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## Migration aspirations in Ukraine: Human rights violations as migration drivers

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# CMR Working Papers

73/131

**YULIYA BORSHCHEVSKA**

## **Migration Aspirations in Ukraine: human rights violations as migration drivers**

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[www.migracje.uw.edu.pl](http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl)

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## ABSTRACT

Ukraine is ranked highly among emigration countries and in particular among countries supplying labor migrants to the EU and Russia. The slumping economy and deteriorating political situation with an increasing number of authoritarian traits logically evoke the question of how non-economic motivation factors impact migration aspirations in Ukraine. The worsening human rights situation in the country is, in a way, seen as a separate matter and is not always associated with migration.

This article is aimed to explore whether human rights violations exert an impact on the migration aspirations of people in Ukraine, in the context of a continually stagnant Ukrainian economy. Economy and human rights are not taken here as different ends of the spectrum; in particular, human rights are not reduced to “physical integrity rights”. This topic is studied based on a case study which included 4 research locations in Ukraine, which differ with respect to their migration profile.

**Keywords:** migration, migration aspirations, human rights, economic factors, Ukraine.

## ABSTRAKT

Ukraina jest jednym z ważniejszych krajów emigracji, w szczególności krajów dostarczających siłę roboczą do państw Unii Europejskiej i Rosji. Zastój gospodarczy i pogarszająca się sytuacja polityczna (coraz więcej cech autorytarnych) wzbudzają pytanie, w jakim zakresie na aspiracje migracyjne Ukraińców mogą mieć wpływ czynniki nieekonomiczne. W istniejącej literaturze, przeważnie zwiększające się zagrożenie dla praw człowieka nie jest jednak łączone z kwestią emigracji, lecz traktowane niejako osobno.

Celem artykułu jest zbadanie, na ile naruszanie praw człowieka ma wpływ na postawy migracyjne mieszkańców Ukrainy (przy uwzględnieniu trwającej stagnacji w gospodarce). Gospodarka i prawa człowieka nie są tu traktowane jako osobne byty, tzn. prawa człowieka nie są sprowadzone jedynie do “prawa do integralności fizycznej”. Podstawą artykułu jest badanie *case study*, przeprowadzone w czterech, różniących się pod względem profilu migracyjnego, lokalizacjach w Ukrainie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** migracja, aspiracje migracyjne, prawa człowieka, czynniki gospodarcze, Ukraina

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## INTRODUCTION

Ukraine is regularly referred to in the context of migration as one of the top emigration countries worldwide (The World Bank 2011, p. 3) and is mentioned very frequently with regard to labor migration. Ukraine is amongst the top countries when it comes to labor migration rates, at least in terms of being a supplier of labor migrants to foreign countries - with over 2 million labor migrants being the most conservative estimate (Poznyak 2012, p. 3). These are clear signals, and to a greater degree consequences, of how the country has been doing economically and politically. The continually slumping economy and deteriorating political situation with an increasing number of authoritarian traits logically evoke the question of how non-economic motivation factors impact migration aspirations and migration decision-making in this country.

The scholarly community, at least in Ukraine, puts the emphasis on economic aspects when researching migration from the country. Migration's "remedy effect" on the domestic economy, helping to settle the problem of unemployment, is an argument which is regularly used. Similarly often referred to is the scope of remittances from abroad which almost equals foreign direct investment into Ukrainian economy (Finance.UA 2011).

Analysis of migration triggers in Ukraine points clearly to the fact that malfunctioning state institutions are seen as one of the core causes responsible for general unsatisfactory performance of the Ukrainian state and fuel willingness to leave the country. Because of the great bureaucratization and high level of centralization, central authorities are overwhelmed by decision making. And thus, reforms remain neglected. This explains why the administrative reform has been on agenda for a long time with less practical result delivered. No significant improvement of public services has occurred so far and local self-governance has remained weak.

Widespread is a statement that Ukraine has good legislation but the problem lies in poor implementation of the laws. Experts refute this statement emphasizing that on the contrary, Ukrainian legislation is unsatisfactory. Too many laws, adopted during the Soviet time, have persisted for too long, and they permeate many new laws (Aslund 2010).

In terms of migration incentives, corruption is often put to the fore. Ukraine has been confronted with a corruption problem for decades already. Experts evaluate fighting corruption efforts as insignificant (Creative Union TORO 2011). Corruption erodes all levels of public administration and both petty and grand scale corruption flourish. As often has been observed, corruption is widespread because the state is unaccountable, with little mechanism of citizen control. Corruption is especially severe in the most heavily regulated domains. This implies that the state authorities "exert considerable discretion over allowing, restricting or imposing sanctions or economic activities" (Fedirko 2013, p.3).

As far as economic drivers of migration are concerned, low wages are given as a major reason to leave the country. For example, one of empirical researches concludes that poor earning possibilities constitute a main push factor for as many as two thirds of Ukrainian migrants (Danzer and Handrich 2007, p. 8). Additionally, besides low pay scale, the violation of labor rights in general is an important migration factor.

The deteriorating human rights situation in Ukraine is, in a way, seen as a separate matter and is not usually associated with migration. Amongst domestic scholars one can barely find any who would hypothesize a connection between migration dynamics, migration aspirations and Ukraine's human rights record. Human rights are, for the most part, understood strictly as "physical integrity rights" which are all about protection from physical violence against the person and concern the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

Analyses of rights violations show clearly that Ukraine is sliding back to authoritarian rule after making some democratic achievements in the previous decade.

Against this background, it seemed reasonable to explore whether human rights violations exert an impact on the migration aspirations of people in Ukraine alongside the fact the Ukrainian economy is continually stagnant. This topic is studied on the basis of a case study which included 4 research locations in Ukraine. The research locations are different with respect to their migration profiles. The project findings were gathered through ethnographic fieldwork, survey and qualitative interviews.

## **1. Starting point. Insights from the EUMAGINE project**

This paper is based on the findings obtained within the EUMAGINE project, implemented within 2010-2013<sup>1</sup>. The ultimate objective of the project was to explore an impact of perceptions of human rights and democracy on migration aspirations and migration decisions in several emigration and transit countries outside the European Union - in Morocco, Senegal, Turkey and Ukraine.

Before turning to the project findings, it has to be made clear that references to “Europe” in the EUMAGINE project and in this paper mean the geographical limitations of the boundaries of the EU. Despite the fact that a greater part of media discourse together with political and academic discourse in Ukraine are used to portray this country as a part of Europe in geographical and cultural terms, for the purposes of the EUMAGINE project, Ukrainian self-perception was disregarded. Therefore, in the project and in the analyses that will be presented here the words “Europe” and “the EU” are used interchangeably.

### *Research problem and hypothesis*

The concept of human rights in the EUMAGINE project is rather broad. It includes the economic, political, civil and social rights in contrast to the narrower, and until recently, widely adopted concept of human rights. The narrower concept is linked to the “integrity of the person” as Carlson and Listhaug pointed out (2007, p. 467) and includes the rights to be free from torture, imprisonment, execution, or disappearance.

This paper is concerned with the research problem of how human rights-focused migration perceptions fuel migration aspirations in Ukraine in addition to economic factors, and how this translates to migration decisions in this country. Economy and human rights are not taken here as different ends of the spectrum; human rights are not reduced to “physical integrity rights”. On the other hand, the economic dimension is analyzed not broadly but with a relation to economic rights (and specifically labor rights) and their observance in Ukraine. These rights include the right to work, the right to freely choose a sphere of employment, the right to just and favorable conditions of work etc., as they are specified in the Articles 6-8 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).

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<sup>1</sup> Detailed information is available at [www.eumagine.org/](http://www.eumagine.org/). The author undertook empirical research in one of target areas (Solomyansky rayon in Kyiv). Additionally, the author’s further role in the project was to analyze obtained findings and observed migration tendencies and co-prepare project reports. While co-preparing project reports, she covered a number of subtopics, analyzing the full scope of available data from all research localities. Data used in the paper were accumulated by the whole Ukrainian research team including also Dr. F. Düvell and Dr. B. Vollmer (the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), Oxford, UK), Dr. Y. Bilan, Dr. I. Lapshyna and Dr. S. Vdovtsova (the Centre of Sociological Research (UA)). Nevertheless, the analysis presented in this paper is solely the contribution of the author.

The hypothesis of this paper is that the *violations of social and political rights in Ukraine constitute essential migration determinants in constructing migration aspirations and driving migration from this country*. Social rights which are taken under scrutiny are understood as the right to “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”, according to the Article 12 (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966) and as the right to education (Article 13, Ibid.). Political rights are understood in conformity with the Article 25 (Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966) and include the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and to be elected; and to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service.

Of course, while analyzing the observance of social rights (the state of medicine and education, meaning quality of service first of all), as they are perceived by ordinary Ukrainians, the economic background comes to the fore. All of the aforementioned are central components of the public service and thus a vivid reflection of state dysfunction, if provided insufficiently. Nevertheless, the economic factors are in no way contrasted to human rights as migration triggers in this paper. For the sake of the analysis, different types of human rights are singled out with economic rights being one of the sets of rights under analysis.

Human rights-focused migration perceptions are analyzed from the accessibility view, i.e. taking into account how particular services are accessible to people in Ukraine. The factors under scrutiny include variables such as access to health services and schools, the presence of corruption, as well as perceptions of the absence of political freedom or presence of corruption. In what follows, gender equality refers to diverse activities and thus is treated as belonging to all types of considered rights.

The adopted definition of human rights was formulated in connection with the capability to achieve one’s fundamental desires. The latter becomes possible through the use of one’s abilities, in turn helping to enhance one’s well-being. Increased freedoms and accumulated social, economic and human capital tend to spur increasing levels of mobility or migration aspirations. The project suggests also categorizing mobility as a human right as it has a potential power to increase human well-being (Timmerman, Heyse & Van Mol 2010).

### *Methodological framework of the project*

The EUMAGINE project was based on a case-study approach. It applied an interdisciplinary perspective. Migration aspirations and decisions were studied with relation to a particular migration destination - the EU.

Methodologically, the project combined ethnographic fieldwork, a large-scale survey, and qualitative interviews. Among others, the respondents of the survey were asked to provide an answer to the question: “Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to go abroad to live or work some time during the next five years, or would you prefer to stay in [this country]?” (Ersanilli, Carling & de Haas 2011, p. 21). The possible answers, which were formulated as “go abroad”, “stay in Ukraine”, will be used in the analysis of the project results that follow, as an indicator of migration aspirations and intentions of the respondents.

Four types of locations were selected in Ukraine in order to provide between-region comparisons and to reflect the diversity within the potential migrant population. Research localities were selected on the basis of the migration profile of the latter: a high/low emigration rate and significant immigration level. Additionally, one more locality was selected which is known for human rights concerns. As a final outcome, the selected research areas were:

- Zbarazh, (research area with high emigration /Western Ukraine/);
- Znamyanska (research area with low emigration /Central Ukraine/);



- Novovorodolazka (area specifically analyzed for the human rights situation /Eastern Ukraine/);
- Solomyansky rayon/Kyiv (research area with immigration history).

One should mention that the Novovorodolazka research area in Eastern Ukraine is known for supply of labor migrants eastward to Russia.

Several villages were included in the project in each location (in three out of the four research localities - apart from the capital). These villages are not specified here as they are considered part of the named research areas. Where they are mentioned in the text, their belonging to a concrete research area is made clear.

In each research area, 500 survey interviews and 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with people aged 18-39 (in total 2000 survey interviews and 80 qualitative interviews). In order to deliver representative results, the selection of respondents was performed according to a 3-level range of socio-demographic characteristics, namely: the research area, gender, and marital status of respondents.

The non-migratory population was included in the methodological composition of the project as a control group, in order to access a greater variety of human rights perceptions. Scholars note that perceptions on human rights of potential migrants during pre-migratory phase are largely un-researched (de Haas 2007).

There are certain methodological limitations in the project, which ought to be mentioned at this point. The construction of the research tools does not allow assessing the magnitude of the impact of perceptions of particular human rights violations. One cannot say which have a greater impact on migration aspirations and which only marginally drive migration. This is because it was not the purpose of the EUMAGINE project to find out what triggers migration more (establish a rating) - poor healthcare service or lack of access to good education, frustration with the political performance in the country or widely spread corruption practices.

### *Theoretical background of the project*

In theoretical terms, this paper adopts the transnational approach to the migration phenomenon, which presupposes that the migratory population maintains connections to various places within different states, marked as source and as destination places (Glick Schiller 2005). What should be noted is that the migratory population from Ukraine developed characteristics which correspond with Portes' characteristics of transnational migrants (Portes et al. 1999). A new social reality is formed, which is regarded as having a migration culture. To explore migration perceptions and aspirations, the culture of migration of Ukrainians is referenced. This is done in parallel to political and media discourse, as migration perceptions and aspirations are essential elements which shape culture of migration. As Pang (2007) and Riccio (2007) observed, migration becomes rooted into people's behavioral patterns (cited in Castagnone 2012, p. 50).

Migration perception and aspirations have been seen here through the lens of the push - pull theory of migration (albeit partly). This theory argues that the economic performance of sending and receiving countries is the main factor influencing the existence of migration flows, as well as their size and pace (Appleyard 1989, pp. 486-499). What should be mentioned is that other contextual factors of migration must also be taken into account.

What falls under the human rights concept within this project, linked to migration perceptions and aspirations, is central for effective state functioning and a reforming process on a wider scale. Ukraine as a deviant democracy faces a challenge of governability and a problem to improve the institutional framework. Undemocratic political elites are able to co-

exist with a democratic institutional setting, provoking institutional distortions (Gallina 2011, p. 6). As scholars point out, this challenge appears not only during the departure from non-democratic regimes but also - at a point when the political landscape favors more predictability and settles into relations of a consolidated democracy (Schmitter & Terry, 1991).

The remainder of the article is organized into 6 chapters. Each of them discusses a separate topic, namely: employment opportunities, gender equality, the healthcare system, education, the corruption issue and the political situation in Ukraine. Major findings concerning the human rights perceptions of the home country situation are contrasted with the perception of the situation in the EU. An analysis of each of the topics is combined with a study of migration aspirations of Ukrainians. In other words, perceptions of respondents towards Ukraine and the EU are contrasted within every research topic in order to better understand migration aspirations. In the analyses that follow, the provided results of the survey are always split by location, sex and migration aspirations of the respondents.

## **2. Worm-son and worm-father dilemma<sup>2</sup>: perceptions of employment opportunities**

Since the economic dimension is analyzed in this paper with a relation to labor rights and their observance in Ukraine, the focus will be on the employment situation. This chapter elaborates on the employment opportunities in Ukraine, as perceived by people in the country. The topics covered in the economic dimension include observations about employment tendencies, as they are being perceived by ordinary Ukrainians. Also, observations touch upon perceptions on the present day employment chances compared to the situation of a couple of decades ago.

### *2.1 The employment situation in Ukraine*

Information about employment chances, and in particular the surviving strategies of the population, is affluent in all interviews irrespective of the research area. Overall, statements on the situation on the labor market in Ukraine outnumber all other covered topics regarding domestic affairs in the country. This is a clear indication of the burning nature of the problem, which is described in informants' statements in many detailed aspects.

Commenting on the current employment situation in Ukraine, respondents generally see the chances to find a good job as low. There are not more than 2 percent of respondents who strongly agree with the statement that "It is easy to find a good job in Ukraine" and about over 10 percent of those who agree that job finding is easy in Ukraine in any group of respondents, i.e. regardless of gender and migration aspirations, in Central and Western Ukraine (Graph 1.a). References to the past when employment was not a problem are rather frequent. Queries overturn in a way the question of whether it is easy to find a good job in Ukraine, because finding any job seems to be problematic in many parts of Ukraine.

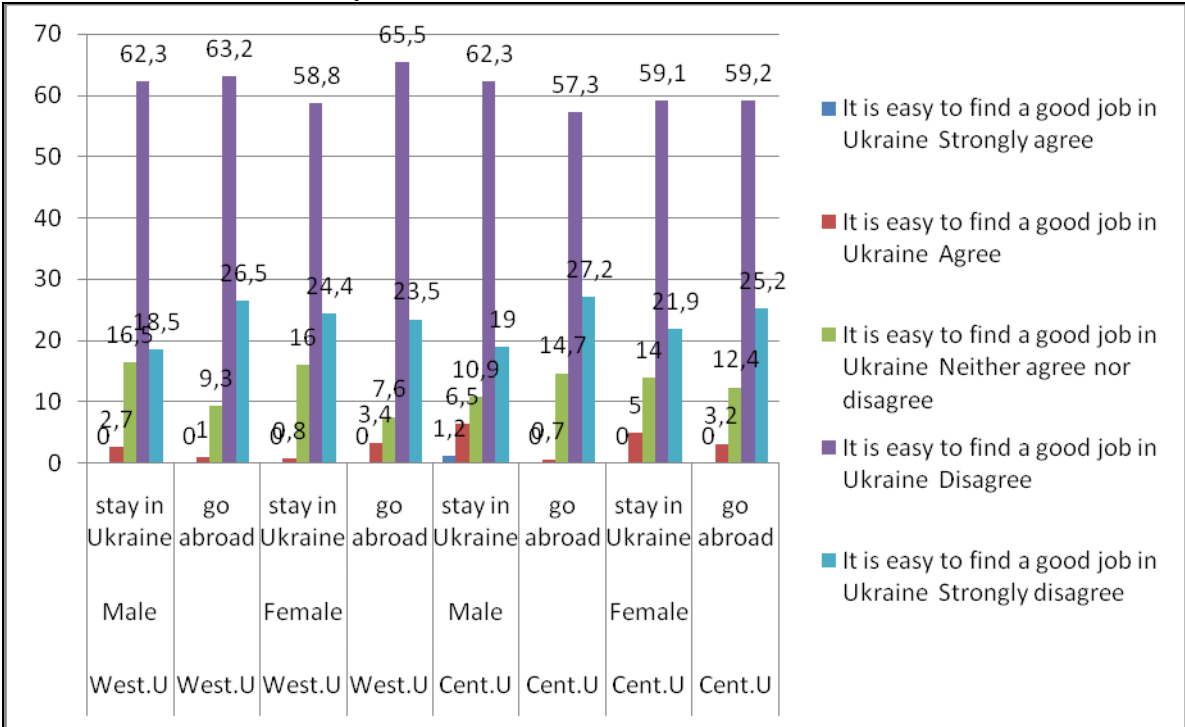
Generally, the proportion of respondents who state that it is not easy to find a good job differs significantly between the regions. While considering "disagree" results, a clear correlation appears between migration aspirations and dissatisfaction with employment chances. But this is obvious only in the case of the capital and Eastern Ukraine, whereas a

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<sup>2</sup> One of the informants from Central Ukraine (42102, Znamyanska research area) told a story about a worm-son and a worm-father, as an answer to the employment related question. In short, the son was asking why they are living in such a terrible place if worms can also live in an apple or in a peach. The father's answer was that there is such a notion as "motherland", which probably in this context means a situation of no choice.

different picture appears while considering Central Ukraine and Western Ukraine (Graph 1.a and Graph 1.b)

**Graph 1.a** It is easy to find a good job in Ukraine (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Latest tendencies indicate clearly that the temporary character of labor migration from Ukraine has changed since the late 1990s, when this mass phenomenon established. Migration from Ukraine turns to be more and more irreversible. In previous years, the majority of labor migrants perceived their stay abroad as something temporary, not being disconnected from the Ukrainian labor market completely<sup>3</sup>. Meanwhile, presently, there have been plenty of individuals for whom labor migration is the only source of income (Malynovska 2011, p. 8). They do not strive to being employed in Ukraine - even semi-officially, while they stay abroad.

In the Eastern part of Ukraine, informants argued that *“It is hard to find [a job], of course, because of limited number of employers in the town [...]”* (44106, Novovodolazka research area). Another informant from this locality is more precise, explaining unemployment reasons *“[...] the reason is in the absence of large factories in Vodolaha<sup>4</sup>; the sugar mill has been closed, the chemical plants are the only thing left. Well, there are no other enterprises as well”* (44118). Informants from Western Ukraine seconded them, saying *“[...] we have here a couple of stores, a school. But the workplaces for involvement of at least 70 percent of the residents of Chernyhivtsi<sup>5</sup> cannot be found here”* (41238, Zbarazh research area). Feedback from Central Ukraine is very similar comparing the present day situation with

<sup>3</sup> It is a widely spread practice in Ukraine for Ukrainian citizens to make “a deal” with employers. They are “employed” with their work books kept at some enterprises but actually with no work performed. Such “employees” are not paid any salary (this is part of a deal), but employment makes them eligible for a minimal pension in the future.

<sup>4</sup> This is an everyday name of the town Nova Vodolaha

<sup>5</sup> This is a village in Zbarazh rayon in Western Ukraine

the past “*The main problem is unemployment. We have no enterprises, no collective farms like it was in the times of the Soviet Union*” (42201, Znamyanska research area).

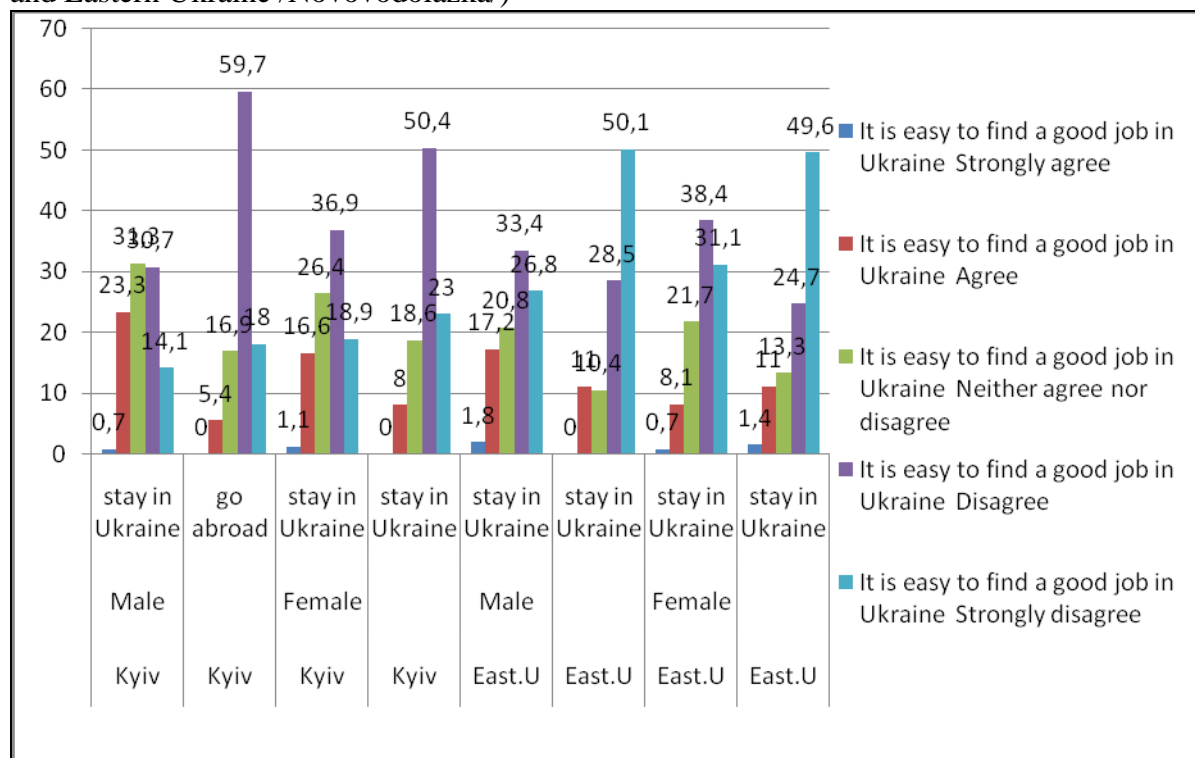
Interviewed Ukrainians elaborated on nuances of available employment opportunities. In many cases, they touched upon either seasonal work or part time employment. A vivid illustration may be provided by a case of three young people who are currently employed in Zbarazh:

“[...] for one-third of the working rate... or a quarter of rate, it means that they will be getting 300-400 UAH, which is less than a half of their scholarship [...]” (41116, Zbarazh research area).

Thus, however strange it might be, for these particular young people to be students is more beneficial than to be employed.

Solomyansky district of Kyiv and Novovodolazka stand out as research areas where significantly more respondents (in comparison to Western and Central Ukraine, i.e. Zbarazh and Znamyanska) agree that job seeking is not complicated in Ukraine. The view that to find a job in Ukraine is not a difficult task is the mostly spread in Kyiv, where 23.3 percent of male respondents and 16.6 percent of female respondents have such an opinion (Graph 1.b). Notably, this view is the most common among respondents who intend to stay in Ukraine.

**Graph 1.b** It is easy to find a good job in Ukraine (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Respondents from Kyiv point not to the difficulty to find a job but to another closely related topic – salary issue; it is difficult to find a well paid job in Ukraine “[...] another thing is whether the salary would be sufficient once you are employed” (43107, Solomyansky rayon research area). Another informant (last year student of a medical university) from Kyiv expressed his indignation by making a calculation first “200-300 USD that is 2000-3000 UAH. I’m a doctor with higher education, I have a degree. Is it fair? Is it possible to make

*ends meet?*” He talked about professors at his university who earn small sums of money monthly:

*“They get 200-300 USD, that’s 3000 UAH. How can you possibly live the whole month having in your pocket only 3000 UAH? Is it after everything they’ve done for the sake of education?”* (43133, Solomyansky rayon research area).

The problem of low wages is also part of the answer to the question of the low quality of education and corruption at higher educational institutions in Ukraine - the issues which will be addressed further on in this paper.

Complaints about violation of other labor rights included non-paid sick leaves. In this regard, employment in state-owned enterprises is widely seen as an advantage, even regardless the fact of miserable payment *“[...] my parents try not to lose their workplaces, because they are working for state-owned enterprises and can take a sick-leave when they need it and it is paid after all [...] they are not pleased with their salaries, but they don’t have any choice”* (44109, Solomyansky rayon research area).

Irregular salary payment is one more example of violation of labor rights, recalled by informants. One of inhabitants from Znamyanska complained *“There is the work only in a depot in Znamyanka. They wanted to close a depot and to leave people without jobs. And it’s just January, so we don’t know what will happen. Half of the salary wasn’t paid off. It was said that people would be dismissed”* (42112, Znamyanska research area).

In the employment context, the tax issue was voiced as well. Besides regular complaints of low payment, the issue of “grey” salaries was touched upon too. This is because often only part of the salary is an official payment in Ukraine and is subject to taxation; the rest is paid in cash. As a rule the bigger part is paid unofficially. Usually, official salary does not exceed the minimal payment level, allowed by law. This concerns not only some small enterprises as people informed but *“[...] even big (Ukrainian) companies pay unofficial salaries to reduce the tax burden”* (43107, Solomyansky rayon research area). This was not a sporadic opinion, but received support from others from this locality *“Speaking about our [Ukrainian] companies, as far as I know, they often do payments under the table”* (43108).

The qualitative datasets delivered only limited observations with relation to the tax issue. This could be explained by the fact that necessary tax payments (individual income tax) are being done by an employer on behalf of an employee in Ukraine. For this reason, many Ukrainians do not perceive themselves as tax payers and often many are even unaware about the amount of taxes due to be paid. For this reason, they do not tend to hold state authorities accountable for spending.

However, interesting in this respect are findings of Marc Berenson who found out that the inclination of the population to pay taxes differs in various regions in Ukraine (Berenson, 2010). He also established certain discrepancies in the inclination to be fair tax payers in Ukraine, Poland and Russia. His findings are not in favor of Ukraine.

In contrast to the observations of the aforementioned informants, feedback about how foreign companies operate in Ukraine is totally different *“[...] in big international companies salaries are always declared; after all, these are foreigners; they respect laws”* (43108).

Quite striking are the findings about the attitude of ordinary Ukrainians towards self-employment and wage employment. Accounts are in place suggesting that self-employment is not perceived as an opportunity to realize one’s economic initiative but rather as the only way to survive. One of the informants from Central Ukraine reports that *“Nowadays a lot of people try to start private enterprises because of a hopeless situation”* (42202, Znamyanska research area). It appears that Ukrainians are ready to become self-employed, when all other means to find a job are gradually exhausted. Those who are unemployed seek jobs within enterprises established by others (people living in the same area), but this opportunity to get

employment is very scarce.<sup>6</sup> As one potential employee argued “*Little shops are the places where one can find work. But, to say the truth, usually their owners also act as vendors*” (42206, Znamyanska research area).

As far as industries where it is possible to get a job are concerned, informants also presented some valuable observations. Job ads in retail are most frequent, respondents observed: “*In general, they are shop assistants who would sell clothes as well as cashiers who are in demand now. I don’t think they need higher education [...] I just see a lot of employment ads: “Supermarket is in want of a shop assistant” or “Supermarket is in want of a cashier”, for example*” (43102, Solomyansky rayon research area). This is an indicator that industry is not that much developed, in comparison to the retail business.

Many informants also raised the problem of age, in two different aspects. One of them is what internal migrants - young job seekers from the peripheries - face in the capital “[...] *they can be manipulated easily, especially those who are from provinces, but want to fulfill themselves in Kyiv. In this case employees agree to any conditions like small salaries, a huge workload. Young employees might also suffer from abusive behavior of their employers*” (43117, Solomyansky rayon research area).

Another aspect of this problem concerns old people and the employment difficulties which they face “*Well, age is important. A person over 50 can hardly get a job. If you are younger - yes, it is possible to find a job*” (43116, Solomyansky rayon research area). Respondents attribute such inequality to the economic crisis and higher unemployment rate as a result of the generally worsened economic situation “*Because of our crisis, I suppose. In the past, things used to be different; age would not be a big problem*” (43116). In relation to this, pension payments were mentioned frequently especially compared with Europe:

“[...] *there pensioners can have a rest, go on vacation, travel. They are fully provided with everything, and they can help their children and grandchildren. And here? Who saw retired people going to the sea, or on vacation, I don’t even say about an excursion tour abroad?! ... it hurts a bit. We have to work for the whole life for the state, to support it, and then when retired we barely survive on that small pension payment...*” (41244, Zbarazh research area).

In this regard, a point related to the pension reform which raises concerns among ordinary Ukrainians was revealed. One of the things introduced by the pension reform, launched in 2011, is an increase of the basic retirement age for both women and men. Whence, the question for many is where to seek employment after 50 in order to earn a decent pension, if employers demonstrate high reluctance to recruit people in that age group. A common perception is that the launch of the pension reform was initiated primarily because of a growing deficit of the pension fund. If the idea behind was to have a reduced number of people eligible for pensions, its effectiveness is questionable, as in turn unemployment payments might become a burden for the state budget.

Employment of retired people in Ukraine was highlighted as being another significant aspect of the labor market. The issue is not only about decent living but also about the financial ability to support children. This type of relation was described as “*traditional for parents to help*”. The same informant followed on saying “[...] *it is traditional for Ukraine. Parents always help their children regardless of their age. If you have parents then this family connection will persist till mature age of the children*” (41114, Zbarazh research area). Parents offer help to their children who are in poor financial conditions, as long as parents are

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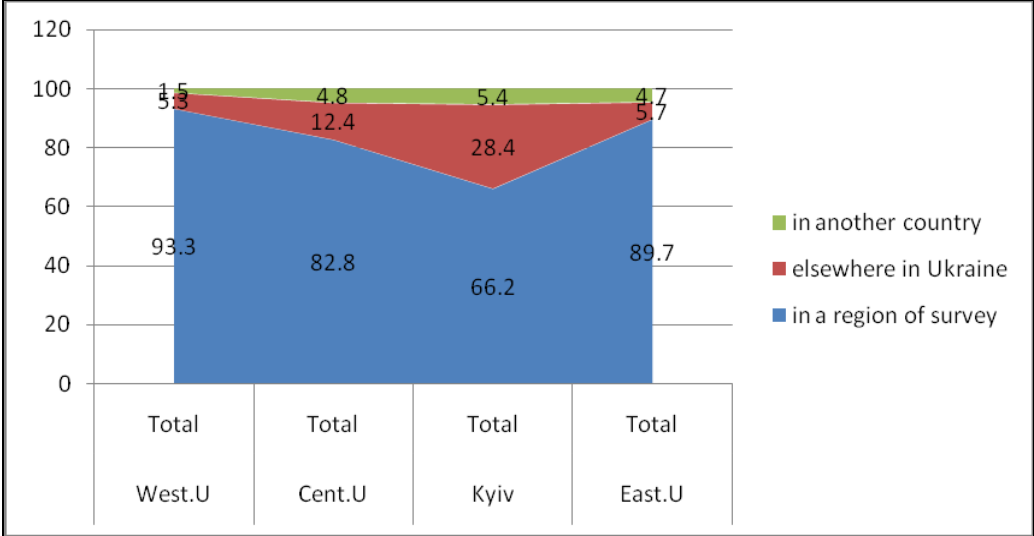
<sup>6</sup> This aspect is interesting for further research, in order to bring to the light another side of the coin – namely, that the relatively low number of small and middle enterprises (SME) in Ukraine is not only a result of the fear for drastic measures of tax authorities to collect taxes or inexistence of any “functioning government entity in charge of SME policy development or implementation” (SME Policy Index 2012, p. 39).

capable of doing so. A middle aged woman from the capital of Ukraine noted “My father says, that I get such low salary that he has to help me because we quickly run out of money” (43102, Solomyansky rayon research area). However, informants noted that this situation is far from being regarded as normal. On the contrary, they are children who should take care of their parents, also financially. One of the views in this relation is as following “[...] when you still have your parents, it’s also a kind a support because without them it’s definitely harder. And though it’s we who should help them, I think we can really do that when we are already independent, but now everything looks as if vice versa” (42104, Znamyanska research area).

Aside these factors, some facts regarding internal migration in Ukraine were revealed. Seeking economic betterment is typical for all the Ukrainian regions considered in the research; at least arguments to support this view were mentioned equally frequently in interviews in all research localities. For instance, an informant from Western Ukraine - a research area with a high emigration rate - remarked “Well, you can find work, but the payment is very low, that is why basically the majority goes to Ternopil [oblast center], salary is low there, but slightly bigger” (41112, Zbarazh research area). Another inhabitant of the same town expressed an identical view “So, if you are looking for a job, anyway, you should go to Ternopil, and only there you can find something better” (41125). An inhabitant of a village near Zbarazh town concluded “[...] the young generation is forced to search for a job elsewhere [...]” (41240).

Information provided by people in Eastern Ukraine is similar. The labor force from the town Nova Vodolaha, an area which provides labor migrants mainly to Russia, has no better choice but to search for employment in the oblast center - Kharkiv. What should be noted is that internal migration was reported not to be a temporary phenomenon. As one of informants put it “Well, mainly people go to Kharkiv to work, they sell their dwelling here”. This means they are not going to return to their home town. The same informant added that “There are nearly 300-400 people living in the nearby villages, but it is a situation drawn from the house books, while in reality there are perhaps only 100 of them living there, the rest of them goes somewhere to earn money” (44118). What is worth mentioning is that the data are outdated and do not permit us to compare the population states across Ukrainian regions, as the last census was conducted in Ukraine in 2001. The next one was expected to be conducted in 2011 but was postponed to 2013 and later on to 2016 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2013).

**Graph 2.a** Respondent's place of birth



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

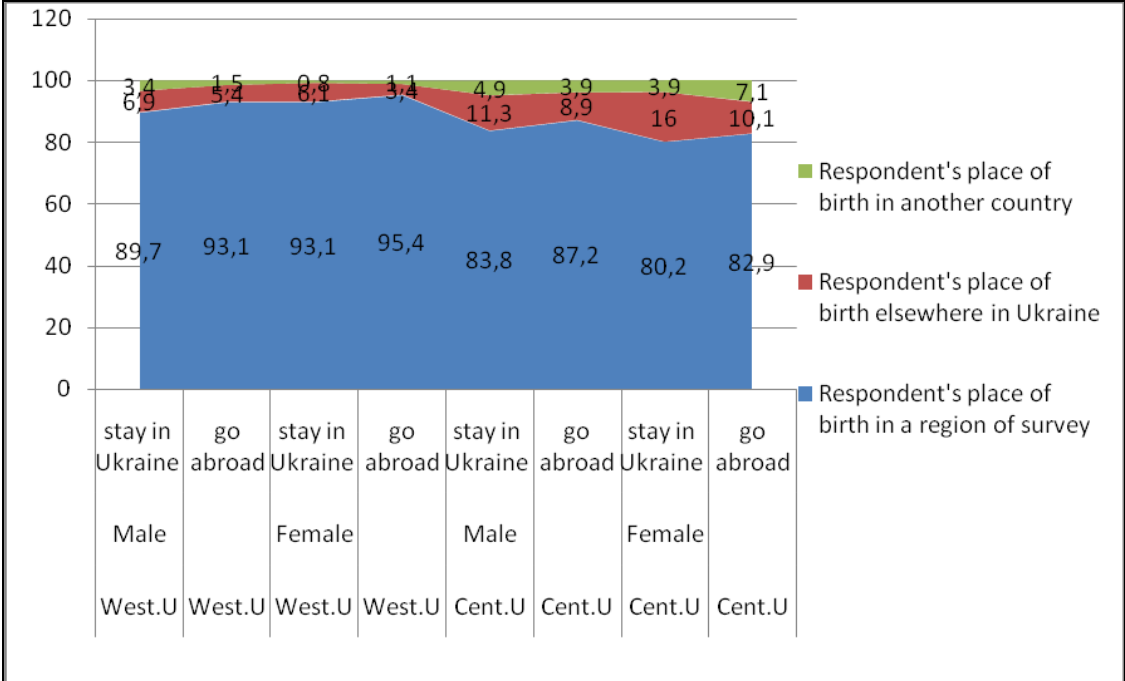
The population of small towns and villages is constantly shrinking in the Kharkiv region where the research area was located. In particular, the head of the Oblast council reported in 2012 about dramatic situation in this region with 9 depopulated villages, over 70 villages where no more than 10 persons live and 250 which have no more than 49 inhabitants (Slobidskyi kray 2012). This tendency concerns also other regions of Ukraine.

At the same time, it was observed that Ukrainian people are not willing to go somewhere far away from their home. Interestingly, this was attributed to the way they were brought up in, e.g. *“People don’t want very much to go somewhere, except near towns, because of their upbringing and attitude. Everybody settles down somehow here, in Vodolaga”* (44116, Novovodolazka research area). It might be fair enough to assume that if they opt for labor migration, life circumstances might be seen as really pressing for them to do so.

The only exception is Kyiv, where internal and international migration routes cross. One-third of respondents surveyed in Kyiv were born elsewhere (not in the place of their current residence) in Ukraine or even abroad (Graph 2.a). Respondents who live in the regions of the survey and were born there constitute well over 80 percent in Znamyanska and in Novovodolazka and over 90 percent in Zbarazh (Ibid).

What is interesting on the context of migration aspirations is that respondents from Central Ukraine (Znamyanska) and Western Ukraine (Zbarazh), who have moved from other regions of Ukraine to the regions where they were surveyed, demonstrate slightly higher propensity to stay in the home country. Respondents from these localities, who had internal migration background and who would want to leave Ukraine, are less numerous compared to the group of those who did not migrate internally. This correlation is observable both among men and women. Among men in Znamyanska who are willing to stay in Ukraine, those born elsewhere in Ukraine make up 6.9 percent compared to 5.4 in the case of those willing to go abroad. For women, the numbers amount to 6.1 percent vs. 3.4 percent respectively (Graph 2.b).

**Graph 2.b** Respondent's place of birth (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



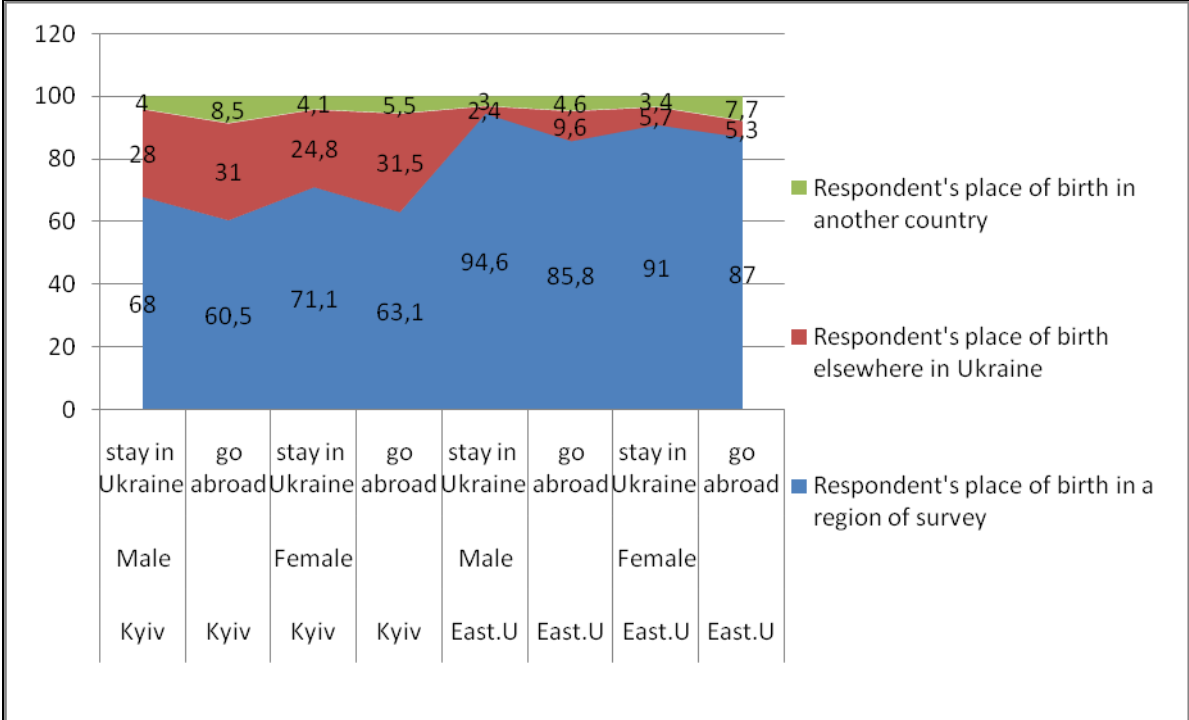
Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings



The same tendency is true for Zbarazh in Western Ukraine. Among male respondents from Zbarazh who have migration aspirations, those born elsewhere compose 8.9 percent compared to 11.3 percent of those who prefer to stay at home (Graph 2.b). The proportion among female respondents is 10.1 percent to 16 percent, respectively.

Women in Eastern Ukraine, who reside out of their place of birth in Ukraine, display a similar tendency. Among respondents who do not intend to leave Ukraine, the proportion of those who were born elsewhere equals 5.7 percent, while for those who do intend to leave Ukraine - 5.3 percent (Graph 2.c). As one can see, the correlation is very slight. However, it might be assumed that for such people, internal migration has been an alternative to international migration.

**Graph 2.c** Respondent's place of birth (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

The research area in the capital reveals a totally different picture, however, among both men and women. The percentages of those born elsewhere are higher for respondents with migration aspirations: 31 percent among men and 31.5 among women, compared to 28 percent men and 24.8 percent women who prefer staying in Ukraine (Graph 2.c). In this respect, internal migration might be seen as a step for Ukrainian people towards international migration. It might be assumed that after moving to the capital, people from other regions decide to go abroad a while later. However, the qualitative data do not permit for convincing conclusions as for which categories of people follow this migration pattern and whether this migration pattern is widely spread.

This is no surprise that people from the regions go to the capital for employment reasons as incomparably more opportunities are available there. This got confirmed by a myriad of qualitative accounts. People interviewed in Kyiv tend to argue that to find a good job is possible. What is worth attention, they bring up another topic, elaborating more on the issue of payments “If the aim is to find a well paid job, this would be possible but the salary would be unofficial. It’ll be given in envelopes” (43107, Solomyansky rayon research area).

Apart from cases of unofficial payment of officially employed personnel, an adjacent problem was indicated. Informants singled out the problem of unofficial employment which is being proposed, depriving them of their labor rights and rights for social protection:

*"[...] actually, employment is a problem. It is very hard to find a good job [...] there are plenty of job offers now... [...] it is all informal. I was told that it's impractical to keep a workbook, it's much better to work under a contract"* (43113, Solomyansky rayon research area).

Low payment is actually a central problem for the Ukrainian labor market in general: it is not solely unemployment that forces people to go to the capital or abroad, but low payment which is absolutely insufficient to survive on. One of the middle aged female informants confirms that low payment, rather than unemployment, is a topical issue. Labor conditions are frequently coupled with violations of labor rights, what could be concluded from her words:

*"Shops always offer workplaces, but they pay too little. You cannot live on that money. Impossible. You will have to work for 14 hours, and then they will pay you 100 UAH for 14-hour work"* (43114, Solomyansky rayon research area).

It is not a surprise that this woman from Kyiv has expressed a strong desire to go abroad for employment. Likewise, more than 50 percent of women from Kyiv with migration aspirations do not support the view that job finding is easy in Ukraine (Graph 1.b).

Remarkably, some informants made an observation of how tough labor conditions and poor earnings change patterns of human behavior. Describing Ukrainians, an inhabitant of the capital said:

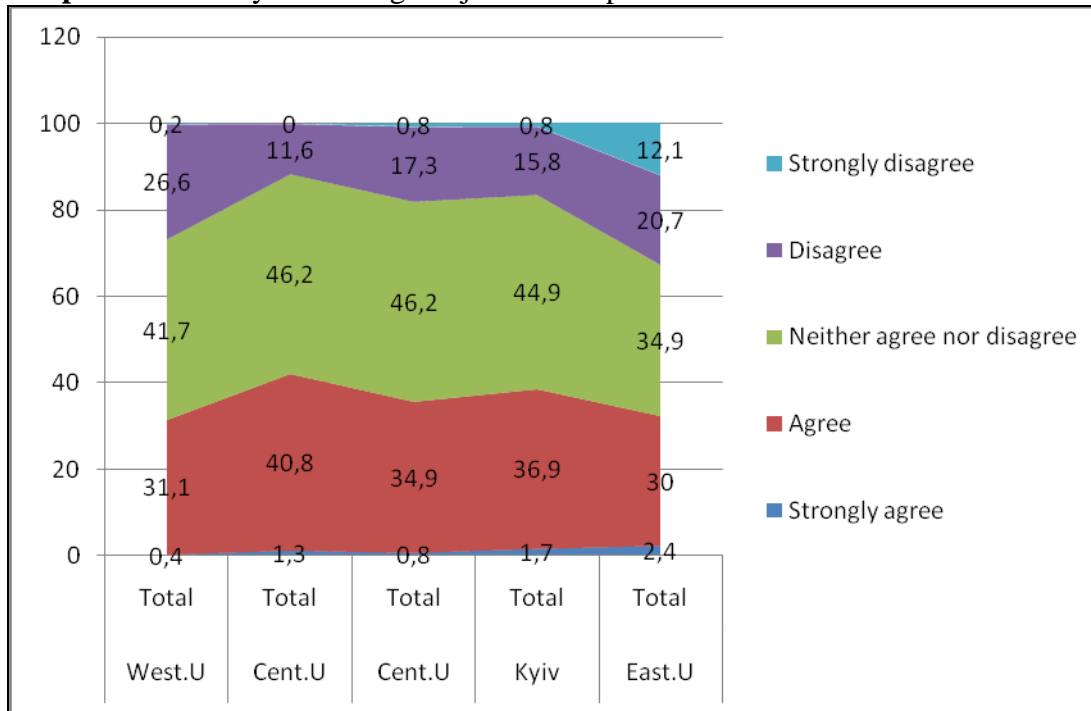
*"Life makes them mad. Life is harsh. I remember in the past, in Soviet times, there was more courtesy and humanity; it was different; now they swear at every step. If something's wrong they won't hesitate to give you a push or curse you with filthy words. People are immensely rude today. Rude and cruel"* (43114, Solomyansky rayon research area).

Other informants dwelled on how the deterioration of the economic situation changes peoples' life in Ukraine and in particular which surviving strategies they employ in order to maintain living. A vivid illustration is a described phenomenon of scrap metal collectors, nicknamed "metallists", operating on the scrap metal market, which developed in Ukraine since the 1990s. Experts argue that the share of shadow scrap metal market in Ukraine reaches nowadays 60-70 percent (Ekonomichna pravda 2012). Scrap metal collectors were portrayed as "a bother" as they are involved in illegal activities as far as methods of scrap metal collection are concerned. As one respondent states *"Some time ago they climbed over my fence, the dog barked but it didn't stop them. So mainly they are the ones who steal metal things - there are many such people [...]"* (44118, Novovodolazka research area).

## 2.2 The employment situation in Europe

In general, the proportion of respondents who are skeptical towards the European labor market and do not believe that it is easy to find a good job in Europe is roughly half of the share of respondents with a similar view towards the Ukrainian labor market. Despite the fact that a high percentage of respondents are not able to give a precise answer to this question, approximately one third of respondents in all research areas think that it is not hard to find a good job in Europe (Graph 3.a.).

**Graph 3.a** It is easy to find a good job in Europe



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Statements, like the following one, are not singular “[...] they [people in Europe] lead a decent life as they are able to take loans. Thus, they have to be sure that they have got a stable job and are paid regularly” (42111, Solomyansky rayon research area). The situation with pensions is also imagined to be totally different in Europe. One of the informants from the capital shared the opinion of a friend of hers living in Europe “She says pensions are kind of decent. One can live on it; it’s not like here in Ukraine” (43114).

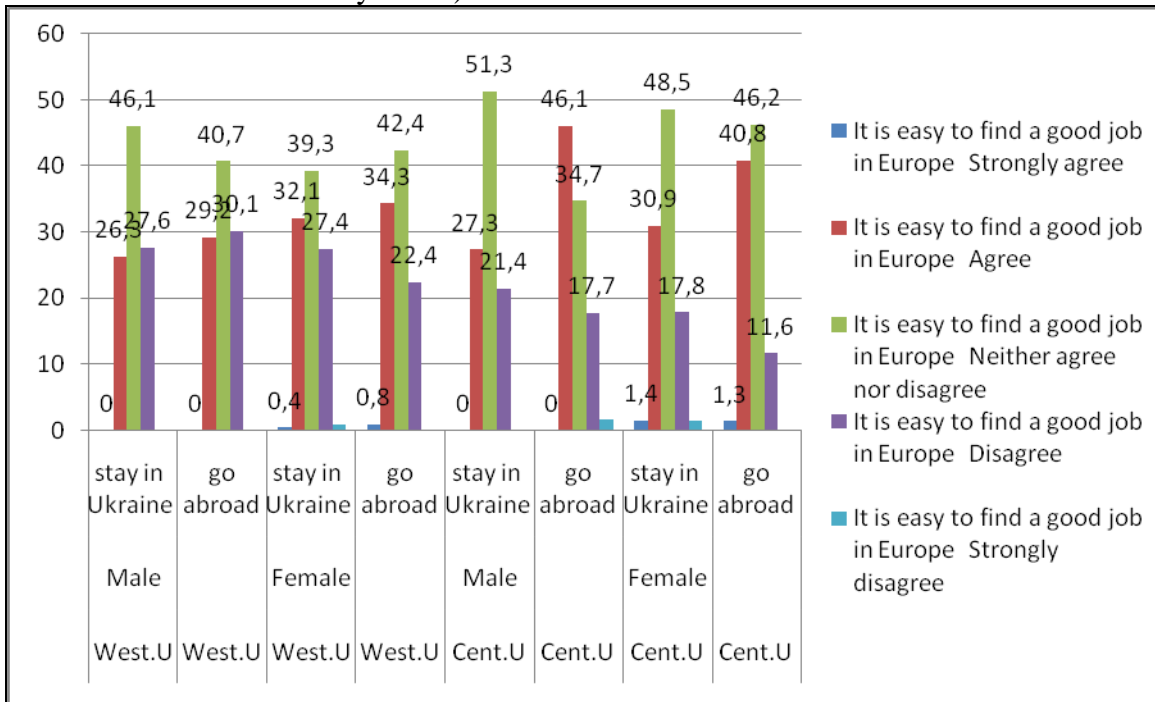
Moreover, informants point to a good educational background which enables graduates in Europe to find a job:

“[In Europe] they can find a deserving job with the diploma they get there. And with our diplomas, I do not know, maybe except from a few schools, but I am not sure about it as well, that it is possible to find a good job” (42108, Znamyanska research area).

Notably, the most critical views on the employment situation in Europe are to be found in Zbarazh, Western Ukraine (Graph 3.b) and in Novovodolazka, Eastern Ukraine (Graph 3.c). One should keep in mind that these are both areas with high emigration rates. Figures are higher and almost equal among both men and women with an intention to stay in Ukraine in the Western part of the country. People from Western Ukraine in the “stay in Ukraine” category are more negatively minded in terms of easiness to find employment in Europe – they are roughly one third among men and women (Graph 3.b). Almost the same proportion among male respondents with no migration aspirations is identified in the Eastern Ukraine - 29.6 percent (Graph 3.c).

Surveyed men from Western Ukraine who intend to migrate constitute the highest share of respondents who do not believe it is easy to find a job in the EU across all research localities – 30.1 percent (Graph 3.b). This might be an indication of higher migration culture and a more critical approach towards migration - as a result of more information exchanged through migration networks and more experiences gathered.

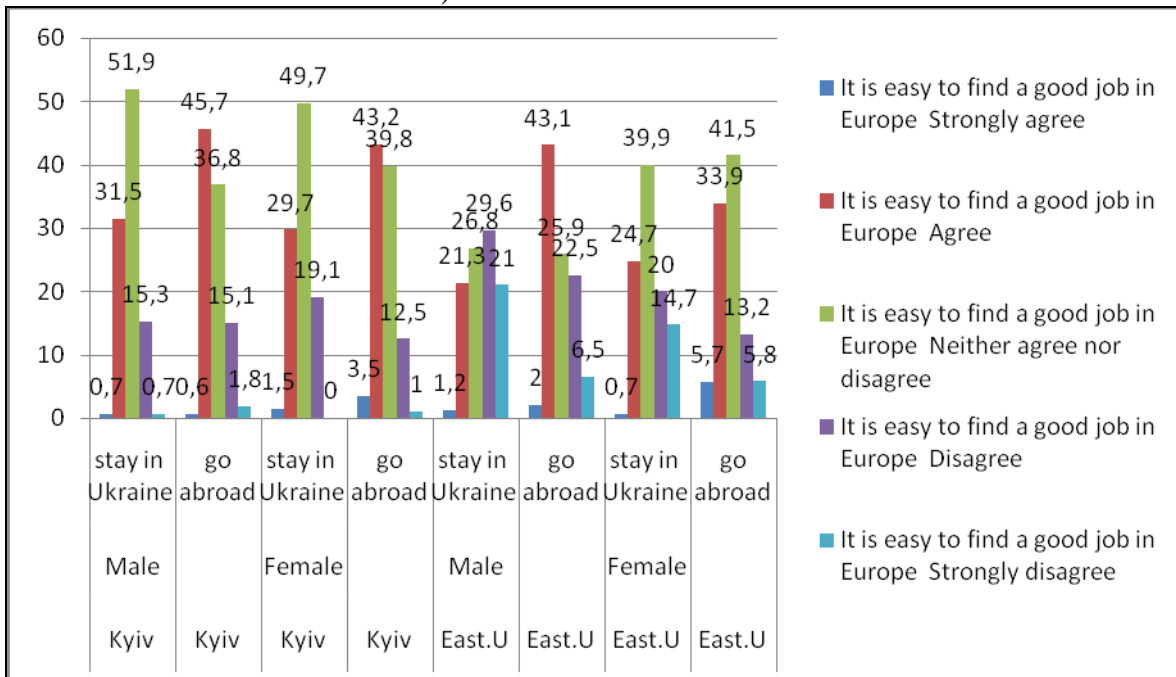
**Graph 3.b** It is easy to find a good job in Europe (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

To support this view, one of the informants from Western Ukraine noted that “*I do not think that it is much easier to find a job there [...] after the crisis they have to work on some lower positions*” (41126, Zbaraz research area).

**Graph 3.c** It is easy to find a good job in Europe (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Overall, in all research areas, the positive attitude towards the labor market correlates directly with migration aspirations, revealing no significant gender differences. The employment issue delivered the greatest number of qualitative evidence. Informants were the most responsive any time the employment issue was touched upon. This is a striking difference to the e.g. political topics and corruption practices discussed, which many of them were not willing to dwell upon. This is no wonder, as the employment situation is difficult in Ukraine.

This is not necessarily an aftermath of the crisis outburst in 2008, but rather the consequence of simply worsening by the crisis of an unreformed economy. According to the interviewed Ukrainians, problems with employment are not to be reduced to merely the absence of working places. A burning problem is low payments which only allow surviving below the poverty line. The problems mentioned include also widely spread unofficial salaries and a lack of social protection.

As far as Europe is concerned, people with migration experience or at least inhabitants of areas with high migration flows are less optimistic about the European labor market than their counterparts in Central Ukraine but point to decent salaries in the EU and high social protection compared to Ukraine.

### **3. Fifty-Fifty approach<sup>7</sup>: equal opportunities in Ukraine and in Europe in terms of gender**

The issue of gender equality is one human right which is analyzed as a possible migration trigger in Ukraine. For this reason, this subchapter explores whether women and men enjoy equal rights in Ukraine, as perceived by the people themselves. The methodology used gave respondents a free hand in terms of issues on which to elaborate, while touching upon gender equality.

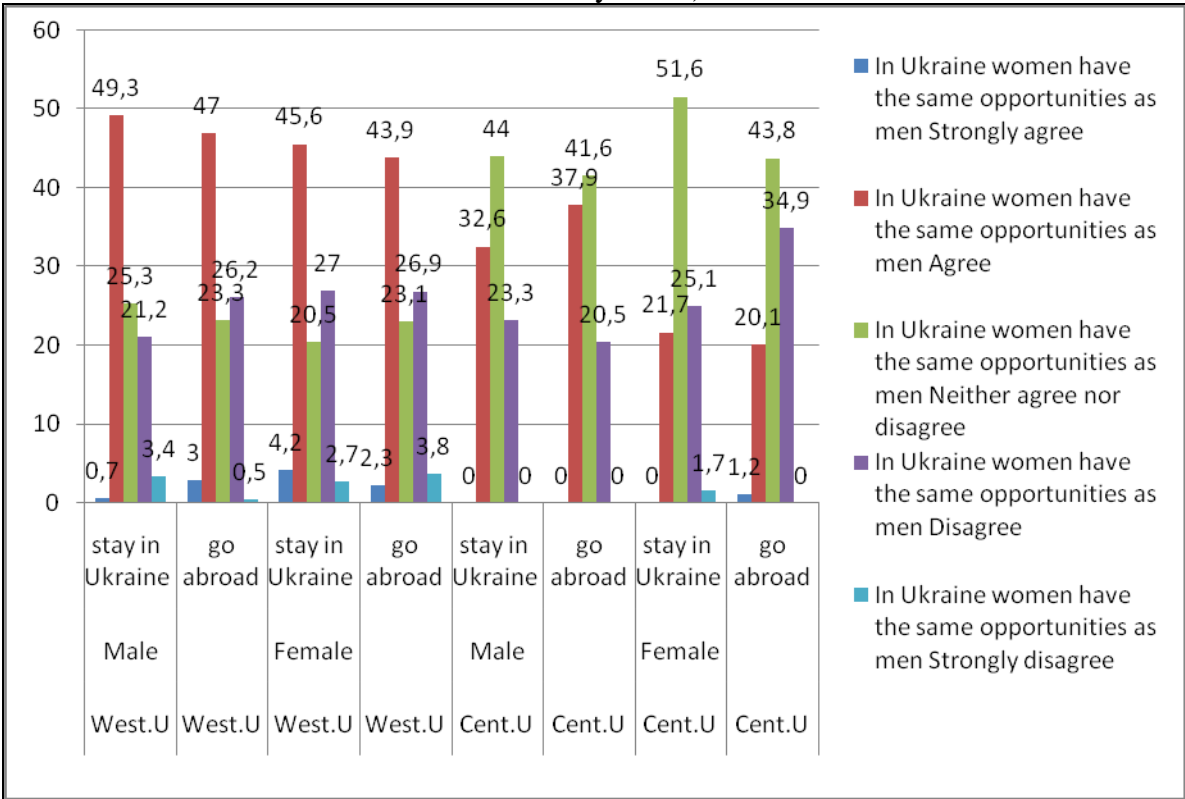
Focusing on the issue of gender equality, generally around 40 percent of respondents agree that women in Ukraine have the same opportunities as men do (Graphs 4.a and 4.b). Nevertheless, the figures are not strikingly different between genders. Interestingly, as one may note, men have a more positive outlook as far as gender equality is considered.

More respondents who want to stay in Ukraine believe in current equal opportunities for men and women, compared to respondents with migration aspirations. The capital (Solomyansky rayon) takes the lead in this respect. Out of the total number of men here with an intention to stay in Ukraine, the share of men who jointly agree (45.9 percent) or strongly agree (18.1 percent) that gender equality exists in Ukraine constitute 64 percent (Graph 4.b). This overall figure is followed by Eastern and Western Ukraine. However, in the case of Eastern Ukraine, the “stay in Ukraine” male respondent group only reaches 40.3 percent within the “agree” response option (Ibid.). In the case of Western Ukraine, the share of male respondents with a similar view is much higher - almost 50 percent (Graph 4.a).

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<sup>7</sup>“Fifty-fifty” was the first reaction in many enquiries about gender equality in Ukraine before further elaboration on the topic.

**Graph 4.a** Women in Ukraine have the same opportunities as men (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

The figures are considerably lower in Central Ukraine within the same respondent group. Notably, this is the only one research locality having absolutely no male respondents with an intention to migrate who would strongly agree with the given statement about current gender equality in Ukraine. The qualitative data provide no evidence which could be argumentative enough to explain this disparity.

Unlike the findings among male respondents, which display a generally more positive view on the issue, survey results among female counterparts speak of the actual existence of gender inequalities. Taking a look at female respondents with migration aspirations from Eastern Ukraine, one can notice there are jointly over one third of women who disagree (19.3 percent) or strongly disagree (13.9 percent) that gender equality exists in Ukraine (Graph 4.b).

For comparison, the migration-orientated female respondent group from Central Ukraine produces almost the same share of women (34.9 percent) who are skeptical about gender equality in Ukrainian society (Graph 4.a). This correlation allows us to argue that Eastern Ukraine does not stand out amongst all other research areas when comparing the survey data. Because of this, predictions of human rights concerns in this region, as far as at least as gender inequality is concerned, are not confirmed.

The qualitative data detect several topics which the majority of informants address in their reflections on the gender equality in Ukraine. Predominantly they refer to salaries, labor conditions and spheres of employment. Another major layer concerns the role of women in politics and their chances of entering the political arena. Moreover, informants described major changes regarding gender issues which have taken place in Ukraine over time.

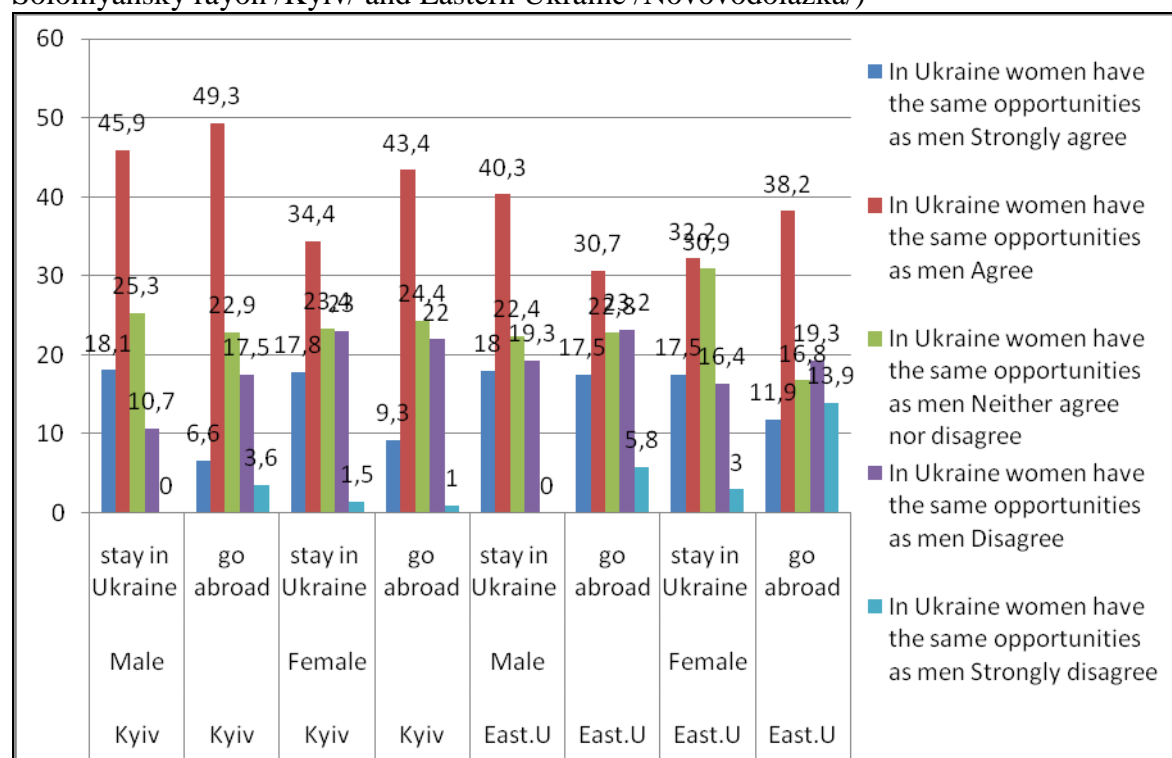
An example of women observing themselves “[...] you know, lately women have become more progressive. In the past top positions were mostly held by men; but nowadays more and more women put aside family matters and pursue their careers. So, I think the

*proportion now is fifty-fifty*” (43109, Solomyansky rayon research area). This is an opinion of a female manager in her 30s, who is employed in one of the Kyiv-based international companies.

Despite the widely supported statement that there are more chances for women available in present-day Ukraine, this fact seems not to motivate women enough to stay in their home country. For example, more than 40 percent of migration-oriented women from Kyiv (Solomyansky rayon research area) agree (43.4 percent) and strongly agree (9.3 percent) that women and men in Ukraine enjoy equal rights (Graph 4.b). It is also worth mentioning that among women from Western Ukraine with the intention to go abroad, proponents of current gender equality in Ukraine (“agree” response option) constitute almost the same percentage (43.9 percent).

Interestingly, some informants pointed to the problem of domestic violence in this context. One of the informants indicated that “[...] *household problems in relationships between men and women are quite common in some families. At the institutional level, I think, these problems are not significant*” (41117, Zbarazh research area). Domestic violence is an issue for Ukraine. For example in 2012 almost 120 thousand victims of domestic violence approached police in Ukraine (Rodis 2012).

**Graph 4.b** Women in Ukraine have the same opportunities as men (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Additionally, this points to the traditional roles of men and women in Ukrainian society, especially in small towns and villages “A women, if she got married, takes care of kids at home, and a man, I think, has to make more money and support a family than a woman (44220, Novovodolazka research area); “If she [a woman] is married, then she may not work, just bring up children” (42212, Novovodolazka research area). Besides the household, these traditional roles, as they are perceived, expand also to (self-)employment “when a woman and her husband are doing business. You know, there are no such business women here as they

*show [on TV]. If there is here a businessman, a woman is considered to be in a subordinate position to her husband, who is a businessman. Since, it is a family business”* (41129, Zbarazh research area).

The issue is perceived to be similar in Europe with men and women enjoying equal opportunities *“Well, on the whole, I think there is no difference. Considering the fact they stand for equal rights, they insist on equality and advocate it passionately. I think gender does not matter much there”* (43108, Solomyansky rayon research area).

Some informants attributed equal opportunities to equality in employment chances and promotion *“Nowadays equality has been accepted everywhere, all over the world. Both woman and man can hold a high leading position”* (44131, Novovodolazka research area).

Despite many voices saying that women have made a tremendous step in getting better employment opportunities, it is still widely visible that men are better paid in Ukraine.

This statement is supported in different parts of the country *“Choosing whether a man or woman is going to maintain the household, a man would rather go to work, as he will get higher payment than a woman. Therefore men prefer going to work and earn more, because women earn only some money from 700 UAH to a thousand”* (44106, Novovodolazka research area). At the same time, some other situations have been portrayed when a woman takes a financial burden to earn a living for the family *“Sometimes it happens that a man does not have a job, then a woman undertakes care for the household and earns money for living, and it also happens vice versa”* (41238, Zbarazh research area).

Considering the payscale for men and women, informants identify certain “female” spheres of employment where employees are predominantly women. Moreover, they point to the fact that it is a kind of tradition that certain work is seen as expected to be done by women, though this does not have to necessarily be the case anymore.

A person from Zbarazh observed that *“Women are in general salespersons, waitresses in bars, somewhere cooks, in some restaurants. These are mainly the jobs, which get paid at least twice less than the wages of men...”* (41112, Zbarazh research area). Another person makes a similar observation about “female” employment *“Well, on the one hand I can say that we have many women working as a janitor. This fact I have noticed, sometimes when I go somewhere I see people who are cleaning, and mostly women do that physical work, it seems that it should be male work, but in most cases I see women”* (41118, Zbarazh research area).

Observations of “female” and “male” jobs concern also some other professions *“For example, among accountants you can find both men and women, but for some reason I have never met a male accountant”* (43104, Solomyansky rayon research area). A similar statement about the fact that cleaning is done by women was made in Eastern Ukraine *“They [women] work as nurses or cleaners there [in rayon centre], and men work as guards mostly”* (44215, Novovodolazka research area). A person from the hotel industry observed that *“A waiter is considered a profession abroad; in our country it is more a casual job. In other words [abroad], if a man began to work as a waiter in 20, by 40 he can still be doing this work [...] for our men waiter is not a profession, it is just a way to earn money”* (43127, Solomyansky rayon research area).

Male employees are generally more preferred in Ukraine. Both male and female informants agree that this tendency is noticeable. The reason is that they are less involved in the household and bringing up children. A woman from a Central Ukrainian town made it clear *“I think they [men] spend less time on sick leave, as they say, they are less busy with children, housework, all domestic problems. They somehow find it easier, so employers prefer men in this regard. They are more willing to deal with men, of course”* (42113, Znamyanska research area).



Informants emphasize the availability of jobs as another problem. There are more jobs for women that are available nowadays and this has less to do with the reluctance of employers to hire women. Previously it was easier for a man to find a job but, over the course of time, things have changed “[...] perhaps within 10-15 years. Nowadays more or less there are offices here, and there is a school, and mainly women are employed there. Earlier we had an enterprise, now it is closed or resold to anybody, I don't know. Mainly men worked there, a man had a possibility to get a job” (44216, Novovodolazka research area).

Informants also reported the violation of women's rights, specifically the refusal of employers to grant them paid sick leave, which is of course an infringement of the law. A mother of several children from Kyiv argues “In Ukraine they [employers] certainly don't like to hire women with kids. If children are of school age, it is simpler; but even then various problems might occur. What if they get sick or so - who wants this trouble? You will have to take a sick day. They will let you go, of course, but this won't be paid sick leave” (43132, Solomyansky rayon research area).

One more aspect which was also not omitted is maternity leave. This was presented as a more and more frequent reason not to employ women “Men are in a better position in terms of employment chances because a woman can go on maternity leave any time. And her position is to be kept for her until she is back. And an employer must take her back”. This male informant goes on to say that a woman can take 3-year maternity leave according to Ukrainian law and this is what employers are obviously dissatisfied with “I always encounter that and hear about that”, he remarked (43107, Solomyansky rayon research area).

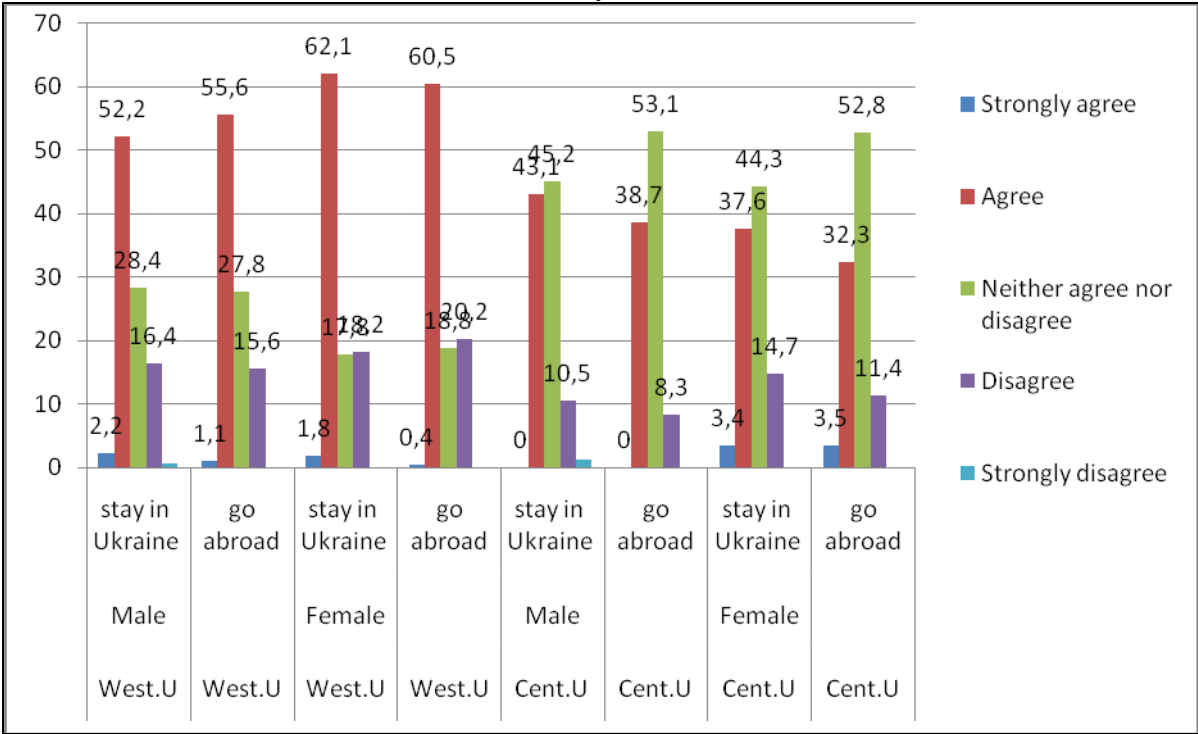
Another adjacent issue addressed is age which was described as critical for women. Above the age of 30 it is harder for women to get a job in Ukraine because of the prospect of maternity leave. Some informants were more skeptical about the age of female colleagues “After 25 she wants to have a baby and take maternity leave, which means a break from work and extra costs for the employer. Even if she has no children yet, she is sure to get pregnant and take maternity leave within the nearest 3 or 4 years. Every employer wants every employee to be predictable and work for at least 5-year period. That is, there is always a risk for an employer”. This was an opinion expressed by a 34 year old sales manager from Kyiv (43135, Solomyansky rayon research area) who represents a rather widespread view on the matter.

The situation in EU countries was portrayed as different in terms of the duration of the maternity leave which is much shorter. Women there do not suffer from unequal treatment in the employment sphere. One rather frequent remark was “Well, I guess, first of all there is no such thing as 3-year leave for women. It is just 1 year or 1 year and a half for women there. Employers are more comfortable with this situation. 1 year and a half is rather proper time [...]” (43107, Solomyansky rayon research area). With regard to Ukraine however, voices were heard saying that the age problem is sensitive for Ukrainian women and it is not necessarily connected to the maternity leave issue but has to do with changes over time “It is now quite a different attitude. If you go to a city, even to a rayon centre, it is not that easy even to find a job as a nurse, especially if you have turned forty. What about a sixty year old woman then?” (44215, Novovodolazka research area).

Survey results identified no significant correlation between perceived gender inequality in EU countries and migration aspirations of Ukrainians. Only Western Ukraine stands out in this respect due to the high migration flow, women from this research locality could be considered as more informed or at least they could project this statement based on the treatment of labor migrants in the EU which they have encountered themselves or rely upon experiences of relatives and friends. In quantitative terms, migration-oriented women from Western Ukraine with a skeptical approach towards gender equality in Europe constitute

an essentially larger proportion (20.2 percent) compared to female counterparts from other research localities (Graph 4.c).

**Graph 4.c** Women in Europe have the same opportunities as men (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



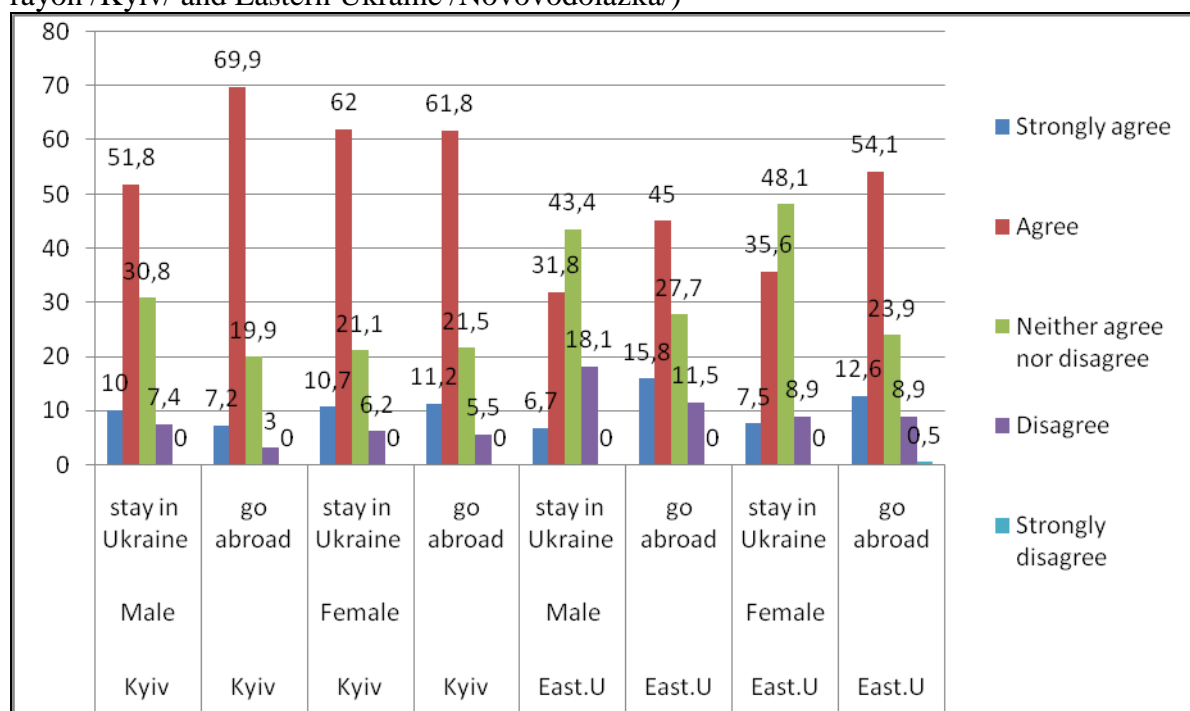
Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

The survey results offer evidence that significantly more respondents residing in Kyiv believe that opportunities for men and women in Europe are equal. There are in total over 60 percent of respondents (61.7 percent) irrespective of gender and migration aspirations (Graph 4.d). Notably, intentions to stay in Ukraine or to go abroad produce very close shares of female respondents (62 percent and 61.8 percent respectively) who agree with the given statement on current gender equality in the EU (Ibid.). The survey findings among male respondents from the capital depict a slightly different correlation. Among men who are willing to migrate, almost 70 percent (69.9 percent) support the view on equality of opportunities for men and women in Europe (Ibid.).

In any case, such high figures in Kyiv could be attributed to the fact that respondents from this locality are more knowledgeable about the state of affairs in the EU in terms of gender equality or it might be equally assumed that the observance of human rights is of a much higher value for them than for people from other regions. While taking the decision whether to migrate or not, people from provinces first of all tend to put an emphasis on earning possibilities abroad.

Qualitative findings do not provide ample information about women’s chances to be engaged in politics in Ukraine. Generally speaking, the following query depicts how the situation looks “*Though women do find their way in politics too now, they are not there in masses*” (42203, Znamyanska research area).

**Graph 4.d** Women in Europe have the same opportunities as men (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovolodazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Feedback on whether and how women are engaged in politics is quite contradicting across the research areas. For example, an informant from Western Ukraine confirmed that in their locality “A woman is the Head of Rayon State Administration” (41121, Zbarazh research area). By contrast, an informant from Central Ukraine admits that “The fact is that I’ve never seen any woman run for a position in the local government” (42105, Znamyanska research area). At any rate, often emphasized was that “[...] If there were women in politics, in my view, there would be more order in the country” (42203, Znamyanska research area).

All in all, the majority of respondents attached the question of gender equality predominantly to employment chances and in particular to wage levels, labor conditions and spheres of employment available for women and men. Qualitative interviews provided numerous supporting arguments and personal stories connecting gender inequalities and employment in Ukraine. On the other hand, the equality of opportunities for men and women in political domain and beyond were widely untouched or only in a limited scope.

Moreover, the obtained findings speak also for the traditional character of Ukrainian society. The qualitative evidence was not sporadic which pointed to traditional roles being preserved in Ukraine. However, these are apparently exposed more in the regions of the country rather than in the capital.

#### 4. A “scary to recall”<sup>8</sup> story: the healthcare system

Healthcare services belong to the basic set of public services and are always one of the most frequently in demand. Therefore, access to these services and their availability could be treated as a valuable indicator to assess the quality of life in a particular country or region.

<sup>8</sup>This was a description of the healthcare system in Ukraine, given by the informant from Central Ukraine (42111, Znamyanska research area).

Additionally, the level of healthcare services could also be regarded as an indicator to understand the ties between the overall advancement of the healthcare system and migration aspirations, should provision of medical services be far below citizens' expectations and needs.

#### 4.1 Healthcare as Ukrainian elegy

On the whole, opinions on the healthcare system in Ukraine are very unsatisfactory. The vast majority of respondents gave strongly negative evaluations. Not surprisingly, the percentage of respondents who evaluate the Ukrainian healthcare as bad or very bad is largest from migration-oriented people in Eastern and Western Ukraine. This could be explained through the high migration rate of these localities and, consequently, experience gained abroad or at least more first-hand information available about the provision of healthcare services abroad.

The figures among migration-oriented male respondents reach over 80 percent (jointly "bad" and "very bad" options) in both these localities as well as among both men and women in the capital (Graphs 5.a and 5.b). The figures among female respondents with the propensity to migrate from Western Ukraine are lower but still significant, exceeding 70 percent, whereas in Eastern Ukraine the figure is over 80 percent in this respondent category (Ibid.).

In general, the share of respondents from Central Ukraine who want to go abroad and who also express their disappointment with the quality and accessibility of healthcare services in Ukraine is lower than in other parts of the country (Graph 5.a). This, however, does not indicate they see the whole situation with the healthcare differently, only that this research locality provides more undecided male and female respondents, compared to other localities - close to 30 percent or more (Ibid.).

In fact, the healthcare system in Ukraine has declined significantly in the last two decades. This has been thoroughly reflected in feedback from ordinary Ukrainians. This concerns the material basics of medical facilities "*there is lack of medical equipment*" (42109, Znamyanska research area), "*[...] we lack support from the government and equipment first of all*" (42207); as well as a professional level of medical staff.

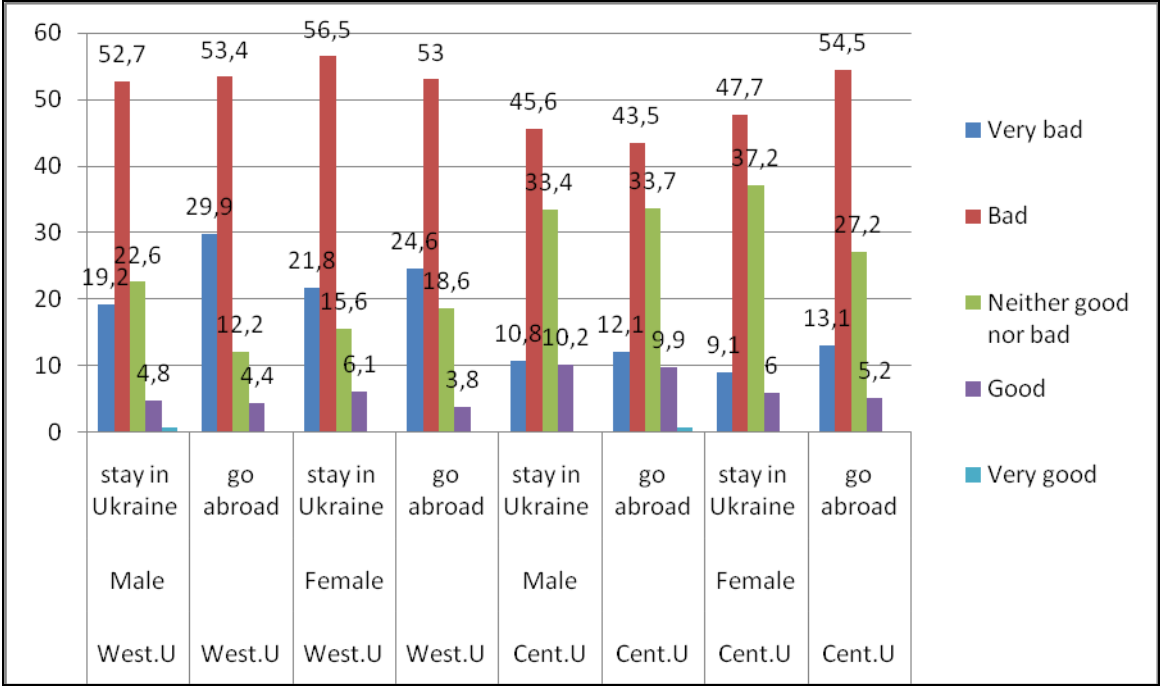
People in Central Ukraine recall past times, noting that previous medical services were of much better quality "*It is said that the medicine had been "closer to people" before*", "*I remember when I worked in the kindergarten being young. I had a small child and it was pleasant to come to the hospital*" (42106, Znamyanska research area). Generally, people portray their present-day experience with hospitals in very dark colors, "*[...] to get to our hospital in Znamenka<sup>9</sup> is just terrible*", "*it's very scary to recall*" (42111, Znamyanska research area).

Though the issue of medical insurance was largely untouched by informants (similarly to medical reform in a broader sense), worth bringing to attention is that there was no reference to the Constitution, which stresses that it is a constitutional right in Ukraine to get medical service free of charge and is prescribed in the Ukrainian Basic Law. This should be highlighted as quite often this fact is mentioned in Ukraine, in particular in Ukrainian media. Instead, in reality, people "*[...] have to buy medication (even during hospitalization) and, in some other cases, they have to pay for medical services*" (41117, Zbarazh research area). Another informant from this locality emphasized that "*[...] it is not only in Zbarazh, I would say it is throughout Ukraine. Firstly, nobody will give you medicine for free, it is very rare that this can happen [...]*" (41112).

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<sup>9</sup> Russian spelling of Znamyanka

**Graph 5.a** The healthcare in Ukraine is (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Perceptions and expectations in the sphere of healthcare demonstrate that many people in Ukraine have a paternalistic attitude towards the state. The majority of people did not point to the necessity for the healthcare system to undergo a profound reforming process, introducing insurance based medical services which are inevitable to improve the quality of those services. Ukrainians just complained about poor accessibility to free of charge medicine which they previously enjoyed.

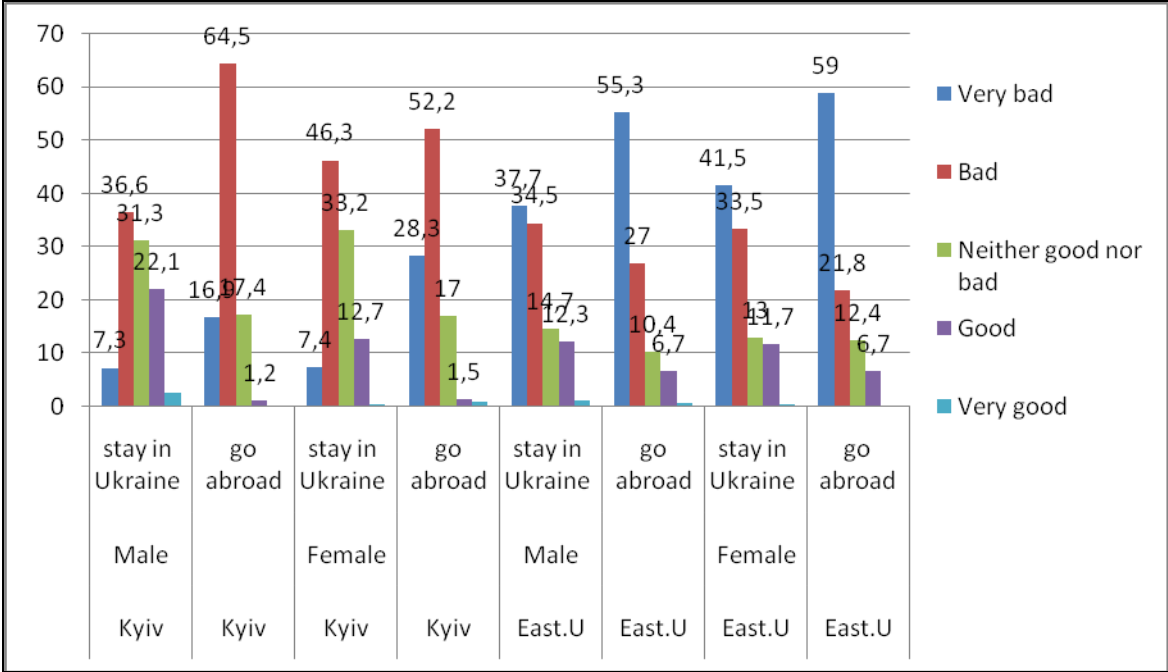
The issue of getting medical services on a free of charge basis also appeared in relation to Europe and European healthcare systems. As a matter of fact, one of the informants compared the activity of the Red Cross in Italy and in Ukraine. An inhabitant of Zbarazh reported that this organization assisted cancer surgery for Ukrainians in Italy on a free of charge basis, adding “We also have Red Cross in Ukraine, but I haven’t heard them doing free of charge...” (41242, Zbarazh research area).

The Solomyansky district in Kyiv is the most pronounced case with regard to a correlation between positive assessments of the healthcare system in the country and lack of migration aspirations. For example, male respondents who prefer to stay in Ukraine constitute 22.1 percent of those who evaluate Ukrainian healthcare in positive terms (Graph 5.b). This could be clear indication that medical services in the capital are on a higher level than in provinces where medical services are provided in a very limited scope. The project’s results delivered plenty of evidence to support this statement:

*“If someone wants to get medical treatment, he/she goes to Kyiv or Kirovograd, or to other big cities. Even, for example, some surgery is very rarely carried out here, mostly people go to Kirovograd for surgery, and if the case is a very difficult one, the surgery will be in Kyiv”* (42109, Znamyanska research area)<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup>The same feedback were presented in particular in the interviews 41121 and 41112 (Zbarazh research area).

**Graph 5.b** The healthcare in Ukraine is (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

The same opinion was expressed by another informant from Znamyanska “Here if any serious health problems, a person is advised to go to Kirovograd, more often, of course, to Kyiv. We don’t have such serious examinations here” (42103). For their part, people from smaller villages argue they can receive better medical assistance only in rayon towns. The informant from the village of Dmytrivka, which is close to the town of Znamyanka, stated that “People can receive only minimal first aid. In the other case, you need to go to Znamenka or somewhere else where you will be sent” (42202).

The healthcare system on the periphery deteriorates continuously because of the general lower quality of life there and lacking opportunities compared to in big cities and in the capital. As observed, medical personnel prefer to move to big cities in search of better employment opportunities. Informants complained about the very low number of doctors left in provincial towns:

“But there are no very good specialists in Znamenka. Because Znamenka is a small town and a good specialist will never stay for too long here” (42103, Znamyanska research area).

“Doctors here can be counted on fingers. Well, there are five, at the very most six good specialists whom you can trust, whom you can approach. We have only one pediatrician; one may say that she is our family doctor” (42111, Znamyanska research area).

Respondents conclude that doctors who are left in provincial towns are less knowledgeable and experienced. This may partly be a reason for their stay, because they are less competitive in the employment market in big cities. Informants also questioned the competence of doctors in the provinces, saying that doctors:

“[...] might treat some rhinitis or cold, but not anything serious. That’s why it’s better in such cases to just take a pile of money and go to Kharkiv, Donetsk or other oblast centers and get your treatment there” (44128, Novovodolazka research area).

People raised complaints that doctors are not interested in conducting a full medical examination and providing medical treatment but are more eager just to prescribe medicine. People reacted negatively to the fact that there are a lot of drug stores in every hospital, arguing they exceed the actual need, *“The most disappointing fact is that there are five drugstores on every floor in the hospital. Every doctor has his/her pharmacy”* (42106, Znamyanska research area).

A pilot project is currently underway in Ukraine which will produce re-arrangements in the provision of medical service with a significant number of medical facilities being closed. The media reports that this strategy will particularly target accident and emergency stations in villages and clinics in rayon towns with a significant proportion of the elderly (Oganesyanyan, 2011). The demographic shortfall which Ukraine is facing is not the only reason to begin reform. Due to a shortage of funds, the government is no longer able to support the medical infrastructure nationwide. These governmental plans raised a wave of protests in different parts of the country. The opinion of protesters matched arguments given by informants:

*“If you are young, you can go to Znamenka or somewhere else. But older people can’t do it so easily; they have to go to our hospital. It is necessary for older people to have the opportunity to go to a hospital. Also it is important to have an emergency department here and some medical workers who can give you a treatment such as an injection or dropper etc. [...]”* (42205, Znamyanska research area).

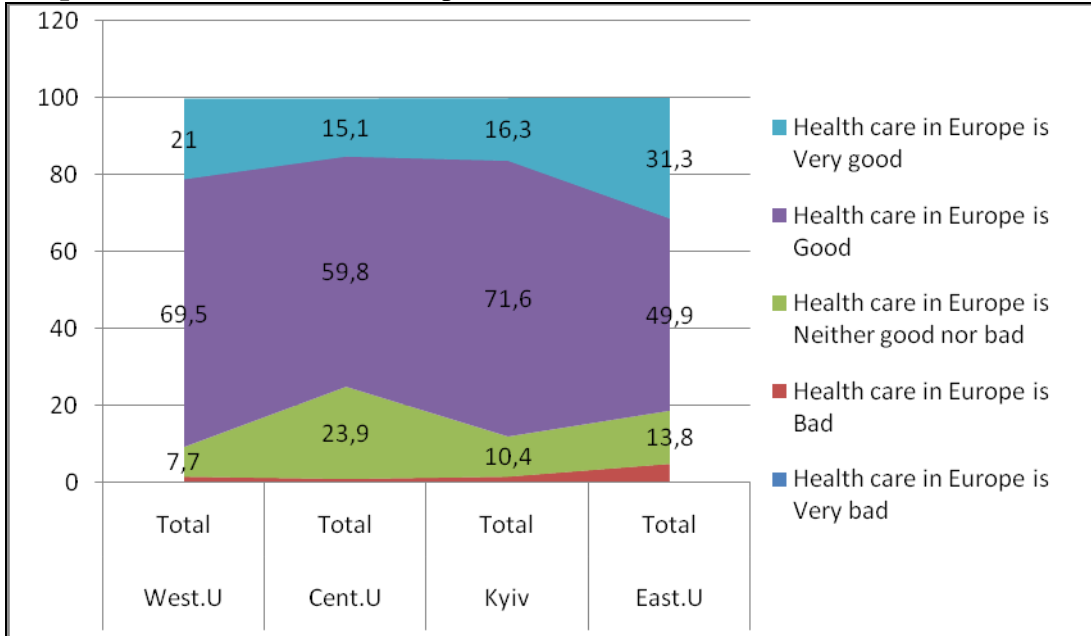
Informants also exemplified how the healthcare system is affected by the poor state of public services *“[...] if, for example, roads are blocked with snow in winter or something, doctors are unlikely to get to the neighboring villages”* (44220, Novovodolazka research area).

#### *4.2 Health care as European dithyramb*

Healthcare in Europe is seen as well developed. In total, between 74.9 percent (Central Ukraine) to over 90 percent (Western Ukraine) of the respondents jointly assessed European healthcare as good or very good (Graph 5.c). This is true for respondents of both genders from both categories - “to stay home/go abroad”. People in the Ukrainian capital tend to evaluate the quality of medical services in EU countries higher than people in Eastern Ukraine: 87.9 percent in total vs. 81.2 percent in total, combining “agree” and “strongly agree” options (Ibid.).

Comparing the healthcare system in Ukraine and in Europe, respondents point out not only technological advancement of medicine in Europe *“[...] healthcare is at a high level over there; that is, equipment, as they say, goes hand in hand with the latest technology”* (42105, Znamyanska research area), but also the attitude towards patients and human health, *“Perhaps it’s nevertheless better in Europe than in our country, because the attitude towards a person’s health and the healthcare is better in Europe. Here the attitude is not so good”* (44216, Novovodolazka research area).

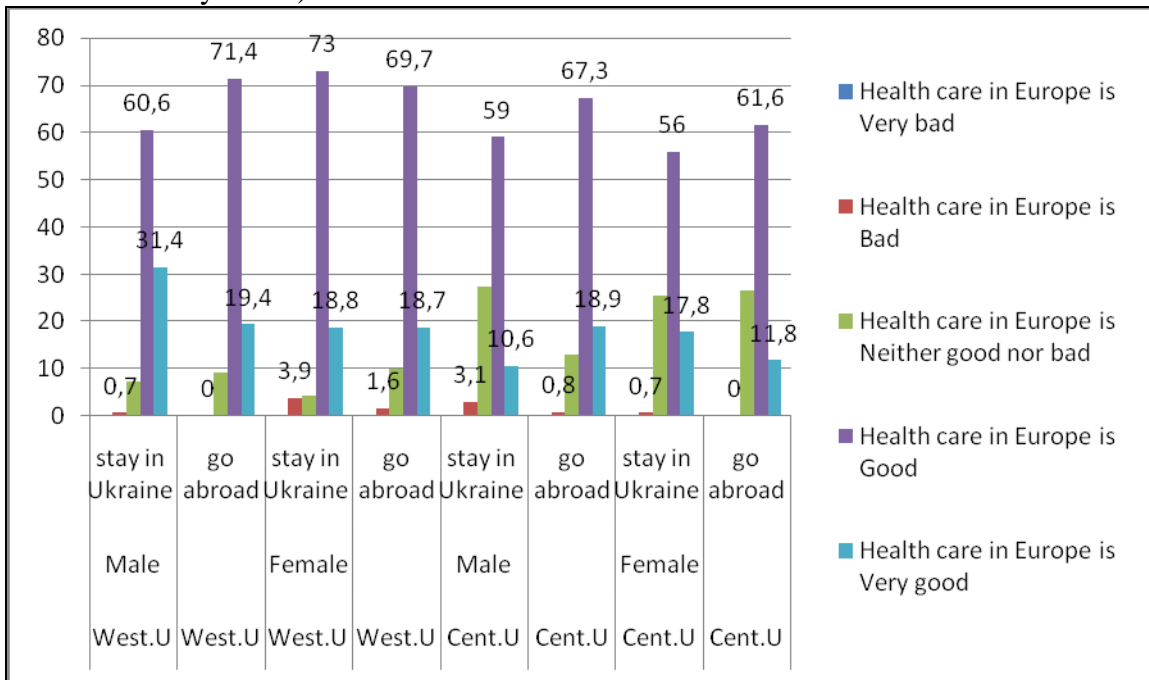
**Graph 5.c** The healthcare in Europe is



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

With relation to Ukraine, informants highlighted a correlation between the attitude of medical staff to a patient and payment for medical services. In the words of one of them *“That is, the attitude, personal attitude of medical staff, how warm towards you it will be, depends on the amount of money”* (42107, Znamyanska research area). The following query about the healthcare in Europe, how it is perceived, is a striking contrast *“[...] no matter who you are, whether you are homeless or you are a well-known politician, the attitude towards you will be the same”*(41240, Zbarazh research area).

**Graph 5.d** The healthcare in Ukraine is (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings



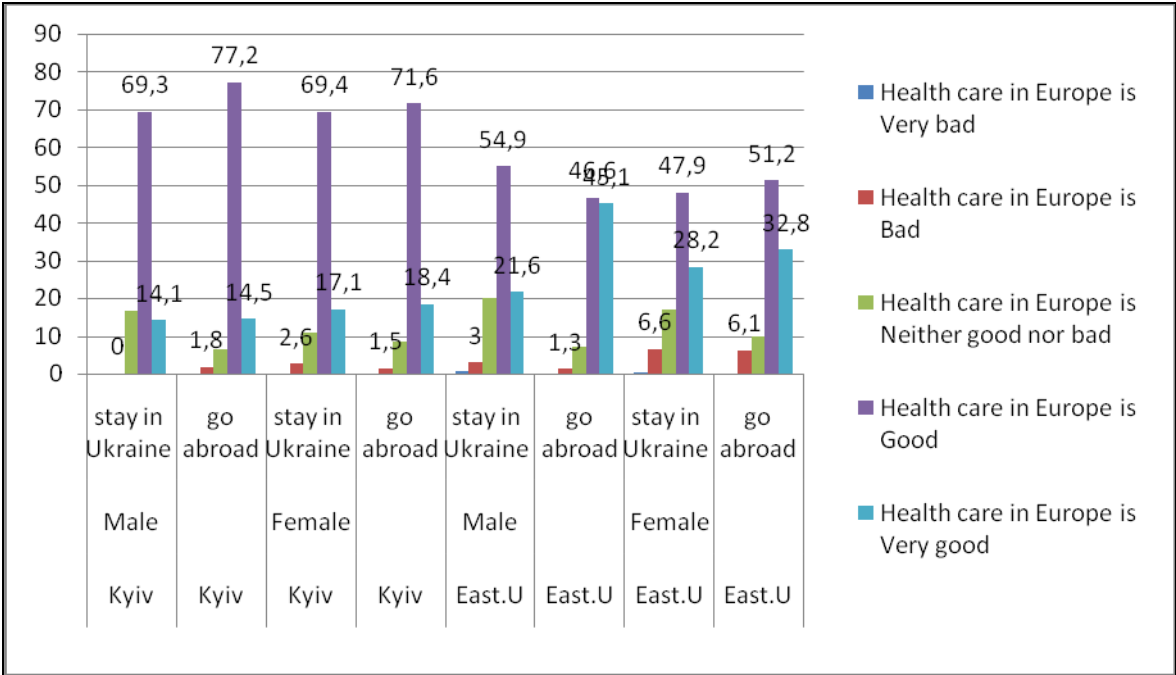
Additionally, the qualitative data indicate also the big gap in the quality of medical services provided at the local level in Europe and in Ukraine “[...] if we compare a provincial town in Denmark with the urban village of Nova Vodolaga, the difference is great” (44125, Novovodolazka research area).

Another indicator of good medical service in Europe for people in Ukraine is the fact that rich people from Ukraine prefer going to European hospitals for necessary treatment:

“All our businessmen, “new Ukrainians” are treated there and are satisfied. Apparently their medicine is much better than ours [...]” (42207, Znamyanska research area).

Nevertheless, the correlation between positive assessments of the European healthcare system and the propensity to migrate is not evident everywhere. A lot of respondents who assess the European healthcare system as good or very good are willing to stay in Ukraine. For instance, the share of (separately) men and women from the capital with an intention to stay in Ukraine is over 80 percent (Graph 5.e) among those with positive or very positive feedback on the healthcare system in the EU in this locality (jointly “agree” and “strongly agree” options). The figures are even higher (over 90 percent) among both men and women in Western Ukraine within these respondent groups (Graph 5.d).

**Graph 5.e** The healthcare in Europe is (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

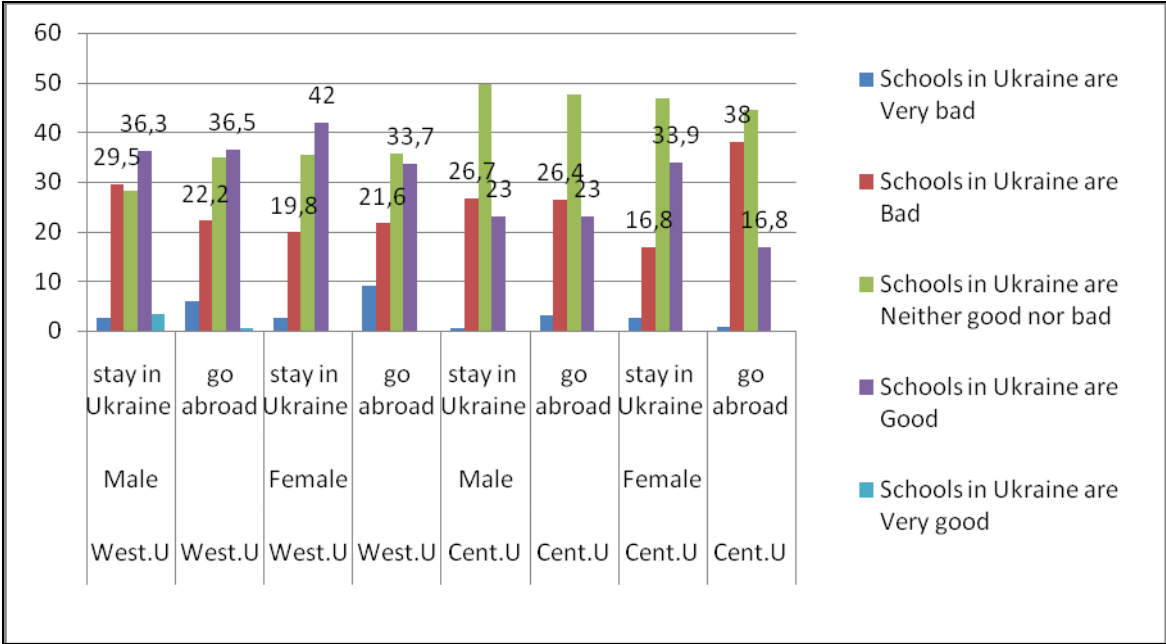
Overall, the healthcare system and provision of medical services in Ukraine are issues which received the most negative feedback. Moreover, the contrast with healthcare in the EU appeared to be the most striking, compared to other research topics. This fact reveals the level of deterioration which healthcare is facing in Ukraine. Special importance is devoted to the huge gap between the capital, big cities and the periphery in providing medical treatment. This has become deeper over time and is not expected to be bridged in the near future.

### 5. Comparative perceptions of education in Ukraine and in Europe

Education is a subject of analysis in this paper because it is an important ingredient of country’s economic development and quality of education, as it is perceived by ordinary citizens, and is an indicator which allows us to assess life satisfaction. This analysis is aimed to shed light on whether education as a human right and its violations is among factors which fuel migration from Ukraine.

Opinions on the quality of education in Ukraine are divided. Notably, informants (at least from Central Ukraine) admit that previously, as in case with healthcare, the situation was absolutely different “Generally it was believed before, that the level of education in the USSR was high, but now it is neglected” (44131, Novovodolazka research area); “[...] it was believed before, that we have the best education” (44220). When it comes to positive assessments of Ukrainian education, figures are higher among respondents who want to stay in Ukraine. Eastern Ukraine takes the lead among the research localities and reveals over the half of respondents with this mindset. They are 50.1 percent of male respondents and 55.5 of female respondents from this locality who intend to stay in Ukraine and think education in Ukraine is good (Graph 6.b).

**Graph 6.a** The schools in Ukraine are (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



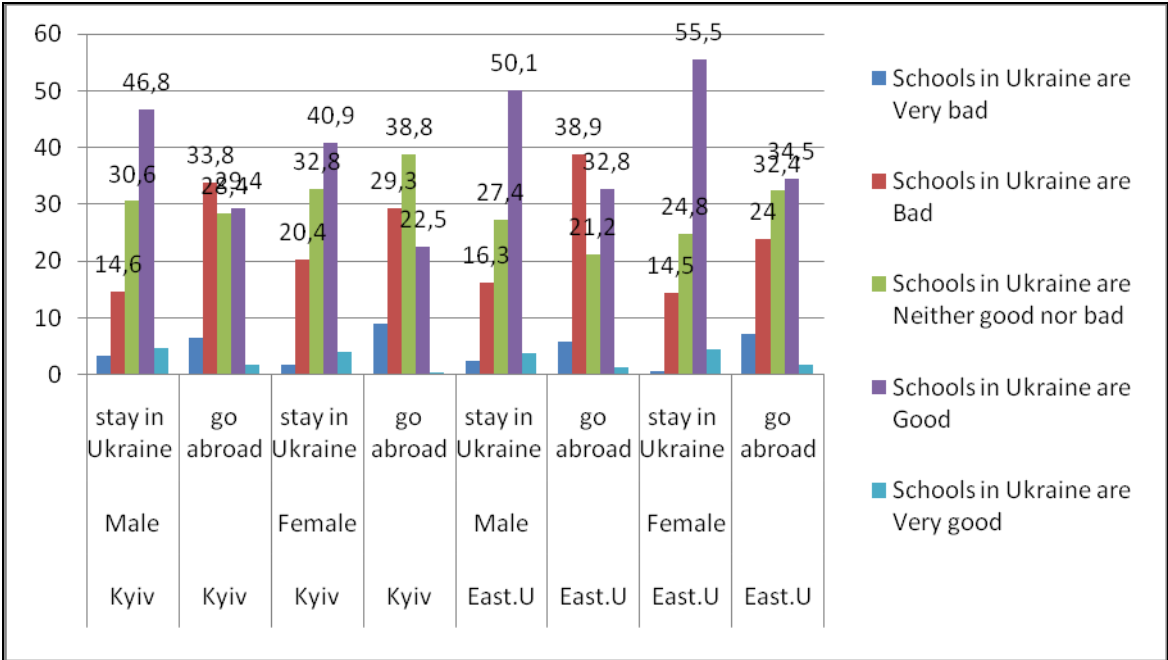
Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Eastern Ukraine is also an interesting case when it comes to evaluating the link between perceived quality of education in Ukraine and migration aspirations. Within the migration-exposed population, this region provided the highest share (38.9 percent) among male respondents who consider schools in Ukraine to be bad (Graph 6.b). The capital exhibits a similar tendency with relation to male respondents who want to go abroad nevertheless their share is lower and constitutes 33.8 percent (Ibid.).

Taking a note of female respondents inclined towards migration, one may see they are most numerous in Central Ukraine (38 percent) and in Kyiv (29.3 percent) when it comes to statements that education is of poor quality in Ukraine (Graphs 6.a and 6.b). Therefore, the

quality of education in Ukraine seems to constitute one of the reasons for leaving the country. Qualitative interviews supplied ample evidence endorsing this assumption.

**Graph 6.b** The schools in Ukraine are (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



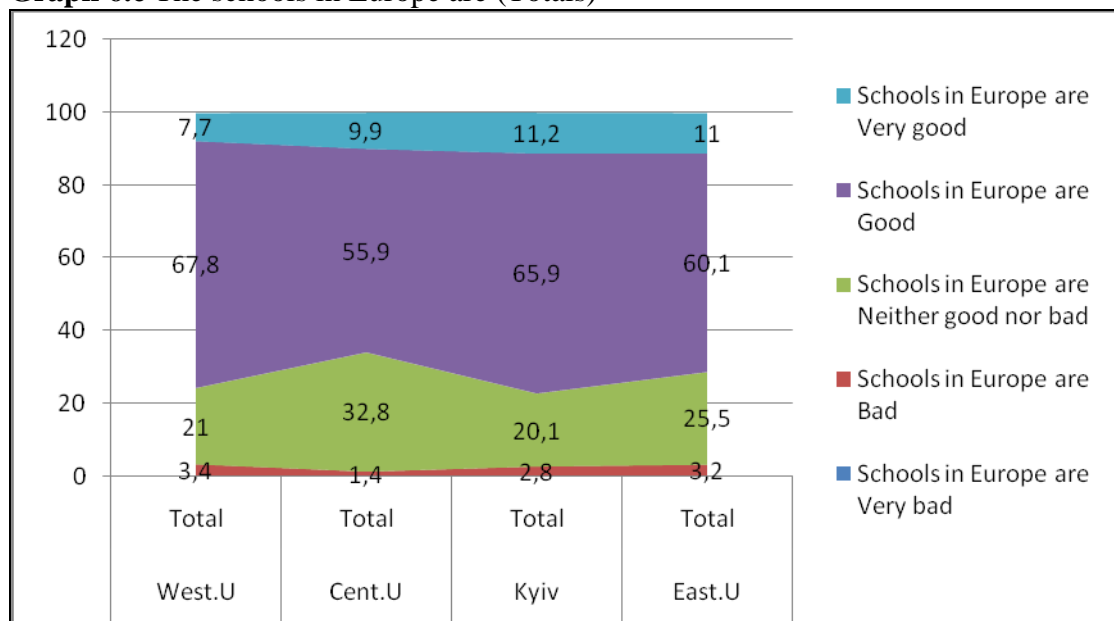
Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Generally, education in Europe received more positive feedback. Informants justified their view saying that “[...] education obtained in Europe is more valued [...] than education, obtained in Ukraine [...] since most of the educational institutions have not reached the international level yet” (41130, Zbarazh research area). However, many people are aware about approximation of Ukrainian educational standards with European ones “I have read that according to the Bologna process, the academic rights of our and European educational institutions are equal” (44128, Novovodolazka research area). Further arguments of why education “[...] is more prestigious and better there [in Europe]” indicate that “They [Europeans] can find a deserving job with diplomas they get there. And with our diplomas, I do not know, maybe except for several universities, but I am not sure about them as well, that it is possible to find a good job after graduation” (42108, Znamyanska research area).

Drawing on interview evidence, apart from the level of education itself, one more reason of why it is not easy to find a job in Ukraine was highlighted. This is the market demand for certain professions in present day Ukraine which not all students want to take into account. As one of the informants observed “[...] there is a need for more locksmiths, turners, electricians, for example even in our district. But still a lot of economists, financiers, and even doctors and practically lawyers... there are already too many of them, the state does not need as many as graduate” (41116, Zbarazh research area).

Many of the interviewed people do not evaluate the level of education obtained in Ukraine positively. More than that, it is described as “lamentable” meaning herewith “[...] the quality of lecturing and testing, the attitude of teachers to their students” (43108, Solomyansky rayon research area). A low salary was named as a major reason of why teachers are not motivated to perform better. As the informants observed “Because of lacking funding, teachers are not eager to teach kids properly - they teach just for kids to be able to get their school leaving certificate” (44128, Novovodolazka research area).

**Graph 6.c** The schools in Europe are (Totals)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

In relation to this, some informants do not tend to believe that poor quality of education is only a fault of teachers and give one more reason *“The teachers are good. I think everything depends on a pupil. If you want to study, you will study [...] if you don’t want to study, this level of education would not give you anything... the school is good here”* (41244, Zbarazh research area). Similar opinion was heard in Kyiv. One of informants is sure that students lack motivation to study and explains why it is so *“[...] much depends on students. Students don’t attend classes; they know they can buy anything. Why should you work if you can always give a bribe?”* (43133, Solomyansky rayon research area).

An important issue was touched upon and namely aging of school teachers. Due to low payment young teachers are not willing to work in schools. Often this is a kind of no way out decision or the last employment option. Thus, schools cannot be too selective and grant employment to smart graduates:

*“The average teacher’s age is 60 years perhaps [...] if a teacher leaves a school than s/he is replaced by a girl who is a young teacher and needs only tick in her record book proving that she has passed traineeship in this or that subject. But she does not provide pupils with knowledge. Three teachers can be changed within one and the same subject during a year. Pupils do not understand anything, everyone is glad and happy, but after all even good pupils do not get more than 9 points out of 12<sup>11</sup>...”* (44125, Novovodolazka research area).

Elaborating on the education issue, informants dwelled on lower quality of education on the periphery, compared to big cities. In this aspect the situation is generally similar to the one with healthcare:

*“R: What is a village school? Even if we compare a village and a district school in a city, the latter is at an upper stage. Kharkov<sup>12</sup> and a village - it is just like earth and heaven.*

*I.: And what does it depend on - on the teachers or on the curriculum?*

*R.: I think that... the teachers are so”* (44211, Novovodolazka research area).

<sup>11</sup> This is a maximum grade according to 12-point grading scale in Ukrainian schools.

<sup>12</sup> Russian spelling of Kharkiv

However not all interviewed individuals share this opinion. Some of them argue it is more a matter of perception in Ukraine that education on the periphery is of poorer quality than it is in reality is. One of informants tends to attribute this to Ukrainian mentality *“Perhaps this is such mentality. Someone says if it is a village, education has to be worse than education in cities”* (44208, Novovodolazka research area).

In many accounts this was stated that not only the periphery, but also big cities and the capital can't boast good education they provide. One of the informants aged under 30, with military background compares the National Technical University of Ukraine “Kyiv Polytechnic Institute” (KPI) and Poltava Military Institute of Communications. He is convinced that also education in Kyiv leaves much to be desired. He is able to compare as he studied not in Kyiv but has been living in the capital for quite a long time at the moment of an interview. He argues *“Strange as it might seem, whenever I talked to both senior officers and my officer colleagues they would always say that officers from Poltava are more knowledgeable. And even if they are not, they have a burning desire to become such”*. According to him, the most plausible explanation is that *“[...] the majority of KPI students come from Kyiv and it somehow influences the attitude towards officers and lecturers”*. *“[...] in Kyiv the process of education may get free of total control”*, he concluded (43104, Solomyansky rayon research area).

An argument for that is provided by a school teacher in physics from Kyiv, saying *“[...] quality [of education] depends on a university”*. Telling about her son she noted that *“The one my son graduated from has zero quality”*. This was the National Aviation University, located in Kyiv. She reported that her son *“[...] was a sort of full-time student”*, meaning herewith that he was not attending classes at all, but at the end he still managed to get the issue settled and received a diploma. Though, she added *“He has not even picked up his diploma, because it is of no use at all”* (43131, Solomyansky rayon research area).

This is a vivid illustration of the fact that education is being received for the sake of diploma itself, rather than for the sake of knowledge. The qualitative data demonstrate that jobs which many people have in Ukraine have little to do with their educational background. One of the queries reports that *“I know people who have two higher educational degrees and work at the “Baraban” market as salespeople”* (44211, Novovodolazka research area). Nevertheless, the attitude is changing step by step. Speaking about potential employers, one of the informants insisted that *“Of course, they will ask you about education; but it is your knowledge that matters; not what is written in your diploma. They will pay attention to your skills, your knowledge and your goals”* (42108, Znamyanska research area).

Due to this tendency - to receive education in order to have a degree - the image of Ukraine suffers abroad. For example, in 2011 Saudi Arabia refused to recognize Ukrainian diplomas of medical universities because of low level of training. An informant from this country who has been living in Ukraine for many years already commented on the situation *“They [Saudi authorities] know the level of knowledge here; they know that professors do not teach anything, that's the reason [...]”* (43133, Solomyansky rayon research area). Another informant, who obtained medical education in Ukraine and who is originally from Syria, argued that his Ukrainian diploma had to be acknowledged by the government and *“Besides a usual recognition procedure, some exams have to be taken”* (43103, Solomyansky rayon research area).

One more problem which was articulated is language training. It is assessed as being not sufficient on the local level:

*“The level of education is probably lower than in Kharkiv. Yes. Well, foreign language [English] is very poorly taught at schools, not to mention other languages. If at some other schools also German is taught, and there are*

*optional classes of Italian, Spanish, than in Vodolaha there is nothing of the kind” (44131, Novovodolazka research area).*

Notably, as in case with the healthcare system, people do not believe that education in Ukraine is good also because rich people from Ukraine prefer their children studying abroad:

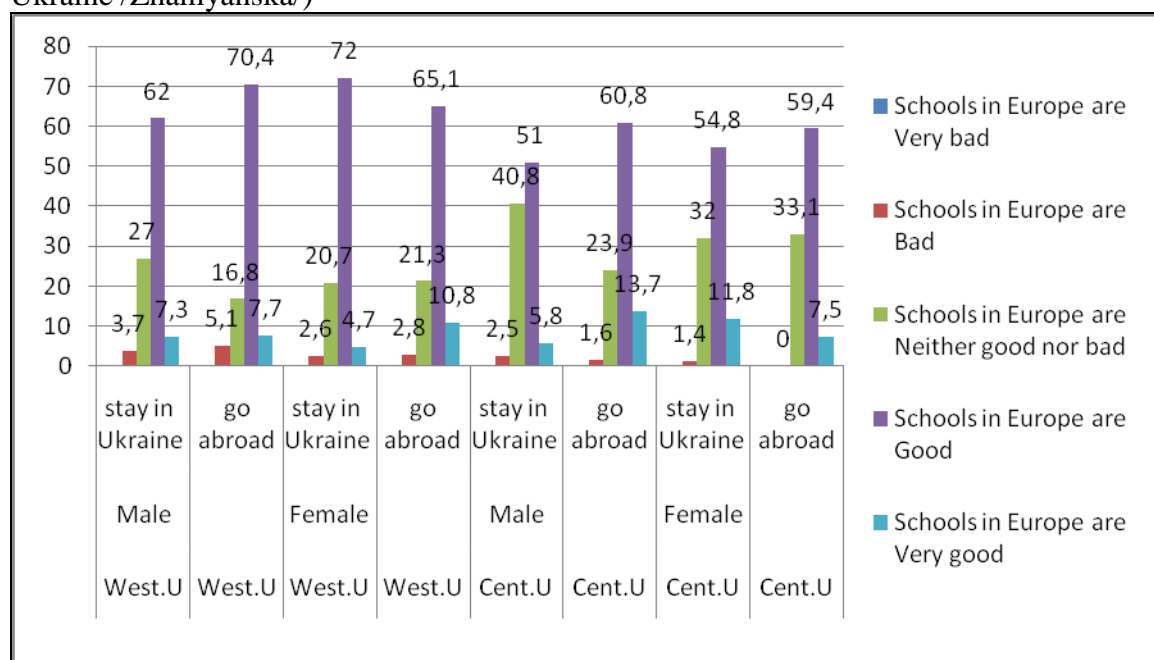
*“R.: [...] now our oligarchs for some reason send their children to study abroad. Perhaps, they know something, not without a reason.*

*I.: Do you think the well-off send them there for the sake of diploma, or quality of education?*

*R.: I think - quality. You can get a diploma here, and even buy it” (44220, Novovodolazka research area).*

As already pointed out, European education gains positive feedback. In particular, the vast majority of respondents - over 70 percent in three research localities (Solomyansky rayon, Zbarazh and Novovodolazka) think that schools in Europe are good (Graphs 6.c). But also in a low emigration area - Znamyanska, a strong majority of respondents (65.8 percent) shares this view (Ibid.).

**Graph 6.d** The schools in Europe are (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



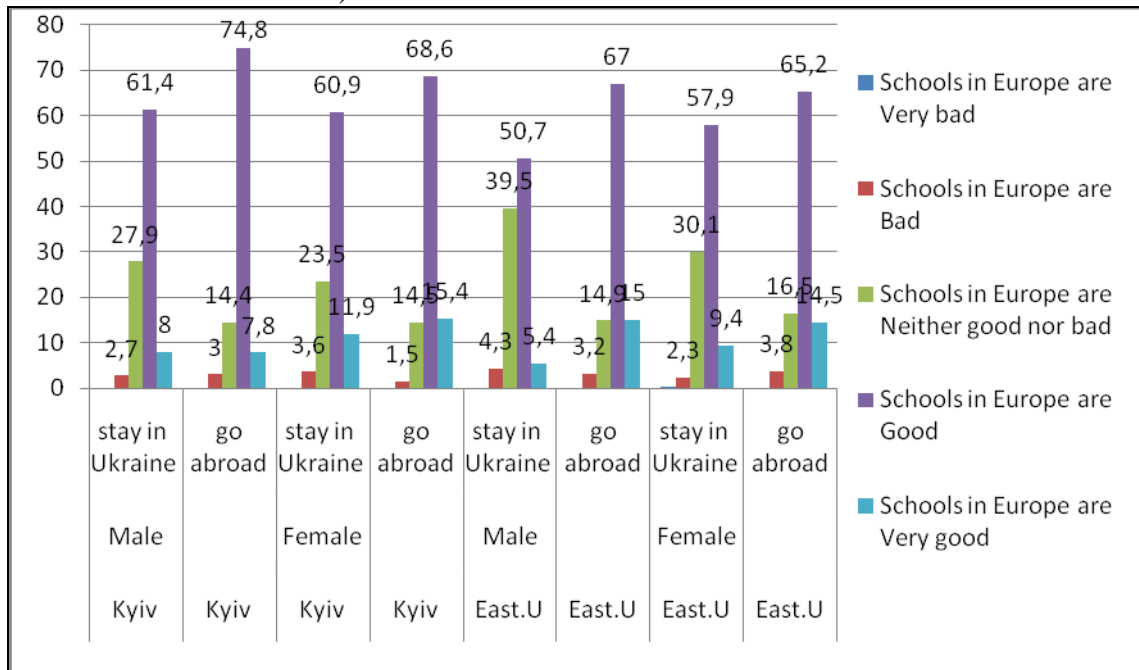
Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

The greater variety of opportunities for children in Europe is given a special attention in interviews, conducted in Znamyanska research area *“[...] there are a lot of different educational establishments there - universities and the like. There are a lot of opportunities for children’s development already in preschool years, unlike it is here” (42204, Znamyanska research area).* This type of opportunities for children seems to be an important argument for Ukrainians evaluating the quality of European education. Speaking about school children and students, another informant remarked *“[...] They don’t put extra, useless stuff into their heads, but study the things they like or are good at. Therefore, I think it is easier for them to find a job then” (41244, Zbarazh research area).*

A positive moment which was also mentioned is an opportunity for smart students and students with special needs to get a scholarship *“[...] it’s mostly paid for, but there is*

probably favorable studying as well... either due to intelligence or disability” (44131, Zbarazh research area).

**Graph 6.e** The schools in Europe are (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

No more than 5 percent of respondents irrespective of the research locality believe that European schools are bad (Graphs 6.d and 6.e). A lot of respondents answered they are “neither good nor bad” probably often suggesting they do not know. Their share is over 20 percent in total (irrespective of gender and migration intentions) in all research localities except for Central Ukraine where even more people (over 30 percent in total) admitted they are not knowledgeable enough about the issue to make a decision (Ibid.).

This is logical as respondents from this locality have less knowledge about education in Europe - either from their own experience or as information received from the third parties, compared to areas with either high out-migration level or high immigration rate. But even those who admit having no idea are able to make a decision, based on some observations like the following one:

*“I don’t know if [education in Europe] is better than ours and to what extent, but I consider it to be good. They don’t come here to study. On the contrary, our students go there”* [42103, Znamyanska research area].

The project findings discovered a myriad of problems in the Ukrainian society, related to education. This is e.g. the payscale and as a result aging of school teachers (the job is highly unattractive for young people), the corruption issue in the sphere of education etc. The centre-periphery divide has appeared to be an important feature in the context of quality of education. However, the view that education in the regions of Ukraine is of poorer quality compared to the one obtained in Kyiv is not unanimous. Many voices were heard making other reasons more responsible for the present poor state of education rather than a centre-periphery divide.

## 6. Wheels don't run without oil<sup>13</sup>: corruption perceptions

The corruption perception index ranks Ukraine very negatively<sup>14</sup> because of its high corruption level. Ukraine does not meet the standards of the Council of Europe's Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) with regards to the financing of political parties and misuse of administrative resources (European Parliament, 2012). A vast portion of corruption is reported as being prevalent in government institutions and state agencies, however Ukraine is also known for its petty corruption.

In this context, it was of great importance to find out what Ukrainian people think about corruption and whether, in their opinion, it is widely spread in their country. This chapter pursues the goal to evaluate corruption perceptions and identify the domains mostly eroded by corruption, but also to determine how corruption perceptions influence migration aspirations of people in Ukraine. Furthermore, the situation in Ukraine as far as corruption is concerned, was compared with the situation in European countries, regarding the way the latter is perceived by Ukrainian citizens.

### 6.1 How "wheels are run" and things are done in Ukraine

As already mentioned, Ukraine is highly ranked among countries with a high corruption level. Also the EUMAGINE project revealed that corruption is one of the major concerns of Ukrainian citizens. Those who agree and strongly agree that corruption is an issue in Ukraine form the vast majority of the population. This is a dominant view in all research areas, ranging from over 60 to over 80 percent (Graphs 7.a and 7.b).

Western and Central Ukraine dominate in the category "agree" that there is a lot of corruption in Ukraine; whereas Eastern Ukraine takes the lead in the category "strongly agree". Altogether the share of migration-exposed respondents, who argue there is a high corruption level in Ukraine, is over 80 percent among men and women in Western Ukraine (Graph 7.a). Likewise, men with propensity to migrate from Central Ukraine support this view with a total share also over 80 percent and women - over 70 percent (Ibid.). However even such high figures do not permit us to establish a correlation between corruption perceptions and a migration impetus which migration assumedly gives. This is so as respondents who want to stay in Ukraine are equally negatively minded when it comes to corruption assessment in Ukraine. At the same time it is an interesting finding about Znamyanska (Central Ukraine) because this locality is known for a low emigration rate.

As already noted, perceptions of widely spread corruption and the propensity to migrate do not correlate in the Eastern and Central parts of the country as respondents with an intention to stay in Ukraine are likely minded that Ukraine is deeply affected by corruption. Eastern Ukraine exhibits this tendency as well but it peaks in the capital. In Kyiv, out of the total share of migration oriented male and female respondents over 90 percent (in each gender respondent category) state there is a lot of corruption in Ukraine – both "agree" and "strongly agree" options (Graph 7.b).

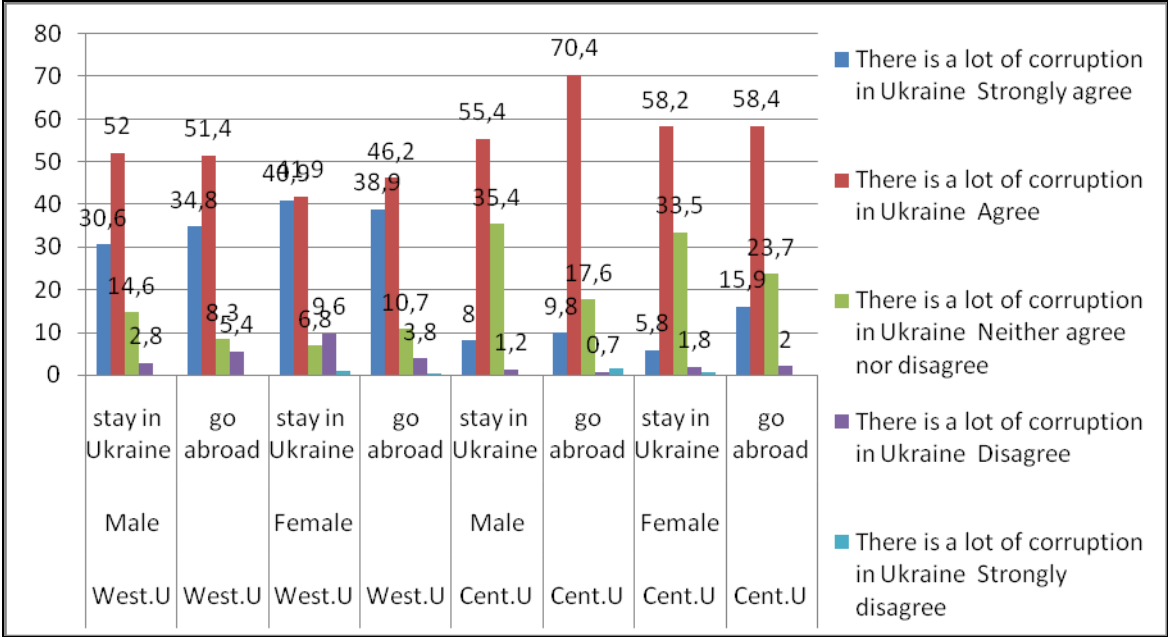
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<sup>13</sup> This is a reflection of the informant in Kyiv on corruption situation in the country (43109, Solomyansky rayon research area).

<sup>14</sup> In 2012 Ukraine was ranked 144 out of 174 countries according to the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International.

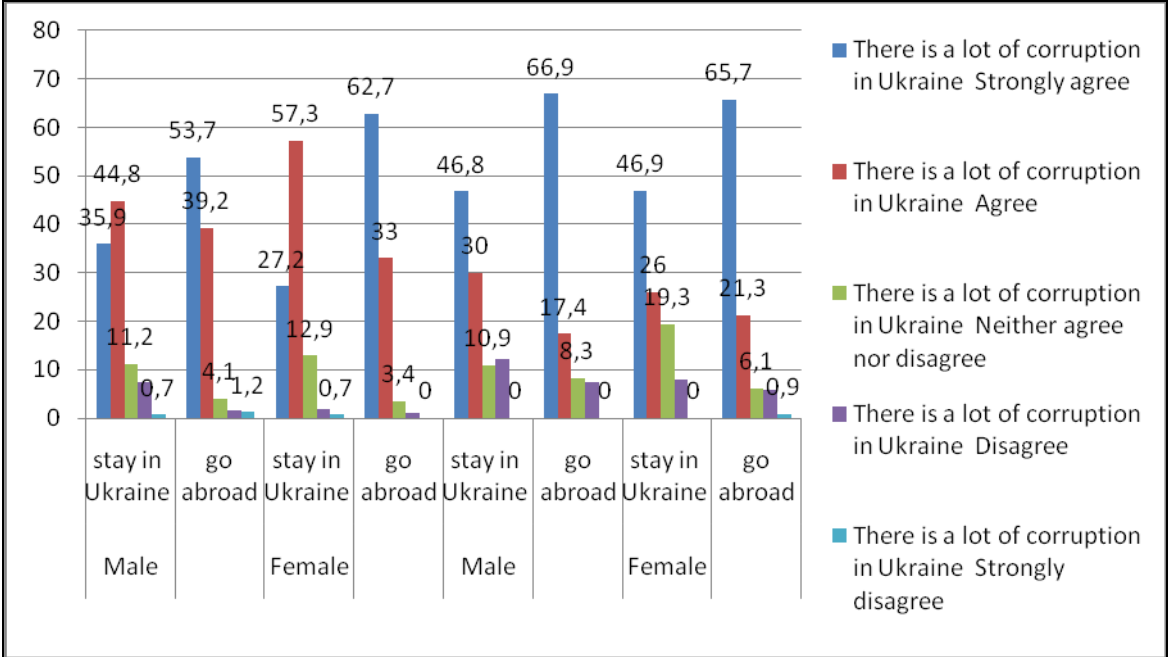


**Graph 7.a** There is a lot of corruption in Ukraine (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

**Graph 7.b** There is a lot of corruption in Ukraine (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Corruption is “[...] so rampant today in our country that there are no limits” one of the queries manifests (41116, Zbarazh research area). The open character of corrupt practices is emphasized, illustrating that giving a bribe is not perceived as anything shameful “We just have it here and all is done openly” (41118, Zbarazh research area).

Moreover, it was observed that corruption was present before Ukraine gained independence “In general I hear people talking about bureaucracy, bribery and corruption. They say it remains from the Soviet times and there is no end to that” (43117, Solomyansky

rayon research area). However, remarks that the scale of corruption had not been as massive as it has been in the recent time are quite interesting *“There was corruption during the Soviet times but it just was not visible”* (41131, Zbarazh research area). The same person reflects on the scale of corruption comparing it with past times *“[...] it was a bottle of Armenian cognac [...] and now everything has changed, say for example you give a plot of land for some service”* (41131).

The healthcare system and education were named among spheres being heavily eroded by corruption<sup>15</sup>. As one of the villagers from Western Ukraine summarizes *“Here in Ukraine nothing can be done at the university or in a hospital without corruption schemes”* (41240, Zbarazh research area). A lot of interviewees are unanimous that both of these areas are subject to widespread corruption primarily because *“These are the most financially vulnerable areas”* (43130, Solomyansky rayon research area). Low salaries are the answer to why corruption flourishes. The same person concludes that *“If people, who work there, were paid decent salaries, they would value their positions; they would not dare to take bribes”* (43130).

Some queries stated that giving a bribe is a solely personal decision (e.g. 43123). Nevertheless another and especially worrying side of corruption was presented stating that some individuals find themselves under pressure to have a hand in corruption. With regard to education, a villager in the central part of Ukraine related something he heard from an acquaintance, who is studying in Odesa. The girl is smart enough to study on her own but nevertheless she was expected to adhere to the common practice that is *“One semester (exams) costs five thousand. And you have to pay everywhere; they make you pay [...] that is the vivid picture of corruption: that is the financial demand - you should give money otherwise you will not receive a diploma [...]”* (42202, Znamyanska research area).

Another example of similar treatment of students comes from Kyiv. Speaking about Shevchenko University, one of Ukraine’s leading educational institutions, it was argued *“[...] there are teachers, who demand that students should pay irrespective of whether they know the subject or not; otherwise they would have lots of trouble”* (43111, Solomyansky rayon research area). As it is stated it is a kind of system that does not flourish on the account of less successful students, who pay for failed exams etc., but makes every student subject to payment, irrespective of his/her knowledge.

Corruption free examples were also named both in Kyiv and beyond, however. As a school teacher observed *“Well, again, there are universities with a good rating - the National Technical University of Ukraine “Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”, for example; it is rated high; it takes a lot of effort to study there [...] Universities are so different...”* (43131, Solomyansky rayon research area). A former student of this university seconded the words of this school teacher, stating that *“Through all my university years nobody demanded bribes from me, and I never bribed anyone; so, such stories sound very strange to me”* (43109, Solomyansky rayon research area).

Feedback about corruption free practices was also received about one of the universities in Eastern Ukraine *“I tried to enter National N.Ye. Zhukovsky Aerospace University [“Kharkiv Aviation Institute”]. Yes, it was really possible to enter that educational establishment without a bribe, that is, such things are not practiced there, you are enrolled there only based on scores, and I was not good enough in mathematics, and so I was only able to get paid education there”* (44128, Novovodolazka research area). Rather than

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<sup>15</sup> Statements about these facts are to be found at least in the interviews 42104, 42105, 42102, 42103, 42108 (Central Ukraine), 43131, 43130 (Kyiv), 41242, 41240, 41112 (Western Ukraine), 44211 (Eastern Ukraine).

corruption at university, this is clearly the fault of a particular individual to pass an entry exam successfully and to be enrolled.

Notably, ordinary citizens make quite a noticeable distinction between corruption cases which are part of their daily life and corruption linked to politics. Corruption within the political domain is seen as a completely separate issue. Every day corruption resulting from contacts with state authorities was labeled as “gratitude” for provided services and was seldom mentioned with negative connotations. It is touched upon rather neutrally. One of respondents recalled “*My husband was in the hospital, in the gastric department, and wanted to thank doctors. He expressed his gratitude after having been healed*” (42106, Znamyanska research area). Another person confirmed the practice of being thankful to doctors in the same manner “*Maybe some people have extra money, so they will bring it to a doctor to show their gratitude, or they will get some medication*” (42103, Znamyanska research area).

These are instances when people initiate bribes ad hoc on their own. Qualitative findings demonstrate that people do not always see how harmful consequences of the low-level administrative corruption, that they happen to be involved in, influence their lives. As Rasma Karklins (2002, p. 24) noted, survey results in some post-communist countries show that the low-level bribe payments (including payments for health services) account for about half of all bribe expenses in those countries. As the qualitative data reveal, informants seem also not to be aware of the true scale of everyday corruptive practices in Ukraine, resulting from daily bureaucratic encounters.

There was practically no mentioning of either medical staff or teachers being paid for their work; being expected to provide services with no additional payment from patients, pupils or students. “Gratitude” is presumably a kind of demonstration of sympathy with doctors or nurses for low salaries they receive<sup>16</sup>. An approach that “*You must “[...] appreciate” the doctor, so to speak [...]*” (43109, Solomyansky rayon research area) came across in many interviews. Some queries explain in detail what is perceived as corruption, drawing the line between this phenomenon and the so called gratitude. An indicator to distinguish between the two is the sum of money “*It would be treated as bribery, unless the amount is small. If there are no demands, if one person gives somebody a little sum out of their own free will, then, this will be seen as a gift. But if a doctor or a university professor demands a certain sum of money, this is qualified as bribery*” (43123, Solomyansky rayon research area).

However, what is interesting is that those who bribe doctors are often themselves in tough financial situations. Bribery is also explained as providing help to doctors who are asking for it. It concerns even some basic things without which reception of patients at hospitals is unthinkable. One person argues “*The doctors ask for help even with such things as paper and stationery in the children’s department*” (42106, Znamyanska research area). This shows extremely poor material provision of hospitals which lack even basic things, not to mention medical equipment or medicines.

Corrupt politicians have been seen as an enemy of the country’s development. This is because “*From the bottom it is impossible to overcome this [corruption]. If there is corruption at the top then at the bottom it will flourish anyway*” (41121, Zbarazh research area). At the same time, all-pervading corruption of other spheres was not referred to as having a negative impact on citizens’ well being. The poor quality of provided services was the only complaint, but not often linked to the corruption of state officials. Or at least respondents were reluctant to touch upon this issue. In principal people in Ukraine admit that

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<sup>16</sup> The same approach is taken e.g. in the interview 43129 (Kyiv) describing “junior nurse’s sincere concern when she’s looking after the patient” justifying bribing.

corruption does not necessary mean the green-lighting of access to services which otherwise would not be received. The matter is corruption practices speed up the process of obtaining some services, which would be provided, but at a much slower pace. A person from Kyiv is sure that *“Well, of course, you can get services you have the right to, but the process can take longer; and the quality of services might be worse without some extra-payments. That is all”* (43108, Solomyansky rayon research area).

A lot of people tend to connect explicitly the problem of corruption with the political system in Ukraine *“[...] the system itself should be cardinally changed. And the system isn’t going to change in the immediate future”* (42102, Znamyanska research area). The situation at present is described as *“total disobedience to the law”* (41114, Zbarazh research area). This is so, because Ukraine is said to be *“[...] in chaos now and there is an outburst of illegality everywhere. You cannot prove or gain absolutely anything. A person who has money and acquaintances is right”* (42202, Znamyanska research area). Another interviewed individual from Western Ukraine agrees totally, saying *“[...] here in Ukraine everything can be bought either for money or for big money. There is no third option”* (41131).

Apart from this, state authorities in general, law enforcement authorities and, in particular, state administrations were said to be corrupt<sup>17</sup>. However, examples of corruption in these domains are not numerous. Respondents were cautious to speak about corrupt practices of local authorities or law enforcement bodies. A typical answer to the question whether there is corruption in Ukraine, was *“Well, I am not saying anything... (Laughs)”* (41129, Zbarazh research area). More informative queries are quite rare like the one of a woman from Kyiv in her 30s, who is a state official herself. She summarized that *“[...] state bodies can’t do without it. They cover for each other. You won’t prove anything”* (43102, Solomyansky rayon research area). A similar feedback was received in Western Ukraine, demonstrating that state authorities are not punishable in Ukraine in principle *“Well, it was a situation, when one [a state official] was arrested for corruption, [they proved [his guilt], but he just resigned and that’s it. There were neither criminal nor administrative liabilities”* (41126, Zbarazh research area).

One of the specific examples was the involvement of state authorities in charge of issuing passports in corrupt practices. A young mother from Kyiv makes clear that *“You would have to wait 2 weeks before you get it, but if you pay... [...] So, if you pay, they will make your passport ready in 2 days instead of 2 weeks”* (43132, Solomyansky rayon research area). She recalled that it was her personal experience two years ago.

Other spheres named as corrupt are construction (43116, Solomyakys rayon research area) or the issuing of visas to the EU. It was mentioned that Ukrainians who were denied visas at European embassies, still managed to get them *“[...] those who actually want to emigrate, to stay and earn something, pay a couple of rubles<sup>18</sup>, have to go nowhere, hand over the documents and get a visa and... well, it is not difficult, let’s say”*. The same person reported even greater details in this regard *“[...] a person, who wants to go abroad, pays through the corruption schemes, something like 250 Euros”* (41131, Zbarazh research area). Spheres also named as among those exposed to corruption were the military, trade and politics. The latter namely *“[...] because of struggle for power [...]”* (43104, Solomyasky rayon research area).

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<sup>17</sup> Supportive statements are to be found in the interviews 41117, 41122 and 41124 (Western Ukraine).

<sup>18</sup> In everyday language people in Ukraine may say “rubles” meaning however Ukrainian currency – hryvnya (UAH).

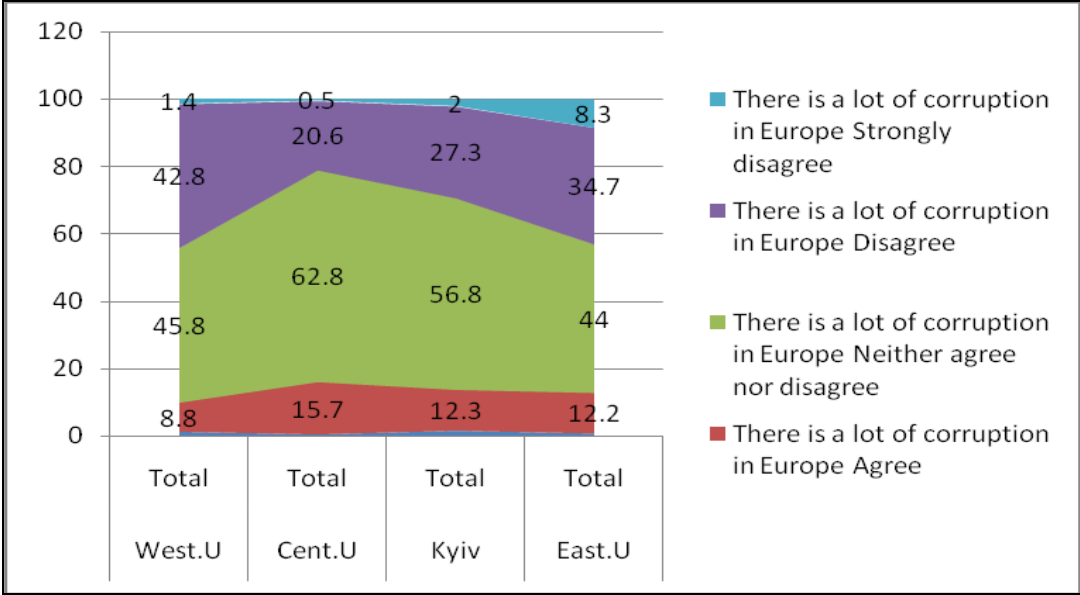
This understanding spans to another sphere exposed to corruption - the employment market<sup>19</sup>. The project findings discovered that corruption is practiced here as a means of getting employment. As some respondents remarked “It is very hard to get a job just like that, mostly connections with influential people or money are required. Money opens all doors” (42109, Znamyanska research area); “I think that if you want to get a job in the public sector you simply have to pay a big sum of money. To get a position” (41126, Zbarazh research area).

Furthermore, the qualitative data reveal that people are skeptical about possible changes in the near future. An interviewee from Kyiv put it beyond doubt that “It would take 10 or 20 years to enhance the general level of public morality” (43133, Solomyansky rayon research area). He stresses that “There’s no sense in staying here. It is hard to live here [...] why should I waste 10 years of my life? You will never lead a normal life unless you are given bribes” (43133).

6.2 How “wheels are run” and things are done in Europe

Unlike Ukraine, corruption in Europe is perceived in general as being low. The largest percentages of respondents (irrespective of gender) who disagree with the statement that there is a lot of corruption in Europe are to be found in Western Ukraine, Zbarazh (42.8 percent) and in Eastern Ukraine, Novovodolazka (34.7 percent), according to the project findings (Graph 7.c). This is an interesting finding, as both these localities have high emigration rates.

Graph 7.c There is a lot of corruption in Europe



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

This means that people living there are more aware about the situation, including that of corruption, in Europe. In the two remaining localities less than 30 percent of surveyed Ukrainians perceive Europe as an area with low levels of corruption – the capital

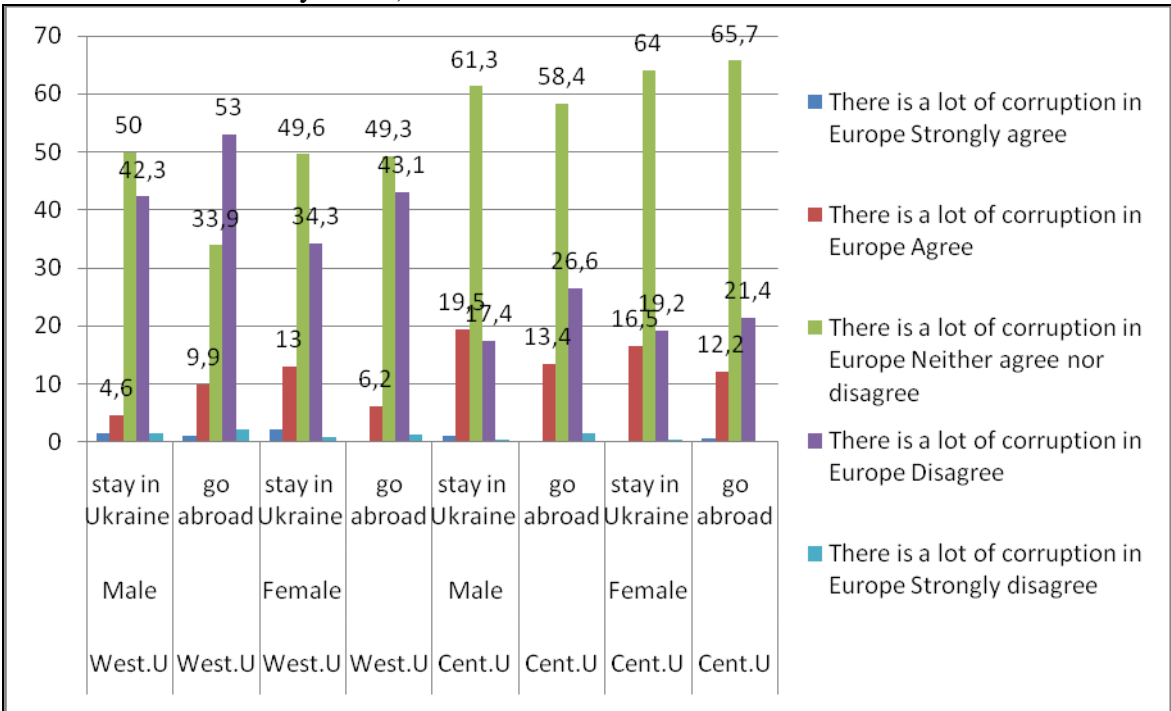
<sup>19</sup> Corruption practices in this sphere were encountered e.g. in Eastern Ukraine (42103) and in Western Ukraine (41126 and 41125).

(Solomyansky rayon) having 27.3 percent and Central Ukraine, Znamyanska - 20.6 percent correspondingly (Ibid.).

Quite similar opinions might be spotted in the same locality even from people with different foreign experience. Moreover, similar accounts of corruption in Europe might be found across the genders and in different age groups.

Thus, a male respondent aged 24 living in Kyiv who has never been abroad argues that “Well, I think if people [in Europe] are accustomed to honesty from childhood, then, things must be better in this context. Though, I am sure corruption takes place there anyway, but on a much smaller scale, of course” (43127, Solomyansky rayon research area). A female teacher at the age of 37 from the same locality states “[...] it looks like they learn honesty at their mother's knees. They just don't understand such things “I am paid well; why should I do that? [Take bribes]” (43130).

**Graph 7.d** There is a lot of corruption in Europe (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Remarkably, there is a substantial share of undecided respondents. This might be an indicator of worse awareness and a lack of experience with Europe. A correlation can be found between the share of undecided respondents and the migration profile of the research localities. Generally, less undecided respondents are identified in areas which are known for supplying Ukrainian migrants abroad. They are Novovodolazka, Eastern Ukraine and Zbarazh, Western Ukraine. In both cases the total percentage of respondents is under 50 percent (Graphs 7.d and 7.e). They are in total (both genders with/without migration intentions) 45.8 percent respondents in Western Ukraine and in total 44 percent of respondents in Eastern Ukraine (Ibid.) Central Ukraine stands out in this respect as a research locality with the total share of over 60 percent of undecided respondents (Graph 7.d).

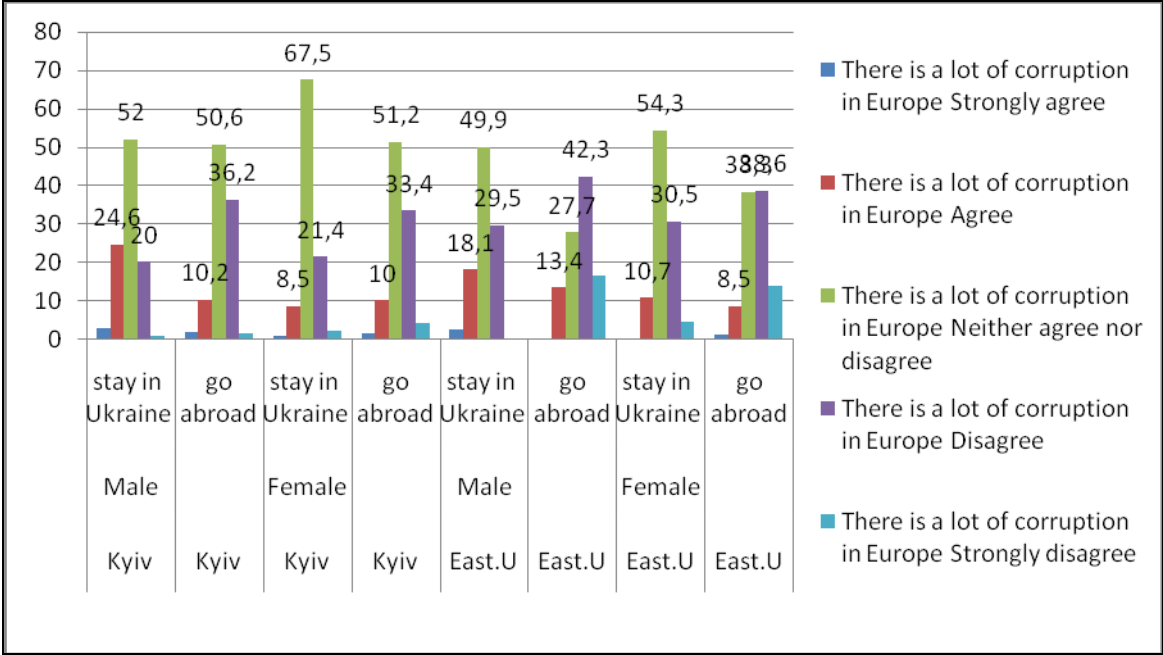
Queries are not illustrative and diverse enough to subgroup them according to different spheres. Statements about corruption in Europe are more general than those relating to Ukraine. Remarkably, awareness of high level of corruption in Ukraine does not necessarily

happen to fuel migration aspirations. Exceptions were also encountered. One respondent, a small market trader, admitted that in Ukraine “[...] to tell the truth, there is a corridor for corruption [...] the margin of profit without this corridor, frankly speaking, - is unacceptable. And there is almost no corruption in Europe [...]” (43112, Solomyansky rayon research area). He said to have no migration aspirations in particular as the present matter of affairs enables him to benefit from the corrupt system in Ukraine.

Cases of corruption related to education or healthcare were assumed to be less frequent. With regard to education in Europe, particularly the following was said “If you have a diploma there, then you could be sure it is deserved, it cannot be bought for money there” (44211, Novovodolazka research area). The situation in Ukraine was reported to be a striking contrast “It is difficult with good marks, everything should be paid for” (44211).

Law enforcement authorities and how they are subjected to corruption are worth mentioning “If we take their policeman and our traffic inspector - there can be no comparison. They are polar opposites” (43130, Solomyansky rayon research area). Another reply was more precise saying that “[...] in Europe (the) police tries to fight it [criminality] somehow, they try to catch criminals, and in our case criminals can bribe police officers to be left in peace; [...] our police can catch a criminal and then just let him/her go” (44121, Novovodolazka research area).

**Graph 7.e** There is a lot of corruption in Europe (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Those respondents who do not reject the existence of corruption in Europe, nevertheless emphasize its limited scope and state that it is not “[...] the same as we have it here, on every step” (41244, Zbarazh research area); “[...] in Europe these things are not as overt as here in Ukraine” (43111, Solomyansky rayon research area); “I do not think that there is no corruption there at all. But if there is, then not at such a level” (44211, Novovodolazka research area). Again, a certain distinction is visible when compared to Ukraine - corruption amongst politicians and corruption outside the political domain “I think they don’t have it. Maybe on the political level they have something like that” (41242, Zbarazh research area).

One particular point about perceived corruption in Europe is that “[...] they [in Europe] do not take bribes from anyone and any time. But if a bribe occurs, its amount is huge” (43111, Solomyansky rayon research area). It was also assumed that corruption is also “[...] present there [in Europe] to some extent as well. Just, perhaps, to a lesser extent, perhaps, even the situation is the same as in our country; just people talk about it less, except for journalists”. It is assumed that “If it does happen, the cases are likely to be hidden” (42105, Znamyanska research area).

Nevertheless, in Central Ukraine respondents take a more critical approach towards evaluating corruption level in Europe. More than that, a correlation is observable between perceived high corruption level and lack of migration aspirations. Namely, the share among respondents who want to stay in Ukraine and argue Europe is affected by corruption is 19.5 percent among men and 16.5 percent among women (Graph 7.d). Meant are “agree” response options. The share is even higher in Kyiv among men with a similar mindset towards corruption in Europe who intend to stay in Ukraine - 24.6 percent (Graph 7.e).

This kind of perception might be to a certain degree influenced by the countries which respondents have in mind while making their comments on Europe “[...] I heard about Romania - my friend told me, she spent her holidays there, and she said corruption has been as high there as in Ukraine. Even worse than we have here...; but if one talks about England., though England is not Europe, but for me it is... England, Germany, I think there is no corruption in those countries. And other European countries, like Romania, Bulgaria, maybe the Slovak republic, former Yugoslavia, I think they have corruption there” (41242, Zbarazh research area).

Generally seen, corruption perceptions have a great impact on formation of migration aspirations in Ukraine, the project findings revealed. The scale of corruption is extremely high, eroding the state institutions to the backbone. Notably, all topics as i.e. education, healthcare and others which are under focus of this paper were mentioned as subjected to corruption in Ukraine. On the other hand, a clear distinction is made between petty corruption and corruption which involves high ranked politicians. More than that, petty corruption turned to have little negative connotations and is perceived as a part of daily life. One should also note many respondents are skeptical about the down-top approach to fight corruption. They appeal to the politicians who should boost corruption fighting effort.

## **7. Politics related perceptions: to run faster than others and make promises<sup>20</sup>**

The political situation in Ukraine has been unstable for many years. The situation might be better described as political turmoil with little room for institutional development, a higher level of local self-governance, and reforms which can hardly be called profound but rather sporadically implemented until now.

The constitutional crisis, which Ukraine has been facing for almost a decade when the new version of the basic law entered into force in 2004, did not add to the political stability and escalated tension between the legislative and executive branches of power and fueled tension between the centre and the regions.

Within this background, it was deemed important to analyze how ordinary Ukrainians perceive the political situation in Ukraine in order to understand what kind of issues in the

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<sup>20</sup>This is an observation about the true aim of Ukrainian politicians from the interview conducted in Western Ukraine (41238, Zbarazh research area).



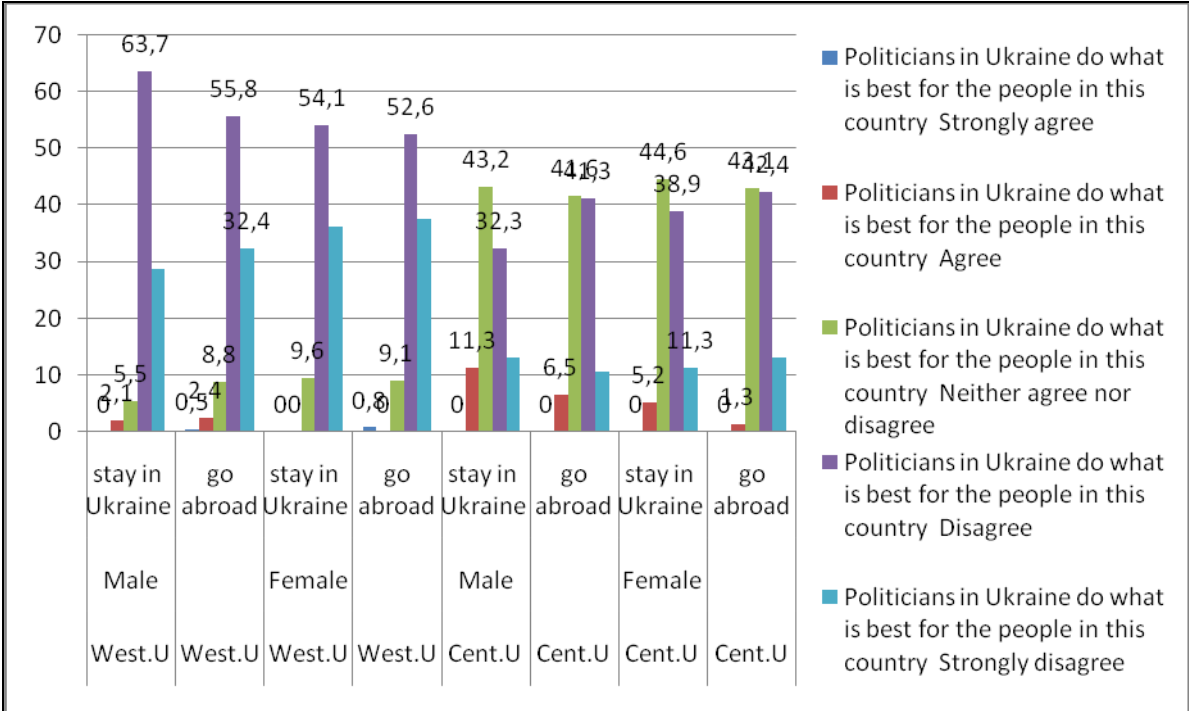
political domain are seen to raise the most concern; and whether political instability and the lack of reforms influence the migration aspirations of people in this country.

7.1 Perception of the effectiveness of Ukrainian politicians

The survey questions were formulated in a way to discover how ordinary citizens evaluate the actions of politicians on a national scale as well as the performance of political authorities in respondents’ home regions. Generally speaking, people in Ukraine are convinced that “[...] our government is wrong [...]” (43108, Solomyansky rayon research area), “[...] nothing has changed for the better [...]” (44122, Novovodolazka research area), “[...] promises remain just promises [...]” (42111, Znamyanska research area).

Many informants were not at ease with elaborating on the political situation in the country. Quite a lot of them admitted they have not much to say because no changes are evident and, moreover, because no clear political course is in place. As one of interviewed females remarked “Well it is not so easy to understand our situation with our authorities [...] judging by the latest developments, political repressions and so on and so forth”; “Somehow our authorities stumble on the way to Europe...” (43117, Solomyansky rayon research area).

**Graph 8.a** Politicians in Ukraine do what is best for people in this country (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



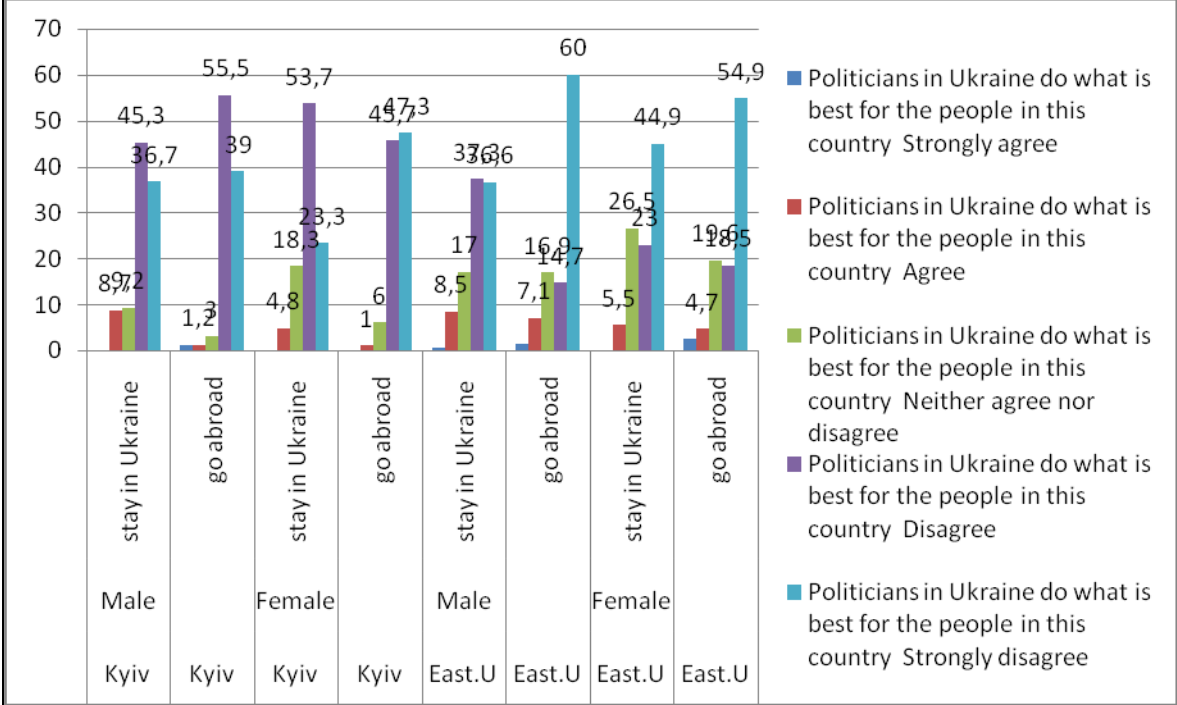
Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

This kind of mood is largely confirmed by the quantitative data. The survey results reveal that the overwhelming majority of respondents (both male and female) do not evaluate the performance of Ukrainian politicians positively. In total there are over 50 percent of surveyed people in Znamyanska with this mindset, over 70 percent in Novovodolazka, followed by Kyiv, and about 90 percent in Zbarazh (Graphs 8.a and 8.b).

At the same time, the assessment of the performance of local politicians in the research localities is also very negative. For example, in the capital, the figures reach over 80 percent for the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” results taken together among both women

and men (Graph 8.d). This is true in particular for respondents with an intention to migrate, for whom these numbers amount to 83.1 percent of male respondents and 84.5 percent of female respondents (Ibid.).

**Graph 8.b** Politicians in Ukraine do what is best for people in this country (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

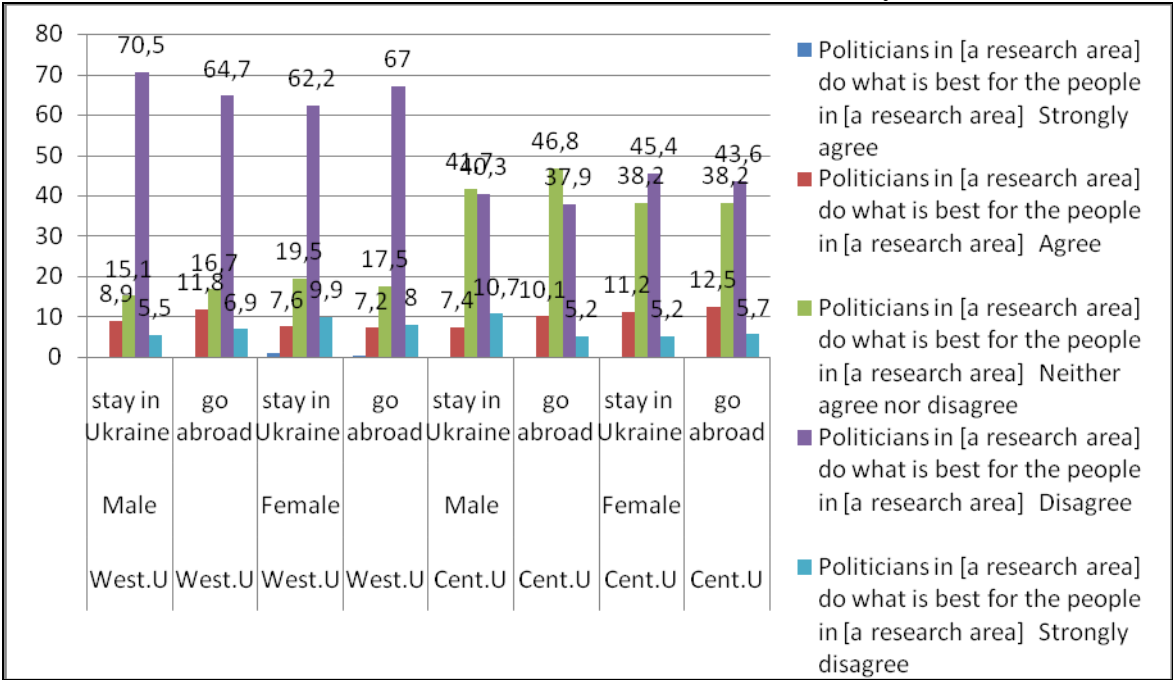
People with an indefinite position on how to assess the effectiveness of politicians in Ukraine differ quite noticeably in proportion across localities. Respondents whose answers fall under this category are to be found in all research localities, albeit in visibly different proportions. The share of undecided respondents who assess the political performance of Ukrainian politicians is under 12 percent in Western Ukraine (Graph 8.a) ranging up to one third across other research localities (Graphs 8.a and 8.b).

It is rather illustrative of how informants, who are unable to make an assessment for the time being, see the future. Asked to evaluate whether Ukrainian politicians do what is best for the people in Ukraine, informants appear to be quite similar in their expressions “*Life will show [in a merry voice] we will hope and wait. Maybe the better deputies will be chosen. Or the worse*” (44208, Novovodolazka research area); “*I can only hope for the best. I can’t be any more precise, because much will depend on the future political situation*” (43104, Solomyansky rayon research area).

Interestingly, the share of undecided respondents from Znamyanska (Central Ukraine) is over 40 percent among both male and female respondents irrespective of their migration aspirations (Graph 8.a). The qualitative data provide no clue how to interpret these findings and why such a big difference is apparent among the research localities. Remarkably, when assessing effective political actions on the local level, figures in Znamyanska are also very close. The shares are slightly over 40 percent among male respondents (irrespective of migration aspirations) and 38.2 percent - among female respondents (Graph 8.c). What should be mentioned is that no other region provides such results. However, the qualitative findings

did not add an explanation as to what is specific about this region in this regard and why such results were obtained.

**Graph 8.c** Politicians in [a research area] do what is best for people in [a research area] (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)

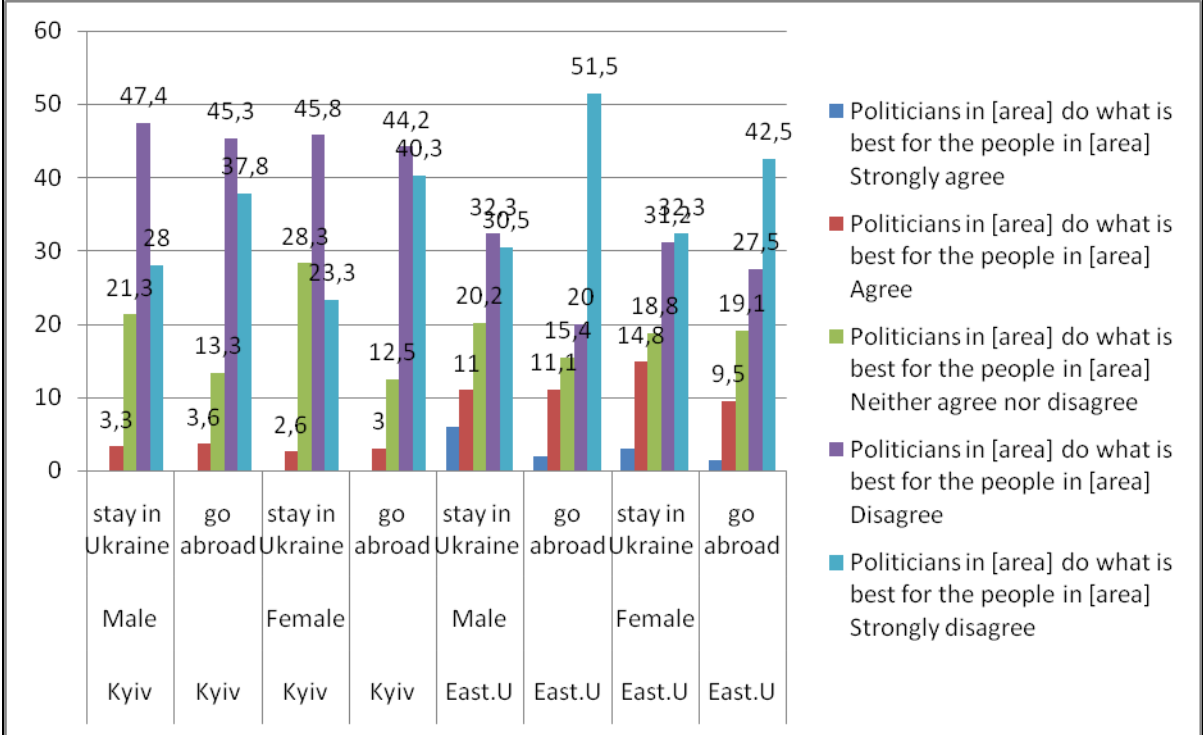


Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

A significant discrepancy was identified in assessments of the performance of local and central authorities. One of the arguments was the attention paid to the needs of local communities rather than a cultivated approach to pursue solely one’s own political interests. This is helpful to discern the positive assessments of actions by local authorities. Politicians at the national level are believed to make their political interests a key priority. Describing his native town Monastyrsk, one male informant claimed that people “[...] have a very good mayor of the town there, a very good administration, who try to do their best for the good of the people, they do not think only about themselves” (41127, Zbarazh research area). This statement was given in contrast to how the situation seems in Zbarazh - one of the research areas and the current living place of the aforementioned informant. The poor performance of local politicians in Zbarazh is confirmed by some other interviewed inhabitants of this town<sup>21</sup>, and is supported by survey results according to which Zbarazh is seen as a poorly governed locality. Those respondents who disagree, local politicians meet interests of Ukrainian people range between 60 and 70 percent in Western Ukraine, Zbarazh (Graph 8.c). The share of respondents having this opinion from this locality constitutes from 62.2 percent among women who want to stay in Ukraine to 70.5 percent among men who want to stay in Ukraine (Ibid.).

<sup>21</sup> E.g. the interview 41130 (Zbarazh research area).

**Graph 8.d** Politicians in [a research area] do what is best for people in [a research area](results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Informants’ views do not imply explicitly the issue of more accountability for local authorities, but refer to the fulfillment of promises. The difference in figures is irrelevant to be able to state that the issue of fulfilled promises is a more common case in the regions than on the national level. This topic was addressed in close relation to elections. Informants argue that “[...] they [politicians] are trying to do something only when the elections begin, a few months before that they arrange election campaigns [...] As soon as the elections are over, all the promises are forgotten fast, and there is even nowhere to go to ask them for some help” (44127, Novovodolazka research area)<sup>22</sup>; “Elections are passing but there is no improvement for people” (41121, Zbarazh research area); “They do promise a lot before the elections, and now I can’t see anything they have really done which they promised. All that remains is the way it was” (44128, Novovodolazka research area).

A middle-aged manager from Kyiv expressed his disgust and his indifference to politics because, in his own words, “[...] billboards irritate me, to be honest [laughing bitterly]. When, next to promises of politicians on billboards, you see an old woman who sells cabbage because of the low pension she has...” (43107, Solomyansky rayon research area). People are quite precise about failed promises. One particular example is “There is an announcement hanging that some deputy’s reception room is open from this till that day, and when you come there during the daytime he can’t be spotted for the whole month” (44127, Novovodolazka research area).

People in Ukraine seem to be aware of the limited financial capability of local authorities and do not tend to put the blame on them for some failed promises, understanding their shared responsibility with higher authorities “I understand that local authorities have lesser possibilities - the taxes are taken to the oblast level and higher, and all we are left with are just some insignificant amount of money that can’t really change anything substantially in

<sup>22</sup>Interview with a similar statement (42109, Znamyanska research area).

*our village*” (42201, Znamyanska research area). This is a point which many scholars also point out - the situation where budgetary policy is used as a leverage to keep local elites in a subordinate position (Zimmer, 2008). In these circumstances, decentralization has no practical implementation for the time being.

For example, people in the town of Znamyanska admit “[...] *we are very satisfied with our local authorities [...] Those things which our major promised us are now being fulfilled gradually*” (42111, Znamyanska research area). Judging achievements of the local authorities, an informant from Eastern Ukraine reflected “*Well, in general, the life of pensioners is rather hard, but they are lucky to have our village council*” (44212, Novovodolazka research area<sup>23</sup>). Similar positive assessments were received in Central Ukraine “*During the last few years, well, when Astafyeva became the head, the village began to get better. Firstly, the roads are more or less looked after; secondly, holidays are celebrated now, like it has never been before. At least some social work is done*” (42201, Znamyanska research area).

Informants expressed a categorical dislike of how politics is done in Ukraine. The present day state of affairs in political life in Ukraine was attributed to the lack of political responsibility “*I just cannot see a leader who would assume the responsibility for improving life*” (44106, Novovodolazka research area). Another informant from this research area referred to an attempt to change; “[...] *Batkivshchyna*” (a political party called “*Motherland*”<sup>24</sup>) *tried to do something, but they were so pressured, that it ended up with nothing*” (44121). Rather interestingly, informants from Western Ukraine provided in general less information with regard to the political situation in the country. They only referred to political parties in sporadic cases.

Informants categorically deny that politicians act to meet the interests of Ukrainian people. More than that, they support the statement that their own interests are a priority for the politicians, who are much less concerned with what they are expected to deliver. A widely common perception is that “*people go into politics just to have something for themselves and for their next generations but they do absolutely nothing for ordinary people*” (42110, Znamyanska research area). The qualitative data provide rich concrete examples of this kind of statements. For example, “[...] *when you are watching the news; when you look at those politicians - how much only their wristwatch costs!*” (41242, Zbarazh research area). Here, the respondent is referring to the passion of Ukrainian politicians for expensive and exclusive accessories, including wristwatches. Ukrainian journalists keep posting pictures of wristwatches of MPs and state administration members. One of these collections was made public by Tyzhden.ua (2012) a while ago. The attention to expensive wristwatches started after journalists managed to take a picture of a very expensive wristwatch of the patriarch Kirill some time ago.

Informants also elaborate on the standard of living which politicians enjoy with a high level of comfort at the disposal of the rest of the population. As ordinary Ukrainians believe “*Take alone some of money which they [members of the parliament] spend on keeping the parliament, on paying their health services [...]*” (43129, Solomyansky rayon research area); “[...] *I simply admire our city authorities [smiling with disgust] when some high official goes somewhere, they block half the district to let him pass...*”. This example was provided by a young woman from Kyiv (43109, Solomyansky rayon research area). A male informant from the capital referred to legislative changes as thus “[...]... *in the past, fiscal authorities would never lose the chance to earn money for themselves and their bosses; but now they try to suppress us on the legislation level too; small businesses suffer the most*” (43135).

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<sup>23</sup> Similar statements are to be found in the interviews 44215, 44216, 44202 (Novovodolazka research area).

<sup>24</sup> Headed by the jailed former prime-minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

A woman about 40 years old from the capital was embarrassed about how ordinary people are treated “*Look, people are trying to get their attention [of the parliament], standing near Verkhovna Rada; but get no response at all. They care about their own business in Rada; they don’t care about anything else*”. This female informant refers to the mass protests in Kyiv when it was decided to reduce pensions for Chernobyl veterans, adding “[...] *elderly people were standing there; and Chernobyl veterans were breaking the fence to get their pensions*” (43108). The outcome of these protests was that the building of the parliament was fenced.

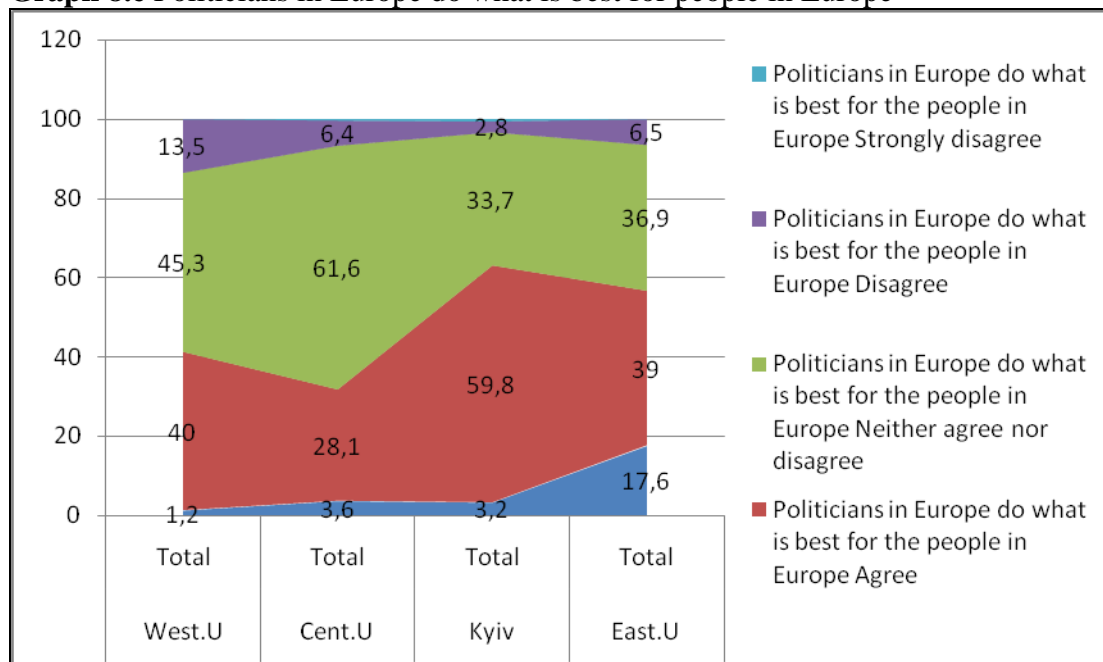
The stance of Ukrainians speaks of a huge distrust in politicians “*This year they started some improvements, but this is not only for people’s sake - this is because of the oncoming Euro-2012 [...] I suspect they will stop the maintenance as soon as Euro-2012 is over; things will return to the previous state of neglect. Steady changes are very unlikely*” (43108, Solomyansky rayon research area).

Sporadic qualitative evidence also reveal mass despair “[...] *the event of 2004 - the Orange revolution known to everyone - then it is perhaps the only democratic jump which has turned out to be a total failure over the last twenty years*” (44125, Novovodolazka research area).

### 7.2 Perception of the effectiveness of European politicians

Research groups have no agreed position on whether the political activity of politicians in European countries is directed towards meeting the interests of ordinary citizens. Nevertheless, greater shares of respondents across all research groups tend to evaluate the actions of European politicians higher than the actions of their Ukrainian counterparts. Total figures (embracing both genders and stay in Ukraine/go abroad intentions) range from over 30 percent (both “agree and strongly agree” responses) in Central Ukraine to over 60 in Kyiv (Graph 8.e).

**Graph 8.e** Politicians in Europe do what is best for people in Europe

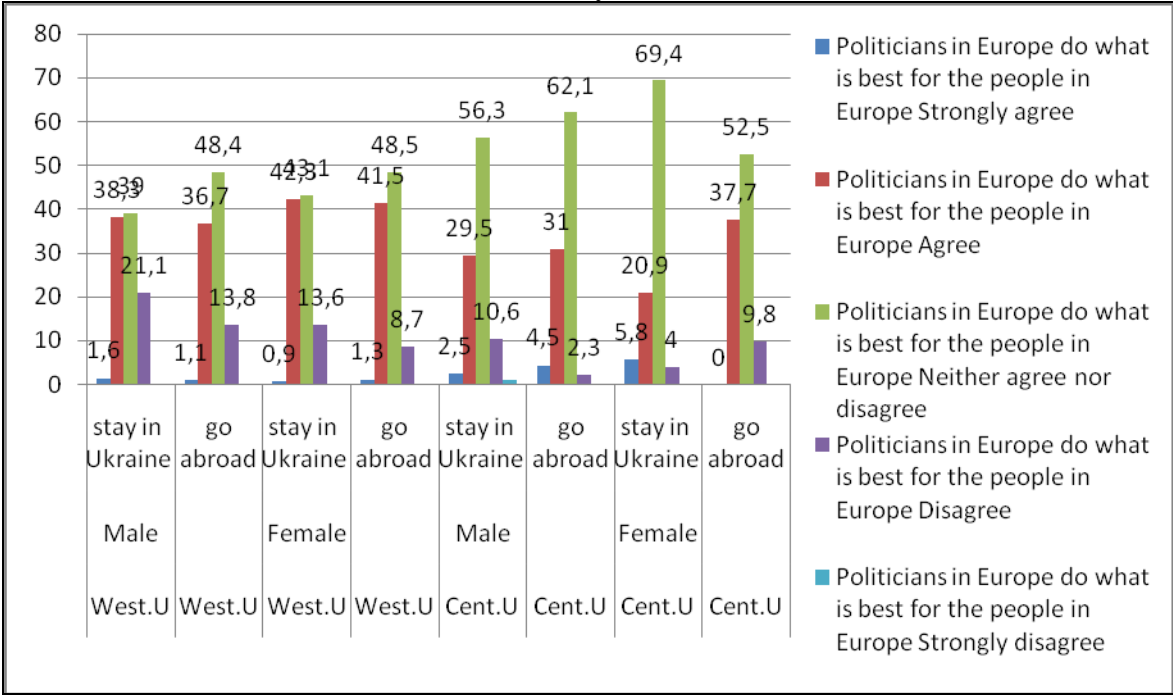


Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Eastern Ukraine is a bit less positive in this respect than the capital, displaying 56.6 percent in total, considering both genders and both presence/absence of migration aspirations (Ibid.). Some informants from this locality pointed to European politicians implicitly, saying for instance that *“Though if we compare our lousy democracy with theirs, there is nothing to compare with [...] in Europe if the nation is trying to decide something, their opinion receives attention”* (44125, Novovodolazka research area).

The highest percentages - the most positive evaluations are given by respondents in the capital and in Eastern Ukraine. Notably, they are more inclined to go abroad than their counterparts in Central and Western Ukraine. The shares of both migration-oriented male and female respondents from Kyiv as well as male respondents from Eastern Ukraine (“strongly agree”/“agree” variants) are almost 70 percent in each indicated respondent group (Graph 8.g). Women from Eastern Ukraine who are inclined to migration are in a large proportion as well. Their share is 63 percent (Ibid.). At the same time the qualitative data are rather scarce to enable conclusions with regard to Eastern Ukraine. This region is known for its supply of labor migrants, but predominantly eastward - to Russia.

**Table 8.f** Politicians in Europe do what is best for people in Europe (results from Western Ukraine /Zbarazh/ and Central Ukraine /Znamyanska/)



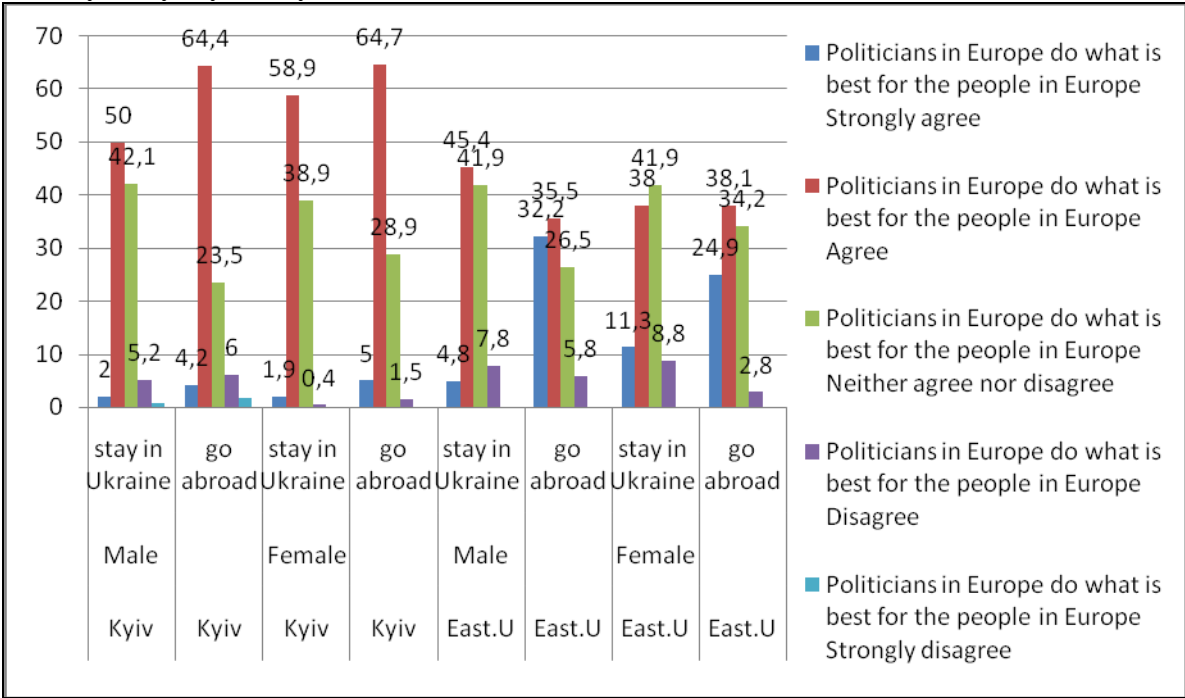
Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

Western Ukraine is a different story. That there is more skepticism by inhabitants towards the performance of European politicians there could be attributed to the fact that there is greater emigration to the EU and thus more awareness about political life in EU countries.

People in Ukraine demonstrate a rather superficial understanding of how politicians perform in Europe. The percentage of respondents who were not able to formulate their answers either way but responded as “neither agree nor disagree” is greater in the case of Europe than in case of Ukraine. Speaking about Ukraine and the performance of Ukrainian politicians, figures reach 40 percent (undecided respondents) only in Central Ukraine (Graph 8.a); whereas in relation to Europe, the total share of respondents (jointly men and women with an intention to migrate) is below 40 percent only in Kyiv and in Eastern Ukraine (Graph 8.g), with the total percentage over 60 percent in Central Ukraine (8.f). Altogether, people in

Central Ukraine seem to be less able to give a distinct assessment of how politicians either in Ukraine or in the EU countries perform.

**Graph 8.g** Politicians in Europe do what is best for people in Europe (results from Solomyansky rayon /Kyiv/ and Eastern Ukraine /Novovodolazka/)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EUMAGINE project findings

They explain that they lack experience to be able to elaborate on the political situation there “I have heard about bribes and deeds of Berlusconi, who is a media magnate, on the TV news” (44116, Novovodolazka research area); “[...] We haven’t been abroad and we see the life on TV and nowadays [...] There are strikes and demonstrations there” (42111, Znamyanska research area). The informants speak about the proactive attitude of people in the EU that should serve as an example for Ukraine, “[...] we welcome this [strikes and demonstrations], we warmly welcome that people don’t keep silent but strive, protect their rights and maybe our Ukrainians will in the end open their eyes and also begin doing something, not keeping silent” (42111).

Ultimately, the received data depict a situation of frustration, lack of hope and distrust when it comes to the political issue in the interest of the people of Ukraine. What is more, such findings have been discovered to be more or less the same across all research localities. Perceptions of whether politicians in Ukraine and in the EU act in the interest of people ran in opposite directions. The situation in the EU is perceived as a kind of model to strive to.

**CONCLUSION**

This paper was aimed at exploring whether violations of social and political rights serve as incentives for Ukrainian citizens to migrate, and whether they are widespread in Ukraine. Violations of economic rights were taken as a separate migration impetus. Overall, this paper contains plenty of qualitative findings which clearly demonstrate which human



rights Ukrainian people are deprived of, as they perceive the situation to be, and what they might hope to find abroad. The project findings prove the hypothesis that human rights determinants, represented by social and political rights, exert an influence on the shaping of migration aspirations in Ukraine.

The methodological limitations of the EUMAGINE project do not allow us to conclude whether economic reasons play a greater role in constructing migration aspirations and influencing migration decisions. This could be an easy endeavor, should the project contrast social, political and other sets of rights against economic incentives to migrate.

Focusing, for example, on social rights, one should remember they are closely linked with the general state of economy. That is why it is of paramount importance to make clear the reasons for the project findings which describe certain human rights as being violated; or in other words - public services as being accessible in a limited scope or not provided at all. Overall, it was observed that even in situations which report violations of human rights (e.g. the issue of employment age), we might recognize economic reasons behind these types of discrimination rather than to state they are a matter of tradition or perceive them as embedded in societal norms.

Correlations between human rights concerns in Ukraine and aspirations to move abroad do not always reveal significant gender differences. To put it differently, opinions of women and men on their human rights violations exhibit significant similarities. Moreover, these similarities are also visible across all considered sets of human rights.

The issue of gender equality was mentioned by informants with references to different human rights concerned. Ultimately, only just over 40 percent of people in Ukraine agree that women's opportunities are equal to that of men. An overall conclusion is that the lack of gender equality is important in constructing migration aspirations. As in the case of gender equality, corruptive practices were reported with reference to economic as well as social and political rights. In general, those who either agree or strongly agree that corruption is a topical problem for Ukraine are in the vast majority. This is a dominant view in all research areas, ranging from over 60 to over 80 percent of respondents' views.

Corruption perceptions in Ukraine provide vivid illustrations, demonstrating that gender difference has no significant impact on the assessment results. What is more, the perception of high corruption levels ("strongly agree option") and propensity to migrate do not correlate in all cases. This is due to respondents who want to stay in Ukraine being also very negatively minded towards corruption. Overall the proportions are striking. For instance, in Kyiv, out of the total share of migration-oriented male and female respondents, over 90 percent (in each gender respondent category) argue Ukraine is deeply affected by corruption.

Perceptions on human rights concerns in Ukraine were contrasted with perceptions of how the same human rights are observed in EU countries. This helps summarize their views on such issues in Europe comparatively with their home country; additionally it helps us to better understand human rights in Ukraine. A combination of the survey findings and the qualitative interview data provides a clear-cut picture of what exactly particular human rights concerns mean for Ukrainians.

### *Migration aspirations constructed based on violated economic rights*

In general, the project findings supply plenty of evidence that people in Ukraine are highly concerned with the continuing economic deterioration in the country. In the same manner, they are unsatisfied with how the Ukrainian state performs and in particular with the quality of public services.

Respondents reported such violations of their labor rights as “grey” (partly official) salaries, irregular salary payments, non-paid sick-leave, and shorter than legally allowed maternity leave. One acute problem is unemployment. In general, people in Ukraine see employment chances as low. Only just over 10 percent of them agree that finding a job in Ukraine is not a problem. However, payscale received even more attention in the research. Low payment is presented as a major problem for the Ukrainian labor market. Thus, this is not solely unemployment that forces people to leave Ukraine but low payment, which is absolutely insufficient to survive on.

Also noteworthy is that low payment was given as a demotivating factor for teachers and doctors to perform better. With regard to the healthcare system and education, which are social rights considered in this paper, economic reasons were voiced as responsible for the current poor quality of medical and educational services.

### *Migration aspirations constructed based on violated social rights*

According to the obtained results, such human rights as access to healthcare and education are not denied to the citizens of Ukraine. In fact, they are accessible. The problem is of a different nature. Namely, medical and educational services are of such poor quality that they can hardly be regarded as being provided at all.

Opinions about the quality of education differ in quite a significant manner. Thus, the quality of education in Ukraine seems to constitute one of the reasons for leaving the country. Qualitative interviews supplied ample evidence endorsing this assumption.

People in Ukraine assess the quality and accessibility of healthcare services in their country as highly unsatisfactory. For example, within the surveyed population in the capital favoring migration, the share of respondents with a negative and strongly negative opinion towards healthcare in Ukraine exceeds 80 percent (separately within the male and female respondent groups). One other common tendency is a perceived increasing gap in providing those services which is noticeable between the cities and the periphery.

The quality of education in Ukraine seems to be one of the drivers of migration as there is an obvious correlation among individuals who aspire to migrate and those who believe that education in Ukraine is not good. A vivid illustration is that even women from Znamyanska in Central Ukraine, an area with a low emigration rate, 38.7 percent share this view (jointly options “bad” or “very bad”) and express their readiness to move abroad.

Unfortunately, it is again not possible to make a clear statement whether poor healthcare services or poor education is a bigger impetus for people to go abroad because of the methodological design of the project.

### *Migration aspirations constructed based on violated political rights*

Feedback on how politicians represent the interests of the people of Ukraine is very negative. The project’s findings depict frustration, lack of hope and distrust when it comes to evaluating the effectiveness of politicians in Ukraine. Remarkably, people referred to political parties in sporadic cases only, speaking about politicians in an “altogether manner”, and pointing to the gap between politicians and ordinary people. One significant discrepancy was identified in the performance of local and central authorities, where the former were evaluated as performing better. This was placed in connection with the fact that local authorities are

more accountable to local communities. On the other hand, central authorities are perceived as prioritizing their own interests.

The poor performance of politicians in Ukraine fuels people's migration aspirations in the capital to a greater degree than in other regions of the country. The vast majority of people in Kyiv (over 80 percent separately among men and women) who want to migrate replied that they either disagree or strongly disagree that politicians meet the interests of the people.

There is also a correlation between Kyiv respondents' migration aspirations and the perceived performance of politicians in Europe in terms of to what degree their actions are in compliance with the interests of ordinary citizens. Among the surveyed people inclined towards migration, more than 60 percent agree that politicians in Europe act to improve the lives of ordinary people.

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