

State of Societal Uncertainty as a Pattern of Modern Ukrainian Society

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Submitted: 24 March 2020, Accepted: 21 July 2020, Published: 12 October 2020

Volume 29, 2021. p. 67-81. <http://doi.org/10.25133/JPSSv292021.005>

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to justify the model of societal uncertainty as a determinant of collective social behavior on the example of the development of societal expectations and perceptions of Ukrainians. The basic methodological premise of the study is to think of society as a “field of opportunity” for social actors, and the research hypothesis is that Ukrainians are in no hurry to change the permanent state of ‘uncertainty or instability’ to ‘certainty or stability.’ The results of the research project “Social Conflictogenity of Ukrainian Society” were interpreted, concerning the attitude of representatives of different social groups towards the state of “societal uncertainty.” It was concluded that a certain destructuring of modern Ukrainian society contributes to the consolidation of societal uncertainty among members of the society as a model of interaction among social subjects. This destructuring is exacerbated by the dominance in most respondents of a passive strategy of forming societal expectations, and Ukrainians’ understanding of societal expectations as wishes. The main issue for members of the society in the situation of societal uncertainty is connected with the uncertainty of social perspectives, and not so much at the personal level, as at the level of social groups and society in general.

Keywords

Societal expectations; social reality; interaction among social subjects; effective outcomes for the society

Introduction

Uncertainty is a state of social reality that is associated with the perceptions of once-stable social structures now being destroyed or changed. Although the assessment of the situation as “uncertain” is subjective, the reasons for such an interpretation are rather real. Subjective context forms an integral part of how members of a society view the social reality and are more defined and noticeable at the micro-level of a society’s social structure (analysis of the processes of direct interindividual interaction in the conditions of finding people in the social space of their immediate environment – family, friends, group of peers, a scant labor collective, etc. was explored, e.g., Deaux & Martin, 2003; Kuz & Sahan, 2016). Yet, in a setting of ever-greater social competition, the social roles held by the members of a society in relation to a given problem, event, phenomenon, or process are also increasingly influenced by subjective content (priority of action of individuals in relation to the whole, structure, society) due to information pressures, informal everyday practices, and social risks; namely, aspects, characterizing the state of societal uncertainty (Amiel & Cowell, 2007; Fawcett et al., 2014; Gaudeul, 2013; Yessilov, 2015; Johnston, 2019; Rand et al., 2014; Fedotov et al., 2018; Savage et al., 2013; van den Berg & Wenseleers, 2018; Zborovsky & Ambarova 2016). At the same time, in our opinion, today, the dominance of the subjective content influencing the societal uncertainties arising from social transformations is increasingly moving to a lower level (to the level of social communities), in turn bringing greater polarization, 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 determine the direction of its external affairs, the processes of reforming its socio-economic system, the ‘national idea,’ social values, etc. And this does not refer to the declaration or statutory consolidation of certain ‘intentions’ of the Ukrainian state in this regard but to the formation of an integrated (through conscious support of a certain vector by the members of the Ukrainian society) social space. In the last five years (2014–2019), the level of societal 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 the modern Ukrainian society.

The ‘state of the Ukrainian society’ was analyzed by key (in the authors’ opinions) periods for Ukraine: 1991 – when 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 centers of socio-political and socio-economic influence; 2004 – ‘The Orange Revolution’ promised new opportunities for the genuine democratization of Ukrainian society, but by 2013 the system of rigid clan management had been restored; and, 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 characterize the state of the Ukrainian society as a social transformation, social tension, a crisis society, or “failure of the social matrix” (Shulha, 2018). To support such opinions, the sociologists point to its multidimensionality (Saveliev, 2015), class structure (Symonchuk, 2016), the different social interests, ways and lifestyles of members of Ukrainian society (Zabolotna, 2018; Zlobina, 2011), the state of social consciousness (Dodonov & Mofa, 2003; Holovakha & Panina, 1994; Popova, 1999; Yereskova, 2016), the loss of cultural and educational competences by Ukrainians, civic irresponsibility (Horbachyk & Holovakha, 2012; Vdovychenko, 2016), and others. Still, the influence of the above components on the state of the Ukrainian society is analyzed 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 societal uncertainty as a pattern in the development of the 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 societal expectations for their social group, for other social groups, and for society as a whole; secondly, 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.

Materials and methods

The methodological basis of the study is a procedural approach (according to Shtompka, 1996) 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 or instability’ to ‘certainty or stability,’ which might for a long time suspend the dreams, hopes, and expectations held by individuals to realize their desires and ambitions in material, social and political aspects of life (Bodnar & Pelin, 2012; Kremen, 2013).

The empirical basis of the study is data derived from a survey of residents of regional centers of Ukraine aged 18 years and older by means of face-to-face interviews conducted by the authors for a much larger project, “Social Conflictogenity of Ukrainian Society” from 29 April – 13 May 2019. The sample is representative by age, gender, and region (N=1,500, margin of error no more than 3.0%). Participants were randomly selected. The study participants were approached and recruited in universities from different enterprises in order to capture the widest possible field of people with different professions and financial wealth.

The empirical data were processed using the SPSS application software package with the 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 main requirement was to make it easier for the researchers to interpret the expressions used by the respondents. All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Study Protocol No. 394675 was reviewed and approved by the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv Commission.

Results and discussion

In a discourse of modernity, Lyotard (1992) hypothesized that in response to the greater societal 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. This is largely due to the inaccuracy (lack of credibility or 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 a society in a situation of societal uncertainty is connected with the uncertainty of social perspectives (not so much at the personal level, but 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. Authors associate the formation of societal uncertainties with different expectations of social communities regarding the actions and the conclusions they draw about the actions of other social groups in relation to certain social transformations. A comparison of societal 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 a society, to some extent, "tells" them how to act and what to expect from life, because "to have a certain place in society" 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 Thomas' introduction of the "situation definition" concept, which means that any social situation is how it is defined by the participants (Thomas, 2002).

Societal 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," the key strategies can be first identified for forming societal expectations (passive, active, interactive) and their main contents. Identifying strategies for shaping societal expectations became possible due to the application of Berger's (1996) uncertainty reduction theory, which explores how communication is used to achieve understanding between social groups (Griffin, 2015). A passive strategy for generating societal 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. Still, the majority of researchers are confident in their ability to filter bias and 'extract' valuable information. An interactive strategy is 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, classification of societal expectations by meaningful content (wishes, warnings, or predictions of future actions) will give insights into the comprehension of 'societal 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, it is necessary to model social groups with respect to their practices of forming societal 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 expectations and their societal outcome, i.e., they make a choice between an outcome for the society that may be somewhat unfair to these social groups, but not risky for the majority of members of the society. Still, others manage their societal expectations to avoid a safe yet

relatively inferior outcome for society's development. This thereby helps understand the objective patterns in the formation of societal expectations as reflecting on certain social trends during times of societal uncertainties.

Respondents' understanding of the dominant strategy used for shaping societal expectations was determined by two blocks of questions. The first block of questions was the definition and registration of respondents' reflections on their view of the state of societal uncertainty. The second block was directly concerned with identifying dominant strategies used for shaping societal expectations. In this context, the above-described attributes of key strategies (passive, active, interactive) served as the content network. Thus, analyzing the empirical data, we understood that the results of the survey confirm the argument that the majority of Ukrainian society members have 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 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. The data in Table 1 gave an opportunity to trace the correlation of respondents' responses by social status.

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 societal 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					
	Workers	Officials	Business sector	Students	Retirees	Unemployed
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

Upon analyzing 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 life strategies.

Analysis of the data shown in Table 2 indicates a tendency for a decrease in the number of respondents viewing societal uncertainty as ‘natural or 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 the 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 societal 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					
	Up to 20 years	21-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	Over 60 years
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

It may be stated that in the conditions of today, societal uncertainties are perceived to be an inevitable and natural state. For most members of the 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 exists. 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 3).

Table 3: Distribution of respondents' answers to the open-ended question: "How do you most often (typically) respond to the situation of societal uncertainty?" (% of the 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

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 4). 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 4: Distribution of indicators by total indicators according to strategies for the formation of social expectations obtained from responses to the open-ended question "How do you most often (typically) respond to the situation of societal uncertainty?" (% of the total number of respondents)

Answer option	%
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

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 5).

Table 5: Distribution of indicators by total indicators according to strategies for the formation of 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)

Indicators	Workers	Officials	Business sector	Students	Retirees	Unemployed
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

Analysis of the obtained data revealed that indicators of a passive strategy for forming societal expectations were dominant 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 the modern Ukrainian society where the 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.

The 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 6) reveals, on the 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 6: Distribution of indicators by total indicators according to strategies for the formation of 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)

Indicators	Up to 20 years	21-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	Over 60 years
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

It has already been noted that to understand whether the state of societal uncertainties is a pattern of the modern Ukrainian society, one must define and classify the societal expectations of members of this society. Table 7 provides an overview of what the concept of societal expectations means to representatives of various social groups.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents' answers to the open-ended question: "What do societal expectations mean to you?" (% of the 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 us 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

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 8). In other words, respondents see societal expectations that they wish to come true.

Table 8: Classification of respondents' answers by total indicators according to the content of societal expectations in response to the open-ended question, "What do societal expectations mean to you?" (% of the total number of respondents)

Answer option	%
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 us 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

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 'atomization' 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 individualized 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 of (any actions would be perceived as failing to meet expectations). The classification of societal expectations by social status is presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Classification of respondents’ answers by summary indicators according to the content of societal expectations in response to the open-ended question, “What do you mean by societal expectations?” (% of the share of the category named among those who chose this answer)

Classification	Workers	Officials	Business sector	Students	Retirees	Unemployed
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 us 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

If we accept the argument that in the context of societal uncertainties when society holds mixed perceptions of 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 of focusing on their personal, societal expectations. Similar tendencies may be observed by age groups (Table 10).

Table 10: Classification of respondents' answers by summary indicators according to the content of societal expectations in response to the open-ended question, "What do you mean by societal expectations?" (% of the share of the category named among those who chose this answer)

Classification	Up to 20 years	21-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	Over 60 years
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 me 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

It is clear that societal 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 actualized, 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 minimized 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 high uncertainty should lead to increased cooperation between all social subjects in order to overcome this situation as quickly as possible (van den Berg & Wenseleers, 2018). Our results indicate the further individualization of social interaction strategies among members of the Ukrainian society.

Conclusion

Considering the state of societal uncertainty as a pattern of the 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 the 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 minimize such a situation by enhancing social interactions with each other in order to obtain information about the behavior 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 the 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 the Ukrainian society which is promoting the more permanent establishment of the state of societal uncertainty as a model of interaction between social subjects.

This ambiguity is intensified by the different strategies for forming societal expectations. Societal 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 the 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 pattern 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 'societal uncertainty' in Ukrainian society is the mechanism for forming societal expectations relied on by members of the society. Representatives of all analyzed societal 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 the Ukrainian society to unify societal expectations, establish clear requirements for the state and social institutions, and minimize the state of societal uncertainties. One may thus assume that members of the 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.

Acknowledgments

The paper refers to the results of the project "Complex issues of historical memory of the countries of Central-Eastern Europe in XX-XXI centuries in the paradigm of dialogism of Ukrainian culture" (official registration No: 0116U003294).

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