

## MILITARY READINESS: SOCIOLOGICAL MEASURE

Military institution is often defined as one of the basic institutions of the political sphere of any modern society [13, p. 207]. However, military sociology still cannot be considered as an independent sociological discipline, it is rather special branch theory which includes the sociology of war and military conflicts, sociology of the military (army), military labor, groups and other aspects of the martial sphere. Modern social theorists generally underestimate importance of the army, as according to classic liberal view militarism was important for European state formation, but was replaced with industrialism [11, p. 215]. This trend is also applicable for sociological education: it is reported that for sociology students the army is “an invisible institution” [8, p. 249 – 266], most of textbooks for general sociology classes say nothing about the military [6, p. xxv].

Still, sociological studies of military servicemen are quite developed. Ministry of Defense of Ukraine also has a special unit within the Center for Humanitarian Problems of the Armed Forces of Ukraine: applied sociological studies laboratory. Thus we can consider the presence of *empirical* sociology of the military instead of military sociology with its distinct theoretical approach [9]. In this sense sociology of the military, first of all, provides military command authorities with valuable information about different social measures of the servicemen’s life, analytical maintenance of strategical, tactical and intelligence needs of the defence apparatus. In many cases such information is classified, thus in this article we focus on methodological approaches to the study of the military and conclusions on the high level of generalization, which helped us to develop corresponding measurement instrument, rather than on specific empirical data.

Our study is based on surveys data of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) servicemen. Black Sea region, in which Ukraine is one of the central powers, is in many ways important for European security. Firstly, main energy corridors — gas and oil pipes — controlled by the states of the region. Secondly, there are several “frozen” conflicts in the region which are sources not only of warfare danger (Caucasus), but also of crime and humanitarian problems: smuggling, drugs, weapon and human trafficking. Thirdly, ethnic tensions in the region cause spreading of Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism and other forms of extremism not only throughout Black Sea countries, but on the global level. Fourthly, controversial geopolitical position of Russia, which has not only economic and political, but also territorial ambitions, may be the source of between-states tension. Fifthly, the region is

essentially transboundary: several blocks and military organizations (NATO and CSTO<sup>1</sup> among the main) have their troops ready for ground and sea actions. Therefore, almost all main world powers (including USA, European Union and Russia) have certain level of engagement in the regional processes.

Taking all these factors into account we cannot but consider the readiness of the AFU to ensure security in the region. The scope of our study goes beyond technological capabilities or defense infrastructure. Instead we focus ourselves upon “human factor”, which is one of the most important, but rather difficult to measure. In the following sections we conceptualize “military readiness” from the social point of view, present the AFU practice of military readiness measurement in social surveys, propose index of morale military readiness and its possible applications, outline directions of further research in the field.

Military readiness is one of the key concepts of military science and army doctrine. Being the term of both strategic and tactical level it is understood very differently depending on scope of view and theoretical background of the researcher. To name just a few definitions we propose these citations from official documents:

- “Operational readiness is the state of preparedness of a unit to perform the missions for which it is organized or designed. It is closely associated with operational effectiveness— that is the degree to which forces are capable of performing their assigned missions in relation to known enemy capabilities of specific mission requirements.” [7, p. 90]

- “The state of preparedness of a unit to perform the missions for which it is organized or designed.” [4, p. 9]

- “The ability of forces to deploy quickly and perform initially in wartime as they were designed to.” [14]

- “The ability of forces to be committed to combat within a short period of time.” [12]

- “A function of force structure, materiel, doctrine, manning, and training.” [5, p. 25]

As we can see doctrinal definitions are very general are not suitable for development of measurement instruments, especially within social science. More specific is structural approach which consider military capability as a complex phenomenon encompassing force structure and preparedness [15, p. 42]. The latter consists of readiness and sustainability. Readiness, in its turn, is defined in terms of personnel, equipment and consumables. Personnel readiness is measured as quality of training and individual readiness. Individual dimension is specific sphere of psychological (micro level) and sociological (macro level) research. From this point of view the military potential of human resources can be measured in terms of their

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<sup>1</sup> The Collective Security Treaty Organization.

“sociological characteristics, political capital, the intellectual qualities of military leaders, and morale.” [10, p. 3]

In this study we define military readiness as a fully internalized realized necessity to carry out military duty. It presumes both irrational and rational motivation. The main problem of military readiness level assessment is discerning truth from falsehood in self-assessment questionnaires. The issue becomes even more challenging with two conditions: (1) exceptionally high level of social conformity of the military, which is cultivated through the years of “obey to command” training [3, p. 151 – 168]; (2) impossibility of anonymity ensuring. According to the provision on organization of sociological studies in the AFU, “Commander of the military *unit under study* have the right to [...] ask for *necessary information* and the results of the study from *subordinates* and higher military command authorities” [1, p. 7] (italicized by the author). While still there are norms about “presenting results in generalized form” [1, p. 8], the regulation previously mentioned produces an ambiguous situation in which every individual questionnaire could be accessed by the direct commander, which is another cause of social pressure and biased results.

These conditions require execution of the following tasks:

- formulating questions which minimizes the influence of social expectations;
- using such question order and wording which minimizes direct commanders intrusion even in cases of anonymity violation;
- using sets of questions which crossvalidate each other therefore minimizing falsehood in answers.

The practice of our research showed that military servicemen are much more open to questions related to assessment of situation in general (like “What do you think about the social status of the military in Ukrainian society?”) then personalized questions (like “Do you trust military authorities?”). Thus, we use general questions in the direct manner, like in civilian polls. Personalized questions were formulated in “third person” perspective (“Do you know some fellow servicemen, who...”) or put in a special order: firstly we pose a question about reasons of socially welcomed attitudes and, secondly, immediately after them — a question about reasons of undesirable (or even unacceptable) attitudes. The latter goes without filter but with the option “there is no reasons for this”. In most cases the norm of full performance (answering all questions) helped to overcome resistance to undesirable reasoning. Also commanders, in most cases, overlooked such question combinations.

Below we present the wording of some of questions about the military readiness we used to poll the military personnel.

*Is our Army able to protect Ukraine in case of real military threat?*

- yes;
- more likely yes than no;
- more likely no than yes;
- no;

- hard to say
- other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*Is ... able to make right decisions in a combat situation?*

	Preside nt of Ukraine	Parl iamment	Gove rnment	Ministry of Defense and General Staff authorities
yes;				
more likely yes than no;				
more likely no than yes;				
no;				
hard to say				

*What are the most negative possible influences upon Ukrainian military units' morale?*

- social insecurity;
- misunderstandings in fellow servicemen relations;
- lack of dynamic combat training;
- the prevalence of egoist ambitions among servicemen;
- insufficient direct commanders' organizational skills;
- rudeness and humiliation of personality;
- a real threat to life and health as a result of hostilities;
- hard to say

*If any of your relatives or friends are subject to conscription during the hostilities in Ukraine, then you would prefer ...*

- he went to serve in the Army;
- would seek to avoid serving in the Army;
- hard to say.

*How likely do you think that as a result of military conflict...*

	quite sure about this	quite sure about this	quite sure about this	quite sure about this	quite sure about this	quite sure about this
Ukraine would lose a part of its sovereign territory.						

Civilians would suffer significant losses.					
The Army would suffer severe casualties.					
Ukraine would suffer considerable material losses (destruction of buildings, roads, natural objects, etc.)					

*How would you rate your moral and psychological readiness to protect Ukraine from hazards (military threat, terrorist attacks, the effects of natural disasters), if it involves a risk to your life?*

- completely ready
- mostly ready
- probably not ready
- not ready
- other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*If you're ready (mostly ready), specify what motivate your readiness? (You can choose several options)*

- homeland defense is my duty
- I want to protect my state
- I want to protect my nation, culture
- I want to protect my family, house
- other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*What cause your hesitation about your readiness? (You can choose several options)*

- the state badly takes care of its defenders (low level of social guarantees)
- not confident in the ability of commanders to make the right decisions in a combat situation (their professional competence)
- not sure about professional training sufficiency of subordinates for combat
- Ukrainian army is not sufficiently equipped (armed) for the confidence in victory
- not sure about the state's promises to take care of me and my family in case of death or injury
- I do not want to risk my health and life.
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

One of the organizational problems of military polls is time budget: filling questionnaires must not be time consumable activity which interferes with the performance of military duties. Thus, questions sets must not be very large, while being effective. At the same time it is essential to regularly check the level of military

readiness, which is possible with use of small set of questions which are put in each questionnaire on different topics. After series of polls and assessing number of meaningful connections with other variables we came to conclusion that the most effective set of questions consists of only three of them: self-assessment of morale, reasons for readiness and hesitation. With the use of this set it is conceivable to create an index of morale military readiness which is calculated according to the formula 1.

$$f(I_{MMR}) = \begin{cases} 2 \times \sum PM - \frac{5}{7} \sum NM, & \text{if max } SA \\ \sum PM - 2 \times \frac{5}{7} \sum NM, & \text{if min } SA \\ \sum PM - \frac{5}{7} \sum NM, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

with  $I_{MMR}$  : index of morale military readiness;

$PM$  : positive motives of military readiness (i.e. conditions which motivate a serviceman readiness);

$NM$  : negative motives of military readiness (i.e. conditions which demotivate a serviceman readiness);

$SA$  : level of self-assessed moral and psychological readiness.

If a polled serviceman is absolutely sure about his readiness (“completely ready” and maximum level of  $SA$ ) we double the influence of positive motives quantity upon the index value. In case of absolute self-assessed unreadiness — negative motives quantity is doubled. Also the influence of negative motives is declined by a  $\frac{5}{7}$  fraction as there is bigger probability to choose them. Thus, the value of the index varies from 10 to  $-10$ . If the index equal 10, then a polled serviceman is absolutely sure about his readiness, all positive motives are important to him, and there are no causes of hesitation. If the index equal  $-10$ , then a polled serviceman is absolutely sure about his unreadiness, all negative motives are important to him, and nothing motivates him in critical situation.

We also propose four levels of readiness based on calculated index:

$I_{MMR}[10 - 5)$  : sufficient;

$I_{MMR}[5 - 0)$  : moderate;

$I_{MMR}[0 - -5)$  : insufficient;

$I_{MMR}[-5 - -10]$  : critical.

In the next section we present general results of morale index assessment in connection with other variables. In all polls quota sampling was used which represent permanent military staff (contracted servicemen) in branches of AFU, regions of military units deployment, categories of the military (senior and junior officers, contracted privates). Samples sizes are between 1150 and 1530 respondents (actual responses).

In table 1 final samples descriptive statistics of the morale military readiness index distribution is shown. As we can see, the index distribution is peaked with most

values concentrated around moderate level. However, a positive value of skewness shows certain tendency towards insufficient level.

Table 1 — Descriptive statistics of the  $I_{MMR}$  distribution.

Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Value	Standard Error	Value	Standard Error
-2.57143	4	0.362658	1.131269	0.289598	0.074159	-0.09059	0.148183

Results confirm the ability of this question set and respectively calculated index to normalize idealized self-presentation in accordance with commanders' expectations.

To find out possible meaningful connections between  $I_{MMR}$  and demographic, social, and economic characteristics of servicemen we performed correlation analysis. All variables scales were recoded to ascending order. In table 2 significant Pearson correlations from the last survey are shown.

Table 2 — Significant correlations between  $I_{MMR}$  and servicemen's characteristics.

		$I_{MMR}$
Health	r	0.095833362**
	p value	0.001575932
	N	1085
Lack of necessary medical assistance	r	-0.108125455**
	p value	0.00077696
	N	963
Lack of additional financial sources	r	-0.14888459**
	p value	3.4823E-06
	N	963
Social and legal protection satisfaction	r	0.172752202**
	p value	2.52761E-08
	N	1027
Housing conditions	r	0.126122852**
	p value	4.64424E-05
	N	1037
Clothing provision	r	0.07133471*
	p value	0.022048816
	N	1030

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As we can see readiness to perform military duty is significantly correlated with social and economic conditions of servicemen. Social issues of the military influence loyalty to the state and, thus, readiness to protect it. Only one demographic characteristic — health condition — influence readiness significantly.

Index of morale military readiness can be considered as the instrument for more objective evaluation of servicemen's real willingness to perform their duties in critical situations. As the index has the metric scale all statistical instruments is applicable for its analysis, which may provide with deeper insights into possible causes of lower level of military readiness and ways of its improvement. Simple questions for the index calculation set is practical enough for regular measurement, which provides longitudinal data for identification of trends.

We can conclude, for instance, that there are preconditions for improving of morale military readiness of the servicemen: most of those who openly declared unreadiness still understand the importance of their duties and has one or several motives for their performance. At the same time, most of those who generally declared their readiness actually hesitate. Thus, general tendency in real, rather than declared, readiness for defense duties is more negative than positive.

At the same time military readiness index has very limited applications without monitoring of other variables for joint analysis. Morale readiness is inseparable from professional and psychological training levels, social characteristics of the military units: social structure and dynamics in servicemen groups; specifics of socialization of different categories of the military, social deviations in the military collectives, social conditions of pre-conscription training (in schools, colleges and universities) and military education (in AFU academies), public opinion of the military, their attitudes towards state policy, trust and loyalty to higher political and military authorities. Crossvalidation of the official economical and financial statistics of the Army is also important: questioning about military servicemen and their families quality of life, social security, implementation of servicemen rights legislation, recreation programs. Public openness of the Army is important for provision of best candidates for the army service, and therefore improvement of military readiness of the AFU. From this point of view objective sociological information about the respect of human rights and freedoms in the Army, fellow-servicemen organisations and communities (e.g. religious) is essential for the AFU public control and prestige. All those parameters can be assessed with respective surveys questions. In case of pre- and after-service social conditions these surveys should be conducted in collaboration with civil research institutions.

Military readiness is a complex phenomenon which has received not enough attention in academic military sociology. Clear understanding of the subject is important for strategic planning and tactical decisions in military governing and combat situations. In terms of material resources maintaining of the low-morale military is costly and non-efficient, while total reduction of the armed forces could

cost defeat of the state and people's rights and freedoms. Sufficient level of military readiness requires constant analysis of technical and social parameters of the Army and mobilization potential of the nation. These parameters do not remain fixed, thus requiring dynamic measurement system. In social sphere the most efficient way to monitor general situation is survey method. Thus, creation of a brief set of questions for assessing morale military readiness level is essential. In this article we proposed a method for quantification of military readiness through the index with respect to self-assessed readiness and cross-validated motivation. Further work in the field should test the robustness of the measurement instrument and maintain ways of collaboration between military and civil sociologists for improving the state security as one of the key preconditions for sustainable development of the society.

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