

Repressions against protests April-August 2015

Results of the protests, repressions and
concessions monitoring

Prepared by [Center for Social and Labor Research](#)

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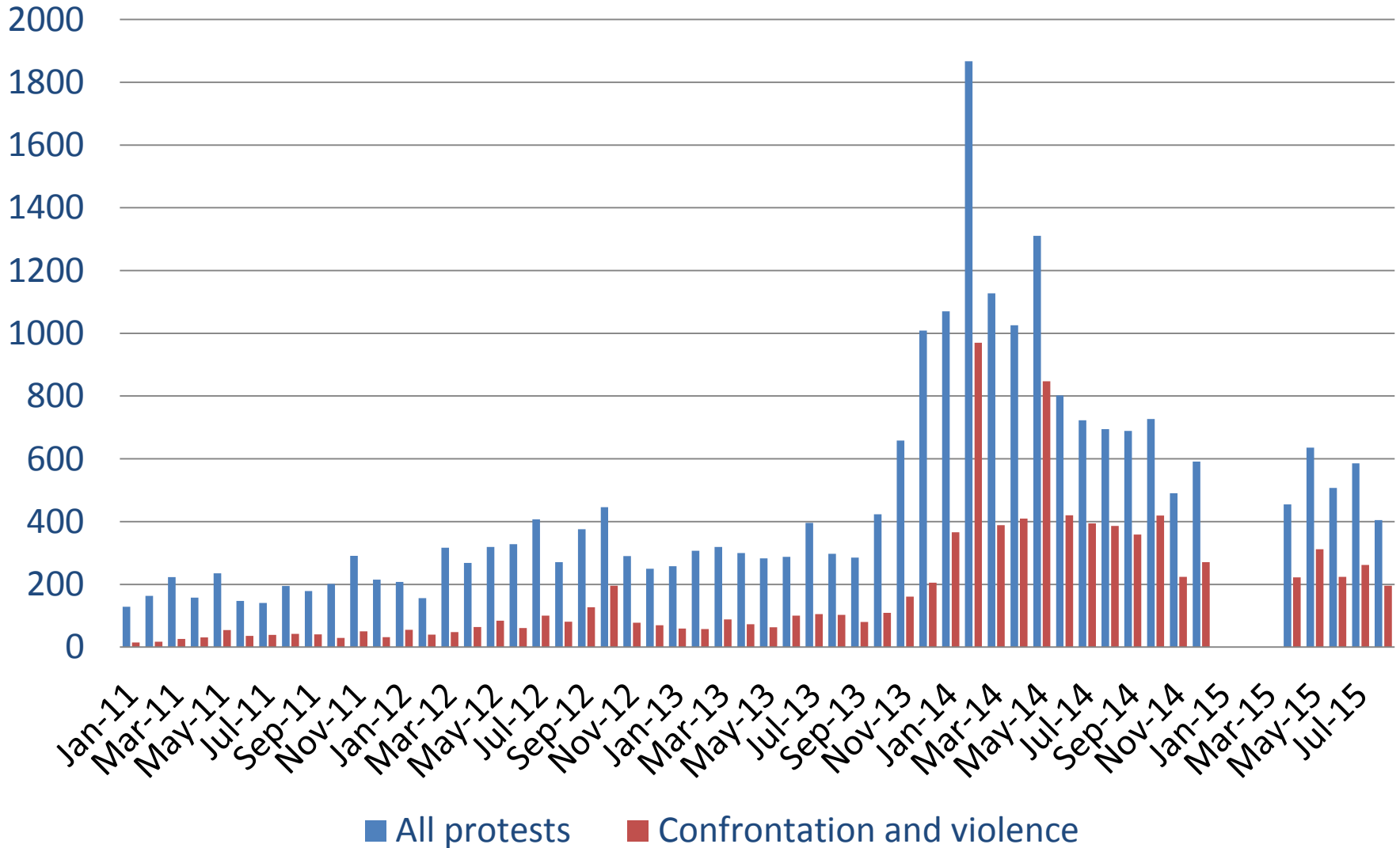
Summary

The report presents the [systematic research of protests, repressions and concessions of protesters in Ukraine](#) in April-August 2015 on protest activity and negative (repressive) reactions to the protests. The calculations below are valid for the territory controlled by Ukrainian government and do not include combat actions in the Donbass and all events on the territory of Crimea and Sevastopol, and the parts of Donetsk and Lugansk regions controlled by separatist authorities. Some positive tendencies of a decrease in negative reactions against protests, which were present in 2014, are reversed now as the general level of negative reactions has increased. Although most of them are against ultraviolent actions of militants in the Donbass, the frequency of repressions against peaceful protests raising social, economic and civil rights issues is also increased substantially. In April-August 2015, protests of such categories saw repressions more frequently than in the last year of Yanukovich. Moreover, if the participants of peaceful socio-economic protests raise political issues and criticize local or central government, the probability of incurring reprisals for them increases. At the same time, the government often ignores the violence in ideological protests. Such tendencies might lead to the normalization of repression and systematic errors. Selectivity of repression might lead to the spread of political and ideological violent crackdowns. In turn, repressions against politicization of the protest might lead to the instrumentalization of government repression to secure its dominance in political struggles.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PROTESTS IN APRIL-AUGUST 2015

(The calculation excludes combat actions in the Donbass, as well as all events in Crimea and Sevastopol (from March 2014) and separatist controlled areas (from August 2014))

Number of protests monthly

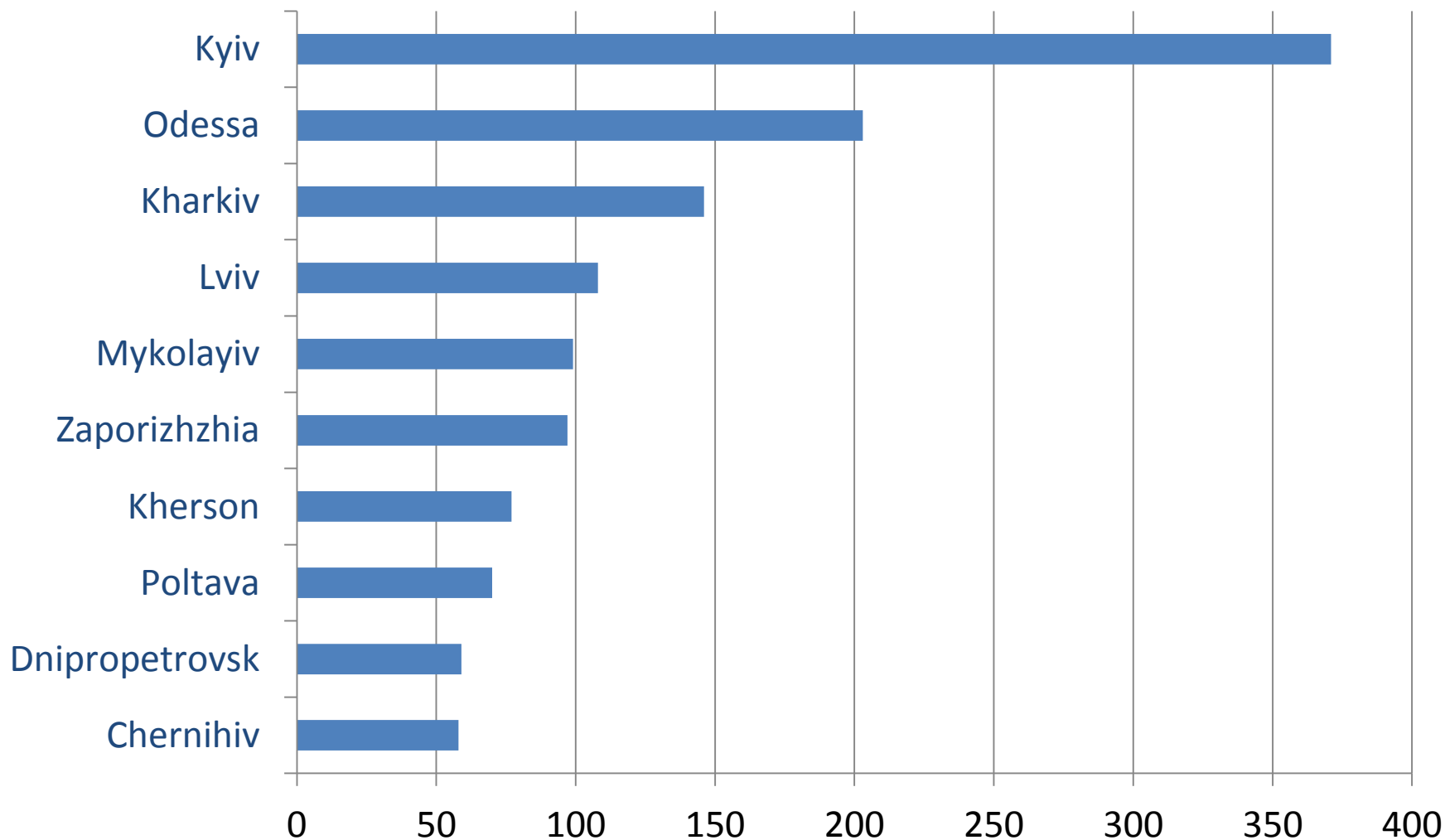


Regional distribution of protests*

	Central	Crimea	Donbass	Eastern	Kyiv	Southern	Western	N
2011	21%	7%	11%	14%	18%	10%	19%	2274
2012	17%	5%	8%	11%	18%	16%	24%	3630
2013	19%	4%	9%	10%	17%	16%	25%	4809
2014	21%	1%	14%	14%	11%	15%	25%	11053
April-August 2015	22%	-	8%	16%	15%	18%	21%	2558

*The “nationwide” events (i.e., those that were impossible to locate in a particular settlement) are not included in the regional distribution. Calculation for AR Crimea and Sevastopol are included only before March 2014. (The calculation excludes combat actions in the Donbass, as well as all events in Crimea and Sevastopol (from March 2014) and separatist controlled areas (from August 2014))

TOP-10 cities with the highest number of protests in April-August 2015



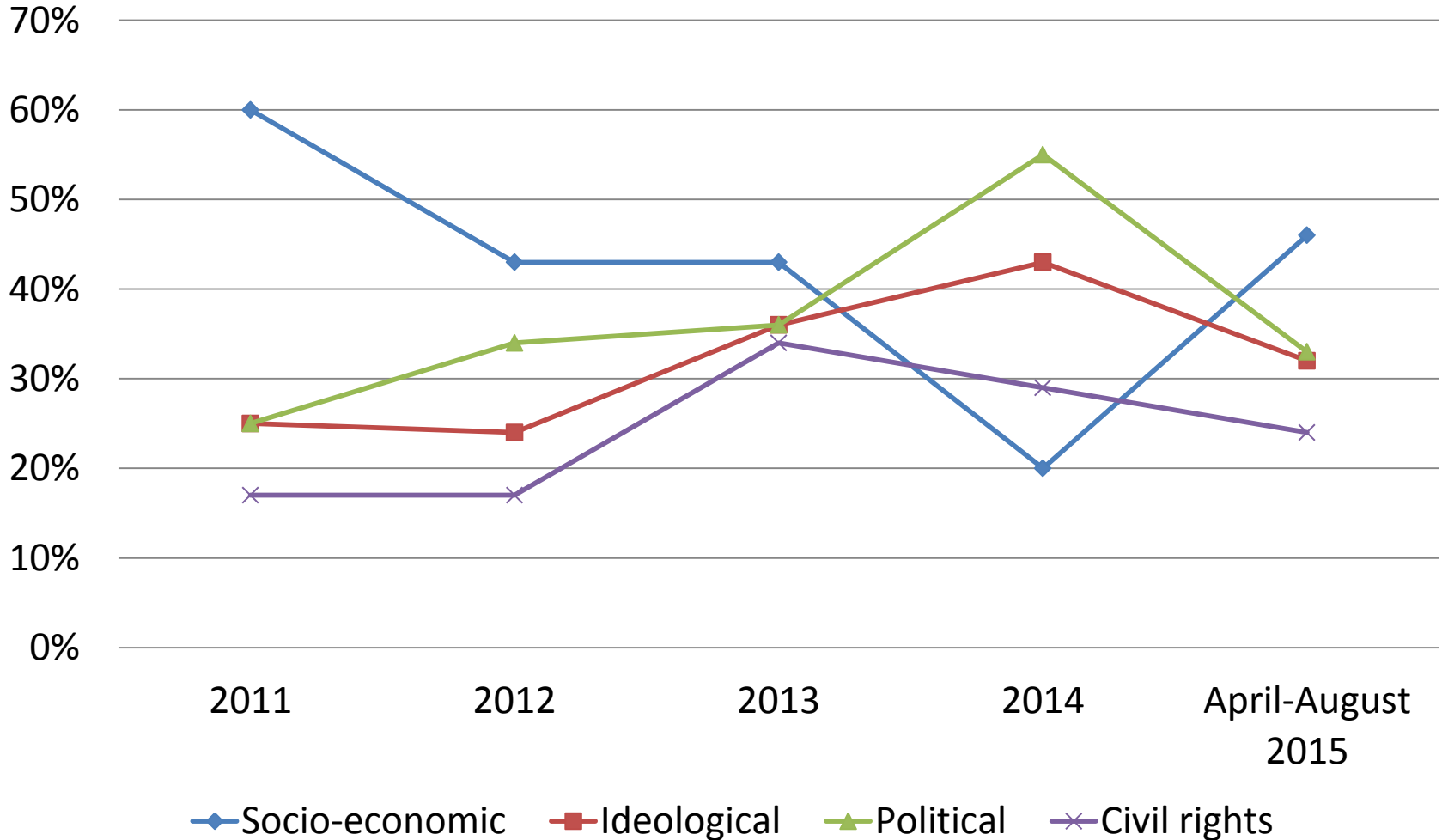
Quantitative and geographical characteristics

- After an unprecedented peak of mobilization during anti-government protests in the late 2013 – early 2014, the wave of protests gradually decreased, although it still did not return to the level that was before Euromaidan.
- There is a decline in the relative number of protests in the Donbass from April-August 2015. This may indicate a reduction of possibilities for the realization of the right to peaceful protest in front-line areas and may partly be a result of a total exclusion of the territories under the control of DPR and LPR from August 2014 from our calculation.
- At the same time, there is a gradual increase in the relative number of protests in the East and South. This might indicate growing discontent with the authorities in these regions.

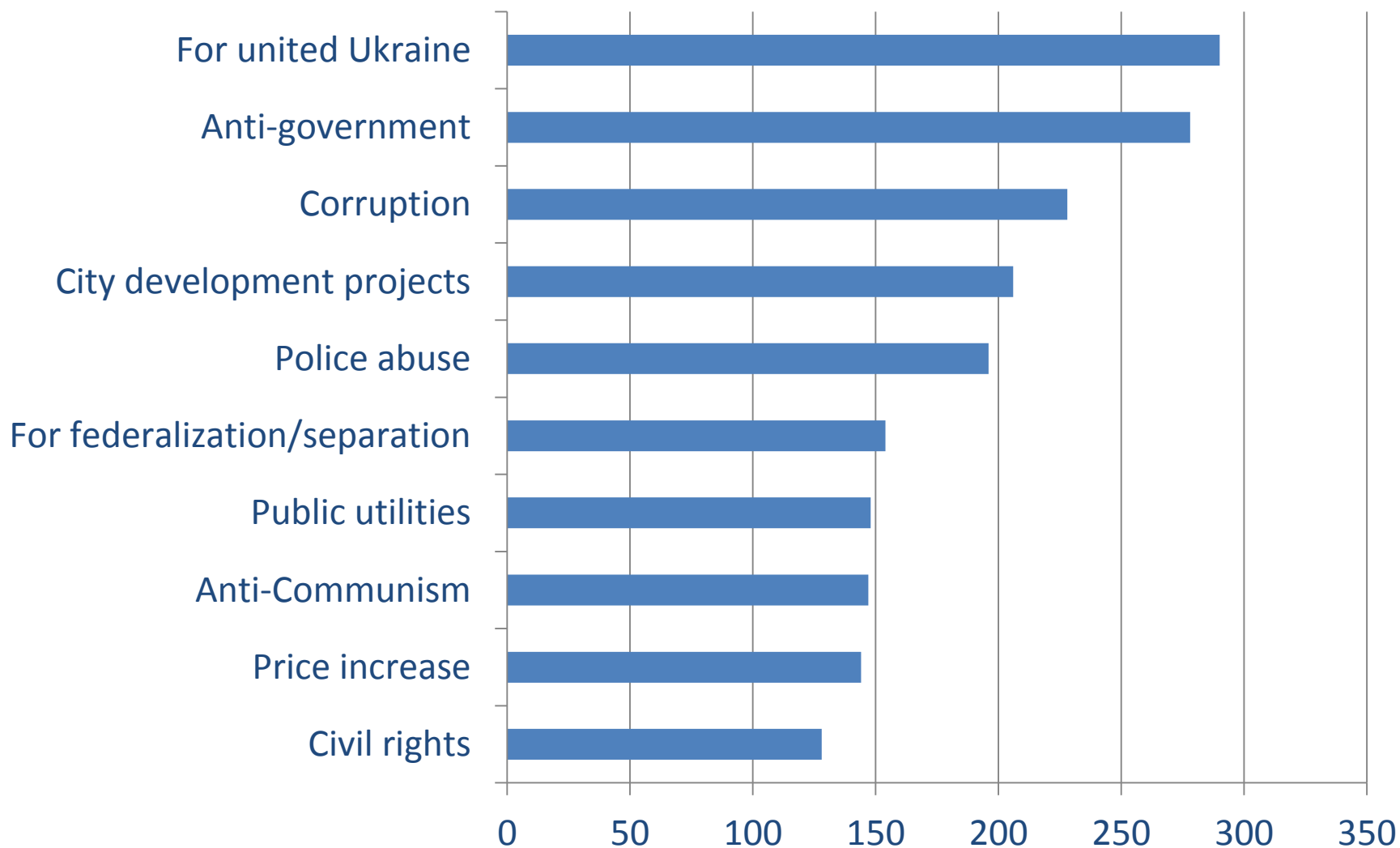
The reported number of protesters

Number of protesters	2011	2012	2013	2014	April-August 2015
<10	10%	13%	11%	9%	13%
<100	35%	32%	41%	27%	41%
<1000	18%	13%	17%	13%	11%
<10000	3%	3%	4%	4%	1%
<100000	0.10%	0.11%	1%	0.20%	-
>100000	-	-	0.10%	-	-
Unknown	34%	40%	26%	46%	34%
N	2277	3636	4823	11118	2589

Protest issues



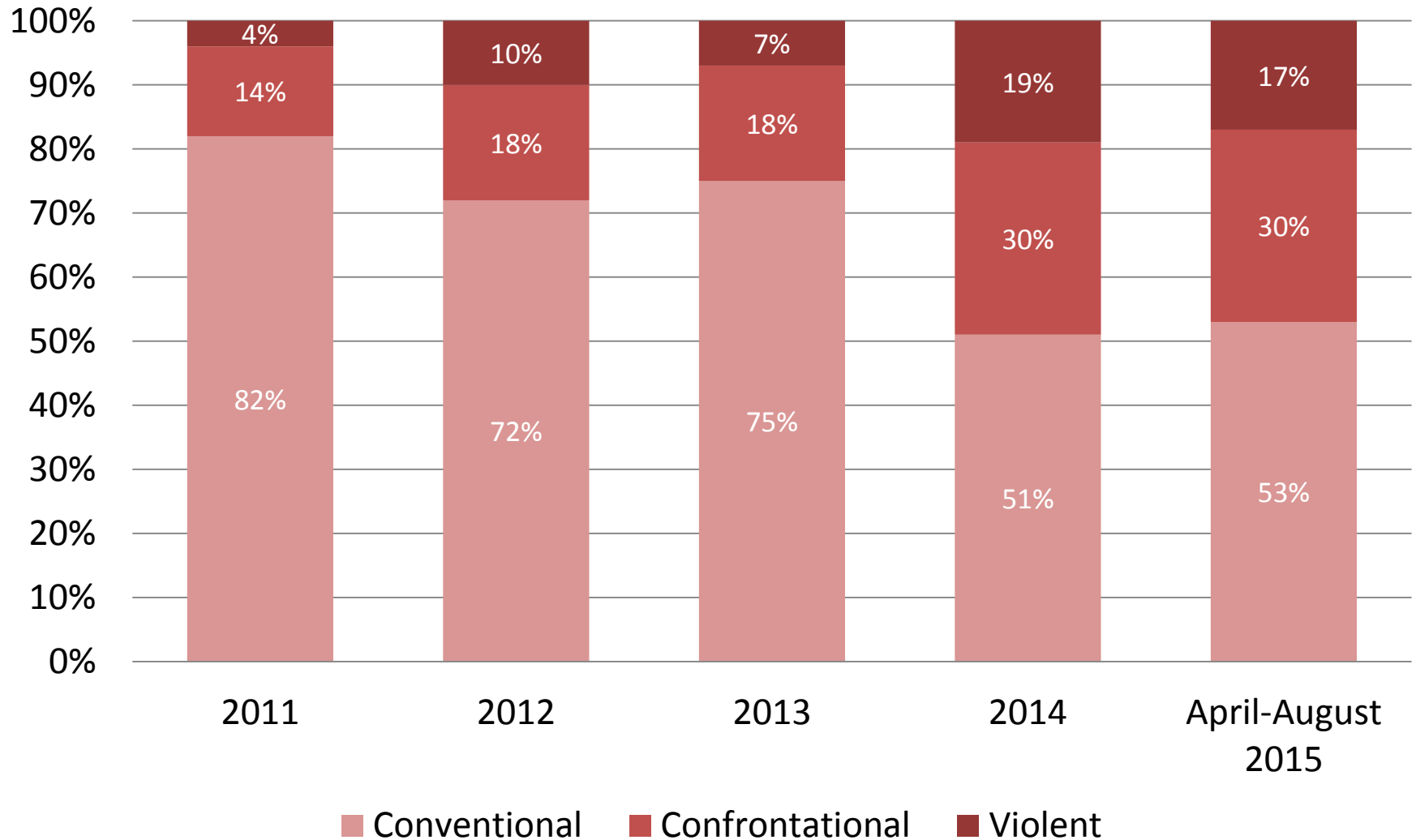
TOP-10 most frequent protest issues in April-August 2015 (number of events)



The number of protest participants by issue

- The number of protest participants in April-August 2015 was decreasing. Protests with more than 10,000 participants practically did not take place.
- At the same time, socio-economic protests are the largest number of protests again, whereas the number of protests in all other categories of issues is decreasing. This shows a relative normalization of the political situation and a reduction of ideological polarization at grassroots level, as well as the absence of significant positive change in the economic situation.
- However, a more detailed look shows that specified leading issues which produce mass mobilization remained ideological (“For united Ukraine”) and political (“Against the government”) issues.

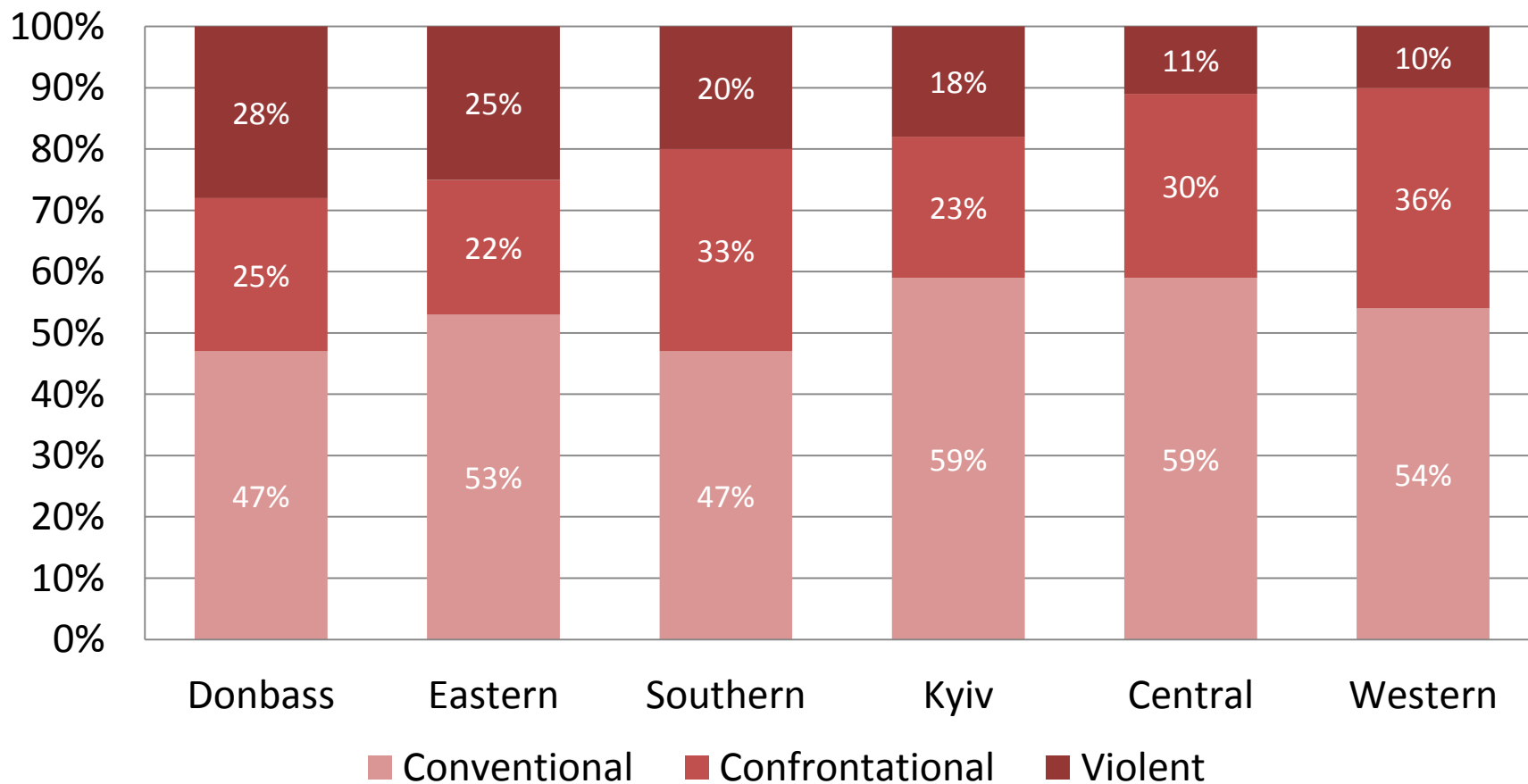
Protest tactics





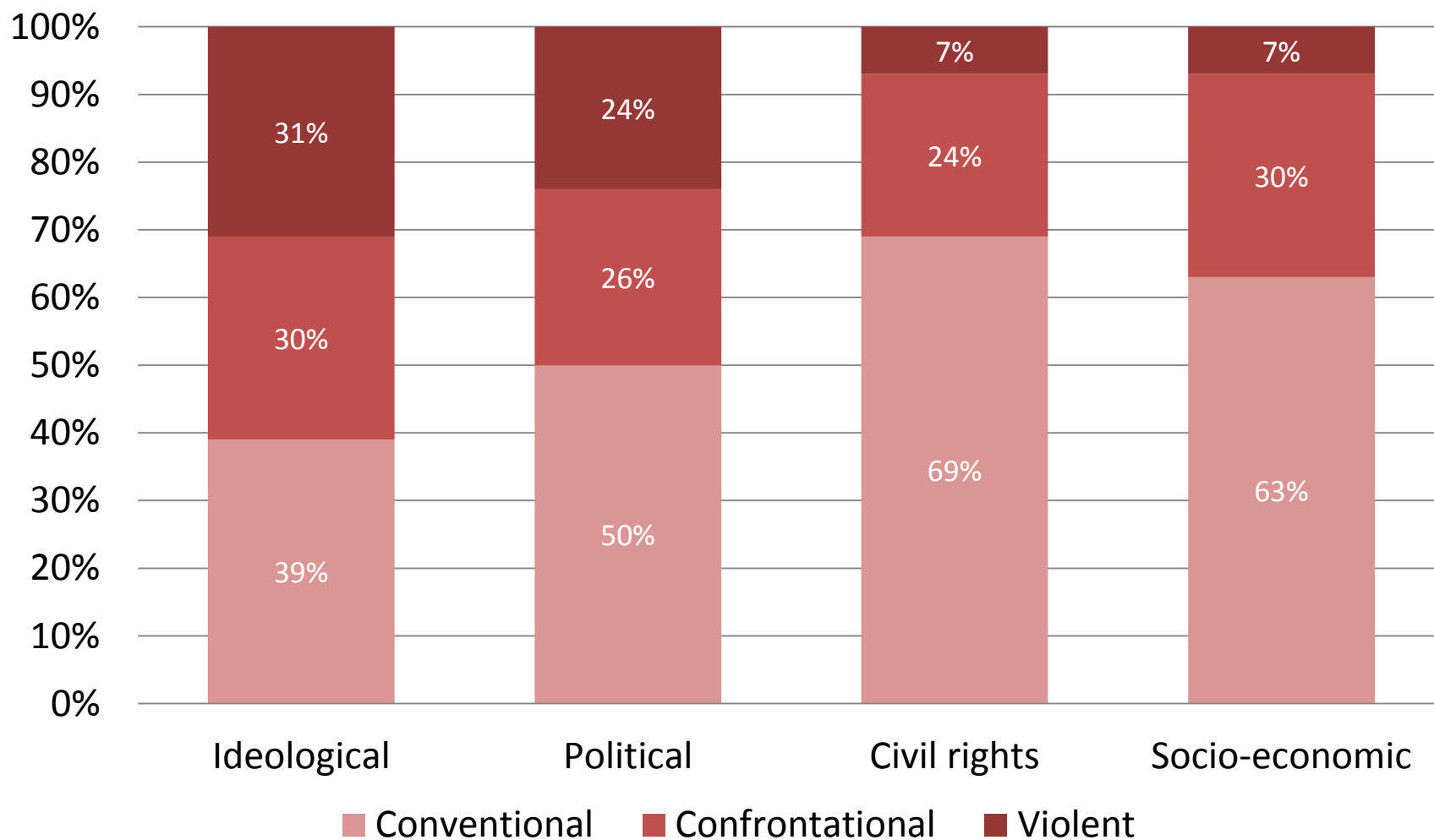
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Protest tactics by region in April-August 2015*



*The “nationwide” events (i.e., those that were impossible to locate in a particular settlement) are not included in the regional distribution. The calculation excludes combat actions in the Donbass, as well as all events in Crimea and Sevastopol (from March 2014) and separatist controlled areas (from August 2014)

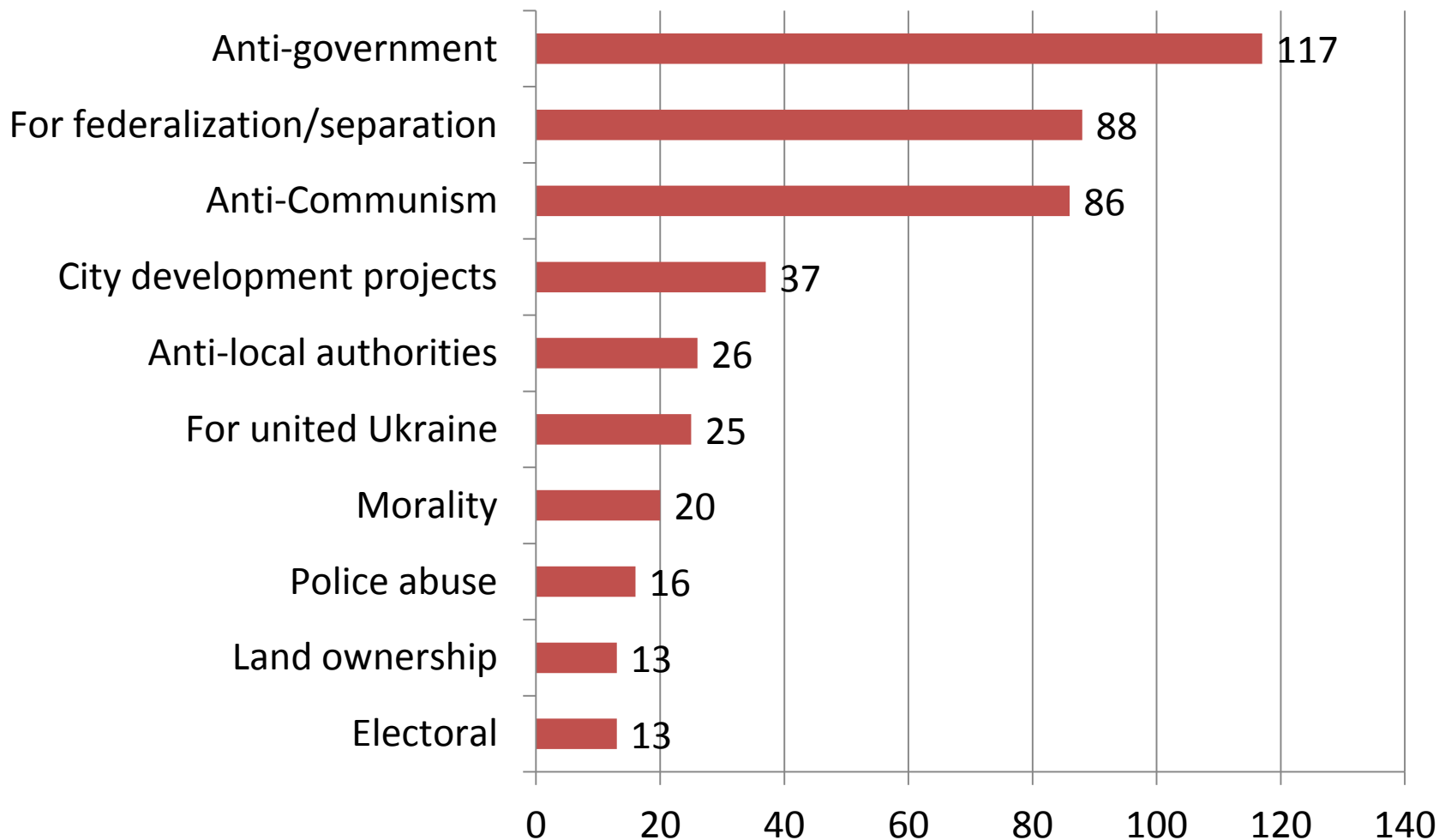
Protest tactics by issue in April-August 2015





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TOP-10 most violent protests by issue in April-August 2015 (number of events)



Protest violence

- Although the level of protest violence in April-August 2015 slightly decreased compared to 2014, it is still very high compared with the pre-Euromaidan period. The same is relevant for confrontational tactics.
- The Donbass, East and South were the regions with the highest level of violence. Confrontational tactics were dispersed more equally among the regions. Such results can indicate a higher level of ideological polarization in regions with a higher level of violence, as it is the participants of ideological protests who used violence more often. Other evidence to support this statement is shown in the details of the specific protest issues where violence takes place.

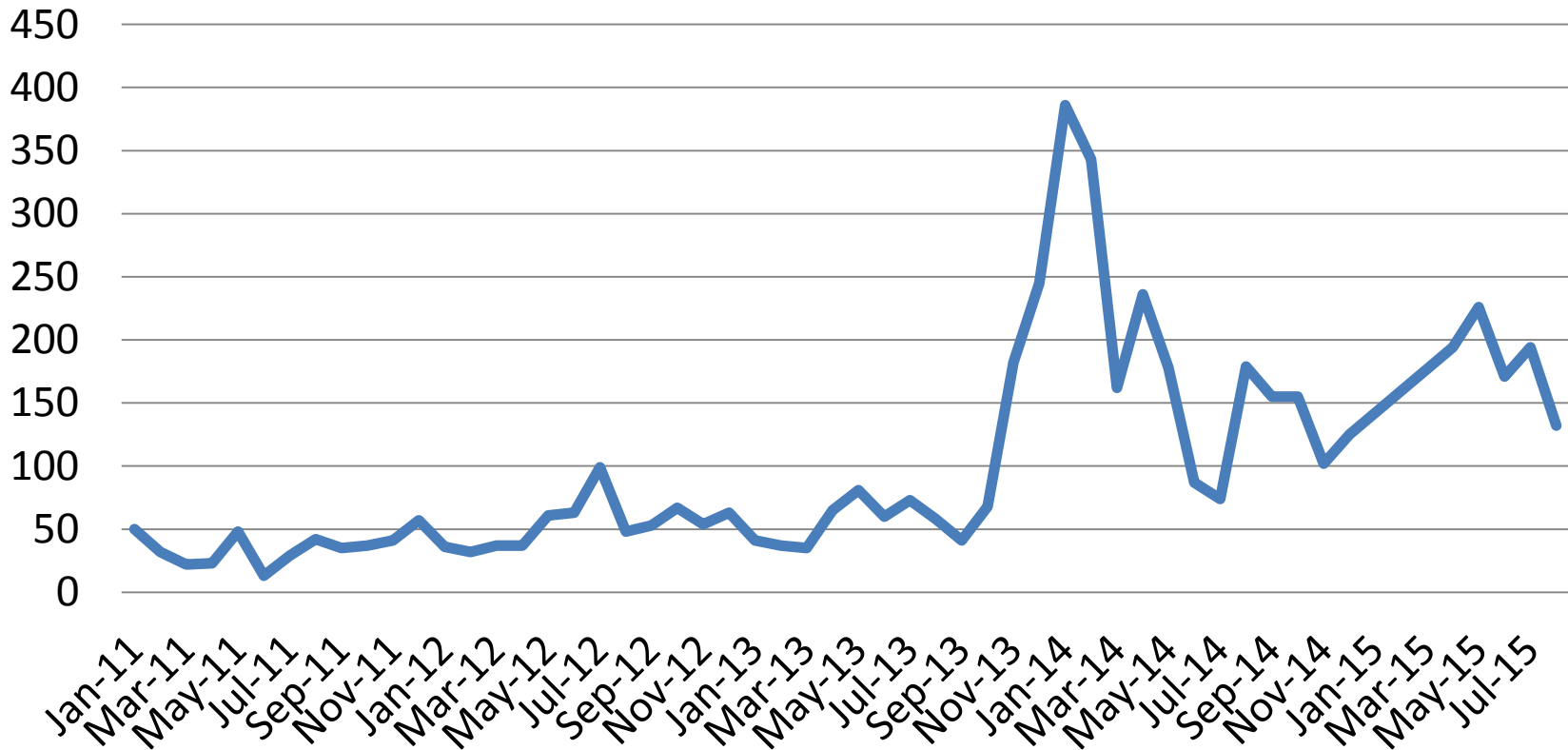
PROTEST REPRESSIONS IN APRIL- AUGUST 2015

- (The calculation excludes combat actions in the Donbass, as well as all events in Crimea and Sevastopol (from March 2014) and separatist controlled areas (from August 2014))

Protest reactions and other repressions

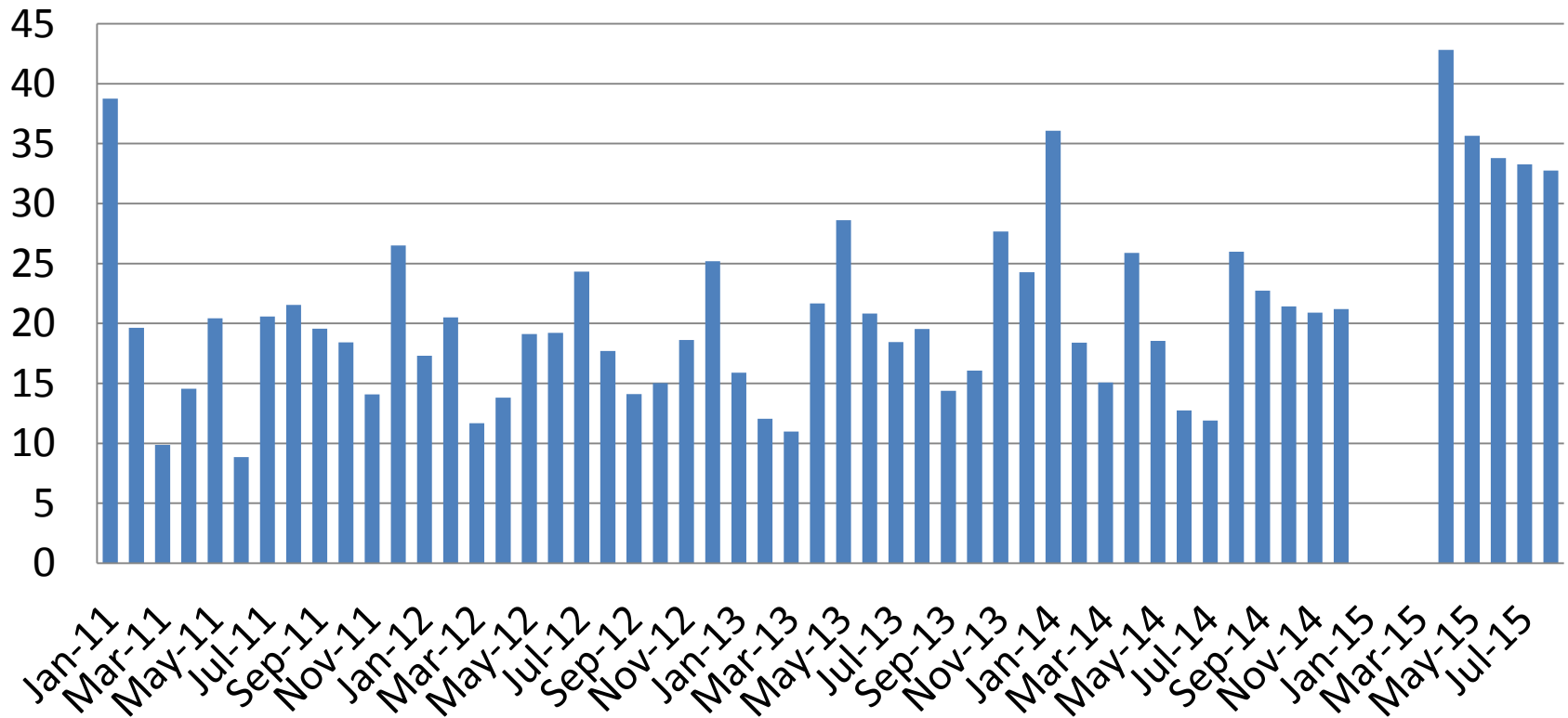
	2011		2012		2013		2014		April-August 2015	
	Number of events	per 100 protest	Number of events	per 100 protest	Number of events	per 100 protest	Number of events	per 100 protest	Number of events	per 100 protest
Negative reactions	429	19	650	18	986	20	2935	26	1346	52
Other repressions	N. a.	-	321	-	273	-	1458	-	394	-
Positive reactions	138	6	199	5	242	5	483	4	99	4
Protests	2277	-	3636	-	4823	-	11118	-	2589	-

Negative reactions (number of events)



— Without protests in support of federalization/separatism, participation of militia, non-authorized military formations, self-proclaimed authorities of DPR-LPR

Negative reactions (per 100 protest)



■ Without protests in support of federalization/separatism, participation of militia, non-authorized military formations, self-proclaimed authorities of DPR-LPR

General dynamics of negative reactions

- The number of negative reactions is slightly lower in 2014. If all repressions of protests in support of federalization/separation with participation of militia or self-proclaimed authorities of DPR-LPR (considered as separatist-organized) are excluded from the calculation, the number of negative reactions almost drops to the level of 2013.
- The general number of negative reactions without consideration of negative reactions to separatist-organized protests substantially increased, from 21% in 2014 to 36% in April-August. Completely excluding the repression of any protests in support of the ideas of federalism or separation, the percentage of repression of protests, per protests held, has increased from 16% in 2014 to 19% in 2015. Such results indicate a deterioration regarding the right to freedom of peaceful assembly in comparison with the first year of new government's term.
- The number of repressions against pro-separation/federalization protests increased by more than five times. Obviously, these negative reactions were partly directed against those suspected of collaboration with separatist forces, but this activity is ultraviolent in itself and is not included in the statistics of the protests on the territory under the control of the Ukrainian government. However, its highly abnormal rate can lead to systematic errors in imperfect law enforcement and judicial systems, as well as to the normalization of such an anomalistic repression

Negative reactions and violence

Type of protest	Number of negative reactions (per 100 protest)			Quantity of violent protests		
	2013	2014	April-August 2015	2013	2014	April-August 2015
All protests	20	26	52	7%	19%	17%
Protests without pro-separation events and militants participation	N.a.	21	36	N.a.	16%	17%
Protests without pro-separation events	N.a.	16	19	N.a.	14%	15%
Pro-separation	N.a.	97	568	N.a.	52%	57%

Negative reactions and violence

Issue	Number of negative reactions (per 100 protest)			Quantity of violent protests		
	2013	2014	April-August 2015	2013	2014	April-August 2015
Only socio-economic protests	11	9	15	6%	6%	8%
Only civil rights protests	17	12	25	4%	10%	8%
Only ideological protests	28	13	26	15%	22%	33%
Anti-communism protests	39	15	25	33%	64%	59%

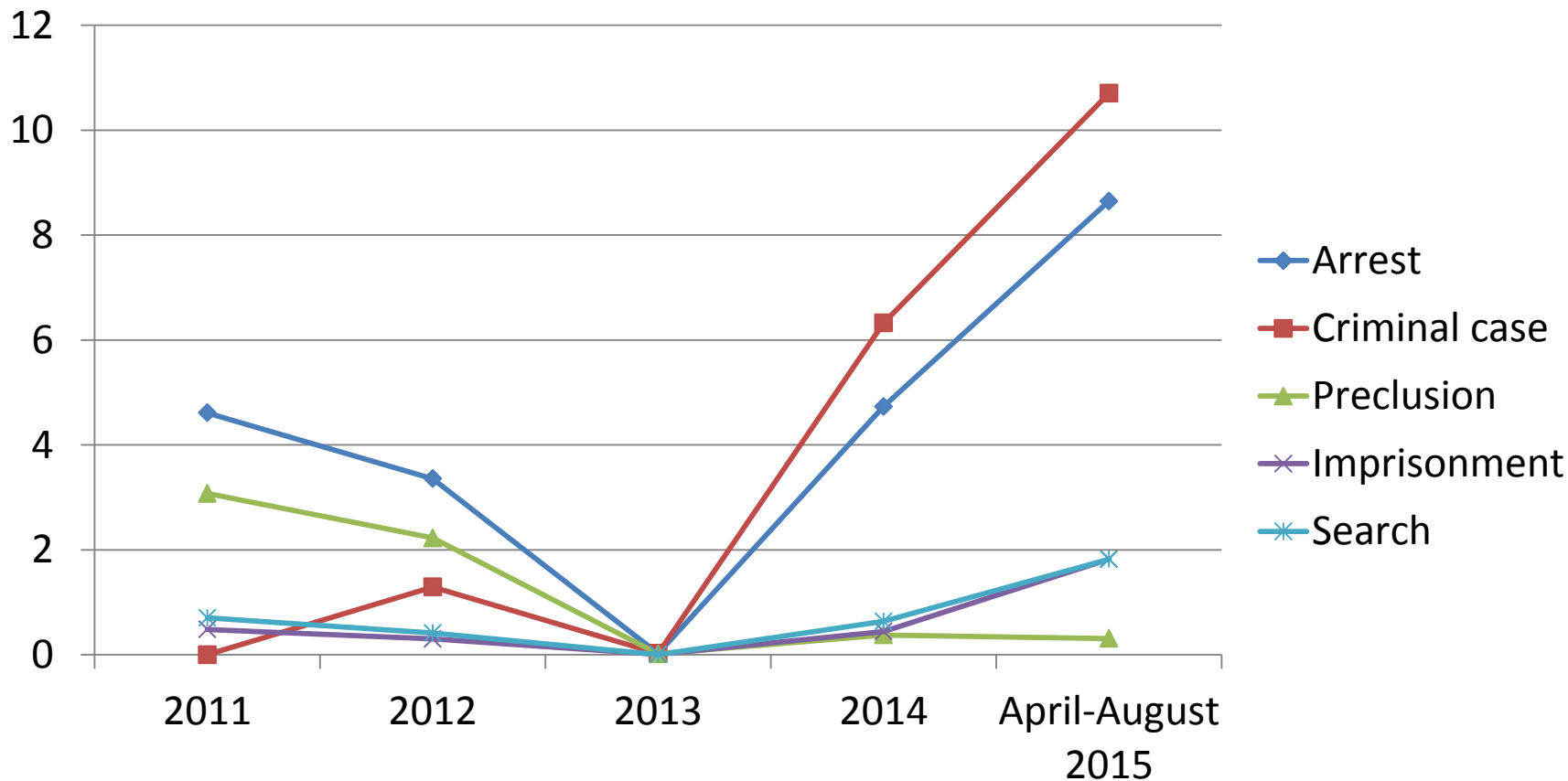
Negative reactions and violence

Issue	Number of negative reactions (per 100 protest)			Quantity of violent protests		
	2013	2014	April-August 2015	2013	2014	April-August 2015
Only socio-economic protests	11	9	15	6%	6%	8%
Protests with both socio-economic and political demands	14	11	22	2%	4%	5%
Only civil rights protests	17	12	25	4%	10%	8%
Protests with both civil rights and political demands	20	13	16	1%	7%	3%

Selectivity of negative reactions

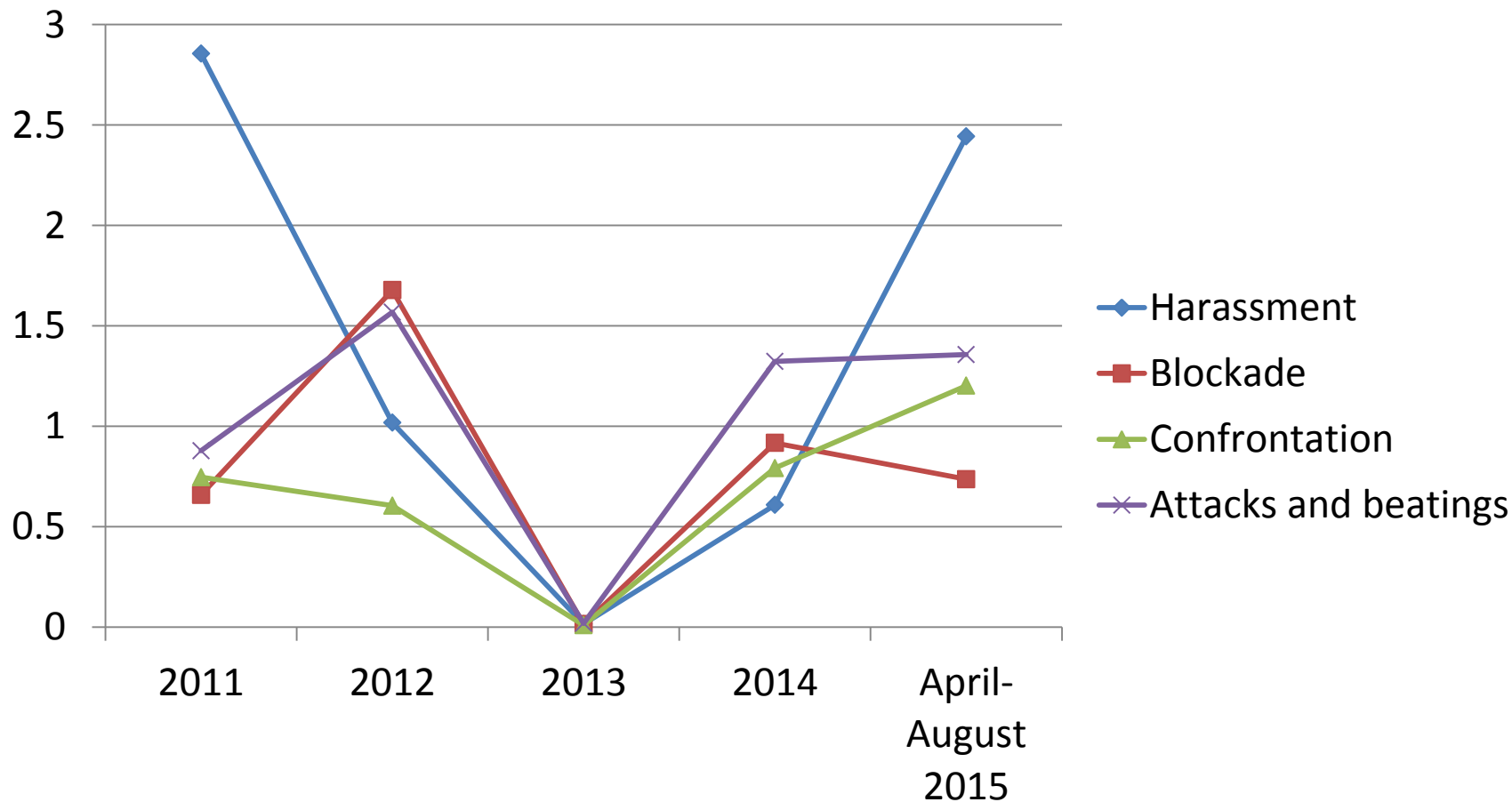
- There are also other disturbing trends. The rate of negative reactions against the protests which raise only socio-economic issues dropped to 9% in 2014 but increased again to 15% in April-August 2015, surpassing the last year of Viktor Yanukovich (11%). The level of negative reactions against politicized socio-economic protests increased by half - 22% in April-August 2015, compared to 11% in 2014, and such a result is significantly higher than in 2013 (13%).
- Similarly, compared to the previous year, the level of negative reactions against civil rights protests increased by half, from 12% to 25%, and this is also higher than in the pre-Maidan period of Yanukovich (17%). The politicization of protests in defense of civil rights is also exposed to a higher level of negative responses (16 %) than in 2014 (13%), although it remains lower than in 2013.
- At the same time, the level of violence in the previously mentioned categories of protests remained relatively low. For example, exclusively ideological protests, one third of which turn violent, are repressed as often as civil rights protests, although the level of violence in the latter case in April-August 2015 was only 8%. Anti-communist protests, almost 60% of which turn violent (although directed mainly against property), met with negative reactions with the same frequency.

The most common legal negative reactions (per 100 protests*)



*Without protests in support of federalization/separatism, participation of militia, non-authorized military formations, self-proclaimed authorities of DPR-LPR

The most common coercive negative reactions (per 100 protest *)



*Without protests in support of federalization/separatism, participation of militia, non-authorized military formations, self-proclaimed authorities of DPR-LPR

Form of negative reactions

- The most common forms of negative reactions in April-August 2015 were criminal cases and arrests. Third most common – harassment of the protest activists and participants.
- Injunctions against protests, popular during the reign of Yanukovych, were less common.
- In April-August 2015, the number of physical attempts to influence the protesters, such as confrontations, attacks and beatings slightly increased.
- It should be emphasized that the sharp drop in the number of all forms of negative reactions in 2013, which can be seen on the charts, is not associated with a decrease in the absolute number of negative responses, but is due to an unprecedented number of protests that took place this year.



METHODOLOGY AND EVENTS TYPOLOGY

Coding methodology and events typology

Monitoring sources

In 2013-2014 protests, repressions and concessions has been coded based on the monitoring of daily news from more than 190 national, regional and activist websites. The full description of the project methodology, coding scheme and the list of monitoring sources are available here <http://cslr.org.ua/ukrainian-protest-and-coercion-data-opis-ta-metodologiya/metodologiya/>, as well as the databases of coded events and full-text reports for 2013: <http://cslr.org.ua/bazi-protestnih-podiy-ta-povidnolen-2/>

General principles of coding

The basic unit of coding – *protest event* – is defined by the following criteria:

- 1) the presence of political or social demands or criticism;
- 2) it should be an action (i.e. it is not purely verbal) of public character;
- 3) it is made by a group of people or one person that are not part of the central government;
- 4) the settlement on the territory of Ukraine where the event took place and at least the approximate date of the event (up to a month) are known.

In addition to the protests the following types of events are included to the database:

- Positive reactions to the events (concessions) – practical actions aimed to fully or partially satisfy the demands of the protestors. Promises to satisfy the demands are not included, but official orders, decrees, commands aimed to satisfy protestor's demands, regardless of whether they were eventually completed or not are included.
- Negative reactions to the protests (repressions) – practical actions aimed to prevent or to suppress protest actions, pressure on the protestors, both physical and legal, by the state or non-government organizations-objects of a protest.
- Other repressions (systematic coding started from July 28, 2014) – practical actions of the government or private companies aimed to prevent or suppress critical or opposing sociopolitical activity which does not fit the definition of the protest event.

Every event is coded separately, even if it is connected to the previous one except for some extremely similar typical sequences of events. Only those events are coded which *have already happened* according to mass media reports. However, *unsuccessful attempts of protest events* which were prevented by law-enforcement bodies are coded. The protest activities which were canceled by protestors because of a court order are not included into the database. A multi-day event is considered to be a single event regardless of its duration.

Events typology and a note on the data

The regions of Ukraine are defined as follows:

Center: Zhytomyrska, Kyivska, Chernihivska, Sumska, Vinnytska, Cherkaska, Kirovohradska, Poltavska oblasts;

Crimea: Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;

Donbass: Donetska, Luhanska;

East: Kharkivska,, Dnipropetrovska, Zaporizka oblasts;

Kyiv: the city of Kyiv;

South: Odeska, Mykolaivska, Khersonska oblasts;

West: Volynska, Rivnenska, Lvivska, Ternopilska, Ivano-Frankivska, Chernivetska, Zakarpatska.

By the **tactics** we divide protests into three categories:

conventional – well-known and commonly accepted forms of protest that do not impose direct pressure on the protest targets, such as pickets, rallies, demonstrations, performances, etc.;

confrontational - protest actions involving direct pressure on the goals of a protest ('direct action') but not yet causing any direct damage for people or property, such as blocking roads, strikes, hunger strikes, etc.;

violent – protest actions with causing (or threat of causing) of direct damage to people or property, such as beating or vandalism.

A note on the data

The data for 2014 do not include combat actions in the Anti-terrorist operation area. Starting from August 2014, the calculation excludes all events in the districts that are controlled by the separatists. Starting from March 2014 the calculation excludes all events in AR Crimea and Sevastopol.



Background information and contacts :

Center for Social and Labor Research was created in 2013 as an independent nonprofit center for the analysis of socioeconomic problems, collective protests, labor relations and conflicts. From August 2014 it includes the team that has been monitoring protests, repressions and concessions at the Centre for Society Research since 2009, but had to leave it because of the fundamental differences in the vision on further development of this organization.

Our contacts:

info@cslr.org.ua

+38 050 7019871

(Oksana Dutchak)