

EXPLAINING UKRAINE'S RESILIENCE TO RUSSIA'S INVASION: THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

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BACKGROUND

- Ukraine's resilience to Russia's invasion as a surprise to politicians, experts and general public, turning Ukraine into "inspiration to the entire free world" (Fukuyama, 2022)
- Factors of resilience: skills of Armed Forces (inter alia, due to joint exercises with Western military), unprecedented societal mobilization in Ukraine & external military and economic support
- Growing attention to the resilience of Ukraine's municipalities
- Yet: little knowledge about specific factors that determine the resilience of hromadas, facing various risks of war

OBJECTIVE AND APPROACH



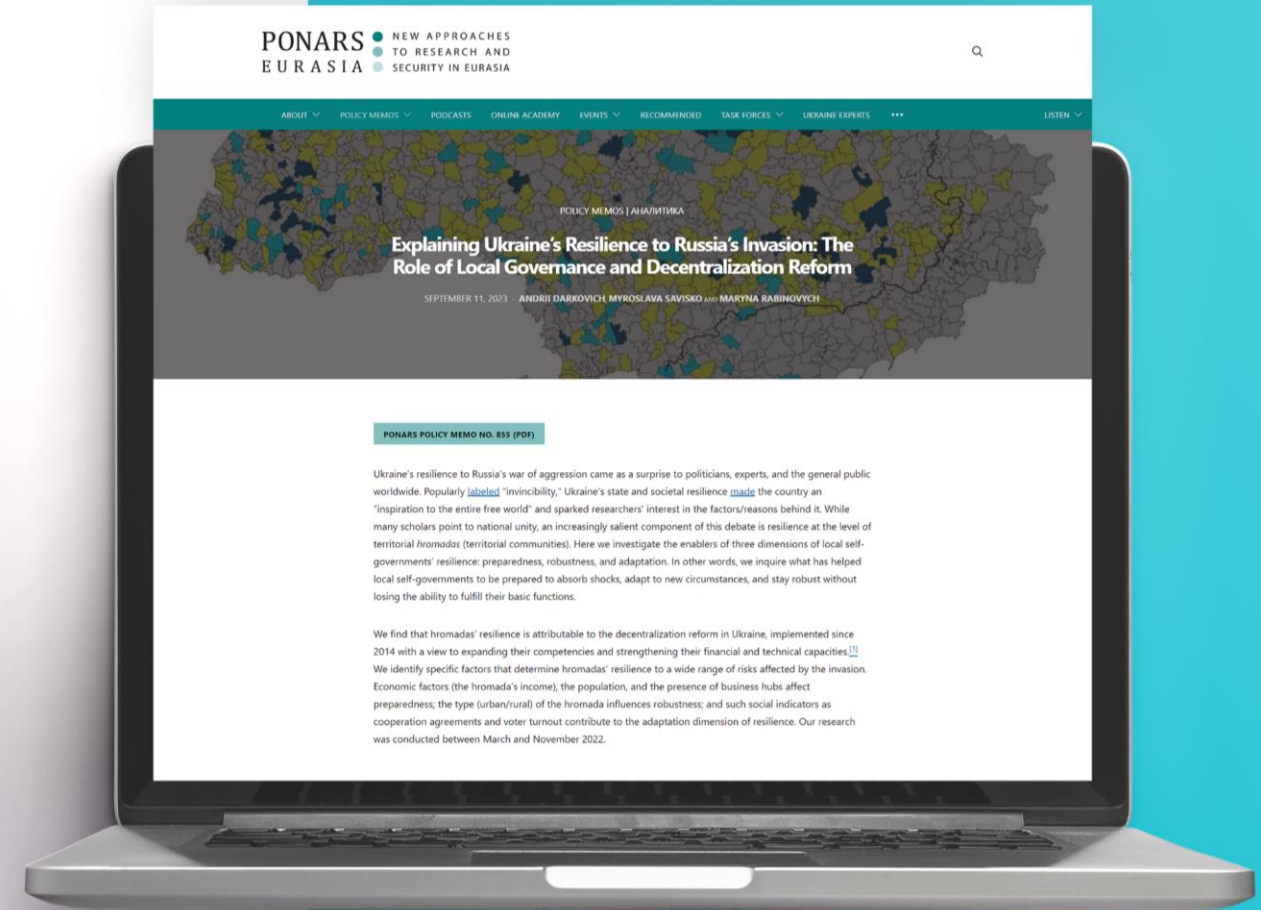
To explain the role of local self-government in the interstate war context



Basis for the conceptual framework's development: resilience, predictors of resilience & context-specific knowledge



Mixed-method approach: qualitative interviews, focus groups with experts, surveys & regression analysis



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK I. HROMADAS AND DECENTRALIZATION REFORM

Hromadas as “the inhabitants, united by them permanently residing in a village, township, city that are independent administrative-territorial units or a voluntary amalgamation of the inhabitants of several villages, townships or cities that have a common administrative center” (Law of Ukraine “On Local Self-Governance in Ukraine”)

Local self-governance as both a right and a capability of a hromada

Hromadas’ broad competencies and access to considerable financial resources following the 2014 decentralization reform

Significant implications of the reform in many domains, including strengthening of the mutual trust between citizens and authorities (Arends, et al., 2023)

RESILIENCE

Increasing prominence of the resilience concept in social studies, with it evolving from the focus on a system's ability to 'bounce back' to its ability to adapt to new challenges

Limited number of works that explore resilience to an interstate war

Understanding of **war as a complex of shocks** with different experiences among hromadas in the occupation, at the frontline and in the rear

Seven types of shocks: institutional, security, economic, humanitarian, critical infrastructure, information and early recovery issues, revealed as a result of interviews



CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RESILIENCE

Table 1. Conceptualization of resilience to threats to institutional stability

Dimension	Definition	Examples
Preparedness	A state of readiness to respond to disaster, crisis or another emergency situation (shock), which can be seen as emerging from “a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action in an effort to ensure effective coordination during the incident response” (Department of Homeland Security, 2017)	Hromadas’ having an emergency response plan and prepared stocks of resources
Robustness	The ability of a hromada as an institutional system to keep its functionality under shock or quickly resume performing its functions after a forced break (Klau and Weiskircher, 2005, p. 417)	A hromada’s ability to continue and/or quickly resume performing their functions in the communal sector, e.g. ensure garbage collection after the start of the invasion.
Adaptation	A hromada’s ability to deliberately change its practices and/or assume new ones in response to a shock through adaptive capacities to shocks (Norris, et al., 2008, p.30)	A hromada’s ability to organize the operation of its functions during long electricity cuts following Russia’s shelling of energy infrastructure

PREDICTORS OF RESILIENCE

Predictors of resilience including both tangible resources and networked adaptive capacities as stressed by Norris, et al. (2008)

Category	Predictors
Economic Development	Volume and diversity of economic resources Equity of resources' distribution Vulnerability to hazards
Social Capital	Expected (perceived) and enacted (received) social support, social embeddedness (social ties), organizational linkages and cooperation, citizen participation (leadership and roles, formal ties), sense of community and attachment to ties
Information and Communication	Infrastructure for informing the public, as well as communications and narratives
Community Competence	"A network equivalent of human agency" at encompasses collective action and decision-making, and collective efficacy and empowerment

OPERATIONALIZATION OF RESILIENCE AND ITS PREDICTORS (1)

Operationalization based on eight exploratory interviews with hromadas' leaders and four focus groups with experts (e.g. U-LEAD, SIDA)

Resilience: index of preparedness + robustness (suspension and renewal of administrative and data collection services + adaptation (measures to prepare for winter under energy strikes))

Predictors of resilience:

Demographic predictors (population metrics); politico-administrative (type of hromada and its area);

Geographical (macro-region, distance from the regional center, distance to the EU border and borders with Russia and Belarus)

Wartime experiences (occupation and/or military actions taking place in hromada)

OPERATIONALIZATION OF RESILIENCE AND ITS PREDICTORS (2, BASED ON NORRIS, ET AL. (2008))

Predictor	Metric
Economic Development “Resource volume and diversity”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• percentage of own budget revenues in total income• own budget revenues per capita
Economic Development “Resource equity and social vulnerability”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percentage of urban population
Social Capital “Organizational structure and linkages”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• availability of a business support center and youth center within the hromada• the number of hromadas in an active network (cooperation agreements) with subject hromada
Social Capital “Citizen participation and leadership”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• head of hromada characteristics• Voter turnout at the most recent local elections

METHODOLOGY



Semi-structured exploratory interviews for conceptualizing hromadas' resilience



Focus groups with experts for the purposes of operationalization



Surveys with hromadas and experts to gather data on various aspects of resilience and weigh the Index of Preparedness, respectively



Regression analysis based on data gathered from open sources

KoboToolbox software, distributed through hromadas' association (survey #1); regional offices of U-LEAD with European, international cooperation project funded by Germany and the EU with presence in all regions of Ukraine, and the database of the Center for Sociological Research, Decentralization and Regional Development in KSE (survey #2).

Figure 1. Surveyed hromadas used for operationalization of hromada institutional resilience

HROMADA SURVEYS

138 Survey 1

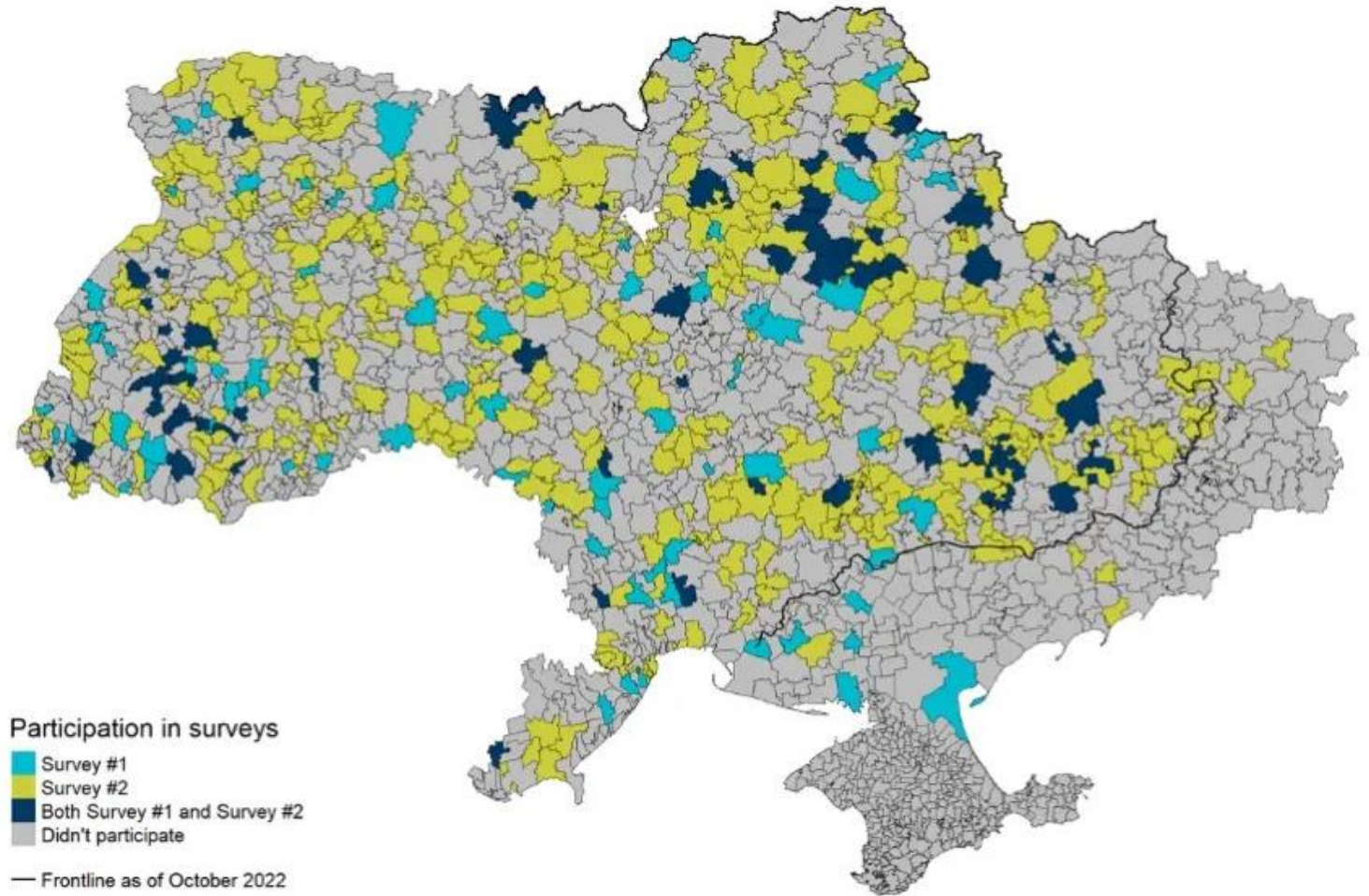
(KSE Center of Sociological Research, Decentralization and Regional Development + ULEAD), October-November 2022

The sample contains responses from 46 urban hromadas and 92 rural hromadas.

474 Survey 2

(KSE Agrocenter), June-August 2022

The sample contains responses from 148 urban hromadas and 326 rural hromadas.

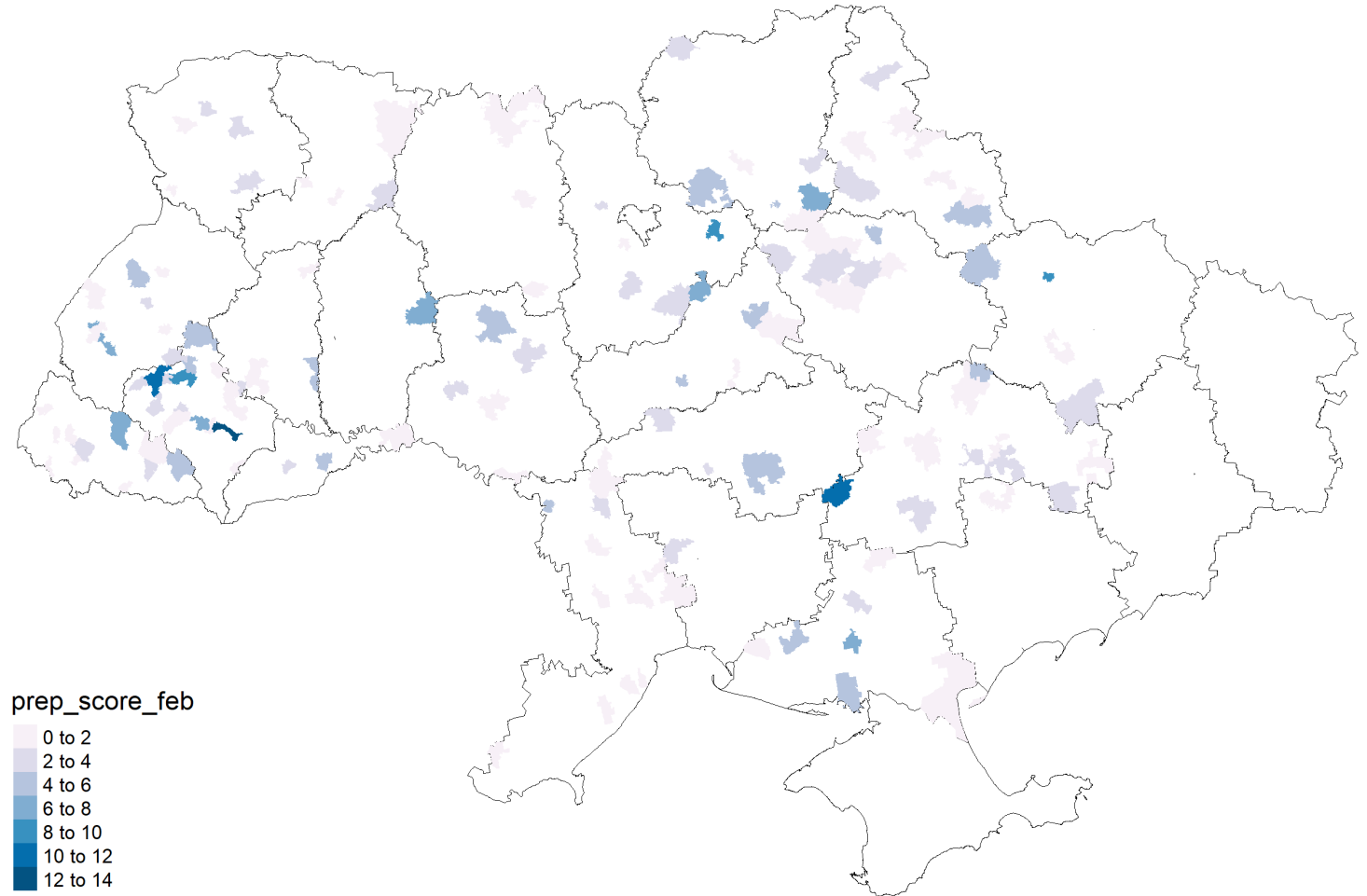


PREPAREDNESS INDEX

Data from 138 hromadas about
14 measurements

(having an emergency response
plan, prepared stocks of resources
etc.)

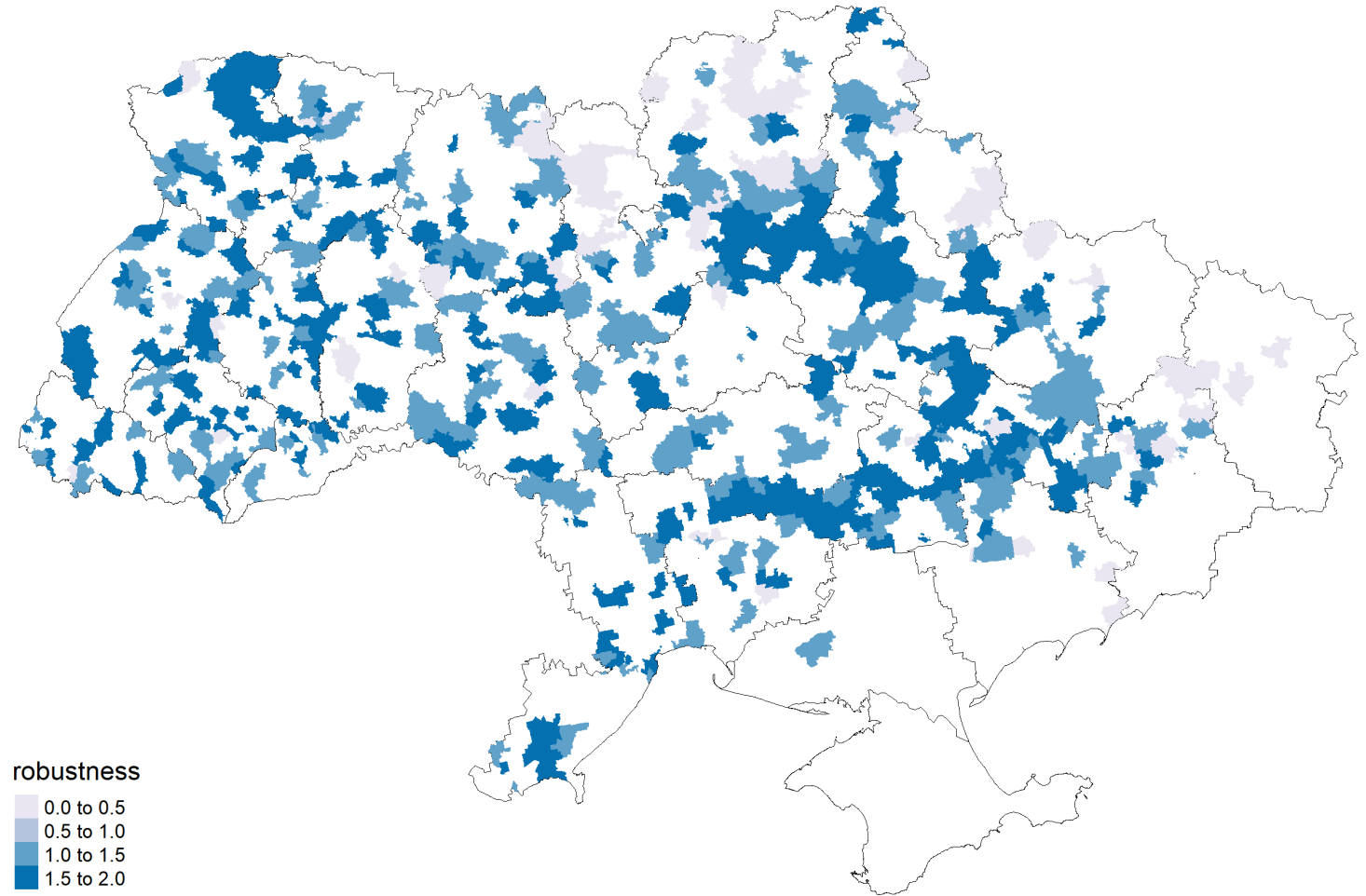
Average 2.5



ROBUSTNESS

Data about 474 hromada's ability to continue and/or quickly resume performing their functions in the communal sector, e.g. ensure garbage collection and administrative functioning after the start of the invasion

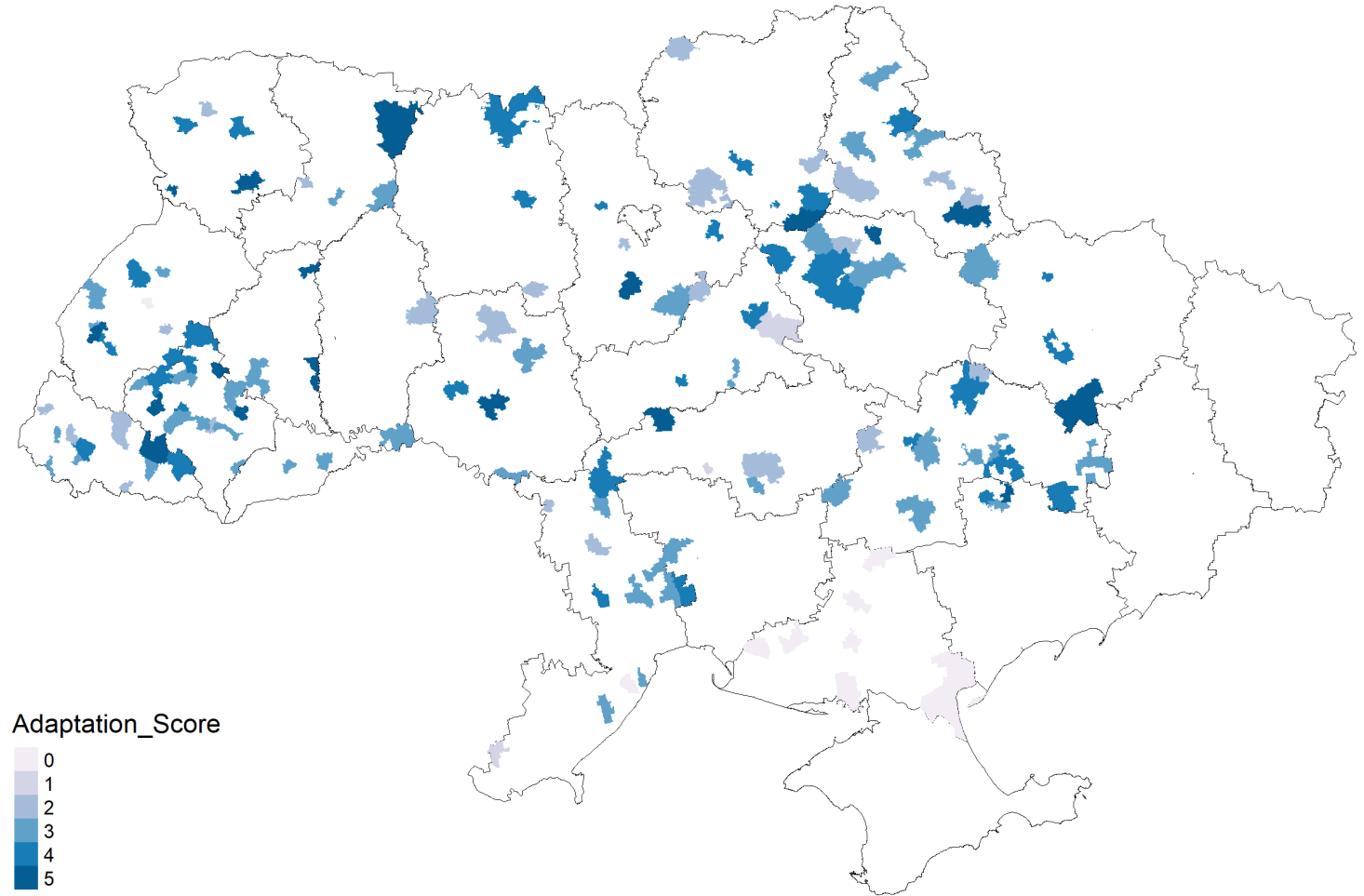
Average – 1.36



ADAPTATION SCORE

Data about 138 hromada's ability to organize the operation of its functions during long electricity cuts following Russia's shelling of energy infrastructure

Average – 3.1



LIMITATIONS



Focus solely on resilience to threats to institutional stability, rather than the whole spectrum of shocks, experienced by hromadas



Use of self-reported data

FINDINGS

PREPAREDNESS

- Positive relationship between preparedness and the **urban type of hromada and presence in hromada city of oblast significance status**, most likely owing to greater resource availability.
- Positive relationship between preparedness and **'own revenue' indicator** (greater capacity to mobilize resources).
- Importance of **establishing 'central hubs for various associations and citizens' networks'** (i.e. presence of business support center).
- Positive relationship with the **number of cooperation agreements**.

ADAPTATION

- More active preparation for winter by hromadas, situated in **North of Ukraine**, especially at 30 km zone to the border with Russia and Belarus. Also, distance to EU border had a positive correlation.
- Positive relationship between adaptation and **'voter turnout'**, as well as **'number of cooperation agreements'** (sharing of resources, experiences and best practices'.

ROBUSTNESS

- Urban hromadas and those in the **Northern region** more likely to experience full suspension of administrative services and **urban type hromadas**.
- Negative relationship between suspension of services and the **'number of cooperation agreements'** indicator.

CONCLUSIONS

Our findings confirm the role of Economic Development and Social Capital as predictors of resilience, suggested by Norris, et al (2008).

What is important is not the amount of resources, available to a hromadas but its ability to generate resources

Importance of both physical hubs and virtual networks for ensuring preparedness

Value of the decentralization reform, conducted in Ukraine, in terms of fostering the autonomy and ownership of local decision-making, as well as more active exchange and learning among hromadas

Importance of fostering municipalities' economic capabilities (own income), social networks and citizen participation to strengthen their resilience to institutional shocks, accompanying a contemporary war