



The Value Division between Ukraine and Russia

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Abstract

The paper provides a comparative analysis of cultural value orientations between Ukraine and Russia, using quantitative data from World Values Survey to understand the Russian invasion, as well as potential value changes in the post-war future. The article also provides other quantitative survey data from internal studies in both countries, which allow to compare their value orientations in the context of a common past with a vision of the future. By applying the Inglehart-Welzel methodology, this article investigates the impact of these value distinctions on each country's democracy perception, aiming to reach research goal to compare the cultural and value vectors of two countries and examine how these value vectors reflect their attitudes towards democracy and social development.

Keywords: values, value orientation, sociology, survey, war in Ukraine, Ukraine, Russia

1. Introduction

Rapid geopolitical transformations, the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the Ukrainian resistance to defend their freedom have raised questions about the cultural and value (non)affinity of Ukraine and Russia for understanding modern changes in society. The brutal Russian war in Ukraine and the resistance of Ukrainians in defending their freedom, the difference in views on the value of human life showed the civilization gap between these two countries and requires different points of view to explain how this invasion has become possible and what we will have in the European community in the future.

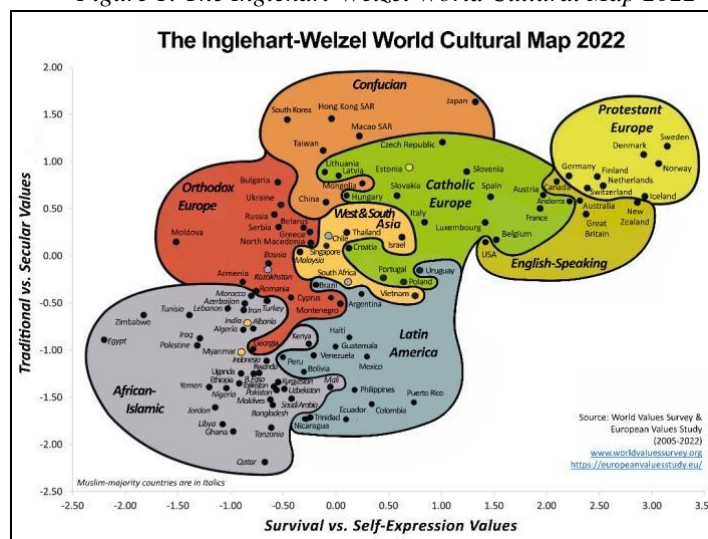
The theoretical framework used in this study is the Inglehart-Welzel methodology, which has been widely used in the study of values and cultural gaps. The methodology aims to understand how economic progress and democratization affect the value orientations of societies. This theoretical framework has been widely used to analyze the cultural and value differences between societies, and in the context of political conflicts too. In particular, Inglehart's theory of post-materialism suggest that when societies become more prosperous and secure - individuals become less concerned with material needs and more focused on selfexpression and quality of life, and that explains the dynamics of social and political change (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). Concerning value divisions in general the framework distinguishes two broad types of values: "survival values" and "self-expression values". Survival values are associated with traditional societies that prioritize economic and physical security, obedience to authority and traditional gender roles. While self-expression values are associated with post-industrial societies that prioritize individual autonomy, personal fulfillment, and democratic participation. R. Inglehart demonstrates how security and wealth affect the worldview of society: wealthier peoples demonstrate more tolerance and a higher degree of openness, they have a high level of trust and freedom, which at the end is associated with a higher level of happiness (Inglehart, 1990) (Inglehart, 1997). This shift is also explained by coming-of-age of a generation that has been growing up in conditions of guaranteed security. According to the Inglehart-Welzel cultural map, Russia and Ukraine share a similar cultural and historical legacy, and are located in the same "orthodox" cluster. However, there are also some differences between the two countries in terms of their value systems and levels of democracy, which may have contributed to the difference between them. For example, Inglehart and Norris (Inglehart, Norris, 2016) argue that Ukraine has developed a more democratic and Western-oriented value system compared to Russia which has a more authoritarian and traditionalist value system. This value division on their opinion has been a key driver of the divergence between the two countries.

Previous scholars have also used the Inglehart-Welzel framework to analyze the cultural and value differences between Ukraine and Russia. For example, Henry Hale (Hale, 2015) argues that the conflict can be explained by to the fact that Ukraine has developed a stronger sense of national identity while to Russia has historically tried to build a cohesive national identity in its multiethnic landscape. He suggests that this has caused a cultural and value division between two countries and can made it harder for them to reaching any agreements

According to the cultural map built within the WVS last wave, Russia and Ukraine are extremely close to each other, Ukraine continues to be in the cluster of "orthodox", postSoviet countries, together with neighboring Russia, Belarus, Bulgaria, and Moldova, where survival values prevail and there is a partial prevailing for secular over traditional values [Figure 1]. However, despite sharing similar cultural and historical roots, these two countries seem to have

developed different value orientations and levels of democracy, which may have contributed to the misunderstanding between them. The research problem of this study is to compare the cultural and value vectors of Ukraine and Russia using mainly the Inglehart-Welzel methodology and examine how these value vectors reflect their attitudes towards democracy and social development. To better understand this issue, this paper aims to compare the cultural and value indicators of Ukraine and Russia using also the Inglehart-Welzel methodology and afforce it with more up-to-date studies, examine how these indicators reflect respective value systems of two countries. By perusing this goal, we aim to shed light on the underlying causes of the war, and offer insights for the fields of sociology and political science.

Figure 1: The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map 2022



Source: World Value Survey site

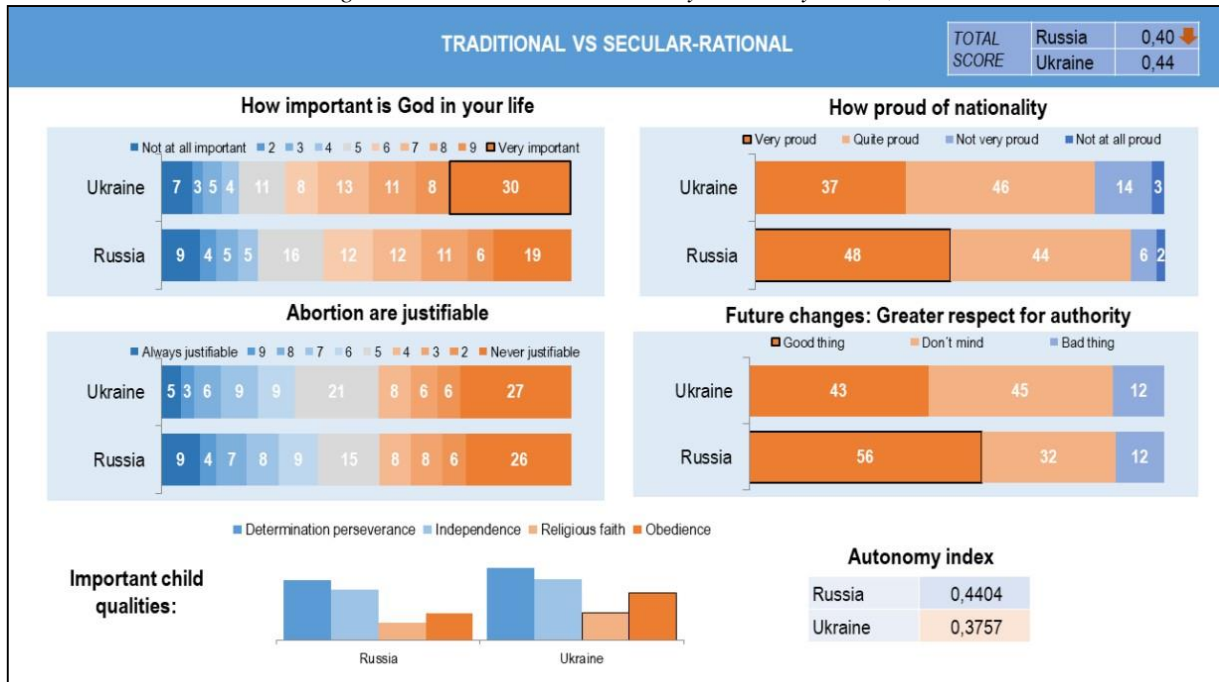
2. Value analysis

In order to understand in what coordinates of this methodology Ukraine is so close to Russia in terms of value, we will consider all the components included in the Inglehart-Welzel value map according to the data of the last 7th wave of World Value Survey 2022.

2.1. Traditionality-secularity

In the scale of traditionality-secularity, the following indicators are taken as an index: God is very important in a person's life; abortions are never justifiable; the respondent has strong sense of national pride; respondent favors more respect for authority and an index of autonomy (it is more important for a child to learn obedience and religious faith than independence and determination). Along this axis [Figure 2], we can see that although the difference between the countries in the overall indicator is extremely small, there are some differences in the index components.

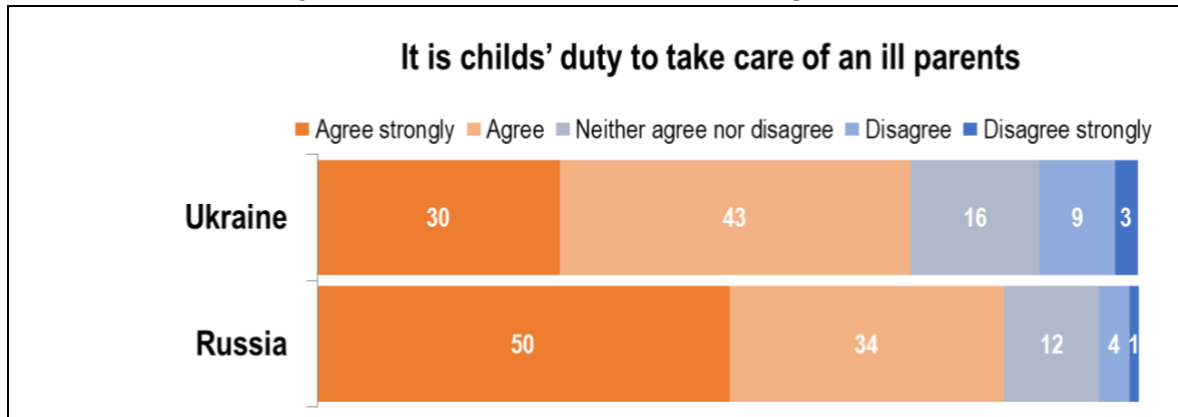
Figure 2. WVS data - Traditionality-secularity values, 2022



Source: World Value Survey data, round 7, 2017- 2022

According to this indicator, Ukraine is "pulled down" by higher **religiosity** - the importance of God in a person's life. In Russia, despite the very high integration of the church in the political sphere, as we can see, the importance of God for a person is somewhat lower, probably not without the influence of the Soviet canvas, which denied the need for religion and which remains stronger in Russia than in Ukraine. However, it would be unfair to unequivocally state that higher religiosity always negates democratic development, in Ukraine the average level of importance of God is even lower than in Poland, and approximately at the same level as in the USA, and we also know that religion is most important in the western regions of Ukraine (Sociological group Rating, 2021), which are closer to the European context. The influence of religion on human life is unlikely to decrease in Ukraine in the coming years, because the war slows down the process of secularization, church communities are beginning to act as part of civil society, and terror makes faith in anything that can give us hope more necessary for Ukrainians, so according to the latest polls (Sociological group Rating, 2022) the level of faith in God has not changed in Ukraine. Also, in this axis of values, the index of autonomy in Ukraine is somewhat lower than in Russia - which is determined by traits that are considered important for their children. It's interesting that in Ukraine, at the same time, independence/determination (secular) and obedience/faith in God (traditional) as desired traits are higher than in Russia, because generally in Ukraine, the average number of given answers is higher than in Russia (4.7 against 4.4). So, we cannot see the difference here, but the difference in the perception of the **child's independence** can be seen in another direct question from the WVS about whether it is child's duty to take care of parents [Figure 3]: among the Russian population there are significantly more people who strongly agree with this thesis.

Figure 3. WVS data – statement about child and parents, 2022



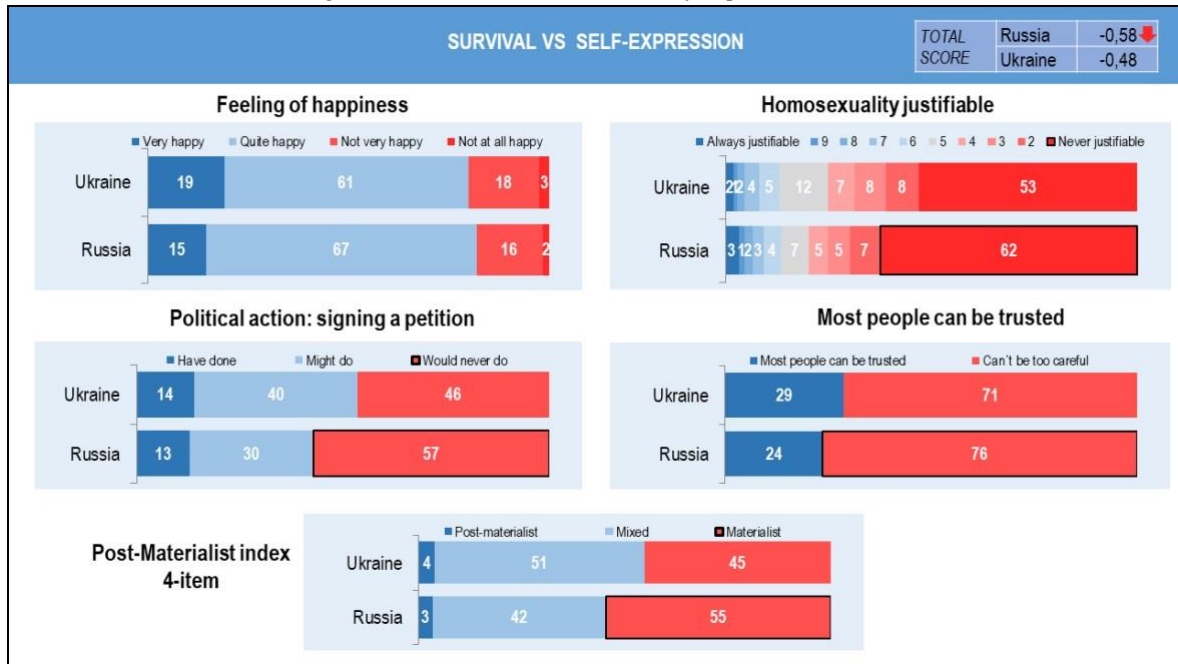
Source: World Value Survey data, round 7, 2017/2022

In the context of attitudes towards **abortion**, we see almost the same indicators in both countries [Figure 2]. For Ukraine, this is a direct correlation with its high religiosity and the sanctity of the family institution, we will see this also further down in gender stereotypes. At the same time, it is hypothetically possible that we can expect a partial liberalization of Ukrainian views on this after the war, taking into account the tragic scale of the suffering of Ukrainian women who were subjected to violence while staying in the occupied territories and faced the problem of the difficulty of performing abortions. As for other indicators, in this group of values Russia loses in the context of the perception of the superiority of its nationality, and what is important in understanding the modern war - we see **a higher loyalty among Russians to the thesis that the government needs more respect from the population** [Figure 2], and therefore, accordingly, less criticism or denial of its actions. Moreover, in the future, this indicator of "requirement of respect for the authorities" could increase even more, if we take into account that the approval of the authorities in Russia has reached the maximum indicators since the beginning of the invasion. In this case, we cannot confirm in the analysis of the question of national pride that Hale's conclusion that Ukrainians have a stronger sense of national identity (Hale, 2015), but these scales do not contain enough questions about identity to investigate this in detail. Cultural and value differences between Ukraine and Russia can be related to different paths of political and economic development. For example, Andreas Umland (Umland, 2015) argues that Ukraine has been on **a path of greater political and economic liberalization** since the collapse of the Soviet Union, while Russia has experienced a return to authoritarianism and state prevailing in the economy. This led to a difference in the cultural systems and value orientations of the two countries, with Ukraine moving closer to Western liberal-democratic values and Russia taking a more traditionalist and **authoritarian** governance.

2.2 Survival vs self-expression values

Now let's review the scale of survival vs self-expression values [Figure 4], which takes into account such indicators as: the materialism index (priority to economic and physical security over self-expression and quality of life); respondents describe themselves as not very happy; homosexuality is never justified; the respondent has not signed and would not sign any petitions; you have to be very careful about trusting people.

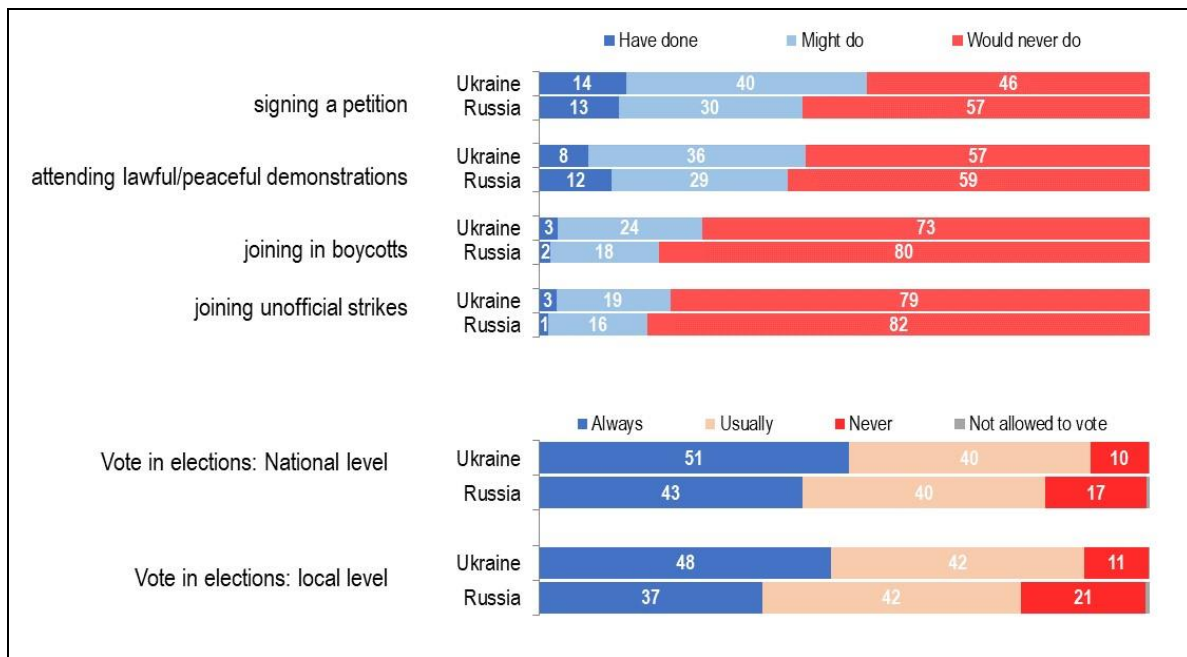
Figure 4. WVS data - Survival vs self-expression values, 2022



Source: World Value Survey data, round 7, 2017- 2022

Here is also a slight difference in the context of Ukraine's closer location to the values of self-expression, but still, the values of survival prevail in both countries. Apart from the feeling of happiness, according to all other indicators, Russia has lower self-expression values than Ukraine. First of all, this concerns the **post-materialist index**, according to which the importance of economics and security is higher than the importance of self-expression and quality of life. It is possible to expect an even greater deterioration for Russia here in the conditions of international isolation. Whether we can expect the same for Ukraine - this is also possible, because the issue of physical security is now more painful than ever for Ukrainians, as well as economic survival, the impact of which we will feel even more with the onset of autumn. However, it would be unfair to argue that this should simultaneously negate the need for freedom of expression. As we can see, especially physical freedom and freedom of national self-determination for Ukrainians is now number one, and if we talk about statistical indicators (V-Dem Institute, 2021), we know for sure that the level of freedom of self-expression in Ukraine is higher than in Russia. What else do we see differences in: this axis takes into account the political activity of respondents in the context of their involvement in petitions. This is a really important difference, which has made the reaction of the Russian population to the invasion exactly the way it is - because "nothing depends on us". We can also see from other indicators from the WVS [Figure 5] that **Ukrainians are generally more politically active**, they participate in demonstrations more often, Ukrainians vote more often, they feel their influence on the political life of the country, they see the change of government, especially after the electoral revolution in 2019 and, in fact, a complete reset of the government. Moreover, Russia's last authoritarian policy of punishment for any rallies and dissent can contribute to even greater reluctance to do anything further, while in Ukraine, on the contrary, any reluctance finds its expression in protests, and even against military force.

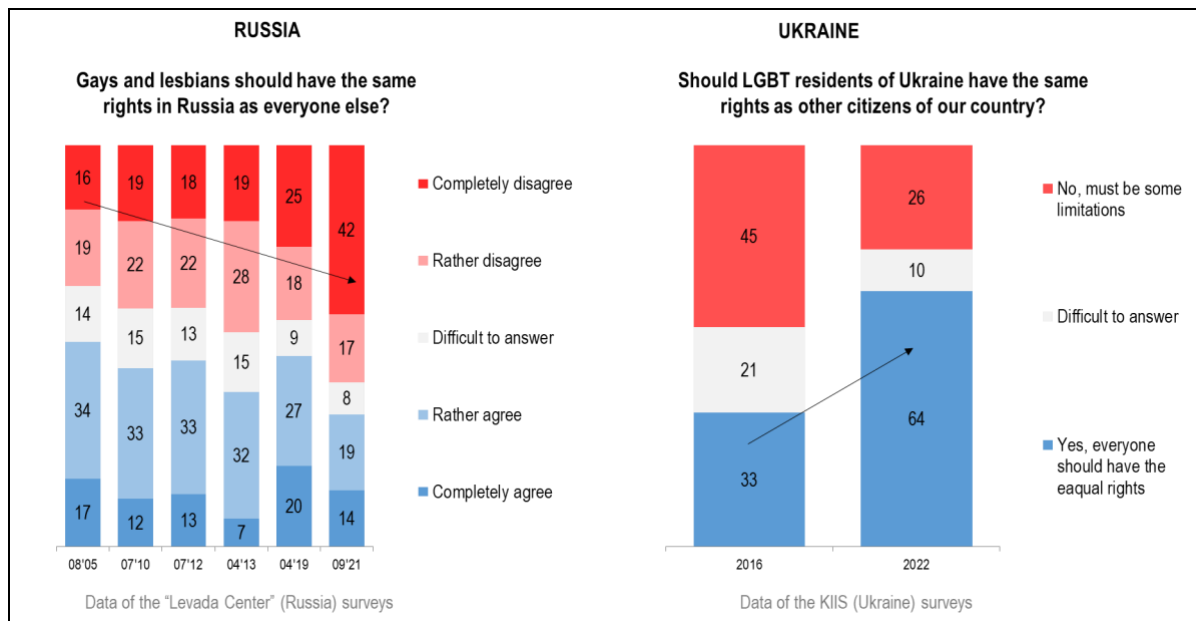
Figure 5. WVS data – political activities, 2022



Source: World Value Survey data, round 7, 2017- 2022

Another important indicator of this axis of values is the attitude towards **homosexuality**. This indicator is not optimistic in Ukraine, and in Russia it is even worse. This is also visible in other WVS issues, for example, among Russians there are significantly more people who would not like to live with LGBT people in the neighborhood. There is one important point here - the **dynamics** of such indicators. If we take the internal studies of the countries [Figure 6], we see the opposite trends: if in Russia the attitude towards LGBT people is only worsening over the years, at the same time in Ukraine the attitude towards granting them equal rights, on the contrary, improves. For Russia, this is rather related to ideological propaganda in recent years, which imposes hatred towards LGBT people, Europe and the USA, while in Ukraine the process of liberalization is deepening, among the non-religious and younger population it is mostly a neutral-positive attitude, to the same process can facilitate the participation of LGBT people in the war against a common enemy.

Figure 6. Attitudes towards LGBT in Ukraine and Russia



Source: Levada center, 2021 (Russia) and KIIS, 2022 (Ukraine) survey data

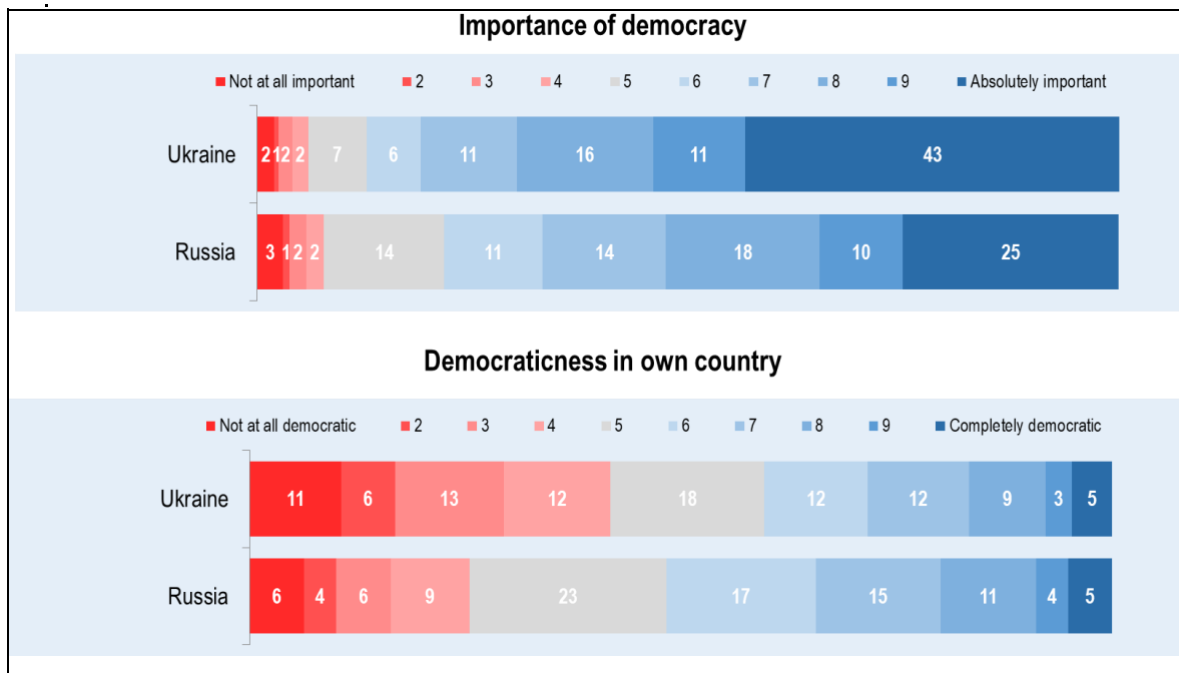
So, within the analyzed indicators of the two value axes, there are still some components that allow us to show some value differences between Ukraine and Russia, in particular, if they are supported by an additional data. However, in general, we see that these differences are more pronounced in issues that stand outside of this methodology. We can review a few more comparisons using WVS data.

2.3. Democracy values

The attitude towards democracy is very important in understanding modern values. Obviously, according to these data [Figure 7], **the value of democracy is significantly more important for Ukrainians rather than for Russians**. The value of democracy is more important to Ukrainians, which confirms the findings of Inglehart and Norris (Inglehart & Norris, 2016) who suggested that Ukraine has developed a more democratic and closer to Western-oriented value system and higher readiness for political activity.

Moreover, if we take the question of whether my country is democratic, the difference is reversed, because Ukrainians are more skeptical in their assessments of their democratic regime than Russians. This is a very important key difference in the context of democratization and the struggle of Ukrainians for the chosen path of pro-European development: for Ukrainians, democracy is more important, they are better acquainted with it because of their higher political involvement, because of previous revolutions, because of greater proximity to Europe, and therefore **Ukrainians' demands for democratic institutions are higher** than Russian ones, they are more ready to fight for these institutions and demand their improvement, while Russians are more satisfied with what they have, and they are less interested in deepening democracy.

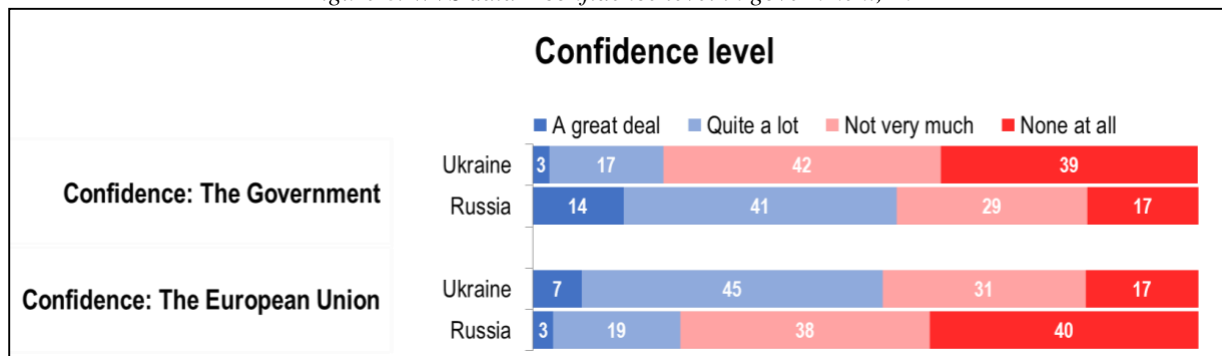
Figure 7. WVS data – value and evaluation of democracy level, 2022



Source: World Value Survey data, round 7, 2017- 2022

This can also be confirmed by a comparison of trust in one's own government and the government of Europe [Figure 8]. **Ukrainians put much more trust in EU than in their own government**, because they want our government to develop and strive for a better European model, Russians, on the contrary, are more satisfied with their government and confident in it significantly more than in European politicians.

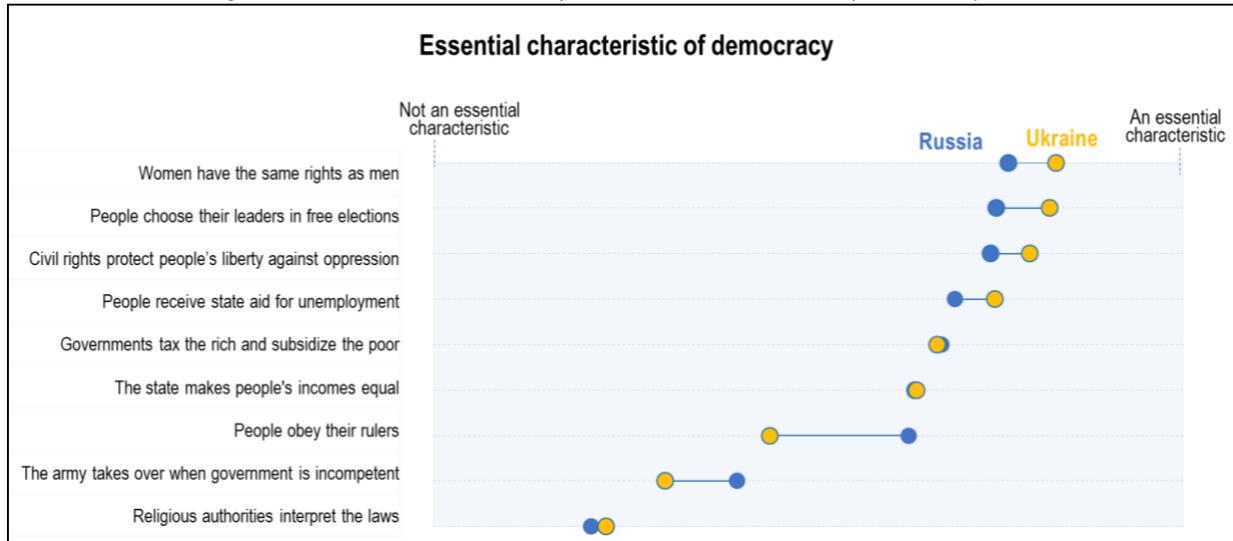
Figure 8. WVS data – confidence level in government, 2022



Source: World Value Survey data, round 7, 2017- 2022

In the same context, it is also interesting to overview what the population of both countries understand by the term “democracy”. The WVS project has a very interesting question about what essential characteristics of democracy are. Most of the studied components have a statistically significant difference between the Ukrainian and Russian indicators [Figure 9]. Gender equality, free choice in elections, civil rights and freedom of speech, social assistance to the unemployed are more important to Ukrainians than to Russians. Whereas conformity is more important **for Russians - democracy for them is more about obeying the rules**, and what is very critical today - **Russians are more receptive to the idea of delegating power to the army**.

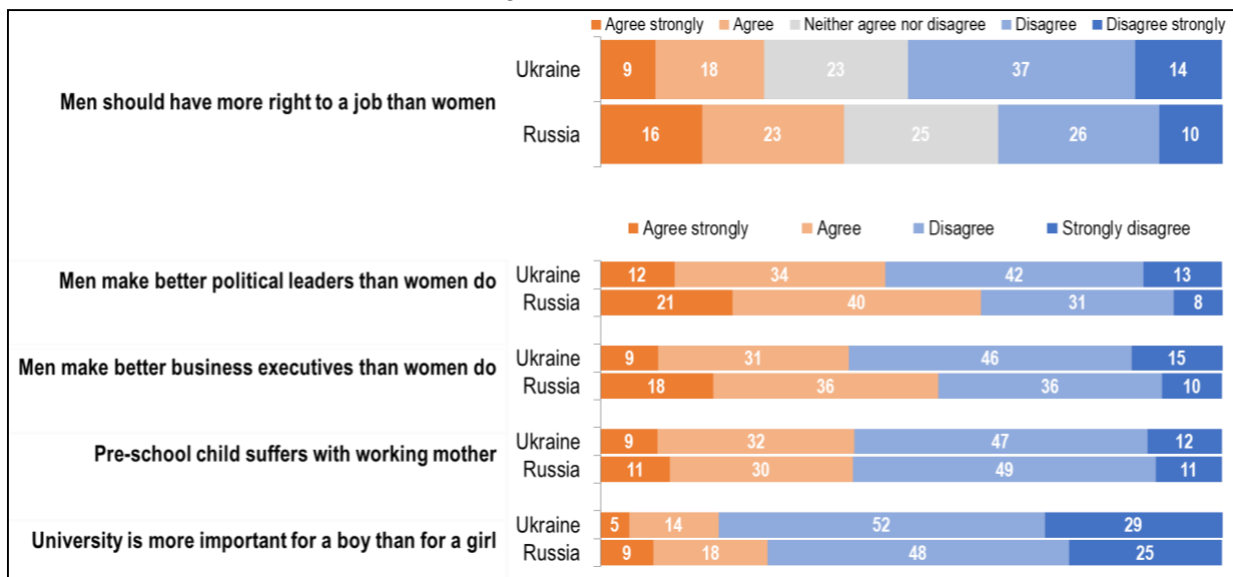
Figure 9. WVS data- evaluation of essential characteristics of democracy, 2022



Source: World Value Survey data, round 7, 2017- 2022

As for gender equality, roles and stereotypes, there is a section in the WVS project which is also devoted to it [Figure 10].

Figure 10. WVS data, 2022

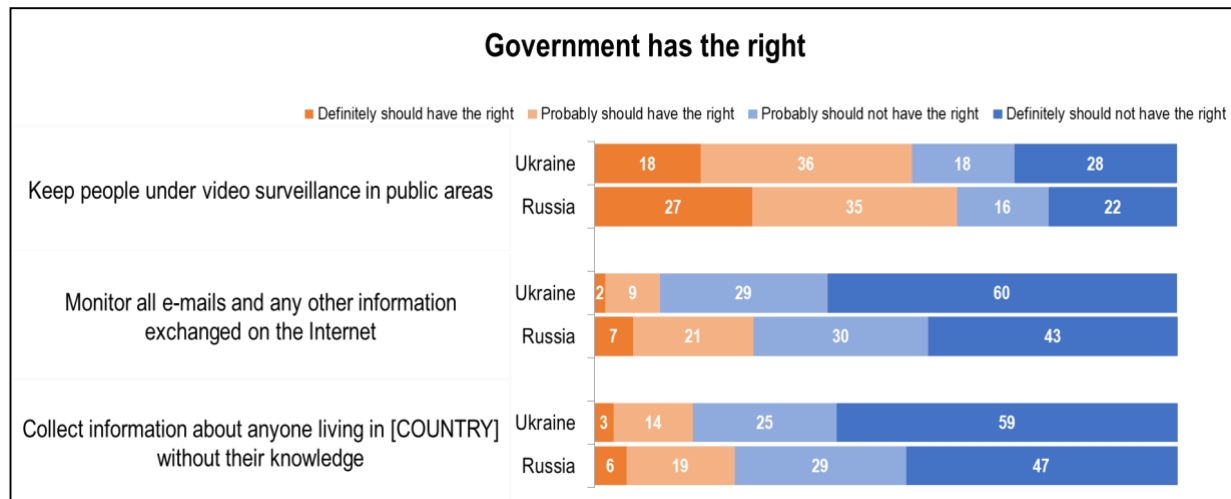


Source: World Value Survey data, round 7, 2017- 2022

In this context, the perception of women's rights in Ukraine is more progressive than in Russia. If Russians both agree and disagree with the fact that men should have more rights to a job than women, in Ukraine disagreement with such statement prevails. The same applies to the rest of the statements: **unlike Russians, Ukrainians tend to disagree that women are worse political leaders or business managers.** The only statement where there is no positive difference on the Ukrainian side is the family issue – about the harm to the child of a working mother. So we can partially confirm the conclusion of Inglehart and Norris, as well as Hale that Ukraine's value system has become more Western-oriented with greater emphasis on individual liberties, democracy.

Another interesting topic that WVS project gives us is the opportunity to analyze the relationship between citizens and the state. We already know that Russians are more loyal to obeying the rules and less ready to make their own decisions in the political sphere. Moreover, **Russians are more ready to live under conditions of increased public control**, including giving up their rights to inviolability of personal information: Russians more than Ukrainians agree that the government should have the right to keep people under video surveillance, monitor private communication and activity on the Internet, collect information about a person without his/her consent [Figure 11].

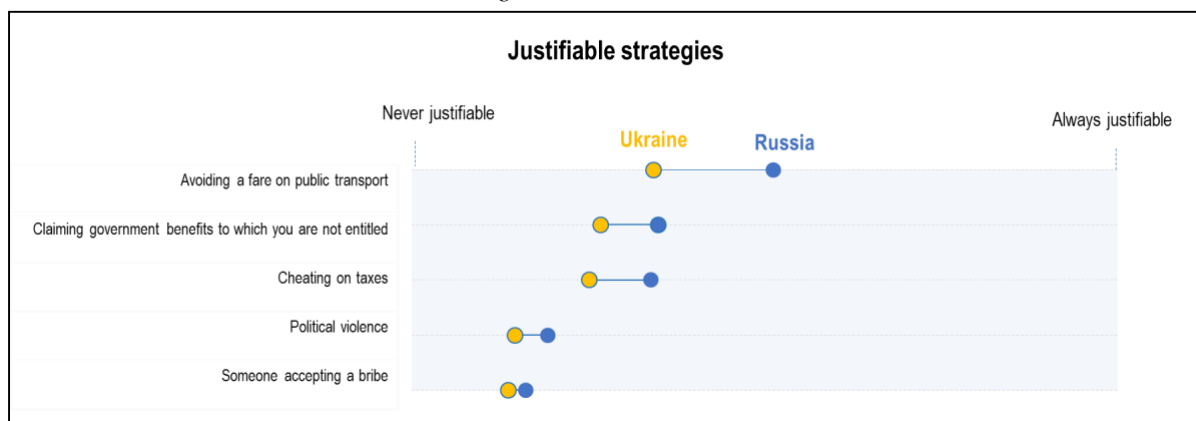
Figure 11. WVS data, 2022



Source: World Value Survey data, round 7, 2017- 2022

At the same time, Russians are ready to exchange these rights for loyalty from the authorities to informal practices that have Soviet roots [Figure 12]: Russians more often consider it normal not to pay for services, to unfairly claim government benefits, to cheat on taxes, all this also shows less important the values of honesty, justice, democracy and equality to Russians.

Figure 12. WVS data, 2022

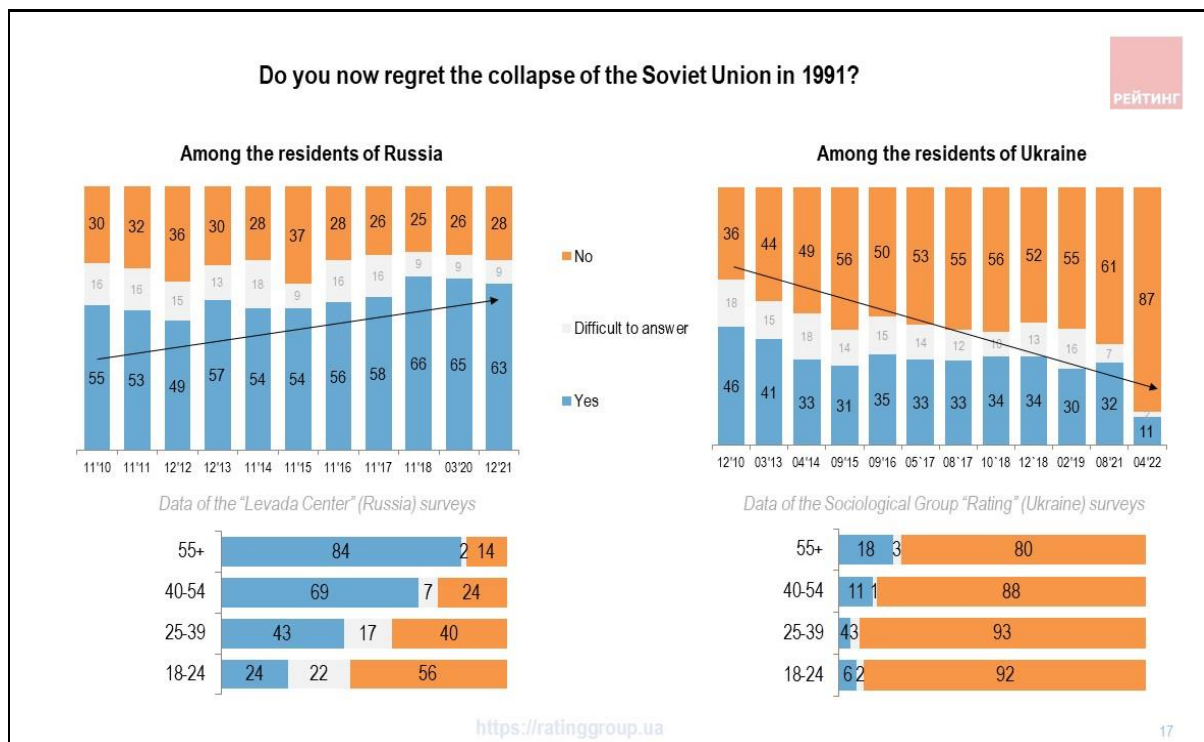


Source: World Value Survey data, round 7, 2017- 2022

2.4. “Path dependency” values

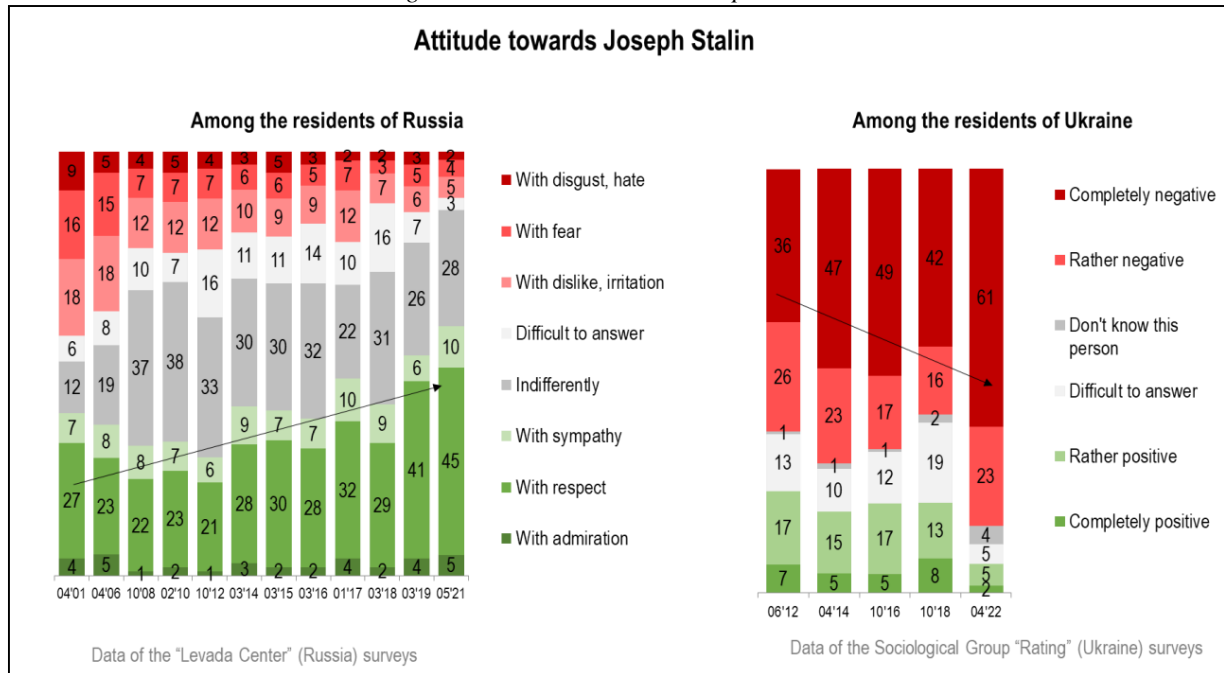
Inglehart was definitely right that despite the impact of economic change, the impact of the “**path dependency**” is also very important (Inglehart, 1997). Umland also considered the issue of Ukraine's and Russia's path dependence, comparing the level of economic liberalization and the paths to self-statehood of the two countries after collapse of Soviet Union (Umland, 2015). Definitely Ukraine and Russia have a common Soviet past, but we should not forget that the main question here is how this USSR past is perceived and interpreted by citizens today. This is the core ideological and value gap between Ukraine and Russia today. According to the results of the survey in Ukraine and Russia [Figure 13, 14], we see that if for Ukraine the rejection of the Soviet life, decommunization processes, rethinking the negative consequences of the Soviet period are more relevant, while for Russians, on the contrary, the state idea is increasingly beginning to be built around the Soviet past, nostalgia for the USSR is increasing (even among those who have never lived there), and ideological characters such as Stalin are only gaining more popularity and the demand for a planned economy is growing. After the full-scale invasion, all these trends are only deepening, Russians increasingly hate Western countries that impose sanctions on them (Levada center, 2022), while Ukrainians, on the contrary, are as positive as possible towards all friendly countries and strive for European integration (Sociological group Rating, 2022).

Figure 13. USSR nostalgia in Ukraine and Russia



Source: Levada center, 2021 (Russia) and Rating Group, 2022 (Ukraine) survey data

Figure 14. Attitude towards Joseph Stalin



Source: Levada center, 2021 (Russia) and Rating Group, 2022 (Ukraine) survey data

3. Conclusion

The Inglehart-Welzel methodology has provided valuable insights into the role of cultural and value differences in shaping country's development. The Inglehart-Welzel theoretical framework has been widely used to analyze the cultural and value differences between societies, including in the context of political conflicts. Previously sociologist have applied this framework to suggest that the conflict can be partly attributed to a cultural and value division between the two countries, with Ukraine developing a more democratic and Western-oriented more liberal value system compared to Russia's more authoritarian and traditionalist value orientation what we also confirmed in our observations. These differences can be linked to the different paths of socio-political development of two countries. However, the Inglehart-Welzel framework may not be sufficient to fully capture the complex nature of the Ukrainian-Russian relations. Therefore, future research may require the development of a new typology to more accurately capture the cultural situation in transitional democracies, taking into account the unique features and peculiarities of their democratic intentions.

War acts as an invariable catalyst for a decrease in the level of existential security, which, according to Inglehart's theory, should cause an "authoritarian reflex" to return to traditional and survival values in belligerent countries (Inglehart, 1990). While Inglehart's theory suggests that war can result in an "authoritarian reflex" and a return to traditional and survival values, the evidence in this case is mixed, influencing differently on both countries' society. We can talk about the fact that social trends in Russia can already fuel this reflex and return to the values of the past, to the rejection of the democratic scenario. However, in understanding the values of Ukraine, it is difficult for this theory to distinguish how democratic development and the bright struggle for personal freedom is possible in conditions of economic and physical danger.

The real situation in Ukrainian-Russian relations proves that the value gap between two states is difficult to distinguish and explain with the existing value methodology. While the Inglehart-Welzel framework highlights the role of cultural and value differences in shaping democratic development, the complex nature of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict suggests that other factors may be influencing too. However, in general we were able to find partial confirmations in the latest World Value Survey data that indicate the correctness of the conclusions of previous studies of Hale, Inglehart and Norris, Umland (Hale, 2015; Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Umland, 2015) who pointed to more democratic, individual, liberal, and Western-oriented value system for Ukraine - meanwhile Russia's value system is more authoritarian and traditionalist with greater emphasis on limited personal rights and freedoms. The aim of this study was to compare the cultural and value vectors of Ukraine and Russia using mainly the Inglehart-Welzel methodology and other nowadays researches to examine how these value vectors reflect their attitudes towards democracy and social development. The analysis of the value orientations from the World Value Survey, in addition to other relevant data, suggests that there are significant differences between the values of Ukrainians and Russians that can answer our research question: first of all, this is the value of democracy, which is more important for Ukrainians and that is why Ukrainians less satisfied of the democratic level in society, and they are ready to fight for it and be politically active, unlike more conformist Russians; Ukrainians are a more religious nation, but at the same time, the processes of liberalization, increasing gender equality, tolerance, and the development of European values are faster in Ukraine rather than in Russia; freedom of expression, libertarianism, personal freedom and own choice of European integration future are also more important to Ukraine, while for Russians, the values of the Soviet past remain relevant, along with loyalty to limited rights and personal freedoms in their state. Generally, Russia has been characterized in this and in previous studies as having a more authoritarian political system, a less developed civil society, and a stronger emphasis on traditional values than Ukraine. In contrast, Ukraine has been characterized as having a more democratic political system, a more developed civil society, and a stronger emphasis on self-expression values than Russia. These differences may help explain why Ukraine has been more willing to defend its independence and democratic values against Russian aggression, while Russia has sought to reassert its influence in Ukraine and other neighboring countries.

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