

Towards Artificial Intelligence and New Technologies or Local Ties? Selected Variables Based on the Age of Respondents from a Survey on the Model of Local Government Consolidation in Ukraine*

Abstract

Democracy has produced a domino effect, growing and spreading across the planet.^[1] The local government system in Ukraine still requires not only a continuation and completion of administrative reforms, including, in particular, the implementation of modern technologies, but also the activation of the human factor through the development of civil society and increased awareness of civic participation at the local and regional levels.^[2] The article presents selected results of a research project carried out in 2025: “The consolidation potential of local government in Ukraine from the perspective of Ukrainian

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¹ *The Global State of Democracy: Exploring Democracy’s Resilience*, First edition (International IDEA, 2017).

² Ewa Maria Włodyka, “The Model of Local Government Consolidation in Ukraine from the Perspective of Ukrainian Immigrants in Poland – Selected Correlations Related to Demographics,” *Ius et Securitas*, no. 2/2025 (2025): 125–52.

immigrants in Poland, taking into account the implementation of artificial intelligence in local public administration.” The quantitative study was conducted among a group of 400 immigrants of Ukrainian origin residing in Poland at the time of the study. A statistical analysis was performed to compare respondents by age in the context of the following research question: How will the age of potential Ukrainian re-emigrants currently residing in Poland affect the consolidation of local government reforms and the functioning of local government? Will new technologies play a role in this regard?

KEYWORDS: local government, civil society, public administration, democracy, Ukraine, participation, new technologies, artificial intelligence, demography, age, immigrants

1 | Introduction

The political implications of an ageing population for democratic systems are of fundamental importance. As the political balance between generations is shifting, questions arise concerning democratic legitimacy. In the context of debates on political demography, Buchmeier and Vogt draw attention to the normative consequences of the interaction between demography and democracy.^[3] At the same time, democracy, at both local and regional levels in the form of local government, must respond to new challenges.^[4] When Russia launched a large-scale invasion of Ukraine

³ Yosuke Buchmeier and Gabriele Vogt, “The Aging Democracy: Demographic Effects, Political Legitimacy, and the Quest for Generational Pluralism,” *Perspectives on Politics* 22, no. 1 (2024): 168–80, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592723000981>. p.168.

⁴ See more: José Ricardo Martins and Chiara Davino, “Local Migration Governance in European Shrinking Areas: A German and an Italian Case,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 24, no. S5 (2023): 863–88, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-023-01029-5>. 864; University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn and Małgorzata Czuryk, “Jurisdiction of the Voivode in the Field of Crisis Management,” *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 34, no. 2 (2025): 87–98, <https://doi.org/10.17951/sil.2025.34.2.87-98>; Mirosław Karpiuk, “The Provision of Safety in Water Areas: Legal Issues,” *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 31, no. 1 (2022): 79–92, <https://doi.org/10.17951/sil.2022.31.1.79-92>; Bogdan Dolnicki et al., eds, *Samorząd Terytorialny Jako Forma Upodmiotowienia Społeczności Lokalnych, Stan prawny na 15 marca 2023 r.*, *Monografie* (Wolters Kluwer, 2023); Mirosław Karpiuk, “Glosa do wyroku

in February 2022, it became clear to the European Union that the Russian Federation posed one of the most serious threats to the region.^[5] Civil society plays an important role in the development of post-socialist Europe.^[6] In turn, the International IDEA publication, *The Global State of Democracy*,^[7] provides a comprehensive global analysis of the challenges facing democracy and possible policy solutions to address them. The publication contrasts recent democratic regressions with long-term positive trends, presenting a nuanced, evidence-based perspective and proposing solutions to issues that are often politicized. The publication discusses complex, critical, and politically sensitive issues facing the world today, such as ensuring that migrants can participate in political life in their home and destination communities. In his study, Chandler asks whether plans to increase public involvement in consultation processes actually contribute to the development of democratic accountability.^[8] Since financial independence forms an indispensable element of the autonomy of local government units (alongside judicially protected independence, among other factors), Fahrmeir's research is of particular relevance. In his article,^[9] he discusses the potential of the historical approach to sustainable development transformation, emphasizing that its value lies not in models but in encouraging more creative questions. Hence, it appears appropriate to pose

Naczelnego Sądu Administracyjnego z dnia 12 lutego 2018 r. (II OSK 2524/17),” *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 28, no. 1 (2019): 185, <https://doi.org/10.17951/sil.2019.28.1.185-194>; Jarosław Kostrubiec et al., “The Status of Municipal Government in the Sphere of Ecological Security,” *Hungarian Journal of Legal Studies* 65, no. 2 (2024): 164–81, <https://doi.org/10.1556/2052.2024.00510>; Mirosław Karpiuk and Jarosław Kostrubiec, “Provincial Governor as a Body Responsible for Combating State Security Threats,” *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 33, no. 1 (2024): 107–22, <https://doi.org/10.17951/sil.2024.33.1.107-122>.

⁵ Krzysztof Kaczmarek et al., “Security of the Eastern Border of the European Union. The Politico-Legal Aspects,” *Revista Jurídica Portucalense* 1, no. 38 (2025): 190–205, [https://doi.org/10.34625/ISSN.2183-2705\(38\)2025.IC-10.190](https://doi.org/10.34625/ISSN.2183-2705(38)2025.IC-10.190).

⁶ Milena Nikolova et al., “Left behind but Doing Good? Civic Engagement in Two Post-Socialist Countries,” *Journal of Comparative Economics* 45, no. 3 (2017): 658–84, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2016.04.006>.

⁷ *The Global State of Democracy*.

⁸ David Chandler, “Active Citizens and the Therapeutic State: The Role of Democratic Participation in Local Government Reform,” *Policy & Politics* 29, no. 1 (2001): 3–14, <https://doi.org/10.1332/0305573012501161>.

⁹ Andreas Fahrmeir, “Democracies, Change, Sustainability, and Transformation: Historical Perspectives,” *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy* 16, no. 1 (2020): 74–82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2020.1781329>.

research questions concerning the factors that may influence a model consolidating local government reforms in Ukraine. The relationship between demography and migration appears to have been under-researched, yet it may be of importance for a better understanding of local government within governing coalitions characterized as multi-level and translocal.^[10]

Research indicates that the impact of demographics on the functioning of local government is a topical issue, while attracting and retaining immigrants is becoming an increasingly important priority for local government units.^[11] These returnees constitute a factor that may contribute to either the stimulation or stagnation of the local economy.^[12] At the same time, systematic mapping of under-researched links between the mobility of foreign students and social development may have implications for state policy. By identifying the transformative potential of returnees and emphasizing the importance of a supportive environment, this analysis highlights the need for conscious and strategic action to maximize the contribution of returnees to society.^[13]

Local government units in Ukraine will have to address a similar phenomenon of the impact of returnees, which are additionally at the stage of ongoing reforms of the local government model. This phenomenon has led to the thesis that Ukrainian returnees will influence the future trajectory of local government reforms in Ukraine. Two research questions were selected for this study: How will the age of potential Ukrainian returnees currently residing in Poland influence the consolidation of local government reforms and the functioning of local government? Will new

¹⁰ Stephan Hochleithner, *Local Government and Migration: A Review of Literature and Media Narratives with Focus on West African Sahel* (Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy, 2018), Elektronisk resurs. p. 4.

¹¹ See more sample research studies: Evan Cleave et al., "Immigrant Attraction and Retention: An Exploration of Local Government Policies," *Wellbeing, Space and Society* 5 (December 2023): 100161, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wss.2023.100161>; Neha Bairoliya and Ray Miller, "Social Insurance, Demographics, and Rural-Urban Migration in China," *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 91 (November 2021): 103615, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2020.103615>.

¹² Anh Tran Tram Truong, "Entrepreneurial Identity Play through Cross-Cultural Experience: Insights from Returnees," *Journal of Business Venturing Insights* 20 (2023): e00416, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbvi.2023.e00416>.

¹³ Zhe Wang et al., "How Do International Student Returnees Contribute to the Development of Their Home Countries? A Systematic Mapping and Thematic Synthesis," *International Journal of Educational Research* 125 (2024): 102330, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2024.102330>.

technologies play a role in this regard? The aim of the study is to identify factors that differentiate Ukrainian immigrants in the context of local government consolidation in Ukraine. This requires the adoption of a methodological approach based on mixed-methods research, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses. The basis for achieving the aforementioned research objective was a quantitative survey conducted on a sample of 400 respondents, enabling statistical analysis, including tests of differences and dependencies between variables (e.g., χ^2 , Mann-Whitney U test, correlations). The research relies exclusively on new empirical data from a pilot study: (a) a quantitative survey and (b) a qualitative survey in the form of in-depth interviews conducted as part of the research project entitled:

The consolidation potential of local government in Ukraine from the perspective of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland, taking into account the implementation of artificial intelligence in local public administration.^[14]

This project involves a pilot study aimed at determining the potential for local government consolidation in Ukraine from the perspective of Ukrainian immigrants currently residing in Poland, taking into account the implementation of artificial intelligence in public administration at the local level. It should be noted that new technologies are increasingly influencing the political system, democratization processes, and the sphere of security. The influence of artificial intelligence on many spheres of human life has been steadily on the rise. It is a tool that e-Administration may be expected to employ in its activities. To use AI tools effectively, digital literacy must be enhanced both in society and in public administration, which should rely on such tools to perform public tasks.^[15]

¹⁴ Project discipline and its percentage share – political and administration sciences: 100%. The result will be a preliminary model of local government consolidation in Ukraine from the perspective of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland, taking into account the implementation of artificial intelligence in local public administration.

¹⁵ Dominik Bierecki et al., “Artificial Intelligence in e-Administration,” *Prawo i Wiąż* 54, no. 1 (2025); Dominik Bierecki et al., ‘Security in the Era of Threats Occurring in Cyberspace’, *Prawo i Wiąż* 57, no. 4 (2025): 73–87.

2 | Demographics and Local Government Democracy in the Study Results

Decentralization in Ukraine began with independence in 1991 and included territorial and administrative reforms, with a new phase starting in 2015. However, these reforms did not achieve the same level of local autonomy as in other post-Soviet states. Ukraine's local government system still requires further reform, particularly the implementation of modern technologies and the strengthening of civil society to enhance citizen participation at the local and regional levels.^[16]

Taking the age of the respondents into account in the correlation analysis may be of research importance, as it allows for the capture of diverse experiences and attitudes resulting from different patterns of political socialization across generational groups. Younger people, growing up in conditions of intense reform and rapid technological development, may be more open to a digitization of public administration and the implementation of artificial intelligence, while older generations may be more distrustful of innovation and exhibit varying levels of digital competence in using e-services. Age may also determine forms of civic participation. An analysis of the correlation with age may make it possible to identify the determinants of individual choices and to capture broader generational effects relevant to the political consolidation and modernization of public administration in Ukraine.

The article examines selected correlations related to the results of quantitative research^[17] conducted on a group of 400 immigrants of Ukrainian origin residing in Poland at the time of the study. A statistical analysis was conducted comparing respondents who arrived before and after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The raw results (in the project manager's resources) compiled all N and % data for the questions; however, the statistical analysis is based on correlations, as these more accurately reflect relationships between the level of education and respondents' attitudes and assessments. For multi-categorical variables, analyses

¹⁶ See more: Małgorzata Czuryk et al., eds, *Samorząd Terytorialny w Państwach Unii Europejskiej* (Akademia Obrony Narodowej, 2015); Paweł Swianiewicz, *Kręte ścieżki reform decentralizacyjnych w Ukrainie* (Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.7366/1509499528801>.

¹⁷ The survey was conducted by means of a research questionnaire using the CAWI method.

were performed using tests for nominal data; only statistically significant results are presented below. The questions included in the questionnaire were divided into three time periods: experiences during residence in Ukraine, experiences during residence in Poland, and experiences related to potential re-emigration to Ukraine.

Most Ukrainian citizens residing in Poland and covered by the study (77.5%) plan to stay for more than six months. The largest age group was 25-44 years (64.8%), primarily economically active. A majority lived in urban areas (over 90%). Respondents were highly educated, with nearly 60% holding at least a bachelor's degree. Most (71%) arrived after February 2022, reflecting war-related displacement. Overall, the group is urban, well-educated, and civically active.

It is evident that, for almost half of the 49 questions in the questionnaire, correlation with the age variable in the personal details section^[18] show no differences between the groups (aged 18-44 and over 44). Examples of such correlations include the two sets of questions below.^[19]

¹⁸ Full text of the question: When did you arrive in Poland? A) Before the Russian invasion in February 2022; B) In February 2022 or later.

¹⁹ Other questions that did not show statistically significant differences based on age were: (a) Have you ever run for local government in Ukraine?; (b) How would you rate your experience in dealing with public administration at the local government level (offices, officials, and formal matters) in Ukraine?; (c) Which characteristics do you think reflect the functioning of local government in Ukraine (until 2022)? (d) When using public administration services at the local government level, did you encounter (more than once) any of the following obstacles and shortcomings? (e) What kind of assistance did you use most often during the first six months of your stay in Poland following your arrival after the 2022 invasion? (f) How would you generally assess your experience in dealing with city or municipal authorities (or district authorities, marshal's office) in Poland? (g) How would you generally assess your experience in dealing with municipal or communal authorities (or district authorities, marshal's office) in Poland? (h) How would you assess your knowledge of the functioning of local government in Poland? (i) How would you evaluate your knowledge of the functioning of local government in Poland?; (j) How would you evaluate your experience in dealing with public administration in general (offices, officials, and formal matters) in Poland?; (k) Does your level of knowledge about local government in Poland and your experience with local government administration (e.g., city or commune office) influence how you assess local government in Ukraine? (l) After leaving Ukraine, do you follow news from the town, area, region where you used to live? (m) Do you feel safe using e-government services in Poland?; (n) What forms of social engagement did you participate in during your stay in Poland?; (o) How likely do you think it is that Russia will not interfere in Ukraine's affairs (either openly or covertly) after the

In the first question, respondents were asked to assess their level of knowledge about the functioning of local government in Ukraine.

Table 1. Assessment of the level of knowledge about the functioning of local government in Ukraine

	< 44 years		> 44 years					
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
Assessment of the level of knowledge about the functioning of local government in Ukraine	3.31	1.11	3.17	1.10	17733.0	-1.07	0.286	0.05

Note: *M* – average; *SD* – standard deviation; *U* – result of Mann-Whitney U test; *Z* – standardized result; *p* – salience; *r* – effect strength coefficient

Source: author’s own study.

In the second question, respondents were asked to provide a subjective assessment of their use of central or local public administration during their stay in Ukraine.

official end of the conflict? (p) Are you planning to return to Ukraine after the end of the armed conflict? (r) What would motivate you to become involved in local government in the place where you will live (as a potential local government employee)? (s) What would motivate you to become involved in local government work in the place where you will live (as a candidate in local government elections)? (t) What qualities do you consider key for candidates for local government?; (u) To what extent do you consider it likely that the following elements of civil society will be implemented in practice (and not merely formally guaranteed by law, “on paper”) within ten years after the end of the conflict in Ukraine?; (w) If you are familiar with any of the following forms of social engagement from your stay in Poland, which do you think could have a positive impact on strengthening local government in Ukraine after the conflict? Which could encourage residents in your area to become involved in local affairs? (x) To what extent do you agree with the statement that the implementation of e-government and artificial intelligence in Ukraine in public administration at the local government level will contribute to improved functioning? (y) In Poland, there is an e-government service (in the form of an application and a website) known as mObywatel, which includes local government services. Do you think it would be worthwhile to introduce a similar application in Ukraine, for example, in the form of the Diia service for local government functions?

Table 2. Which type of public administration do you rate most positively in Ukraine?

			Age		
			<44 years	> 44 years	
Which type of public administration do you rate most positively (in Ukraine)?	central public administration	N	89	30	$\chi^2(2) = 0.81$ $p = 0.666$
		%	31.00%	26.50%	
	public administration at the local government level	N	136	56	
		%	47.40%	49.60%	
	none of the above	N	62	27	
		%	21.60%	23.90%	

Source: author’s own study.

3 | Evident Statistical Differences in the Study by Age

Below, responses to questions showed statistically significant differences between the two age groups are presented.

When asked to assess their involvement in the functioning of local government in Ukraine before 2022, 22% of respondents aged up to 44 (the second most frequent response) said that they were involved. In the over-44 age group, 19.50% of respondents said they were involved (the third most frequent response). The reasons for low engagement varied depending on age. However, the primary reason for the citizens’ absence of engagement in local life was a lack of trust in local government in Ukraine.

Table 3. If you rate your involvement in the functioning of local government in Ukraine as low, what was the main reason for this?

		Age		
		<44 years	> 44 years	
I was involved, so this question does not apply to me.	N	63	22	$\chi^2(1) = 0.304$ $p = 0.585$
	%	22.00%	19.50%	
I did not have anyone to vote for.	N	50	20	$\chi^2(1) = 0$ $p = 0.948$
	%	17.40%	17.70%	
I do not trust local government in Ukraine (as a system).	N	56	25	$\chi^2(1) = 0.34$ $p = 0.558$
	%	19.50%	22.10%	

I do not trust local government in Ukraine (as people that represent local government).	<i>N</i>	73	33	$\chi^2(1) = 0.59$
	%	25.40%	29.20%	$p = 0.442$
I was somewhat interested in local affairs at the lowest level of hromada (громади), but when it comes to higher levels (oblasts – області and regions – райони), I no longer felt attached to the local community.	<i>N</i>	44	15	$\chi^2(1) = 0.27$
	%	15.30%	13.30%	$p = 0.602$
There were not enough forms of local and direct democracy (e.g. participatory budgeting, public consultations, local referendums).	<i>N</i>	30	10	$\chi^2(1) = 0.23$
	%	10.50%	8.80%	$p = 0.630$
There was insufficient communication from the local authorities; the local government was “closed” and “inaccessible” to the citizens.	<i>N</i>	51	17	$\chi^2(1) = 0.43$
	%	17.80%	15.00%	$p = 0.513$
I did not have sufficient knowledge about local government as such.	<i>N</i>	30	14	$\chi^2(1) = 0.31$
	%	10.50%	12.40%	$p = 0.577$
I wanted to run for office but encountered obstacles.	<i>N</i>	15	4	$\chi^2(1) = 0.51$
	%	5.20%	3.50%	$p = 0.475$
Fear of hate speech and political attacks	<i>N</i>	13	3	Exact Fisher Test $p = 0.572$
	%	4.50%	2.70%	
Lack of time	<i>N</i>	23	12	$\chi^2(1) = 0.69$
	%	8.00%	10.60%	$p = 0.406$
I was not involved for reasons other than those stated	<i>N</i>	37	4	$\chi^2(1) = 7.71$
	%	12.90%	3.50%	$p = 0.005$ $V = 0.14$

Source: author's own study.

The responses obtained make it possible to capture not only the level of respondents' actual involvement in local government but also the mechanisms underlying withdrawal from civic activity. From a methodological perspective, this question makes it possible to identify both systemic factors (e.g., lack of trust in local government institutions, limited opportunities for local democracy, low administrative transparency) and individual factors (e.g., lack of time, lack of knowledge, a limited sense of agency, or fear of negative consequences). In the context of Ukraine, this question may reveal differences in the perception of local government between generations, between individuals with and without migration experience, and between respondents who had the opportunity to observe local government under more stable conditions before 2022, and those who left the country during the war. The responses obtained provide a basis for

further analyses, as they may indicate which barriers – formal, social and psychological – need to be addressed in the process of consolidating local government in Ukraine.

One statistically significant difference was observed in the question above. Respondents aged up to 44 who rated their involvement in the functioning of local government in Ukraine (until 2022) as low^[20] more frequently pointed to factors other than those specified in the question. However, the observed effect size was relatively low.

In the second part of the survey (concerning experiences during the stay in Poland), differences between age groups were observed in responses to the question concerning knowledge of the listed terms. The largest proportion of respondents were familiar with the term “e-services.”

Table 4. Please tick the boxes next to the terms you are familiar with, even if only by hearsay.

		Age		
		<44 years	> 44 years	
European Charter of Local Self-Government, European Charter of Regional Self-Government	N	80	29	$\chi^2(1) = 0.20$ $p = 0.655$
	%	27.90%	25.70%	
AI Act	N	62	22	$\chi^2(1) = 0.22$ $p = 0.637$
	%	21.60%	19.50%	
Act on Municipal Local Government, Act on District Local Government, Act on Provincial Local Government	N	43	8	$\chi^2(1) = 4.55$ $p = 0.033$ $V = 0.11$
	%	15.00%	7.10%	
Democratization Index	N	62	16	$\chi^2(1) = 2.86$ $p = 0.091$
	%	21.60%	14.20%	
Deliberative democracy	N	28	4	$\chi^2(1) = 4.26$ $p = 0.039$ $V = 0.10$
	%	9.80%	3.50%	
E-services	N	209	83	$\chi^2(1) = 0.02$ $p = 0.898$
	%	72.80%	73.50%	
E-administration	N	115	50	$\chi^2(1) = 0.58$ $p = 0.445$
	%	40.10%	44.20%	

²⁰ These individuals, for example, did not exercise their right to vote or stand for election, nor were interested in local affairs.

Pro dobrovilne obiednannia terytorialnykh hromad (On voluntary association of local communities)	N	84	37	$\chi^2(1) = 0.46$ $p = 0.496$
	%	29.30%	32.70%	
None of the above	N	19	11	$\chi^2(1) = 1.13$ $p = 0.287$
	%	6.60%	9.70%	

Source: author’s own study.

In this case, two statistically significant differences were observed. Younger respondents were more likely to be familiar with the organic laws governing local government in Poland and the concept of deliberative democracy; however, the effect sizes noted were low, and the remaining differences were not statistically significant.

The next two questions concerned respondents’ assessment of their digital competence and experience in using new technologies.

Table 5. Questions concerning the assessment of digital competence and experience in using new technologies.

	< 44 years		> 44 years					
	M	SD	M	SD	U	Z	p	r
How would you rate your level of digital competence in using e-government services and your knowledge of artificial intelligence?	3.33	1.10	3.03	1.09	13652.5	-2.58	0.010	0.13
How would you rate your experience of using new technologies (e-government and artificial intelligence) when accessing public administration services in Poland?	3.47	0.78	3.30	0.76	13056.0	-1.87	0.062	0.10

Source: author’s own study.

The results indicate that younger respondents (<44 years) exhibit a higher level of self-assessed digital competence, which may result from more frequent use of new technologies and from greater exposure to the digitization of administration in Poland and Ukraine. Although this difference is statistically significant, it is characterized by a low effect size, suggesting that digital competences are at a relatively similar level in both age groups, with a slight advantage for the younger group. The lack of significant differences in the assessment of experiences related to e-government and artificial intelligence in Poland suggests that practical experiences approaching public administration are similar regardless

of age. This suggests that age has less influence on the assessment of the quality of administrative services than individual experiences or the availability of tools.

In the context of local government consolidation in Ukraine, this may be interpreted as indicating that the implementation of new technologies, including e-government and artificial intelligence, should not be viewed solely in generational terms. There is potential for well-designed digital solutions to be acceptable and useful across all age groups, provided that adequate training and support are available.

Within the same category of questions (relating to the period stay in Poland), this one concerned the sources of knowledge about e-government and new technologies in Polish administration.

Table 6. Where do you obtain knowledge about e-government and new technologies in Polish administration? Please select up to three answers.

		Age		
		<44 years	> 44 years	
from my children, my closest family	N	44	28	$\chi^2(1) = 4.90$ $p = 0.027$ $V = 0.11$
	%	15.30%	24.80%	
from other Ukrainian immigrants	N	126	49	$\chi^2(1) = 0.01$ $p = 0.922$
	%	43.90%	43.40%	
I searched for information on the Internet myself, mostly on forums and in groups.	N	101	31	$\chi^2(1) = 2.21$ $p = 0.137$
	%	35.20%	27.40%	
from officials in offices	N	52	21	$\chi^2(1) = 0.01$ $p = 0.914$
	%	18.10%	18.60%	
from Polish acquaintances	N	85	34	$\chi^2(1) = 0.01$ $p = 0.926$
	%	29.60%	30.10%	
from Poles – I asked for help in using e-services	N	40	13	$\chi^2(1) = 0.42$ $p = 0.518$
	%	13.90%	11.50%	
from government websites, including online textbooks	N	14	13	$\chi^2(1) = 5.660$ $p = 0.017$ $V = 0.12$
	%	4.90%	11.50%	
This question does not apply to me.	N	29	14	$\chi^2(1) = 0.44$ $p = 0.507$
	%	10.10%	12.40%	

Source: author's own study.

From a political science perspective, the results indicate generational differences in sources of knowledge about e-government and new

technologies in Poland. Older respondents are more likely than younger ones to seek help from their children and immediate family, which may be interpreted as a form of intergenerational knowledge transfer and a means of compensating for gaps in digital competence. At the same time, government websites appear to be more important for older respondents, who may perceive them as more reliable and secure sources of information due to their institutional nature. From the perspective of local government consolidation in Ukraine, these results suggest that the process of digitization and AI implementation in administration should not be limited to technological development but must be supported by measures aimed at increasing trust in official sources of information and involving families and local communities in the adoption of new solutions. Such an approach may support the development of social capital and the strengthening of the democratic legitimacy of local governments.

The third part of the survey concerned predictions regarding the model of local government consolidation in Ukraine. Here, age-related differences were noted in responses to the question concerning factors influencing willingness to return to Ukraine.

Table 7. Which factors are most likely to influence your willingness to return? Please select up to five factors that you consider most important.

		Age		
		<44 years	> 44 years	
family situation	N	124	46	$\chi^2(1) = 0.21$ $p = 0.649$
	%	43.20%	40.70%	
secure employment in Ukraine	N	118	52	$\chi^2(1) = 0.80$ $p = 0.372$
	%	41.10%	46.00%	
no external threats in Ukraine	N	156	56	$\chi^2(1) = 0.75$ $p = 0.387$
	%	54.40%	49.60%	
efficient and transparent public administration in Ukraine	N	67	22	$\chi^2(1) = 0.70$ $p = 0.401$
	%	23.30%	19.50%	
guarantee of non-interference by foreign states in Ukraine's politics and functioning	N	106	24	$\chi^2(1) = 9.10$ $p = 0.003$ $V = 0.15$
	%	36.90%	21.20%	
the willingness of those in power to strengthen the role of civil society	N	43	15	$\chi^2(1) = 0.19$ $p = 0.662$
	%	15.00%	13.30%	
strengthening local government and an ability to influence my surroundings	N	49	21	$\chi^2(1) = 0.13$ $p = 0.720$
	%	17.10%	18.60%	

modernizing administration through new technologies	<i>N</i>	47	19	$\chi^2(1) = 0.01$
	%	16.40%	16.80%	$p = 0.915$
support from European countries in strengthening local government and civil society	<i>N</i>	83	27	$\chi^2(1) = 1.03$
	%	28.90%	23.90%	$p = 0.311$
Ukraine's membership in international organizations, including the European Union	<i>N</i>	85	42	$\chi^2(1) = 2.13$
	%	29.60%	37.20%	$p = 0.144$

Source: author's own study.

The analysis demonstrated that, in most cases, responses from both age groups (<44 years and >44 years) were similar, suggesting a relatively uniform pattern of motivations related to a potential return to Ukraine. The only statistically significant difference was found in relation to the factor concerning guarantees of non-interference by foreign countries in Ukraine's politics and functioning. This factor was more frequently indicated by younger respondents (36.9%) than older respondents (21.2%), which may reflect greater sensitivity among younger respondents to geopolitical and international security issues.

The analysis indicates that external security remains a fundamental condition for considering a return, especially for younger respondents, who may be more inclined to link their life and career plans to a sense of stability in the country. However, for other factors, such as family situation, access to employment, or the state of public administration, no significant generational differences were observed, which may indicate their broader relevance across the surveyed population.

The second part of the analysis^[21] presents results on respondents' views regarding their potential return to Ukraine and the challenges facing local government after the conflict. It highlights age-based differences in the perception of financial issues and the implementation of e-government and AI, as well as in assessments of education and public awareness regarding digital governance and technology risks.

²¹ It should be noted that the second part of the analysis of questions correlated with demographic variables is the subject of a separate study.

4 | Conclusions

The questions in the survey were grouped into three periods: experiences in Ukraine, experiences in Poland, and experiences related to potential re-emigration to Ukraine. The analysis revealed several statistically significant age-related differences that, while modest in magnitude, provide insight into generational dynamics shaping local government consolidation in Ukraine.

Younger respondents (<44) were more likely to express a desire to influence their surroundings, even if they did not yet know how to do so, suggesting openness and readiness for civic engagement. Older respondents (>44) showed greater uncertainty about future involvement. Regarding the qualities of local leaders, older respondents valued “worldly wisdom” and life experience more strongly, while younger ones emphasized specialist knowledge, digital skills, and innovation. In assessing local government challenges, younger respondents tended to doubt Ukraine’s ability to overcome underfunding even with international support, while older respondents expressed greater confidence in self-reliance. Both generations, however, agreed that e-government and AI could enhance transparency and efficiency, although only younger respondents significantly associated these technologies with reducing corruption. A generational gap also appeared in views on digital education: older respondents were more critical of its adequacy, whereas younger respondents expressed greater confidence in current efforts. Overall, the findings indicate that Ukraine’s local government consolidation and modernization will require a dual approach – promoting innovation and digitization for younger citizens while ensuring stability, trust, and inclusive education for older ones. These results lay the groundwork for a broader theoretical and political science interpretation to be developed in subsequent stages of the study. It should be noted that the second part of the analysis of questions correlated with demographic variables is the subject of a separate study.

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