

POLITICAL DISCONTENT IN UKRAINE*

This article examines the sources of rapid decline of trust in major political institutions in Ukraine in 1996-1997. Using the United States Information Agency (USIA) data sets of 1996 and 1997 I argue that the population's perception of government effectiveness (government perceived performance), market orientations, and the possibility to influence government (external political efficacy) are the key causes of trust in Ukraine. I analyze both time series evolution of trust and its sources as well as evolution of relationships between these dimensions. I find that government perceived performance as well as trust are rapidly declining. I stress, on the one hand, the increasing of the influence of the government perceived performance and the political efficacy on political trust. On the other hand, I found in my study that the influence of market orientations on political trust is declining.

Introduction. The Decline of Trust in Ukraine

Political discontent has become more and more evident in contemporary Ukraine. Confidence in major political forces is rapidly declining. According to the United States Information Agency (USIA) data 24.7 percent of the population expressed great or some trust in the Council of Ministers in 1996 (12.7 percent-in 1997), 17.2 percent of the people expressed confidence in Parliament in 1996 (12.8 percent-in 1997)¹. What is the relevance of this data? Does it really matter if political trust is declining?

The substantial political discontent in the country may cause real problems for the stability of the regime. According to Nye [16], confidence and regime stability might be connected through the willingness of the public to provide such crucial resources as tax dollars, to obey the law, and the willingness of bright young people to go into government. Distrust leads to people's reluctance to provide these resources. Consequently, government can not perform well, which, therefore, leads to further decline of trust. One can assume that in Ukraine distrust and negative government

performance lead to willingness of young educated people to leave the country. Those who are expected to improve the situation prefer to live outside.

On the other hand, discontent is connected with the decreasing support for democratic values. It is associated with declining participation and the quality of democracy (if it is possible to talk about some quality of democracy in Ukraine for now). "Democracy's guiding ideal is the substitution of mutual understanding and agreement for coerciveness and arbitrary authority in all phases of social and political life. The existence of distrustful citizens who are convinced that the government serves the interests of a few rather than the interests of all is a barrier to the realization of political ideal" [1.p.226].

The importance of the decline of political trust for the survival of democracy in Ukraine leads us to question the sources of this decline.

A popular psychological explanation for declining trust is that it is connected to interpersonal trust. However, "most academic studies have found only a modest

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As for other major institution decline of confidence in the year was not founded: 48.0 % in 1996 to 47.4% in 1997 for Ukrainian armed forces, 17.1% in 1996 to 17.4% in 1997 for Judicial system..

relationship between interpersonal trust and trust in government" [17, p.84-85]. Statistics in Ukraine show, that mean² level of trust in government in 1996 was 2.30 (2.16 in 1997), in Parliament in 1996 2.09 (2.03 in 1997), in President 2.55 in 1996 (2.28 in 1997). However, the level of trust in family and relatives was much higher (4.57 both in 1996 and in 1997) [18]. Moreover, as I noted earlier, in Ukraine, the decline of trust in parliament, the Council of Ministers and the President is not followed by a decline of trust in other major institutions, such as army and the judicial system.

Another popular explanation is connected with the influence of mass media. I assume that mass media influences political trust through the population's perception of government effectiveness (government perceived performance). Below I try to look at this question more closely.

Nye [16] examines other explanations of political trust employed in existing literature:

- The scope of government.
- Political performance.
- Economic causes of dissatisfaction.
- Social and cultural causes of dissatisfaction.
- Political causes of dissatisfaction.

I'm going to analyze the influence of three dimensions on trust in Ukraine:

1. Support for transition to a free market as a cause of dissatisfaction based on economic values.

2. Political performance, namely, government perceived performance.

3. Political efficacy. I consider one indicator of political efficacy, namely, the possibility to influence government by voting.

My basic hypothesis is that people who support transition to a free market positively evaluate government effectiveness and feel that they can influence the government by voting are more likely to trust political institutions. I assume that the influences of the afore-mentioned factors on political trust are not stable in time. My purpose is to find out which influences are increasing, which are

decreasing, and which remain the same. I also present some statistics in evolution of concepts under study.

Research Methodology

Initially I put forward several different hypotheses about the structure of relations between the concepts under study. That is why I used alternative models or competing models rather than a model testing approach. As a goodness-of-fit measure for my models I use the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) [11].

Political Efficacy and Trust

There are five analytically distinct usages of the word "alienation" in existing literature: normlessness, meaningless, powerlessness, social isolation and self-estrangement [21]. The most common usage refers to feeling of *political inefficacy* (powerlessness) and *distrust* (normlessness). In my article I analyze these two core dimensions of political alienation.

The concept of political efficacy was introduced into empirical research by Campbell, Gurin and Miller [7, see also 10] with the definition: "sense of political efficacy may be defined as the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process that it is worth while to perform one's civic duties".

In their classical work Almond and Verba [5] make an important distinction between "output effect" or "the kind of expectations people have of treatment at the hands of government officials" and "input effect" or "the feeling people have both about those agencies and processes that are involved in the election of public officials and about the enactment of general public policies". Thus, political efficacy is an input dimension; a trust is an output dimension. Lane [14, see also 10] made a distinction between two dimensions of citizen's attitudes towards politics: internal efficacy (competence) and external efficacy (responsiveness).

²Means were calculated for 5-ball scale of level o

ust: 5 - great trust. 1 - no trust

Different models for measuring political efficacy are proposed in the existing literature [see, for example, 3, 4]. Acock, and Clark [3] propose political efficacy consisting of two-constructs model with four indicators and measurement errors. External efficacy is represented by such indicators as: "How much attention to what people think..." and "Over the years, how much attention do you feel the government pays to what people think when it decides what to do?". I'm going to analyze a single indicator of political efficacy: "Voting is an opportunity to influence government". While it limits my analysis, it can be seen as an extreme display of political inefficacy: if even voting can not influence government, than how to influence?

In 1996, 25 percent of Ukrainians agreed that voting gives an opportunity to influence the government, in 1997, 32.2 percent agreed with the mentioned statement. Though dynamics is not substantial, it gives us an opportunity to hope for a better situation. People's feeling of their ability to influence the government is of key importance for a democratic state.

Discussions of political trust start with Easton, who in 1979 proposed the concept of political support [10] which he defined as a set of positive attitudes to political objects. Support can be specific and diffuse depending upon whether it applies to objects or content. Political trust is a form of diffuse support, which may be focused on one or three general political objects: the "political community", i.e., the broad group of persons who share a political division of labor; the "regime", the basic rules of the game through which political power is shared; and finally the elected and appointed officials responsible for making and implementing political decisions [2]. However, "certain political objects may simultaneously encompass both incumbents and institutions to a degree that makes difficult for most members of the public to distinguish clearly between their regime and authority aspects" [2].

In my article I consider trust in several major political institutions: the Council of Ministers, the Parliament, the President, the Ukrainian armed forces, and the judicial system. In order

to accumulate trust in different political institutions into one construct I constructed a two-group restricted (factor loadings are equal in both groups) measurement model with five indicators and measurement errors (See Appendix A). I assume, that indicators taken into consideration simultaneously encompass both incumbents and institutions.

Support for transition to a free market economy in Ukraine

According to Gabriel, "since values are used as standards in evaluating political situations and objects, a strong relationship can be expected between value orientations and feelings of trust" [10,p. 367]. Following this statement, I expect support for a free market economy to play an important role in citizens' evaluations of ineffectiveness of the government and political inefficacy. "... to the extent that support for market reforms is built on a foundation of fundamental beliefs, Soviet citizens are more likely to support these institutional changes even in the face of serious hardships" [9,p. 539]. In my research I consider support for a free market economy as an exogenous construct which influences political performance and external political efficacy. "A useful way to describe the relation between democracy and capitalism is to say that it is asymmetrical. Capitalism is a necessary - though not sufficient - condition for democracy but democracy is not a precondition for capitalism" [6,p.5].

Three dimensions of support for a free market economy are taken into consideration:

1. Liberalization of prices. "Most economists consider the liberalization of prices to be an essential element of market reform in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe" [9,p. 594]. In order to estimate the beliefs of Ukrainians in the necessity of liberalization of prices I consider a five items agree-disagree scale for the statement: "For the improvement of economy in Ukraine prices for basic things and services have to be free...".

2. Privatization. "...Free-market reform includes the introduction of private ownership into an economy that has had limited historical experience with such a concept" [9,p.594]. I consider two indicators of attitudes towards privatization: (1) "Ordinary people will benefit from private property in Ukraine", and (2) "Citizens of Ukraine should have an opportunity to buy and sell agricultural land".

3. Foreign investments. Finally, I assume that positive attitude toward foreign investments is a core element of free market support in Ukraine. Obviously, support of foreign investors can help the state to afford economic transformations towards a market economy. A five items agree-disagree scale for the statement "Foreign investments should be encouraged" is used in my analysis to measure attitudes towards foreign investments.

According to Table 1, fewer and fewer people in Ukraine support free prices. People do not feel that they are capable of withstanding economic difficulties and need the protection of the state. Nevertheless, a substantial part of the population (in 1997 even more than in 1996) continues to believe that "ordinary people will benefit from private property in Ukraine". The number of those who support foreign investments also increases - people hope that it will help to overcome an economic crisis. As for the private ownership of agricultural land, attempts to inculcate it without a complex state program were not successful. Private agricultural enterprises were not compatible. As a result of it, support for the opportunity to buy and sell agricultural land declines.

In order to measure the construct "Orientations towards market economy" I constructed two-groups restricted measurement model (See Appendix B).

As I noted earlier, support for market transformation is vital, but, of course, not enough for tolerance toward political institutions. "The notion that the market by itself can efficiently allocate scarce resources is purely hortatory" [19,p. 43]. Among explanations for a seeming decline of confidence, "one favorite is to do with it scope... President Ronald Reagan is famous for having said that government was the problem, not the solution. To illustrate, he said, "We declared war on poverty. And poverty won!" [15,p.21]. Therefore I assume that government perceived performance is an important factor, which influences political discontent.

Government Perceived Performance

... true leaders are those who can
• inspire hope
among their followers in a set of
limited but lofty
goals and then use that hope to build
support
to achieve those goals [23,p.181].

Political leaders of stable states do what will allow them to stay in power. In other words, they will try to keep the support of their electorate and to attract those who voted for other candidates. On the other hand, citizens of the state can evaluate the effectiveness of political leaders by taking into account their activities and outcomes based on media interpretations and comments of friends and neighbors.

Table 1

Support for transition to a free market in Ukraine

	AGREE, %		DISAGREE, %	
	1996	1997	1996	1997
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:				
For the improvement of economy in Ukraine prices for basic things and services have to be free...	46,5	23,0	53,4	77,0
Ordinary people will benefit from private property in Ukraine...	34,8	41,5	65,2	58,5
Foreign investments should be encouraged...	36,8	50,0	47,2	50,0
Citizens of Ukraine should have an opportunity to buy and sell agricultural land...	66,7	53,0	33,4	47,0

How media interpretations can influence evaluation of government effectiveness is shown in newspaper articles from the fall of 1997:

... Fund of State Property of Ukraine leads the big part of state property. And, as results show, very ineffectively. According to the first six months of the year, the half of corporate sector of economy was detrimental. Privatization was taken under the control of President Leonid Kuchma... Government of Valéry Pustovoitenko says about the necessity to improve the effectiveness of direction of state part in corporate enterprises. But branch ministries can not afford it any more, as for fund's servants, they have no relevant experience. Why does President need such a close control for privatization - is another question... [12].

Changes to the taxation law "prepared by the state have not satisfied deputies - advisor of Supreme Council Vitaly Melnychuk says. There are a lot of proposals to this law, because, to be frank, it will stop those enterprises which are still working" [20].

On the 3rd of September 1997 in the Parliament session concerning the questions of law politics and justice law reform an unprecedented decision for Ukraine was taken. Members of the Committee proposed to Parliament the procedure of impeachment of President Leonid Kuchma. Such a decision was caused by a situation when Parliament twice overruled veto of the head of the state on the law of local governmental administration but the President has not signed this law [22].

Pavlo Lazarenko headed the party "Gromada" and also started the creation of a shadow Cabinet [13].

Even such a brief and limited overview gives us an opportunity to assume that the influence of mass media in Ukraine 1997 is more likely negative than positive.

Evolution of governance can be considered in three dimensions: the scope of government (what the government does), performance (how it is doing), and its perceived performance (how it is seen by its citizens) [16]. I am analyzing several dimensions of perceived performance of the government. Following Wilson [23] I regard

this perceived performance (subjective evaluation of government effectiveness) as political performance. I consider several areas of government action and public policy.

Security issues. People expect their government to protect them against violence from both inside and outside the country. In order to estimate political performance in security issues we consider two indicators: evaluations of government effectiveness in (1) fighting organized crime; (2) providing defense needs.

Fighting organized crime is of key importance for the survival of democracy in contemporary Ukraine. Increased crime and inability of the state to protect ordinary people may lead to renewed nostalgia for a strong state, or for a communist rule. The strategic geographical position of Ukraine makes the possibility that attempts to "set it in order" both by Russia and the Western states more realistic. In this case the main purpose of Ukraine would be to avoid war or to be ready to defend itself.

So far citizens have evaluated the government's effectiveness in fighting organized crime negatively: 9.8 percent of the population evaluated government effectiveness in 1996 positively (7.4 percent in 1997); the situation with providing defense needs is a little bit better: 36.2 percent in 1996, and 44.0 percent in 1997. This can be explained from the point of view that the majority of people do not think about army affairs until a war breaks out.

Another significant issue to consider is *economic growth* of the country. Stagnation, inflation, and increasing unemployment in Ukraine have marked the last few years. Possibilities for the growth of the private sector are miserable - huge taxes, and weak law make it difficult. Ukraine is becoming poorer and poorer. It is time to think about survival, not about economic growth. Consequently people evaluate government effectiveness in the area of economic growth negatively. And this evaluation becomes substantially more negative with time: 76.2

percent of the population evaluated government effectiveness in promoting economic growth negatively; in 1997 this statistics became 92.8 percent.

Successful social protection of the population helps to win the allegiance of less-advantaged people who were alienated from the market economy and sometimes from democracy as a result of the harshness of early capitalism [23]. In Ukraine *social protection* of the population is a very problematic issue because it includes a large variety of issues, such as medical care, education, childcare support, housing subsidies and others. In spite of the wide variety of needs, the government can not afford substantial help to those who need it. It seems now that the majority of the Ukrainian population deserves social protection. According to the USIA data set for 1997, about 92 percent of population had total income per family of 300 grivnas or less. It is not even enough to provide sufficient nutrition. This is the reason why I also consider government effectiveness in *ensuring food supply*. In 1996 5.2 percent (2.9 percent in 1997) of Ukrainians evaluated government effectiveness in social protection positively, 30.6 percent in 1996 (45.4 percent in 1997) evaluated ensuring food supply positively.

While *environmental protection* is an important issue in the politics of Ukraine, the government can not afford to pay attention to this issue. As a result, people evaluate government effectiveness in environmental protection negatively: 7.7 percent of the population in 1996 (6.3 percent in 1997) evaluated government effectiveness in cleaning up environmental pollution negatively.

The *protection of civil rights* involves at least three dimensions [23]: a statement of the basic right to be protected in a country, independent courts that enforce these rights against abuses by individuals, and guarantees of civil liberties. Therefore, measurement of government effectiveness in this issue is problematic. Nevertheless, I assume that it provides an affective evaluation of

government performance: 19.4 percent of Ukrainians in 1996 (7.5 percent in 1997) evaluate protecting civil rights in the country positively.

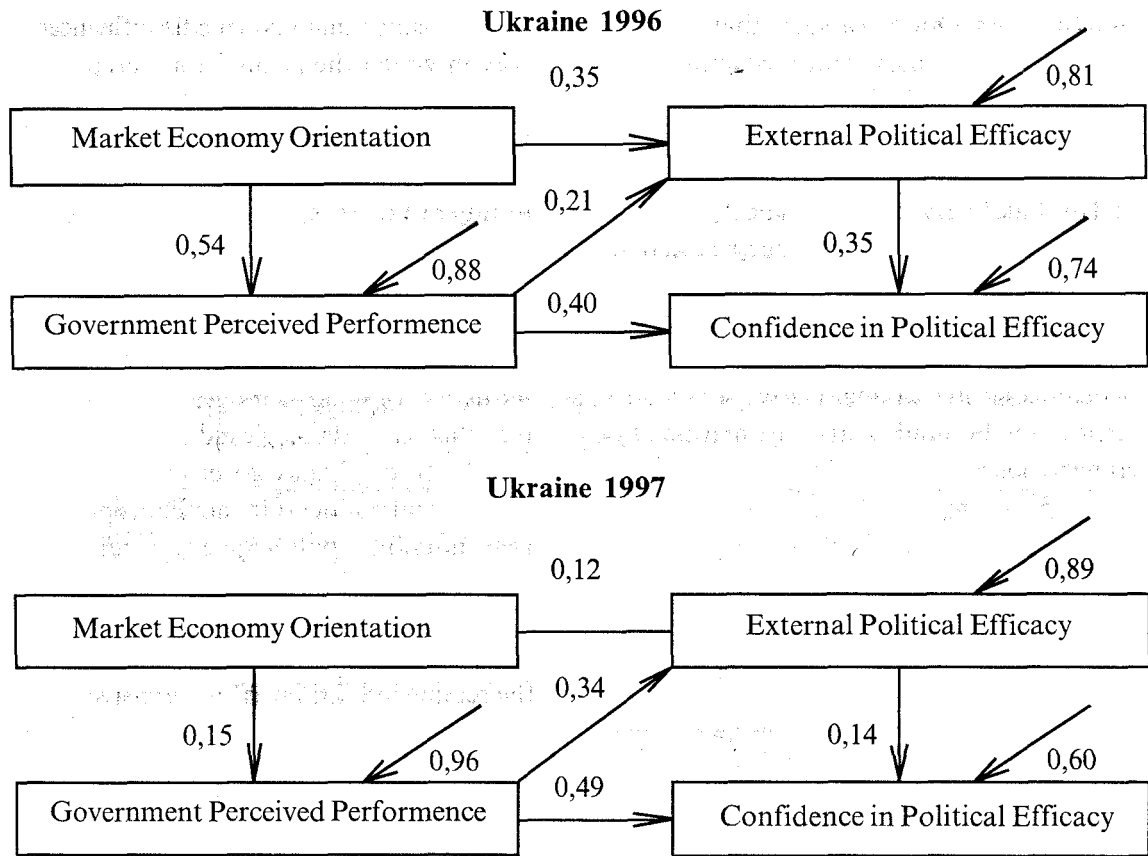
In order to accumulate all the aforementioned aspects of government performance in one measure I constructed two-groups restricted (factor loadings are equal in two groups) measurement model (See Appendix C).

Relations between Attitudes towards Free Market, Political Performance and Political Discontent

It is important to find out whether people dissatisfied with a given decision or set of decisions first begin to distrust the authorities and finally become disenchanted with the political community itself.

The hypothesis of a crucial role that political performance plays in support for the political institutions and on political efficacy was drawn in my study. Another presumption is connected with the influence that support for a free market has on political efficacy and perceived government performance. Finally, political efficacy is assumed to influence political trust. My model of political discontent is similar to Schwartz's model of alienation. According to Schwartz [21, p. 16], "adoption of political alienation is a function of three variables: (1) perceived threat from value conflict; (2) perceived, personal, political inefficacy; and (3) perceived systemic inefficacy". And while my methods and measures differ substantially from Schwartz's, the main idea remains the same - main causes of discontent lie in values (in my article it is represented by market values), perceived political performance and political inefficacy.

I constructed a two-group regression model which illustrates the relationships between market orientation, political performance, external political efficacy and political trust. Models fits data (RMSEA=0.0).



As the above path diagram shows, regression coefficient for Ukraine 1996 and 1997 differ substantially. In order to estimate the significance of differences I tested the hypothesis of the regression coefficient's equality for each relation presented in model. The results of testing are shown in Table 2.

All the relations presented in the model differ significantly. The influences of market orientations on political performance and political efficacy decrease. The influences of political performance on political efficacy and confidence in political institutions and of political efficacy on confidence in political institu-

Table.2.

Regression model "Confidence in Political Institutions". Testing equality of regressions

Relations	Unrestricted solution		Testing equality of regressions (Chi-square, df)
	Regressions		
	1996	1997	
Market orientations -> Political performance	0,54	0,15	Chi-square= 83.72, df=1
Market orientations -> Political efficacy	0,35	0,12	Chi-square= 18.60, df=1
Political performance -> Political efficacy	0,21	0,34	Chi-square= 10.13, df=1
Political performance -> Confidence in political institutions	0,40	0,49	Chi-square= 7.29, df=1
Political efficacy -> Confidence in political institutions	0,35	0,14	Chi-square= 35.16, df=1

tions increase. One can assume that the dynamics have to be as follows: unsatisfactory government performance leads to the feeling of political inefficacy and distrust. Inefficacy and distrust lead to reluctance to support government through taxes, and to abide by laws. Thus, political performance becomes worse and leads to deeper alienation. This influence of political performance becomes more substantial with time. As a whole, such a situation seems to be dangerous for the survival of democracy in Ukraine. The way out from this circle has to be a radical transformation of government policy.

Conclusions

Trust in major political institutions is rapidly declining in Ukraine. Political discontent in the country is vital for survival of democracy. It may cause real problems for the stability of regime. It is also connected with the decreasing support for democratic values. Therefore it is important to find the main sources of it.

Complex social phenomena have multiple causes. I consider a simple model in order to explain the complex concept of discontent with political institutions. I simplify the reality in attempt to construct model with a few variables. I consider only a few of possible causes of discontent in Ukraine. In my study market orientations, government performance, and external efficacy have a substantial influence on political trust. These influences are not similar in time. The influences of political performance and external political efficacy increase while the influence of support for market decreases. I'm also trying to support my statistical calculations by taking into consideration the context of mass media of the

time. I assume that mass media influences the way in which the population perceives the government's performance.

Of course, my approach has a lot of limitations. First of all, I consider a limited number of factors, which influence political discontent. I do not take into account such factors as economic performance (evaluation of the economic situation in Ukraine), political interest, etc. My model does not depict the influences of socio-demographic factors. On the other hand, the single indicator "voting is a possibility to influence government" measures the external political efficacy concept (feeling that individual political action can have an impact upon the political process). However, despite these limitations, the results of my study seem obvious to me now. The weakness of the regime in Ukraine is so pervasive that its entire strength is devoted to the task of hanging on to power. Political leaders divert public resources to their own bank accounts or to their friends and relatives. Under such circumstances government performance is ineffective. And a key factor that is associated with Ukrainians' discontent is the public perception that government has failed in its efforts to solve many of the nation's most serious problems.

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Appendix A

Ukraine 1996



Factor score regressions: 0,18 (Council of Ministers); 0,16 (Parliament); 0,14 (Ukrainian Armed Forces); 0,20 (Judicial System); 0,15 (President)

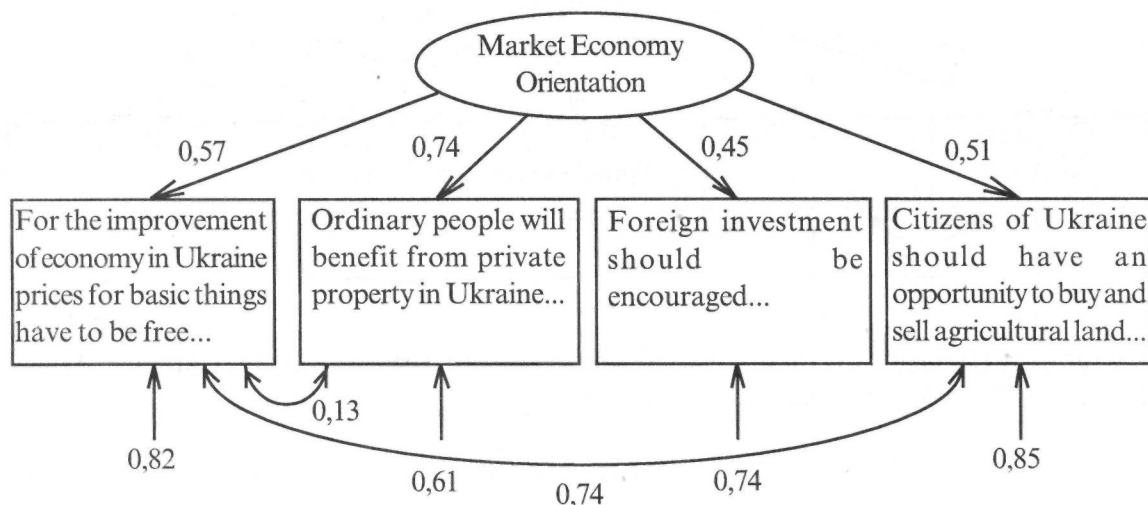
Ukraine 1997



Factor score regressions: 0,28 ("Council of Ministers); 0,13 (Parliaments 0,12 Ukrainian Armed Forces); 0,17 (Judicial System); 0,14 (President)

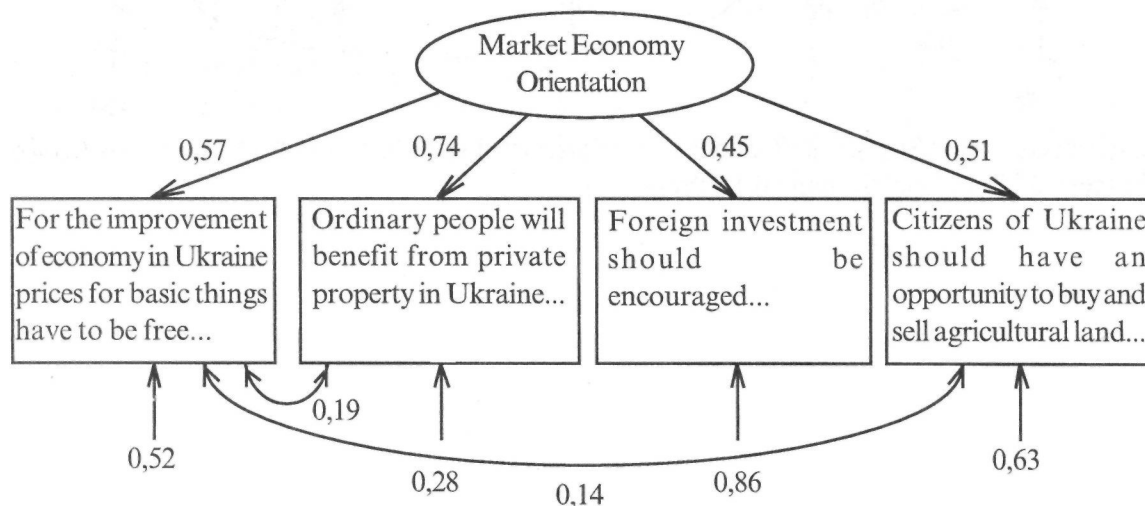
Appendix B

Ukraine 1996



Factor score regressions: 0,09 (for the improvement of economy in Ukraine prices for basic things have to be free...); 0,21 (ordinary people will benefit from private property in Ukraine...); 0,13 (foreign investments should be encouraged...); 0,10 (citizens of Ukraine should have an opportunity to buy and sell agricultural land...)

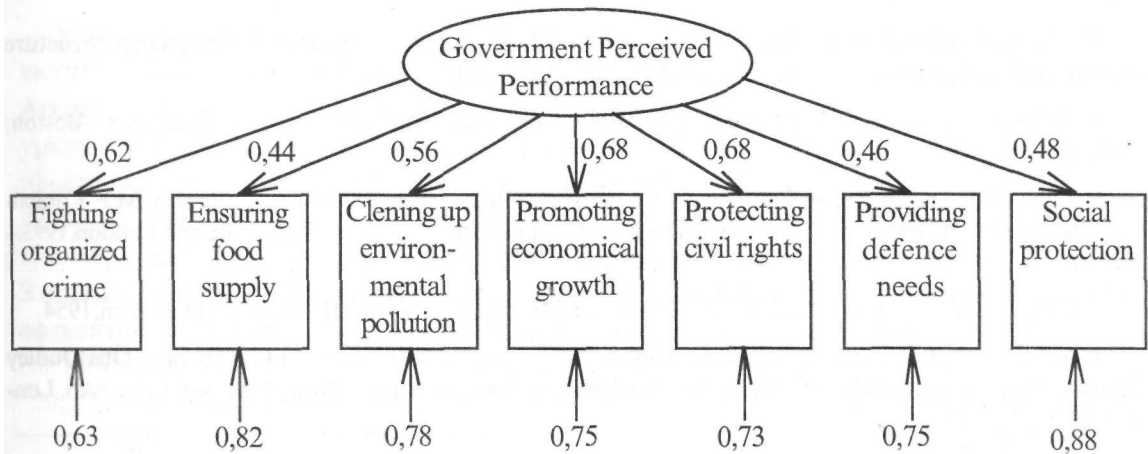
Ukraine 1997



Factor score regressions: 0,26 (for the improvement of economy in Ukraine prices for basic things have to be free...); 0,38 (ordinary people will benefit from private property in Ukraine...); 0,05 (foreign investments should be encouraged...); 0,11 (citizens of Ukraine should have an opportunity to buy and sell agricultural land...)

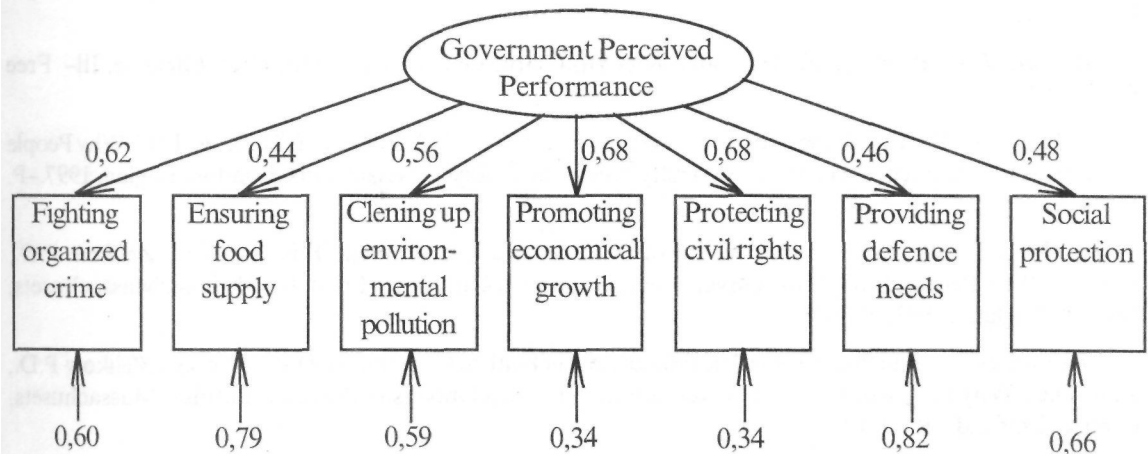
Appendix C

Ukraine 1996



Factor score regressions: 0,15 (fighting organized crime); 0,06 (ensuring food supply); 0,12 (cleaning up environmental pollution); 0,13 (protecting economic growth); 0,13 (protecting civil rights); 0,07 (providing defence needs); 0,11 (social protection).

Ukraine 1997



Factor score regressions: 0,11 (fighting organized crime); 0,04 (ensuring food supply); 0,11 (cleaning up environmental pollution); 0,19 (protecting economic growth); 0,20 (protecting civil rights); 0,04 (providing defence needs); 0,10 (social protection).

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ПОЛІТИЧНЕ НЕВДОВОЛЕННЯ В УКРАЇНІ

У цій статті вивчаються причини швидкого спаду рівня довіри до основних політичних інститутів в Україні в період з 1996 по 1997 рік. На основі даних 1996-1997 рр. Інформаційної Агенції Сполучених Штатів автор стверджує, що сприйняття населенням ефективності уряду, ринкові орієнтації та оцінка можливості вплинути на уряд (зовнішня політична ефективність) є основними причинами політичної довіри в Україні. В статті аналізується як динаміка довіри та її причин, так і еволюція зв'язків між цими вимірами. Автор робить висновок про те, що рівень довіри та сприйняття ефективності уряду швидко знижуються. З одного боку, збільшується вплив політичної ефективності та сприйняття населенням ефективності дій уряду. З іншого, вплив ринкових орієнтацій зменшується.