

<https://doi.org/10.15407/socium2020.02.172>
UDC 316.654:355.1-055.2(477)

Kvit A.S., independent gender expert, MA in Global Political Economy, Independent gender expert, Women Peace and Security consultant, email: ann.kvit@gmail.com,
Martsenyuk T.O., PhD. in Sociology, Associate Professor of Sociology, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, 2, Skovorody Str., Kyiv, 04070, Ukraine, email: t.martsenyuk@ukma.edu.ua, ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4785-5618>, Scopus Author ID: 55190077900, Web of Science ResearcherID: W-6844-2019

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ATO/JFO VETERANS AND THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN UKRAINE

This paper analyses attitudes towards veterans among the adult population of Ukraine, its support for veterans in politics, trust to veterans, and expectations from them. It also identifies information sources used by the population to form their opinion about veterans. The paper is based on the results of the all-Ukrainian public survey conducted in May-June 2019¹.

Keywords: veterans, Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO), Joint Forces Operation (JFO), political activism, reintegration, attitude, trust.

Kvit A.S., магістр з глобальної політекономії, незалежний гендерний експерт, консультант з питань “Жінки, мир, безпека”, email: ann.kvit@gmail.com,
Марценюк Т.О., канд. соціол. наук, доцент кафедри соціології Національного університету “Києво-Могилянська академія”, вул. Сковороди, 2, Київ, 04070, Україна, email: t.martsenyuk@ukma.edu.ua, ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4785-5618>, Scopus Author ID: 55190077900, Web of Science ResearcherID: W-6844-2019

СТАВЛЕННЯ ДО ВЕТЕРАНІВ АТО/ООС ТА ЇХНЬОЇ ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ СЕРЕД УКРАЇНСЬКОГО СУСПІЛЬСТВА

Проаналізовано ставлення дорослого населення України до ветеранів, підтримку політичної діяльності ветеранів та очікування від них. Визначено основні джерела інформації, які використовує населення для формування думки про ветеранів АТО/ООС в Україні. Матеріал базується на результатах всеукраїнського опитування, проведеного у травні – червні 2019 р.

Ключові слова: ветерани, антитерористична операція (АТО), операція Об'єднаних сил (ООС), політична діяльність, реінтеграція, ставлення, довіра.

Over 370 000 Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO)/Joint Forces Operation (JFO) veterans have been registered² since the beginning of the war in Eastern Ukraine in 2014. Coming back from war, veterans face numerous challenges in reintegration into the peaceful life [1; 2; 3]. Among factors supportive of the reintegration, former ATO/JFO combatants name employment. Namely, a new job, which would reflect their interests and values, and make a positive social impact [4; 5].

¹ Empirical data presented in this paper was collected in the framework of the research “Engagement of Veterans in Public and Political Life: From War to Personal Victories (Sociological Research)” conducted by NGO Studena and supported by The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2019.

² As of April 30, 2018. Data provided by the Ministry of Ukraine for Veteran Affairs as of July 01, 2019.

Politics, public service, and civic activism are among the areas of veterans' post-war activity in Ukraine. Since the beginning of the war in Eastern Ukraine, ATO/JFO veterans gradually engage in the national and local level politics [4]. There are opinions that veterans' combat experience and motivation for change in the society are supportive factors for their engagement in political activism. This, subsequently, could result in societal change and veterans' reintegration into peaceful life [6; 7]. A somewhat permanent demand for "new faces" in Ukrainian politics among the population as well as demand to end the war in the East of Ukraine could also serve as favorable factors for the political activity of ATO/JFO veterans.

On the other hand, the marginalization and glorification of veterans in Ukrainian media, as well as prosecution of veterans, activated since autumn 2019, might affect the image of veterans and their chances in politics along with their reintegration chances in general, forming a hostile environment around them. Thus, despite a demand for new politicians, effective approaches towards ending the war in Eastern Ukraine, and the necessity for veterans' reintegration into civilian life, how Ukrainian society is disposed towards veterans and towards veterans in politics in particular? Are those who fought for Ukraine coming back into the welcoming society, and is their political participation welcomed?

This paper introduces the results of the all-Ukrainian public survey conducted in May-June 2019. It explores public attitudes towards veterans in Ukraine, towards their political participation and expectations from veterans' in politics. Reviewing public opinion about women and men veterans, the paper also looks at the roots of the discussed opinion patterns examining primary information sources used by the population to form their opinion about veterans. All analyzed data are disaggregated by sex, age groups, macro-regions, and urban/rural location. Knowing the attitudes towards veterans would help adjust reintegration programs for veterans implemented by the government, for shaping the media image of ATO/JFO veterans and for further investigations of media manipulations with the ATO/JFO veterans' image and its consequences, analysis of veterans' reintegration mechanisms, the efficiency of the reintegration programs, etc.

The paper is structured in the following way: the introductory section is followed by the literature review and description of the empirical findings. The paper concludes with an overview of the key findings and suggestions for further research.

The situation with ATO/JFO veterans in Ukraine: previous studies. Starting from 2014, the number of veterans is continuously increasing in Ukraine, whereas veterans' reintegration process is not that prompt. Research results show that veterans face numerous difficulties in reintegration into peaceful life related to the access to services and their quality, discrimination, and efficiency of reintegration efforts in general. A survey by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) [8] reveals that not all services guaranteed to veterans by the state are available to them. Veterans lack access to priority housing, long-term educational loans, free legal services, etc. Moreover, half of them experienced discrimination or biased treatment at least once; 1/3 of veterans would like to receive at least one type of psychosocial support. Veterans also mention they are unlikely to return to their previous places of work due to a change in their mindset after serving.

The study *Invisible Battalion 2.0: Women Veterans Returning to Peaceful Life* [4] highlights the difficulties and needs women veterans face in a peaceful life. Among them are high quality medical and social services, decent employment, respectful attitude from the society, official recognition of combatant status. It also reveals that women-ex-combatants face multiple discrimination (at least by gender and by combatant status) in Ukrainian society at the labor market, in health care and social protection institutions, and everyday life.

Meanwhile, veterans experience discrimination in daily interaction with the civil population; the adult population of Ukraine seems to have somewhat positive general attitudes towards veterans. Sociological Group Rating has been monitoring trust towards veterans in Ukrainian society. According to the results of their survey, 67% of the population trusted veterans in October 2019, which was higher than the trust to the Ukrainian army and the President [9]. Results of the *Info Sapiens Omnibus*, conducted in December 2019, showed that 71% of the adult population of Ukraine think that ATO/JFO veterans are heroes and patriots, more than 50% think veterans are more socially active than the rest of the population. At the same time, 57% of respondents are cautious about veterans believing that posttraumatic stress disorder of ex-combatants might increase violence [10].

Besides the assessment of veterans' perception of reintegration services and needs, expert legal analyses of available reintegration programs have also been conducted in Ukraine, including a study on meeting the needs of veterans at the national and local levels [11], review of services and programs for veterans provided by the government and civil society at the national and local level [12], analysis of budgeting support programs for veterans and their families [13].

Available research reveals that one of the common needs of veterans associated with their successful reintegration into peaceful life is decent employment, which is often related to financial sustainability, self-realization, and meaningful contribution to the society's development [4]. Efforts are put into improving veterans' employment by the government [14], civil society, and international organizations [15; 16; 17]. Many available programs focus on veteran's entrepreneurial empowerment in Ukraine.

Politics and civil service could be considered as other sectors, where veterans could realize themselves. For example, in the USA, veterans are constantly present in public office [18]. The research shows that the US veterans' military experience prepared them for civilian work [19]. There is also an opinion that not only veterans but the whole society would benefit from veterans' engagement in politics. Veterans should be present in the government, because "who but people who know the real price of life can fight for it in the government" [7]. This approach to veterans' reintegration is adopted by some Ukrainian NGOs as well. For example, in 2017–2018, the project "For Veterans in Power" by NGO *Studena* [20] trained dozens of veterans for work in public service and executive government. Veterans also join national-level politics. Six veterans are deputies (MPs) at *Verkhovna Rada* of the 9th convocation [21]. 2 ATO veterans are deputy-ministers at the Ministry of Veteran Affairs. Veterans also demonstrate civil activity. In 2019 there have been 55 all-Ukrainian organizations of ATO veterans [22].

However, not much is known about veterans in politics and public service in Ukraine: about their activity, perspectives, and public attitudes towards this activity. **This article aims** to address this gap and provide information about the attitudes of Ukrainian society towards veterans, especially in the sphere of politics. It also aims to analyze if generally, positive attitudes towards veterans are reflected in more practical aspects of daily life, such as acceptance and support of their political activity and expectations towards veterans. To better understand the origin and nature of public attitudes towards veterans, key information sources forming public opinion about veterans in the country are also considered in this publication.

The methodology of a public opinion survey. The research is based on the results of the all-Ukrainian survey. The attitudes towards veterans were collected during the survey “Opinions and Views of the Population of Ukraine” (Omnibus) conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) from May 24 till June 07, 2019. The study included 2021 interviews with respondents residing in 110 settlements of Ukraine; among them, 719 respondents were interviewed in the rural area. The results obtained can be analyzed by sex, age groups (6 age groups in this case), macro-regions (West, Centre, South, East), settlement type (urban and rural), and education level.

Stratified four-stage sample random at each stage was used in the survey. The sample is representative of the adult population (including respondents’ sex, age, and residence) permanently residing in the territory of Ukraine, not in military service, imprisoned or held in medical institutions (hospitals or medical boarding facilities). First, the Ukrainian population was stratified by regions (24 oblasts and the City of Kyiv), then the population of each region was additionally stratified by urban (cities and urban-type settlements) and rural population (except for the City of Kyiv where the population is all urban). In Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts, the survey was held only in the territories controlled by the Ukrainian government. The population of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea was not covered by the poll.

The four macroregions analyzed in this research include the following oblasts:

– West: Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi and Chernivtsi.

– Centre: City of Kyiv, Kyiv Oblast, Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Kirovograd, Poltava, Sumy and Cherkasy.

– South: Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolayiv, Odesa, and Kherson.

– East: Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv.

The respondents were asked five questions about their attitude towards veterans:

1. What is your attitude towards men and women veterans of ATO/JFO?

2. Should ATO/JFO veterans be involved in politics?

3. Should ATO/JFO veterans engage in politics in Ukraine be trusted?

4. How would the engagement of veterans in the social and political life affect those spheres?

5. What are the primary sources of information you formed your attitude towards ATO/JFO veterans on?

Z-test with Bonferroni correction was used for the data analysis. Results marked with a star show columns where the proportion of answers is significantly different from the percentage of responses to the same question in other columns, indicating within-group differences in answers to each item.

Results of public opinion survey. Results of the public opinion survey demonstrate that the adult population of Ukraine has positive attitudes towards ATO/JFO veterans. However, when it comes to more practical aspects of life and its possible impact on respondents, e.g., political activity of veterans and its outcomes for the society, the general support towards veterans tends to change.

Attitudes towards ATO/JFO veterans. In total, 62,4% of respondents admitted positive attitudes towards ATO/JFO veterans, 16,3% noted they were neutral, and only 9% were negative (see Table 1). Men tend to have more positive attitudes towards veterans, and they are more defined with their answers. It could be explained by the fact that men are more involved in ATO/JFO [23, p. 61]. Women tend to be more indecisive about their attitudes towards veterans than men. No significant differences between the age groups of respondents have been detected.

Table 1

What is your attitude towards men and women veterans of ATO/JFO? %

| Answers | All | Women | Men |
|-------------------------------|------|-------|-------|
| Absolutely positive | 36,2 | 34,2 | 38,7* |
| Rather positive than negative | 26,2 | 26,6 | 25,7 |
| Neutral | 16,3 | 17,6 | 14,8 |
| Rather negative than positive | 5,1 | 4,5 | 5,8 |
| Absolutely negative | 3,9 | 3,7 | 4,1 |
| Hard to say | 9,3 | 10,8* | 7,6 |
| Refused to answer | 2,9 | 2,6 | 3,3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

The population of the Western region has the most positive attitude towards veterans compared to the other regions (see Table 2). In more eastern regions, the attitudes towards veterans are slightly less positive. For example, one-third of the Eastern Ukraine residents have a neutral attitude towards veterans. The rural population is more favorable towards ATO veterans than the urban population, with 72,1% of people having absolutely positive and somewhat positive than negative attitudes.

Involvement of veterans into politics. As seen in Table 3, 42,3% of respondents believe that the ATO/JFO veterans should be involved in politics. Opinions of women and men are not much different statistically. 19,2% of respondents think veterans should be involved in national and local level politics, and only 6,8% suggest that veterans should be involved only in local-level politics. 30,7% of respondents spoke against veterans in politics. This could be related to the mentioned earlier caution to possible higher risks of violent behaviour among veterans, discovered by the Info Sapiens survey [10]. More research on negative attitudes

towards veterans in politics is required. There is also a large share of those who could not give a definite answer – almost a quarter of respondents. This may mean a lack of public discussion on the role of veterans in politics and the lack of positive role models of veterans in politics.

Table 2

What is your attitude towards men and women veterans of ATO/JFO?
(by geographic location and type of settlement), %

| Answers | All | Macroregions | | | | Urban population | Rural population |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------|--------|-------|-------|------------------|------------------|
| | | West | Centre | South | East | | |
| Absolutely positive | 36,2 | 56,0* | 37,6* | 27,4* | 10,6 | 34,3 | 40,3* |
| Rather positive than negative | 26,2 | 27,3* | 28,9* | 27,7* | 14,6 | 23,4 | 31,8* |
| Neutral | 16,3 | 9,3 | 9,5 | 23,6* | 34,0* | 17,6* | 13,9 |
| Rather negative than positive | 5,1 | 0,8 | 5,0* | 7,4* | 9,4* | 6,6* | 2,1 |
| Absolutely negative | 3,9 | 0,8 | 3,7* | 3,8* | 10,6* | 5,0* | 1,7 |
| Hard to say | 9,3 | 3,3 | 11,5* | 8,1* | 17,9* | 10,2* | 7,4 |
| Refused to answer | 2,9 | 2,5 | 3,9 | 2,1 | 2,9 | 3,0 | 2,9 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

Table 3

Should ATO/JFO veterans be involved in politics? %

| Answers (sorted by popularity among all) | All | Women | Men |
|---|------|-------|------|
| No, they should not | 30,7 | 30,0 | 31,4 |
| Yes, in politics both at the state and local levels | 19,2 | 18,7 | 19,7 |
| Yes, in particular, in state-level politics | 16,3 | 15,1 | 17,8 |
| Yes, local-level politics | 6,8 | 6,4 | 7,4 |
| Hard to say | 24,9 | 27,5 | 21,8 |
| Refused to answer | 2,1 | 2,3* | 1,9 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

As for the attitude towards veterans in politics among the population of different age groups (Table 4), the adult population of 30–69 years old tend to support the idea of veterans in politics at both state and local levels, whereas support rates among youth (18 and 29) are lower (app. 20% vs. 11%, respectively). Instead, the youngest respondents mostly were not certain about their opinion (31,1%) or refused to answer at all (4,8%).

The survey showed that public opinion regarding the engagement of veterans in politics also differs by four macroregions of Ukraine (Table 5). In particular, Western and Central regions are more supportive of veterans in politics at various levels (73,3% and 48,3% in total, respectively). In contrast, more respondents from Southern and Eastern regions believe that veterans should not engage in politics – 38,8% vs. 52,9% of respondents, respectively.

About half of respondents from Eastern Ukraine are against ATO/JFO veterans in politics, which can be related to their personal experience of war, witnessing military actions, bearing social and economic consequences of war and attitude to military personnel and military actions in general.

Table 4

Should ATO/JFO veterans be involved in politics? (by age groups), %

| Answers (sorted by popularity among all) | All | 18-29 years old | 30-39 years old | 40-49 years old | 50-59 years old | 60-69 years old | 70+ years old |
|---|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| No, they should not | 30,7 | 35,3 | 32,7 | 30,3 | 30,0 | 26,0 | 27,8 |
| Yes, in politics both at the state and local levels | 19,2 | 11,2 | 20,4* | 19,8* | 23,3* | 22,0* | 18,8 |
| Yes, in particular, in state-level politics | 16,3 | 11,4 | 18,4 | 13,3 | 16,9 | 20,1 | 19,1 |
| Yes, local-level politics | 6,8 | 6,3 | 5,6 | 9,0 | 6,4 | 8,5 | 5,5 |
| Hard to say | 24,9 | 31,1* | 22,1 | 25,6 | 21,1 | 22,9 | 26,7 |
| Refused to answer | 2,1 | 4,8* | 0,8 | 2,1 | 2,4 | 0,5 | 2,1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

Table 5

**Should ATO/JFO veterans be involved in politics?
(by geographic location and type of settlement), %**

| Answers | All | Macroregions | | | | Urban population | Rural population |
|---|------|--------------|--------|-------|-------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | West | Centre | South | East | | |
| No, they should not | 30,7 | 18,3 | 25,5* | 38,8* | 52,9* | 34,9* | 22,2 |
| Yes, in politics both at the state and local levels | 19,2 | 21,3* | 23,8* | 15,5 | 10,1 | 17,3 | 23,0* |
| Yes, in particular, in state-level politics | 16,3 | 26,4* | 14,0 | 13,4 | 7,9 | 15,5 | 18,1 |
| Yes, local-level politics | 6,8 | 7,3* | 10,5* | 4,1 | 1,8 | 6,5 | 7,6 |
| Hard to say | 24,9 | 24,6 | 23,4 | 26,7 | 26,0 | 24,3 | 26,1 |
| Refused to answer | 2,1 | 2,1 | 2,9 | 1,6 | 1,3 | 1,7 | 3,0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

There is also a difference in urban and rural population opinion on veterans in politics. The urban population is about 1,5 times more likely not to support the idea of involving veterans in politics than the rural population. The rural population is more open to veterans in state and local politics.

As seen in Table 6, almost half of the respondents (44,4%) believe that ATO/JFO veterans involved in politics in Ukraine are credible. In terms of gender-based specifics, men tend to trust veterans in politics more (46,7%) than women do (42,5%). This tendency is similar to the gender division of attitudes towards veterans – men tend to have more positive

attitudes towards veterans than women. Almost one-third of women do not have an opinion regarding trust to veterans engaged in politics.

Table 6

What is your attitude to the statement: ATO/JFO veterans engaged in politics in Ukraine should be trusted? %

| Answers | All | Women | Men |
|-------------------|------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 17,4 | 15,0 | 20,3* |
| Somewhat agree | 27,0 | 27,5 | 26,4 |
| Somewhat disagree | 10,4 | 10,7 | 10,0 |
| Strongly disagree | 15,4 | 14,5 | 16,6 |
| Hard to say | 27,1 | 29,2* | 24,6 |
| Refused to answer | 2,6 | 3,2 | 2,0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

In terms of age groups (Table 7), respondents aged 30–39 trust veterans in politics the most compared to other age groups (21,6%). Instead, those aged 40–49 more often strongly disagree with the statement that ATO/JFO veterans engaged in politics should be trusted (18,9%). Young people aged 18–29 refused to answer this question more often than other age groups (4,7%). At least 1/4 of respondents in each age group could not make their minds about the statement.

Table 7

What is your attitude to the statement: ATO/JFO veterans engaged in politics in Ukraine should be trusted? (by age groups), %

| Answers | All | 18-29 years old | 30-39 years old | 40-49 years old | 50-59 years old | 60-69 years old | 70+ years old |
|-------------------|------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Strongly agree | 17,4 | 11,8 | 21,6* | 15,5 | 16,5 | 19,5 | 20,0 |
| Somewhat agree | 27,0 | 28,5 | 26,1 | 26,8 | 29,0 | 27,7 | 23,3 |
| Somewhat disagree | 10,4 | 8,2 | 8,9 | 13,0 | 10,6 | 13,0 | 8,9 |
| Strongly disagree | 15,4 | 17,2 | 14,6 | 18,9* | 15,2 | 9,6 | 16,6 |
| Hard to say | 27,1 | 29,6 | 26,8 | 24,3 | 25,7 | 29,5 | 27,1 |
| Refused to answer | 2,6 | 4,7* | 2,0 | 1,5 | 2,9 | 0,7 | 4,1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

As seen in Table 8, the Western region of Ukraine tends to support the idea of the credibility of veterans engaging in politics more than other regions (63,9%). This could be related to the fact that, according to the results of this survey, citizens of this region demonstrate the most positive attitudes towards veterans in general, compared to the other regions (56%). The population of Western Ukraine also demonstrates higher support for joining NATO and military strengthening as a security strategy for Ukraine [24]. The population of Central Ukraine (45,3%) trust veterans in politics more than the population of Southern (36,5%) and Eastern Ukraine (18,7%). Over 1/3 of the Eastern region's

respondents have not decided whether veterans in politics should be trusted. Rural area residents demonstrated higher levels of trust to veterans in politics (53%) than the urban population.

Table 8

What is your attitude to the statement: ATO/JFO veterans engaged in politics in Ukraine should be trusted? (by geographic location and type of settlement), %

| Answers | All | Macroregions | | | | Urban population | Rural population |
|-------------------|------|--------------|--------|-------|-------|------------------|------------------|
| | | West | Centre | South | East | | |
| Strongly agree | 17,4 | 24,7* | 20,2* | 12,1* | 5,9 | 15,8 | 20,6* |
| Somewhat agree | 27,0 | 39,2* | 25,1* | 24,4* | 12,8 | 24,4 | 32,4* |
| Somewhat disagree | 10,4 | 6,2 | 9,7 | 15,2* | 11,5* | 11,2 | 8,8 |
| Strongly disagree | 15,4 | 7,1 | 12,2* | 18,6* | 34,2* | 18,7* | 8,9 |
| Hard to say | 27,1 | 20,1 | 29,0* | 27,6* | 35,3* | 27,8 | 25,8 |
| Refused to answer | 2,6 | 2,7 | 3,9* | 2,2 | 0,3 | 2,2 | 3,5 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

Only one-fifth of respondents (20,4%) believe that nothing will change after ATO/JFO veterans engage in social and political life. Table 9 also demonstrates that 23% of respondents are convinced that veterans' needs will be met to a greater extent, 20% believe that more effort will be made to end the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Men tend to believe significantly more than women that with veterans' engagement in the social and political life needs of all population categories, including veterans, will be satisfied. One-fourth of the respondents (more women than men) cannot answer this question. Women are significantly more indecisive on the matter. Veterans' engagement in politics is hardly associated with improvements in the state's defensive capacity and corruption reduction in the country as these answers were not very popular among respondents. Besides, veterans in politics are not associated with more violent or radical approaches to decision making. No significant age differences between respondent groups concerning answers to this question have been noted.

Table 9

How would the engagement of veterans in the social and political life affect those spheres? (multiple choice question), %

| Answers (sorted by popularity among all) | All | Women | Men |
|--|------|-------|-------|
| Veterans' needs will be more satisfied | 22,6 | 21,5 | 24,0 |
| Nothing will change | 20,4 | 20,7 | 20,1 |
| More effort will be put to solve the armed conflict in the East of Ukraine | 20,0 | 20,6 | 19,2 |
| Needs of all population categories, including veterans, will be satisfied | 14,5 | 11,9 | 17,7* |
| The defence capacity of the state will improve | 12,9 | 12,7 | 13,1 |
| Level of corruption will decrease in the country | 12,8 | 11,9 | 13,9 |
| Violence will be more used in problem-solving by civil society activists and politicians | 6,5 | 5,9 | 7,2 |
| Hard to say | 24,5 | 27,1* | 21,4 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

The respondents' opinion on the effect of involvement of ATO/JFO veterans in public and political life differs among regions (Table 10). Respondents from Eastern Ukraine often choose the answer "nothing will change" (37,5%) against only 10,6% respondents from the Western region who believe in positive changes for veterans and society in case veterans engage in politics. The Central region is also somewhat hopeful about veterans' engagement in politics. Respondents from Southern Ukraine believe that more veterans in politics will contribute to more efforts in solving the armed conflict in the East of Ukraine and to the improvement of the defence capacity of the state. 40,3% of Eastern Ukraine respondents find it hard to answer this question.

Table 10

How would the engagement of veterans in the social and political life affect those spheres? (by geographic location and type of settlement), %

| Answers | All | Macroregions | | | | Urban population | Rural population |
|--|------|--------------|--------|-------|-------|------------------|------------------|
| | | West | Centre | South | East | | |
| Veterans' needs will be more satisfied | 22,6 | 25,7* | 26,6* | 22,4* | 7,2 | 20,8 | 26,5* |
| Nothing will change | 20,4 | 10,6 | 17,5* | 25,5* | 37,5* | 22,0* | 17,1 |
| More effort will be put to solve the armed conflict in the East of Ukraine | 20,0 | 29,2* | 19,8* | 18,0* | 6,0 | 18,9 | 22,2 |
| Needs of all population categories, including veterans, will be satisfied | 14,5 | 16,6* | 15,9* | 13,3 | 9,3 | 15,5 | 12,6 |
| The defence capacity of the state will improve | 12,9 | 19,6* | 12,9* | 10,2* | 4,5 | 11,8 | 15,1* |
| Level of corruption will decrease in the country | 12,8 | 19,3* | 11,9 | 10,7 | 6,2 | 12,2 | 14,1 |
| Violence will be more used in problem-solving by civil society activists and politicians | 6,5 | 4,2 | 8,2* | 8,2* | 3,4 | 6,5 | 6,3 |
| Hard to say | 24,5 | 21,8 | 20,6 | 24,1 | 40,3* | 25,1 | 23,3 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

Among information sources that shaped the attitude towards ATO/JFO veterans provided in Table 11, television is the primary source – more than half the respondents (56,9%) selected this answer (in terms of gender, 10% more women rely on this source of information than men). The second popular source of information is other people's stories about veterans (31,1% – women and 23% – men), which is followed by personal experience of communication with men and women veterans (31,3% of men and 21,7% of women

selected this answer). 14% of respondents (gender differences are not significant in these answers) have veterans among their family members and/or friends. 2,3% (47) of male and female respondents have personal experience of serving in the ATO/JFO.

Table 11

What are your primary three information sources you form your opinion about ATO/JFO veterans on? %

| Answers (up to 3 options) | All | Women | Men |
|--|------|-------|-------|
| Television | 56,9 | 61,7* | 51,1 |
| Stories from other people | 27,4 | 31,1* | 23,0 |
| Personal experience of communication with women and men veterans | 26,0 | 21,7 | 31,3* |
| Social media and internet resources | 22,6 | 20,3 | 25,2* |
| I have ATO/JFO veterans among my relatives/friends | 14,4 | 13,6 | 15,4 |
| Printed press | 8,8 | 9,9* | 7,4 |
| Radio | 6,4 | 5,8 | 7,2 |
| I am an ATO/JFO veteran myself | 2,3 | 1,3 | 3,6* |
| Other | 0,2 | 0,2 | 0,3 |
| Hard to say | 7,1 | 7,2 | 6,9 |
| Refused to answer | 3,1 | 2,8 | 3,3 |

* The difference between groups is statistically significant at the level of $p = 0,05$ with a 95% confidence interval.

Conclusions. The public opinion survey results show a positive attitude towards veterans predominates in Ukraine. However, society is slightly less supportive towards veterans' engagement in politics. Almost half of the respondents believe that ATO/JFO veterans who engage in politics should be trusted. Finally, there are no common and high expectations for veterans in politics.

Attitudes towards veterans and their political activity vary among different population categories. A quarter of the population does not have an opinion about their attitudes towards veterans, trust to them, and expectations from veterans in politics. The young population aged 18-29 is the least knowledgeable and most undecided about ATO/JFO veterans in Ukraine. Male and rural populations demonstrate slightly higher support towards veterans than female and urban populations, respectively. The population of the Western region is more supportive of veterans. Support, expectations, and trust to veterans in politics tend to decrease from the Western region to the Central and Southern regions reaching its lowest rates in Eastern Ukraine.

Differences between general attitudes towards veterans and their hypothetical political activity may be related to the lack of vision of ex-combatants' role and place in civilian life but also the view on political activity in general. The survey results show that the civilian population of Ukraine does not largely associate combat experience with supportive factors for perspectives and impact in politics. The meaning and perspectives of the frontline achievements in civilian life in Ukraine are still to be investigated.

The survey showed that public opinion about veterans is primarily formed by the media, whereas the role of personal experience with veterans is less decisive. It could be related to

the fact that not everyone has personal experience with veterans. These results demonstrate the significant role of media, television particularly, in shaping public opinion about veterans and forming conditions for their reintegration into civilian life, including chances in politics. To facilitate the reintegration process, more research on expectations and stereotypes towards veterans is needed. Detailed analysis of the media image of veterans would also help identify entry points for shaping the status of veterans in the society in accordance with the goals and action plan [14] of the Ministry of Veteran Affairs.

References

1. Elnitsky, C.A., Fisher, M.P., Blevins, C.L. (2017). Military service member and veteran reintegration: A conceptual analysis, unified definition, and key domains. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 369-379. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00369
2. Returning Home from Iraq and Afghanistan: Preliminary Assessment of Readjustment Needs of Veterans, Service Members, and Their Families. (2010). Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
3. Analytical report: Veterans in Ukraine: what's next? Reintegration of former service members. Challenges, opportunities, gender aspects. (2019). International Alert. URL: https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Ukraine_Whatsnextforveterans_UKR_2019.pdf [in Ukrainian]
4. Martsenyuk, T., Kvit, A., Hrytsenko, A., Vasylenko, L., Zviahintseva, M. (2019). Invisible Battalion 2.0: Women Veterans Returning to Peaceful Life: Sociological Research. URL: <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2019/11/invisible%20battalion%20eng.pdf?la=en&vs=3417>
5. Veterany.UA. (2019). About life after war, or how to find a job if you are ATO veteran. URL: http://www.veterano.com.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6110:pro-zhittya-pislyavijni-abo-yak-uchasniku-ato-znajti-robotu&catid=32&Itemid=129 [in Ukrainian]
6. Fallows, J. (2019). A Major Boost for Young Veterans Running for Congress. URL: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/09/with-honor/569338/>
7. Bura, D. (2020, March 2). Veterans in power: people who know the price of life and remember the fallen soldiers will not betray Ukraine. Bez Broni. URL: <https://bezbroni.net/stories/veterani-pri-vladi-lyudi-yaki-znayut-cinu-zhittya-i-pamyatayut-zagiblih-pobratimiv-ne-zradyat-ukrainu> [in Ukrainian]
8. Life after conflict: Survey on the sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics of veterans of the conflict in eastern Ukraine and their families. January 2020. (2020). IOM. URL: http://ukraine.iom.int/sites/default/files/veterans_reintegration_survey_2020_eng.pdf
9. Assessment of the situation in Ukraine (19-22 October, 2019). (2019). Sociological Group Rating. URL: http://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/ocenka_situacii_v_strane_19-22_oktyabrya_2019_goda.html [in Ukrainian]
10. The majority of the population of Ukraine considers ATO / OOS veterans to be real heroes and patriots, but almost 60% are concerned about the threat of an increase in unregistered weapons among citizens. (2019). InfoSapiens. Study on vulnerable population groups. URL: <https://sapiens.com.ua/ua/publication-single-page?id=101#> [in Ukrainian]
11. Meeting the needs of participants of the Russina-Ukrainian war at the local level. (2017). The Legal Hundred. URL: <https://legal100.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/zvit-sotsialnyi-zakhyst-veteraniv.pdf> [in Ukrainian]
12. The White Book. Analysis of the system of state support for veterans and their families in Ukraine. (2018). The Legal Hundred. URL: <https://legal100.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Bila-Knyga.pdf> [in Ukrainian]
13. Monitoring of government financed regional programs on social protection of ATO/JFO veterans. (2019). Stabilization Support Services. URL: <https://shorturl.at/gprPX> [in Ukrainian]

14. Action Plan for 2020. (2020). Ministry of Veteran Affairs. URL: <https://mva.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/1/uploaded-files/43.pdf> [in Ukrainian]
15. Projects on employment of ATO veterans. (2017). Life after ATO. URL: <https://life-after-ato.com.ua/page/3> [in Ukrainian]
16. Ukraine Veteran Reintegration. (2020). IREX. URL: <https://www.irex.org/project/ukraine-veteran-reintegration>
17. Ministry of Veterans Affairs and IOM mission in Ukraine signed an agreement on implementation of joint projects in the field of reintegration of veterans. (2019). Government Portal. URL: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/minveteraniv-ta-mom-uklali-ugodu-pro-realizaciyu-spilnih-proektiv-u-sferi-reintegraciyi-veteraniv>
18. Burgess, R., Daniel, A. (2016). Serving after Serving. Veterans in Public Office. URL: https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2016/04/13/serving_after_serving_109255.html
19. DeSilver, D. (2013). Most-recent veterans say military prepared them for civilian work. Pew Research Center. URL: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/11/11/most-recent-veterans-say-military-prepared-them-for-civilian-work/>
20. Project “For Veterans in Power”. (2017). NGO “Studena”. URL: <http://studena.org/za-vdv-za-veteraniv-do-vlady-proekt-pidgotovky-veteraniv-do-derzhsluzhby/> [in Ukrainian]
21. Veterano blog. (2019, July 27). TV Channel 24. URL: <https://24tv.ua> [in Ukrainian]
22. List of all-Ukrainian ATO veterans’ unions. (2020). State service for veterans’ affairs. URL: <http://dsvv.gov.ua/zvyazky-z-hromadskistyuspryannya-rozvytku-hromadskoho-suspilstva/perelik-vseukrajinskyh-hromadskyh-ob-ednan-veteraniv-vijny-ta-ato.html> [in Ukrainian]
23. Suslova, O., Roos, E. (2017). Gender Impact Assessment of the Security and Defense Sector in Ukraine. Kyiv: UN Women.
24. Conclusion of 2019: public opinion. (2020). Razumkov Centre. URL: <http://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/pidsumky2019-gromadska-dumka> [in Ukrainian]

Received on 30.03.20 and updated on 29.05.20