



Land Reform in Ukraine: Attitudes & Expectations

Based on SCORE 2021 Ukraine

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The views, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this document do not necessarily reflect the position of USAID, UNDP, or their partners.

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About SCORE

Social **CO**hesion and **RE**conciliation Index (SCORE) is an analytical tool providing a solid evidence base for developing policies and programs that strengthen national unity, social cohesion, and resilience as well as for monitoring progress of their implementation.

SCORE Ukraine is implemented on an annual basis and designed to improve the understanding of societal dynamics in Ukraine. It is a joint initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union (EU) and implemented by the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD).

This policy brief is based on the SCORE Ukraine dataset collected between January – May 2021. All the indicators used in this brief are outlined in the [glossary](#) section, and the guidance on how to interpret the analysis is presented in the respective results and discussion sections.

For more information on how to read SCORE data, please read our handbook [here](#) or visit our online data [platform here](#) for the full list of SCORE Ukraine indicators.

About partners

Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development works with international development organizations, governments, and civil society leaders to design and implement evidence-based, people-centred strategies for the development of peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable societies. Working in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, SeeD provides policy advice for social transformation that is based on citizen engagement strategies and empirical understanding of the behaviour of individuals, groups, and communities. The SeeD approach focuses on understanding the root causes of social problems by developing and empirically testing a science-based theory of change.

USAID (United States Agency for International Development) is the world's premier international development agency directly involved in numerous development projects. USAID has partnered with Ukraine since 1992, providing more than \$3 billion in assistance. USAID's current strategic priorities include strengthening democracy and good governance, promoting economic development and energy security, improving healthcare systems, and mitigating the effects of the conflict in the East.

USAID's Democratic Governance East (DG East) is a five-year activity to improve trust and confidence between citizens and government in eastern Ukraine, building opportunities for the region to lead Ukraine's democratic transformation. DG East aims to strengthen the connection and trust between citizens and their government in eastern Ukraine by promoting good governance and inclusive civic identity, increasing interaction between

citizens and civil society, and increasing collaboration between government and citizens and citizen participation in community development and local decision-making.

USAID's Transforming Communications Activity (TCA) is a five-year activity of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which aims to strengthen Ukrainian democracy through comprehensive research, innovative communication initiatives, and the creation of socially meaningful content.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supports strategic capacity development initiatives to promote inclusive growth and sustainable human development. Through partnerships with national, regional, and local governments, civil society, and the private sector, UNDP strives to support Ukraine in its efforts to eliminate poverty, develop people's capacity, achieve equitable results, sustain the environment, and advance democratic governance. UNDP through its flagship UN Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme (UN RPP) is also helping to restore critically important social and economic infrastructure and effective work of local governments in eastern Ukraine, create jobs and spur entrepreneurship among IDPs and host communities, and promote peace and reconciliation.

Introduction

Land reform is a hot topic in public discourse in Ukraine. Land market was partly launched on July 1, 2021, after decades of ban on land sales. This is the first phase of the reform when only Ukrainian citizens (i.e., natural persons) can buy up to 100 hectares of agricultural land per person. The second phase is due in 2024 when both Ukrainian natural persons and legal entities will be able to purchase and own up to 10,000 hectares per person. Foreign citizens and companies will remain prohibited from acquiring land until this restriction is lifted by a national referendum.¹

Earlier Ukraine belonged to the group of countries where there was no space to realise one's property rights. This group where there is no land market is the least common, according to a research analyzing land affairs in sixty countries.² Instead, the most numerous is the group of countries with open but restricted market. The restrictions can concern size of the private property one can own, price regulations, requirements regarding education, qualification, experience, or residence of a buyer, tax burden, state permission for purchase, etc. Ukraine, however, is transiting to another group of countries with a market that has less restrictions to citizens but is closed for foreigners. The number of countries belonging to this group is decreasing, according to the research.³

Land was state property during the Soviet period. Only members of the state (*sovkhos*) and collective (*kolkhoz*) farms were able to cultivate and use it.⁴ After independence in 1991, Ukraine started transitioning to market economy. Land was distributed among members and pensioners of the former *kolkhozes* and *sovkhos*es as well as local residents providing social services. As of 2020, there were 6.9 million people owning 28 million hectares. The total size of agricultural land is about 41 million hectares, 33 million hectares of which is arable.⁵

The **moratorium** on sale of agricultural land was introduced in 2001. According to the MPs, it was an interim measure until land cadastre and land bank were established and legislation on land transactions was passed to prevent excessive land accumulation due

¹ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Закон України "Про внесення змін до деяких законодавчих актів України щодо умов обігу земель сільськогосподарського призначення" [Law of Ukraine on amending legislation of Ukraine on agricultural land turnover], no. 552-IX, in force since July 1, 2021, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/552-20#Text>.

² Mykola Haidai et al., "Створення вільного ринку землі сільськогосподарського призначення в Україні: Детальний аналіз міжнародного досвіду та оцінка соціально-економічного ефекту" [Introduction of free land market of agricultural land in Ukraine: Detailed analysis of international experience and social and economic effect assessment], analytical report, Easy Business, April 2016, pp.30-31.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The outputs and assets in collective farms (*kolkhozes*) were nominally owned by its members while in state farms (*sovkhos*es) by the state.

⁵ AgroPolit and Feodal, "Land Handbook of Ukraine: 2020 Infographics," accessed September 27, 2021, p.3-4, <https://agropolit.com/spetsproekty/705-zemelnyy-dovidnik-ukrayini--baza-danih-pro-zemelnyy-fond-krayini>.

to insufficient regulation.⁶ The moratorium, which prevented the sale of 96% of agricultural land,⁷ had been extended a few times afterwards until it was lifted in July 2021. Because of the moratorium, the majority of the transactions have become lease-hold transactions between landowners and tenants, and actual land purchase transactions have remained minimal. For many rural residents, leasing arable land is an important source of income: on average, about one-fifth of landowners' annual income is from land share lease payments, according to the 2015 survey by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology.⁸ 17 million hectares of privately owned land is leased which is approximately 41% of all agricultural land. However, 6.5 million hectares, which make up 16% of all agricultural land, is used only by 117 big agricultural enterprises.⁹ Thus, the moratorium was not effective in preventing land accumulation. Instead, in the absence of a well-regulated market, influential "latifundists" have accumulated land assets often through underpriced rent and used manipulative media narratives to generate negative public opinion about lifting the moratorium.¹⁰ There are no limits on the area size that can be leased to one enterprise.

The partial launch of the land market in July 2021 aims to improve the situation. A study from May 2021 reports that approximately 10-15% of citizens would like to seize the new opportunity and purchase or trade land plots.¹¹ At first glance, the land market concerns only this group of people (landowners who want to sell their plots and people who want to become landowners). However, it will impact more than land transactions by turning land into a liquid asset affecting land prices, lease relations, and mortgage acquisitions.¹²

Although land reform is mainly associated with lifting the moratorium and land market in public discourse, it is a much broader and comprehensive policy change. The reform also foresees transfer of public land to empower local communities and propel regional economic development. This is the **decentralization** aspect of the reform. The communities have received state-owned land outside of administrative boundaries of

⁶ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, "Стенограма пленарного засідання 25 жовтня 2001 року" [Transcript of plenary meeting on October 25, 2001], <https://portal.rada.gov.ua/meeting/stenogr/show/3422.html>.

⁷ The remaining 4% was household land (not plots) or orchards, for instance. AgroPolit and Feodal, "Land Handbook of Ukraine," p. 15.

⁸ Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, "Current Issues of Land Reform in Ukraine: Summary of Key Results of the Study," 2015.

⁹ Ibid, p. 12

¹⁰ Oleksandr Rakhmanov, "Why do Ukrainians Oppose Land Sales? The Problem of Legitimacy of Private Land Tenure in Post-Soviet Society," *European Politics and Society* 2020, p.2, doi: 10.1080/23745118.2020.1815470.

¹¹ Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, "Чи підтримують українці відкриття ринку землі, на яких умовах та на який захист своїх інтересів очікують" [How Ukrainian support land market, on what conditions, and what protection of their interests expect], survey conducted on May 14-19, 2021, <https://dif.org.ua/article/chi-pidtrimuyut-ukrainsi-vidkrittya-rinku-zemli-na-yakikh-umovakh-ta-na-yakiy-zakhist-svoikh-interesiv-ochikuyut>.

¹² AgroPolit and Feodal, "Land Handbook of Ukraine: 2020 Infographics," pp.17-24.

settlements. They can now adopt spatial community development plans;¹³ negotiate administrative borders with neighbouring communities, change target use of land plots (e.g., for agriculture or housing), etc.¹⁴

Further, land management and bureaucracy are streamlined to reduce red tape which is the **deregulation** aspect of the reform. The **state support** especially for small farmers will be streamlined and digitalized with the creation of the State Agrarian Registry where they can create online accounts and apply for state support.¹⁵ **Loan guarantee state fund** is yet another instrument to be established opening agricultural SMEs' access to loans.¹⁶

Transparency in land sales and **anti-corruption** is enhanced by electronic actions.¹⁷ Moreover, the National Geospatial Data Infrastructure will contain open and comprehensive information about all the natural resources including agricultural land. As some authors put it, after lifting the moratorium, "low-cost efficiency enhancing transactions will be limited to a relatively small part of Ukraine's land." Clear records and secure tenure are no less important.¹⁸ With all the information available electronically in one place, the NGDI can also open the possibility for **digital services**.

In addition to decentralization, deregulation, and transparency components, the legislative package also contains other measures such as those to prevent land takeover and grabbing, land consolidation, and irrigation.¹⁹ The latter of which will introduce "water user

¹³ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Закон України "Про внесення змін до деяких законодавчих актів України щодо планування використання земель" [Law of Ukraine on amending some legislative acts of Ukraine on land use planning], no. 711-IX, in force since July 27, 2021, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/711-20#Text>.

¹⁴ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Закон України "Про внесення змін до деяких законодавчих актів України щодо вдосконалення системи управління та дерегуляції у сфері земельних відносин" [Law of Ukraine on amending some legislative acts of Ukraine on the improvement of land management and deregulation], no. 1423-IX, in force since May 27, 2021, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1423-20#Text>.

¹⁵ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Закон України "Про внесення змін до деяких законів України щодо функціонування Державного аграрного реєстру та удосконалення державної підтримки виробників сільськогосподарської продукції" [Law of Ukraine on amending some laws of Ukraine on State Agrarian Registry and state support for agricultural producers], no. 985-IX, in force since December 4, 2020, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/985-20#Text>.

¹⁶ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, "Проект Закону про Фонд часткового гарантування кредитів у сільському господарстві" [Draft Law on loan guarantee fund in agriculture], no. 3205-2, May 25, 2020, http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=68921.

¹⁷ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Закон України "Про внесення змін до деяких законодавчих актів України щодо продажу земельних ділянок та набуття права користування ними через електронні аукціони" [Law of Ukraine on amending some legislative acts of Ukraine on sales of land plots and acquisition of usage rights via electronic actions], no. 1444-IX, in force since July 6, 2021, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1444-20#Text>.

¹⁸ Klaus Deininger and Denys Nizalov, "26 Years of Land Reform: the Glass is Half-Empty or Half-Full," *VoxUkraine*, October 9, 2016, https://kse.ua/about-the-school/news/2016_10_08-voks_26-rokiv-zemelnoyi-reformi/.

¹⁹ Ukraine State Service of Geodesy, Cartography, and Cadastre, "Законодавчий пакет земельної реформи" [Legislative package of land reform], accessed September 28, 2021, t.ly/RpZh.

associations” which should stimulate investments in pumping stations, pipelines, and other irrigation infrastructure.

However, as the reform was launched recently in July 2021 with its regulatory infrastructure still underway, the number of land sale contracts remains low.²⁰ Thus, it is too early to evaluate the benefits and constraints of the reform.

Although potential beneficiaries are yet to experience the reform in action, we can evaluate **expectations** from the new policy and how people perceive the different elements of the reform, such as the aforementioned land market, decentralization, deregulation, and anti-corruption components. While this paper does not provide an in-depth assessment of regulatory mechanisms, better understanding public perceptions, sceptical or supportive attitudes towards the reform would help tailor policy decisions and communication strategies for smoother implementation and cooperation between authorities, beneficiaries, and the wider public.

By using SCORE 2021 dataset, we investigate why Ukrainians support, or not, the land reform and their expectations about it. Our findings reveal that the general perception of authorities, be it positive or negative, is an important factor determining attitudes towards the reform. The analyses lead us to argue that decentralization, deregulation, and digitalization aspects of the reform should be better communicated since they are not well linked to the attitudes about the reform. Besides, people expect transparency and clear economic dividends.

For the landowners, who are among the main stakeholders and a sizeable potential beneficiary group, demographic characteristics play a bigger role compared to the general population. The needs of rural and older landowners need to be prioritized to shift the attitudes as they tend to be significantly less supportive of the new policy. Meanwhile, younger landowners may appreciate the land market and digital services. In addition, some immediate deliverables are important to keep that handful of landowners who are likely to support the reform in order to prevent them from turning into the reform rejectionists.

Methodology

Survey design and data collection

Data collection was carried out from January 2021 to May 2021 and, thus, before the launch of the land market. Therefore, we cannot evaluate the actual impact and effect of the new policy, and it is yet premature to make such an assessment. Instead, we focus on

²⁰ Kyiv School of Economics, “Огляд стану земельних відносин в Україні” [Review land affairs in Ukraine], August 2021, <https://kse.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Land-Review-August-20210828-final-1.pdf>.

expectations from the reform, how they match the content of the reform, potential benefits and risks, and drivers of attitudes.

The national sample consists of face-to-face 12,482 interviews from 24 oblasts and Kyiv city. The sampling was based on estimations of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine as of January 1, 2019. The sample is representative of the adult population of Ukraine (18 years old and above).

The following categories of the adult population and geographical areas are excluded from the sample: Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Sevastopol city, non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk.

The sample contains 2,565 respondents who are landowners (21%). According to the 2020 land handbook,²¹ there are 6.9 million landowners in Ukraine which is equivalent to approximately 20% of the adult population.²²

Further, the sample includes almost 1% of tenants and 2.4% of agricultural workers. The sample size of tenants and agricultural workers is too small to apply advanced statistical methods. Thus, we limit ourselves to descriptive statistics and two-group comparison (tenants vs. non-tenants, agricultural workers vs. others).

Support for land reform indicator

The “support for land reform” is an indicator based on three questions scaled together into one single index. Given the multidimensionality and complexity of the land reform, these items were worded broadly without specifying a single aspect, component, or regulatory mechanism. This approach helps distinguish reform awareness and ‘knowledge of’ from attitudes towards the reform itself.

As such, respondents were asked to report the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. An effective land reform is currently impossible to implement
2. Land reform will have a negative impact on landowners in one’s locality
3. Land reform will gradually improve the quality of life in Ukraine

Data analysis

In addition to *descriptive* statistical analysis (e.g., frequencies, comparison of SCORE indicators), more advanced analyses are applied, which included *population segmentation*

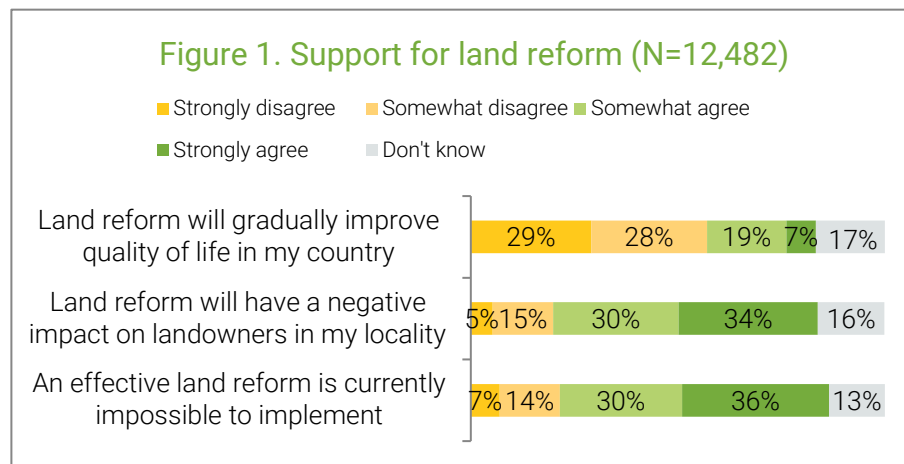
²¹ AgroPolit and Feodal, “Land Handbook of Ukraine: 2020 Infographics,” p.4.

²² The total population of 18+ age group in 2021 is 33.96m (excluding the temporarily occupied territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and the city of Sevastopol) [State Statistics Service of Ukraine, “Населення” [Population], accessed September 26, 2021, http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/menu/menu_u/ds.htm].

(i.e., cluster analysis) and *statistical modelling*. Cluster analysis was used to reveal the socio-demographic and psychosocial characteristics of individuals who tend to support land reforms compared to others who tend to be either unsure or rejective of such reforms. *Statistical modelling* (linear regression) was used to investigate the relationships between the dependent variable (i.e., the outcome of interest), which is the Support for land reform in this case, and various independent variables (i.e. indicators that can be contextual, conceptual, and/or theoretical drivers or predictors). Such models help understand what affects an indicator that is the outcome (support for land reform) or what this indicator influences itself as a driver. Models were controlled for age, gender, education, income, type of settlement to ensure that the relationships were not artefacts of demographic differences. The weights are applied throughout the analysis to ensure social and demographic representativeness.

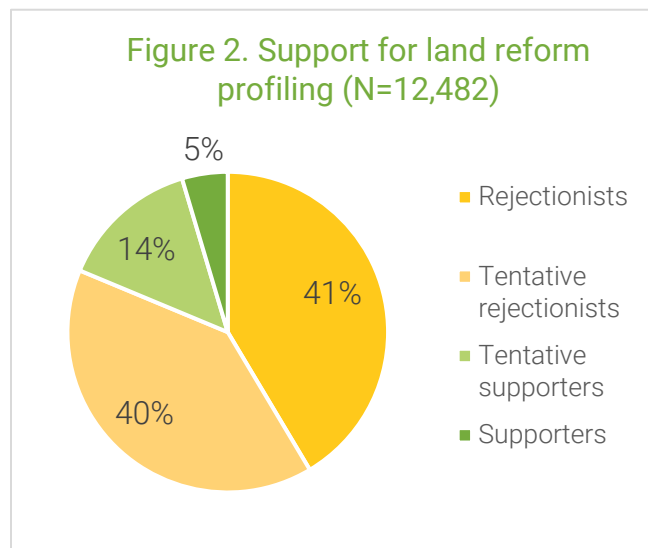
What Do People Think About Land Reform?

The majority of respondents **disapprove** of the land reform. They report that the land reform is currently impossible to implement; will not improve the quality of life in the country; and will have a negative impact on



landowners in their locality (see Figure 1). Further, approximately 13 - 17% of the sample does not have an opinion on either of the three items (i.e., respondents who chose 'Don't know'). According to another survey from December 2019 by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, the land reform was a priority for only about 15% of respondents.²³

²³ Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, "Reforms in Ukraine: Public Opinion," survey conducted on December 6-11, 2019, https://dif.org.ua/article/reforms-in-ukraine-public-opinion_2020_19.



After considering all possible combinations of responses regarding the three questions asked about the land reform, respondents were divided into four categories ranging from strong rejectionists to strong supporters. More specifically, the combination of responses that indicated a clear agreement or disagreement with different aspects of the land reform were grouped in the Supporters and the Rejectionists respectively, while the combination of responses that showed only a slight approval or disapproval were grouped in

the Tentative Supporters and Tentative Rejectionists, respectively.

The cluster analysis, done on the three statements mentioned above, shows that support for land reform is extremely low (see Figure 2). While 41% of respondents report a hard negative stance on the issue (Rejectionists), 40% appear to fall into the Tentative Rejectionist category. There is a chance that some of the Tentative Rejectionists may shift towards the Tentative Supporters group if dividends of the reform were better communicated and visibly observed or concretely experienced during the implementation. The tentative groups lean either towards supporting or rejecting the reform; however, their position is not strong as supporters and rejectionists.

When examining the SCORE 2021 national sample, demographic characteristics such as gender, education, type of settlement, sector of employment do not have a significant effect on respondents' attitude towards the land reform. When the differences are present and statistically significant, they are very small.²⁴ Younger group of people, respondents with higher income, business owners, and students are inclined to have a slightly higher support for the reform.

The absence of differences in the perception of the reform between **potential beneficiaries** (landowners, tenants, and agricultural workers) and the general population is surprising and can be explained by the fact that it is yet too early to evaluate the impact of the reform which has been launched recently. Therefore, the support is hypothetical about potential benefits and risks rather than an assessment of dividends and losses produced by the implementation. Besides, land ownership is not a factor of social stratification for Ukrainians. Land plots are not necessarily considered commodities since they were obtained involuntarily. During privatization in the 1990s, many Ukrainians unwittingly

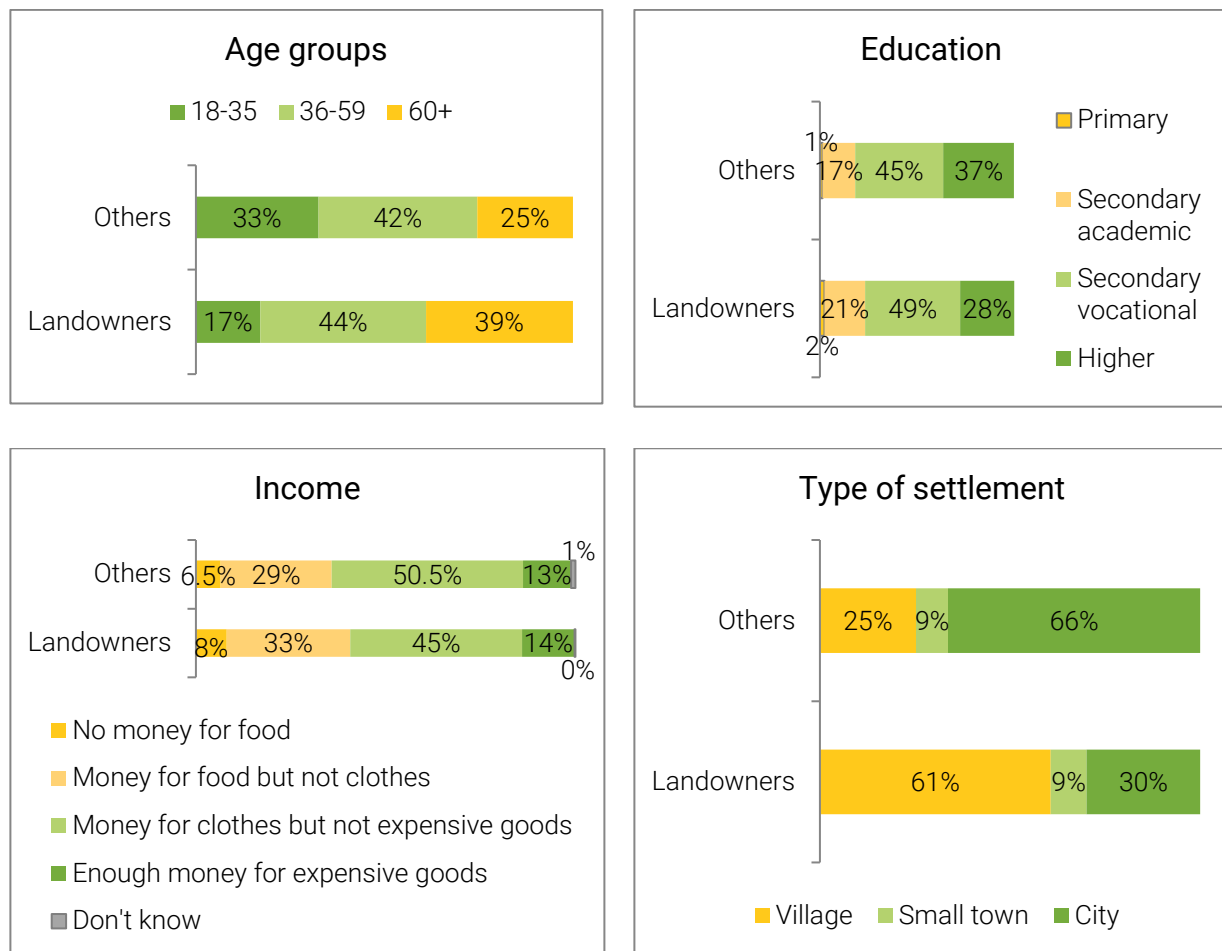
²⁴ The differences between demographic groups were tested with ANOVA. They are significant at .001 level with $F > 20$ but small when eta-squared is from .01 to .06.

became landowners.²⁵ Thus, they do not necessarily feel as a separate class where land is seen as a valuable asset. As a result, their perception of the reform is similar to the one of non-owners, at least for now. Looking deeper, the following sections focus on the potential beneficiaries of land reform and investigate the demographic characteristics of landowners, tenants, and agricultural workers in more detail.

Who Are Potential Reform Beneficiaries?

The respondents of SCORE 2021 who **own land** tend to be older than non-owners, and the majority (61%) lives in villages. They are also slightly less educated and with lower income than the general population.

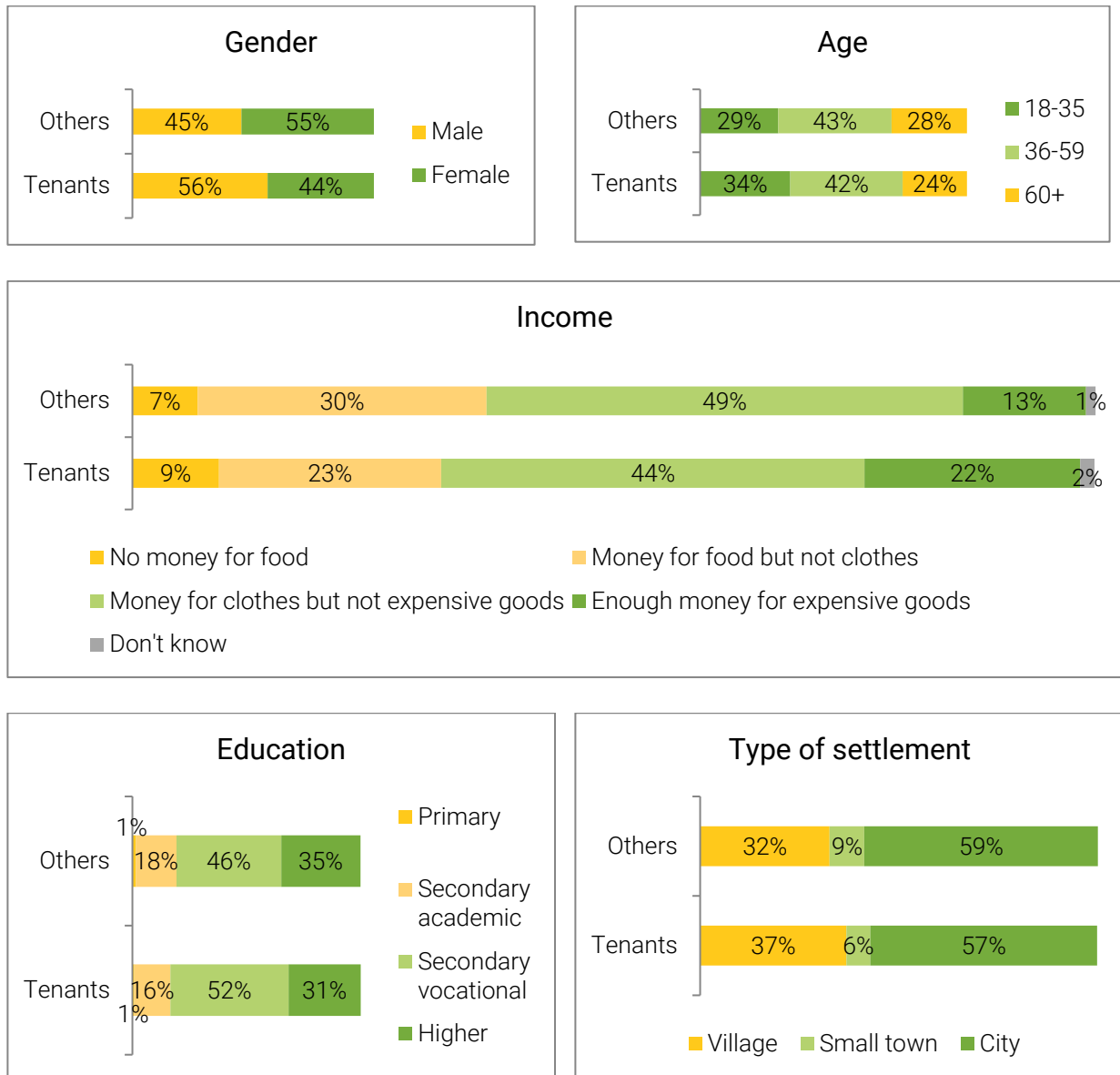
Figure 3. Who landowners are (Landowners: N=2,589; Others: N=9,893)



²⁵ Rakhmanov, "Why do Ukrainians Oppose Land Sales?" p. 4.

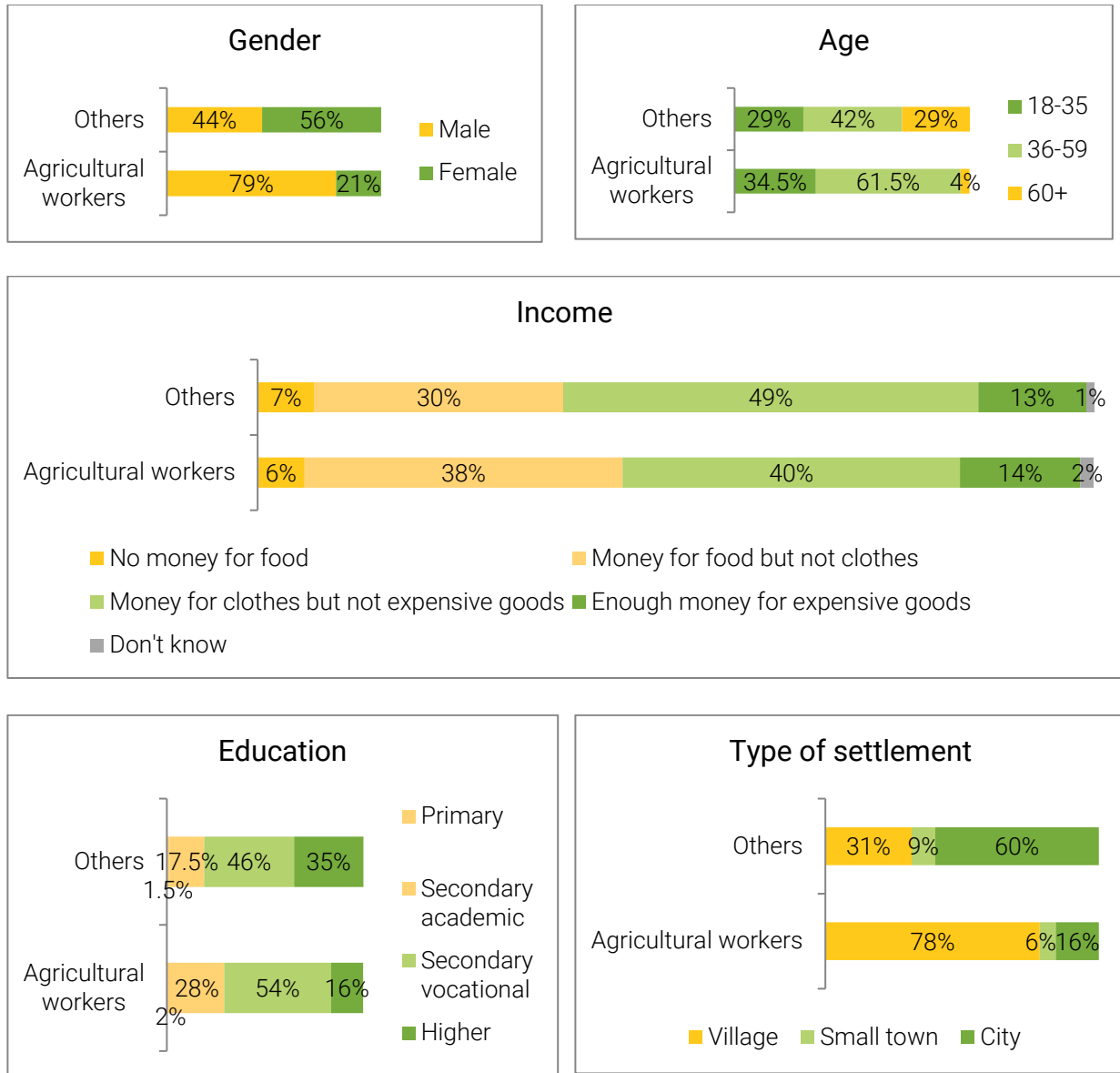
Tenants have a relatively higher income but lower education than the general population. 57% of them live in cities, 56% are men, and they also tend to be slightly younger (the average age for tenants is 45 while for non-tenants it is 47 years old).

Figure 4. Who tenants are (Tenants: N=133; Others: N=12,349)



Agricultural workers are predominantly men of working age, living in rural areas with a relatively lower education and income than the general population.

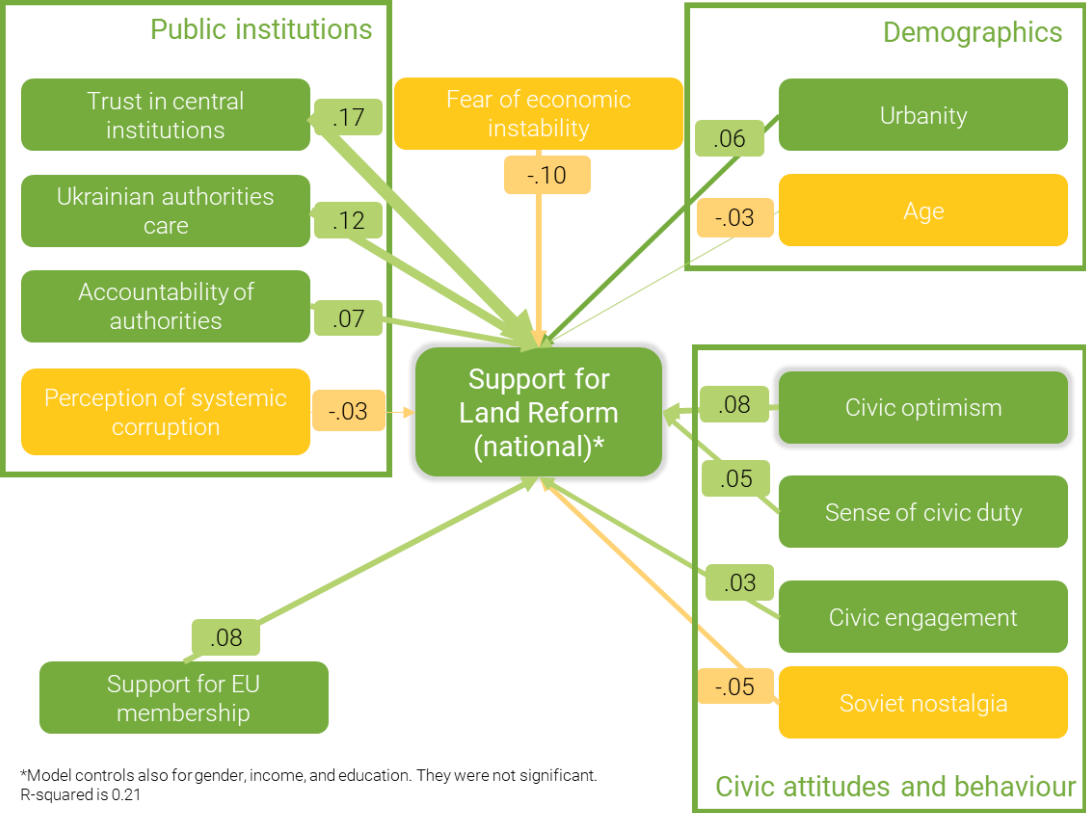
Figure 5. Who agricultural workers are (Agricultural workers: N=304; Others: N=12,178)



Why Do Ukrainians (Dis)Approve of Land Reform and What Do They Expect?

In order to investigate people’s expectations and attitudes regarding the land reform, we have applied linear regression models. They are presented in the figure 6 and 7. Beta coefficients, reported in figures, denote the degree of change in the outcome variable for every unit of change in the predictor while controlling for the influence of all other predictors in the model. It should be noted that we do not claim causal relations. Instead, we statistically test various theoretical hypotheses regarding people’s expectations and attitudes. Beta coefficients can be positive or negative. **Positive** beta coefficients indicate that for every unit of increase in the predictor variable, the outcome variable will also increase by the beta coefficient value. Conversely, **negative** beta coefficients suggest that for every unit of increase in the predictor variable, the outcome variable will decrease by the beta coefficient value. For the sake of the example, let’s take the beta coefficient between the predictor variable and the outcome variable was 0.4. Next compare two individuals that are different by one point in the predictor variable and are similar in terms of other control variables. An individual with one-point higher value of the predictor variable is expected to have approximately 0.4 higher value of the outcome variable.

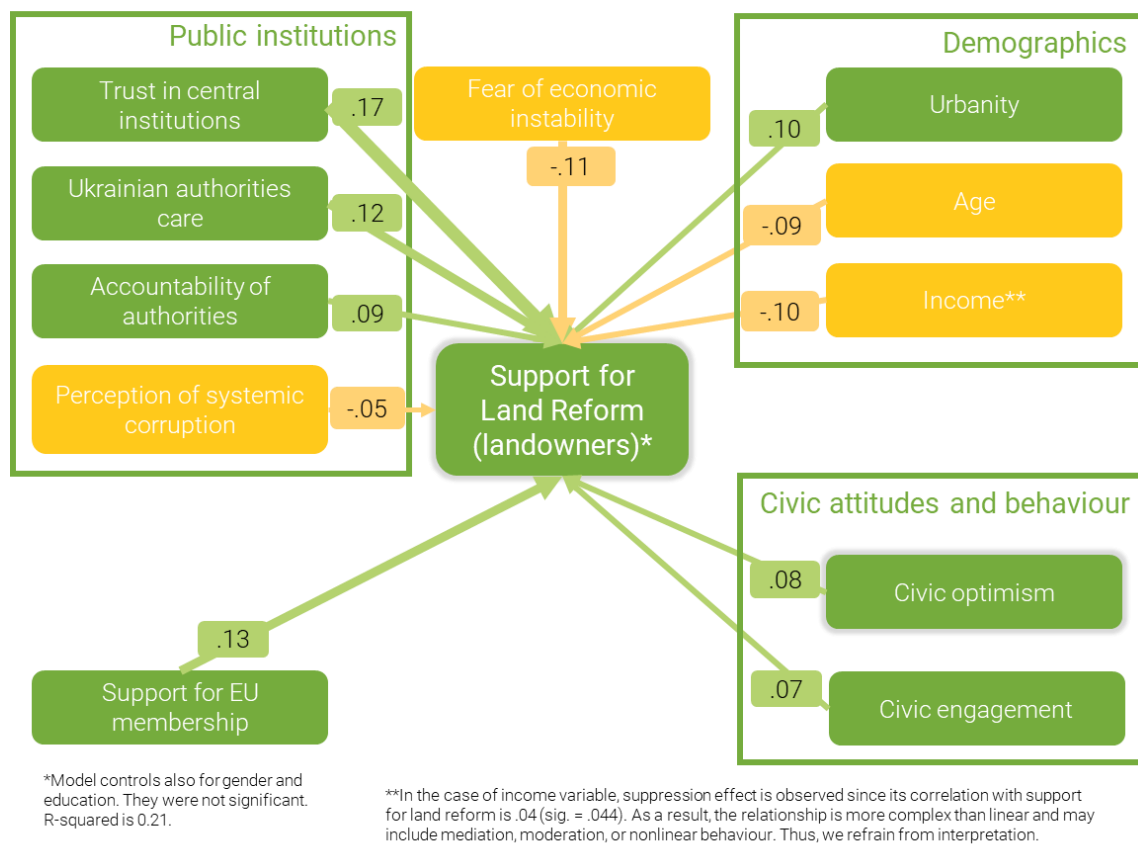
Figure 6. Drivers of support for land reform: nationwide



“Being determines consciousness”

The regression model suggests that urban residents, as well as younger people who are less likely to have socialized and lived through the USSR, tend to have higher support for land reform (see Figure 6), while those with soviet nostalgia, who are also older and more rural, have lower support. This is in line with a previous research by Tymofii Brik and Oleksii Shestakovskiy suggesting, “Socialization under the USSR influenced negative opinions about privatization [including land privatization -ed.] by older generations for many consecutive years.”²⁶ The research further finds that the age effect is weaker for western Ukraine that belonged to the Soviet Union for a shorter period of time than other regions²⁷ and for cohorts with a higher economic position.²⁸ Yet, other factors continue to play an important role.

Figure 7. Drivers of support for land reform: landowners



²⁶ Tymofii Brik and Oleksii Shestakovskiy, “Attitudes About Privatization and the Shadow of Communism: 25 Years of Anti-market Scepticism,” in *Ukraine in Transformation: From Soviet Republic to European Society*, ed. Alberto Veira-Ramos, Tetiana Liubyva, Evgenii Golovakha (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), p. 49.

²⁷ The western Ukrainian territories of Lviv, Rivne, Volyn, Ivano-Frankivks, Ternopil became part of the Soviet Union in 1939; Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina in 1940; Zakarpattia in 1945.

²⁸ Brik and Shestakovskiy, pp.49-51.

Demographic characteristics like age, type of settlement, and income are more important for landowners in their support for land reform than for the general population (see Figure 7). Thus, “being determines consciousness”²⁹ to a greater extent for this group, i.e., demographic characteristics and material conditions of life partly determine their attitudes.

Younger landowners tend to have higher support for the reform. At the same time, they have higher scores on positive civic attitudes and behaviour (civic engagement, sense of civic duty) and psychosocial assets such as leadership, growth mindset, and distress tolerance than their peers who are not landowners (see Figure 8.2). They are likely to appreciate increased discretion in what they can do with the land as well as streamlining land administration procedures including their digitalization.

Land is an asset that decreases the desire to leave locality in search of a better quality of life (migration tendency) for rural residents (see Figure 8.1). It is an important source of livelihood for them. Increasing its value and liquidity can add to the prosperity of rural landowners.

Perception of authorities is key

Having a positive perception of public institutions has the strongest effect on support for the land reform. Specifically, this block of drivers includes three indicators that reinforce support: trust in central institutions (president, MPs, government, and courts); the perception that authorities care for the needs of the citizens; and accountability. Thus, a person who trusts state institutions, perceives authorities as caring about people’s needs and accountable is more likely to support endeavours coming from these institutions. This relation can also work in opposite direction: thus, positive experience with state initiatives could enhance trust and legitimacy.

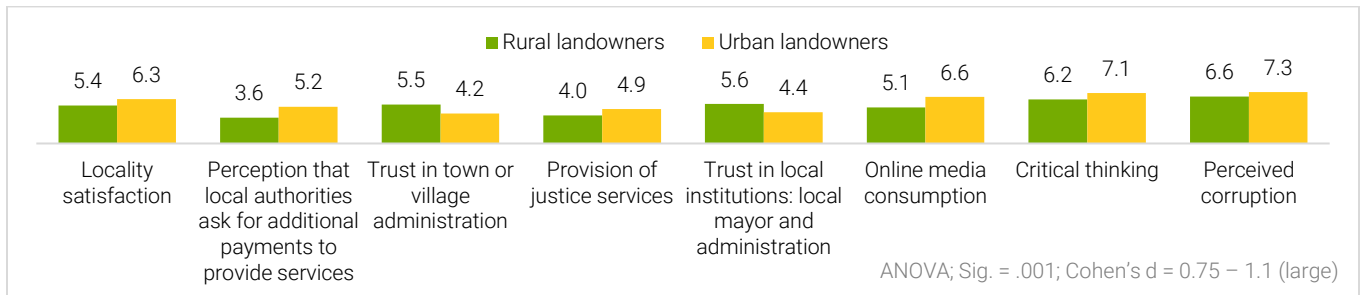
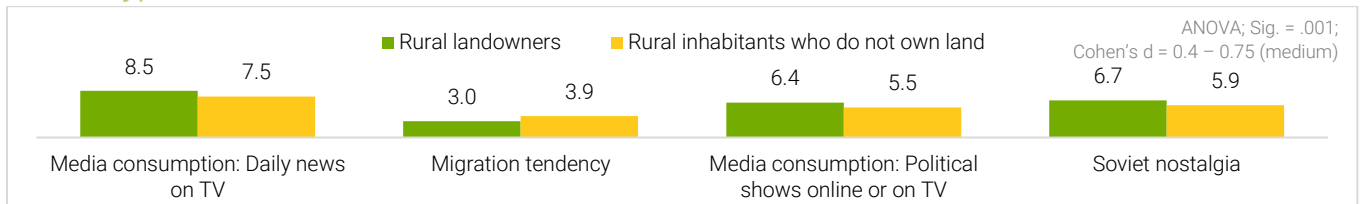
No more shadow activities

The models reveal the importance of transparency and anti-corruption in the land affairs. There is the effect of the accountability of authorities on the support for land reform (see Figure 6 and 7). At the same time, the perceived high-profile systemic corruption has a negative impact. Although it is not particularly conspicuous as a driver, the relation between perceived corruption and other reforms is something we have observed in the previous waves of SCORE analysis.

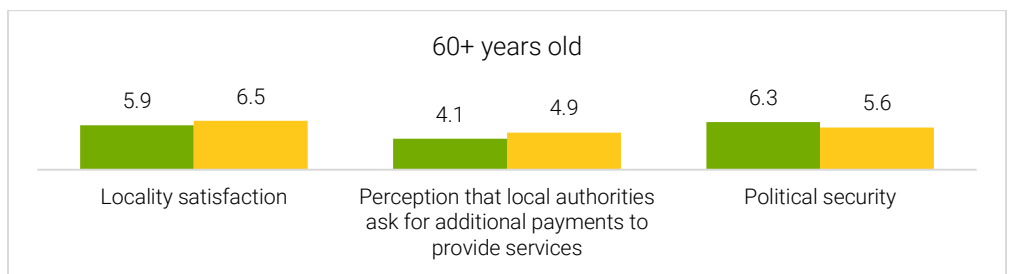
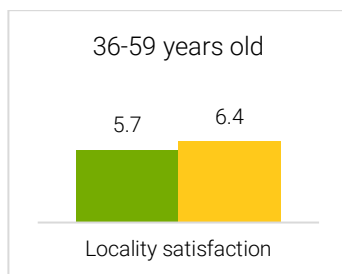
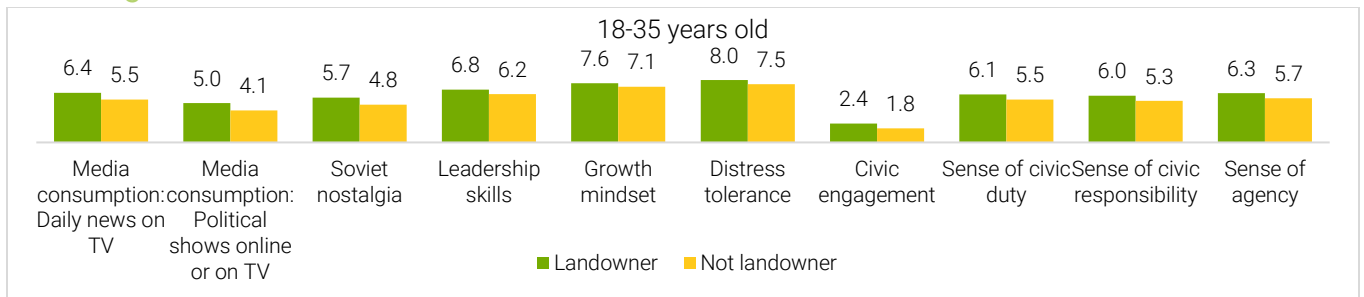
²⁹ Rakhmanov, p. 4.

Figure 8. Landowners by age, income, and type of settlement (N=12,482)

1. Type of settlement

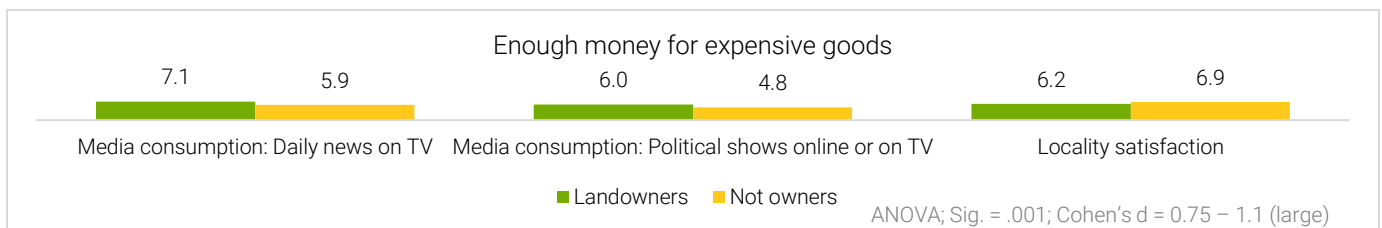


2. Age



ANOVA; Sig. = .001; Cohen's d = 0.4 – 0.75 (medium)

3. Income (Enough money for expensive goods; N=1,608)



Thus, anti-corruption should be part and parcel of any reform implementation. Transparency in land affairs and state assistance allocation to agricultural enterprises and farmers could be among the expected outcomes.

In this context, it is worth highlighting the importance of rule of law which, in fact, is one of the key entry points for effective policy implementation, also highlighted by another survey by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in May 2021.³⁰ Trust in courts and perception around whether judges and prosecutors indulge in corruption is part of SCORE indicators on trust in central institutions and perception of systemic corruption, respectively. An effective justice system should provide the potential reform beneficiaries with instruments to safeguard their rights. When focusing on rule of law instruments such as effective provision of justice, rural residents, who tend to have significantly lower satisfaction with the provision of justice services and less access to such services, should be accounted for carefully (see Figure 8.1).

Linked to the above, SCORE 2021 models also reveal that the higher one scores on civic engagement, the more they support the land reform. The strength of this effect is even more pronounced for landowners (the coefficient in the model for the full sample is .03 while it is .07 for the landowners; see Figure 6 and 7). It should be noted that the level of civic engagement is far from high: the score is 2.1 out of 10 for the general population and 2.4 for the landowners. According to some authors, landowners resort to individual and collective demonstrations, write letters to local administrations in reaction to land grabbing. They air their grievances against legislative changes which can cause harm like limitations on grain export. Collective protests against arbitrariness and lawlessness of officials are another manifestation of civic activism to protect rights, the authors write in the research on rural social movements and land conflicts.³¹ Thus, stronger protection of land rights against illegal encroachment will serve the needs of landowners.

Thus, there is a visible expectation from the state to guarantee property rights protection for landowners. Landowners are vulnerable to extortion and hostile takeovers regarding their plots. Some land users resort to underhand dealings to secure inheritable rights to use land. Others practice transfer of ownership through a will. There are even cases when farmers pay employees to apply for land plots which they then lease to those farmers. A non-transparent land cadastre potentially is one of the factors enabling these dubious developments. Therefore, a transparent and open land cadastre as a part of the National Geospatial Data Infrastructure and digital procedures may limit the space for shadow activities to some extent.

³⁰ Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, "Чи підтримують українці відкриття ринку землі" [How Ukrainian support land market].

³¹ Oane Visser and Natalya Mamonova, "Large-Scale Land Acquisitions in the Former Soviet Union. A Study of Rural Social Movements and Land Conflicts," IS Land Academy report (Revised Version), 2012, pp.29-33, pp. https://www.landgovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/LSLA_FormerSovietUnion.pdf.

Economic development is expected

Fear of economic instability negatively affects support for land reform (see Figure 6 and 7). This suggests that instability concerns make people resistant to change. Therefore, economic development contributing to economic stability can boost the support for the new policy. It is rather a mid- or long-term goal since economic prosperity is a hard task to achieve. There are some initiatives that could contribute to this cause: The survey by Rating group reveals that respondents see employment in rural areas, investments, loans to small farmers, fair land price as potential benefits from the reform.³² These endeavours can contribute to the economic development of regions and the country.

SCORE data show that economic dividends are likely to be particularly appreciated by landowners of 36+ years old, those with a higher income, and people from rural areas as they are less satisfied with their locality than their peers without land plots (see Figure 8).

Besides, state support and loan guarantee funds are likely to be slightly more appreciated by those who cultivate land themselves. The survey by Rating group shows that landowners who lease their plots are more likely to say that land sale introduction has no advantages (40%) compared to those who cultivate the land themselves (35%).³³ In addition, loans to farmers can potentially contribute to transparency and, thus, development since farmers operating in shadow will have to formalize their tenure and lease to receive loans.

It is more personal for landowners

Respondents who believe that ordinary people can change things in their communities and that they have responsibility for the future of Ukraine (sense of civic duty) are inclined to have higher support for land reform (see Figure 6). That handful of supporters may see the reform as contributing to common good of the entire country. They are less likely to search for personal benefit. For landowners, however, the sense of civic duty does not influence their attitudes (see Figure 7). Thus, their support for the reform is likely to be less motivated by collective benefits. The reform is more personal for landowners than for the general population which is natural. Besides, individual expectations usually have shorter time frames than collective goals. Given this personal link and the civic optimism of the landowners supporting the reform – though the number of them is meagre, - they can easily get disillusioned without some immediate visible results. These can include some economic benefits or transparency in land affairs, as elaborated in the sections above. Otherwise, the supportive landowners may become direct spoilers.

³² Rating group, “Ставлення українці до запровадження продажу землі” [Attitudes of Ukrainians to land market], survey conducted on September 28- October 1, 2019, http://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/otnoshenie_ukraincev_k_vnedreniyu_prodazhi_zemli.html.

³³ Ibid.

Decentralization is still out of sight

Unlike trust in central institutions, trust in local authorities does not influence support for land reform neither for landowners nor for the general population (see Figure 6 and 7). This might be related to the fact that the legislative package of the reform is elaborated by the government and the parliament. At the same time, local authorities are part of the implementation process. The absence of the link between trust in local authorities and support for land reform is counterintuitive. One possible explanation could be that both the public expectations from local authorities in the effective delivery of the reform and their awareness regarding the decentralization aspect of the land reform (e.g., spatial planning conducted by *hromadas* (communities), receiving state-owned land outside of settlements) are lower. As trust in local authorities is higher than trust in central authorities in general, clear communication on the decentralization aspect and local authorities' role in the implementation of the reforms could encourage support among potential beneficiaries by establishing a positive link between these two indicators. In addition, this link may be established in the course of the reform implementation on the local level in the case of success. The decentralization aspect of the land reform would be particularly welcomed by rural landowners who have a higher trust in local self-governments, their heads, and perceive local authorities as less corrupt when compared to the urban landowners (see Figure 8.1). Older landowners (60+) may appreciate it as well since they see local authorities as less corrupt (see Figure 8.2). Thus, the emphasis on local authorities and their connection to the reforms need to be strengthened.

It is also about land management

There is no satisfaction with the provision of public services in the models which means service delivery does not have an influence on support for land reform. One possible explanation for its absence is that people do not link the reform to deregulation and streamlining administrative procedures (see Figure 6 and 7). Ideally, there should be such a link as that is what we expect from accountable legitimate governance institutions that represent the common good. Deregulation of land management and potential digitalization will reduce red tape and streamline mandatory procedures. Streamlining procedures for state support and the creation of an agrarian register can provide new opportunities for small farmers who seldom receive state support because of the red tape, among other things.³⁴ Deregulation and digitalization can also contribute to transparency and decrease the perception of bribery and petty corruption among public officials.³⁵ As such, clear

³⁴ AgroPolit, "Закон про держпідтримку та аграрний реєстр: які зміни запровадив парламент" [State support law and agrarian register: what parliament changed], December 1, 2020, <https://agropolit.com/spetsproekty/822-zakon-pro-derjpidtrimku-ta-agrarniy-reyestr-yaki-zmini-zaprovadiv-parlament>.

³⁵ Mihály Fazekas, "Red Tape, Bribery and Government Favouritism: Evidence From Europe," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 68 (2017): p. 415, doi: 10.1007/s10611-017-9694-2.

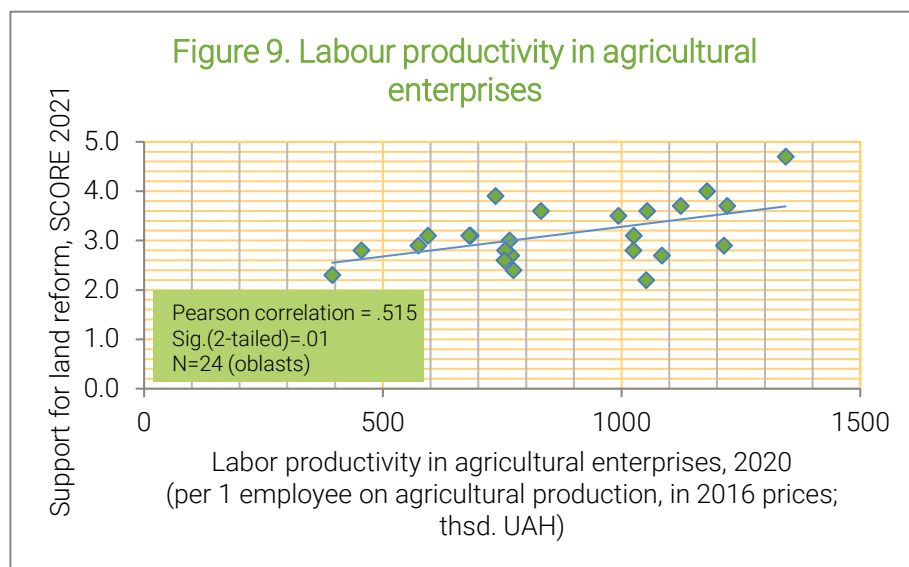
communication of these potential dividends could help improve support for land reform among landowners since they would be able to effectively enjoy these potential opportunities due to the reform.

Other features

People who tend to support Ukraine's EU membership are more likely to support land reform. This is likely to be a broad stroke support for many reforms as mechanisms that would facilitate the accession process but its influence on support for land reform is stronger for landowners than the general population. Those who support the land reform also tend to have lower Soviet nostalgia which broadly refers to a romantic longing for the Soviet past (see Figure 6) and which is in line with the finding above with regards to EU orientation but as well as the findings with regards to age (i.e., younger people are more likely to support the land reform, more likely to support EU membership, and less likely to have Soviet nostalgia). Notably, however, while Soviet nostalgia reduces support for land reform for the general population, this relationship is absent among landowners (see Figure 7).

Agricultural Enterprises

Oblasts with higher support for land reform have higher labour productivity in agricultural enterprises (see Figure 9; Pearson correlation = .52, $p = .01$).³⁶ Yet, support for land reform in an oblast is not associated neither with the number of bigger agricultural enterprises and smaller farms in that oblast nor with the total size of agricultural land the enterprises and



farms have in that oblast. Thus, this support is higher not because there are bigger enterprises or they possess a higher share of agricultural land in the oblast but particularly relates to productivity, which may be linked to efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural

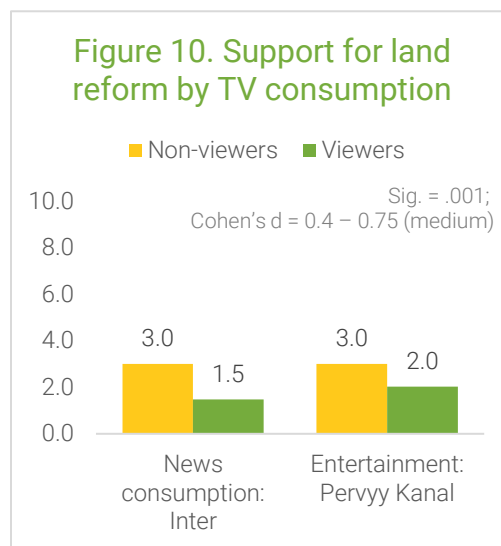
³⁶ The state statistics on labor productivity in agricultural enterprises in 2020 (per 1 employee on agricultural production, in 2016 prices; thsd. UAH) is correlated with the mean score on support for land reforms of 2021 SCORE. Oblast is the unit of analysis in this case.

crops and processes. This calls for further investigation as interventions that increase labour productivity could in turn cultivate support for land reform.

Media Consumption

There are two ways how people learn about things that matter to them. One is their own experience which is not the case for land reform because of its very recent launch. The other one is information consumption.³⁷

We have not found a significant difference in attitudes towards the reform among consumers and non-consumers of various TV channels and social media with two exceptions: *Inter* and *Channel One*. People who get their information about current affairs on Ukrainian *Inter* and those who watch Russian *Channel One* (*Pervyy Kanal*) for entertainment (e.g., soap operas, comedy, competitions)³⁸ are less likely to support land reform (see Figure 10). This is not necessarily about the content of these TV channels, though we do not exclude this possibility (a further investigation is required to confirm or confute the hypothesis). Rather people who are profound critics of Ukrainian authorities are more likely to be viewers of these TV channels and strong critics of reforms.³⁹ This finding also tells us that there is room to establish a positive relationship between information consumption and land reform via a clear and transparent media communication strategy on its dividends.



Communication strategies on mainstream media should particularly target rural and older landowners because a. landowners are more likely to be rural (61%) in general; b. rural landowners are less likely to support the land reform (Figure 7); and c. rural landowners, including younger landowners, consume daily news on TV and political talk shows more frequently than non-landowners. As mentioned, communication should focus not persuading people on the benefits of reform but rather on explaining its components and dividends by providing clear, digestible, and honest information evaluation.

³⁷ Vitaliia Yaremko, Iryna Lukomska, and Denys Nizalov, "What Political Parties Say about the Land Reform – and What the Voters Hear," Kyiv School of Economics, July 31, 2017, <http://www.kse.org.ua/en/research-policy/land/analytical/?newsid=2082>.

³⁸ 22% of the sample is viewers of *Inter* to get information about current affairs while only 1% watches *Pervyy Kanal* for entertainment. Every fourth (24%) viewer of *Pervyy Kanal* for entertainment watches also *Inter* for news.

³⁹ The score for Ukrainian authorities care among viewers of *Inter* for news is 2.2 while it is 2.7 among non-viewers; it is 1.7 among viewers of *Pervyy Kanal* for entertainment and 2.6 among non-viewers.

Key Findings and Recommendations

The issue of land reform is actively present in public discourse and hardly supported by Ukrainians. This paper focuses on understanding drivers of (dis)approval of land reform and public expectations around it to help facilitate its successful implementation. To that end, this final section summarizes the key findings:

1. Demographic characteristics are more important for landowners than for the general population. The focus should be placed on the needs of rural (the score on support for land reform is 2.8) and older (2.7) owners who express lesser support than urban (3.2) and younger (3.8) landowners and are more sizeable groups.
2. Younger landowners appear to seek more discretion with the management of their land plots as well as streamlined and digitalized procedures.
3. Meanwhile, the handful of landowners who support the reform could easily feel disillusioned easily and turn sceptical unless dividends are communicated and clearly and experienced concretely.
4. Demographic characteristics are not the main factors influencing support for land reform, though. The perception of authorities in general, but central authorities in particular, heavily influences the attitudes. Strengthening the relationship between citizens and state institutions (both trust and dialogue) is important to facilitate the successful implementation of reforms including but not limited to the land reform.
5. Transparency and anti-corruption are other important pieces in the equation. The new policy should guarantee the protection of property rights for landowners, especially from land grabbing or other shadow operations. An open land cadastre and an effective independent justice system would contribute to this cause.
6. Economic development can further boost support for land reform. Loans and state support, as well as land liquidity, have the potential to revive rural areas. Deregulation and digitalization can ease access of small farmers to these instruments who often underutilize these opportunities due to red tape and corruption. At the same time, the new reality potentially created in the course of land policy change could drive innovation and modernization both for agricultural enterprises which would increase their productivity and create a multiplier effect on support for land reform.
7. Highlighting the decentralization dimension of the land reform and how it empowers *hromadas* can be particularly welcomed by rural and older landowners and drive support via leveraging higher trust in local authorities. The deregulation and decentralization aspects of land reform are not well associated with the attitudes about it as well and, as such, require further communication.
8. The consumption of media outlets is not related to the attitudes towards the reform except for two TV channels. Only viewers of Ukrainian *Inter* for news and Russian *Pervyy Kanal* for entertainment tend to have significantly lower support for land

reform. At the same time, traditional media channels like TV and political talk shows are more effective in reaching rural landowners, thus, there is room to establish a positive link via clear, digestible, and honest communication messages.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations can be proposed:

1. Focus on the needs of rural and older landowners who are the most sceptical and sizeable groups. At the same time, approach younger landowners with new opportunities regarding land plot management and digitalized procedures.
2. Ensure immediate dividends for landowners; communicate with them regarding opportunities and potential pitfalls they should avoid.
3. Invest in building trust between authorities and citizens to enhance legitimacy of endeavours launched and implemented by the authorities.
4. Guarantee the protection of land property rights for landowners; invest in effective justice system.
5. The reform is expected to contribute to economic development.
6. Build a connection between land reform and its aspects beyond the land market like decentralization and deregulation aspects. Focus on traditional media channels to reach the target audience in terms of communication.

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Glossary

Indicator	Definition
Accountability of authorities	The degree to which one feels that authorities representatives are and can be held accountable.
Civic engagement	The degree to which one participates in formal and informal civic, social and political matters such as voting in elections, attending events organized by local authorities, signing petitions, participating in public demonstrations, etc.
Civic optimism	The degree to which one believes that the present generation is in a better position than the past and that the future generation will be in a better position compared to the current one.
Critical thinking	The ability to critically engage with information by corroborating, questioning and identifying potential biases.
Distress tolerance	The ability to cope with challenging life events and unpleasant feelings constructively.
Fear of economic instability	The degree to which one feels fears that Ukraine will face economic downturn and crisis in the near future.
Growth mindset	The belief that abilities, intellect and talents can be developed through dedication and hard work, rather than being inborn.
Leadership skills	The ability to understand the strengths of group members and motivate them to work together towards achieving a common goal.
Locality satisfaction	The degree to which a person is satisfied with their place of residence (in terms of jobs, leisure activities and raising children).
Media consumption: Daily news on TV	The degree to which one keeps up with current affairs primarily from daily news on TV.
Media consumption: Political shows online or on TV	The degree to which one keeps up with current affairs primarily from political shows online or on TV.
Migration tendency	The degree to which one is inclined to leave one's region in search for more or better opportunities elsewhere.
Online media consumption	The degree to which one uses online media sources of information such as social media to keep up with current affairs.
Perception of systemic corruption	Perceived level of corruption as measured by the frequency of informal payments towards Parliamentarians, Judges, and local authority workers.
Political security	The degree to which one feels comfortable expressing their political views both collectively and individually without fearing consequences.

Provision of public services	The degree to which a person is satisfied with the provision of public services, such as education, healthcare and social welfare payments.
Sense of civic duty	The degree to which one feels responsible for the future and well-being of their society and country.
Soviet nostalgia	The degree to which one regrets the collapse of the Soviet Union and believes that life was better before 1991.
Support for EU membership	The level of support for Ukraine to become a member of the EU.
Support for land reform	The degree to which one believes that land reform will improve the quality of life in their country, will have a positive impact on landowners in their locality, and can be implemented.
Traditional media consumption	The degree to which one uses traditional media sources of information such as radio, TV and newspapers to keep up with current affairs.
Trust in central institutions	The combined level of trust in national institutions such as the President, Parliament, Cabinet of Ministers and courts.
Trust in local institutions	The combined level of trust in local administrations and village or town heads.
Ukrainian authorities care	The degree to which one feels that Ukrainian authorities represent their concerns and views, equally care about all parts of Ukraine and are ready to listen.