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POPULATION'S FEAR OF CRIME AND ASSESSMENT OF THE PREVALENCE OF OFFENSES IN UKRAINE

The article considers the construction of two sociological indices reflecting the subjective perception of crime by the population, based on data from a sociological survey conducted in Ukraine by the Center for Strategic Development of Territories at the request of the National Police of Ukraine during September-October 2019 (n = 15140). Statistical analysis was conducted in R with the jamovi library.

The fear of crime index consists of five items: fear of burglaries from home, fraudsters, being robbed or ripped off on the street, physical violence from strangers, and being insulted on the street or in a public place. Responses to the questions were

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presented on a 4-point Likert scale (“0 – not afraid at all”, “0.33 – rather not afraid”, “0.66 – rather afraid”, “1 – very afraid”), and the alternative “hard to say” was excluded from processing. The index of the population’s fear of crime was constructed as an average of the items on the scale (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.86). The average score was calculated if the respondent provided a meaningful answer to at least four of the five survey questions.

The delinquency prevalence opinion index included nine items regarding the prevalence of delinquency: homicide, violent hooliganism, burglary, illegal alcohol/drug trafficking, fraud, violence, street robbery, rape, traffic violations, and increasing numbers of guns in the population. Likert scales were dichotomized, where 1 was assigned to respondents’ choice of alternatives “rather common” and “very common”, and 0 to alternatives “not common at all”, “rather not common”, and “difficult to answer”). The opinion index of the prevalence of offenses was calculated as the sum of the alternatives (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.76).

Correlation between the fear of crime index and the delinquency prevalence estimation index is: $r = 0.15$ (weak effect).

Statistical analysis included identifying differences in the mean values of sociological indices in socio-demographic groups using Welch’s t-criterion and one-factor Welch’s analysis of variance.

The average statistical effect is characterized by differences in the mean values of the fear of crime index by article ($d = -0.72$) and differences in the mean values of the prevalence assessment index of offenses in the territorial-settlement groups ($\eta^2 = 0.1$).

Fear of crime is more pronounced among women, middle-aged and elderly people, residents of urban settlements and cities, representatives of families with low material level. Representatives of families with low and high material level, residents of regional centers indicate the prevalence of delinquency to a greater extent.

Keywords: fear of crime, sociological index, assessment of the prevalence of crime, sociological survey, Ukraine.

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