

Dynamics of Cooperation between State and Civil Society Actors in Ukraine throughout the War with Russia

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Received: Aug. 20, 2024 Accepted: Oct. 23, 2024 Online published: Dec. 30, 2024

doi:10.5296/jpag.v14i2.22518

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/jpag.v14i2.22518>

Abstract

This study investigates the complex dynamics of state and civil society cooperation in Ukraine since the February 2022 Russian invasion. The study relies on in-depth interviews with senior representatives of civil society and state actors in Ukraine and examines the performance of key actors in terms of addressing immediate wartime needs. The research identifies crucial stages in state decision-making where Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a pivotal role, emphasizing their contributions, especially to problem identification, information collection, alternative identification, and result evaluation. Furthermore, it assesses the sustainability of civil society-state actor cooperation during the conflict, emphasizing financial stability, flexibility, communication, and trust as pivotal factors. Lastly, it explores shared challenges, including divergent priorities, politicization, security concerns, and collaboration reluctance, proposing strategies centered on open dialogue, collective problem-solving, and expert advice incorporation. In summary, this research provides nuanced insights into civil society-state actor collaboration during enduring conflict, offering lessons on fostering cooperation and resilience in the face of foreign invasion.

Keywords: Civil Society, Russo-Ukrainian War, State Actors, Ukraine

1. Introduction

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 reignited academic as well as policy questions about how different national actors can best deal with a foreign invasion. This study attempts to address the following general research questions - What is the role of civil society actors, and how can they assist the state during a foreign invasion? Drawing upon in-depth interviews with a diverse array of civil society and state actors within Ukraine, this research aims to shed light on the multifaceted dynamics that have emerged amidst the turmoil of war. In-depth interviews allowed the authors of the study to collect unique information and to investigate the views, perceptions, and motivations of the respondents as well as their social behavior and interaction with different actors.

Events of the early months of Russia's full-scale invasion spurred both state and civil society actors in Ukraine to quickly re-organize and shift their focus from routine items in their mandate to emergency assistance. Some local civil society representatives immediately joined the Ukrainian army while others began to use their connections around the globe to organize humanitarian support for citizens and to help the army collect money to buy the necessary equipment for protection.

The large amount of foreign assistance delivered to Ukraine created a new challenge to administer this assistance conscientiously and according to the priority needs of the country. In the later months of the war the extent of this challenge was manifested by corruption scandals and consequent dismissals within the Ukrainian government, increasing the workload of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau and the law enforcement agencies as well as of the watchdog civil society groups and investigative journalists. For instance, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau started investigating large corruption scandals, such as the one involving the head of Ukraine's Supreme Court in a \$2.7 million bribery scheme (Camut, 2023).

While the priorities of both actors were aligned in the early months of Russia's full-scale invasion, which prompted them to cooperate on emergency response and humanitarian assistance, sustaining this cooperation became more difficult in the later months of the war when challenges in good governance and public administration started to emerge and civil society actors became more critical of the performance of state actors.

This study aims to explore the multifaceted and changing dynamics of cooperation between state and civil society actors by providing an in-depth analysis of perceptions and experiences of various respondents representing those actors. The following section discusses methodological decisions. It is followed by a section, which situates the study in the existing literature. The next section presents the results of the study, which is followed by a discussion and concluding remarks.

2. Method

The primary data collection method for this study is in-depth interviews. A total of ten interviews were conducted, comprising four interviews with state actors and six interviews with civil society actors (see Appendix A). Two distinct semi-structured questionnaires were

developed for state actors and civil society actors. These questionnaires were designed to elicit detailed responses regarding the experiences, perspectives, and insights of the participants in relation to their collaboration during the ongoing conflict. The interviews were conducted via virtual platforms.

The selection of state actors as respondents for this study was based on convenience criteria due to the unique context of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Given the challenging circumstances posed by the protracted conflict, convenience sampling was deemed a practical approach to access state actors who were directly involved in decision-making.

Civil society actors were selected using a purposive sampling strategy to encompass a wide spectrum of civil society organizations operating in Ukraine. The selection included representatives from NGOs, think tanks, advocacy groups, professional associations, foundations, and individuals actively engaged in civil society initiatives. This diversity was sought to capture a comprehensive range of perspectives from the civil society sphere.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interviews. The analysis process involved several iterative stages. Initially, transcripts were thoroughly reviewed for familiarization with the data. Subsequently, an initial set of codes was generated, identifying key themes and patterns in the responses. These codes were refined, merged, and organized into broader themes through constant comparison of the data. The resulting thematic framework was systematically applied to all interviews, facilitating the identification of recurrent themes, variations, and outliers.

This research adheres to ethical principles and guidelines. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary nature. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

This study is subject to certain limitations. The qualitative nature of the research implies that findings are context-specific and may not be generalized to other conflict contexts. Additionally, the sample size, although diverse, is relatively small and, therefore, the findings should be considered within this context. Finally, due to the challenging and often perilous circumstances associated with the conflict, some potential participants were hesitant to engage in interviews. Furthermore, during certain interviews, the presence of intense military operations in the surrounding areas created a potentially distracting or emotionally distressing environment for both participants and interviewers. These contextual factors, stemming from the war, may have influenced the willingness and comfort level of participants during the interviews. As a result, there is a potential limitation to the comprehensiveness and candidness of the data collected which may have affected the depth of insights provided by some participants.

3. Literature Review

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 brought the world into a new geopolitical reality - a permanent member of the United Nations (UN) Security Council had invaded a sovereign state. This war highlighted the importance of the role of the state as the main, rational actor in international relations. It also highlighted that war remains an

instrument for achieving a political goal. During the war, the increased dynamics of inter-state relations, the promotion of national interests and military strategies of states, and the intensity of assistance provided by individual states to war participants, especially to Ukraine as a victim of military aggression, are visible. Less visible, however, are the role of non-state actors in assisting the state during a foreign invasion and the dynamics of their cooperation with state actors.

According to Wagner, non-state actors can include individuals, international organizations, private companies, non-governmental/civil society organizations, trade associations, transnational corporations, terrorist groups, and transnational criminal organizations (Wagner, 2009). This research focuses on self-organized, non-profit CSOs., which have rich knowledge and experience in conducting independent monitoring of the implementation of the principles of good governance and public administration. In realist and neorealist perspectives, the role of CSOs in war settings is “either secondary, marginal or non-existent” (Marchetti & Tocci, 2009). However, stemming from their growing role as a “transmission belt between society, business and the state” (Zarembo and Martin, 2023) and as a ‘norm-framer’ or a ‘norm-changer’ in the tradition of social constructivism, the civil society has over the years increased its influence on policy debates and decision-making processes, including on security issues, which traditionally belong to the realm of state responsibility (Hoyoon, 2019). According to Price, there are three main sources of influence of civil society organizations: their expertise, moral influence, and a claim to political legitimacy. The first involves the disclosure of objective knowledge and accurate/reliable information, the second, the protection of moral principles such as transparency, accountability, and integrity, and the third, protection of public interest and the ‘common good’ based on moral principles (Price, 2003).

The focus of the available literature is on the role of and opportunities for civil society actors to engage in intra-state armed conflict-prevention and/or post-conflict peace, security, reconciliation, state institution-building, and development. Relevant insights are provided by Poskitt and Dufranc, who conducted a survey in 2011 with 125 CSO representatives working in situations of conflict in 46 countries across the globe. The aim was to study conflict dynamics and challenges to the development and performance of CSOs. According to the survey findings, violent conflicts and the resulting security threats decrease space in which CSOs can operate, participate in governance processes, and influence social change. The structures for dialogue between the state and civil society may cease to function during conflict due to the breakdown of effective management within both sectors, limited resources, time, and freedom of movement, but also due to misalignment of priorities. Such a breakdown and the weakened checks-and-balance systems frequently cause an upsurge in corruption as well as limited accountability and access to information in the state, which undermines public trust in the government and further hinders CSO operations. (Poskitt & Dufranc, 2011). As illustrated by Elayah and Verkoren at the example of the ongoing Yemeni civil war, the security of CSOs and their staff is continuously threatened by the armed conflict. The CSOs have trouble communicating with their foreign donors and receiving assistance from them. Further, the CSOs, especially those without political connections, are denied access to government officials, and hence opportunities to participate in government meetings

and to influence decision-making. On the other hand, the armed conflict in Yemen and the resulting failure of governance has created a fertile ground for corruption in both state and non-state sectors as a result of which the foreign aid often does not reach the target population. This widespread corruption has damaged the image of the government, but especially of the CSOs who are perceived to be motivated by financial gains from foreign donors rather than by the needs of the local people. At the same time, the CSOs' lack of qualified staff and weak organizational and planning capacities, further restricted by the protracted armed conflict, has forced these organizations to focus on the most immediate, short-term humanitarian support projects rather than on longer-term community development projects (Elayah & Verkoren, 2020). Marchetti and Tocci defined civil society operating in a conflict as 'conflict society' whose identity and actions are shaped by the conflict. They also analyzed the role of Conflict Society Organizations (CoSOs) in conflict eruption and escalation, and the contribution these organizations make to the securitization of conflict. According to the authors, the CoSOs' contribution during the conflict is manifested in various ways, including raising awareness of conflict conditions, organizing combatant groups and guerillas, and calling for international support through funds and arms or through mediation of war (Marchetti & Tocci, 2009). For instance, during the intra-state armed conflict in Northern Kenya, between 2008 and 2014, the CoSOs, specifically local civic associations, played a key role in collecting information about potential threats and protection strategies for youth militias and local communities and in mobilizing resources for them, thus improving their scouting, monitoring, and threat response capacities (Cox, 2019). The civic groups have also proved their value in the war times by initiating and leading multiparty coordination forums, which united state authorities, local and international CSOs, businesses, media, and citizens as members. Such civic forums provide a space for regular exchange of information, dialogue, and advocacy for international support, and signal the importance of staying united in the face of the war. In fact, they can pressure the international community to step up their efforts to stop the war through mediation or military intervention as evidenced by the successful work of the Tuzla Citizen's Forum, a largest citizen-led forum with more than 15,000 members, during the Bosnian War (Berry, 2019).

In the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war, the available literature provides a general overview of a broad spectrum of both countries' non-state actors, which has played a significant role in the conflict. This started with the Euromaidan demonstrations in Ukraine in 2013, followed by the Revolution of Dignity and the ousting of the pro-Russian President Yanukovich in 2014, and leading to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and hostilities in Ukraine's eastern region of Donbas in 2014 and onwards. According to Mulford, the capacity and influence of non-state actors over the dynamics of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict is on the rise, and state leaders who are willing and able to capitalize on this influence would better navigate the complex environment of the conflict (Mulford, 2016). In separate research, Puglisi elaborated on mass mobilization, self-organization, and transformation of Ukrainian civil society into the security actor becoming the agent for change during the conflict, promoting collective responsibility and improving the quality of governance in Ukraine. According to Puglisi, civil society's creative and multifaceted contribution to effective governance, especially in the security sector, was first manifested in the establishment of

self-defense units during the Euromaidan demonstrations and of pro-Euromaidan volunteer battalions after the hostilities broke out in the Donbas. At a later stage, Ukrainian civil society contributed to the procurement of military equipment for the country's armed forces and to the provision of logistical services to them, as well as to the monitoring and democratic oversight of military operations in the Donbas, including through informed opinions on the functioning of the security sector and through calls for accountability of military institutions. These new modes of civic participation in Ukraine, which emerged during the Euromaidan demonstrations and the ensuing conflict with Russia, were based on bottom-up activism, advocacy for public oversight of state institutions, volunteering, and crowdfunding. Puglisi concludes that these "critical junctures" and "exogenous shocks" in Ukraine created a new momentum for local civil society's increased participation in the decision-making processes, engendering more open, effective, and democratic forms of governance in the country (Puglisi, 2018). Furthermore, the post-Euromaidan civil society has had a key role in building the social capital of internally displaced persons (IDPs), war veterans, and local citizens through the provision of education, social services and humanitarian assistance to those groups as well as in advocating for their needs and in deepening trust networks between civic groups and organizations (Worschech, 2018). The increased role of Ukrainian civil society and citizens in supporting the country's humanitarian and military needs during military conflict with Russia, as well as in providing public oversight of governmental reforms and decisions, urged Anne Applebaum, a Polish-American journalist and historian, to describe them as the "other Ukrainian army" (Applebaum, 2022). Public trust in civil society work has also increased, as evidenced by the high number of followers that CSOs and informal groups have generated on social media and by the high number of donations Ukrainians have made to CSOs to support their efforts during the war (Leonchuk et al., 2023). Worschech identified four main characteristics of the post-Euromaidan civil society in Ukraine: 1) high share of volunteering; 2) ability to mobilize during the emergency; 3) grassroots-based civic activism; and 4) increased trust and solidarity among local citizens and community groups. At the same time, the Ukrainian civil society organizations have continued to intensively apply their 'watchdog' skills to ensure transparency and accountability of the government, especially the military, which has led to improved public oversight of the defense and security sector as well as to the strengthened civil-military ties and inclusion (Worschech, 2018). Zarembo and Martin explored the sense of community and community responsibility within the Ukrainian civil society, which has engaged en masse in civic resistance against the Russian aggression. The four main factors are found to be contributing to this communal spirit of "coming together to get things done": 1) belonging; 2) influence; 3) fulfillment of needs; and 4) shared emotional connection in extraordinary moments of national emergency (Zarembo and Martin, 2023).

In their expanded role in providing a "whole-of-society response" to Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, the Ukrainian CSOs have been actively cooperating with state actors in the following domains: humanitarian crisis response; international advocacy for the provision of weapons to the Ukrainian army; exposure of businesses having ties with Russia; drafting of legislation to accelerate the country's EU accession; and the promotion of transparency and accountability principles in Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction process (Andrieieva et al.,

2023). Both state and civil society actors have learned to live in war conditions and to implement new legislation and practice in the above areas and beyond. As reported by the CSOs, the focus of their cooperation with state actors “has changed from the point based, operational problem solving typical at the beginning of 2022 to strategic planning and development of thorough concepts for further action”. (Skvortsova et al., 2023).

However, the expanded tasks and the urgency of delivering them have strained the capacity of the CSOs, which have faced numerous challenges ranging from the lack of human resources and professional development to the lack of funding. Other systemic challenges pertaining to corruption cases in the management of recovery funds, the lack of access to government-held information under the martial law, the limited use of public participation tools, and the resulting low level of public engagement in policy making, have also hindered the efficiency and effectiveness of CSO actions (Andrieieva et al., 2023).

While the above literature provides useful insights into the role and capacity of civil society organizations, during the Russo-Ukrainian war, and the key domains of their cooperation with state actors, it does not provide an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of this cooperation, the related achievements, challenges, and lessons that can be drawn. Particularly scant is the analysis of cooperation at different stages of Russia’s full-scale invasion and of the ways of how to overcome the existing challenges in state-civil society cooperation. A new, much larger-scale and protracted phase of the war has further tested the resilience and aptitude for cooperation of the Ukrainian state and civil society actors in terms of emergency response, and also in terms of good governance and public administration. By narrowing down the scope and focus of research to examine the capacity of those actors to respond to the crisis, as well as the dynamics of their cooperation at different stages of the foreign invasion, this study aims to fill the above gaps in the existing literature.

4. Results

4.1 How Do the Capacity and Role of Civil Society Actors Change at Different Stages of the Foreign Invasion

Data collected revealed that there is a shared perception that, since the 2014 war in Ukraine, civil society actors in Ukraine have been equipped with the necessary skills and capabilities to engage in decision-making. This allowed them to swiftly mobilize their volunteers and contacts in and out of the country to deliver emergency assistance to the Ukrainian army and citizens at the beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion. Respondents reported that the CSOs engaged in emergency decision-making through various mechanisms. For instance, Transparency International Ukraine (TI Ukraine) helped the government draft the necessary decrees and legal amendments to expedite the public procurement procedures during the war emergency, to impose or amend sanctions against Russia, and to freeze Russian assets. Respondents highlighted a particularly important role CSOs play in problem identification, data collection, and result evaluation. In contrast, the stage of implementation is largely in the hands of governmental bodies.

However, throughout the later stages of the war, the influence, and capabilities of civil

society actors in shaping state decision-making slightly diminished and encountered obstacles. As the conflict progressed, critical watchdog organizations such as TI Ukraine and the CHESNO Movement found it increasingly difficult to influence decision-making since the process was closed on the one hand, and state officials were unwilling to accept their criticism on the other. According to the representatives of TI Ukraine and the CHESNO Movement, the CSOs, especially those with no connections in the government, were not able to attend parliamentary hearings, for instance, and to put questions to MPs and receive their feedback. The engagement was also difficult for more established organizations, which would get access to the draft law only 24 hours before parliamentary hearings, with very little time left for providing meaningful feedback. Sometimes, the CSOs would learn about a draft law after it was already adopted, with no opportunity to influence its content.

The displacement of many people from the country has decreased the civilian workforce, putting further burdens on the CSOs' human capacity to work on multiple assignments. To address this problem, the CSOs forged partnerships with each other and united resources to work more effectively on common tasks. According to the representative of the Foreign Policy Council Ukrainian Prism (a foreign policy think-tank), the organization took experts of other organizations to workshops dedicated to the topics of their expertise and used their resources as well for media advocacy.

4.2 Which Domains Do State and Civil Society Actors Have the Highest Level of Interest to Collaborate in?

Respondents believe that the efforts of both state and civil society actors in response to the crisis have been sound and effective. For example, key ministries and governmental entities rapidly adjusted their activities to the challenges and issues that arose as a result of the war. In addition, civil society actors successfully adapted their operations and activities, making substantial contributions by aiding in emergency efforts, coordinating international assistance, and overseeing human rights breaches. The joint practice and effort by governmental and civil society actors in Ukraine, in response to the Russian invasion, demonstrates a collective mobilization and cohesion of society in the face of a foreign danger, also known as the rallying around the flag effect.

Respondents especially highlighted the efforts and willingness to cooperate of the following state actors: The Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Ministry of Digital Transformation, the Parliament, the National Bank, the National Security and Defense Council, and the National Anti-Corruption Bureau.

As for specific examples, the respondents mentioned: - the operation of the national railway free of charge by the Ministry of Infrastructure, which enabled people to evacuate to safer places in the west of the country; the launching of the UNITED24 platform by the Ministry of Digital Transformation as the main venue for collecting charitable donations in support of Ukraine; the prompt adoption of much relevant legislation and the taking of decisions by Verkhovna Rada, the Parliament of Ukraine, including requesting military support from other countries and negotiating with the UN, the EU, the NATO, and other multilateral

international institutions; the investigation of large corruption scandals by the National Anti-Corruption Bureau, such as the one involving the head of Ukraine's Supreme Court in a \$2.7 million bribery scheme.

One of the major areas of cooperation between state and civil society actors is legislation. In the face of war, state and civil society actors joined forces to address legislative necessities. For instance, such cooperation included drafting a new law about compensation to Ukrainians who had lost property as a result of the Russia invasion. Another example is cooperation between civil society organizations and the Ministry for Infrastructure to work on a draft law on recovery, in particular how the state needs to compensate people's damaged housing, or how state funds should be distributed. Moreover, civil society actors have highlighted the work they did with state actors to draft legislation aimed at restricting the activities of political parties deemed as pro-Russian.

Civil society actors have contributed to the formulation of governing strategies and have also influenced the development of official policy. A notable instance centered on the formulation of a plan for reintegrating Crimea after its takeover by Russia. The approach was shaped significantly by the involvement of civil society specialists, highlighting the possibilities for productive cooperation.

Cooperation between state and civil society actors effectively manifested itself in terms of communication with international actors as well. Respondents underlined that streamlining advocacy efforts that come from state as well as civil society actors made sure Ukraine was perceived as a unitary force. Respondents mentioned that civil society actors with good international connections were involved in communication with foreign actors, international organizations, parliamentary groups, etc. One illustrative example was an initiative of a government agency to include CSOs in breaking opposition in some countries regarding NATO's open-door policy. For their part, the CSOs formed a RISE Ukraine coalition and involved state institutions in the work of the coalition to support the recovery and modernization of Ukraine after the war and to ensure that this process is transparent, accountable and inclusive (RISE Ukraine, 2023).

4.3 Challenges

Even though joint action between state and civil society actors has largely been perceived as successful throughout the war, respondents have highlighted some notable challenges. These challenges need to be addressed, especially as the conflict has a high likelihood of being protracted.

Representatives of state actors named the divergent priorities of some civil society organizations, their lack of professionals in some key areas, and their motivations as challenges to successful cooperation between state and civil society actors in Ukraine.

More specifically, one of the respondents from the state actors argued that in the early phases of the war it had become apparent that the priorities of some civil society actors were primarily focused on immediate needs and completely neglected the long-term calculations. Ultimately, such misalignment resulted in the politicization of some issues and shifted the

focus from constructive and efficient problem-solving to political disputes and protracted collaborative efforts.

Another respondent questioned the genuine motivations of some nonprofit organizations engaged in civil society activities during the war, noting that those organizations are motivated primarily by financial gain and salaries rather than by the common cause to support Ukraine in the war with Russia.

State actors also noted that lack of professionals in the civil society sector has been hindering the efficiency of joint efforts. According to the respondents, two factors are primarily responsible for these shortfalls. Firstly, there are too few professionals with sufficient expertise in civil society organizations when it comes to some specific policy areas, such as Crimea and indigenous people. Secondly, the Russian invasion has led some civil society actors with sufficient knowledge and skills to leave the country or to shift their priority from cooperation to physical survival.

There were two main issues that civil society actors saw as challenges to effective collaboration. Firstly, sometimes state actors do not prioritize accountability and transparency. Secondly, there is limited access to information and a lack of communication between the two sectors.

Respondents argued that sometimes state actors' occasional lack of transparency and accountability posed a substantial obstacle to collaboration and effective assistance from civil society organizations. State actors often justified such reluctance as being associated with potential security risks, but these justifications were not sufficiently backed by evidence. One respondent from a major Ukrainian civil society organization argued that such lack of transparency seriously undermined the sustainability of cooperation between state and civil society:

“It [successful cooperation during the war] cannot be sustainable... if you start talking about that there should be more accountability to the people or more transparency, then it slows down because some other actors, you know, from the sphere of security of Ukraine come in and say: ‘no, it is impossible because it’s violating our security.’”

Another major challenge is limited access to information and limited communication from state actors. To ensure effective collaboration with state actors, civil society actors need information and swift communication from state actors. Interviews suggest that state actors, citing martial law and security, sometimes limit access to information and do not communicate with civil society actors.

4.4 How to Overcome Challenges?

State actors suggested that a multifaceted approach is needed to address the challenges of state-civil society collaboration during wartime. Firstly, every actor in the process should maintain a realistic perspective, and civil society representatives should adjust their expectations, recognizing that not all the problems identified can take precedence over the multitude of issues faced by the government. Persistent engagement is also no less important;

this might include building and utilizing personal relationships, enhancing skills and capabilities of civil society representatives, incorporating expert advice into the decision-making process, fostering understanding, and sidestepping bureaucratic obstacles.

On the other hand, civil society actors argue that openness and a change in perspective are necessary for cooperation with state actors. The practice of state actors of sometimes not seeing civil society actors as having genuine motivations undermines the whole process of effective collaborative efforts. The interviews reveal that one of the ways to overcome existing challenges might be by appointing liaison people within state agencies who will understand the needs of civil society organizations and ultimately facilitate effective cooperation during the war. Moreover, tools guaranteeing transparency are necessary to address the existing challenges related to government transparency and accountability. Engaging with the international community to highlight these challenges and jointly advocating for reforms was proposed as a viable strategy by the CSOs.

In summary, the key strategies involve pragmatic and persistent engagement, fostering mutual understanding, and utilizing personal relationships to navigate the complex landscape of state-civil society collaboration amidst wartime challenges.

5. Discussion

The findings of this research have confirmed that non-state actors, such as civil society organizations, play an ever-increasing role in state decision-making processes in the 21st century, including in times of inter-state wars where the role of the state as the protector of national security through hard power tools and in the spirit of *realpolitik* has traditionally been more prominent.

The ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war has shown that the war can serve as a trigger for the previously underdeveloped civil society in Ukraine to mobilize, to self-organize, to advocate for more open governance, and to engage in decision-making. By consistently doing so for the past 10 years, Ukrainian civil society has been transformed into a security actor, capable of serving as a conduit of knowledge and the protector of public interest on the one hand, and as a supporter and a watchdog of the country's armed forces and the security sector on the other - prompting Anne Applebaum to call them the "other Ukrainian army". The civic resistance against Russian aggression has also developed a sense of community within the Ukrainian civil society, which has had a key role in building the social capital of war victims and in advocating for the latter's needs. This in turn has increased political legitimacy and public trust of Ukrainian CSOs, which have received numerous donations from citizens to support their efforts during the war. New mechanisms of civic participation, such as volunteering, crowdfunding, and public monitoring of military logistics and procurement, have emerged to become prominent in the course of the war.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 drove Ukrainian CSOs to: - step up their efforts in the provision of emergency services to citizens; in the drafting of war-related legislation; and in the advocacy for securing regular financial, humanitarian, and military aid for Ukraine from international community. While doing so, the CSOs became more

supportive of the government's efforts and more cooperative with responsible state agencies. This rallying around the flag effect in Ukraine, and national unity in the face of the Russian aggression, was felt the strongest within the first six months of the full-scale invasion, which confirms Mueller's hypothesis that the rally effects are greater after international events that are "specific, dramatic, and sharply focused", involving a more aggressive use of force (Mueller, 1970). This is especially the case when a country defends itself against another, aggressor, country, when the conflict is highly intense, and when the conflict occurs during a heightened international crisis - all conditional effects of the Russo-Ukrainian war (Seo & Horiuchi, 2022).

Yet, as the war has continued and challenges in good governance and public administration come to the fore, especially in the administration of large-scale foreign aid to Ukraine, the intensity of cooperation between Ukrainian state and civil society actors has subsided. The latter have become more critical of the government and made calls to ensure transparency and accountability of decision-making processes, while the former became dismissive of CSOs' policy recommendations, citing martial law and security risks stemming from the Russian invasion as an excuse for closing the government's doors. The watchdog groups, however, have found this excuse unsubstantiated. The hesitance and reluctance of state actors in addressing problems identified by CSOs resulted in a resource-intensive process for the latter to mobilize the public around policy issues beyond the emergency assistance and to make a difference in promoting good governance within the state sector. For their part, the state actors questioned the professionalism and motivations of certain civil society actors who were thought of as lacking specialized knowledge, or driven mainly by their financial gains. Such lack of professionalism and integrity among certain CSOs, especially those operating in developing countries embroiled in conflict, has been extensively researched by Themudo and Chayes. According to their findings, in countries where foreign aid is pouring in, it is common to create a CSO to meet donor demands and to take advantage of available funds (Themudo, 2012). Chayes calls these civic groups and their representatives self-promoting political activists, self-interested intermediaries, and moneygrubbers who "figured out how to express just what the Westerners expected to hear" (Chayes, 2015). A related challenge is the lack of accountability and professionalism of some CSOs whose board members are usually self-selected and volunteer-based individuals who lack the capacity or the will to oversee the management of those organizations (Themudo, 2012). In the context of Ukraine, a brain drain and concerns about physical safety are also hindering the work of local CSOs. At the same time, state authorities, especially local and oblast authorities who are more prone to corruption, lack the political will to address the CSO recommendations on improving public accountability, which negatively affects the impact of local CSOs on good governance as well as their cooperation with state actors (Bader et al., 2019).

This research revealed that maintaining a realistic perspective and an open mind on what can be achieved during the war is a key to start addressing the emerging challenges in cooperation between the Ukrainian state and civil society actors since the first months of Russia's full-scale invasion. Avoiding finger-pointing and blaming, and adopting a supportive approach with an emphasis on building personal relationships, utilizing personal contacts for

communication, and avoiding bureaucratic obstacles, have been proposed as important additional ways out. To address challenges related to government transparency and accountability, the CSO respondents have prioritized employing the strategy of pragmatic and persistent engagement with state actors, as well as with the international community, to highlight threats.

The above findings are also supported by the secondary data explored as part of this research. According to Bader et al, in cases when the Ukrainian state authorities have exhibited the political will to improve public accountability, the strategy of civil society actors to apply non-confrontational methods such as advocacy, persistent persuasion and eventual consent, has proved successful in achieving tangible results. This was evidenced by the adoption of anti-corruption regulations based on civic initiatives by city councils in Kropyvnytskyi, Dnipro, Khmelnytskyi and Kremenchuk, and by the creation of an “integrity bureau” by the city council in Lutsk. In cases where the state authorities lack political will for reforms, the civil society actors have no other choice but to apply confrontational methods, such as monitoring of potentially corrupt state officials, conducting informational campaigns about corruption, filing lawsuits against state agencies, and organizing demonstrations. These methods proved successful in Mykolaiv and Ternopil, where local authorities were forced to return to public property illegally sold land and to reverse the increase of public transport tickets, respectively. Nevertheless, applying non-confrontational methods was found to be essential in facilitating state and civil society cooperation and in achieving more substantial and sustainable results through such cooperation. The strong support from international actors, especially in the context of European integration, is also essential to create political will among the Ukrainian state authorities to cooperate with civil society on good governance issues and to consider their recommendations for reform (Bader et al., 2019). A recent case, when the Verkhovna Rada reinstated public access to state officials’ asset declarations, is a good illustration. Apart from persistent advocacy from civil society actors, this positive development in the fight against corruption was also made possible through persistent calls on the Ukrainian leadership from the Members of the European Parliament (Court, 2023).

The findings of this research carry important implications for scholars and practitioners working in the field. Apart from providing regular financial, humanitarian, and military aid to a defending country fighting an unjust war against an aggressor country, the international community should also prioritize monitoring how this aid is implemented on the ground to ensure that it is directed to where it is most needed. This brings issues of good governance, public administration, and state and civil society cooperation to the fore. Using the example of the Russo-Ukrainian war, the given research aimed to explore those issues by: - reviewing the existing opportunities and mechanisms for state and civil society cooperation in Ukraine since Russia’s full-scale invasion of the country; by studying perceptions of representatives of both sectors on the role and the capacity of civil society actors to engage in decision-making during the war as well as on the areas where the civil society’s support is most needed; by analyzing the factors which are contributing to successful state and civil society cooperation and those which are not; and by drawing strategies for addressing the existing challenges to cooperation in the course of the protracted war.

Acknowledgments

The authors of this article gratefully acknowledge the financial and in-kind support received from the GIPA - Georgian Institute of Public Affairs. We are particularly thankful to the GIPA professors Nani Macharashvili and Tornike Sharashenidze as well as to the GIPA Program Coordinator Mariam Dotiashvili and to the GIPA students Ana Devadze, Ani Tevdorashvili, and Luka Khutulashvili for helping us with the organization of interviews, the data collection, and the fine-tuning of the content of the article.

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Appendix A

Interviews

Organization:	Interview date:
Transparency International Ukraine	June 7, 2023
Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”	May 16, 2023
Kyiv City Council	June 30, 2023
Representation of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea	July 6, 2023
The Ukrainian Veterans Foundation	May 31, 2023
EasyBusiness	May 16, 2023
Institute of Legislative Ideas (ILI) - Member of Rise UA Coalition	June 15, 2023
National Agency for the Corruption Prevention	June 27, 2023
Civil Network OPORA	June 5, 2023
Pyx ЧЕCHO	May 29, 2023

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