

Ukraine³⁸



Facts & Figures

Population

41.1m

Political system

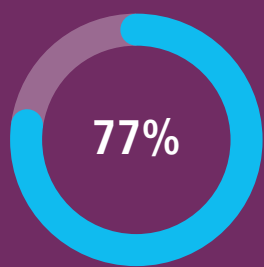
**Unitary
semi-presidential
republic**

Varieties of Democracy
regime type

**Electoral
democracy**

Varieties of Democracy
Liberal Democracy Index
ranking (2021)

99



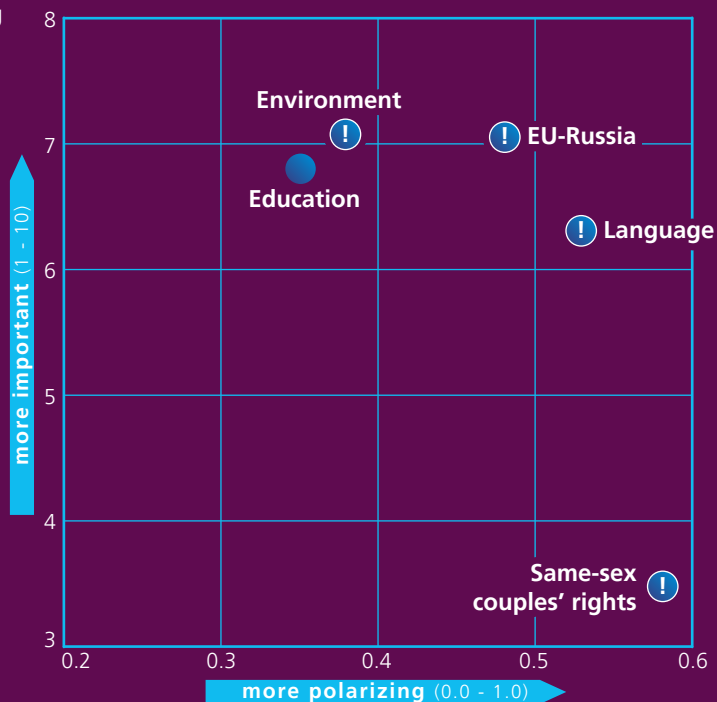
Democratic competence of Ukrainian respondents

Percentage of respondents who on average rate the four democratic items as more democratic than the ten undemocratic items in our survey

Which issues let politicians get away with undemocratic behavior?

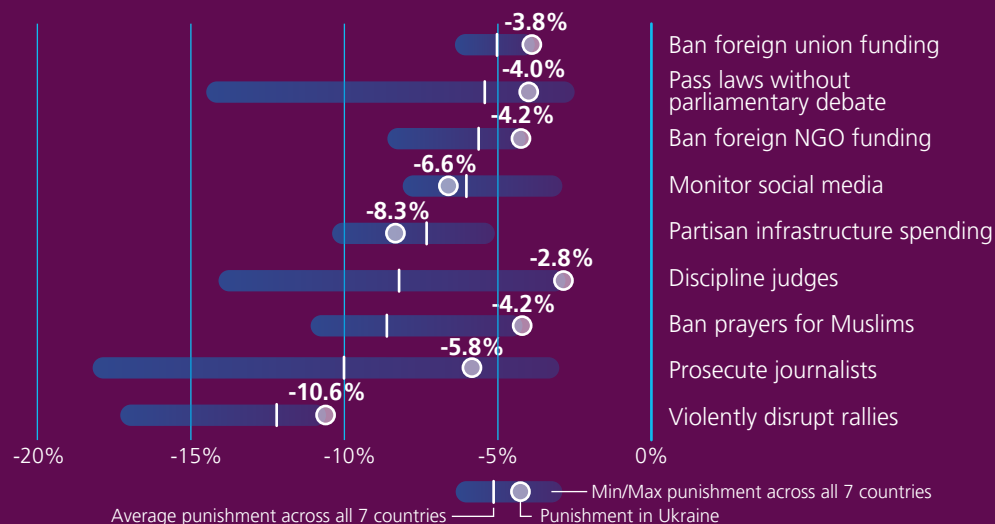
Issues displayed according to their importance to voters and degree of polarization

! Issues for which voters forgive undemocratic behavior



How much are key elements of liberal democracy valued?

The higher the vote loss for an undemocratic policy proposed by a political candidate, the more a certain democratic element is valued.



Ukrainian parties presented in the survey



English name	Servant of the People	European Solidarity	All-Ukrainian Union "Fatherland"	Opposition Platform - for Life	Voice
Ukrainian name	Слуга народу (SN)	Європейська солідарність (YeS)	ВО «Батьківщина» (VOB)	Опозиційна платформа – За життя	Голос (PH)
European affiliation	ALDE	EPP (Observer)	EPP (Observer)		ALDE
Currently governing					

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AND SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY

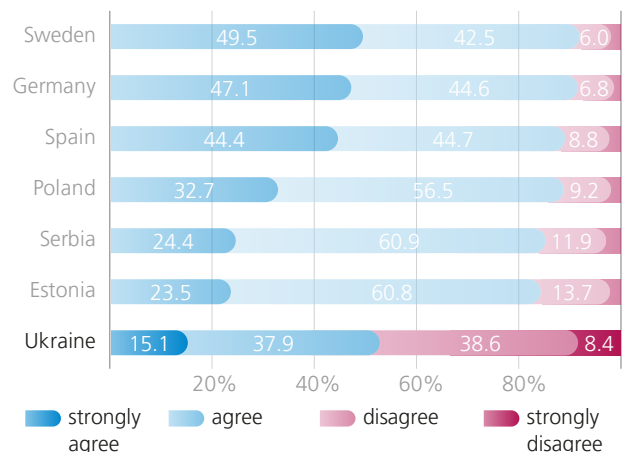
The Ukrainian people have a good understanding of what democracy is and what it is not. This is confirmed by their democratic competence that is at 77%. Moreover, a majority of Ukrainian citizens are pro-democracy oriented, however, some items related to the support for democracy enjoy significantly less support than in the other six European countries under investigation. Indeed, for Ukrainians it is important to live in a country that is governed democratically (mean score 8.4) and to have a democratic political system (80% of Ukrainians rank this as either “very good” or “fairly good”). Yet, only a slim majority of Ukrainians (53%) either “strongly agree” or “agree” that democracy is better than any other form of government. The population seems to be really torn on this question.

When we look at the Ukrainians’ attitude toward some features of an authoritarian system, we find a strong rejection of the item “having the army rule” as more than three-quarters (76.4%) of Ukrainians find this proposition either “very bad” or “fairly bad.”

If “the military removed a corrupt president”, 23.3% of Ukrainians would find this rather or completely democratic³⁹ - a similar outcome as in other countries. Still, on average, Ukrainians rank just third behind Swedes and Spaniards in rating this act as undemocratic.⁴⁰ Moreover, the country is divided over the acceptance of having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections: just 50% find this situation either “very bad” or “fairly bad.” The uncertainties in the last few years especially after the annexation of Crimea – a development that tends to favor the population’s acceptance of a

“How strongly do you agree that democracy is better than any other form of government?”

All figures in %



Due to rounding, totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

concentration of power – have most likely contributed to some of these outcomes.

In comparison, Ukrainians seem to highly appreciate some civil liberties: Journalists who frequently disagree with the president’s policies, for instance, are comparatively more appreciated than in other countries,⁴¹ more even than in Sweden. If journalists were prosecuted for criticizing the government, however, Ukrainians turn out to be the least critical of this practice.

When it comes to the performance of their democracy, Ukrainians seem to demand and expect more. They appear to be less satisfied with the state of democracy in their country,

³⁸ Please note that our survey was conducted at the end of 2021, hence prior to the 2022 start of the unprovoked Russian war against Ukraine. We are aware that some positions or views might have shifted in light of the past months. However, we decided to nevertheless report our findings as they might still be providing a valuable baseline for understanding democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine, particularly with regard to a possible EU-membership.

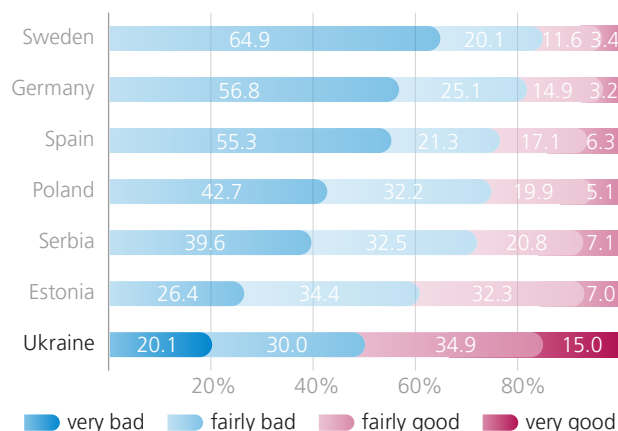
³⁹ Rating it with an 8, 9 or 10 on a scale from 1 to 10.

⁴⁰ On a scale from 1 (not at all democratic) to 10 (completely democratic), the mean score is 4.4.

⁴¹ Reaching a mean rating of 6.7 on a scale from 1 to 10.

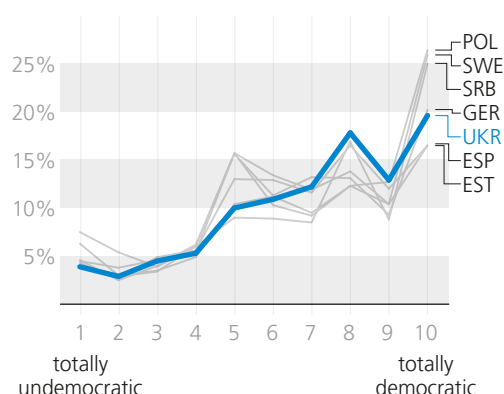
"How good or bad do you find having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections?"

All figures in %



Due to rounding, totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

"How democratic do you find the practice of journalists frequently disagreeing with the president's policies?"



i.e., how democratically the country is being governed (mean score 4.8), and with how democracy works in practice (mean score 4.2) as well. Such a sentiment is also manifested in the

fact that half of the population finds it "fairly good" or "very good" that experts, not the government, make decisions for the country.

Judiciary

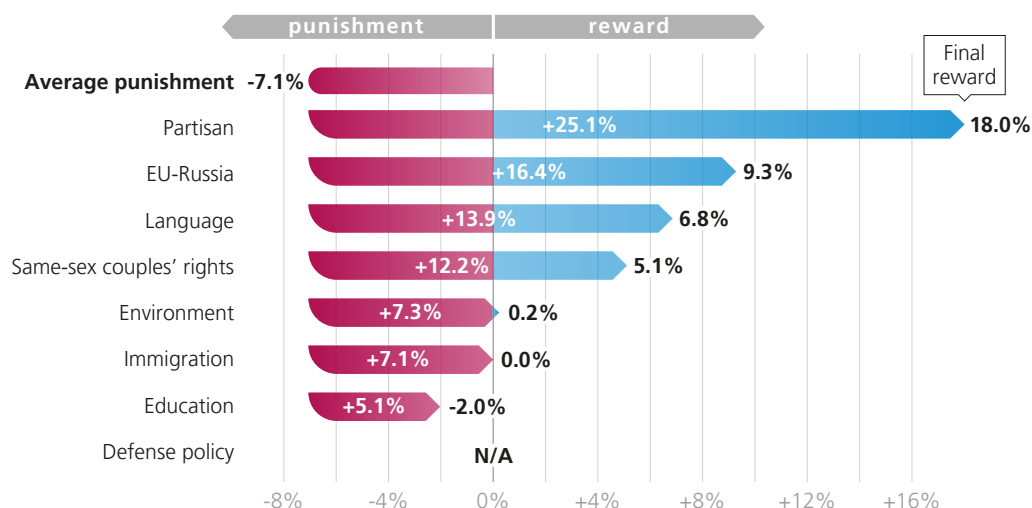
Ukraine is the only country in which attacks on the judiciary is one of the least punishable undemocratic behaviors.

WHAT KIND OF UNDEMOCRATIC BEHAVIOR DO UKRAINIANS PUNISH?

Ukrainian voters showed willingness to punish undemocratic behavior. Yet the average punishment – a loss of -7.1% of the overall vote share for the candidate who adopts an undemocratic position – is the second lowest across the entire sample. The most punishing undemocratic positions are "violently disrupt opponent's rallies" with a -10.5% vote share loss and "partisan infrastructure spending" with a -8.3% vote share loss. On the other hand, Ukrainians punish

"passing laws without parliamentary debate" and "disciplining judges who publicly criticize the government" the least as the candidates advocating for these undemocratic positions lose only -0.3% and -2.8% of the vote share respectively. In this aspect, Ukraine differs from the other countries under investigation, as it is the only country in which "attacks on the judiciary" is one of the least punishable undemocratic behaviors.

Existence of trade-offs/compensation for undermining democracy



PARTY LOYALTY AND POLICY INTERESTS: WHICH ISSUES ARE

MORE IMPORTANT THAN UPHOLDING DEMOCRATIC STANDARDS?

Ukrainian voters forgive undemocratic behavior of the candidate when they come from their favorite party. They do the same for identity-based interests and partly for socio-economic interests as well. As in all the other countries under investigation, this is particularly the case with partisan interests. Hence, a candidate from the respondent's favorite party who advocates undemocratic policies is not punished, but instead ends up being rewarded with a +18% vote share increase. Favorite identity-based policies can compensate for undemocratic behavior as well. While for other countries in the sample the favorite policy on same-sex couples' rights is accompanied by the highest final rewarding rate when it comes to identity-based interests, for Ukraine, however, this is the case with the voter's favorite policy on the country's foreign policy orientation (pro-Eu-

ropean or pro-Russian) – here we find a +9.3% vote share increase. This is followed by the voter's favorite policy on the language issue and then same-sex couples' rights, with a +6.8% (the highest among the four countries in which this issue is salient) and a +5.1% final rewarding rate respectively. This is in accordance with the dominance of national identity debates in the Ukrainian political system.

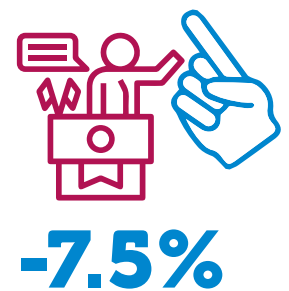
Ukrainians also show willingness to sacrifice democracy for their favorite environmental policy, albeit to a much lower degree: the final rewarding rate is only +0.2%. This, moreover, does not seem to be the case when it comes to a favorite policy regarding education. Despite advocating for it, the undemocratic candidate is still punished and loses -2% of the vote share.

ARE SUPPORTERS OF A CERTAIN POLICY INTEREST⁴² MORE FORGIVING OF UNDEMOCRATIC BEHAVIOR THAN OTHERS?

If we divide respondents along a left-leaning/right-leaning axis, we can identify more nuanced findings about the willingness to punish undemocratic behavior. Concretely, the advocates of closer relations with the EU at the expense of a closer relationship with Russia as well as those who want close relationship with both actors forgive undemocratic behavior of the respective candidate, with a +9.5% and a +11.2% final vote share increase respectively. Contrary to this, advocates of a stronger attachment to Russia would neither reward, nor punish for it. When it comes to the language issue we can observe a reversed trend. Proponents of the right to use Russian when communicating with state offices would clearly forgive undemocratic behavior for it. An undemocratic candidate who advocates

such a policy would end up with a +13.7% vote share increase, which is 11.9% more compared to the undemocratic candidate who demands the sole use of Ukrainian in such occasions.

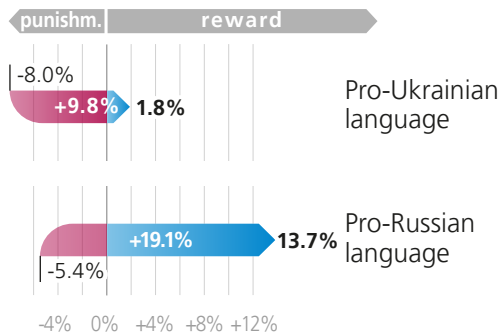
Regarding the issue of rights for same-sex couples, those on the right show less attachment to democratic principles. Indeed, they forgive undemocratic behavior for their favorite policy on this issue and an undemocratic candidate who advocated for it ends up increasing their vote share by +8.8%. The final rewarding rate among leftist voters is smaller, yet still considerable at +4.1%. When it comes to the issue of environment, the electorate appears to be divided, as only right-leaning voters forgive undemocratic behavior for their favorite policy (+2.3% final vote share increase).



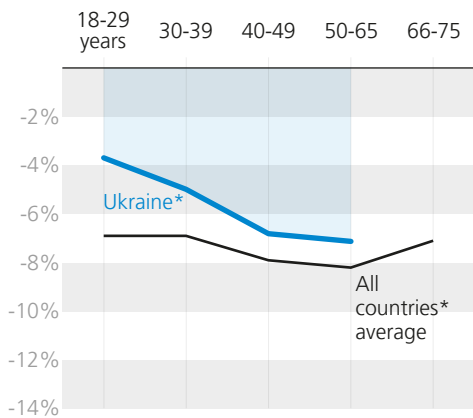
This is the average punishment corresponding to the share of Ukrainian voters willing to defect from an otherwise favored candidate once they adopt an undemocratic position.

⁴² Please find an overview of all tested policy positions on pg. 13.

Language: shift in punishment when presented with favored policy

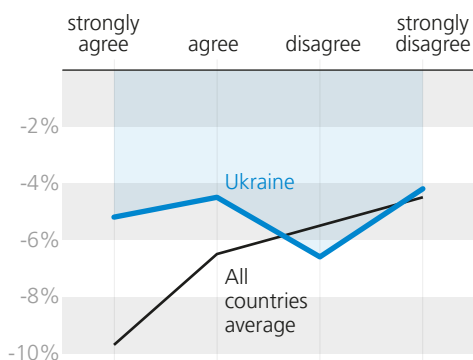


Average electoral punishment by respondents' age groups



*No data was collected for age group 66-75 in Serbia and Ukraine.

Average electoral punishment by respondents agreeing/disagreeing with the statement that "democracy is better than any other form of government"



WHAT ROLE DOES POLARIZATION PLAY?

Ukraine has the highest levels of polarization of all countries under investigation. Polarization is the highest on the issue of which rights to grant to same-sex couples, followed by the foreign policy orientation (EU vs. Russia) and the issue of language use. For all these cases, we find an

overlap between a high polarization and a willingness to forgive undemocratic behavior. However, there is also one non-polarizing issue for which the Ukrainians would forgive undemocratic behavior: the environmental policy.

WHO ARE THE MAIN 'DEFENDERS OF DEMOCRACY'

IN UKRAINE?

As in the other countries under investigation, women, students and the more educated among the population defend democracy most. In addition, those with more political knowledge, those who work full time, those who are more trustful, those who lack an authoritarian personality and, interestingly, those who are unemployed defend democracy as well. However, in this regard we can identify some differences between Ukraine and the remaining countries in our sample: In Ukraine, those who show an increased interest in politics, who are less religious

and who are democratically competent do not punish more. We also found that those who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "democracy is better than any other form of government" punish undemocratic behavior actually clearly less than those who hold the opposite view.

Who else shows less willingness to punish politicians who violate democratic principles? Pensioners, citizens who got temporarily laid off, citizens with a more positive economic assessment of the country and, surprisingly, the young as well.

WHICH PARTY'S VOTERS PUNISH

UNDEMOCRATIC BEHAVIOR THE MOST?

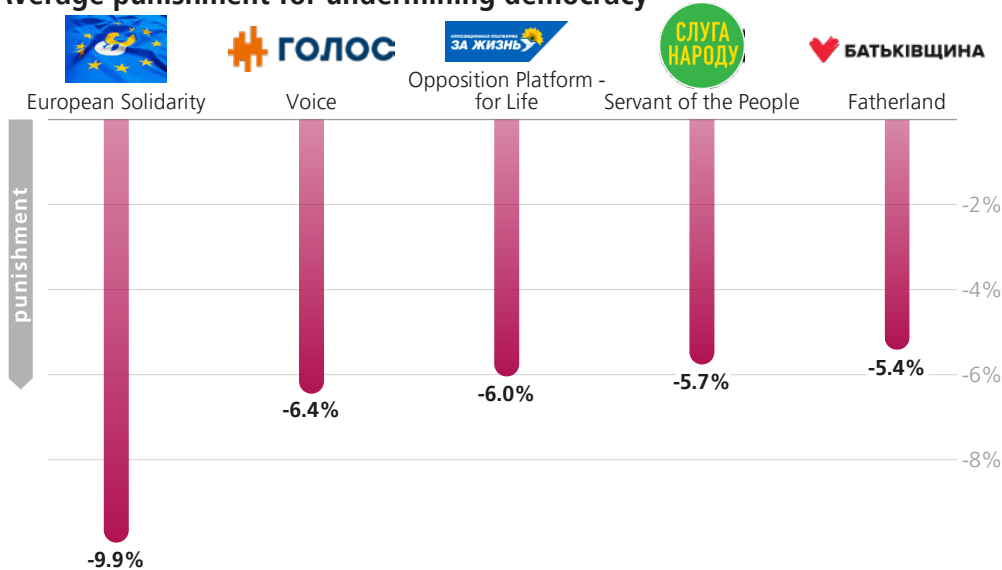
When it comes to party affiliation, voters of all Ukrainian parties showed a general willingness to punish undemocratic politicians, however, voters of some parties are willing to punish more than voters of others, a tendency shared among all countries under investigation. "Fatherland" voters show the least willingness to punish undemocratic behavior, with an average punishment rate of only

-5.4% (vote share loss). They are followed by voters of the ruling Servant of the People, who punish slightly more with -5.7%. These particular voters also showed a readiness to reward violation of some democratic principles: disciplining judges with +16.4%, passing laws without parliamentary debate with +18.6% and prosecuting journalists with a +19.8% vote share increase.

The voters of other Ukrainian parties punish only slightly more. The punishment rate in the case of the Opposition Platform-For Life voters is -6%. Violations of democratic principles is punished the most by voters of the Voice and the Euro-

pean Solidarity, with a -6.4% and -9.9% punishment rate respectively. Interestingly, the punishment rate among the respondents who would not vote for either of these parties is the second highest: -8%.

Average punishment for undermining democracy



Polarized

Ukraine is the most polarized country across the entire sample.

Summary for Ukraine

A majority of Ukrainian citizens are pro-democracy oriented, however, some democratic standards enjoy significantly less support than in the other six European countries under investigation. Ukrainians are quite critical of the way democracy works in their own country. When it comes to defending democratic standards in our experiment, Ukrainians score below average (but with only the second lowest punishing rate behind Spain). Ukrainians are most likely to defend electoral fairness.

As in all other countries under investigation, party loyalty is the most important determinant of voting behavior. Ukrainians completely forgive a candidate their undemocratic behavior if they are from their favorite party. Group loyalty and identity issues play the second most important role when it comes to voting decisions in Ukraine. These include issues such as foreign policy orientation, language, as well as rights for same-sex couples, which are prioritized at the ballot box over rejecting undemocratic positions.

Ukraine has the highest level of polarization of all countries under investigation, and this higher degree of polarization mostly correlates with a higher willingness to forgive undemocratic behavior for polarizing issues. However, one exception is the issue of environmental policy: it is not a polarizing issue, but it is regarded as important by Ukrainians. Hence, the salience of the issue can perhaps serve as one explanation for the tolerance of undemocratic behavior.