Social and marketing research during the war

In 2014, Ukraine entered a new stage of struggle for their independence. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine officially declared on 20 February 2014 beginning of the temporary occupation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia. International organizations have recognized the occupation and annexation of Crimea as illegal and have condemned Russia’s actions. In April 2014 began the war in the East of Ukraine or the War in the Donbass, which was preceded by a series of Pro-Russian demonstrations in Ukraine and the proclamation of “state sovereignty” of the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR). Conflict became the continuation of Russian military aggression against Ukraine. Geographical covers a part of Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine. In these conditions attention to public opinion, especially in the territories not controlled by Ukraine, is becoming extremely important. This article analyzes the experience of conducting research in the occupied and uncontrolled territories of Ukraine in 2014–2015 years.

Keywords
social and marketing research in Ukraine, research in the occupied and uncontrolled territories, research methods in the occupied and uncontrolled territories

The struggle for the independence of the Soviet Union former republics did not end with the Declaration of independence and the adoption of the Constitution. The newly independent States decided task of society and economic development. This put a number of new tasks before people and their government, primarily the formation of national identity and economic independence. Modern Ukraine is today winning its independence, first and foremost in the fight with the Russian aggressor. At this time the role of professional social and marketing researches, which are conducted in the temporarily occupied and uncontrolled territories of Ukraine to Ukrainian researchers are extremely important.

A number of events occurring in the country recently and the reaction of the research market and of the society for research led me to believe that the professional community should discuss important aspects of their activities during this period.

The first problem: whether to continue a professional relationship with representatives of the belligerent?

It would seem that during the war (and I mean here for military operations the annexation of the Crimea and the fighting in the Donbass), clarification of relations should take place among politicians and the military. However, the first thing faced by researchers, and especially by social scientists — they
become hostages of situations, they are just tried to use to verify the correctness of their actions. The first call was made in 2004. That was based on the data of exit polls when the results of voting were challenged in the presidential election. Our colleagues have had a difficult time scientific debate on television. A lesson that was passed by the sociologists of Ukraine is the understanding of responsibility for the results of the sociological studies during periods of political battles.

In 2014 the members of the Ukrainian Marketing Association (UMA) had no arguments about the participation in a field research commissioned by the Ministry of foreign Affairs of Russia. They responded quickly to the incoming request from the Russian for a field survey of public opinion in the Crimea to determine the relationship of the Crimean population to the issue of disconnection from the Ukraine and the readiness of Ukrainian citizens to move to permanent residence in the regions of the Russian Federation (except for Moscow and St. Petersburg) with the help of questionnaires, developed by the Ministry of foreign Affairs of Russian Federation. The UMA appeal to the members of the professional association with a proposal to refrain from participation in such research, because there was no confidence in the correctness of the interpretation and use of the obtained results. Quite a lot of questions was emerged to the questionnaire. According to the UMA no research agency of Ukraine has not provided their fields for this study.

However, this case does not exhaust the whole range of relationships between professionals during this period. Companies continue to cooperate in the field of marketing research for business and the exchange of scientific knowledge and, from my point of view, this is a balanced, focused on the future communication policy of the agencies.

The second problem: what should be considered in the process of conducting research on the uncontrolled territories?

Marketing research is conducted on the uncontrolled Ukraine, temporarily occupied territories. An example — a research of the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS). "The research of needs for humanitarian assistance to the inhabitants of Donetsk and Lugansk regions" (UNIAN, 2015). The study was commissioned by the Rinat Akhmetov's Humanitarian Fund and NGO "Dopomozhemo TV" in the period from October 2014 to September 2015. There was assessed the need for humanitarian assistance to the inhabitants of the cities of Donetsk and Lugansk regions, studied the current needs of the population in food products, medicines and non-food items, as well as the situation with the work of medical and educational institutions, communications.

Polls were conducted by KIIS using a method of telephone interview by means of a computer (CATI). The age of respondents was over 18 years. In September 2100 respondents were polled in 30 the neediest cities. A representative survey spend actually failed because of the extremely low population access to telephone services in the Lugansk stanitsa and Pervomaisk stanitsa (only 18 interviews were conducted in these cities). The calculations needs for humanitarian aid and migration levels weren't performed for these cities separately.

The research of GfK Ukraine "Socio-political mood of the inhabitants of the Crimea" (GfK, 2015 — the study was conducted by GfK Ukraine on request of Berta Communications with support from Canada Fund for Local Initiatives for project Free Crimea). A research carried out at the request of Berta Communications supported by Canada Fund for Local Initiatives for project Free Crimea. A research was conducted from 16 to 22 January 2015, 800 interviews with residents of the Crimea 18 years and older who live in cities with a population of 20 thousand and more. The sample is representative to the population of the Crimea by a size of the settlement, sex and age, according to the State Statistics Service, as at 01.01.2013. CATI — telephone interviews, calls to home telephone number. The maximum statistical error was 3.5%. However, one very important fact was missing: a survey by phone does not guarantee the anonymity and security of the respondent in the occupation regime.

The research results were actively discussed in the press (Insider, 2015). Main question: How can we trust the results of the research? Of course, the research methodology and data collection techniques are important in the analysis of the results. That technique attracted the most criticism from opponents of the discussion.

As you can see in the both studies the data collection method was selected telephone survey. This is understandable, because the physical presence of the interviewer in these areas is dangerous. I want to note that it is not about leisure, but about the work of the interviewer, i.e. on data collection.

So, of course, the first thing that must be considered, conducting research in the territories in the zone of an occupation, a warfare — is safeguarding of interviewers and respondents
Publication of research results

The third problem: Publication of research results

Sociologists and marketers have found themselves under intense public scrutiny, especially in the case of publication of the results of their research on such sensitive social issues. Reporters read carefully not only the findings of social research, but also the course of a scientific debate. An example is the hot debate over editorial material in the journal Sociology: theory, methods, marketing "Lugansk: hot summer 2014" (2015) which was shown the various points of view, including the author of uncontrolled territories, which were published under pseudonyms. However, the Ukrainian sociologists have not yet had the experience of publishing this kind of materials, as well as Ukrainian journalists — experience in the analysis and perception of such materials. Therefore, the article was perceived as a separatist material (Oniszczenko, 2015), carrying ideological overtones.

Indeed, researchers are aware of their responsibility for the publication of public opinion research results, because publishing a public opinion, they form it willingly or unwillingly. That is why, a method of the research and a receipt of data are attended. In addition, the market operators are trying to show different points of view with a weighed approach to their position. Scientific discussions also reflect different approaches to solving the problem. Of course, this approach to publishing of research papers are objectionable to some opponents, who would like to see only one point of view and consideration of issues — only from a one angle.

In the course of active discussions, unfortunately, there are cases when its members publish the results of research context-free and cite only those passages that highlight or reinforce the opinion of the author. Meanwhile, in the period of an acute political debate in the country it's especially important to adhere to the provisions and articles of the ESOMAR/WAPOR Guideline on Opinion Polls and Published Surveys (ESOMAR, 2014) as well as Quality Marketing Research UMA (Ukrainian Marketing Association) Standards SOU 91.12.0-21708654-001-2002 (p. 42).

These documents emphasize that the study of public opinion requires a mandatory adherence to professional and ethical requirements; however, like all other forms of research surveys. Public opinion research is a particularly "sensitive" area. It is linked to issues which cause a much greater public interest and emotion than a marketing project for the study of goods market, services market or labour market. In addition, the results of public opinion research is usually much more widely published and discussed. It is unacceptable that these results were provided to the society as biased and even more provocative.

Taking into account the experience of many countries, ESOMAR has developed specific guidelines for the publication of public opinion research to the general public, government officials, politicians, the media and all other interested audiences had with the help of research access to precise objective measurements of public attitudes and intentions. The aim of ESOMAR Code is to reduce the risk of society misunderstanding by disclosing inappropriate or misconceptions of a research.

The researchers — members of the NGO "Ukrainian Marketing Association" adhere to the ESOMAR Codes in the publication process of the results of sociological surveys. We remember that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has carefully considered the ESOMAR Code for the publication of the results of public opinion polls and approved it. The Council of Europe encouraged the wide use of this document as a guide by publishing surveys.

At the same time we are seeing that this is an extremely difficult time organizations, journalists (and sometimes researchers!) don't always adhere
to the ESOMAR requirements for such publications. In particular, the World Association of researchers stress that it is necessary to carefully analyze the publication, not to take quotes out of context, to worry about that readers can adequately assess the conclusions of the study.

An example of a questionable approach is the publication of the results of the study "Have you ever seen Pinocchio?". The study was conducted by the Literary Association "Stan" (Lugansk) in conjunction with the public initiative of "Kultunyi dialog" (Kremenchug) with the financial support of the authoritative American Foundation National Endowment for Democracy and with the support of the US Embassy in Ukraine. The aim of the study was to identify the stereotypes regarding the IDPs (internally displaced persons — IDPs) in Ukraine. On a page of a renowned information resource "Gurt" (Gurt, 2015), in spite of the importance and complexity of the study, it was given only one quote from it, which is quite controversial.

At the same time, learn all results of the study, as it's proposed by the administration "Gurt", it is quite difficult, because of the need to follow the link and be a registered user of the portal. This article is rather poses questions than provide answers. In particular:

1. Is it acceptable to use literary devices in the case publication of the results of the study? For example, using memorable fictional name or selecting quotes taken out of context.

2. How to ensure that research on socially relevant themes with the obligatory participation of specialists? After all, the latter as members of professional associations must adhere to requirements of the Code, Guidelines and National Quality Standards to properly ensure the publication of the results for the purpose, at the same time explaining the methodology of collecting information, as well as in proportion and balanced representation of all major positions, not only negative, as in the above case.

3. How to respond to criticism of those who disagree with the conclusions of studies?

**Summary**

Ukrainian sociologists and marketers are acutely aware of the need to provide the reliable information and also of the observance of balance and responsibility in the provision of research results. Council of the NGO "Ukrainian Marketing Association" has repeatedly applied to its members to adhere to mandatory for us standards strictly, and especially:

- procedural provisions of The ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market, Opinion and Social Research and Data Analytics,
- requirements of ESOMAR/WAPOR Guideline on Opinion Polls and Published Surveys,

Given the complexity of conducting research, collecting data and interpreting them in a difficult for the country time, we also appeal to the client (customer) of social and marketing research in order to collaborate with professional researchers who possess the relevant methodology and experience, and for which compliance with recognized international codes is a must.

**Resources**


