only in narrowly defined trust in political institutions at all levels but also in broader trust in economic institutions, including financial institutions, international investors, and non-profit organizations (Habibov et al., 2017). The negative impact of corruption is particularly pronounced in post-Communist countries (Grönlund and Setälä, 2012) as changes in the regime created numerous opportunities for opportunistic behavior and might require considerable time to establish an effective rule of law (Blind, 2006).

Nonetheless, the literature advises caution when interpreting the results regarding the corruption-trust nexus. The causal direction remains contentious, with several researchers highlighting the issue of endogeneity in this relationship (Morris and Klesner, 2010). Trustworthy institutions may promote prosocial behavior and mitigate corruption by enhancing

citizens' confidence that incidents of corruption will be detected, investigated, and penalized (Andriani and Sabatini, 2015). Conversely, a lack of trust in public institutions can lead to greater acceptance of illegal behavior (Marien and Hooghe, 2011).

In the case of Ukraine, corruption is widely recognized as a primary challenge for the legitimacy of the democratic regime (Lough and Dubrovskiy, 2018). Ukrainians frequently associate the prevalence of corruption with low overall morality among individuals in positions of leadership, encompassing both business and political sectors (Lankina and Libman, 2019). However, there is a significant lack of empirical studies explicitly assessing the impact of corruption on institutional trust in Ukraine.

Research question and objectives

Despite extensive research on politics in Ukraine, there is a notable lack of analysis regarding the key determinants of confidence in institutions within the country. Existing studies have not rigorously tested prevailing theories of institutional trust formation in the country's specific context. In the best case, Ukraine was encompassed in the sample of European nations or transitional economies. This oversight is critical given the country's unique features, including the pronounced political division among the population, pervasive corruption, and low levels of generalized trust inherited from the Communist regime.

Furthermore, existing cross-country studies that include Ukraine often exhibit methodological shortcomings. Many of them overlook the intricate interconnections among the major determinants of institutional trust, creating empirical challenges in isolating their individual effects. For instance, citizens' satisfaction with economic policies can significantly affect their overall satisfaction with the political regime. Likewise, the influence of corruption on

institutional trust may be mediated by individuals' attitudes toward the incumbent regime (Blind, 2006). This complexity calls for a methodological approach that can account for the correlations among factors by examining their combined influences rather than isolating individual effects. Therefore, shifting the focus from individual predictors to combinations of predictors is necessary to provide more consistent insights into the mechanisms underlying the formation of institutional trust.

This study attempts to address the existing gaps by focusing on Ukraine and using fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) as the main methodological framework. As Landman (2008) rightly observed, single-country studies can refine existing classifications and either substantiate or refute prevailing theories. From this perspective, our primary research question is: What combinations of conditions can explain high and low institutional trust in Ukraine?

Specifically, the objective of our study is threefold. First, we aim to identify all the combinations of conventional predictors that can explain high institutional trust in Ukraine. Second, we seek to determine whether low institutional trust is symmetrically reflected by the same combinations that explain high institutional trust. Third, if the formation of low institutional trust requires different combinations of conditions, we aim to identify how many distinct configurations can account for this and which predictors are involved in each of them.

Data and method description

Data source

Data were collected through an online survey administered by Research.ua LLC. The questionnaire, designed in Ukrainian, targeted the Ukrainian population aged 18 to 55. A total of

850 individuals participated, achieving a response rate of 71.2%. Table 1 summarizes the key demographic characteristics of the survey participants, including age, gender, education, and geographic location, and confirms the representativeness of the sample.

Table 1 near here.

Research Method

The social diversity principle suggests that institutional trust cannot be attributed to a single factor but rather should be understood as a complex construct (Miller, 1987). In line with this perspective, this study employs fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) as its primary research method. fsQCA challenges the assumption that individual predictors have independent effects on the outcome variable. Instead, it allows for the examination of how multiple factors interact to produce specific outcomes (Berg-Schlosser et al., 2009; Pappas and Woodside, 2021).

Two key properties characterize fsQCA. First, it assumes that change results from combinations of factors that may exhibit asymmetry; thus, the configurations leading to a positive outcome may differ from those associated with a negative outcome. In the context of institutional trust, this suggests that the combinations fostering high trust differ from those that engender low trust. Second, multiple combinations of conditions can yield the same outcome. Specifically, more than one combination can contribute to the establishment of high or low institutional trust.

An additional advantage of fsQCA is its capacity to utilize fuzzy sets, alongside binary and multivalued sets, to capture case complexity by allowing membership scores to range between 0 and 1. fsQCA also permits a causal combination to be a subset of both an outcome and its negation, as consistency scores do not need to exhibit a perfect negative correlation for the two types of outcomes. Overall, these attributes make fsQCA a valuable exploratory tool that can generate new

insights, serving as a foundation for further theoretical development or the reevaluation of existing theories.

Variables choice

The response variable in this study is institutional trust, measured by asking participants to rate their confidence in various institutions on a seven-point scale, where 1 represents "No trust at all" and 7 represents "Complete trust." The institutions assessed include core political bodies (courts, government, local government, and parliament), civic institutions (state apparatus, bureaucrats, and election commissions), and protective agencies (army and police). Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of respondents across the response values and highlights a pervasive lack of trust among Ukrainians in all political institutions, with the exception of the army. This widespread distrust mirrors the levels observed in Ukraine over 2002 - 2018, as reported by Izha et al. (2020) based on the European Social Survey[3]. The consistency in trust levels between the two surveys further supports the validity of our data.

Figures 1 near here.

Table 2 indicates that the selected trust items exhibit a strong correlation, except for trust in the army. A principal component analysis (PCA) revealed that only one composite factor had an Eigenvalue exceeding 1 when trust in the army is excluded from the estimations. This aligns with Mishler and Rose's (2001) assertion that a generalized institutional trust often exists, as citizens tend to evaluate government performance holistically rather than distinguishing the contributions of individual institutions. Based on this finding, trust in the army was excluded, and a composite measure of institutional trust was constructed by averaging the trust scores for

[3] It is necessary to rescale trust scores when comparing results between the two surveys since the response scale ranges between 1 and 7 in our survey and between 1 and 10 in the European Social Survey.

the remaining institutions. The reliability of this composite measure (Cronbach's alpha) was estimated at 0.92, confirming that the selected institutions load onto a single construct (see Figure 2).

Tables 2 and Figure 2 near here.

The conditions assessed in this study include interpersonal trust, authoritarian values, the extent of ideological polarization, economic and political performance of institutions, and perceived corruption. Generalized interpersonal trust is measured using the standard question: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" The responses are rated on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means you can't be too careful and 7 means most people can be trusted. The average score for interpersonal trust is 2.8 out of 7, suggesting the existence of low levels of trust in strangers within Ukrainian society.

Political values are measured through the propensity for authoritarianism, encompassing conformity, anti-political pluralist views, and support for strong leaders, as defined by Pernia (2022). The conformity dimension is assessed with the following statements: "Government leaders are like the head of a family; we should all follow their decisions," and "The government should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society." Anti-political pluralism is captured by the following questions: "The harmony of the community will be disrupted if people organize lots of groups" and "If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be chaotic." Support for strong leaders, which reflects a preference for authoritarian values over democratic values, is measured with the statement: "A strong leader does not have to bother with parliament or elections." Each item is rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) so that higher values indicate authoritarianism, while

lower values indicate more pro-democratic attitudes. Principal component analysis reveals that these items load on the same construct (Cronbach's alpha = 0.96). A single measure of authoritarianism is calculated by averaging all item responses for each participant. The mean score for this measure is 3.6 out of 7, indicating that Ukrainians display ambivalence between authoritarian and democratic attitudes.

To measure ideological polarization, we use five questions about political issues considered as the most debatable in Ukraine, including (1) preserving democracy in the country, (2) ensuring independence of Ukraine as a state, (3) preserving the territorial integrity of Ukraine, (4) promoting Ukraianin as an official language, and (5) promoting the importance of belonging to the Ukrainian nation. Respondents were asked – on a seven-point scale – to indicate their agreement with statements that achieving each of the above objective is important. Responses show significant support across all selected items (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 near here

We use these questions to calculate a combined ideological score on the individual level by averaging responses to these five items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.92). Then, we follow Lindquist and Östling (2010) by computing the standard deviation of the single score at the regional levels as a proxy of polarization extent. Specifically, high standard deviations indicate stronger disagreement among the regional population and thus stronger political polarization, whereas lower standard deviations suggest stronger political cohesion. We assign respondents the standard deviation for the regions that they reported as their permanent place of residence. Overall, data suggest that political polarization varies between 0.85 and 1.77 with the mean value being 1.25.

Satisfaction with the economy is measured by asking respondents to rate their current satisfaction with performance of governmental reforms in various economic domains on a scale from 1 ("Not at all satisfied") to 7 ("Completely satisfied"), including overall improvements in the economy, reductions in poverty and income inequality, ensuring stable employment and the rule of law in economic transactions. Similarly, satisfaction with democracy is assessed by asking respondents to rate their satisfaction with various political outcomes on the same 1 to 7 scale, including political stability, transparent and fair elections, corruption reduction among politicians, along with securing national defense and freedom of speech in the country. Principal component analysis confirms that the selected satisfaction items for both types of satisfaction load onto their respective constructs, producing a Cronbach's alpha of approximately 0.95. The mean satisfaction score for institutional performance is 2.5 out of 7 for democracy and 2.2 out of 7 for the economy, which indicates that Ukrainians are strongly dissatisfied with the performance of institutions in both areas.

Finally, perceived corruption is measured by asking, “How widespread do you think corruption, such as bribe-taking, is among politicians and public officials in Ukraine?” Responses range from 1 ("Very high corruption") to 7 ("No corruption at all"). The mean score for this variable is 1.6, suggesting that Ukrainians perceive corruption to be very widespread. The descriptive statistics for the selected variables used in the analysis are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 near here.

Calibration of the above variables, involving the transformation of the raw numeric data into degrees of membership in the target set, has been performed by specifying three thresholds: the level of membership for the full inclusion, full exclusion, and the crossover point reflecting

maximum ambiguity. The common practice of using percentiles as recommended anchors has been applied in this study. Considering that the majority of our variables are ordinal and hence not normally distributed, we selected the 80th percentile as an anchor for the full membership, the 50th percentile as the cross-over point, and the 20th percentile as an anchor for the full non-membership as suggested by literature (Pappas et al., 2017; Plewa et al., 2016; Pappas and Woodside, 2021). However, using the 50th percentile (median) for the ambiguity point is not always a good solution for our data given that there are many more cases in the sample below the mean value of the scale and less above the mean value. In this situation, using the median as an ambiguity point would shift the ambiguity point incorrectly towards lower values. To solve this issue, we utilize the middle point of the interval between the full membership and full non membership thresholds as an ambiguity threshold for the majority of variable. For transparency, the anchor values for each variable are reported in Table 3.

Analytical strategy

Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis generates three types of solutions: complex, intermediate, and parsimonious. The complex solution encompasses all possible combinations of conditions. This may lead to a large number of identified configurations, which is believed to complicate the interpretation of the results (Pappas and Woodside, 2021). The parsimonious solution simplifies the complex solution by presenting only the core causal conditions essential to any solution while excluding peripheral conditions (Brush et al., 2024). However, since it relies on simplifying assumptions regarding logical remainder rows (i.e., truth table rows without cases), it can incorporate solutions with limited empirical support, which may not align with their plausibility (Rutten, 2023). Due to this, we avoid the calculation of the parsimonious solution.

For the same reason, we do not include the intermediate solution, which incorporates conditions that are present in the cases but require challenging counterfactuals (consistent with empirical knowledge but not with theoretical knowledge) to be excluded (Greckhamer et al., 2018; Ragin, 2008). While mathematically sufficient, the intermediate solution may lack substantive sufficiency, meaning it does not offer a plausible explanation of the outcome.

Instead, we choose a conservative solution since it provides a more detailed and comprehensive view of the findings for our data (Fiss, 2011). In addition, the choice of only six conditions produces a solution with a limited number of configurations, making results easily interpretable. The analysis has been performed by using the R-package *QCA* (Dusa, 2019).

We evaluate fsQCA solutions based on two primary criteria: consistency and coverage. The consistency measure represents the proportion of consistent cases, defined as the number of cases that are members of both the causal (solution) set and the outcome set, divided by the total number of cases in the causal set (Ordanini, Parasuraman and Rubera, 2014). A higher consistency score is preferred as it indicates more robust findings (Emmenegger et al., 2014). We follow the existing literature and adopt a threshold of 0.80 for consistency (Fiss, 2011; Pappas and Woodside, 2021).

In addition to consistency, fsQCA calculates Proportional Reduction in Inconsistency (PRI), an alternative measure for assessing subset relations. PRI consistency is designed to address simultaneous subset relations of configurations in both the outcome and its negation. High PRI consistency scores should approximate raw consistency scores, with a recommended threshold of 0.70, while configurations with PRI scores below 0.50 indicate significant inconsistency (Brush et al., 2021).

Coverage evaluates the extent to which a subset of conditions encompasses the target set (outcome), allowing for equifinality, which occurs when multiple effective combinations can yield the same result (Brush et al., 2024). fsQCA produces three metrics for measuring coverage: raw coverage, unique coverage, and solution coverage. Raw coverage quantifies the proportion of memberships in the outcome explained by each term of the solution, reflecting the explanatory power of individual configurational solutions (Fiss, 2011). A threshold of 0.60 is typically applied to determine a sufficient level of coverage.

Since a single observation may be explained by multiple configurations, fsQCA also provides a measure of each configuration's unique contribution to the solutions, known as unique coverage (Ragin, 2008). Unique coverage quantifies the portion of overall coverage that derives exclusively from a specific path, indicating the extent to which a configuration contributes to explaining cases exhibiting the outcome without overlapping with other configurations (Fiss, 2011). The QCA protocol recommends retaining only solutions with unique coverage scores of 0.001 or higher.

Finally, solution coverage measures the proportion of memberships in the outcome explained by the complete solution and is partially analogous to R-squared in regression analysis. This statistic is typically used descriptively rather than diagnostically (Mendel and Ragin, 2011) and can range from 0.10 to 0.80 (Misangyi and Acharya, 2014; Pappas and Woodside, 2021). Generally, QCA methodology suggests focusing on configurations that may exhibit low statistical relevance but provide valuable theoretical insights (Dusa, 2019).

Hypotheses formulation

As previously indicated, fsQCA seeks to identify all possible solutions that encompass the selected conditions explaining the positive or negative outcome. While specific propositions have been formulated regarding the effects of individual factors on institutional trust, it is challenging to specify *a priori* complex combinations of predictors that may account for high and low institutional trust in the specific case of Ukraine. Due to this, we refrain from formulating expectations about the number and the exact composition of configurations of conditions. Instead, we propose that solutions will likely consist of various combinations of conditions, while also acknowledging the presence of causal asymmetry:

Hypothesis 1: There is no single best configuration of conditions that leads to high or low institutional trust; instead, multiple effective configurations of factors exist.

Hypothesis 2: The combinations of conditions leading to low institutional trust differ in their composition from those leading to high institutional trust.

Analysis and Results

Necessity analysis

We begin by performing the necessity analysis. A predictor or condition is deemed necessary if it consistently occurs whenever individuals exhibit either high or low levels of institutional trust, as determined by consistency and coverage scores. According to standard guidelines, a condition is identified as necessary when its consistency score exceeds 0.90 and its coverage exceeds 0.6 (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012).

Table 4 summarizes the results of the necessity analysis, indicating that none of the selected conditions meet these thresholds, except for the presence of corruption. The existence of corruption is a necessary condition for low institutional trust. However, the Venn diagram

presented in Figure 4 shows that none of the conditions, when considered individually, is neither necessary nor sufficient. Instead, each condition can be associated with both high and low institutional trust depending on the specific combination of factors involved.

Figure 4 and Table 4 near here

Sufficiency analysis

Building on these findings, we turn to the analysis of sufficiency for high institutional trust. Table 5 summarizes the results for the conservative solution, which is defined by an inclusion score of 0.810 and explains approximately 83% of the observed cases. Seven combinations meet the criteria for consistency and coverage. Notably, simultaneous satisfaction with the democratic and economic outcomes of institutional performance emerges as a key factor capable of producing high levels of trust in institutions (see Configuration 1).

High institutional trust can also arise when only one type of satisfaction is present. For example, when focusing on respondents' satisfaction with democracy in Ukraine, high institutional trust can be achieved if there is interpersonal trust within society (Configuration 2). Furthermore, satisfaction with democracy can foster trust in institutions even when individuals hold authoritarian values and perceive high levels of corruption (Configuration 3). Conversely, in cases of dissatisfaction with democracy, institutional trust is only possible if individuals adhere to democratic values and perceive no or low corruption in the country (Configuration 4). This holds true even in the presence of some polarization among respondents in their attitudes toward Ukraine.

Table 5 near here

Likewise, economic satisfaction can generate high institutional trust and mitigate the negative effects of other conditions. Notably, satisfaction with the economy leads to institutional trust even if individuals report high levels of corruption or hold authoritarian values (Configurations 5 and 6). However, in the absence of economic satisfaction, institutional trust can still emerge, but only under specific conditions. As highlighted in Configuration 7, this requires the absence of polarization in respondents' attitudes toward Ukraine, no perceived corruption, and high levels of interpersonal trust. This holds true even if individuals possess authoritarian values.

Table 6 outlines the solutions for low institutional trust by identifying seven combinations that lead to scenarios where Ukrainians lose trust in the selected institutions as a whole. Unlike the findings for high trust, dissatisfaction with institutional performance alone is not sufficient to explain low trust. As indicated by Configurations 1 and 2, dissatisfaction must be accompanied by the perception of high corruption for Ukrainians to exhibit low trust in institutions.

Table 6 near here

Remarkably, when individuals are satisfied with the democracy-related outcomes, they may still lack trust in institutions if these institutions fail to deliver satisfactory economic outcomes. As outlined in Configuration 3, this lack of trust can persist even if there is high social trust within society. Furthermore, Configuration 4 highlights that dissatisfaction with the economic performance of institutions often leads to low institutional trust, particularly when individuals hold authoritarian values. This remains true also in the presence of homogeneous political views and strong interpersonal trust within society.

Configuration 5 indicates that adherence to authoritarian values can result in low institutional trust in Ukraine if both economic and democratic outcomes of institutional performance are unsatisfactory, particularly among individuals who lack interpersonal trust.

However, Configuration 6 demonstrates that the absence of authoritarian values can still produce low institutional trust, especially if individuals are dissatisfied with democracy-related outcomes and reside in regions with high political polarization.

Finally, Configuration 7 highlights the complexity of the situation. Addressing dissatisfaction with economic and democratic outcomes, as well as reducing corruption, does not guarantee the restoration of institutional trust. Even among individuals with democratic values and homogenous political views, distrust will persist if they lack interpersonal trust.

Overall, our analysis provides strong support for the hypotheses. First, multiple combinations of the selected conditions were found to lead to either low or high institutional trust, consistent with Hypothesis 1. Second, the combinations that produce high institutional trust are distinct in their composition from those that result in low institutional trust, supporting Hypothesis 2.

Robustness check

To assess the robustness of our results, we follow the recommendations from previous fsQCA studies (Wu et al., 2021) and vary the calibration strategies (see Annex 3). Specifically, we explore the effects of adjusting the consistency threshold for our trust baseline model, setting it to either a higher value of 0.95 or a lower value of 0.05. For high institutional trust, these adjustments produce solutions that are nearly identical to those of the baseline model. For low institutional trust, the results show only marginal differences.

Additionally, we recalibrated the anchors by increasing the full membership criterion by five percentage points (from 80% to 85%) and decreasing the full non-membership criterion by five percentage points (from 20% to 15%). These adjustments resulted in a marginal decrease in solution consistency, but additional configurations emerged, still reflecting the logic of the base

solution. We then recalibrated the anchors further by decreasing the full membership criterion by five percentage points (from 80% to 75%) and increasing the full non-membership criterion by five percentage points (from 20% to 25%). The solutions remained largely consistent with the baseline model, although one additional configuration for high institutional trust emerged, while one configuration for low institutional trust was eliminated. In summary, the alternative calibration strategies generated combinations that were either identical to or logical subsets of the baseline solution. No substantial deviations in the results were observed.

Additionally, our robustness test includes the identification and exclusion of irrelevant cases. In fuzzy-set analysis, when consistency and coverage measures are applied, cases with low membership in a condition or outcome contribute positively to these measures, potentially skewing QCA solutions (Schwellnus, 2013). This poses a significant issue, as the presence of irrelevant cases can lead to solutions with high consistency and reasonable coverage, even if they lack empirical support (Brush et al., 2024). To address this, we excluded all the irrelevant cases and recalculated the truth tables for the conservative solution (see Annex 3). The results obtained form a subset of the baseline solution. However for low interpersonal trust, both the consistency and inclusion scores for the solution decreased.

Discussion

Our findings suggest that institutional trust in Ukraine is primarily strategic. At this stage of the ongoing war and democratic development, individuals expect tangible outcomes in order to develop confidence in democratic institutions. People must feel satisfied with the performance of these institutions to trust them. Moreover, the satisfaction component indicates that contentment

does not have to be total; it can be partial, meaning that satisfaction with just either the political or economic domains is sufficient to foster high institutional trust.

Additionally, the satisfaction-based mechanism of trust formation is so influential in fostering high institutional trust that it can offset many challenges typical of post-communist societies, such as low social trust and widespread corruption. Individuals may trust their political institutions even in the presence of corruption, as long as they are satisfied with the outcomes of the institutions' functioning. These findings align with previous research on post-communist economies (Blind, 2006).

However, when satisfaction with institutional performance is lacking, corruption is likely to play a significant role in defining institutional trust. The absence of corruption becomes an essential condition for high institutional trust to emerge. Additionally the presence of corruption appears a primary condition leading to low institutional trust when respondents are dissatisfied with institutional performance. As long as corruption is perceived as high, satisfaction with institutional performance becomes crucial for trust in institutions to emerge.

Importantly, ideological factors, such as the political values individuals hold and the degree of disagreement regarding the future of Ukraine as a democratic, independent and territorially united state, do not appear to play a significant role at this time. Individuals with authoritarian values can still trust democratic institutions as long as they are satisfied with their performance. Similarly, polarization in visions about Ukraine is not critical when individuals are satisfied with the political or economic outcomes overall.

Remarkably, the ideological component becomes more influential in fostering low institutional trust. The absence of democratic values and polarized visions about Ukraine can worsen the situation with distrust, but primarily when individuals are dissatisfied with institutional

performance. Furthermore, having democratic values may still lead to low institutional trust in Ukraine if both economic and democratic outcomes of institutional performance are unsatisfactory.

This is an important finding suggesting that, even in the context of a war with a significant ideological component, the trust that people place in institutions does not strongly depend on whether they hold democratic values or whether their visions about Ukraine differ significantly within society. The key factor that currently matters is whether individuals feel satisfied with the political or economic outcomes of these institutions' performance. This suggests that Ukrainians tend to base their trust in democratic institutions on pragmatic satisfaction with their functioning, often overlooking the ideological aspects. Trust in institutions is driven by expectations of tangible results, rather than being ideologically motivated, even though the country is in the midst of a war aimed at defending the ideology of a democratic and independent Ukraine.

This pragmatic nature of institutional trust formation and its detachment from the ideological component explains why Ukrainians continue believing in democracy while having no or little confidence in institutions supporting the democratic regime. Individuals tend to base their trust in political institutions on pragmatic evaluations of institutional performance, largely disregarding ideological commitments to democracy or optimism about Ukraine's long-term statehood in these assessments. As a result, Ukrainians' aspirations for and commitment to democratic governance persist independently of their trust in democratic institutions.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that Ukraine is marked by a significant distrust in political institutions, a situation that is particularly puzzling given that these institutions are essential to the

functioning of democracy and that Ukrainians place considerable importance on maintaining a democratic regime. We term this phenomenon the "Ukrainian syndrome," defining it as the coexistence of strong belief in the political regime with significant disbelief in the regime's political institutions, which does not undermine the overall legitimacy of the regime.

In explaining the Ukrainian syndrome, we have focused on exploring institutional trust formation. fsQCA has been employed to identify possible combinations of conditions that lead to high or low institutional trust among individuals. Despite differences in the composition of these combinations for trust and distrust, the analysis revealed that confidence in institutions among Ukrainians is primarily strategic in nature. The key factor that currently influences trust is whether respondents feel satisfied with the political or economic outcomes of these institutions' performance. In other words, people must be satisfied with what these institutions deliver in order to trust them.

Moreover, the results suggest that the confidence Ukrainians place in their institutions does not have a strong ideological component. High institutional trust can emerge among individuals holding authoritarian values or polarized visions about Ukraine. Conversely, individuals with democratic values and homogenous political visions can still express distrust in institutions as long as they feel dissatisfied with their performance.

These findings help explain the Ukrainian syndrome. Ukrainians' belief in and desire for Ukraine as a democracy exists independently of their trust in the democratic institutions supporting democracy. Instead, individuals tend to link their trust in institutions to the pragmatic satisfaction with their performance, while overlooking the ideological aspects of their beliefs about the regime or Ukraine's future as a state when evaluating institutions.

The trust type we omitted from the analysis—trust in the army—can provide additional insight into the nature of this satisfaction with institutional performance. As the current survey reveals, trust in the army and satisfaction with its performance are exceptionally high, with an average rating of 6 out of 7. People continue to trust the military despite the prolonged stalemate in the war, the ongoing missile attacks, and the inability to halt the Russian military's advances. The reason for this is a simple but powerful realization that the army is doing everything possible within its means. Even if the overall outcomes of its performance are not entirely satisfactory, the effort the military makes generates trust among the people.

Drawing upon this reasoning, two important conclusions can be made regarding institutional trust formation in Ukraine. Firstly, the Ukrainian population has the potential to develop higher levels of institutional trust. While many studies classify Ukraine as a low-trust society, with the baseline level typically seen as inherently low and unlikely to exceed this threshold, the sustained high trust in the military suggests that improvements are achievable. Ukraine has the capacity to raise overall institutional trust to levels seen in high-performing countries, provided the right conditions are met.

Secondly, institutional trust among Ukrainians is primarily strategic in nature and closely linked to institutional performance. However, this performance, as trust in the military suggests, is not always assessed based on actual outcomes but rather on the perceived effort made to achieve those outcomes. Ukrainians do not expect issues such as poverty and income inequality to be resolved overnight in order to trust their institutions. Instead, they desire to see a sincere effort or attempt by these institutions to improve society. This suggests that political institutions must make a greater effort to convince the public that they are acting in their best interests in order to generate sufficient institutional trust among Ukrainians.

Hence, future research should focus more on exploring the key predictors of satisfaction with political and economic outcomes of institutional performance in Ukraine. Such insights would facilitate the formulation of concrete policies aimed at improving the performance of democratic institutions in the country. This analysis should ideally be based on longitudinal data, which would help eliminate the endogeneity problem and provide consistent and efficient estimates for the predictors of institutional trust under the specific conditions of war.

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Table 1. Main features of respondents included in the survey

	No(%)		No(%)
Gender		*Education*	
Male	427 (50.2%)	Some high school (no diploma)	10 (1.2%)
Female	423 (49.8%)	High school graduate	86 (10.1%)
		Some college (no degree)	44 (5.2%)
Age		Associate's/ Specialist's degree	203 (23.9%)
18 – 24	97 (11.4%)	College graduate (bachelor)	93 (10.9%)
25 – 34	207 (24.4%)	Postgraduate	408 (48.0%)
35 – 44	290 (34.1%)	Ph.D. or similar	6 (0.7%)
45 – 55	256 (30.1%)		
Monthly Household Income		*Location*	
(in hryvna)		North	137 (16.1%)
Less than 5.000	53 (6.2%)	South	117 (13.8%)
5.000 – 10.000	151 (17.8%)	West	245 (28.8%)
10.000 – 20.000	317 (37.3%)	East	64 (7.5%)
20.000 – 50.000	273 (32.1%)	Center	204 (24.0%)
More than 50.000	56 (6.6%)	Kyiv	83 (9.8%)

Table 2. Correlations among the Institutional Trust Items Included in the Survey

Trust items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Trust in the government	1.000***	0.640***	0.686***	0.758***	0.596***	0.615***	0.574***	0.316***
2. Trust in local governments	0.640***	1.000***	0.593***	0.607***	0.547***	0.537***	0.516***	0.333***
3. Trust in the state apparatus and bureaucrats	0.686***	0.593***	1.000***	0.755***	0.747***	0.705***	0.570***	0.190***
4. Trust in the parliament	0.758***	0.607***	0.755***	1.000***	0.683***	0.658***	0.557***	0.205***
5. Trust in the courts	0.596***	0.547***	0.747***	0.683***	1.000***	0.620***	0.564***	0.183***
6. Trust in the election committees	0.615***	0.537***	0.705***	0.658***	0.620***	1.000***	0.589***	0.276***
7. Trust in the police	0.574***	0.516***	0.570***	0.557***	0.564***	0.589***	1.000***	0.461***
8. Trust in the army	0.316***	0.333***	0.190***	0.205***	0.183***	0.276***	0.461***	1.000***

Notes: All correlations are statistically significant at the 1% level.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Calibration Anchors for the Key Variables Used in the Analysis

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max	Threshold used for calibration			Abbreviation
						Low	Ambiguity	High	
Institutional trust	850	2.739	1.297	1.000	7.000	1.57	2.57	3.86	INSTRUST
Authoritarian values	850	3.555	1.195	1.000	7.000	2.60	3.60	4.40	AUTHORVAL
Social trust	850	2.838	1.655	1.000	7.000	1.00	2.50	4.00	SOCTRUST
Satisfaction with democratic reforms	850	2.475	1.337	1.000	7.000	1.20	2.35	3.60	SATDEMOCR
Satisfaction with economic reforms	850	2.249	1.307	1.000	7.000	1.00	2.12	3.24	SATECON
Perceived corruption	850	1.636	1.208	1.000	7.000	1.00	2.10	3.00	NOCORRUPT
Within-region polarization	850	1.248	0.236	0.851	1.765	0.11	1.22	1.44	POLARIZ

Notes: The logistic function has been used for the calibration process.

Table 4. Analysis of Necessary Conditions for High and Low Institutional Trust

Conditions	High Institutional Trust		Low Institutional Trust	
	Consistency	Coverage	Consistency	Coverage
AUTHORVAL	0.653	0.642	0.479	0.478
~ AUTHORVAL	0.469	0.470	0.642	0.652
SOCTRUST	0.708	0.653	0.497	0.466
~ SOCTRUST	0.421	0.452	0.629	0.686
SATDEMOCR	0.807	0.830	0.329	0.343
~ SATDEMOCR	0.361	0.346	0.837	0.815
SATECON	0.784	0.834	0.316	0.342
~ SATECON	0.381	0.354	0.846	0.799
NOCORRUPT	0.448	0.860	0.168	0.327
~ NOCORRUPT	0.650	0.435	0.928	0.631
POLARIZ	0.609	0.553	0.616	0.568
~ POLARIZ	0.524	0.573	0.515	0.572

Table 5. fsQCA Solution for High Institutional Trust

	Configurations						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AUTHORVAL			●	○		●	●
SOCTRUST		●			●		●
SATDEMOCR	●	●	●	○			
SATECON	●				●	●	○
NOCORRUPT			○	●	○	○	●
POLARIZ				●			○
Consistency	0.877	0.865	0.817	0.818	0.836	0.824	0.863
PRI	0.838	0.817	0.714	0.489	0.734	0.722	0.542
Solution Coverage	0.741	0.615	0.332	0.094	0.344	0.323	0.072
Unique coverage	0.090	0.021	0.013	0.008	0.007	0.009	0.001
Overall solution consistency				0.810			
Overall solution coverage				0.830			

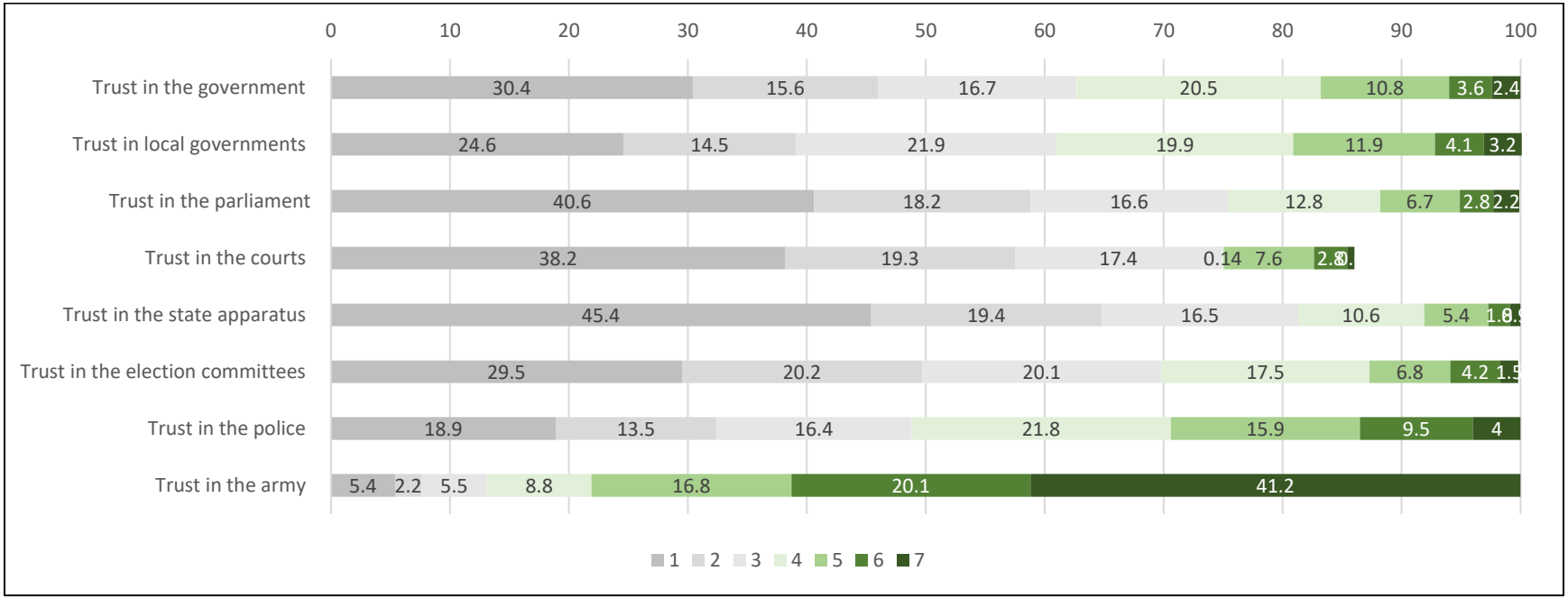
Notes: The black circles (●) denote the presence of a condition, while the empty circle (○) indicates the absence of it; empty cells indicate a "does not matter" situation in which the condition may be either present or absent. Every column represents a separate configuration of conditions meeting sufficiency criteria. All the configurations should be combined in one solution with the logical "AND."

Table 6. fsQCA Solution for Low Institutional Trust

	Configurations						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AUTHORVAL				●	●	○	○
SOCTRUST			●	●	○		○
SATDEMOCR	○		●		○	○	●
SATECON		○	○	○	○		●
NOCORRUPT	○	○					●
POLARIZ				○		●	○
Consistency	0.829	0.811	0.771	0.812	0.883	0.857	0.813
PRI	0.783	0.761	0.461	0.605	0.838	0.795	0.386
Solution Coverage	0.806	0.818	0.191	0.142	0.361	0.390	0.070
Unique coverage	0.029	0.030	0.005	0.002	0.002	0.004	0.006
Overall solution consistency				0.779			
Overall solution coverage				0.894			

Notes: The black circles (●) denote the presence of a condition, while the empty circle (○) indicates the absence of it; empty cells indicate a "does not matter" situation in which the condition may be either present or absent. Every column represents a separate configuration of conditions meeting sufficiency criteria. All the configurations should be combined in one solution with the logical "AND."

Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents across Response Values for Institutional Trust Questions.



Notes: Institutional trust was measured by asking respondents to rate their trust in various institutions using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "No trust at all" and 7 indicated "Complete trust." A score of 4 represented neutrality, interpreted as a state of indecision or ambivalence.

Figure 2. Trust Items Representation in the Single Construct of Institutional Trust.

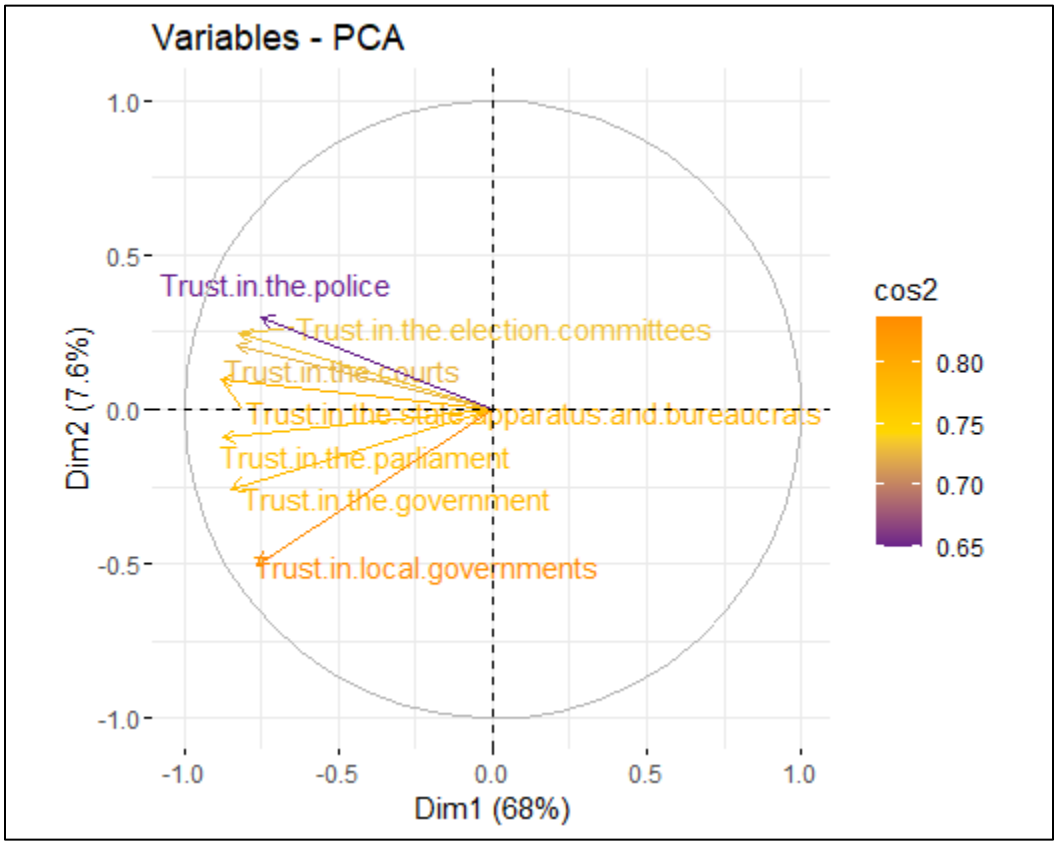
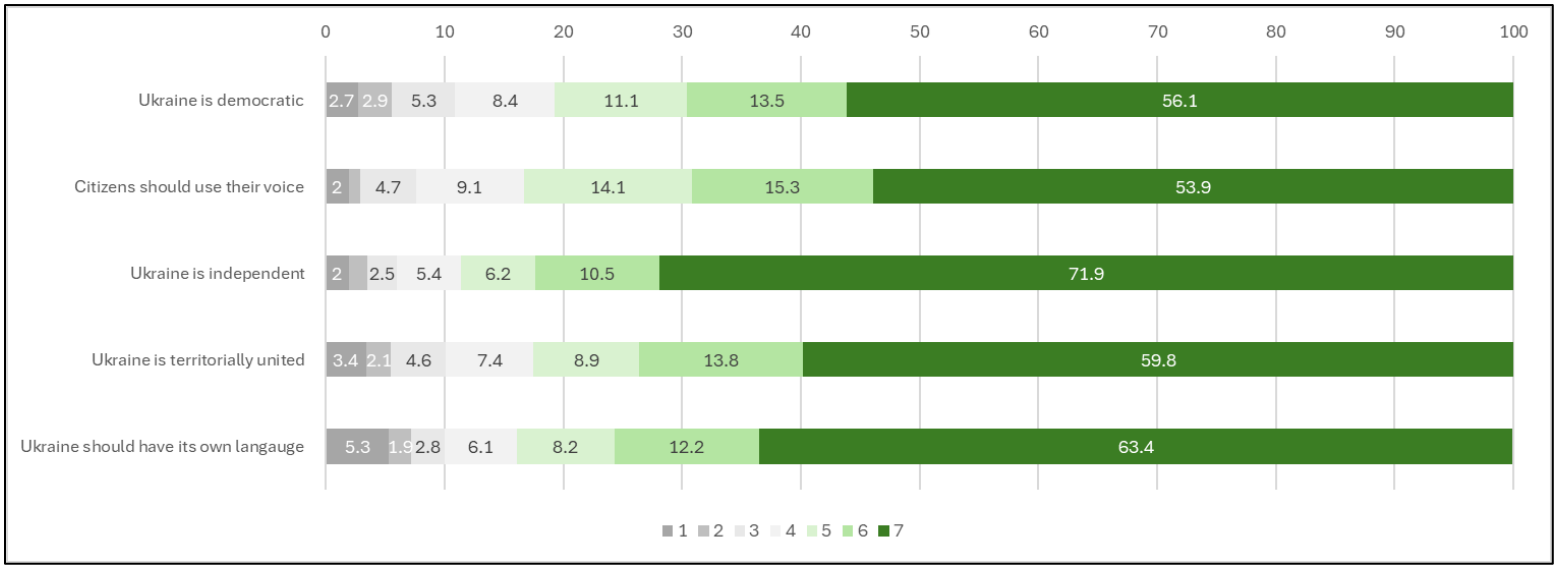
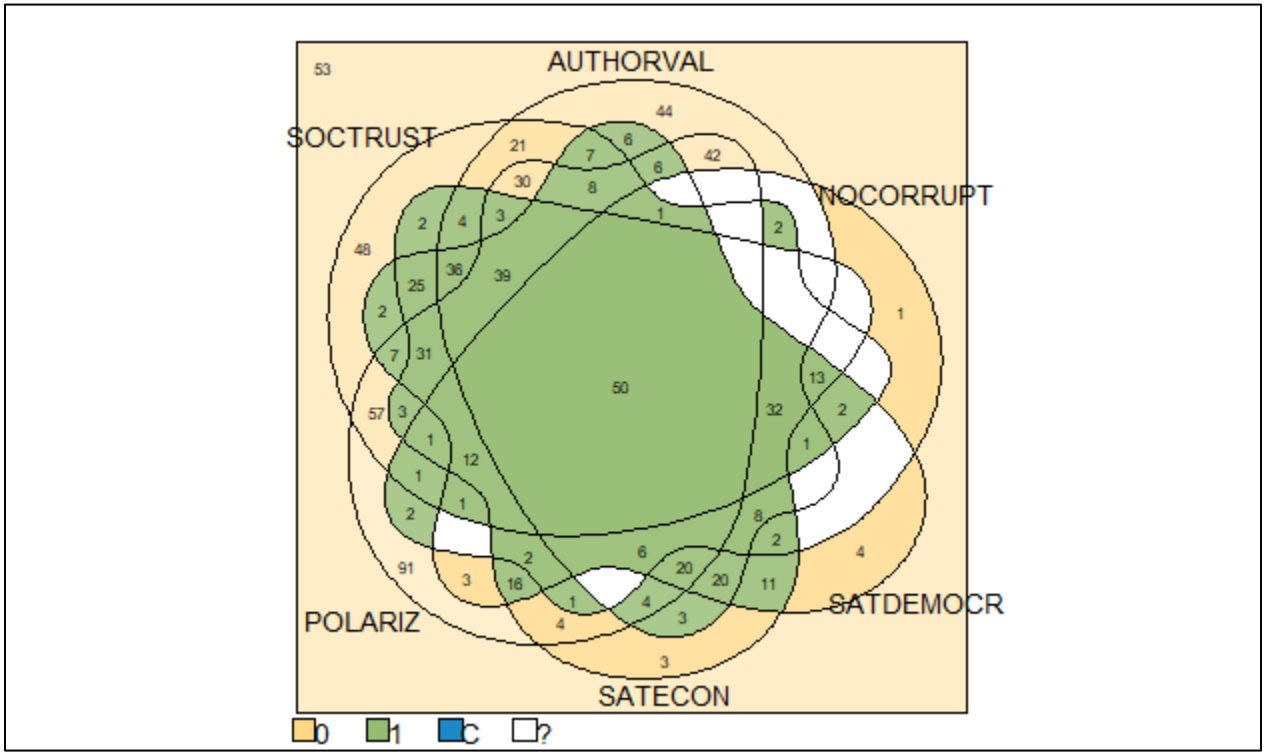


Figure 3. Distribution of Respondents across Response Values for Questions about Attitudes toward Ukraine.



Notes: Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the selected issues on a scale from 1 ("Not at all important") to 7 ("Totally important").

Figure 4. Venn Diagram for fsQCA Truth Table before Applying the Minimization Procedure



Notes: Color (0) represents positive output configurations, color (1) denotes negative output configurations, color (C) indicates contradictions, and color (?) signifies remainders (i.e., intersections lacking empirical evidence). The counts for each intersection reflect the number of cases associated with each configuration.

Annex 1. Truth Table for the Conservative Solution: The Case of High Institutional Trust

		Consistency	PRI	Solution Coverage	Unique coverage
SATDEMOCR * SATECON		0.877	0.838	0.741	0.090
SATDEMOCR * SOCTRUST		0.865	0.817	0.615	0.021
SATDEMOCR * AUTHORVAL * ~NOCORRUPT		0.817	0.714	0.332	0.013
~SATDEMOCR * NOCORRUPT * ~AUTHORVAL * POLARIZ		0.818	0.489	0.094	0.008
SATECON * SOCTRUST *~NOCORRUPT		0.836	0.734	0.344	0.007
SATECON * AUTHORVAL * ~NOCORRUPT		0.824	0.722	0.323	0.009
~SATECON * AUTHORVAL * SOCTRUST * NOCORRUPT * ~POLARIZ		0.863	0.542	0.072	0.001
	M1	0.810	0.753	0.830	

Annex 2. Truth Table for the Conservative Solution: The Case of Low Institutional Trust

		Consistency	PRI	Solution Coverage	Unique coverage
~SATDEMOCR * ~NOCORRUPT		0.829	0.783	0.806	0.029
~SATECON * ~NOCORRUPT		0.811	0.761	0.818	0.030
SOCTRUST* SATDEMOCR * ~SATECON		0.771	0.461	0.191	0.005
SOCTRUST *AUTHORVAL * ~SATECON *~POLARIZ		0.812	0.605	0.142	0.002
~ SOCTRUST * AUTHORVAL * ~SATDEMOCR * ~SATECON		0.883	0.838	0.361	0.002
~ AUTHORVAL * ~ SATDEMOCR * POLARIZ		0.857	0.795	0.390	0.004
~ SOCTRUST* ~ AUTHORVAL * NOCORRUPT * SATDEMOCR * SATECON *~POLARIZ		0.813	0.386	0.070	0.006
	M1	0.779	0.719	0.894	

Annex 3. Summary of Robustness Tests

	Robustness test strategy	Number of conf.	Solution	Solution consistency	Solution coverage
High Institutional Trust	New calibration anchors (20%, 50% 95%)	7	SOCTRUST*SATDEMOCR + ~NOCORRUPT*SATDEMOCR + ~NOCORRUPT*SATECON + SATDEMOCR*SATECON + ~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*SATDEMOCR*POLARIZ + ~SOCTRUST* ~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT * ~SATDEMOCR* ~SATECON + SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT* ¬SATECON* ~POLARIZ	0.803	0.841
	New calibration anchors (5%, 50% 80%)	7	SOCTRUST*SATDEMOCR + ~NOCORRUPT*SATDEMOCR + ~NOCORRUPT*SATECON + SATDEMOCR*SATECON + ~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*~SATDEMOCR*POLARIZ + ~SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*~SATDEMOCR*~SATECON + SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*~SATECON*~POLARIZ	0.837	0.837
	New calibration anchors (15%, 50% 85%)	11	Four additional combinations emerged: ~AUTHIORVAL*~NOCORRUPT*SATECON + SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*POLARIZ + SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*SATECON*POLARIZ+ ~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*~SATDEMOCR*~SATECON * POLARIZ	0.723	0.896
	New calibration anchors (25%, 50% 75%)	8	~SOCTRUST*SATDEMOCR*SATECON + AUTHORVAL*SATDEMOCR*SATECON + NOCORRUPT*SATDEMOCR*SATECON + SATDEMOCR*SATECON*POLARIZ + SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*SATDEMOCR *POLARIZ + SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*SATECON*POLARIZ + SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*~NOCORRUPT*SATDEMOCR*POLARIZ + SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*~SATDEMOCR*~SATECON*~POLARIZ	0.799	0.781
	Irrelevant cases removed	5	SATDEMOCR*SATECON + SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*SATDEMOCR + SOCTRUST*NOCORRUPT*SATDEMOCR + SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*SATECON*POLARIZ + SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*~NOCORRUPT*SATECON*POLARIZ	0.879	0.914

Low Institutional Trust	New calibration anchors (20%, 50% 95%)	8	~SOCTRUST*~NOCORRUPT + ~NOCORRUPT* ~SATDEMOCR + SOCTRUST* SATDEMOCR* ~SATECON + ~AUTHORVAL* ~NOCORRUPT* ~POLARIZ + ~AUTHORVAL* ~SATDEMOCR*POLARIZ + ~SOCTRUST* ~AUTHORVAL* ~SATDEMOCR* ~SATECON + ~SOCTRUST* ~AUTHORVAL* SATDEMOCR* SATECON + SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*~SATECON*~POLARIZ	0.743	0.932
	New calibration anchors (5%, 50% 80%)	7	~NOCORRUPT*~SATDEMOCR + ~NOCORRUPT*~SATECON + SOCTRUST*SATDEMOCR*~SATECON + ~AUTHORVAL*~SATDEMOCR*POLARIZ + ~SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*~SATDEMOCR*~SATECON + SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*~SATECON*~POLARIZ + ~SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*SATDEMOCR*SATECON*~POLARIZ	0.752	0.918
	New calibration anchors (15%, 50% 85%)	11	Four additional configurations emerged SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*~SATDEMOCR*POLARIZ+ SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*~SATECON*~POLARIZ+ SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*SATDEMOCR*~POLARIZ ~AUTHORVAL*SATDEMOCR*SATECON*~POLARIZ	0.732	0.956
	New calibration anchors (25%, 50% 75%)	6	~NOCORRUPT*~SATECON + ~SOCTRUST*~NOCORRUPT*~SATDEMOCR + ~NOCORRUPT*~SATDEMOCR*~POLARIZ + ~SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*~SATDEMOCR*~SATECON + AUTHORVAL*~SATDEMOCR*~SATECON*~POLARIZ + SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*~SATDEMOCR* POLARIZ	0.857	0.889
	Irrelevant cases removed	4	SOCTRUST*NOCORRUPT*SATDEMOCR*~SATECON + SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*SATDEMOCR*~SATECON*~POLARIZ + SOCTRUST*~AUTHORVAL*NOCORRUPT*~SATDEMOCR*SATECON*POLARIZ+ SOCTRUST*AUTHORVAL*~NOCORRUPT*~SATDEMOCR*SATECON*POLARIZ	0.664	0.363