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UNCERTAINTY AS A REGULAR FEATURE OF MODERN UKRAINIAN SOCIETY¹

Abstract. *The purpose of this article is to substantiate the pattern of societal uncertainty as being a determinant of collective social behaviour exemplified by Ukrainians' developing societal expectations and perceptions. The results of the "Social Conflictogenity of Ukrainian Society" research project are interpreted with respect to attitudes to the state of 'societal uncertainty'. A certain destructuring of modern Ukrainian society is shown to be adding to the consolidation of societal uncertainty among members of society as a particular model of interaction among social subjects. It demonstrates that members of Ukrainian society are unwilling to reduce the state of societal uncertainty.*

Keywords: *uncertainty, social expectations, social strategies, destructuring of society, social prospects*

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Introduction

Uncertainty is a state of social reality that is associated with the perception of once stable social structures now being destroyed or changed. Subjective context forms an integral part of how members of a society view the social reality and is more defined and noticeable at the micro level of a society's social structure (Deaux and Martin, 2003; Kuz and Sahan, 2016). Yet, in a setting of ever greater social competition, the social roles held by members of society in relation to a given problem, event, phenomenon or process are also increasingly influenced by subjective content due to information pressures, informal everyday practices, and social risks; namely,

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aspects exacerbating the state of social uncertainty (Amiel and Cowell, 2007; Savage et al., 2013; Gaudeul, 2013; Fawcett et al., 2014; Rand et al., 2014; Zborovsky and Ambarova, 2016; van den Berg, 2018; Johnston, 2019). At the same time, today the dominance of the subjective content influencing the social uncertainties arising from social transformations is increasingly moving to a lower level, in turn bringing greater polarisation, conflict and social distrust among various social groups.

The above description of the state of society currently prevails in Ukraine, which in the 28 years of its independence has been unable to clearly determine the direction of its external affairs, the processes of reforming its socio-economic system, the 'national idea', social values etc. In the last 5 years (2014–2019), the level of social uncertainty has only increased, meaning that the state of a 'social divide' in society due to certain socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural processes has become permanent (habitual) in modern Ukrainian society.

The 'state of Ukrainian society' by periods: 1991 – the country declared its independence, although by 2004 the "Soviet Ukraine" model had in fact returned – the principle of creating an effective counterbalance between the centres of socio-political and socio-economic influence; 2004 – "The Orange Revolution" promised new opportunities for the genuine democratisation of Ukrainian society, but by 2013 the system of rigid clan management had been restored; 2014 – the Revolution of Dignity, although after 6 years the country has returned to an authoritarian majority. The entire period has attributes of societal uncertainty for Ukrainian society.

Ukrainian sociologists characterise the state of Ukrainian society as a social transformation, social tension, a crisis society, or "failure of the social matrix" (Shulha, 2018). To support such opinions, they point to its multidimensionality (Saveliev, 2015), class structure (Symonchuk, 2016), the different social interests, ways and lifestyles of members of Ukrainian society (Zlobina, 2011; Zabolotna, 2018), the state of social consciousness (Holovakha and Panina, 1994; Popova, 1999; Dodonov and Mofa, 2003; Yereskova, 2016), the loss of cultural and educational competencies by Ukrainians, civic irresponsibility (Horbachyk and Holovakha, 2012; Vdovychenko, 2016) and others. Still, the influence of the above components on the state of Ukrainian society is analysed by researchers who mainly proceed by giving priority to the entire society, especially the structure of society in relation to both individuals and their social actions.

In this study, we aim to explore social uncertainty as a pattern in the development of modern Ukrainian society, defining the individual and collective experience of Ukrainian activity in the social space. To accomplish this, we first consider how actors create social expectations for their own social group, for other social groups, for society as a whole; how social actors

evaluate social impacts based on whether they give the very subject and others equal opportunities from the standpoint of the expected social outcome.

Methodology

The methodological basis of the study is a procedural approach to social issues whereby society is perceived not so much as an object but as a kind of 'field of opportunity' for social subjects. A key unit of analysis is the 'event' that manifests itself in the perceptions, reactions and actions of actors, whose consequences are polyvariant for society as a whole (Shtompka, 1996). Analysis of events shows that in recent times certain social communities do not wish to change "uncertainty/instability" to "certainty/stability", which might for a long time suspend the dreams, hopes and expectations held by individuals to realise their desires and ambitions in material, social and political aspects of life (Bodnar and Pelin, 2012; Kremen, 2013) that, to some extent, 'inhibits' the perception of positive tendencies in the reform of Ukrainian society by its members (Yereskova and Mazuryk, 2017). To change this situation, it is important to factor in levels that reflect the objective reality (meant here as 'nation by citizenship') in the minds of Ukrainians.

We therefore consider societal expectations through the lens of a model of actualisation of social processes for social subjects. When a situation of uncertainty arises in the social system, social actors always react in a particular way. In other words, the situation of uncertainty determines the procedure for actualising those processes that take place in society and divides it into two forms: practical and cognitive. Practical actualisation of social processes involves focussing on the value and situational means of consolidating these processes. During practical actualisation of social processes for the social subject, they tend to experience their consequences themselves via different strategies: complete disregard for what is happening; adaptation to the current situation; open opposition; and wilful avoidance ("social blindness" - "such a thing simply does not exist, I do not see this").

The essence of cognitive actualisation lies in determination of the entire infrastructure of the process, its properties, consequences etc. While being irrelevant and insignificant for the majority, for those who employ cognitive actualisation, everything that happens has a special meaning, allowing one to understand the nature of the process and, in the future, to be able to manage it on any level (micro, meso, macro). The main functions of cognitive actualisation are the description, explanation, understanding and prediction of social processes occurring in society. Cognitive actualisation's purpose is to establish the identifying features of the social process, to determine the causes and factors of influence. Proceeding on this basis, we attempted to empirically record and determine the dominant strategies used

for actualising the perception of processes underway in Ukrainian society by its members in order to understand and predict the overriding tendencies in views on democratic reforms (as sought by Ukraine and its citizens).

Analysing the “progress” vs. “leave as is/return as it was” dichotomy that has existed in Ukraine since 1991, we hypothesised the dominance of practical actualisation over cognitive actualisation, based on the predominance of a wilful avoidance strategy adopted by members of Ukrainian society, which will continue to consolidate the “societal uncertainties” pattern in Ukrainian society. We believe this is significantly influenced by the current social structure of Ukrainian society, which makes overcoming the societal uncertainty processes in Ukrainian society complicated. Thus, in our study we focus on two features: age distribution and distribution by social status.

The influence of age on how the objective reality is perceived is well known. We substantiate our position in the context of the use of social status. We believe causal links may exist between social status as determined by the nature of the work being performed (the degree of its content complexity, independence and responsibility, routinisation etc.) and the strategy of updating society’s expectations. The theoretical construct of social status suggests such a conclusion. In this case, we rely on the fact that working conditions affect the value orientations held by an individual.

A person who makes independent and responsible decisions according to the profile of their activity manifests this focus in relation to both the perception of social processes and to oneself because complex and independent work promotes the development of more flexible thinking and a responsible attitude to oneself and one’s social environment. Conversely, routine work, which limits independence, makes thinking more stereotypical, in turn leading to the formation of a conformist attitude towards oneself and society. Namely, a person whose work is relatively autonomous, free from external guardianship, is better at perceiving and realising the inner meaning of events in society, while constant external control causes a sense of helplessness, which is often extrapolated to the entire social reality.

In the process of research, our hypothesis was confirmed, hence the consolidation of societal uncertainties as a pattern of the development of Ukrainian society is influenced by the current social structure of Ukrainian society, which makes overcoming the societal uncertainty processes in Ukrainian society complicated because the individual desires held by social subjects do not translate into a single set of demands for all; more specifically, into general directions and goals. Moreover, the primary strategy for actualising the events taking place in Ukrainian society is one of wilful avoidance.

The empirical basis of the study is data taken from a survey of residents of regional centres of Ukraine aged 18 years and older by means of a face-to-face interview conducted in the framework of the project “Social

Conflictogenity of Ukrainian Society". The sample is representative by age, gender and region (N=1500, margin of error no more than 3.0%. Dates of research: 29 April - 13 May 2019). The empirical data were processed using the SPSS application software package with use of correlation analysis; respondents' answers to open-ended questions were processed using a scale method, with the indicator scale not being set a priori, but formed upon identification of the internal semantic structures of the respondents' answers. When coding the respondents' answers, the idea was to ease the researchers' interpretation of the expressions used by the respondents.

Results and discussion

In a discourse on modernity, J. Lyotard's hypothesised that, in response to the greater social uncertainty, complexity and diversity of social reality, social actors may be differentiated between those willing to accept complex social things and those who seek to simplify the reality (Lyotard, 1992). This is largely due to the inaccuracy (lack of credibility/unreliability) of the knowledge possessed by social subjects about the conditions and processes occurring in the social community and the external environment, coupled with the probabilistic nature of adverse events (Rishniak, 2003). The chief issue for members of society in a situation of social uncertainty is connected with the uncertainty of social perspectives (not so much at the personal level, but at the level of both social groups and communities, and society in general).

The analysis of the theoretical aspects outlined above allows an assumption to be made that a state of societal uncertainty arises when it is possible and necessary to choose the ways for society to develop, to refine worldviews, ideological sympathies, lifestyles etc. In other words, societal uncertainties accompany the exacerbated search for possible exits from certain situations in society and the likelihood of their occurrence. We associate the formation of societal uncertainties with different expectations of social communities regarding their own actions and the conclusions they draw about the actions of other social groups in relation to certain social transformations. A comparison of social expectations provides a more sophisticated understanding of the substantive component of the stratified structure of any society. After all, the place occupied by the individual in society to some extent 'instructs' them how to act and what to expect from life because "to have a certain place in society" (according to P. Berger) means "to be at the point of intersection of certain social forces" (Berger, 1996). Axiomatically, this affects the attitudes and reactions of social communities to events taking place in society (on the basis of W. Thomas' introduction of the "situation definition" concept, which means that any social situation is how it is defined by the participants) (Berger, 1996).

Social expectations have a considerable impact on the interaction mechanisms in society and the result of such interactions between various social actors (Griffin, 2015). Following this logic, in the process of researching the pattern of 'societal uncertainties', we first identify the key strategies for forming social expectations (passive, active, interactive) and their main contents. Identifying strategies for shaping social expectations became possible due to the application of Ch. Berger's uncertainty reduction theory, which explores how communication is used to achieve understanding between social groups (Griffin, 2015). A passive strategy for generating social expectations entails discrete observation of the reactions of other social groups from a distance. An active strategy involves reaching out to a third party for information to assess the reactions of other social groups to social change. Here it is understood that a third party will provide some degree of bias, but the majority of researchers is confident in their own ability to filter bias and 'extract' valuable information. An interactive strategy is a direct social interaction, a kind of social probing of the societal expectations of other social subjects and, thus, a prediction of tendencies of social consequences for the society in general.

Second, we classify social expectations by meaningful content - wishes, warnings, or predictions of future actions. This will give insights into comprehension of the "social expectations" concept by representatives of different social communities (that is, what is desired to come true, or a prediction of what may come true, or potential responses to changes in society). Third, we model social groups with respect to their practices of forming social expectations. Particular social groups may be neutral to the processes occurring in society if their societal expectations are positively correlated with the societal expectations of others, or they may not be concerned by outcome inequalities if everyone has equal chances in terms of the expected societal outcome. Others find a balance between their own expectations and their societal outcome, i.e. they make a choice between an outcome for society that may be somewhat unfair to these social groups but not risky for the majority of members of society. Still others manage their societal expectations to avoid a safe yet relatively inferior outcome for the society's development. This thereby helps understand the objective patterns in the formation of societal expectations as reflecting certain social trends during times of societal uncertainties.

Respondents' understanding of the dominant strategy used for shaping social expectations was determined by two blocks. The first block of questions was the definition and registration of respondents' personal reflections on their view of the state of societal uncertainty. The second block was directly concerned with identifying dominant strategies used for shaping society's expectations. In this context, the above described attributes of

key strategies (passive, active, interactive) served as the content network. Thus, analysing the empirical data, we understood that the results of the survey confirm the argument that the majority of Ukrainian society members has no negative reaction to the state of “societal uncertainty” (70.8%). For convenience, we combined responses with synonymous content of respondent reflections (for example, the statements “This does not contribute to social cohesion” and “This always has catastrophic consequences for Ukrainian society”). There is an understanding that this is a natural condition for Ukrainian society (42.1%), which is driven by mental characteristics. A utilitarian attitude to this situation (a desire to exploit it for their own benefit) was shown by 28.7% of the respondents, while 27% of them believed that societal uncertainty does not help unify Ukrainian society and brings negative consequences (Table 1).

Table 1: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION "HOW DO YOU TAKE THE FACT THAT UKRAINIAN SOCIETY IS CONSTANTLY IN A STATE OF SOCIAL UNCERTAINTY REGARDING VARIOUS SOCIO-POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES?" (% of total respondents)

Answer option	% (N=1500)
This is a normal state for Ukraine throughout all the years of its independence	36.8
When there are no clearly defined rules or guidelines, this is an additional opportunity to gain some material or social preferences	24.7
This does not contribute to social cohesion	18.9
This always has catastrophic consequences for Ukrainian society	8.1
The reluctance to decide is our Ukrainian mentality	5.3
Normally, as a certainty which one has to adapt to and exploit	4.0
Difficult to answer	2.2
Total	100

Source: compiled by the authors.

The data presented in Table 2 give an opportunity to trace the correlation of respondents' responses by social status.

Upon analysing the data, we noted that respondents from social groups like “students”, “retirees” and “employees” were more concerned about the state of societal uncertainty (28.2%, 25.2%, 23.2%, respectively). The least concerned about this situation were representatives of the “workers” social group (11.3%). Evidently, the overwhelming majority of respondents (regardless of social status) sees it as appropriate to take advantage of the state of societal uncertainty to implement their personal life strategies.

Analysis of the data shown in Table 3 indicates a tendency for a decrease in the number of respondents viewing social uncertainty as “natural/

normal” for Ukrainian society (those aged up to 20 years – 84.2%; 21–30 years – 75.7%; 31–40 years – 69.7%; 41–50 years – 69.1%; 51–60 years – 62.3%; over 60–56.1%). This can be explained by a certain disappointment with the situation in Ukraine during the years since independence among representatives of the older age groups, possible nostalgia for times of ‘confidence in the future’, and awareness of the ‘side effects’ of the state of societal uncertainty for the formation of civil society, the reform of particular spheres of life in Ukrainian society, their level of integration, and the desire for a common future.

Table 2: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION »HOW DO YOU TAKE THE FACT THAT UKRAINIAN SOCIETY IS CONSTANTLY IN A STATE OF SOCIAL UNCERTAINTY REGARDING VARIOUS SOCIO-POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES?« (% of the share of the category named among those who chose this answer)

Answer options	Social status (N=1467)					
	workers (n=306)	officials (n=471)	business sector (n=174)	students (n=160)	retirees (n=195)	unemployed (n=161)
This is a normal state for Ukraine throughout all the years of its independence	39.8	39.9	37.1	45.7	19.8	29.2
When there are no clearly defined rules or guidelines, this is an additional opportunity to gain some material or social preferences	27.5	24.7	28.0	12.7	30.6	34.8
This does not contribute to social cohesion	6.3	16.8	10.3	18.9	17.3	13.0
This always has catastrophic consequences for Ukrainian society	5.0	6.4	7.1	9.3	7.9	5.6
The reluctance to decide is our Ukrainian mentality	11.8	5.5	4.6	3.1	11.4	5.0
Normally, as a certainty which one has to adapt to and exploit	9.6	6.7	12.9	10.3	13.0	12.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: compiled by the authors.

It may therefore be stated that in the conditions of today societal uncertainties are perceived to be an inevitable and natural state. For most members of Ukrainian society, this state of societal uncertainty brings neither destructive (like anxiety, confusion, aggression etc.) nor constructive reactions (desire for integration, the need to decide on key socio-economic, socio-political issues etc.).

A state of societal uncertainty is perceived to be where one is unable to not simply ‘endure’ but also effectively exist. We classified the entire range of answers from the second block (consisting of questions for identifying

respondents' key strategies for forming societal expectations and their details) according to the corresponding strategies for forming societal expectations (Table 4).

Table 3: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION "HOW DO YOU TAKE THE FACT THAT UKRAINIAN SOCIETY IS CONSTANTLY IN A STATE OF SOCIAL UNCERTAINTY REGARDING VARIOUS SOCIO-POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES?" (% of the share of the category named among those who chose this answer)

Answer options	Age (N=1467)					
	up to 20 years. (n=200)	21–30 years. (n=318)	31–40 years (n=309)	41–50 years (n=333)	51–60 years (n=181)	over 60 years (n=126)
This is a normal state for Ukraine throughout all the years of its independence	53.2	48.5	37.9	40.3	21.3	23.0
When there are no clearly defined rules or guidelines, this is an additional opportunity to gain some material or social preferences	25.0	22.5	28.4	23.6	34.8	21.2
This does not contribute to social cohesion	6.5	18.3	16.8	16.0	23.8	19.0
This always has catastrophic consequences for Ukrainian society	9.3	6.0	13.5	14.9	13.9	24.9
The reluctance to decide is our Ukrainian mentality	6.0	4.7	3.4	5.2	6.2	11.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: compiled by the authors.

Table 4: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION: "HOW DO YOU MOST OFTEN (TYPICALLY) RESPOND TO THE SITUATION OF SOCIAL UNCERTAINTY?" (% of total number of respondents)

Answer option	% (N=1500)
I do nothing, just waiting to see what happens	35.2
I am in no hurry to do something; I am observing what will happen	15.4
I listen to what people who I find to be authoritative think about this	14.2
I start looking for information on the essence of events or similar events	12.4
I simply observe the reactions of others	6.4
I try to predict the actions of others in such a situation	5.4
I communicate (interact, confer) with others regarding the situation that occurred	5.3
I try to predict the consequences for everyone	3.2
Difficult to answer	2.5
Total	100

Source: compiled by the authors.

Classification of the respondents' responses to indicate the key strategies for forming societal expectations we described above suggests that the passive strategy for forming societal expectations dominates among the respondents (Table 5). To summarise the data obtained, we derived a total indicator for each strategy of forming societal expectations, which not only allows the existing levels of relevant strategies in respondents to be clearly demonstrated, but also to track their distribution depending on their social status and age.

This serves to further confirm the argument that the respondents perceive the state of societal uncertainties as a normal condition for Ukrainian society. Yet, it could also indicate societal uncertainty in the correctness of the reactions made by other social subjects, which in turn 'inhibits' the process of social 'attachment' to other social groups and consolidates social distance in society.

Table 5: DISTRIBUTION OF INDICATORS BY TOTAL INDICATORS ACCORDING TO STRATEGIES FOR THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS FROM THE OPEN QUESTION »HOW DO YOU MOST OFTEN (TYPICALLY) REACT TO THE SITUATION OF SOCIAL UNCERTAINTIES?« (% of the total number of respondents)

Answer option	% (N=1500)
Passive strategy	57.0
I do nothing; just waiting to see what happens	35.2
I am in no hurry to do something; I am observing what will happen	15.4
I simply observe the reactions of others	6.4
Active strategy	26.6
I listen to what people who I find to be authoritative think about this	14.2
I start looking for information on the essence of events or similar events	12.4
Interactive strategy	13.9
I try to predict the actions of others in such a situation	5.4
I communicate (interact, confer) with others regarding the situation that occurred	5.3
I try to predict the consequences for everyone	3.2

Source: compiled by the authors.

Classification of strategies for shaping societal expectations depending on social status helped determine the distribution of the corresponding social groups by the key strategies (Table 6).

Analysis of the obtained data reveals that indicators of a passive strategy for forming societal expectations dominate among representatives of all social statuses. This is strongly pronounced in the student-age youth (76.1%) who, more so than the representatives of other social statuses, take an 'outside observer' position regarding the processes occurring in society. The distribution of indicators of an active strategy by social status, where all

groups (excluding students) are dominated by the indicator “I listen to what people who I find to be authoritative think about this”, fully illustrates the situation in modern Ukrainian society where the respondents’ perception of the social reality is significantly affected by external information and social content. Building on this, in Ukrainian society each social group has, in fact, its own authorities (opinion leaders), that are mostly situation-dependent.

Table 6: DISTRIBUTION OF INDICATORS BY TOTAL INDICATORS ACCORDING TO STRATEGIES FOR THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS FROM THE OPEN QUESTION “HOW DO YOU MOST OFTEN (TYPICALLY) REACT TO THE SITUATION OF SOCIAL UNCERTAINTIES?” (% of the share of the category named among those who chose this answer)

Indicators	%(N=1462)					
	Workers (n=306)	Officials (n=466)	Business sector (n=174)	Students (n=160)	Retirees (n=195)	Unemployed (n=161)
Passive strategy	52.7	47.4	58.5	76.1	45.9	48.6
I do nothing; just waiting to see what happens	27.8	24.9	23.8	32.7	21.8	30.6
I am in no hurry to do something; I am observing what will happen	15.0	13.1	27.8	23.1	10.8	17.4
I simply observe the reactions of others	9.9	9.4	6.9	20.3	13.3	0.6
Active strategy	34.0	37.8	23.2	18.9	31.2	28.6
I listen to what people that I find to be authoritative think about this	18.5	25.5	15.5	5.8	26.1	13.0
I start looking for information on the essence of events or similar events	15.5	12.3	7.7	13.1	5.1	15.6
Interactive strategy	13.3	14.8	18.3	5.0	22.9	22.8
I try to predict the actions of others in such a situation	5.9	5.2	1.6	2.7	3.6	–
I communicate (interact, confer) with others regarding the situation that occurred	5.4	7.8	14.0	2.3	16.7	19.8
I try to predict the consequences for everyone	2.0	1.8	2.7	–	2.6	3.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: compiled by the authors.

Low scores for interactive strategy indicators among students (5.0%) are quite indicative, suggesting that representatives of this social status make no attempts to discover, understand or hear the opinions of others. Conversely, pensioners, non-working people and business representatives are those most focused on reducing societal uncertainty, with their indicators of an interactive strategy for forming societal expectations being 22.9%,

22.8% and 18.3%, respectively. The correlation of indicators of strategies for forming societal expectations depending on the respondents' age (Table 7) reveals, on one hand, that representatives of different social groups, in a situation of societal uncertainty, attempt to isolate themselves from interaction with other social groups (by occupying the position of outside observers) and, on the other hand, are quite adapted to such a situation, and have adjusted well to the varied and uncertain reality facing society.

Table 7: DISTRIBUTION OF INDICATORS BY TOTAL INDICATORS ACCORDING TO STRATEGIES FOR THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS FROM THE OPEN QUESTION "HOW DO YOU MOST OFTEN (TYPICALLY) REACT TO THE SITUATION OF SOCIAL UNCERTAINTIES?" (% of the share of the category named among those who chose this answer)

Indicators	%					
	(N=1462)					
	Up to 20 years of age. (n=200)	21-30 years of age (n=318)	31-40 years of age (n=309)	41-50 years of age (n=328)	51-60 years of age (n=181)	over 60 years of age (n=126)
Passive strategy	70.3	76.5	80.0	84.2	80.4	76.7
I do nothing; just waiting to see what happens	35.8	44.3	25.3	37.3	21.7	38.7
I am in no hurry to do something; I am observing what will happen	23.9	7.7	8.9	39.4	42.3	9.3
I simply observe the reactions of others	10.6	24.5	45.8	7.5	16.4	28.7
Active strategy	24.2	18.7	14.4	9.4	10.6	12.5
I listen to what people who I find to be authoritative think about this	4.0	4.4	8.3	1.9	8.3	12.5
I start looking for information on the essence of events or similar events	20.2	14.3	6.1	7.5	2.3	-
Interactive strategy	5.5	4.8	5.6	6.4	9.0	10.8
I try to predict the actions of others in such a situation	1.6	1.5	2.3	1.4	3.2	0.5
I communicate (interact, confer) with others regarding the situation that occurred	1.6	1.9	1.7	4.3	5.8	10.3
I try to predict the consequences for everyone	-	1.4	1.6	0.7	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: compiled by the authors.

We have already noted that to understand whether the state of societal uncertainties is a pattern of modern Ukrainian society one must define and classify the societal expectations of members of this society. Table 8 provides an overview of what the concept of societal expectations means to representatives of various social groups.

Distribution of indicators by total indicators according to strategies for

forming societal expectations from the open question “How do you most often (typically) react to the situation of societal uncertainties?” % of the share of the category named among those who chose this answer).

Table 8: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION: “WHAT DO SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS MEAN TO YOU?” (% of total number of respondents)

Answer option	% (N=1500)
These are my expectations from the actions of the President, the Verkhovna Rada, the government for the betterment of our lives	25.2
This is when I want what is best for me (my family) to come true	20.4
This is when I want everything to happen for my (my business) benefit	18.3
This is what is most likely to happen in certain circumstances	12.5
This is what allows to understand what is going on in society so as to adapt	6.6
These are my expectations of other people's possible reaction to what is going on in society	5.9
These are my concerns regarding the development of our society	4.9
This is an understanding of what needs to be done to improve the lives of ordinary people	3.2
This is when one wants what would be appropriate for our state, society in the future	1.5
Difficult to answer	1.5
Total	100

Source: compiled by the authors.

Table 9: CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS BY TOTAL INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION “WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS?” (% of the total number of respondents)

Answer option	% (N=1500)
Wishes	43.4
This is when I want what is best for me (my family) to come true	20.4
This is when I want everything to happen for my (my business) benefit	18.3
This is an understanding of what needs to be done to improve the lives of ordinary people	3.2
This is when one wants what would be appropriate for our state, society in the future	1.5
Warning	37.7
These are my expectations from the actions of the President, the Verkhovna Rada, the government for the betterment of our lives	25.2
This is what is most likely to happen in certain circumstances	12.5
Forecast for future action	17.4
This is what allows to understand what is going on in society so as to adapt	6.6
These are my expectations of other people's possible reaction to what is going on in society	5.9
These are my concerns regarding the development of our society	4.9

Source: compiled by the authors.

Classification of the respondents' answers as 'fillers' of the meaningful content of the societal expectations described above shows that the vast majority of respondents form their own societal expectations by way of personal 'wishes' (Table 9). In other words, respondents see societal expectations as what they wish to come true.

Table 10: CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS BY SUMMARY INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION "WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS?" (% of the share of the category named among those who chose this answer)

Classification	% (N=1477)					
	Workers (n=306)	Officials (n=461)	Business sector (n=174)	Students (n=160)	Retirees (n=195)	Unemployed (n=161)
Wishes	66.8	76.5	80.0	84.2	83.9	76.7
This is when I want what is best for me (my family) to come true	25.3	24.5	21.2	27.6	15.3	24.6
This is when I want everything to happen for my (my business) benefit	15.4	12.3	30.8	23.8	20.5	18.2
This is an understanding of what needs to be done to improve the lives of ordinary people	20.6	26.6	21.5	10.6	23.8	22.0
This is when one wants what would be appropriate for our state, society in the future	5.5	13.1	6.5	22.2	24.3	11.9
Warning	24.1	18.5	14.2	9.3	10.6	12.4
These are my expectations from the actions of the President, the Verkhovna Rada, the government for the betterment of our lives	15.2	11.0	10.2	7.9	8.1	6.9
This is what is most likely to happen in certain circumstances	8.9	7.5	4.0	1.4	2.5	5.5
Forecast for future action	9.1	5.0	5.8	6.5	5.5	10.9
This is what allows to understand what is going on in society so as to adapt	1.3	2.6	3.4	3.2	1.2	6.4
These are my expectations of other people's possible reaction to what is going on in society	0.3	2.4	0.9	1.6	0.8	2.2
These are my concerns regarding the development of our society	7.5	–	1.5	1.7	3.5	2.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: compiled by the authors.

The analysis of the data supports the argument that in the conditions of societal uncertainty the respondents attempt to fill the social reality around them with subjective content, as manifested in the desire to subject public life to their personal (individual) priorities. This situation seems understandable since the phenomenon of the 'atomisation' of members of society from each other is not novel in modern societies. But a stalemate emerges in the

condition when, if society is too individualised about societal expectations for further social life, then, *a priori*, the state, other social subjects cannot 'fit' within the societal expectations and, accordingly, satisfy society's members (any actions would be perceived as failing to meet expectations). The classification of societal expectations by social status is presented in Table 10.

Table 11: CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS BY SUMMARY INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION "WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS?" (% of the share of the category named among those who chose this answer)

Classification	%(N=1477)					
	Up to 20 years of age (n=200)	21-30 years of age (n=318)	31-40 years of age (n=309)	41-50 years of age (n=343)	51-60 years of age (n=181)	Over 60 years of age (n=126)
Wishes	76.1	74.9	84.3	85.7	85.2	88.7
This is when I want what is best for me (my family) to come true	34.4	30.4	20.5	18.9	23.5	46.6
This is when I want everything to happen for my (my business) benefit	8.4	20.6	34.7	40.2	11.7	6.4
This is an understanding of what needs to be done to improve the lives of ordinary people	19.8	15.1	17.1	13.9	34.5	21.4
This is when one wants what would be appropriate for our state, society in the future	13.5	13.3	12.0	12.7	15.5	14.3
Warning	11.6	17.6	10.6	10.1	10.1	8.2
These are my expectations from the actions of the President, the Verkhovna Rada, the government for the betterment of our lives	2.8	9.5	6.3	7.4	6.6	5.8
This is what is most likely to happen in certain circumstances	8.8	8.1	4.3	2.7	3.5	2.4
Forecast for future action	12.3	7.5	5.1	4.2	4.7	3.1
This is what allows to understand what is going on in society so as to adapt	3.5	5.2	1.0	2.0	1.5	3.1
These are my expectations of other people's possible reaction to what is going on in society	8.8	0.7	2.9	0.9	1.2	–
These are my concerns regarding the development of our society	–	1.6	1.2	1.3	2.0	–
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: compiled by the authors.

If we accept the argument that, in the context of societal uncertainties when a society holds mixed perceptions of the social reality and is thereby conflictogenic (socially split), it is appropriate (to ensure greater integration) to pay attention to intergroup interaction in the society, it then becomes evident that respondents of all social statuses practically leave out the possible

reactions of other social groups, instead focusing on their personal social expectations. Similar tendencies may be observed by age groups (Table 11).

It is clear that social expectations have both a rational and an emotional component. This explains our belief, especially during times of societal uncertainty, that it is prudent to consider the realm of interpretations of reality wherein one's personal status as a social subject is formed or actualised, which depends on relations with other individuals at the level of social communities and groups. In times of societal uncertainties, many variations for social interaction arise but, considering the fact that social subjects are unsure as to which situation they are encountering, they cannot (or are unwilling to) predict the actions of other social groups due to having minimised social cooperation, seeing each social group 'shut itself off' in a world of their own ideas and desires regarding a common future and creating their own versions.

As a result, members of society perceive the representatives of 'other' social groups as social competitors in achieving the desired result. The paradox of Ukrainian realities is that, unlike in most European countries, which have also passed through a stage of democratically reforming the social system at various times in their existence, high uncertainty should lead to greater cooperation among all social subjects in order to overcome this situation as quickly as possible (van den Berg 2018). Our results indicate the further individualisation of social interaction strategies among members of Ukrainian society.

Conclusion

Considering the state of societal uncertainty as a pattern of modern Ukrainian society, we proceeded from the assumption that the uncertainty of the social prospects of Ukraine's development is a certain permanent state of functioning of Ukrainian society, triggering uncertainty of members of society about their own actions and their own conclusions concerning certain social transformations. It appears that in this situation social subjects should feel the need to minimise such a situation by enhancing social interactions with each other in order to obtain information about the behaviour of the 'others' and to predict possible reactions or the consequences of actions in given social situations. This is the decisive factor in the development of social relations in the country. However, our results show that most members of Ukrainian society not only perceive the state of societal uncertainty as constituting a threat to society, but are also ready to take advantage of the opportunities of this scenario to satisfy their personal needs (70.8%). Building on the fact that the prevention of uncertainty may indicate the extent to which members of a certain society have a need for social structuring (rules, values, national ideas, particular vectors of development

in certain spheres of life etc.), we may assume that it is precisely a certain destructuring of Ukrainian society which is promoting the more permanent establishment of the state of social uncertainty as a model of interaction between social subjects.

This is intensified by the different strategies for forming societal expectations. Social expectations determine social group practices in relation to other social subjects, which may manifest themselves in several variations, such as group self-sufficiency (“we can do without it”, “we will achieve it on our own and for ourselves”), as expectations of future effective interaction, as a utilitarian attitude (“they have what we need” or “they can provide what we need”) or as an attempt to ‘consider’ a threat as public (“they behave wrongly, abnormally, strangely ...”) etc. Thus, 57% of the respondents are dominated by a passive strategy for forming societal expectations, 26.6% by an active and 13.9% by an interactive one, with 2.5% of respondents being unable to decide on their own societal expectations. In our opinion, the dominance of the passive strategy of forming societal expectations (irrespective of the respondents’ social status and age) indicates a further cementing of the pattern of “societal uncertainties” in Ukrainian society. Due to the distance from other social subjects, the desire to ‘simply wait and see what happens’ does not assist in enhancing social interaction and integration in society.

A strengthening of the pattern of “societal uncertainty” may be indirectly confirmed by the fact that this strategy is formed by representatives of the social groups of “students” (76.1%) and the “business sector” (58.5%). This is worrying because these are the very social groups that, by their social characteristics, must best of all understand the expediency of and be interested in reducing societal uncertainties because in a society with low levels of societal uncertainty social interaction between subjects is not perceived to constitute a threat to their personal welfare but is seen more as an opportunity to bring about effective outcomes for society in general.

Another factor helping to strengthen the pattern of “societal uncertainty” in Ukrainian society is the mechanism for forming societal expectations relied on by members of society. Representatives of all analysed social statuses form their societal expectations of public life as ‘wishes’. The predominance of societal expectations formed as wishes may indicate the unwillingness of members of Ukrainian society to unify societal expectations, establish clear requirements for the state and social institutions, and minimise the state of societal uncertainties. One may thus assume that members of Ukrainian society do not want to sacrifice their personal achievements in order to form unifying societal expectations and ensure the effective functioning of society. This is a key component of any civil society that brings together social subjects who want a common future within a given country.

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