



Research into Belarusian organized civil society's solidarity potential

Research results report



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Problem definition, tasks, and research method

During the last few years, in Belarusian society's public and political life, we can observe a decrease in citizens' ability to organize joint effective political and public actions, to demonstrate publicly and actively their own position, and to defend common interests. In spite of the increasing number of petitions, public statements, and signatures gathering campaigns, we can see not only the absence of any influence of these tools on the life of the country, but their weak mobilization potential as well. More often than not, they just remain a way of revealing one's own personal position and do not result in either a launch of further joint actions, or a change of a situation. The general tendencies of the public-political life give evidence of not simply a decrease in political activity (political passivity, etc.), but also of a change of the structure of social connections and relations, which solidarity activity can be built on. Thus, since 2006, after the reduction of the mass character of support rendered to the traditional forms of displaying civic and social activity (rallies, protest actions), there appeared several "new" forms, e.g. silent protest actions, campaigns to collect aid for detainees and political prisoners, all possible kinds of flash mobs, etc. These flares of one-time actions show a potential possibility of such behavior, but every time any attempts to repeat this or that successful practice and to disseminate it meet with failure. Explanatory versions and concepts that appeal to the "new media" or "new majority" are wide open to both practical and empirical criticism. At the same time, the practice of work of public associations and civil initiatives which activities are aimed at changing Belarusian society requires answers to the question — What can one count on and what can one lean on when it comes to mutual support and solidarity displays?

What can unite and mobilize the activity of Belarusian citizens (for the sake of what are they ready to get united and to act extensively)? Who (what social groups, strata, communities) is the most capable of demonstrating solidarity and organizing solidarity actions? In search of answers to these questions, we have to study the fabric of public relations as a material and a basis of these or those solidarity actions.

This research does not assign a task to conceptually study the question of solidarity, but to analyze empirical material.

At this stage of our research, the **object** is not all Belarusian society, but only the part that can be considered the nucleus of solidarity displays, which can set the beginning of social movements, i.e. **organized civil society** (the NGOs sector, the third sector). The question of solidarity within the framework of this public segment represents a specific problem definition. On the one hand, as for its meaning and mission (its orientation on democratic ideals and interest in changes), organized civil society is predisposed to solidarity in its actions. Besides, for more than 20 years of its existence in Belarus, this segment has obtained stability and institutional forms, as well as self-reproduction abilities and readiness to carry out solidarity actions. On the other hand, there are inner contradictions, inconsistency, absence of mutual support, inability to create effective coalitions and to widen its influence in society — this is a list of the most widespread critical remarks and evaluations addressed to Belarusian organized civil society, which have already become trite expressions for the last few years. Therefore, before seeking for solidarity bases in Belarusian society as a whole, we analyzed a separate segment by asking it the following question — Does somebody's formal belonging to the third sector provide a potential possibility of solidarity displays?

The **goal** of this research is to evaluate and to substantially interpret the **potential of public-political solidarity**¹ in Belarusian organized civil society.

Before we start describing the results of our research, we would like to mention a number of conceptual frameworks, which our further reflections and measurements are grounded on.

Here, we understand **solidarity** as a manifestation of connections and relations between people, which is expressed in joint informal and emergent actions (support, assistance, joining) of a public (non-production) character that lead to the defense of common interests and achievement of overall objectives.

The important characteristic of solidarity actions is their situational (one-time) character, i.e. solidarity appears and can be pinpointed in its concrete displays, but it does not exist as a permanent kind of employment and activity, or as a constant characteristic of this or that community, group, society as a whole. In this regard, the **subject** of our research is the **solidarity potential**. We understand the solidarity potential as such a quality of connections and relations between people, which allow them to carry out solidarity actions in the public-political sphere and which are the basis for solidarity displays.

The preconditions and bases for solidarity displays (the solidarity potential) will be considered at several levels:

1. Level of subjective semantic spaces. Subjective semantic spaces are such a system of categories of individual consciousness with the help of which various objects and notions are evaluated and classified². This evaluation is based on affective, extramental guidelines. The similarity of subjective spaces and of the arrangement of various significant “objects” (values, symbols, persons, etc.) in these spaces attests indirectly to the similarity of possible reactions to a situation, to the potential of understanding and supporting each other with regard to public-political events and problems that have to do with these “objects”, and, accordingly, to the predisposition to demonstrate solidarity. This level is extremely important due to its unconsciousness and, consequently, its ability to “check” formal and normative affinity in perception for representatives of organized civil society.

2. Level of self-consciousness and social relations (in particular, social identification and trust in various groups, subjects, and institutions). The realization of the belonging to a certain circle can be a basis for actions of supporting the people who are thought to belong to the same circle and to have the same interests, purposes, values, points of view, etc. — “We are workers”, “We are intelligentsia”, “We are citizens”, “We are democrats”, etc. The substantial bases of this belonging can act as signs or objects of solidarity. Trust characterizes a positive predisposition to act and to expect solidarity manifestations with regard to oneself (Who can I rely on? Whose support can I count on?). The type of groups which a person identifies him/herself with and which seems credible to him/her (family or a professional community, neighbors or representatives of local authorities) provides some

¹ In this case, public-political solidarity means that it is objects, events, or problems of public-political life that act as the cause, reason, and purpose of solidarity actions. In this research, professional, cultural, and other kinds of solidarity are not within the framework of our analysis.

² More details (in Russian): *Petrenko V.F. Psychosemantics of Consciousness*. — Moscow, 1988. [Electronic resource] // Ethnopsychology. — On-line Educational Center. — Access date: 01.10.2014. — Access mode: <http://ethnopsychology.narod.ru/libr/P/petrenko.htm>, free. — Title screen.



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additional information on the solidarity potential and its contents. A person's adherence to and trust in non-formalized groups and communities characterizes his/her readiness to independently define situations and purposes of solidarity actions. The prevalence of trust in formal institutions and abstract social communities characterizes society's high degree of fragmentation and its unpreparedness to carry out individual actions aimed at protecting and advancing its interests and values.

3. Level of practice, experience, and behavioral patterns. The available experience of implementing solidarity actions not only provides the grounds to extrapolate similar actions in the future, but also characterizes a certain way of life and the forms of forming social connections and relations. Today, researchers address to the strengthening of the role and meaning of communicatory connections and relations, in comparison with other forms of social coalescence. Therefore, the structure of communication of organized civil society's representatives does matter. The development of informational and communicational technologies considerably enhances the factor of the intensity of communication in regard to the collective social action. Forms, places, and contents of communication create certain behavioral patterns which characterize the potential of solidarity actions.

Within this framework, we set the following research **tasks**:

1. to evaluate and to substantially describe Belarusian organized civil society's solidarity potential:
 - to define the specificity of social identification and trust as bases for solidarity actions;
 - to evaluate a possibility of demonstrating solidarity on the basis of the similarity (difference) of semantic fields of representatives of the third sector;
 - to mark out characteristics of the communicatory behavior of representatives of the third sector and to designate the specificity of the experience of solidarity actions.
2. to determine the possibilities of stimulating and mobilizing the solidarity potential:
 - the consolidating/disintegrating force of various objects of public-political life (events, persons, positions, values);
 - the potential of leaning on opinion leaders, public and political persons.

This research was initiated by Belarusian human rights defending organizations³ and carried out by the **Center for European Transformation** and the **Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies**.

The information was gathered with the help of a **questionnaire**.

³ Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House, Human Rights Center "Viasna", Belarusian Helsinki Committee, Legal Transformation Center (Lawtrend), Committee for the Protection of the Repressed "Salidarnasts", Belarusian Association of Journalists, and Assembly of Democratic NGOs in Belarus.

The research was implemented in **September 2013 — June 2014** (the field stage — in **February-March 2014**).

The authors of this research express their deep appreciation to **Nikolay N. Leonov**, candidate of physico-mathematical sciences, for his substantial participation in the programming and analyzing of the research results, as well as the developing and implementing of the data mathematical analysis strategy.

Sample construction procedure; field study and sample characteristics

In this research, the **statistical population** is a set of public organizations (NGOs) that participate in the activity of organized civil society's most representative and regular communicatory platforms (thematic and national ones), i.e. National Social Forum, Informal Education Festival, Belarusian Business Circles Assembly, Environmental Forum, Belarusian Human Rights Defending Forum, Conference of Belarusian NGOs Assembly, Conference of the EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform. There are 367 public organizations that took part in the work of the latest sessions of one or several of these platforms. The list of these organizations was alphabetically ordered and then, with the help of an occasional selection (with the use of the step-by-step sampling method), 150 organizations were chosen; it was planned to poll two persons in each of them — the leader of an organization (or someone from representatives of the leaders' pool) and a member of an organization, who was the last or one of the last people who joined its activity.

While carrying out the field stage of the research, 69 organizations from among those that were originally selected were replaced. 35 out of them — as a result of their refusal to participate in the poll; the others — for various reasons, e.g. it was impossible to contact representatives of an organization; an organization stopped its existence (legal or actual); the same people worked in several organizations (the same persons represented two and more different organizations). The most widespread cause of the refusal to participate in the poll is that it is "politically" oriented. Sometimes, this reason was mentioned to interviewers already during the first contact, after an explanation of the purposes and tasks of this research and a presentation of the structures which carry it out; less often — after the questionnaire was read. This cause of the refusal was most often voiced by representatives of business associations and organizations of a social orientation — they were the basic ones that refused. Other causes of the refusal to participate in the poll (e.g., the absence of time or the unwillingness to waste time on "pointless studies") were mentioned much more rarely and are characteristic of representatives of organizations that are close to the oppositional political activity. One more problem, which did not allow us to implement the pre-planned design of the sample in its completeness, is the presence of organizations consisting practically of one person, as well as the reluctance of some leaders of the organizations that took part in the poll to ask members of their organizations, who joined their activity among the last, to take part in this research.

As a result, during the implementation of the field stage of the research, representatives of 150 organizations were polled; however, in some organizations, it was possible to poll only one respondent. Having carried out a telephone control and quality check of filled questionnaires, the total volume of the sample was 286 persons. Respondents' distribution as for their status in their organizations is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' distribution as for their status in their organizations

Status in an organization	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
"Leaders"	149	52,1
"Beginners"	137	47,9
Total	286	100,0

Respondents' distribution as for the basic fields of activity of the organizations is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' distribution as for the basic fields of activity of the organizations

Organization profile	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
Culture, national culture	51	17,8
Social sphere	49	17,1
Human rights	47	16,4
Ecology	27	9,4
Civil society	26	9,1
Sustainable development, development of urban and rural territories, agrotourism	25	8,7
Business, business associations	24	8,4
Youth	22	7,7
Education	10	3,5
Analytics and researches	5	1,7
Total	286	100,0

Half the respondents (57,3%) are representatives of Minsk-based organizations. Among the Regions, it is the Homiel Voblaść [Region] (10,1%) that is presented most of all in the research (See Table 3).

Table 3. Respondents' distribution as for the Regions

Region	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
Minsk	164	57,3
Homiel' Region	29	10,1
Mahiloŭ Region	25	8,7
Viciebsk Region	22	7,7
Brest Region	18	6,3
Minsk Region	16	5,6
Hrodna Region	12	4,2
Total	286	100,0

Thus, 24,5% respondents represent organizations that work in the regional centers (excluding Minsk) and 18,2% — in other settlements (towns). We shall notice that the number of organizations that do not work in cities and towns, but in rural areas, is rather insignificant in the sample (See Table 4).

Table 4. Respondents' distribution as for the settlements they live in

Place of residence	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
Minsk	164	57,3
Regional centers (excluding Minsk)	70	24,5
Other cities and towns	50	17,5
Rural areas	2	0,7
Total	286	100,0

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The sample design was not meant to set quotas as for the Regions and we, of course, cannot extend our conclusions concerning the representation of public organizations at the regional level to the whole sector. However, at least, when it comes to the settlement type criterion, the distribution in the sample is close enough to what is characteristic of Belarusian organized civil society as a whole.

While substantiating the representativeness of the sample of this research, one more methodological difficulty has to do with the chosen way of selecting respondents from organizations. The sample design presupposed that there would be two persons from one organization regardless of the number of members of an organization; this choice was not absolutely casual, but was determined by the substantial criterion (one's "position" and "years of work" in an organization); therefore, in the strict sense, it is impossible to think that the sample represents activists of organizations included in the activity of the basic national and thematic communication platforms. However, due to the fact that the research objective is to analyze the solidarity potential, we considered it possible to have such a strategy of building the sample, taking into account different "specific weights" of perceptions and guidelines of leaders of organizations and "ordinary" members. We proceeded from the assumption that the "specific weight" of guidelines of the leader and all other members of an organization is approximately equal, at least, in the sense which defines the general direction of actions of an organization, its reaction to events that are external in relation to its direct activity, etc.

Besides, subsequent to the research results, we analyzed statistically significant distinctions in the answers to the questions among the groups "Leaders" and "Beginners" and it turned out that these significant distinctions are observed in the questions which are connected with social-demographic characteristics, as well as the experience of work in the sector and the awareness of various subjects and information resources, but there are practically no distinctions in the basic parts of the poll, which have to do with the identity and attitude towards the objects evaluated by the semantic differential technique. It allows us to analyze the basic semantic blocks of our research with the help of the sample as a whole, without splitting it up into separate sub-samples as for the criteria of one's "position" and "years of work" in an organization.

Social-demographic characteristics of the sample. The gender distribution among various categories of respondents looks quite traditional for Belarus. There are 54,9% of men and 45,1% of women in the research sample as a whole; the gender distribution in various categories of respondents may vary. In the group "Leaders", men are already 63,1%; women (54%) are the majority (although not dominating) in the group "Beginners" (See Table 5).

Table 5. Gender distribution among various status groups, %

Sex	Status in an organization		Sample as a whole
	"Leaders"	"Beginners"	
Men	63,1	46,0	54,9
Women	36,9	54,0	45,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

The research sample looks quite balanced as for the age. It includes respondents from the age of 16 (the limit established by the rules of selecting respondents) to 85 years old. The average age in the sample is 40 years old (See Table 6).

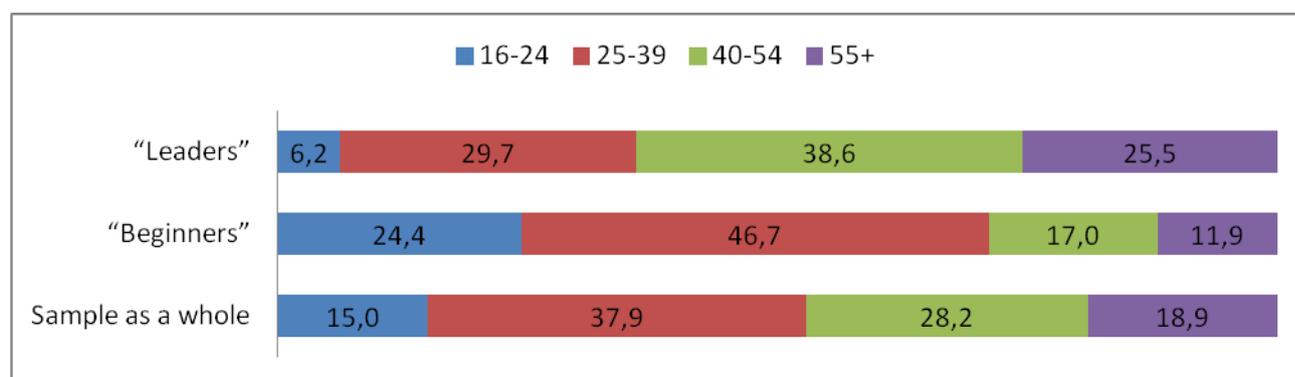
Table 6. Descriptive statistics of the variable “Age” in the sample as a whole

	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation*
Age (completed years)	280	16,00	85,00	40,03	14,59

* Standard deviation is a measure that is used to quantify the amount of variation or dispersion of a set of data values.

About 1/7 of all respondents is in the youngest age group — from 16 to 24 years old (15%); about 1/5 (18,9%) is in the most senior age group (55 years old and more); a little bit more than 1/3 (37,9%) — respondents at the age from 25 to 39 years old; a tad less than 1/3 (28,2%) — from 40 to 54 years old (See Diagram 1).

Diagram 1. Respondents’ distribution as for their age, %



The borders of the age groups within different categories of respondents are shifted in a quite predictable and logical way — the group “Leaders” is a little bit more senior than the group “Beginners” (the average age in the sub-sample “Leaders” is 44,4 years old, while in the sub-sample “Beginners” — 35,3 years old) (See Tables 7 and 8).

Table 7. Descriptive statistics for the sub-sample “Leaders”

	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Age (completed years)	145	19,00	85,00	44,44	13,47

Table 8. Descriptive statistics for the sub-sample “Beginners”

	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Age (completed years)	135	16,00	84,00	35,28	14,31

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The research results demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of activists of the Belarusan third sector have a high educational level — 7,3% respondents have a scientific degree; almost three quarters — higher education; about 10% — incomplete higher education (See Table 9).

Table 9. Distribution as for the educational level in various status groups, % per column

Educational level	Status in an organization		Sample as a whole
	“Leaders”	“Beginners”	
Elementary education, incomplete secondary education	—	0,7	0,3
Secondary education	—	2,9	1,4
Vocational secondary education	3,4	10,9	7,0
Incomplete higher education	8,7	12,4	10,5
Higher education	78,5	67,9	73,4
Scientific degree	9,4	5,1	7,3

The analysis of types of employment of the respondents with incomplete higher education demonstrates that these are basically students who are finishing their studies (86% respondents in this group have said that they are studying right now at Belarusan or foreign universities).

While carrying out our research, one of the characteristics we were interested in was the number of years the respondents have been working in their organizations and in the third sector as a whole.

Almost half the respondents (44,1%) have a long history of their “life” in the third sector, participating in the activity of public organizations for more than 10 years. Almost 1/5 of all who have taken part in the research came to the sector during the last 3 years (See Table 10).

Table 10. Respondents’ distribution as for the number of years of their activity in the third sector

For how long have you been taking part in the life of the third sector and the activity of public organizations?	Absolute frequency	% in the sample	Valid percent*
Up to 3 years	54	18,9	19,4
4-10 years	99	34,6	35,5
11 years and more	126	44,1	45,2
Total	279	97,6	100,0
N/A	7	2,4	—
Total	286	100,0	—

* Valid percent is a share from the number of the respondents who have answered this question.

As for the number of years of respondents’ activity in the organizations they represented in the research, the chosen time periods are distributed almost in regular intervals: a tad more than 1/3 (35%) said that they participated in the activity of their organizations less than three years; 31,1% — from 4 to 10 years; and 29,7% — more than 10 years (See Table 11).

Table 11. Respondents' distribution as for the number of years in their organizations

For how long have you been taking part in the activity of your public organization?	Absolute frequency	% in the sample	Valid percent
Up to 3 years	100	35,0	36,5
4-10 years	89	31,1	32,5
11 years and more	85	29,7	31,0
Total	274	95,8	100,0
N/A	12	4,2	—
Total	286	100,0	—

One of the tendencies of developing organized civil society in Belarus, which is quite often marked by both researchers and people who are actively included in the life of the third sector, is the “professionalization” of NGOs. 65,7% respondents have named their work in public organizations as one of their types of employment; 45,5% noticed that they participate in the activity of public organizations as volunteers (See Table 12).

Table 12. Prevalence of various types of employment among respondents, %

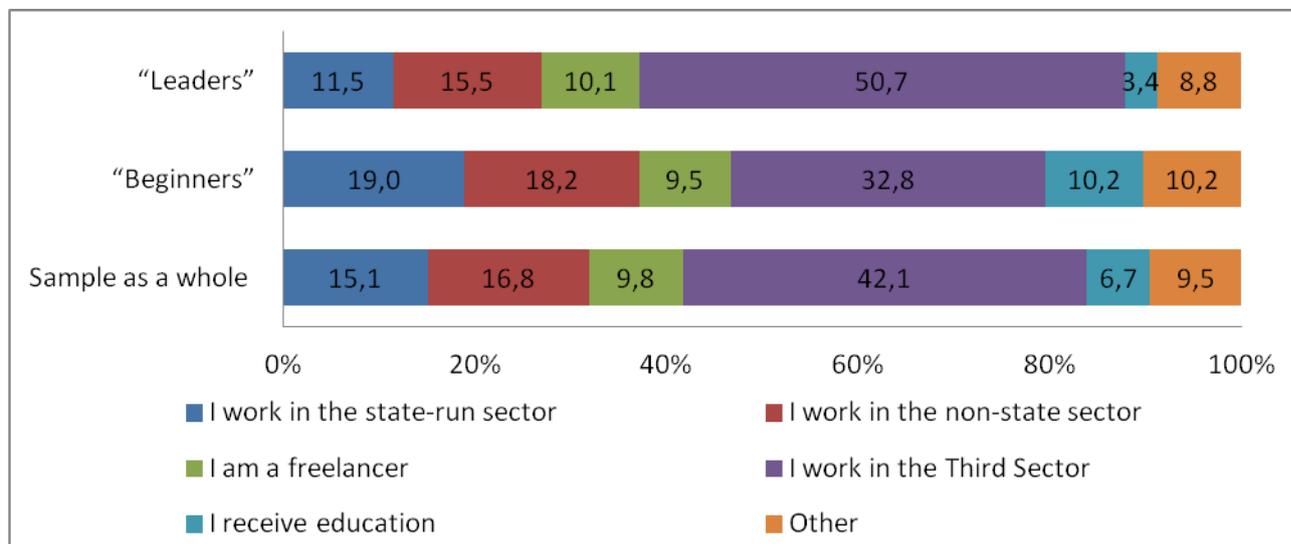
Choose from the following list everything that is true for you now*:	% in the sample
I work in a public organization, the third sector	65,7
I participate in the activity of a public organization(s) as a volunteer	45,5
I am a freelancer	26,6
I work at a state-run enterprise, organization	19,6
I work at a private enterprise, organization	17,8
I have my own business	16,8
I am a pensioner due to my age or state of health	12,6
I study at a Belarusian university	11,2
I study at a foreign university	1,7
I go to school, college, vocational school	0,7
Other	4,9

* The question was asked as a non-alternative one, i.e. it was possible to pick any number of variants.

In order to receive a clearer picture, respondents were asked an additional question in which we asked them to call the basic sphere of their employment. A little bit less than half (42,1%) respondents named their work in the third sector as the basic sphere of their employment. This share is a little tad higher (50,7%) in the group “Leaders”, in comparison with the group “Beginners” (32,8%) (See Diagram 2).

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Diagram 2. Spheres of respondents' basic employment, %



The "first" and "second" sectors are presented as the basic spheres of employment among activists of NGOs almost equally (15,1% and 16,8% respectively). Besides, almost every tenth respondent specified that the basic sphere of his/her employment is to be a freelancer, 6,7% — to be a student. The "Other" type of employment (9,5%), according to the analysis of variants, was mentioned basically by pensioners, women during their maternity leave, or the unemployed.

Summing up the analysis of characteristics of the civil society segment, which is the object of our research, it is possible to say the following:

1. The research process has confirmed some general assertions concerning the condition and features of development of organized civil society in Belarus. First of all, it concerns the disbalance of the presence of public organizations as for the territorial question, a high share of Minsk-based organizations, and at the level of the Regions — the concentration of public activity in the regional centers. One more aspect that was proved while carrying out the research is that in the Belarusian third sector there is a phenomenon of a "person-organization" — when a public organization (sometimes, even a rather active one, which is visible and has a history) actually consists of one person. An extreme version of this phenomenon is when one person can be the only representative of several public organizations and simultaneously — of local structures of political parties.
2. In the research sample, there is an almost equal proportion of men and women; all age groups are balanced enough. As we are not aware of the demographic structure of the statistical population, it is difficult for us to evaluate the sample representativeness as for these parameters; the design of the sample does not allow us to extrapolate methodologically correctly the data to the statistical population as a whole. Nonetheless, if to assume that the received sex-age structure is close to the statistical population structure, then it means that, in comparison with the country's population, the civil society segment, which we study, is a little bit more "masculine" and younger (See Table 13).

Table 13. Demographic characteristics of the research sample and of Belarus' population, % per line

	Sex		Age			
	Men	Women	16-24	25-39	40-54	55+
Country*	46,5	53,5	11,9	22,7	22,3	26,7
Sample	54,9	45,1	15,0	37,9	28,2	18,9

* Data as of 1 January 2013 (Source (in Russian): **Number of Belarus' resident population as for their sex and age as of 1 January 2013** [Electronic resource] // Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus. — Official web-site. — Access date: 01.10.2014. — Access mode: http://minzdrav.gov.by/dadvfiles/000166_420984_Tabl2_4_2012.doc, free. — Title screen.).

3. In the civil society segment that we study, three quarters of our respondents have higher education (sometimes, more than one) and 7,3% — also a scientific degree. Considering the absence of significant distinctions in the educational level between the groups “Leaders” and “Beginners”, it is possible to speak with a rather high degree of confidence about a high educational level in the statistical population.

4. According to the research data, about 1/5 of our respondents are the people who have come to the NGOs sector within the three latest years. On the one hand, these figures seem to be rather high, especially taking into account the constantly discussed problem of the absence of an influx of new people in the sector. However, if we recall that the sample was built with a special emphasis on the participation in the research of the people who have come to their organizations among the last ones, the situation looks not so bright. Thus, if to take the number of years spent in the sector separately for the category “Beginners”, the share of those who have come to the third sector within the last three years will hardly be more than a third (34,8%). If we look at the same category from the point of view of the number of years spent in an organization, this share will almost be two thirds (63,8%). The general conclusion can be formulated as follows — during the latest three years about 1/3 of organizations in the segment of civil society, which we study, have not received any new members. Other organizations receive new members, on the one hand, at the expense of people who had nothing to do with the third sector before and, on the other hand, at the expense of members of other public organizations; the share of these two sources is almost identical.

5. One more feature of the development of organized civil society in Belarus, which was proved as a result of the research, is a high degree of “professionalization” of the Belarusian third sector. 65% pollees have defined themselves as “those who work” in the third sector and only 45% — as “volunteers”; 42% said that their work in the third sector is their basic sphere of employment. A deeper analysis demonstrates that almost 1/5 of all pollees (19,9%) are the people who do not have any other employment (neither work, nor study) and any other sources of income (not even as freelancers and pensioners), except for their activity in public organizations.

6. The topics and questions, which have to do one way or another with any political activity, cause ambiguous reactions, segmenting this sector's organizations. There is a whole layer of organizations that avoid any contact with this topic. The other part of organizations is ready if not to work, then to discuss the problems and topics that are connected with the political life of the country.

Grounds for solidarity actions: structure of social identifications and trust

One of the grounds for support, mutual aid, and solidarity is the way individuals perceive their belonging to separate social communities, the way they identify themselves with various kinds of groups. One's comprehension of belonging to a certain circle of people (the feeling of "We") can be a basis for actions supporting the values of this group or in relation to the people who are identified as "We". The description of the solidarity potential through the structure of social identities is one of the research tasks. In order to mark out hypothetical groups-objects of identities, Vladimir Yadov's technique is used:

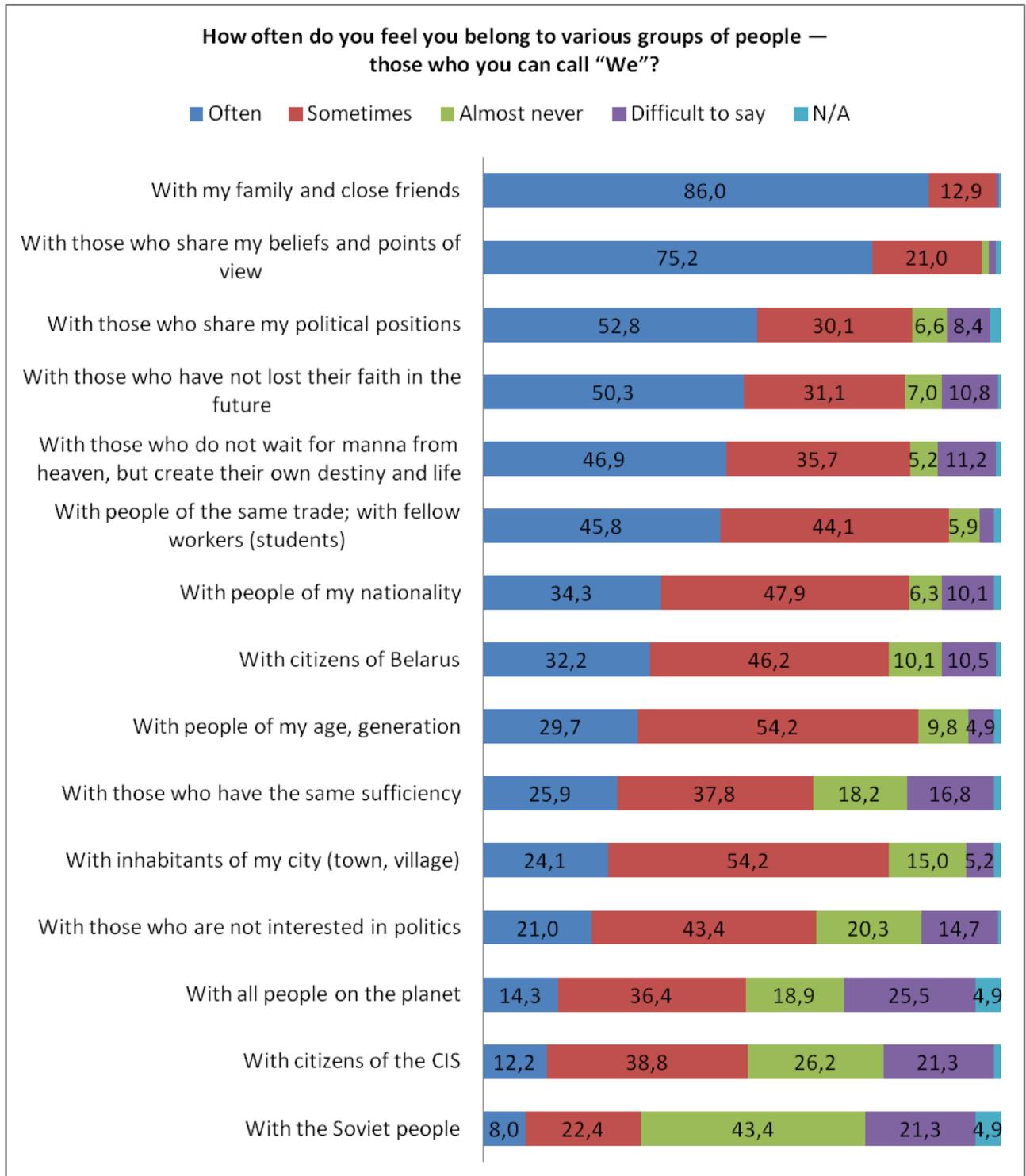
- Identification with communities of various scales — from primary to the largest ones: with one's family and close friends; with inhabitants of one's city (village); with people of the same nationality; with all people on the planet;
- Age identification;
- Identification by professional, industrial-organizational, and financial- proprietary criteria: with people of the same trade; with fellow workers (students); with those who have the same sufficiency;
- Civic identity;
- Political-ideological axiological identifications: with those who share the same beliefs and points of view; with those who share the same political positions; with those who are not interested in politics;
- Identifications formed on the basis of behavioral strategies: with those who prefer to keep a low profile, to live like "the majority of all people"; with those who are sure that nothing depends on their actions; with those who do not wait for manna from heaven, but create their own destiny and life; with those who have not lost their faith in the future⁴.

To describe the groups the identification with which is the strongest basis for solidarization, at first, we shall rate concrete groups (See Diagram 3).

⁴ See (in Russian): *Yadov V.A. Social identification in a crisis society* // Sociological Magazine. — 1994. — № 1. — P. 48.



Diagram 3. Structure of social identification among representatives of the third sector, %



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The natural leader as for the identification frequency is the group “With family and close friends” — 86% representatives of the sector “Often” feel affinity with them. On the second place, considerably outstripping the other groups, there is the group “With those who share my beliefs and points of view” — 75,2%. Then, there are groups where the answer “Often” is chosen by most respondents, however, in which relation there is no unanimity (the share of the answer “Often” is from 52,8% to 46,9%): “With those who share my political positions”, “With those who have not lost their faith in the future”, and “With those who do not wait for manna from heaven, but create their own destiny and life”.

It is necessary to separately mention the groups which the majority of people identify themselves with from time to time. In this case, we can speak about the importance of some external, situational, or contextual factors for the comprehension of one's belonging to these groups. These directions of self-identification include: “With people of my age, generation”, “With inhabitants of my city (town, village)”, “With people of my nationality”, and “With citizens of Belarus”. The identification “With people of the same trade; with fellow workers (students)” occupies an intermediate position between “Often” (45,8%) and “Sometimes” (44,1%). Also, among the “situational” identities, there are “With citizens of the CIS”, “With those who have the same sufficiency”, “With all people on the planet” (from 36% to 38% respondents specified that they feel their identity with these groups “Sometimes”).

As for the self-identification and incipience of the “We” feeling among representatives of organized civil society, the least suitable group is “With the Soviet people” (“Almost never” — 43,4%); however, from time to time, this identification appears almost in every third respondent (30,4% chose the answers “Often” and “Sometimes”).

To compare the potential of different grounds for solidarity, we shall review types of the groups of identifications. For this purpose, we shall have to redefine some aspects of Vladimir Yadov's classical technique, taking into account Belarus' realities. We will consider four types of groups for identification:

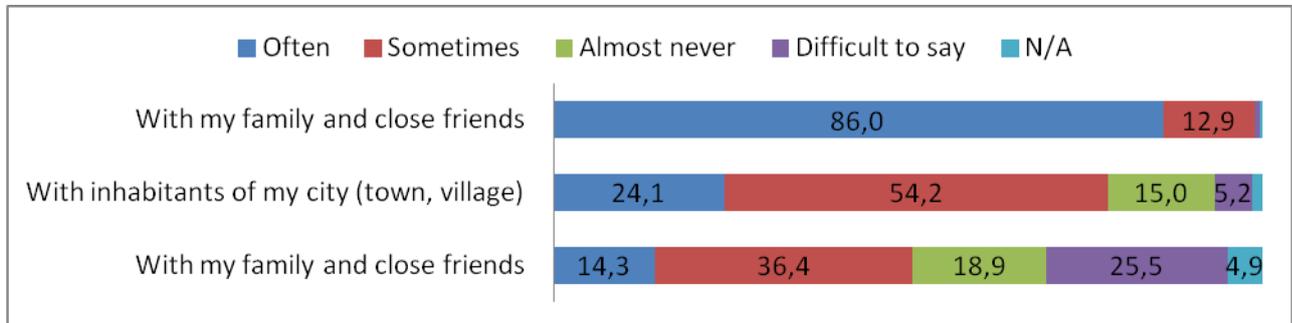
- 1) Communities of various scales (from close people (family, friends) to inhabitants of a settlement and, at last, the planet);
- 2) Groups with social-demographic characteristics (age, trade, sufficiency);
- 3) Groups of national and civic identities (in Belarus' realities, they include identifications with people of the same nationality, citizens of Belarus, citizens of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as well as with the Soviet people);
- 4) Political-ideological axiological identifications and identifications formed on the basis of behavioral strategies (affinity of beliefs, political positions, interest in politics, orientation on independence from external circumstances, and faith in the future).

Communities of various scales

The force of the identification with communities of various scales predictably decreases with the increase of the community's scale (See Diagram 4).



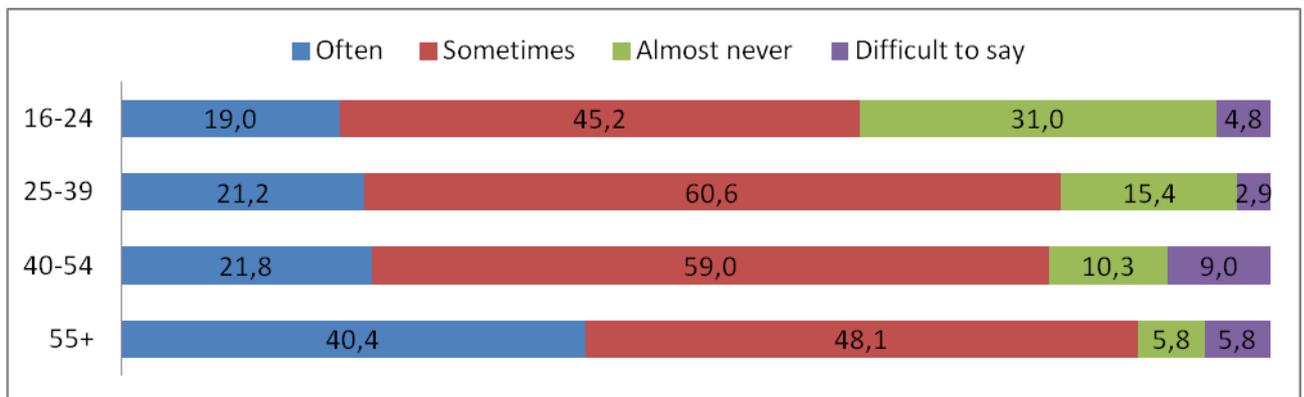
Diagram 4. Degree of the identification with communities of various scales, %



However, the quantitative difference between the identification with the close circle and the identification with the local community is so essential that the identifications with the local community and with all humankind have almost a marginal character. We shall also note the maximally possible high percent of those who could not answer unequivocally the question on the identification with all people on the planet, which means that this identification is so poorly actualized that it does not cause even any negative definiteness.

The identification with the local community is a bit stronger in the senior age group (55 years old and more) and it is the weakest in the younger age group (16-24 y.o.), almost a third of which never identifies themselves with inhabitants of their settlement (See Diagram 5).

Diagram 5. Degree of one’s identification with inhabitants of one’s city (village) in various age groups, %

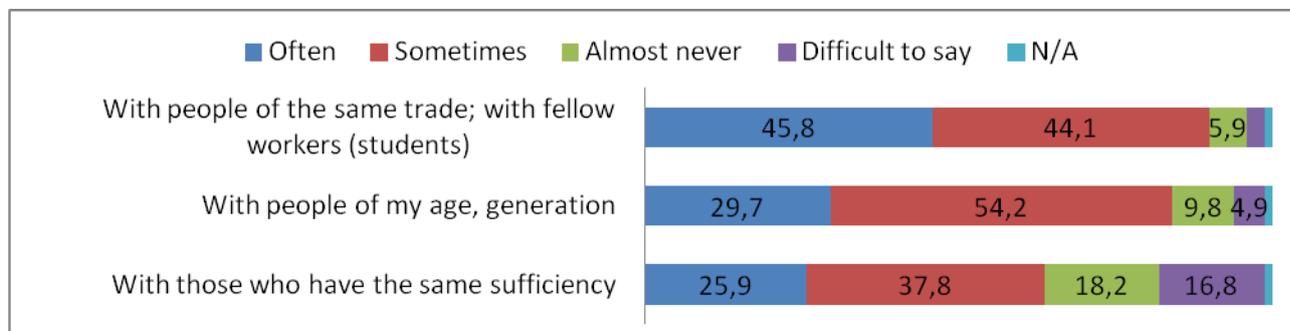


It is remarkable that these two types of identifications — “With inhabitants of my city (town, village)” and “With all people on the planet” — are practically not influenced by the migration experience: neither territorial, nor professional, or by that between countries. At least, we have not found any stable connections.

Groups with social-demographic characteristics

In our research, it concerns age and professional groups, as well as the groups marked by the criterion of one’s financial position and well-being (See Diagram 6).

Diagram 6. Degree of the identification with social-demographic communities, %

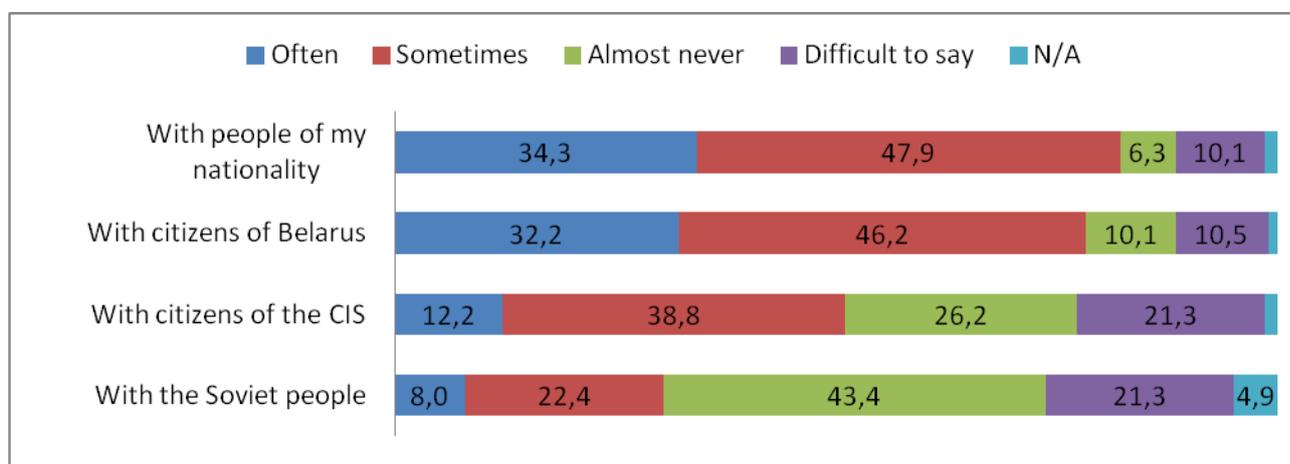


It is obvious that the strongest one in this type of identifications is the professional one, although it differs from the generational identification more likely by intensity, rather than actually positive definiteness. In other words, the overwhelming majority of respondents this way or another identify themselves with both their professional circle and people of their generation, but the professional identification is more vivid, more “frequent”. Thus, none of types of these identifications has any significant dependence on age.

Groups of national and civic identities

In this complex of identifications, the most expressed ones are the identifications “With people of my nationality” and “With citizens of Belarus”, although we have to mark that their intensity is not too high — only for a third of respondents this type is the type of their everyday description of themselves; almost 50% of pollees said that they identify themselves according to both national and civic criteria only once in a while. For activists of the third sector, a more marginal one is the identification with citizens of one of the Russian-focused unions, which Belarus is now a member of, e.g. with citizens of the Commonwealth of Independent States; and even a smaller part of pollees continues to keep the feeling of belonging to the Soviet people (See Diagram 7).

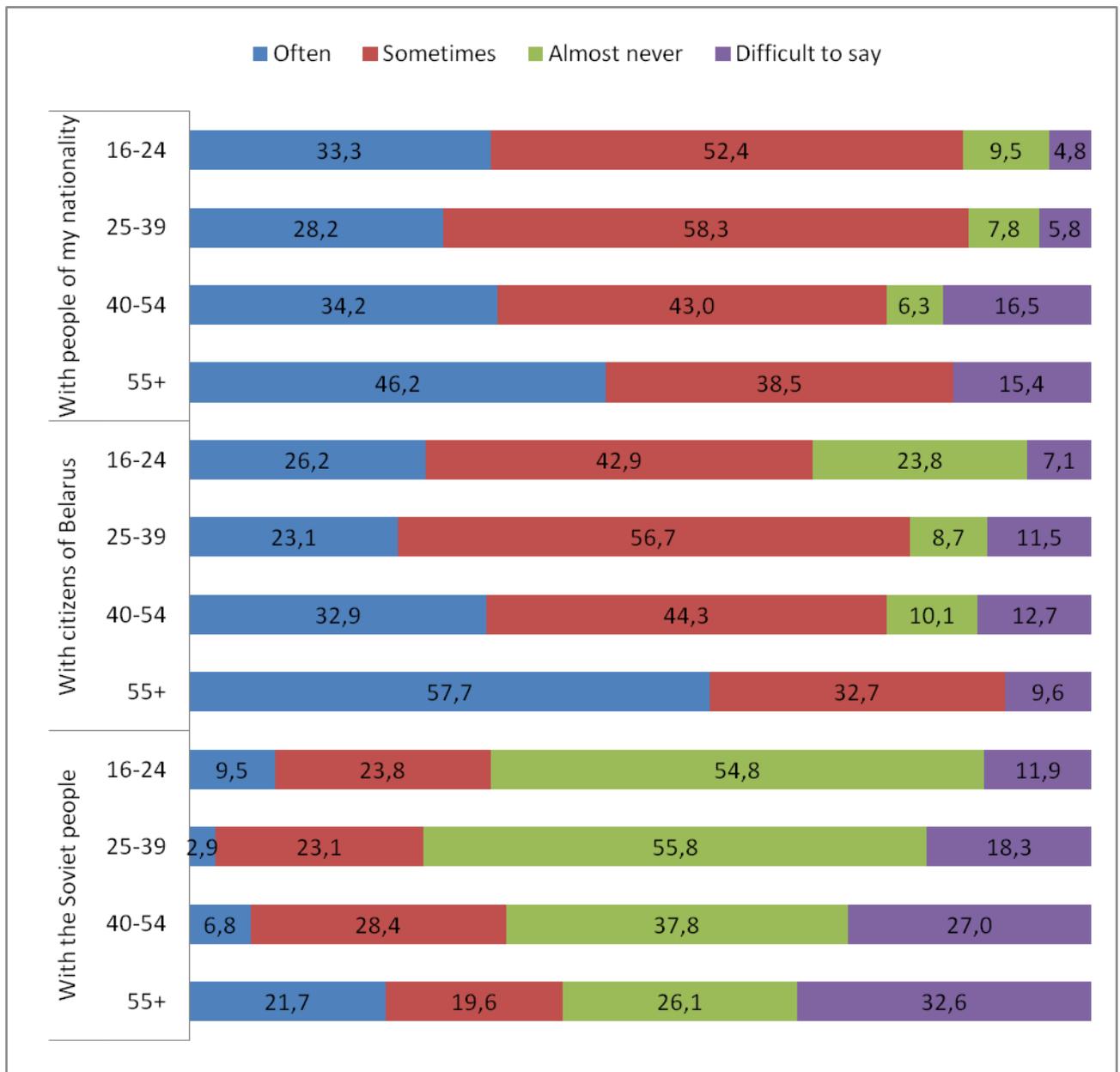
Diagram 7. Degree of national and civic identifications, %





The analysis of this identity type in different age groups demonstrates unexpected results. In the senior age group, the share of those who still “Often” or “Sometimes” identify themselves with the Soviet people is predictably high. However, simultaneously, it is among the senior generation that the degree of civic and national self-identification is the highest. In this group, there is nobody who has negative definiteness in relation to these two criteria of identification (i.e. no one answers that they “Almost never” feel affinity with people of their nationality or citizens of Belarus) (See Diagram 8).

Diagram 8. Degree of civic and national identifications in different age groups, %

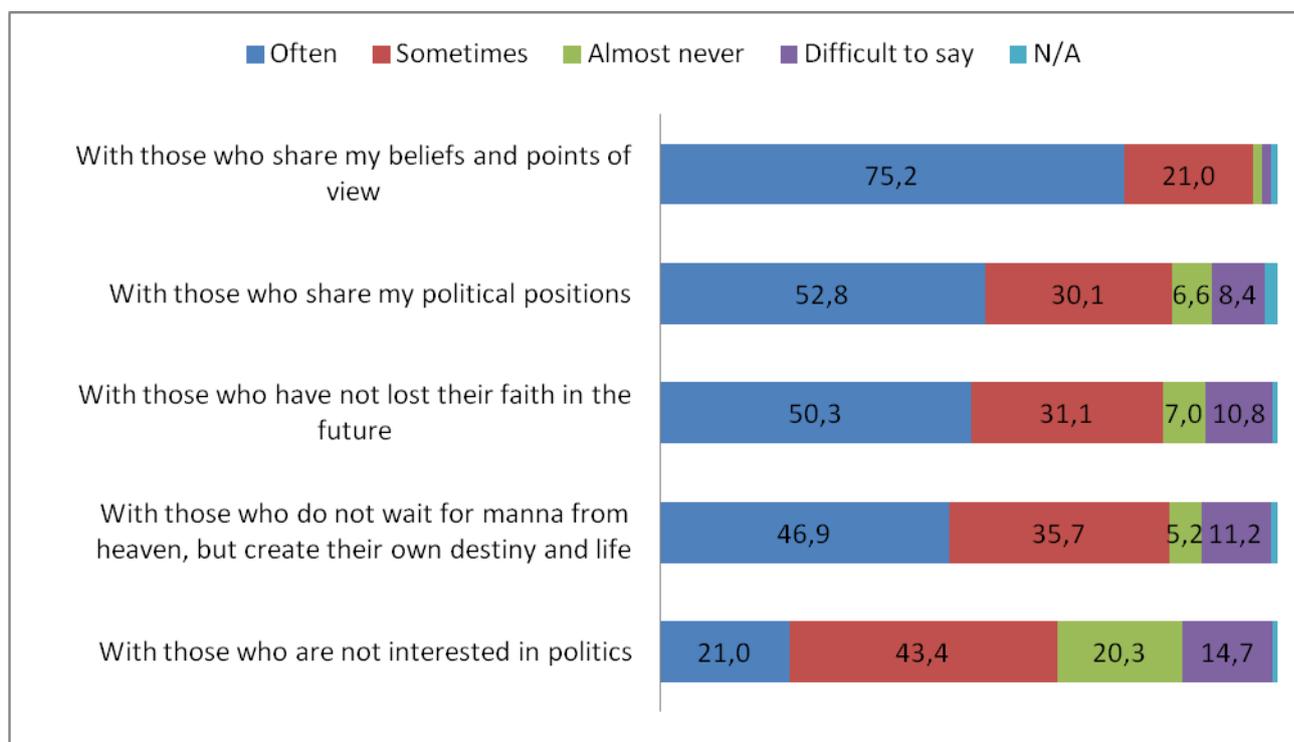


The analysis of the ratio between various identifications shows that there is a connection of average force between such pairs of identifications as “With people of my nationality” and “With citizens of Belarus”, as well as between “With citizens of the CIS” and “With the Soviet people”. Still, the strongest connection is between the identifications “With citizens of Belarus” and “With citizens of the CIS”⁵. It indicates the ambiguousness of the substantial filling of third sector activists’ civic identity and different contents of their conceptualizations of citizenship.

Political-ideological axiological identifications and identifications formed on the basis of behavioral strategies

At first, we shall note the rather high “rating” of the identifications of this group in the general list of the groups proposed to respondents. The identification “With those who share my beliefs and points of view” occupies one of the leading positions, conceding only to the identification “With my family and close circle”, which is head and shoulders above the others in all studies of Belarusian society. Three quarters of respondents who chose “Often” and 1/5 of those who chose “Sometimes” feel affinity with their “like-minded fellows”; an insignificantly small share of people “never” feels such affinity (See Diagram 9).

Diagram 9. Степень идентификации на основании ценностей и поведенческих стратегий, %



⁵ Hereinafter, comparisons are made with the use of Cramér's V.



The analysis of the connection of various identifications in this group shows the heterogeneity of their contents, which is revealed even at such a rather abstract level of formulations. Quite a strong connection exists between the identifications “With those who have not lost their faith in the future” and “With those who do not wait for manna from heaven, but create their own destiny and life”, which is logical enough, because these are very close behavioral guidelines. The analysis of connections of the identification “With those who share my political positions” demonstrates a more complicated picture — the connection between the identification “With those who share my political positions” and the identification “With those who share my beliefs and points of view” is strong enough; however, simultaneously, there is a connection of almost the same force between the “political positions” identification and those who prefer political escapism (“With those who are not interested in politics”).

According to our research hypothesis, the high level of the identification with the groups of this type can give evidence of the high potential of solidarity based on the appeal to ideas and values, identical situation assessment, and vision of the future. Still, in order to implement this potential, it is also necessary to have the substantial commonality of this vision; people with certain beliefs and points of view should consider themselves “We” and they ought to share each other’s political positions. Meanwhile, we cannot say anything about this substantial commonality; we even cannot say that it exists.

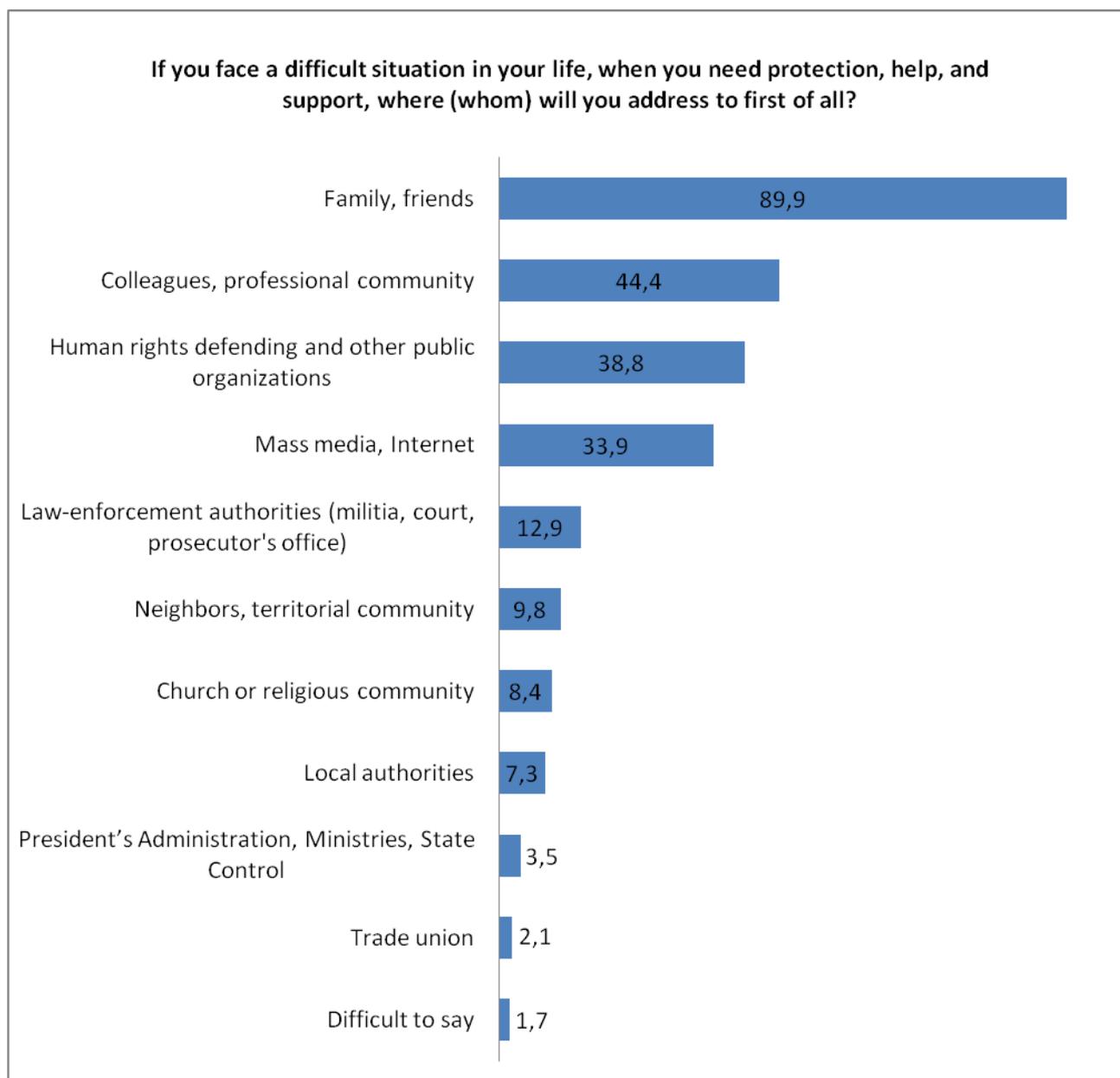
Structure of trust in social institutions and communities

One more characteristic, which was used to determine the potential of solidarization, is the level of civil society representatives’ trust in various groups and institutions. First, trust relations characterize a positive predisposition to act, including expectations to demonstrate solidarity. The type of the groups, which are trusted (family or a professional community, a religious community, or representatives of local authorities), is characterized by the prevalence of solidarity as a cultural norm and its borders. Besides, it is possible to expect that the high level of trust presupposes symmetric relations, and if a person is ready to address to a group or an institution in a difficult situation or in a situation when the rights are infringed, it is possible to hope that this person will be ready to provide support in a reversed situation.

Trusting in various informal groups and institutions means a high potential of solidarization, whereas a high level of trust in official organizations assumes a lower potential.

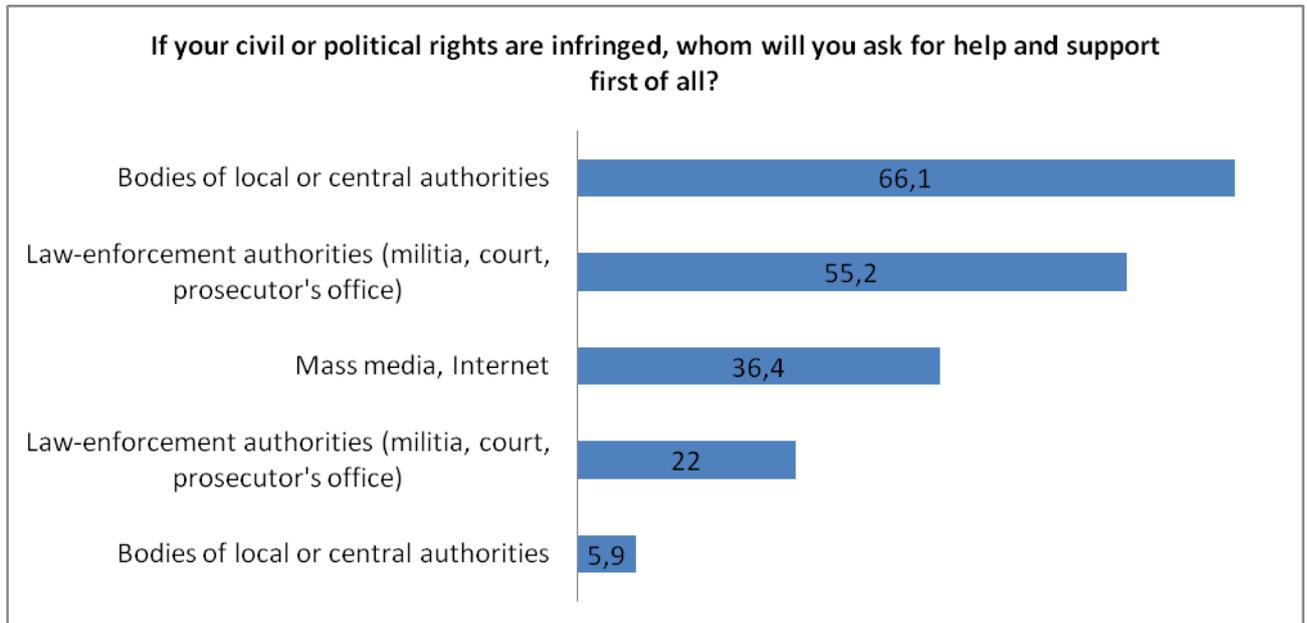
Just like in the case of describing the structure of identifications, the closest and most reliable social groups are family and friends — almost 90% respondents are ready to rely on them in a difficult situation. As for the other informal groups, only the professional community has some potential of trust — 44% pollees would ask their fellow workers or community for help. Church and territorial communities have less than 10% each. 38,8% of third sector activists are ready to ask human rights defending and public organizations for help in a difficult situation; 33,9% — the mass media, which can be considered a rather high indicator, especially against the catastrophically low level of the readiness to address to official institutions (See Diagram 10).

Diagram 10. Degree of trust in various social institutions and communities in a “difficult situation”, %



Among representatives of public organizations, the level of readiness to address to the authorities and law-enforcement bodies in a difficult situation is extremely low. Only 3,5% respondents expect support from central power; 7,3% — from local authorities. Trust in law-enforcement agencies is a little higher — 12,9% expect support from them. A little higher is the level of expectations from law-enforcement authorities in a concrete situation when rights are infringed (See Diagram 11).

Diagram 11. Degree of trust in various social institutions and communities in a situation when rights are infringed, %



However, for the institutions, which are directly meant to protect rights, the result of 22% is low enough; only bodies of local or central authorities concede to it. In the rating of those from whom activists of the third sector expect help and support in rights infringement situations, human rights defending organizations and the close circle are in the lead. Thus, the cross analysis of the data shows that, considering the degree of trust in and expectations from public organizations, respondents are divided into three practically equal groups. A tad more than a third of activists of public organizations count on assistance from colleagues in their sector in any situations — in situations when rights are infringed and in wider “difficult situations in life”; almost a third — only in narrowly specialized situations when rights are infringed; and, at last, a little bit less than a third does not consider public organizations to be an institution or a community which aid it is possible to rely upon (See Table 14).

Table 14. Degree of respondents’ readiness to address to human rights defending and other public organizations in various critical situations, %

Readiness to address to human rights defending and other public organizations in rights infringement situations	Readiness to address to human rights defending and other public organizations in difficult situations in life		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	34,6	31,5	66,1
No	4,2	29,7	33,9
Total	38,8	61,2	100,0

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To check the hypothesis of the interdependence of the level of trust in different communities and that of the potential of solidarity actions, we studied the way the trust structures in the groups, which have the experience of participating in solidarity actions, differ⁶.

Statistically significant distinctions are revealed in the level of trust in such groups as “Human rights defending and other public organizations” and “Mass media and the Internet”. The higher is the degree of third sector activists’ participation in various actions of solidarity, the more are they inclined to count on public organizations and mass media when they face difficult situations in life (See Table 15).

Table 15. Readiness to address to social institutions and communities in groups with different experience of participating in solidarity actions in difficult situations in life, %

If you face a difficult situation in your life, when you need protection, help, and support, where (whom) will you address to first of all?	Low degree of participation	Average degree of participation	High degree of participation
Family	91,1	91,3	84,5
Colleagues, professional community	41,8	44,6	39,7
Human rights defending and other public organizations	17,7	38,0	56,9
Mass media, Internet	22,8	37,0	50,0
Law-enforcement authorities (militia, court, prosecutor's office)	15,2	7,6	17,2
Neighbors, territorial community	12,7	12,0	5,2
Church or religious community	7,6	7,6	10,3
Local authorities	8,9	6,5	6,9
President's Administration, Ministries, State Control	3,8	2,2	5,2
Trade union	—	3,3	1,7

This consistent pattern is even more striking if we analyze groups and institutions, which respondents rely upon in rights infringement situations (See Table 16).

⁶ The groups are formed as a result of the answer to the question “Do you have any personal experience of participating in actions of solidarity or actions of support?”. Respondents’ experience included four kinds of activity: n1 — participation in actions aimed at gathering donations or humanitarian aid; n2 — signatures under collective appeals, petitions; n3 — public statements in support of someone or something; n4 — participation in protest actions, street actions. Each kind of activity received the following number of points: “I participate regularly” — 3, “I participate from time to time” — 2, “I participated once or twice” — 1, “I have not participated” — 0. The participation index was calculated: $(n1 + n2 + n3 + n4) / 12$. The index changes in the range from 0 (total absence of experience of participation) to 1 (regular participation in all kinds of activity). Then, the whole corpus was divided into three groups: with low (index weight from 0 to 0,33), average (from 0,37 to 0,66), and high (from 0,67 to 1) degrees of participation in solidarity actions.

Table 16. Readiness to address to social institutions and communities in groups with different experience of participating in solidarity actions in situations when rights are infringed, %

If your civil or political rights are infringed, whom will you ask for help and support first of all?	Low degree of participation	Average degree of participation	High degree of participation
Human rights defending and other public organizations	41,8	70,7	82,8
Close circle (family, friends, colleagues, professional community)	65,8	55,4	37,9
Mass media, Internet	25,3	38,0	53,4
Law-enforcement authorities (militia, court, prosecutor's office)	21,5	20,7	20,7
Bodies of local or central authorities	7,6	6,5	6,9

Except for the growth of intentions to address to public organizations and mass media, with the growth of the degree of participation in solidarity actions, the importance of the close circle (as the only one which it is possible to count on in situations when civil or political rights are infringed) decreases. Still, the degree of activeness and the presence of experience of participating in solidarity actions do not influence in any way the attitude towards all the other groups and institutions — power structures, professional community, local communities, and church communities.

The carried-out analysis does not allow us to unequivocally evaluate the solidarity potential, the bases of solidarity actions at the level of conscious identities and trust. On the one hand, the high degree of identification with the communities grounded on values and behavioral strategies makes it possible to assume the presence of the potential of solidarity actions, the possibility to appeal to ideas and values, as well as political guidelines so as to implement this potential. However, the analysis results demonstrate the internal heterogeneity of third sector activists' views and beliefs even at the level of the most general notions such as perceptions of politics. In order to evaluate whether the solidarity potential can be implemented on the basis of the commonality of convictions at all, it is necessary to substantially analyze this commonality.

The analysis of trust structures reveals the high importance of the family and professional community as something which it is possible to some extent to rely on in any difficult situation. The importance of local and religious communities is essentially lower. The level of trust in public organizations and mass media as something which it is possible to count on in rights infringement situations and difficult situations in life is quite high. However, it is necessary to mark that, as for these parameters, the civil society sector that we study is extremely unhomogeneous. The degree of trust in colleagues from the sector divides it into three almost equal parts: 1) those who count in any situations on aid from public organizations; 2) those who ask for possible support only in the sphere of rights protection; and 3) those who do not rely upon any support from human rights defending and any other public organizations in any situations. Besides, it is possible to speak about the importance of the factor of the available experience of solidarity actions or any actions in support (up to charitable ones) in the formation of trust structures. People, who participate in various actions of assistance and support more often, are more inclined to count on help from public organizations, mass media, users of social networking services, as they have



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some personal experience of participating in such support. It is possible to assume that solidarity actions should reproduce trust structures and through them — solidarity actions themselves. However, here again, in order to evaluate possibilities of implementing the existing potential, it is necessary to consider the substantial bases for solidarization.

Grounds for solidarity actions: similarities and distinctions in the perception of significant events, values, and positions

Manifestations of solidarity often have to do not only and not so much with rational grounds or declared values, but also with a person's subjective attitude towards certain events, situations, and values. In this section, we shall address to the evaluation of the solidarity potential through the **analysis of similarities or distinctions in the perception and evaluation of significant social and political objects** (events, characters, phenomena, and values), which are potential objects of displaying solidarity. It is important for us to document not direct, but indirect indicators.

For this analysis, the method of Charles Osgood's semantic differential is used⁷. This method addresses to the subjective semantic space where there are various "objects" — people, values, phenomena, positions, etc. Based on the arrangement in this space, we will analyze the perception of various "objects". The semantic differential technique is built on pairs of contrasting adjectives, with the help of which each "object" is to be evaluated by respondents. The offered adjectives are the most common, not connected with the theme of "objects"; they make it possible to pinpoint a sensory-emotional image. On the basis of the received evaluations and their comparison, we can speak about similarities or distinctions in the perception of these "objects".

Our analysis is built on the following assumption: the more there are similarities in the perception and evaluations, the more there is a potential possibility of understanding and supporting each other when it comes to political events and problems.

The research uses the classical technique modified for the Russian language, consisting of 12 scales⁸. Respondents had to evaluate such "objects", which in the Belarusian situation can act as an impulse or basis for consolidation and solidarity actions and which are actively used in political rhetoric and activity (14 "objects" in total)⁹:

⁷ Charles Osgood believed that the semantic differential helps to measure the so-called connotative value (unlike the denotative one), i.e. not objective characteristics, but "conditions which follow the perception of stimulus words and necessarily precede conscious operations with these words" (см.: Osgood Ch., Suci G., Tannenbaum P. **The Measurement of Meaning**. Urbana, 1957).

⁸ Charles Osgood's classical technique has a number of updates in the Russian psychological tradition that tries to adapt it to the Russian language material. We used E. Y. Artemieva's technique, which was reduced from 20 to 12 scales, proportionally to the way they are included in EPA-factors (Evaluation — Potency — Activity) (See (in Russian): Artemieva E.Y. **Basics of psychology of subjective semantics**. — Moscow, 1999).

⁹ In spite of the fact that the researchers chose the "objects" united by some semantic unity (events, values, strategies, etc.), each of 14 "objects" was evaluated separately by respondents, and initially all "objects" were presented as those that are not united among themselves. The connexity of different "objects" in respondents' semantic space came to light only as a result of a quantitative analysis of the data.

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- Events, dates of national pride: **March 25th — July 3rd**;
- Objects of cultural and axiological identification: **Belarus — Europe**;
- Values: **human rights — stability**;
- Strategies of actions: **public-political dialogue — political protest**;
- Political positions: **a political prisoner — the president**;
- Social positions: **a businessman — an official**;
- Opinion leaders: **an intellectual — a politician**.

We asked respondents to evaluate each of these “objects” with the help of 12 pairs of adjectives. The analysis of the received evaluations allows us:

- 1) to define to what extent organized civil society’s representatives are unanimous in their perception of the offered “objects”;
- 2) to find groups which evaluations concerning the whole complex of “objects” are close and significantly differ from evaluations of other groups and therefore — have a potential to manifest solidarity¹⁰.

The results of the evaluations of the 14 offered “objects” demonstrate the absence of unanimity among representatives of organized civil society even when it comes to the things that may seem basic and obvious for this segment of society. In all cases, respondents used the evaluation scale from 3 to -3. The average quadratic deviation (the size of the spread of evaluations) is from 1,3 to 1,9 points. It is indicative of a big variety, absence of unambiguity, and even contradictoriness of perception (See Tables 17-20).

Table 17. Evaluations of offered “strategies” and “events” as for semantic differential scales

Evaluated “objects” Scales	“Political protest”		“Public-political dialogue”		“3 July”		“25 March”	
	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation
Difficult — Easy	-1,10	1,80	-1,45	1,78	-0,41	1,78	0,39	1,76
Evil — Kind	-0,07	1,62	0,08	1,68	-0,03	1,68	1,29	1,36
Cold — Hot	0,95	1,70	0,20	1,59	-0,47	1,59	1,09	1,46
Dirty — Clean	0,42	1,59	0,01	1,66	-0,17	1,66	1,22	1,37
Old — Young	0,79	1,59	0,11	1,71	-0,42	1,71	-0,30	1,82
Silly — Clever	0,74	1,46	0,80	1,55	-0,72	1,55	0,92	1,42
Quiet — Loud	1,20	1,70	0,17	1,67	0,87	1,67	0,54	1,60
Slow — Fast	0,51	1,67	-0,85	1,34	0,03	1,34	0,14	1,33
Simple — Complicated	0,95	1,80	1,56	1,48	-0,17	1,48	0,62	1,50
Cowardly — Courageous	1,52	1,64	0,58	1,37	-0,26	1,37	1,37	1,39
Weak — Strong	0,97	1,77	0,41	1,55	-0,11	1,55	1,02	1,57
Unhappy — Happy	0,07	1,62	0,16	1,65	-0,08	1,65	0,82	1,54

¹⁰ Other analysis possibilities (in particular, the uniting and disintegrating potential of each of the “objects” to be evaluated) will be presented in the section “**Factors and possibilities to mobilize the solidarity potential**”.

Table 18. Evaluations of offered “objects of identification” and “values” as for semantic differential scales

Evaluated “objects” Scales	“Europe”		“Belarus”		“Human rights”		“Stability”	
	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation
Difficult — Easy	0,78	1,63	0,01	1,93	-0,91	1,906	-0,34	1,84
Evil — Kind	1,15	1,22	1,14	1,63	0,82	1,820	0,24	1,58
Cold — Hot	0,38	1,31	0,10	1,55	0,45	1,704	-0,43	1,49
Dirty — Clean	0,90	1,37	1,21	1,50	0,77	1,803	0,20	1,53
Old — Young	-0,44	1,80	-0,21	1,77	0,02	1,712	-0,68	1,49
Silly — Clever	1,21	1,36	0,25	1,50	1,19	1,572	-0,03	1,71
Quiet — Loud	0,34	1,44	-0,64	1,58	0,58	1,754	-0,40	1,50
Slow — Fast	0,10	1,68	-1,04	1,52	-0,27	1,590	-0,94	1,52
Simple — Complicated	0,93	1,70	0,70	1,69	1,10	1,800	0,43	1,71
Cowardly — Courageous	0,83	1,37	-0,38	1,74	1,18	1,649	-0,37	1,63
Weak — Strong	1,19	1,47	-0,11	1,82	0,96	1,824	0,05	1,79
Unhappy — Happy	1,33	1,26	-0,21	1,83	0,56	1,849	0,11	1,81

Table 19. Evaluations of offered “social and political positions” as for semantic differential scales

Evaluated “objects” Scales	“Official”		“Businessman”		“Political prisoner”		“President”	
	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation
Difficult — Easy	-1,65	1,33	-0,53	1,64	-1,55	1,54	-1,76	1,48
Evil — Kind	-1,10	1,32	-0,10	1,22	0,02	1,65	-1,34	1,62
Cold — Hot	-1,34	1,30	0,06	1,63	0,90	1,67	-0,46	2,01
Dirty — Clean	-1,11	1,38	-0,22	1,78	0,63	1,54	-1,29	1,57
Old — Young	-1,03	1,42	0,33	1,26	0,57	1,24	-1,19	1,58
Silly — Clever	-0,54	1,44	1,52	1,24	0,97	1,41	0,02	1,79
Quiet — Loud	-0,31	1,66	0,16	1,54	1,29	1,38	1,66	1,47
Slow — Fast	-1,12	1,56	1,44	1,47	0,76	1,40	0,63	1,65
Simple — Complicated	0,72	1,56	1,00	1,51	0,82	1,61	0,96	1,88
Cowardly — Courageous	-1,44	1,51	1,23	1,59	1,89	1,36	-0,27	1,93
Weak — Strong	-1,14	1,58	1,34	1,42	1,68	1,45	0,36	2,00
Unhappy — Happy	-1,01	1,36	0,50	1,32	-0,76	1,68	-1,04	1,64

Table 20. Evaluations of offered “characters for possible opinion leaders” as for semantic differential scales

Scales \ Evaluated “objects”	“Politician”		“Intellectual”	
	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation
Difficult — Easy	-0,83	1,55	0,27	1,84
Evil — Kind	-0,14	1,22	0,99	1,37
Cold — Hot	0,50	1,72	0,31	1,59
Dirty — Clean	-0,33	1,52	1,10	1,23
Old — Young	-0,16	1,29	0,15	1,38
Silly — Clever	1,01	1,33	2,06	1,24
Quiet — Loud	1,15	1,50	-0,26	1,50
Slow — Fast	0,85	1,48	0,46	1,50
Simple — Complicated	0,90	1,53	0,93	1,77
Cowardly — Courageous	0,89	1,54	0,95	1,38
Weak — Strong	0,80	1,62	1,09	1,41
Unhappy — Happy	-0,06	1,30	0,34	1,54

Thus, if to try to restore a certain overall picture of the perception of significant objects to manifest solidarity, we shall receive some perceptions of the **high degree of incoherence, absence of certain priorities, which would unite representatives of organized civil society at the level of preconscious evaluations and subjective meanings**. At the same time, the obtained data allows us to assume that each of the “objects”, without receiving unanimous evaluations, “divides” all set of respondents into groups, which evaluations are close, while evaluations of different groups significantly differ among themselves. In order to check this hypothesis, we carried out a cluster analysis¹¹ that allowed us to mark out groups, which evaluations are close, for each of the offered “objects”.

The selecting of such groups (clusters) makes it possible to analyze the consolidating or differentiating potential of each evaluated “object”. These groups unite people whose perceptions are similar, i.e. they have potential bases for similar reactions, similar attitudes, similar actions, and, thuswise, they are potentially ready to manifest solidarity.

Among all the evaluated “objects”, there are three pairs in which respondents’ distribution in groups is connected between themselves, i.e. the division in groups as for one “object” is interconnected with the group division as for another “object” (the evaluations of the object “March 25th” are connected with the evaluations of the object “July 3rd”; the evaluations of the object “President” are connected with the evaluations of the object “Political prisoner”; the evaluations of the object “Intellectual” — with the evaluations of the object “Politician”). This complex of three pairs can be considered as the semantic kernel on which basis there is a division inside organized civil society at the level of subjective perceptions.

¹¹ Cluster analysis is a multidimensional statistical procedure ordering respondents in rather homogeneous groups based on the evaluations they provided to each “object”. This cluster analysis was not compulsory — therefore the optimum number of groups for each of the evaluated “objects” was selected.



The first pair includes events, dates of national pride — the “March 25th” and the “July 3rd”. During the evaluation of these “objects”, all respondents divided into three groups. These groups do not coincide with each other, which gives evidence of the asymmetry in the perception of these two dates that apply for the status of the main national holiday of the country and the nation (See Diagrams 12 and 13¹²).

Diagram 12. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object “July 3rd”

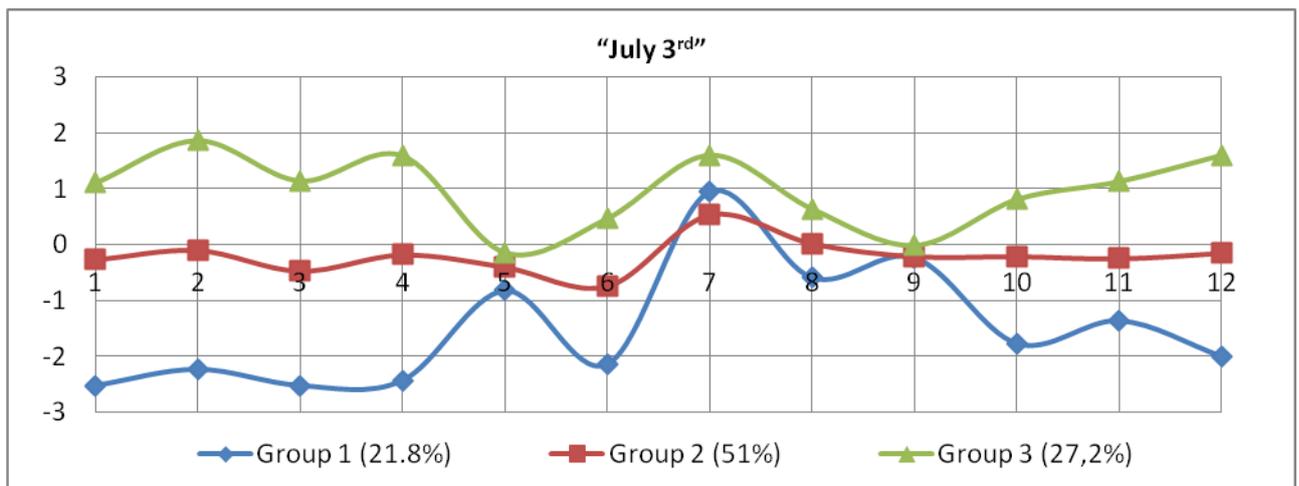
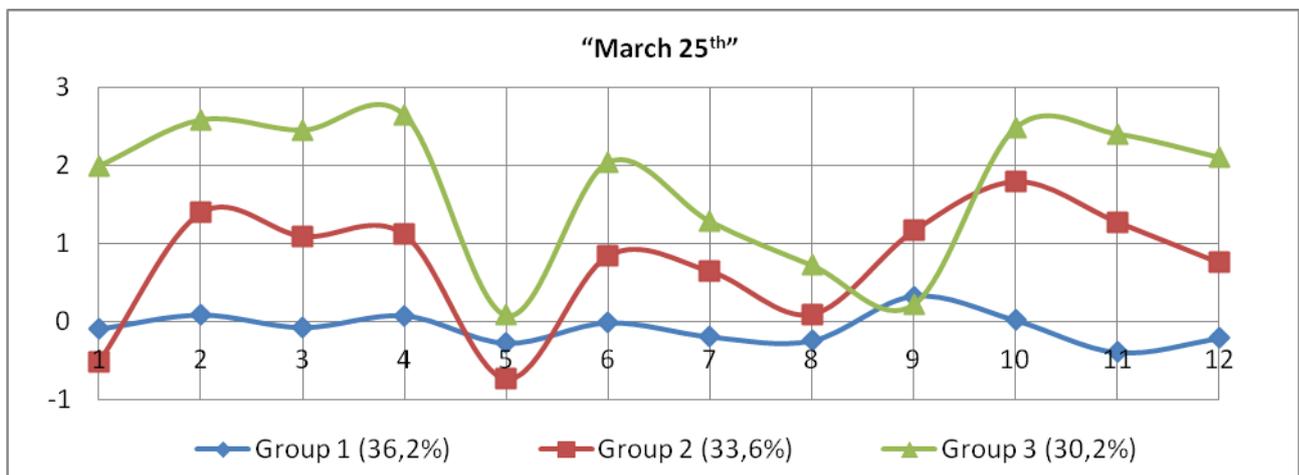


Diagram 13. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object “March 25th”



¹² In diagrams 12-39, the horizontal scales are: 1 — “Difficult — Easy”, 2 — “Evil — Kind”, 3 — “Cold — Hot”, 4 — “Dirty — Clean”, 5 — “Old — Young”, 6 — “Silly — Clever”, 7 — “Quiet — Loud”, 8 — “Slow — Fast”, 9 — “Simple — Complicated”, 10 — “Cowardly — Courageous”, 11 — “Weak — Strong”, 12 — “Unhappy — Happy”; average arithmetic values for each scale are presented vertically.

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The data shows that the “July 3rd” has a bigger disintegrating force, bringing all respondents in two opposite camps and a group with neutral evaluations, practically in all scales, which attest to the contradictoriness or complexity of the perception of and attitude to this date. As for the “March 25th”, we observe the gradation from a definitely positive attitude to a neutral-discordant one. Thus, the “March 25th” has a high consolidating potential, while the “July 3rd” is a date, which divides representatives of organized civil society into groups that most probably cannot arrive at an understanding. Therefore, it is possible to say that among representatives of the third sector, the solidarity potential belongs to the actions and ideas that have to do with the positive perception of the “March 25th” as a significant historical date, which, at the same time, do not appeal to the negative evaluations or negation of the importance of the “July 3rd”.

As for the attitude to such significant figures of the Belarusian political field as the “President” and the “Political prisoner”, there are 2 groups of respondents whose evaluations are similar. It is possible to say that the arrangement of these clusters is symmetric — the “Political prisoner”: neutral-negative evaluations and more positive evaluations; the “President”: neutral-positive evaluations and mainly negative evaluations. The data shows that more than a third of representatives of organized civil society have no accurately expressed attitude towards these characters of the political field; their evaluations are inconsistent and ambiguous. It means that any possible solidarity based on the attitude to these figures is limited by maximum two thirds of representatives of the third sector (See Diagrams 14 and 15).

Diagram 14. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object “Political prisoner”

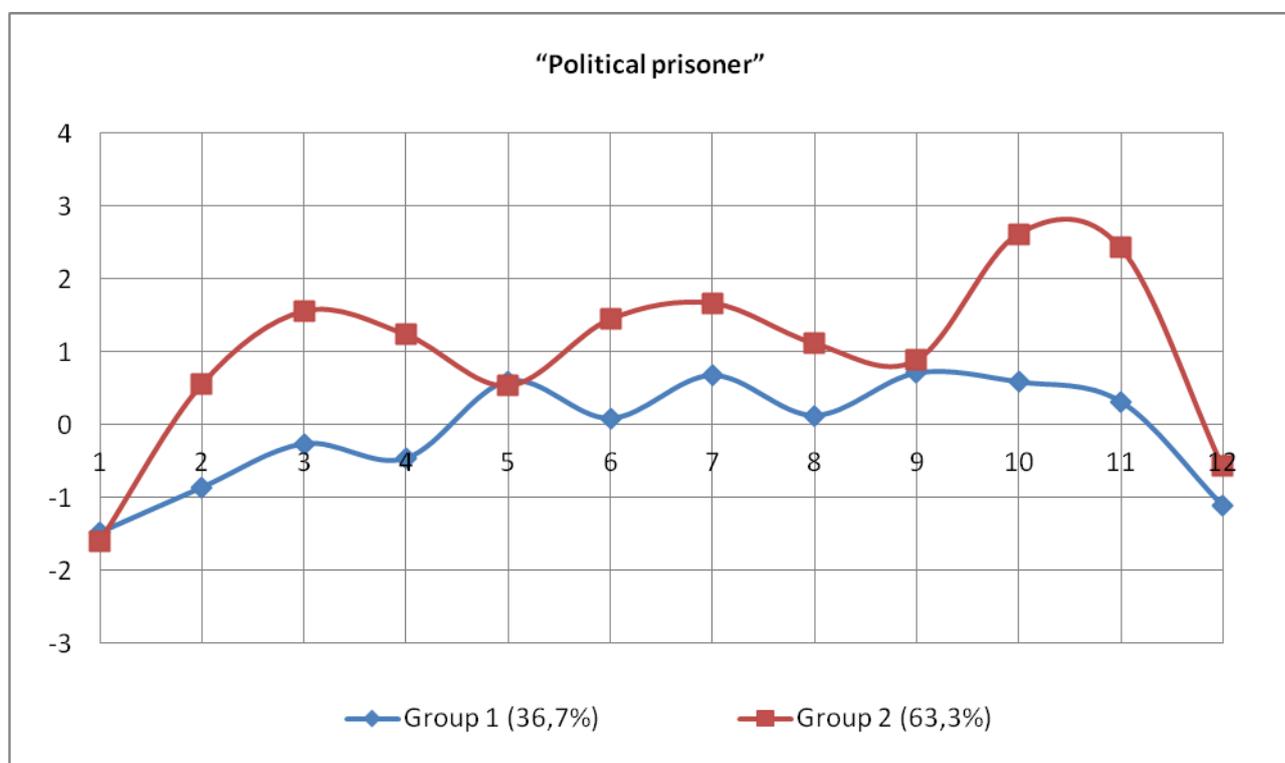
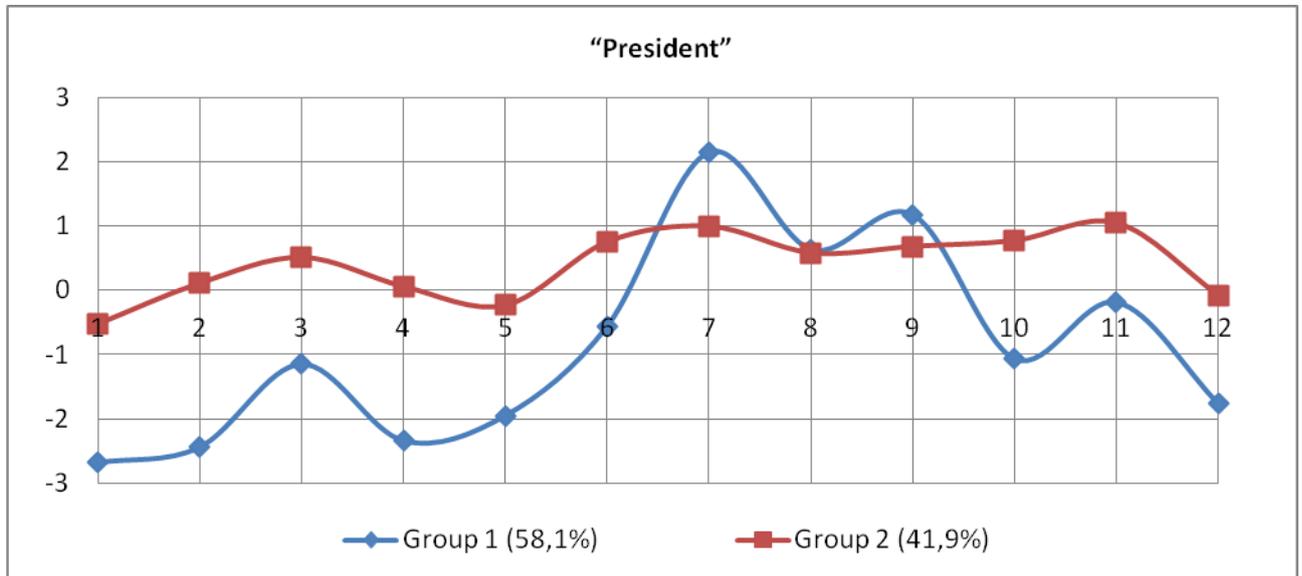




Diagram 15. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object “President”



The “Intellectual” and the “Politician” is a pair of “characters” of the Belarusian public field, who, as for their function, are the “assemblage points” for solidarity actions and the important factors of forming public opinion. The cluster analysis distinguishes 2 groups of respondents who have similar evaluations of the object “Intellectual” and 4 groups, which can be united somehow among the widely scattered various evaluations of the object “Politician” (See Diagrams 16 and 17).

Diagram 16. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object “Intellectual”

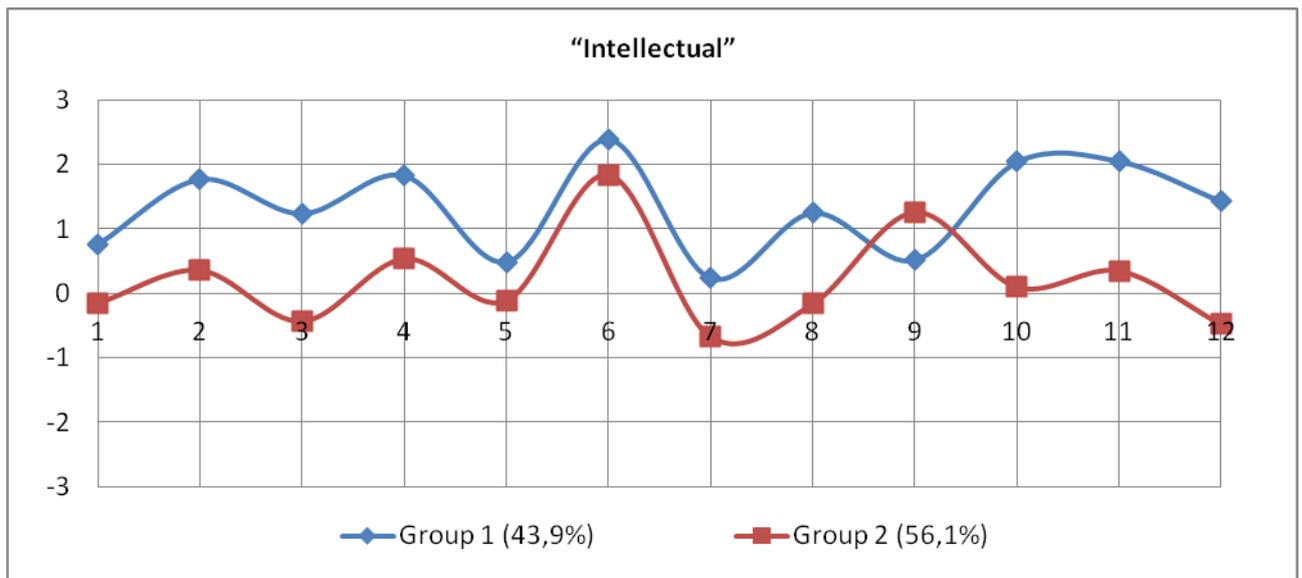
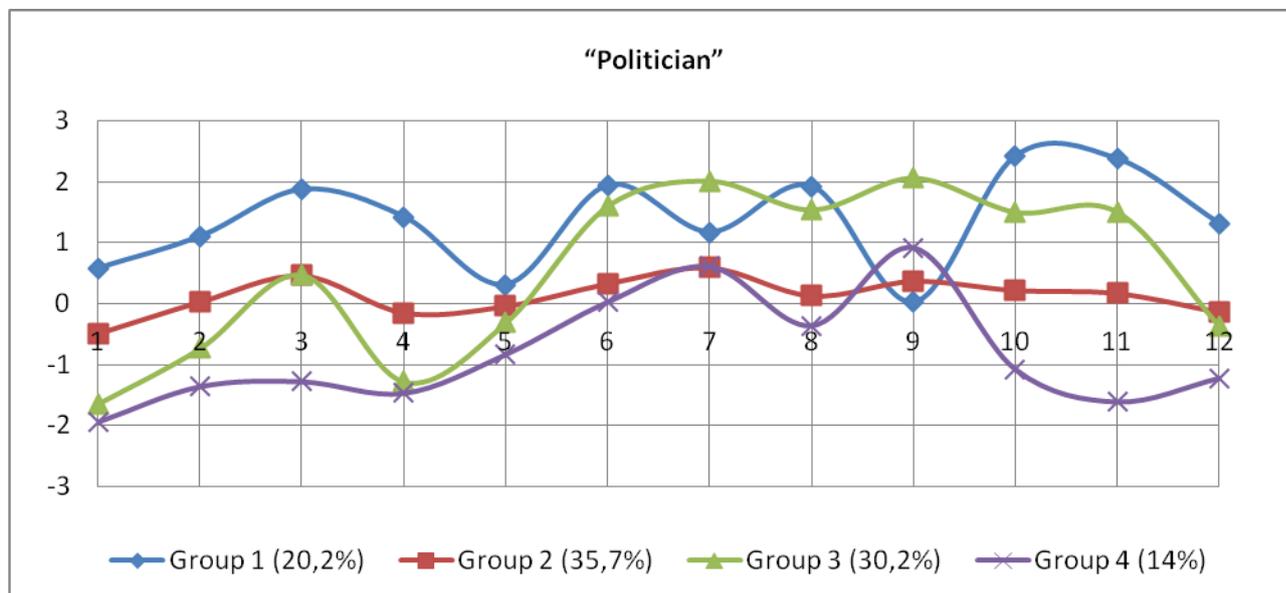


Diagram 17. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object "Politician"



The analysis demonstrates that these figures cause more likely contradictory feelings and evaluations, rather than accurate and homogeneous ones. As for the "Intellectual", representatives of organized civil society are split in two groups, which positions differ as for the degree of definiteness of the positive attitude. The range of evaluations in different scales is quite big, and it means that the perception itself is selective and multivalued. The majority of respondents are more likely prone to neutral evaluations, which attests to the fact that this position has no serious social capital to initiate solidarity actions. Although, any sharp negative attitude is not observed either.

The attitude to the "Politician" splits respondents into four groups, which per se means a high disintegrating potential of this "character" for representatives of the third sector. Unlike the clear and certain distinctions in the evaluations of the object "July 3rd", the contradictoriness of this position is reflected here. We see a group (20,2%) with unequivocally positive evaluations and a group with mainly negative evaluations (14%). The largest group (35,7%) unites people who provide the evaluations of approximately "0", i.e. the people who cannot precisely define their attitude. One more group (30,2%) is characterized by strongly pronounced, but inconsistent evaluations. Thus, the "Politician" happens to be such a controversial figure that will cause more likely wrangles and disagreements, rather than make it possible to appeal to common positions and perceptions.

The other evaluated "objects" also split respondents into groups, but this division has no inner interrelation. Thus, the evaluations of the "Political protest" and the "Public-political dialogue" allow us to split respondents in two groups. The attitude towards the "Political protest" is less polar — one group gives mainly neutral evaluations, the other one — rather positive evaluations, although not too high ones. The "Public-political dialogue" also divides the sample in two parts — two thirds of respondents perceive this strategy positively as a whole (although, they provide not too high evaluations); one third is inclined to negative evaluations (although, they are not too pronounced either) (See Diagrams 18 and 19).



Diagram 18. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object “Political protest”

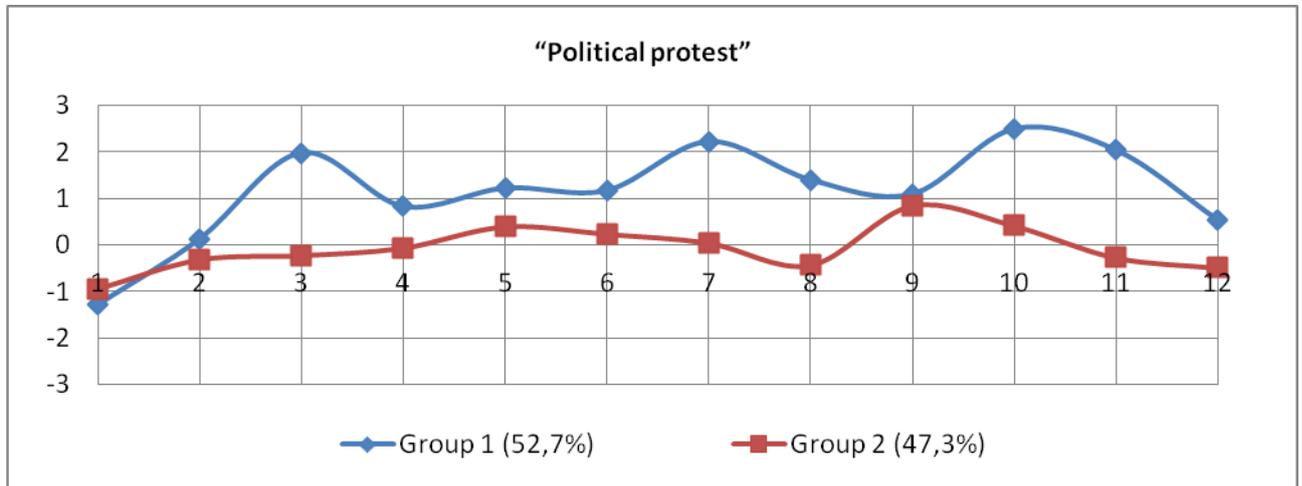
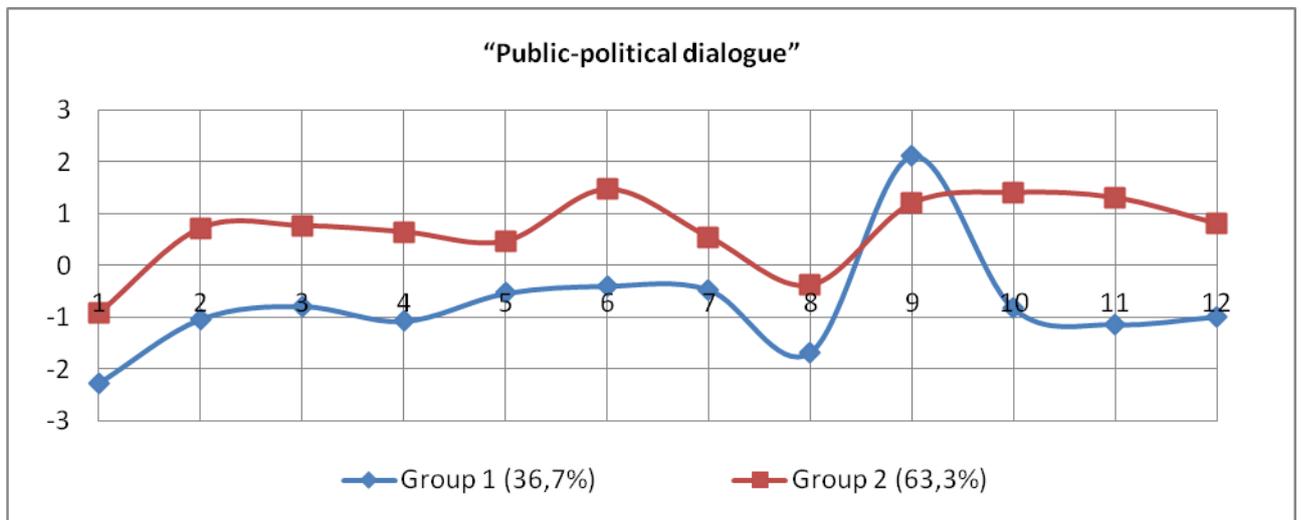


Diagram 19. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object “Public-political dialogue”



The comparison reveals that the “Public-political dialogue” possesses a bigger differentiating force. The “Political protest” is apparently perceived more unequivocally, but this unambiguity has average evaluations. It means that in reality the evaluations themselves can be extremely multifarious and antilogous and will not be within the pale of any systematic attitude.

The pair “Belarus” and “Europe” also allows us to have 2 clusters with the difference in evaluations in about one point. If in their attitudes towards “Europe”, among respondents, there are those who demonstrate their positive perception and those who are close to “0” in their evaluations (an indeterminate or ill-defined attitude), then the perception of “Belarus” is more antinomic and emotionally colored (See Diagrams 20 and 21).

Diagram 20. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object "Belarus"

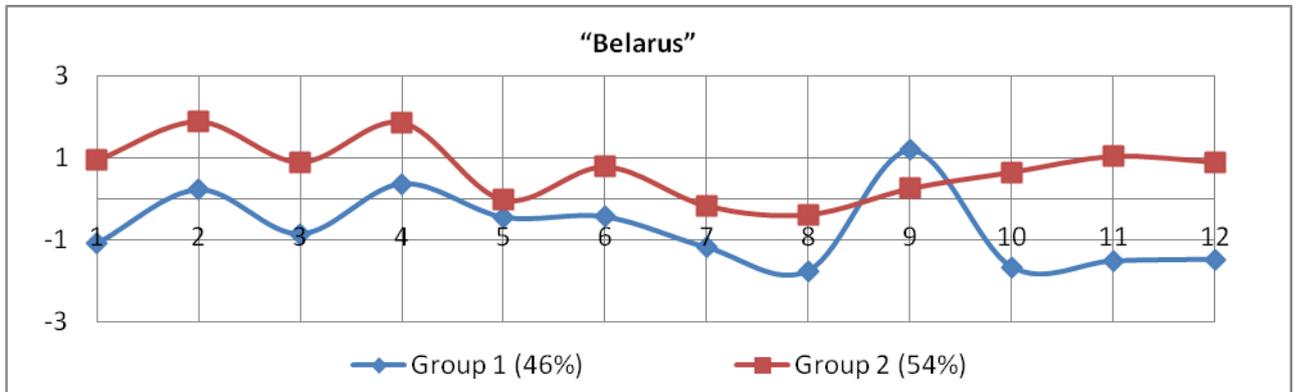
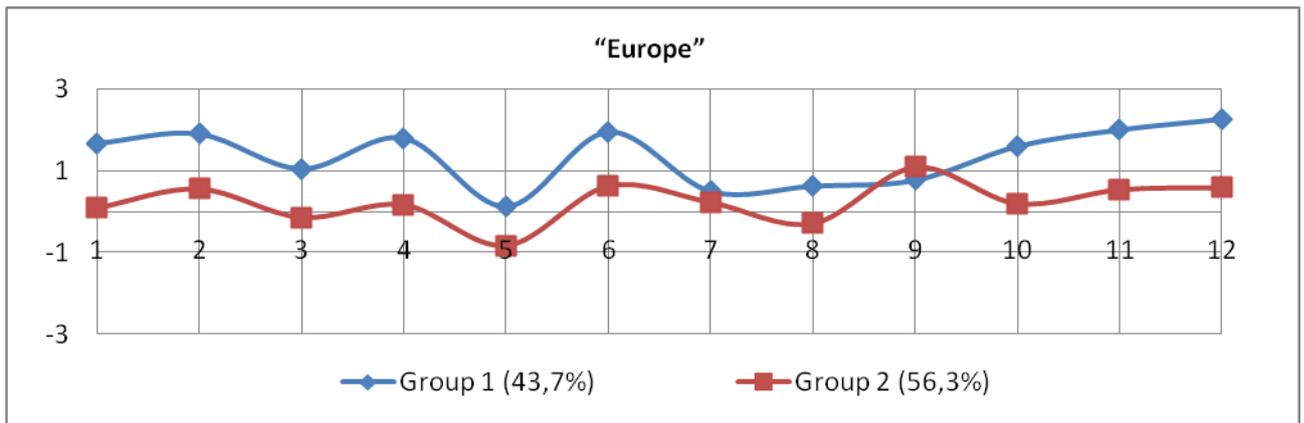


Diagram 21. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object "Europe"



The "Stability" and the "Human rights" have a differentiating potential as well. The "Stability" splits accurately enough all respondents in two groups showing their negative (39,4%) and moderately positive (60,6%) attitudes. Despite the "belonging" of this value to the discourse of power and its opposition to the "Human rights" in political rhetoric, only a third of respondents show their negative attitude. This value is perceived positively by the others.

It may seem that the "Human rights" value should unite all third sector representatives because it has the basic meaning for the very existence of the third sector. The appeal to human rights traditionally acts as a foundation of solidarity actions for this segment of society. Most likely, a direct question of the adherence to this value would receive unambiguous answers. However, at the level of non-conscious evaluations, we observe a disintegrating action. As for their evaluations, respondents divided into three groups. A small group (14,6%) provides openly negative evaluations and strikingly differs from all the others. The two other groups, each is about 40%, also demonstrate different attitudes: one — vaguely-neutral; the second one — manifestly positive (See Diagrams 22 and 23).



Diagram 22. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object “Stability”

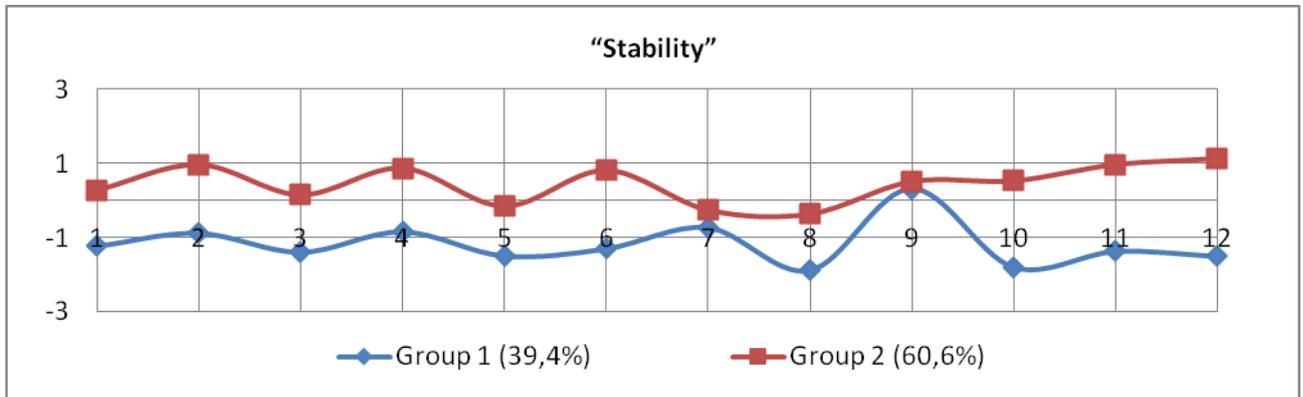
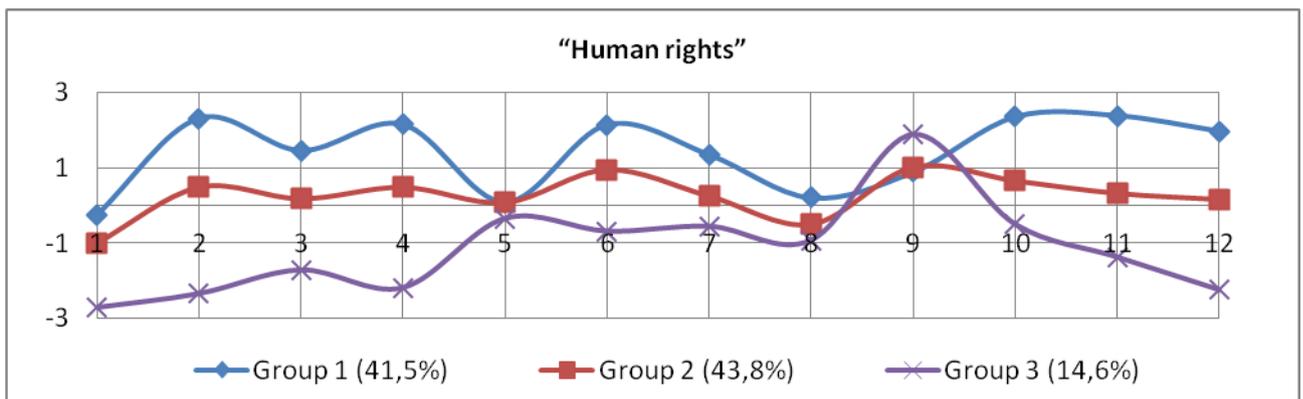


Diagram 23. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object “Human rights”



If to look as a whole at the range of the evaluations received by all “objects”, it is possible to see that it is the “Human rights” that cause the widest range of evaluations, which means not only the importance of this value (expressivity of its perceptions), but also the fact that it is perceived very differently. Hence, despite its obvious integrating contents, in today’s Belarusian situation, the appeal to this value will most likely give rise to dissent and disintegration, which are not rationalized though. Probably, the perception of human rights is marred by all complicated contexts of the existence of Belarusian organized civil society.

The social positions “Businessman” and “Official” also divide all respondents in two groups, and this section, just like in the case with the “Political prisoner” and the “President”, as a whole, is symmetric. However, if the attitudes to the “Official” split up very accurately (the majority reveals negative evaluations and only a third perceives the “Official” neutrally), then the “Businessman” is a more controversial figure. Here, one group provides very high evaluations as for a number of indicators, but when it comes to other indicators its evaluations are more neutral or even negative. The other group is rather close to neutral evaluations (See Diagrams 24 and 25).

Diagram 24. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object "Businessman"

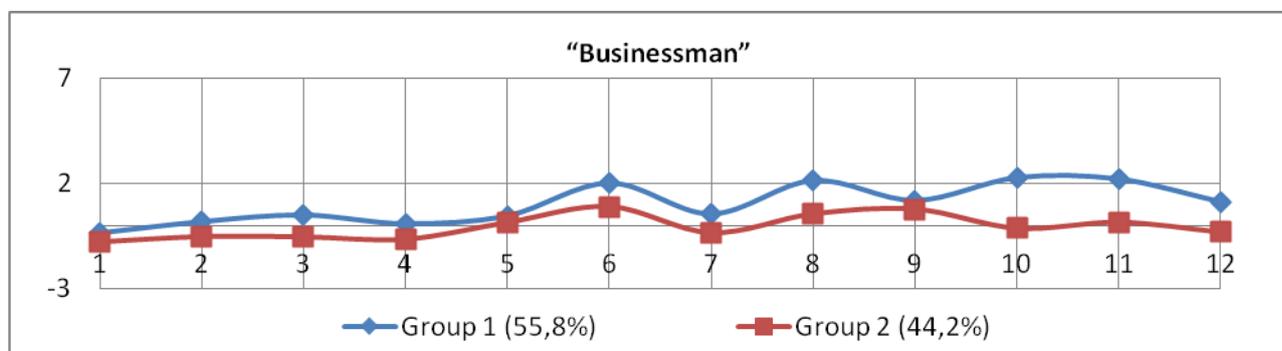
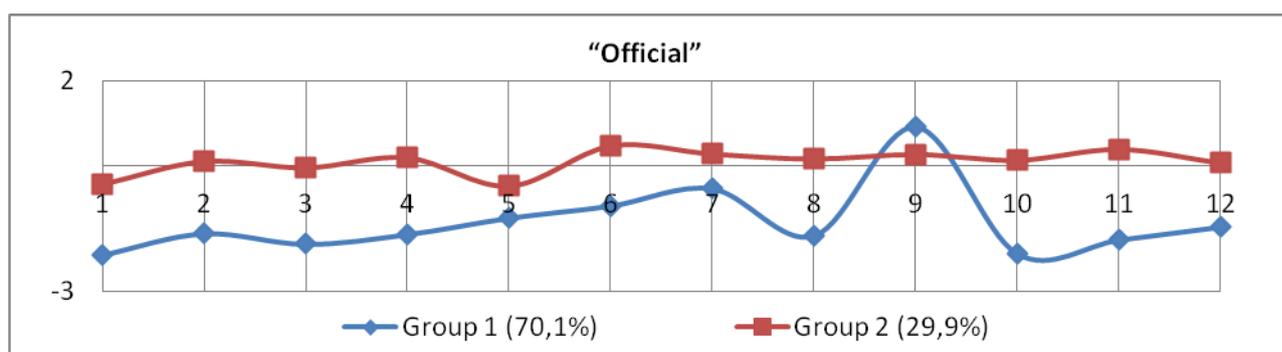


Diagram 25. Profile of the groups as for their evaluations of the object "Official"



Such a distribution shows that we can count on the solidarity of mistrust with regard to the "Official", while the "Businessman" has no sufficient positive potential and looks rather like a controversial and antinomial figure.

Summing up the results of this analysis, it is possible to say that none of the evaluated "objects" is perceived unanimously and uniformly by organized civil society's representatives. Some of them can stimulate more likely disagreements and misunderstanding, rather than support and solidarity. Each of the "objects" divides all representatives of the third sector in two, sometimes — into three (and in the case with the "Politician" — four) groups, which evaluations significantly differ from each other.

The biggest disintegrating effect is observed in the case with the "Human rights", the "Politician", the "President", and the two dates applying to be the main national holiday — the "July 3rd" and the "March 25th". It is obvious that these "objects" are filled most of all with various additional connotations and evaluations connected with the previous experience or concrete embodiment of the roles or carriers of values. This additional context sets the complexity and contradictoriness of their perception and makes it problematical to use them as solidarizing factors.

We observe the most consolidated attitude towards the following "objects": "Europe", the "Businessman", and the "Intellectual".

Three groups of potential solidarity among representatives of organized civil society

The carried-out analysis demonstrates that, on the one hand, third sector representatives see and evaluate quite differently the significant social-political values, events, and objects. This perception does not make it possible to speak about any stable bases for solidarity actions, which would root in the non-conscious, preconscious perception of the world and objects in it. On the other hand, we observe that in relation to each of the “objects” the general set of respondents splits into distinct groups, which perception is similar. Moreover, this division in a number of cases is interconnected. Thus, it is necessary to assume that there is some internal structurization among organized civil society representatives, which divides this set into several groups that, in their turn, have a high solidarity potential since they perceive and evaluate the complex of the significant “objects” of the social-political field in a similar way.

Having carried out the cluster analysis, we pinpointed three such groups (clusters)¹³. It is worth noting that the fuzziness of these clusters¹⁴ is approximately identical (0,35; 0,39; 0,33), i.e. they have an approximately equal degree of similarity of respondents’ evaluations. At the same time, the distance between all the three clusters¹⁵ is also almost equal (0,32; 0,27; 0,31). It means that if we place these clusters on the surface, they will make an equilateral triangle, i.e. the differences in the evaluations of the representatives of the clusters are approximately equal.

One of the pinpointed groups is the smallest (17,6%); it includes the people with the sharpest evaluations. Due to the contents of these evaluations, it is possible to call this group “**Politicized activists**”¹⁶. As for the majority of questions of the semantic differential, this group’s positions are not only the most strongly pronounced, but they also substantially reflect a high degree of political nature (politicization; politicizedness) in the perception of the world. As a whole, the semantic space (the space of meanings and values) of this group can be described as follows — on the positive evaluations pole there are the “March 25th” as a national holiday, the “Political prisoner”, the value of “Human rights”, “Europe”, and the strategy of “Political protest”. These objects are not only evaluated in a similar way, but also create a sui generis “complex” in the consciousness of these representatives of organized civil society, i.e. their meaning and importance are closely linked together in the perception of social reality. This complex is resisted by another pool of the “objects” representing, first of all, the

¹³ The cluster analysis covered 205 respondents; answers of 81 questionnaires did not participate in the analysis because of the refusal to evaluate at least one of the offered “objects”.

¹⁴ The indicator of a cluster’s fuzziness is “0” if all its points coincide (i.e. the cluster is reduced down to one point); it is “1” if all its points are at the maximum distance from each other — the distance that is possible due to the ranges of variables used during the clusterization.

¹⁵ The distance between two clusters is “0” if the clusters coincide, i.e. if it is one and the same cluster; it is “1” if the clusters are removed from each other at the maximum possible distance. It happens when each cluster is reduced down to one point, and these points are situated from each other at the maximum distance which is possible due to the ranges of variables used during the clusterization.

¹⁶ The data on the evaluations of each of the groups of all evaluated “objects” are in the end of this section.

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current Belarusian state — the “President”, the “July 3rd” as the Independence Day, the “Official”, and the value of “Stability”. The other objects fill the space between these two polar complexes. The “Politician” and the “Intellectual” gravitate to the first pole, supplementing its oppositional-European contents. “Belarus”, the strategy of “Public-political dialogue”, and the “Businessman” receive inconsistent evaluations, possibly, owing to the serious discrepancy between their ideal image and their implementation in the Belarusian situation.

Thus, this group includes the people who are potentially ready to protest, who positively perceive the values and symbols supported by the political opposition. The political involvement and activity of representatives of this group are proved and supplemented by the fact that they are the most regular participants of public support actions (“I participate regularly” — 44,4%, “From time to time” — 33,3%); they sign various forms of collective appeals much more often than representatives of other groups (“I participate regularly” — 77,8%), and they are active participants of protest actions (“I participate regularly” — 36,1%, “From time to time” — 47,2%).

The communicatory behavior of this group is also peculiar. In comparison with other groups, in their close circle (relatives, friends, colleagues), these people discuss more often the questions of European and world politics, human rights, and the political life of Belarus, paying much less attention to their personal and economic topics. They also use more often the newspapers and radio (Internet radio, most likely) as a source of the information on the life in the country. Representatives of this group use all the riches of the Internet and information possibilities more intensively: news web-sites, web-sites of parties and organizations, social networking services, and organizations’ mass mailing so as to watch the political situation in Belarus.

As for the social identification structure, this group differs from others, first, due to a high degree of its embedment in various social groups and, first of all, in the communities grounded on ideological and axiological bases. The biggest distinctions from other representatives of organized civil society are revealed in several cases. When it is a question of identification with people of the same nationality (52,8% “Often” identify themselves with representatives of their nationality, while the average share is only 33%). Also, they are ready much more rarely than others to identify themselves “with the Soviet people” (66% answer “Almost never”; the average share in the sample is 48%). Second, “Politicized activists” identify themselves more often than others “with those who share their political positions” (82,9% among them choose the answer “Often”, while the average indicator in the sample is 55,4%). A similar picture is with the distinctions in relation to the identification “with those who share their beliefs and points of view” — 86,1% among “Politicized activists” against 78,4% on the average. Also, it is possible to say that for them the identifications formed on the basis of the behavioral strategies are a little bit more important. “With those who do not wait for manna from heaven, but create their own destiny and life” they identify “Often” in 55,6% of cases (among all representatives of the third sector — 48%), “With those who have not lost their faith in the future” — 61,1% (against 54,4% on the average). Thus, the structure of social identification and the feeling of “We” confirms that this group is focused, first of all, on the ideological unity and that it is more ready, in comparison with others, to get solidarized on the world outlook and axiological bases.

Besides, this group significantly differs from others as for its degree of trust in various groups and institutions, which is revealed in its readiness to address to them in difficult situations or in case of infringements of civil and political rights. In such situations, they much more often than others trust in human rights defending and other public organizations (72% — in difficult situations in life, 92% — in case of infringements of civil and political rights; in the sample — the average indicators are 39% and 67% respectively). Also, “Politicized activists” are



more focused on the usage of public space — 50% (against respectively 38% and 39% in the sample as a whole) are ready to address to the mass media and the Internet in “difficult situations in life” and in the situation of “infringements of civil and political rights”.

Who is in this group from the point of view of social-demographic characteristics? This group is the most “male” among all others — the ratio of men and women in it is 70 to 30, while as a whole in the sample it is 55 to 45. As for the age, in this group, in comparison with the average in the sample, the age group from 40 to 54 years old is presented more strongly and, at the same time, people from 55 years old and more are presented least of all. Besides, it is the group with the biggest experience of activity in the third sector — despite the fact that among these people there are a lot of those who joined public work not so long ago, the average number of their “years of work” both in a concrete organization and in the sector as a whole is higher in comparison with other groups.

The distribution inside the group as for the status of a person in an organization differs much from the average in the sample — the share of “Leaders” in this group is almost 20 points higher. If to speak about the field of activity of organizations in which these people work, there are more organizations that work in the sphere of human rights, as well as those that work in the sphere of civil society as a whole.

Thus, among representatives of organized civil society, there is a group (less than 1/5 of the whole sample) that has a high potential of solidarization, experience, and readiness for joint actions in various forms. The semantic and descriptive reference points of such solidarity are the values of human rights, European orientation, and resentment against the existing state administration forms in Belarus and all symbols of the current regime.

Another one — more numerous group of representatives of organized civil society (38,5%) — can be named “**Skeptics**” (or “the Disappointed”) since it is characterized by a high degree of criticism in its attitude practically towards all the “objects” which were proposed for evaluation. The semantic space of this group gravitates to the center or even to the negative pole. Here, there is no polarization in relation to the evaluated “objects”; there is more likely deep skepticism, first of all, in terms of politically and oppositionally colored events, strategies, and persons. Thus, this group gives the “Political protest” strategy the most negative evaluations among all representatives of the third sector. The same negative evaluations are given to the “Public-political dialogue”, which leads us to the thought that they are disappointed in any forms of action. There is the same tendency concerning the two dates applying for the status of the main national holiday — the most critical among all is the attitude to the “March 25th”; the attitude to the “July 3rd” is not so negative as in the first group. Both “Europe” and “Belarus” receive the most negative evaluations in this group; also, there is a skeptical attitude to the “Human rights”. The evaluations of the “President” and the “Political prisoner” are close to those in the first group. It is possible to say that in this group there are obvious opponents of the current regime, but simultaneously there are not adherents of all values, strategies, and symbols proclaimed by the oppositional party; these are doubting and critical people. With regard to representatives of organized civil society, it can mean disappointment in the accepted ideals and patterns, at least, in the way they are being implemented in Belarus. The complexity of the situation leads to amphibolous evaluations of the values and guidelines, which seem to be incontestable for civil society.

The fact that this is a group of disappointed people is also proved by their experience of participating in various forms of solidarity manifestations. Thus, almost 50% of them participate with this or that regularity in protest



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actions (“regularly” — 11,8%, “Often” — 35,5 %) and public statements (“regularly” — 11,8%, “Often” — 31,6%). It means they are, most likely, still mechanically included in the activity, but they differ much from the group “Politicized activists” as for their perception of and attitude to it. In particular, the spectrum of topics the representatives of this group discuss in their close circle is considerably different from those discussed by the “Politicized activists”. As compared to the first group, the topic of salaries and price increase, as well as problems of their settlement, is much more important for them; they also discuss family and private affairs, as well as health, much more often. The intensity of discussions of political questions in this group is much lower if compared to the group “Politicized activists”.

As a whole, the “Skeptics” are inclined to identify themselves with various social communities to a lesser degree than the other groups. They demonstrate their weak identification with their professional community and fellow workers (in 35,4% of cases, while in the sample as a whole this indicator is 45%). Also, it is necessary to underline their weak identification with people of their nationality (only 20,5% identify themselves with this group “Often”, whereas on the average this indicator is 33%). Concerning the “We” feeling with people who share their ideological and Weltanschauung guidelines, this group does not stand out against the background of the whole sample; it is more likely that it (together with the third group) creates this general background. As a whole, here there is a quite high level of identification with people who share the same point of view (75,9% “Often” identify themselves with these people); 50% of representatives of this group identify themselves with those who share their political positions.

From the point of view of the trust in and the practice of addressing to various groups and institutions in case of difficult situations in life or infringements of their rights, the “Skeptics” slightly differ from the third group. They do not try to keep connections at a micro level either. Thus, in difficult situations in life, they are rarely than others ready to address to fellow workers, representatives of their professional community (32% against 43% as a whole), as well as a church or religious community (4% against 8%). In this group, we observe smaller trust in various institutions and communities.

As for the gender structure, as well as the age, the distribution in this group is similar to the distribution in the sample as a whole. In general, all social-demographic characteristics inside this group (including, a person’s years of work in an organization and the third sector as a whole, his/her status in an organization) are distributed almost similarly to that of the sample as a whole. The only thing that can be mentioned is that the majority of activists of environmental organizations are in this group.

Thus, this group of organized civil society’s representatives demonstrates the similarity of the guidelines and perceptions of social and political reality; however, in the least degree among others can this similarity be the foundation of solidarity actions with other citizens or activists. It is solidarity of doubt and criticism. It is possible to say that about a third of representatives of organized civil society will be extremely selective and skeptical, in case of appeals to wide solidarity, especially to solidarity in the political field (which has nothing to do with the concrete activity of a public organization).

The third group is the biggest (43,9%). It can be characterized as a compromise group, or the “**Inhabitants**”. In the space of the values, meanings, and evaluations of this group (semantic space), there is an attempt to combine the things that cannot be combined, to reconcile the values and symbols which, in particular for the first group, act as



polar complexes. Thus, the people in this group provide very close evaluations and perceive both “July 3rd” and “March 25th” in a similar way. In both cases, these evaluations are mainly positive, although the “March 25th” causes more contradictions. There is also an averaged-positive attitude towards the two different strategies — “Public-political dialogue” and “Political protest”, which are often opposed in public rhetoric. We observe the same thing when it comes to the values. Representatives of this group are a tad less positive than the “Politicized activists” in relation to the “Human rights”; however, they perceive the “Stability” with almost the same positivity. Also, this group has the most positive evaluations of the “President” and they perceive the “Political prisoner” even more positively. The analysis of evaluations of the whole complex of the offered “objects” makes us think that this group tries not to radicalize the position and to support everything that has any positive connotation. Unlike the second group, here there are no criticism and skepticism; there is more likely some equalization — “running with the hare and hunting with the hounds”. Such a strategy of forming the semantic field can be described as “philistine”, i.e. it tries to minimize dissonances and conflicts.

Such a definition of this group finds its acknowledgement in the data concerning the other questions. The topics discussed in the close circle of these people are similar to those in the group “Skeptics”. The only essential difference is that the questions of Belarus’ political life occupy a very insignificant place in this group, even in comparison with the “Skeptics”. At the same time, these people discuss culture and sports news more often. Television as the basic source of information plays a higher role for this group as compared to others; they use all other sources of information less intensively.

This group’s basic form of displaying solidarity is collective appeals and petitions (“I participate regularly” — 22,5%, “from time to time” — 38,2%, in the whole sample — 35,1% and 34,2% respectively). 25,3% representatives of this group take part in public statements and 16,1% participate “from time to time” in protest actions.

The “Inhabitants” are ready in a bigger degree than the “Skeptics” to identify themselves with various social groups, but this level is much lower than that of the “Politicized activists”. In the structure of their identifications, it is possible to pinpoint two social groups that distinguish them from others. First, they are slightly more often inclined to identify themselves with citizens of Belarus (35% answered “Often”, whereas for the “Skeptics” this indicator is 28%, for the “Politicized activists” — 29%). Also, they are more prone to identify themselves with people of their age and generation — in 39% of cases (while for the “Skeptics” and the “Politicized activists” this indicator is 21% and 23% respectively).

The group “Inhabitants” differs from the other representatives of organized civil society as for the trust level only when it comes to their trust in representatives of power. In difficult situations in life, in 12% of cases they are ready to address to local authorities, while among the two other groups this share is 5% (the “Skeptics”) and 3% (the “Politicized activists”). When civil or political rights are infringed, in 24% of cases they are ready to address to law-enforcement bodies, whereas in the other groups this level is lower: 16% — the “Skeptics” and 17% — the “Politicized activists”.

This group is the most “female” of all (the share of women in it is almost 10% higher than on the average in the sample) and the “youngest” (in comparison with the average indexes in the sample; here, the share of

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respondents from 16 to 24 years old is much higher and the share of those who are from 25 to 39 years old is a bit higher). Also, in this group, there is the lowest average index of the years of work in the third sector: 8,6 years, in comparison with 10,5 years in the group "Skeptics" and 13,6 years in the group "Politicized activists". Besides, in this group (the only one among the others), there are more "Beginners" in organizations than "Leaders". As for the profile of activity of organizations, these are, first of all, members of organizations working in the social and youth spheres.

Thus, we see that more than a third of representatives of organized civil society are similar in their orientation on depoliticization, in the acceptance of the existing circumstances in the Belarusian situation, and in the aspiration to seek for compromises by connecting different discourses and systems of values. It is obvious that the characteristics of this group are the closest for the population of Belarus as a whole, and it finds its reflection in the most expressed feeling of belonging to the community of citizens. This group may be able to manifest solidarity, but not "protest" solidarity; it is ready to display "yes" solidarity. Its sphere is, first of all, social services and assistance. Also, the form of solidarity actions should not demand much from these people.

Below are the data on the evaluations of all proposed "objects" in each of the groups (See Diagrams 26-39).

Diagram 26. Profile of the groups "Skeptics", "Politicized activists", and "Inhabitants" as for their evaluations of the object "July 3rd"

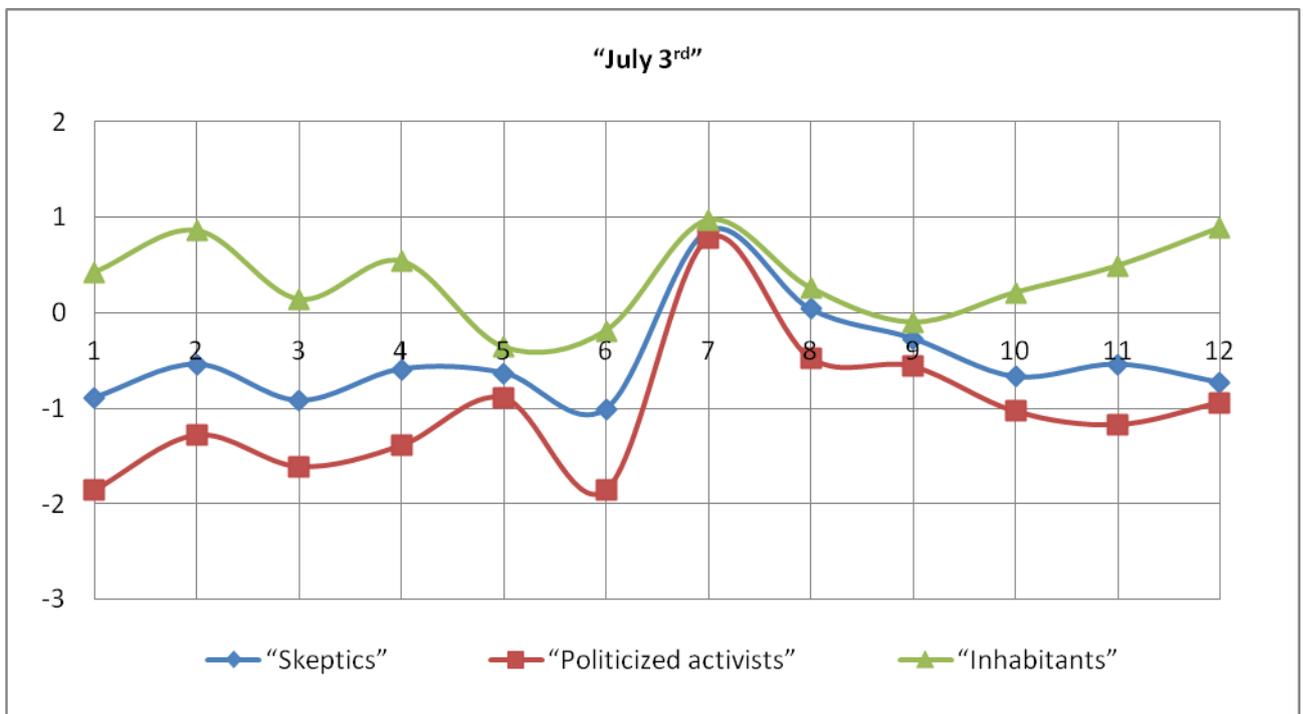




Diagram 27. Profile of the groups “Skeptics”, “Politicized activists”, and “Inhabitants” as for their evaluations of the object “March 25th”

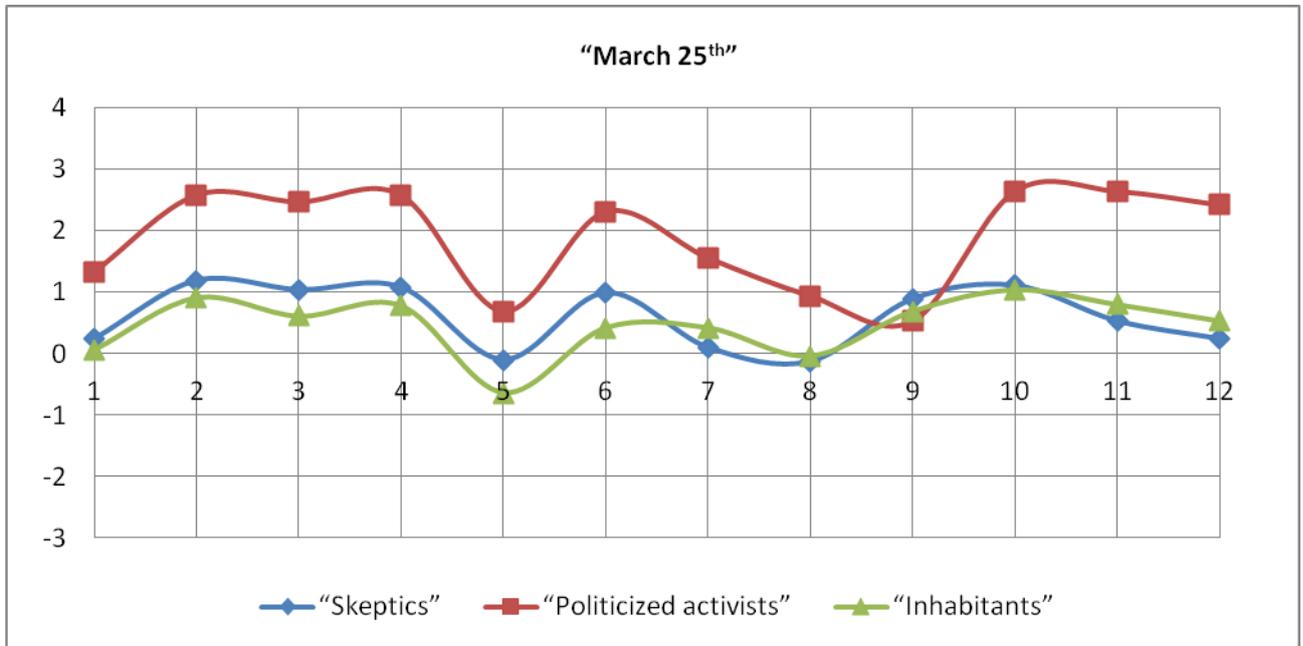


Diagram 28. Profile of the groups “Skeptics”, “Politicized activists”, and “Inhabitants” as for their evaluations of the object “Political protest”

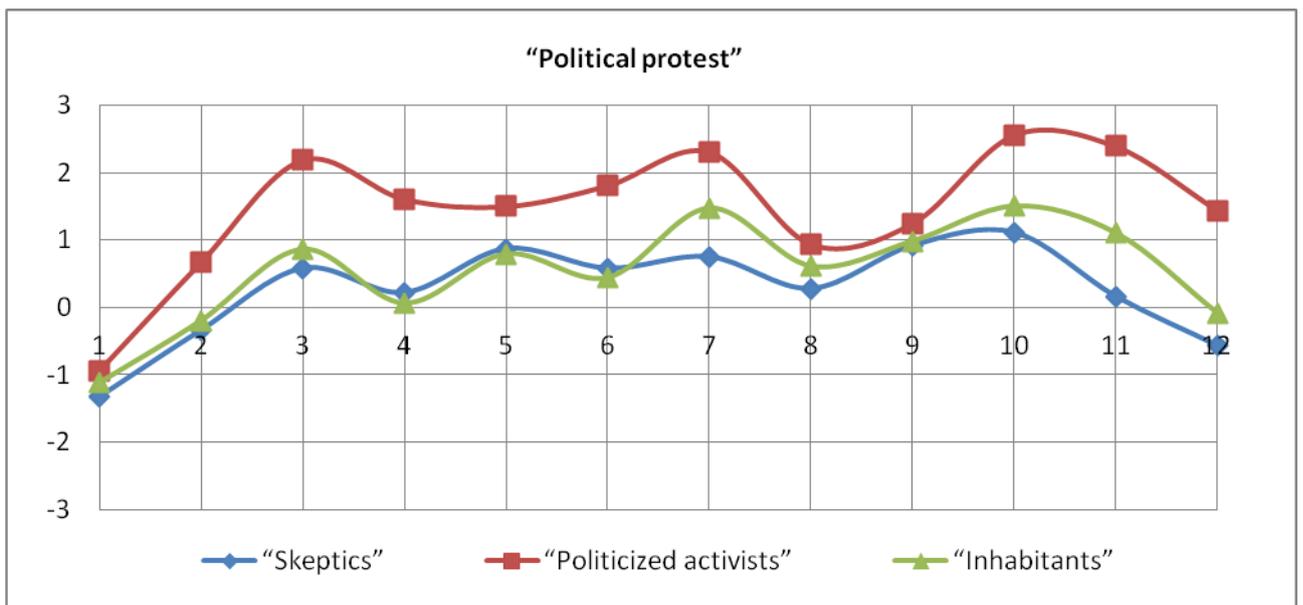


Diagram 29. Profile of the groups "Skeptics", "Politicized activists", and "Inhabitants" as for their evaluations of the object "Public-political dialogue"

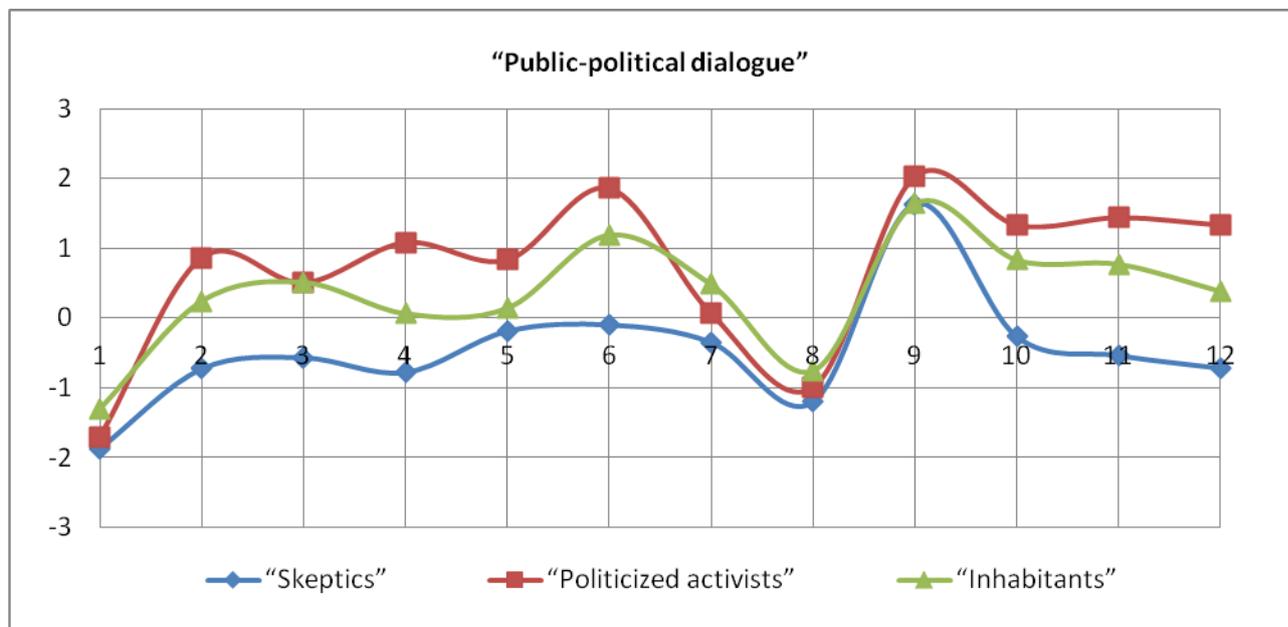


Diagram 30. Profile of the groups "Skeptics", "Politicized activists", and "Inhabitants" as for their evaluations of the object "Belarus"

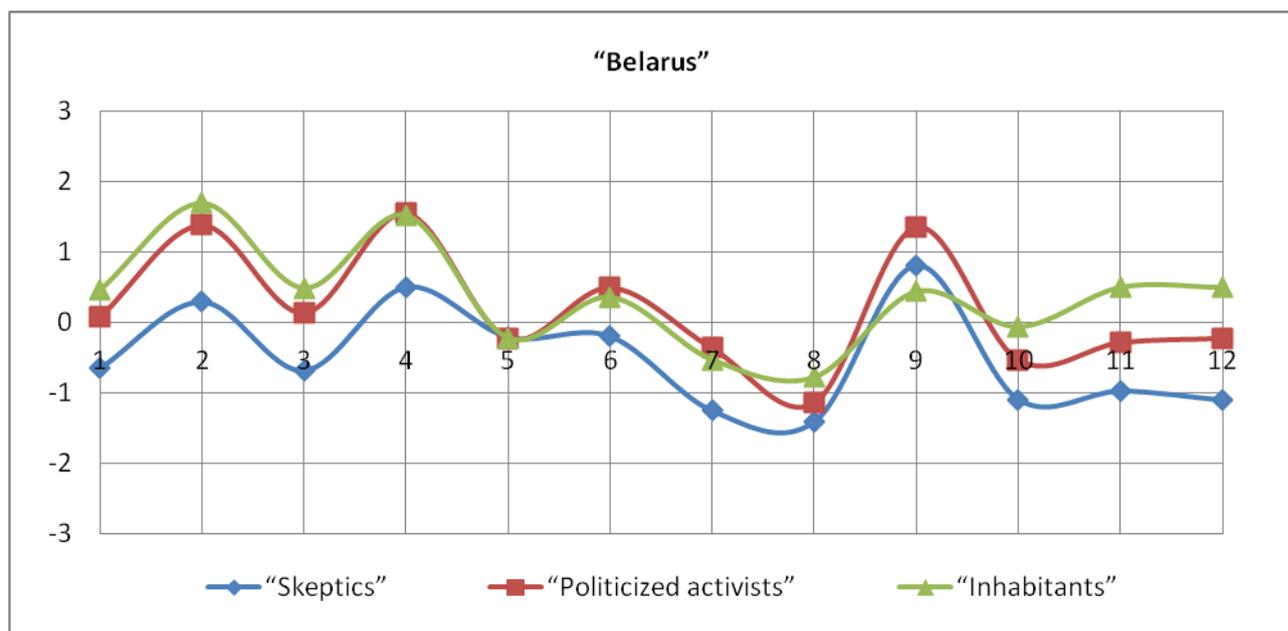




Diagram 31. Profile of the groups “Skeptics”, “Politicized activists”, and “Inhabitants” as for their evaluations of the object “Europe”

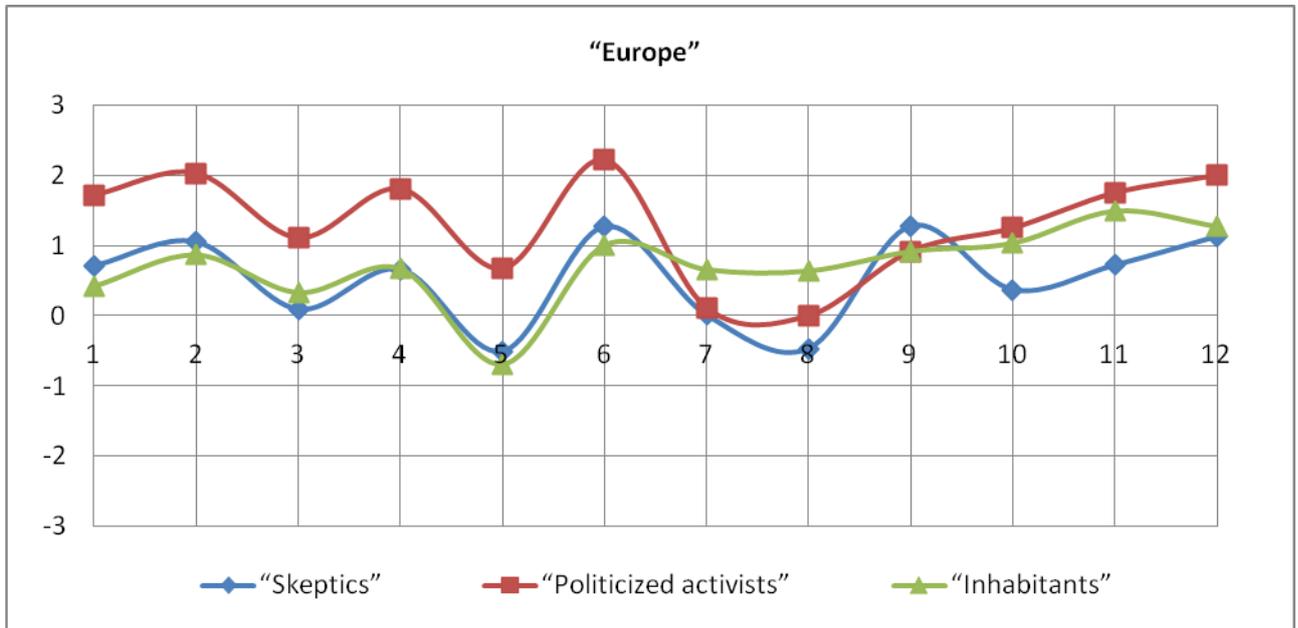


Diagram 32. Profile of the groups “Skeptics”, “Politicized activists”, and “Inhabitants” as for their evaluations of the object “Human rights”

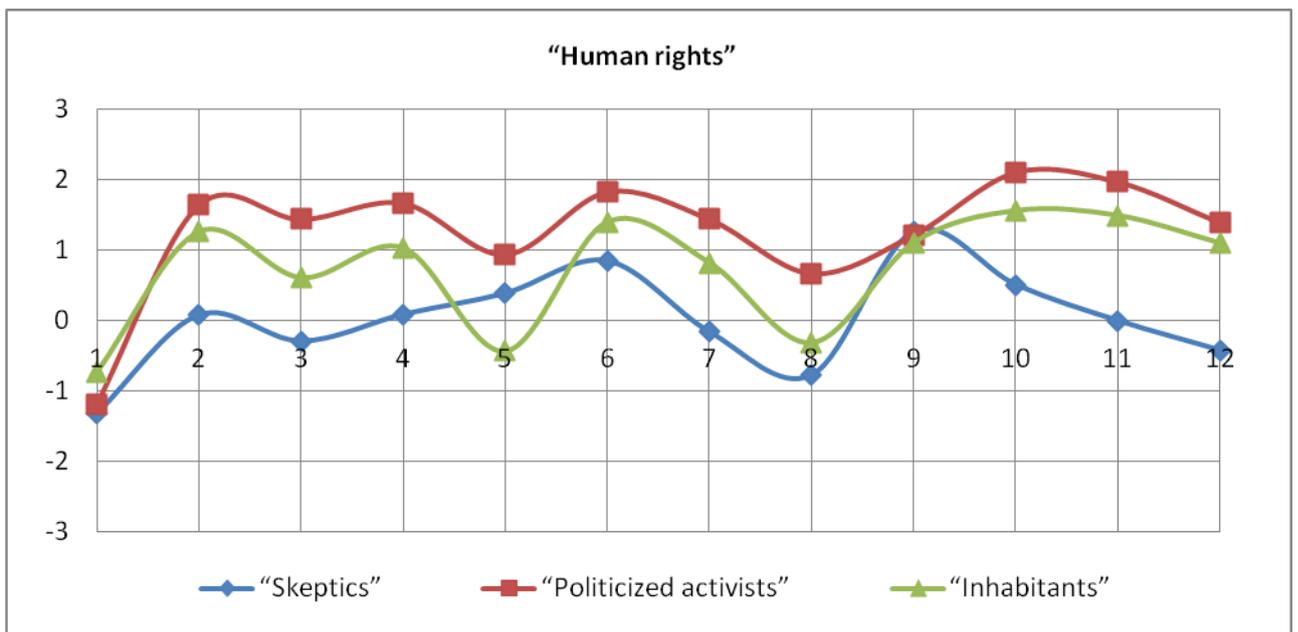


Diagram 33. Profile of the groups "Skeptics", "Politicized activists", and "Inhabitants" as for their evaluations of the object "Stability"

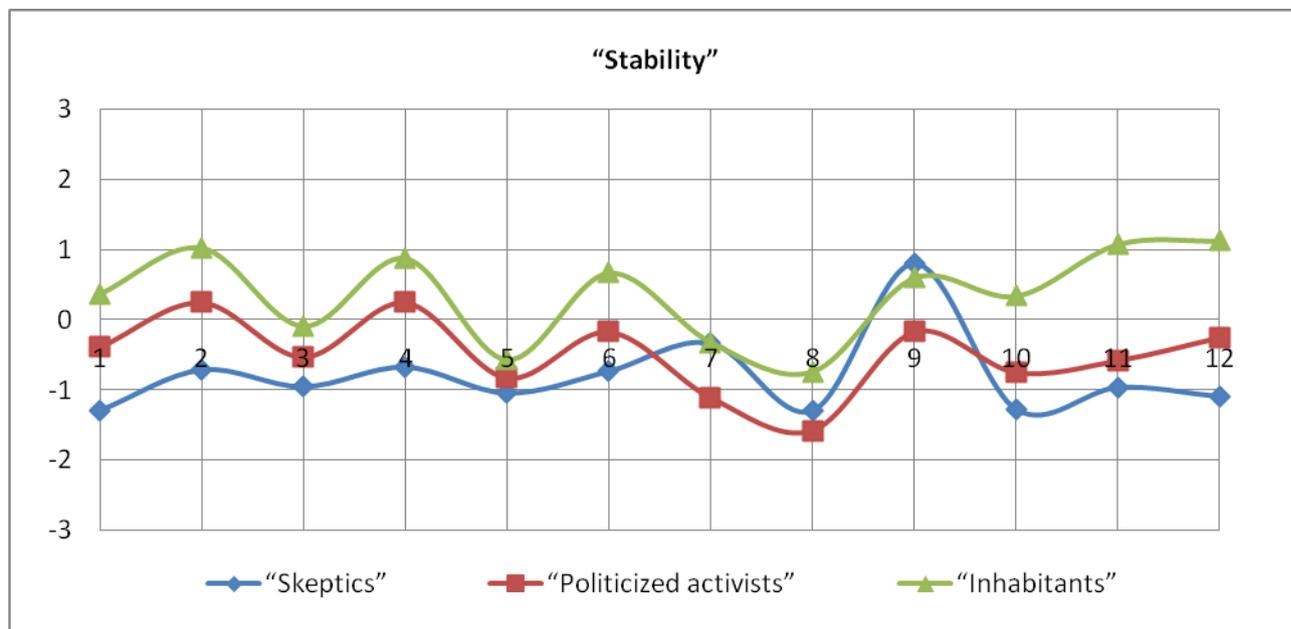


Diagram 34. Profile of the groups "Skeptics", "Politicized activists", and "Inhabitants" as for their evaluations of the object "President"

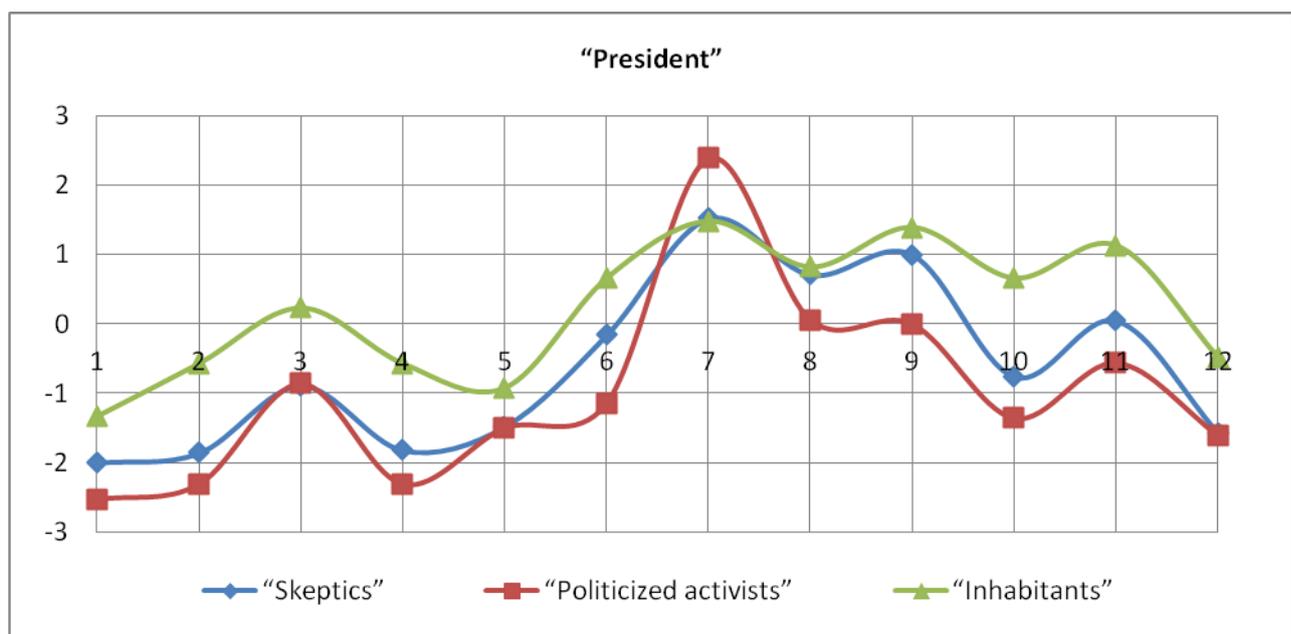




Diagram 35. Profile of the groups “Skeptics”, “Politicized activists”, and “Inhabitants” as for their evaluations of the object “Political prisoner”

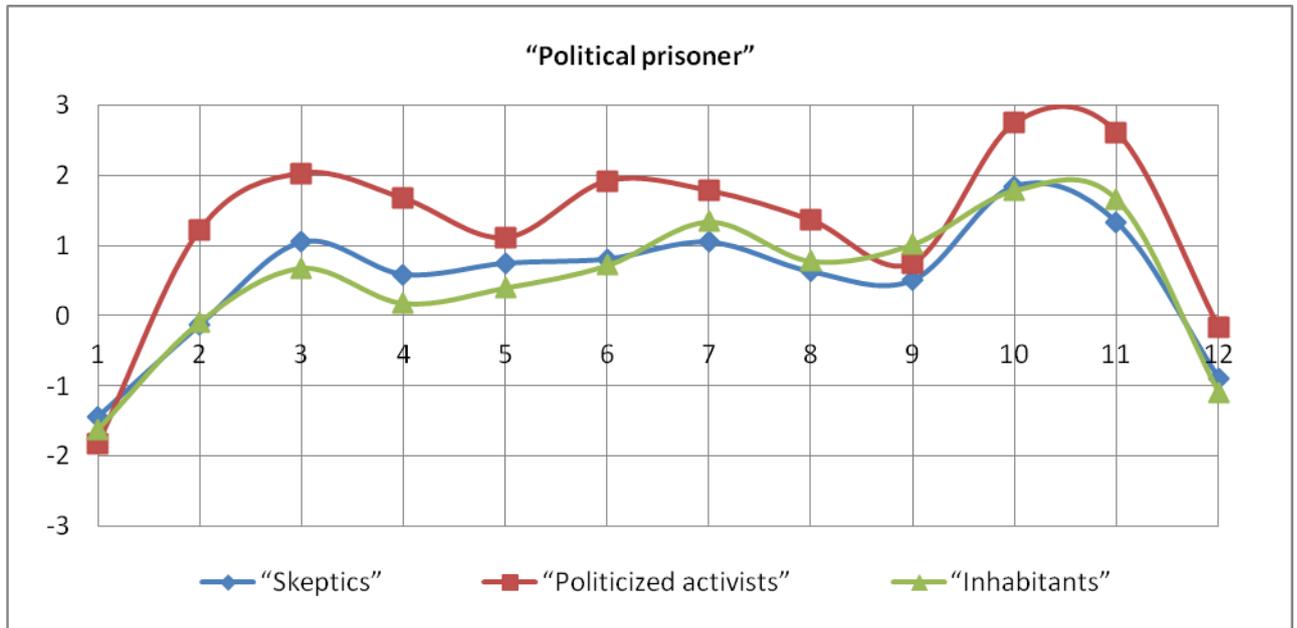


Diagram 36. Profile of the groups “Skeptics”, “Politicized activists”, and “Inhabitants” as for their evaluations of the object “Politician”

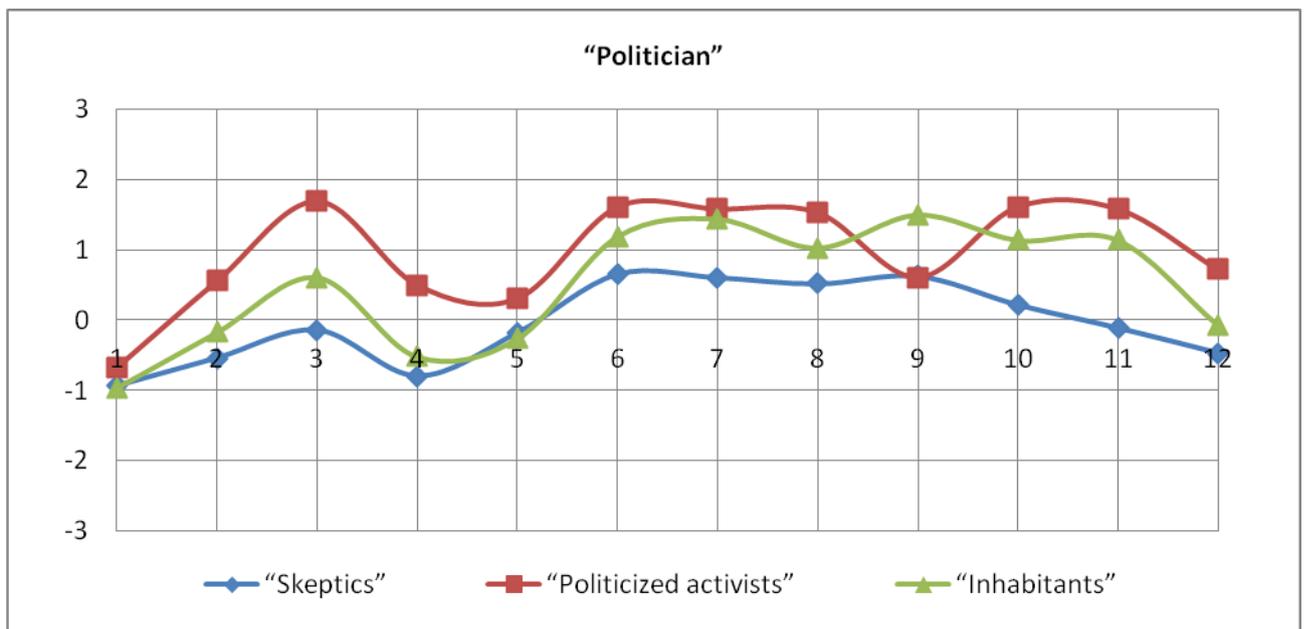


Diagram 37. Profile of the groups "Skeptics", "Politicized activists", and "Inhabitants" as for their evaluations of the object "Intellectual"

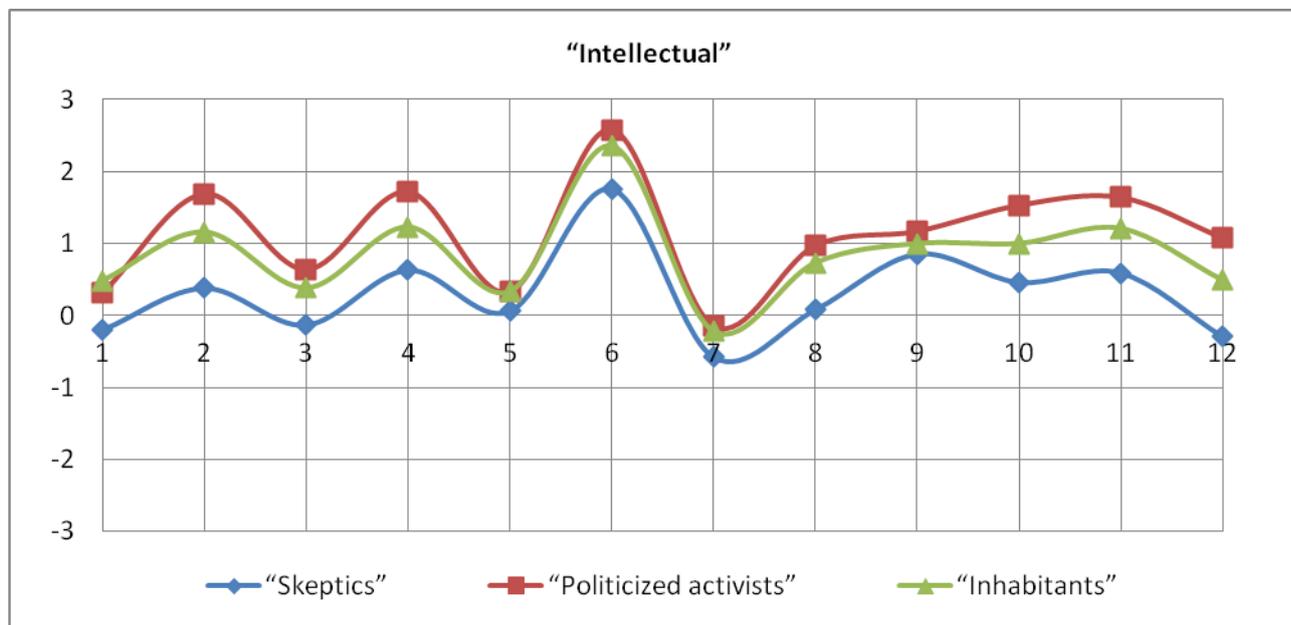


Diagram 38. Profile of the groups "Skeptics", "Politicized activists", and "Inhabitants" as for their evaluations of the object "Official"

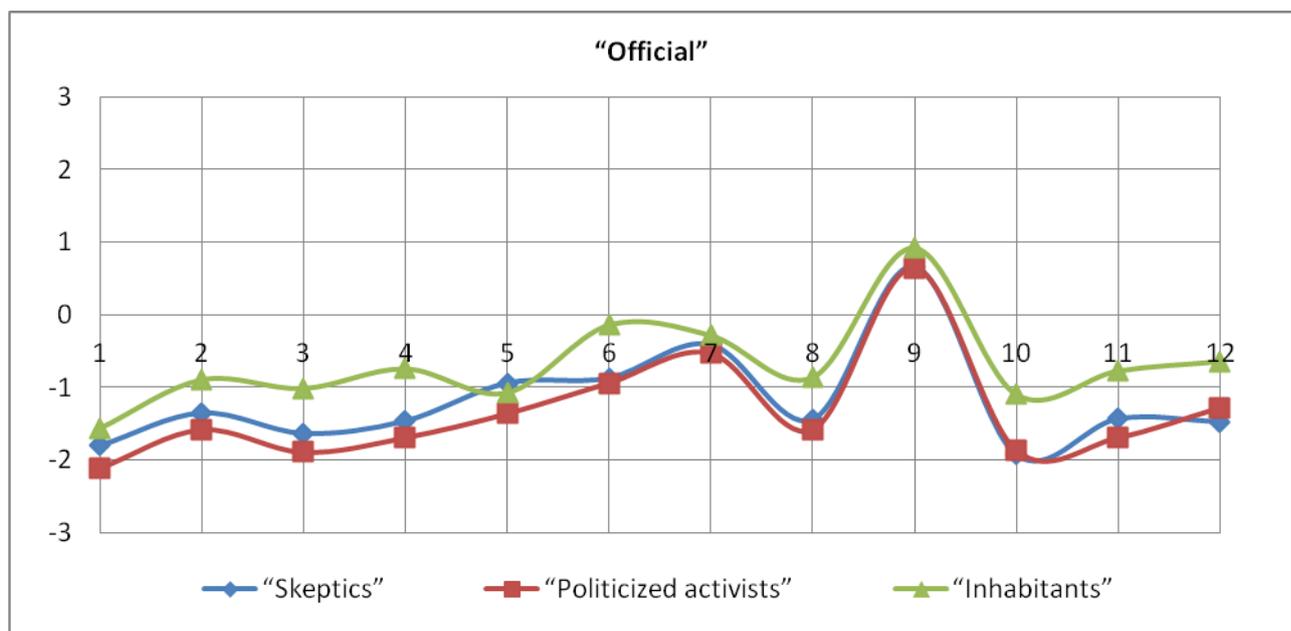
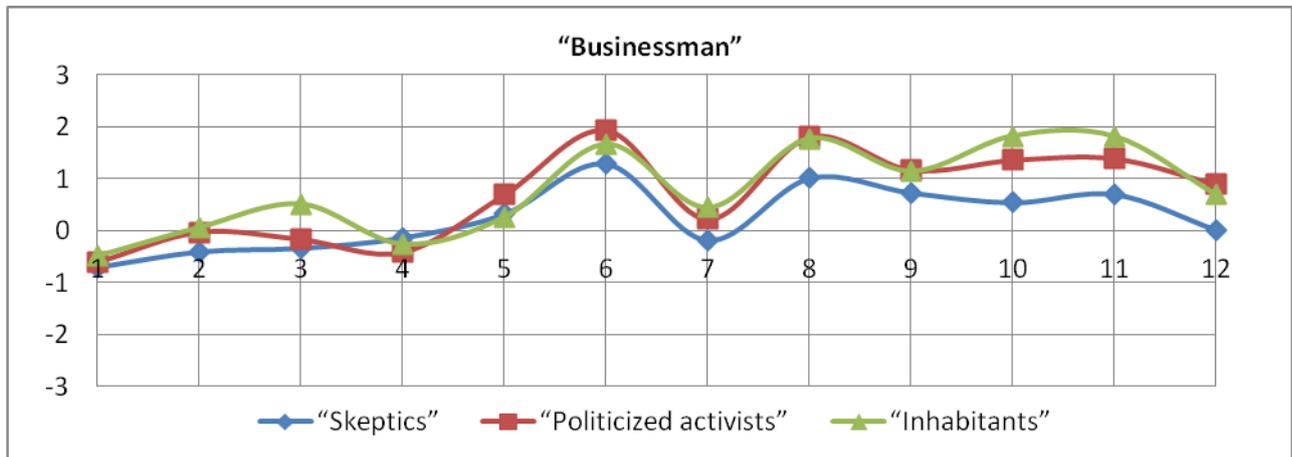


Diagram 39. Profile of the groups “Skeptics”, “Politicized activists”, and “Inhabitants” as for their evaluations of the object “Businessman”



Summing up the analysis of perceptions of the significant “objects”, social positions, values, and events, we can say the following.

At the level of subjective perception and presets in relation to the significant “objects” of the social-political field, the organized civil society of Belarus has no high solidarity potential. The system of categories and meanings, in which social reality is perceived, differs essentially, i.e. we cannot expect any spontaneous similar reaction and understanding that do not require special coordination and discussion. Each of the “objects” offered for evaluation steadily divides all representatives of the third sector into 2-3 groups, which perception significantly differs from each other. Some of such “objects” can stimulate disagreements and misunderstanding, rather than support and solidarity. The majority of symbols, values, and signs, which are used actively in civil action rhetoric, are full of contradictory connotations and evaluations that are disintegrating at the deep level, rather than promoting solidarization.

Inside organized civil society, it is possible to specify three various types of its representatives whose grounds for and potential of solidarity actions differ from each other. The small group has a quite accurate and polarized picture of the perception of events, persons, and values in the social-political field; it is ready with a high degree of probability to demonstrate solidarity in all forms of action. Still, it will not be understood and supported by most representatives of organized civil society, who do not want any politicization for various reasons as they are disappointed or try to avoid radical evaluations and actions. At the same time, the other two types of representatives will also understand and support each other with a low degree of probability because their points of view and self-determination in the current situation are based on different foundations. We observe the biggest propinquity of positions concerning the “Intellectual”, the “Official”, and the “Businessman”, but even though the positions are similar, the perception of these characters is not colored by vivid emotions, except for the “Official” who, obviously, can “count” on negative solidarity. Thus, the possibility of displaying solidarity actions even among representatives of the third sector has a low potential, at least, without specially forming connections and the exact message.

Grounds for solidarity actions: behavioral and communicatory strategies

In addition to the conscious feeling of “We” with various groups of people and the deep bases of the perception of the significant values and objects of public life, the potential of solidarity actions is connected with the previous experience of participating in them and readiness for these or those forms of support. Addressing to this component of evaluation of the solidarity potential, we consider forms and ways of demonstrating support and the way of action, which is being implemented in today's situation.

The research data show that for representatives of organized civil society the most widespread form of participation is the gathering of signatures for petitions and collective appeals. The gathering of donations and humanitarian aid is a tad less popular. Practically a third of respondents “have no experience” of participating in neither public statements, nor protest actions. Thus, we can say that among representatives of Belarusian organized civil society the most widespread option is the “safe” expression of one's opinion, which has nothing to do with active manifestations (See Table 21).

Table 21. Organized civil society representatives' experience of participating in solidarity actions, %

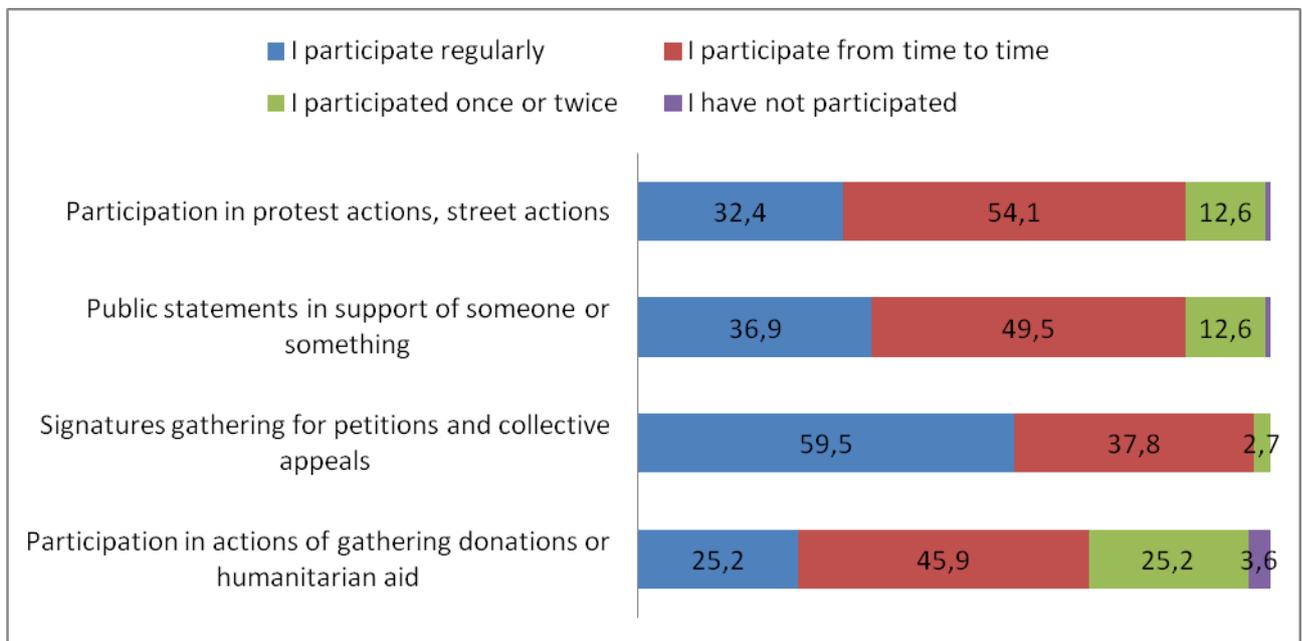
Participation forms	Participation in actions of gathering donations or humanitarian aid	Signatures gathering for petitions and collective appeals	Public statements in support of someone or something	Participation in protest actions, street actions
I participate regularly	13,6	34,3	17,1	14,0
I participate from time to time	38,8	33,6	28,0	28,0
I participated once or twice	28,3	17,8	18,9	16,1
I have not participated	14,7	12,6	31,8	37,8
N/A	4,5	1,7	4,2	4,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Among those who regularly participate in public statements and protest actions, there are mainly representatives of human rights defending organizations; representatives of organizations, which work in the spheres of ecology, national culture, and direct development of civil society, are rare. As for the age, the 40-54 years old group is the most active in all forms of solidarity actions, except for “donations and charity”, where a younger age group is in the lead — 25-39 years old. More than 50% of representatives of the youngest generation have no experience of participating in public statements and protest actions at all (52,8%).



Generalizing the obtained data with the help of the cluster analysis, we can notice two typological groups as for the forms of displaying solidarity they use¹⁷. The first group is 41,9%, the second — 58,1%. These groups have different strategies in their behavior. The first group — **“Those involved in solidarity actions”** — includes the representatives of organized civil society, who use all spectrum of forms of participation, to some extent regularly resorting to this or that one. Just like in the whole sample, their most popular form is public appeals and petitions; public statements and street actions are used actively enough, though to a lesser degree. The gathering of donations and humanitarian aid is least characteristic of this group (See Diagram 40).

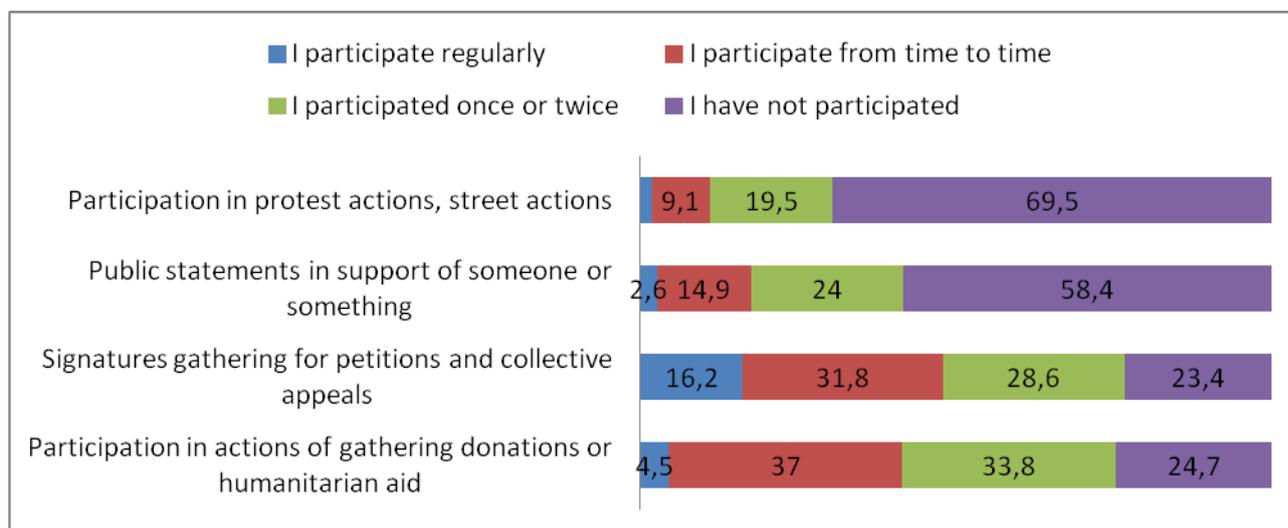
Diagram 40. Experience of participating in various forms of solidarity actions of the group “Those involved in solidarity actions”, %



The second group (58,1%) is more selective in its manifestations of solidarity. In particular, the most widespread way of its expression is the signing of collective appeals — it is done more or less regularly by a little bit less than 50% representatives of this group. More eloquent ways of displaying solidarity are not popular in general. Almost 60% respondents of this group have no experience of participating in public statements; about 70% — in protest actions (See Diagram 41). Being based on the used strategy, representatives of this group can be called **“Those participating selectively in solidarity actions”**. This group’s civil society representatives are concentrated on concrete actions of their organizations and do not expect any external support; they are seldom involved in public manifestations of solidarity with others.

¹⁷ 265 questionnaires participated in the cluster analysis; 21 questionnaires were eliminated because some questions were not answered.

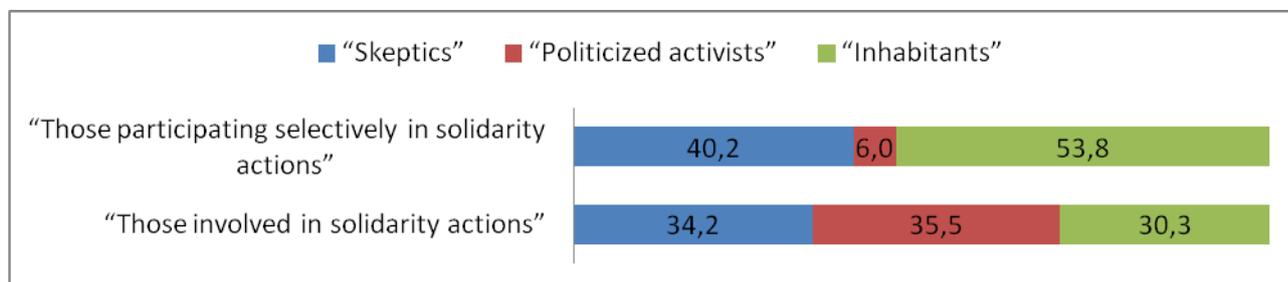
Diagram 41. Experience of participating in various forms of solidarity actions of the group “Those participating selectively in solidarity actions”, %



The two types of behavior described above are differently presented among “Leaders” and “Beginners”. Thus, in the group “Those involved in solidarity actions”, the ratio of “Leaders” and “Beginners” is 70,3% to 29,7%, whereas in the group “Those participating selectively in solidarity actions” — 39% to 61% respectively. It would be possible to say that the non-involvement in this case is connected, first of all, with the small number of years of work in organizations; however, considering the analysis presented above, it is possible to say that the number of years of work cannot be the only explanation.

We have compared the distribution in the groups on the basis of the semantic spaces (“Skeptics”, “Politicized activists”, “Inhabitants”) and the groups as for the experience of personal participation in solidarity actions (See Diagram 42).

Diagram 42. Representation of the groups “Skeptics”, “Politicized activists”, and “Inhabitants” among the two types of involvement in solidarity actions, %



The results demonstrate that the non-involvement in the variety of forms of active support is closely connected with the perception of the significant events, values, and positions by the “Skeptics” and the “Inhabitants”.

Among those who rarely participate in various forms of solidarity, there is the biggest number of the “Inhabitants”; there are many “Skeptics” as well. We can speak about a certain way of life and a way of action for more than 50% of representatives of organized civil society, which have to do with the disbelief or unwillingness to join any active forms of displaying supports that are beyond their direct interests and actions of their organizations.

The picture is supplemented with an analysis of respondents’ communicatory behavior. The role and importance of communicatory connections (sometimes stable and sometimes situational ones) constantly grows; the forms of uniting people around communicatory or network platforms are rather various and become quite often more significant (at least, in the sense of defining possibilities of social action) than more traditional and stable forms of uniting people (as for the territory, criteria of one’s employment and profession, one’s economic and social status, etc.).

The basic variables, on which basis it is possible to pinpoint communicatory strategies of activists of the third sector, are as follows:

- Topics and problems discussed in the close circle;
- Places of communication with adherents and opponents concerning Belarus’ public-political problems;
- Sources of information on the life in Belarus.

The results analysis shows a quite high level of actualization of public-political questions in respondents’ communicatory practices. Along with the traditional “philistine” topics of everyday intercourse (family and private affairs, salaries and prices, health), discussions of political life, of questions of Belarusian culture and national self-consciousness, and of European and global politics have rather high ratings (See Table 22).

Table 22. Level of actualization of various topics in respondents’ communicatory practices, %

What topics and problems do you discuss most of all in the close circle (relatives, friends, co-workers)?	% in the sample
Family and private affairs	59,1
Political life in Belarus	51,4
Questions of Belarusian culture and national self-consciousness	50,0
Economy and state administration in Belarus	47,6
Questions of European and global politics	47,2
Salaries and prices	46,2
Health	43,4
Questions of defending human rights and interests	39,5
Problems of development of one’s city, town, village	25,9
News of culture and sports	24,5
Environmental problems	18,5
Other	9,8

* The question was not alternative, i.e. it was possible to choose more than one variant of the answer.

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There are distinctions in respondents' categories ("Leaders" and "Beginners"), but they concern only several topics. Thus, "Leaders" discuss such themes as questions of European and global politics, defending human rights and interests, as well as economy and state administration in Belarus, more often than "Beginners", who prefer, as compared with "Leaders", the topic of salaries and prices. The degree of actualization of the other themes is approximately identical in both groups (See Table 23).

Table 23. Level of actualization of various topics in communicatory practices of different status groups, %

What topics and problems do you discuss most of all in the close circle (relatives, friends, co-workers)?	"Leaders"	"Beginners"
Questions of Belarusian culture and national self-consciousness	49,7	50,4
Questions of European and global politics	52,3	41,6
Questions of defending human rights and interests	44,3	34,3
Salaries and prices	42,3	50,4
Health	42,3	44,5
News of culture and sports	20,1	29,2
Political life in Belarus	59,7	42,3
Problems of development of one's city, town, village	24,8	27,0
Family and private affairs	59,7	58,4
Environmental problems	20,1	16,8
Economy and state administration in Belarus	53,7	40,9
Other	8,7	10,9

We see much more essential distinctions in the preferred topics for discussions in the close circle among respondents who implement different strategies of participating in solidarity actions. Those who use the whole spectrum of participation forms prefer "Political life in Belarus", "Questions of European and global politics", as well as "Questions of Belarusian culture and national self-consciousness" and "Questions of defending human rights and interests"; those who are selectively included in solidarity actions prefer "Problems of development of one's city, town, village", "Health", "Salaries and prices", as well as "Environmental problems" and "Questions of Belarusian culture and national self-consciousness". It is obvious that for the first group the topicality is in the political field and for the second group — in the social one. Also, there are distinctions as for the "territory" of their concern. "Those involved in solidarity actions" think more likely in the scale of the whole country, Europe, and the world; "Those participating selectively in solidarity actions" are concentrated on their settlement (See Table 24). This division can highlight different conceptualizations and practices of the active attitude towards the solution of questions in various spheres. One's preoccupation with local and social problems has to do with the limited forms of solidarity actions, which is probably based on the perceptions of the efficiency of these forms. Those, who are interested in political problematics and national scales, obviously, prefer the practice of using various forms of expressing their position and need solidarity within the framework of these forms.

Table 24. Level of actualization of various topics in communicatory practices of the groups with different degrees of involvement in solidarity actions, %

What topics and problems do you discuss most of all in the close circle (relatives, friends, co-workers)?	“Those involved in solidarity actions”	“Those participating selectively in solidarity actions”
Questions of Belarusian culture and national self-consciousness	58,6	44,2
Questions of European and global politics	61,3	37,7
Questions of defending human rights and interests	57,7	28,6
Salaries and prices	45,0	49,4
Health	33,3	50,0
News of culture and sports	18,9	30,5
Political life in Belarus	76,6	37,0
Problems of development of one’s city, town, village	45,9	70,1
Family and private affairs	19,8	17,5
Environmental problems	47,7	46,8
Economy and state administration in Belarus	5,4	5,2
Other	—	—

The analysis of “places” where communication on public-political questions is concentrated demonstrates that this communication is the most intensive in the circle of friends, then — on the Internet (forums and social networking services) and during public events, and after that — in the circle of fellow workers or students and in the family circle (See Table 25).

Table 25. Circles of communication on public-political questions in Belarus, %

Where do you meet like-minded fellows / opponents in conversations about public-political problems in Belarus most often?*	% in the sample**
In the circle of friends	76,2
On the Internet (forums, social networking services)	62,9
During public events (meetings, presentations, cultural events)	61,9
There where I work, study	59,4
In the family	51,0
In public transport, department stores, queues, etc.	45,1

* The question was not alternative, i.e. it was possible to choose more than one variant of the answer.

** The indicator was calculated on the basis of the two questions of the questionnaire: “Where do you meet like-minded fellows in conversations on public-political problems in Belarus most often?” and “Where do you meet opponents in conversations on public-political problems in Belarus most often?” with identical scales. The indicator represents a share of respondents who marked this communication circle as the one where they meet either like-minded fellows, or opponents, or both simultaneously.

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The circle of friends is not only the most intensive as for the degree of discussion of public-political questions, but also the most consolidated as for the points of view and evaluations: almost three quarters of respondents (71,7%) said that it is in the circle of friends that they meet like-minded people when it comes to these questions and only 22,7% face other points of view while discussing public-political questions with friends. The following circles as for the intensity of communication within the framework of the problems we are interested in are characterized by a much more balanced number of “like-minded fellows” and “opponents” (See Table 26).

Table 26. Balance of “like-minded fellows” and “opponents” in various communicatory circles, % per column

Where you meet ... in conversations about public-political problems in Belarus most often?	Like-minded fellows	Opponents
In the circle of friends	71,7	22,7
On the Internet (forums, social networking services)	42,7	49,7
During public events (meetings, presentations, cultural events)	46,9	32,9
There where I work, study	41,6	31,1
In the family	43,4	15,4
In public transport, department stores, queues, etc.	5,2	43,0
Other	3,8	7,7
I do not participate in discussions of this sort of problems	2,1	5,6

Let's notice that, as for the variety of reactions, the “richest” place of communication is the Internet — 29,4% respondents said that they meet both like-minded people and opponents there. On the second place as for this criterion is the circle of friends (18,2%), on the third — public events (17,8%), then — professional and family circles.

The difference between “Leaders” and “Beginners” is revealed in the higher intensity of communication for the group “Leaders” concerning almost all circles, except for the circles of friends and colleagues.

We observe essential differences in the communication circles that are mentioned by representatives of different strategies of participating in solidarity actions. Thus, “Those participating selectively in solidarity actions” meet opponents in the most close circles more often — among friends and there where they work or study. “Those involved in solidarity actions” meet opponents in public places more often — public transport, department stores, events, and especially the Internet. It can speak about various communicatory strategies in these groups. The former are more ready for difficult communication in close circles, or their closest circles are more diverse per se. The latter are more likely focused on their readiness to oppose in public spaces (See Table 27).

Table 27. Comparison of communication circles of respondents with different experiences of participating in solidarity actions, %

Where you meet ... in conversations about public-political problems in Belarus most often?	“Those involved in solidarity actions”		“Those participating selectively in solidarity actions”	
	Like-minded fellows	Opponents	Like-minded fellows	Opponents
In the family	45,9	13,5	41,6	17,5
In the circle of friends	73,9	15,3	68,8	26,0
There where I work, study	39,6	26,1	42,9	35,1
In public transport, department stores, queues, etc.	7,2	56,8	3,9	35,7
During public events (meetings, presentations, cultural events)	64,9	38,7	37,0	28,6
On the Internet (forums, social networking services)	48,6	64,9	39,6	40,3
Other	6,3	8,1	1,9	6,5
I do not participate in discussions of this sort of problems	—	0,9	3,2	9,1

Analyzing the obtained data, we can say that the two groups, which implement different strategies of participating in solidarity actions, can rely on different mechanisms of solidarization. “Those involved in solidarity actions” can stake on wider incidence. In spite of the fact that they meet a lot of opponents, the variety of forms and communication places allows them to count on the situational understanding, experience in discussions, and social capital. “Those participating selectively in solidarity actions” are focused on more “intimate” forms of support, which are based on personal contacts and a narrower circle of communication. At the same time, their communication circle is obviously more multifarious as for ideological and world outlook guidelines.

Along with communicatory platforms, the sources of ideas and information, which create the common space of knowledge, values, and guidelines, are very important as well. The most popular source of information on the life in our country among representatives of organized civil society is the Internet — 94,4% respondents marked it as such. On the second place, there is communication with friends and relatives (68,2%), and only on the third place — TV (45,8%) (See Table 28).

Table 28. Popularity of various sources of information on the life in Belarus

What sources of information on the life in our country do you use?*	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
Internet	270	94,4
Communication with friends, acquaintances, relatives	195	68,2
TV	131	45,8
Newspapers, magazines	113	39,5
Radio	36	12,6
Official information there where I work, study	25	8,7
Other	9	3,1

* The question was not alternative, i.e. it was possible to choose more than one variant of the answer.

The data on the use of the Internet among third sector activists confirms its value as the basic source of information — 89,2% respondents underlined that they use the Internet every day; 7,7% — from time to time (See Table 29).

Table 29. Frequency of Internet usage among respondents

Do you use the Internet?	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
Yes, every day	255	89,2
Yes, from time to time	22	7,7
No, I do not use it	6	2,1
I do not know what the Internet is	1	0,3
N/A	2	0,7

In order to stay *AU COURANT* with the latest developments in the country, the overwhelming majority of organized civil society's activists use news web-sites (88,1%), the second place is occupied predictably by social networking services (59,8%). The role of the mass mailing of news and that of web-sites of parties and organizations is approximately the same — about a third of respondents called them an information source (See Table 30).

Table 30. Use of various sources of public-political information in the Internet

What sources of information on the Internet do you use most of all so as to stay au courant with the public-political life in Belarus?*	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
News web-sites	252	88,1
Social networking services	171	59,8
News and organizational mass mailing	108	37,8
Web-sites of parties or organizations	96	33,6
I use other sources of information, not the Internet	15	5,2
I am not interested in the public-political life in Belarus	9	3,1
N/A	5	1,7

* The question was not alternative, i.e. it was possible to choose more than one variant of the answer.

In the cumulative rating of the web-sites that respondents use, the absolute leadership belongs to the web-site *TUT.BY*; the second and third places are shared with almost the identical result by *Charter'97* and *Nasha Niva* (See Table 31).

Table 31. Cumulative rating of the web-sites that respondents use to stay au courant with the public-political life in Belarus

Web-sites*	Rating, %**
TUT.BY	42,0
Charter'97	26,2
Nasha Niva	25,9
Belarusian Partisan	18,1
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty — Belarus Service	16,1
Belarusian News	15,0
Human Rights Center "Viasna" ("Spring")	8,0

EuroBelarus.Info	8,0
Belarusan People's Front	5,2
United Civic Party	5,2
BelaPAN	4,2
Onliner.by	3,5
Alternative Youth Platform	3,4
Lenta.ru	3,1
Movement "For Freedom"	3,1

* In the table, there are the web-sites that have more than 3% of mentions.

** The cumulative rating is based on the results of two questions of the questionnaire, in which respondents were asked to name news web-sites and web-sites of parties and organizations, which they visit most of all to stay au courant with the latest developments in Belarus. Each web-site named in the answer to at least one of these questions in the questionnaire received one point; one point was given to the web-sites, which were mentioned in one questionnaire twice. Thus, the rating shows the number of respondents who mentioned at least once this or that web-site as a source of public-political information.

Social networking services (SNS) are the following significant source of public-political information for third sector activists. The absolute leader in this rating is Facebook; almost half as many respondents use VKontakte (VK.com); then there are Twitter, Odnoklassniki (OK.ru), and LiveJournal (See Table 32).

Table 32. Rating of the SNS that respondents use to stay *AU COURANT* with the public-political life in Belarus

SNS*	Rating, %
Facebook	47,6
VKontakte (VK.com)	27,3
Twitter	6,6
Odnoklassniki (OK.ru)	5,6
LiveJournal	1,4

* The table presents the percent of the total number of respondents; the share of those who did not answer this question is 40,2% (these are basically those who do not use SNS as a source of public-political information). In total, respondents mentioned 9 social networking services; the table presents only those that have more than 1% mentions.

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As for representatives of different behavioral strategies of participating in solidarity actions, the information sources on the Internet are distributed in an indicative way — “Those involved in solidarity actions” are not only more included in communication, but also gather the information, which is presented by their own structures or the sector’s ones, much more often. Thus, it is possible to say that, despite the big involvement in public communication, those who actively use different forms of solidarity receive more unequivocal, ideologically close information. “Those participating selectively in solidarity actions” probably have a more diverse circle of receiving information, ideas, and guidelines (See Table 33).

Table 33. Use of sources of public-political information on the Internet in the groups with different experiences of participating in solidarity actions, %

What sources of information on the Internet do you use most of all so as to stay au courant with the public-political life in Belarus?	“Those involved in solidarity actions”	“Those participating selectively in solidarity action”
News web-sites	94,4	88,8
Social networking services	74,1	51,3
News and organizational mass mailing	53,7	28,9
Web-sites of parties or organizations	43,5	28,3
I use other sources of information, not the Internet	7,4	2,6
I am not interested in the public-political life in Belarus	0,9	4,6

Summing up the analysis of the behavioral and communicatory strategies, it is necessary to highlight the following.

The space of solidarity actions concentrates more and more in the virtual world (social networking services, web-sites, etc.). It is the most convenient form of communication and interaction with opponents and adherents; it is also the most convenient space to manifest solidarity. According to this space, the most widespread form of solidarity actions is collective appeals and petitions.

Other forms of solidarity manifestations (street actions, public statements, and donations) have a lower potential — they are popular only among certain layers of organized civil society.

There are two types of the behavioral and communicatory strategies. The first strategy (“Involvement in solidarity actions”) is based on the pro-active practice of various kinds of solidarity manifestations, orientation on public communication, and readiness for discussions with a wide range of opponents. It presupposes the active use of trusted sources, has mainly a national scale, and is focused on wider political processes. This strategy is characteristic of less than 50% representatives of the third sector who are concentrated in the organizations that work with topics of human rights and development of civil society, sometimes — ecology and Belarusan culture. The second strategy (“Selective participation in solidarity actions”) is inherent, first of all, in representatives of the organizations that work with various social themes (youth, education, sustainable development, and social problems). This strategy is built on selective involvement in solidarity actions, which are thematically and territorially limited by a city, social group, etc. The communicatory practice of this group is more focused on the

close circle which, unlike the first type, is more diverse and includes people with different points of views and guidelines.

These two types can count on different types of solidarity: “Those involved in solidarity actions” — on the exact public message and short-term readiness to support the circle of the people who are constantly present in the public space; “Those participating selectively in solidarity actions” — on closer and long-term involvement in the solution of local problems concerning a rather narrow circle of people. However, in both cases, it is possible to rely most of all on support in the form of signing collective appeals.

Factors and possibilities to mobilize the solidarity potential

In spite of the fact that the previous analysis has demonstrated rather a limited solidarity potential even in the environment of organized civil society, it is important to review the possibilities that it would be possible to lean on in order to use what is available. What can turn the potential into real actions and support? Here, possibilities to lean on authorities (opinion leaders) will be considered. We shall also address again to evaluations of the “objects” in the semantic space so as to define whether it is possible to use them in order to mobilize the available potential.

As authorities (opinion leaders) for third sector representatives, we shall review those who can define the common agenda and suggest situation assessments and strategies of actions:

- Experts whose opinions are listened to;
- Leaders whose actions are taken into account;
- Journalists or bloggers who can form public opinion on certain questions.

We asked respondents to name experts, leaders, and journalists whom they are guided by and then to name “opinion leaders” in Belarusan society¹⁸.

The research results demonstrate that in the Belarusan third sector there are a lot of leaders able to mobilize the solidarity potential, or that (which is, as a matter of fact, the same) there are no such people. Before a detailed description, we shall mark two general moments revealed in the answers to all questions of this block:

- 1) Answering all questions on authorities (public-political figures, experts, journalists, and opinion leaders), almost 50% respondents (from 47,6% to 56,6%) could not call any name or chose the variant “No such people”. It means that for half the activists of public organizations there are no personal reference points either among experts, or in the media, or public-political field;
- 2) As a result, the questions on authorities were answered only by half the respondents; still, the lists with the written surnames for each question are quite big — from 87 to 126 positions. The highest rating is 12,6%. The analysis of the answers shows that respondents quite often named one and the same person while answering all these questions, i.e. they think that this one and the same person (it concerned most often the leader of an organization, but not only) acts as a public-political figure, as an analyst and an expert, and as a journalist or a blogger whose publications are taken into account.

The biggest number of various names, with the least value of the maximum rating, was collected by the question on public-political leaders. Out of 126 names, only 14 gathered more than 1% of mentions. Positions of “leaders”

¹⁸ Open questions were used, i.e. respondents themselves wrote all names and did not choose from the list.

in this list are so close that it makes almost no sense to pinpoint the first, the second, and the third rating places (See Table 34).

Table 34. The most popular public figures and politicians among respondents

Among Belarusian public figures or politicians, is there someone whom you are guided by in your actions? If yes, name them:*	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
Ales Bialiatski	19	6,6
Aliaksandr Milinkevich	18	6,3
Ulad Vialichka	15	5,2
Mikola Statkevich	15	5,2
Uladzimir Matskevich	14	4,9
Zianon Pazniak	9	3,1

* In total, 126 names were mentioned; the “No such people” variant was chosen by 51,7% respondents. The table presents the names that received more than 3%.

Respondents designate leaders more distinctly when it comes to journalists and bloggers whose publications are third sector representatives’ subject of attention. Sviatlana Kalinkina, who received 12,6% of mentions in the answer to this question, is the leader if compared to all other names in this list (See Table 35).

Table 35. Belarusian journalists and bloggers’ rating of popularity among respondents

Among Belarusian journalists and bloggers, is there someone whom you always read and whose materials you are interested in? If yes, name them:*	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
Sviatlana Kalinkina	36	12,6
Valery Karbalevich	13	4,5
Uladzimir Matskevich	13	4,5
Aliaksandr Klaskouski	10	3,5
Evgeny Lipkovich	10	3,5
Viktar Malishevsky	9	3,1

* In total, 87 names were mentioned; the “No such people” variant was chosen by 56,6% respondents. The table presents the names that received more than 3%.

It was quite unexpected to see an impressive list of the people named by respondents as experts and analysts whose opinions and forecasts they trust. Against constant statements on the Belarusian analytical and expert community’s backwardness, the list of 90 persons looks more than encouragingly. Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of these “analysts and experts” are authorities for 1-2 persons — often are they representatives of these persons’ organization; the opinions of the most popular person in this list — Uladzimir Matskevich — are trusted by less than 1/10 of pollees (See Table 36).

Table 36. Rating of Belarusian experts and analysts among respondents

Name, please, Belarusian experts or analysts whose opinions, assessments, and forecasts you trust most of all*	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
Uladzimir Matskevich	26	9,1
Valery Karbalevich	17	5,9
Serge Chaly	17	5,9
Andrei Yahorau	14	4,9
Aliaksandr Klaskouski	13	4,5
Leonid Zaiko	11	3,8
Dzianis Melyantsou	10	3,5
Oleg Manaev	9	3,1
Jaroslav Romanchuk	9	3,1

* In total, 90 names were mentioned; the “No such people” variant was chosen by 47,6% respondents. The table presents the names that received more than 3%.

Considering the described results, it is no wonder and even natural that the current president of Belarus became the person whom activists of public organizations named the “opinion leader” (11,9%). It is symptomatic as well that 85 out of the mentioned 102 “opinion leaders” received 3 and less mentions. The variants “I do not know” and “I find it difficult to answer” were chosen by 28,3% respondents; the variant “In Belarus, there are no “opinion leaders” — 20,3% (See Table 37).

Table 37. Persons who, according to respondents, could win the “opinion leader” contest

If in Belarus there were “opinion leader” contest, who would you nominate for this position?*	Absolute frequency	% in the sample
Alexander Lukashenko	34	11,9
Uladzimir Matskevich	23	8,0
Ales Bialiatski	14	4,9
Sviatlana Kalinkina	12	4,2
Aliaksandr Milinkevich	12	4,2
Uladzimir Niakliaeu	12	4,2
Zianon Pazniak	11	3,8
Mikola Statkevich	9	3,1

* In total, 102 names were mentioned; the table presents the names that received more than 3%.

Generalizing the results analysis of this block, it is necessary to mark that it is not possible to rely on the authority of separate persons as on the factor that has a potential of forming solidarity when it comes to these or those questions in Belarusian organized civil society. Regardless of the fact that it is possible to pinpoint a number of people with certain authority either in one of the statuses (e.g., an expert or a journalist), or people who are more or less often named in all lists, it is obvious that their influence is rather limited. The Belarusian third sector is a

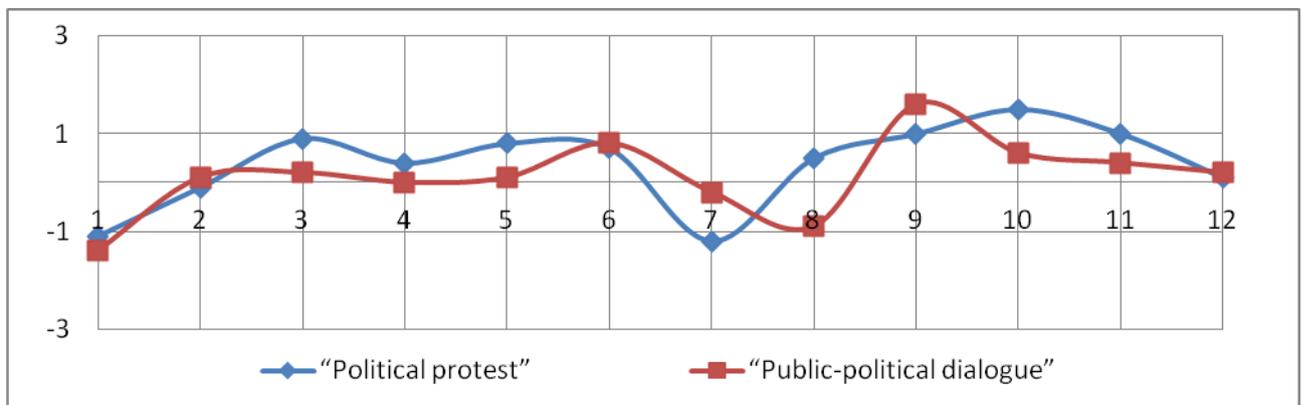


“crowd of leaders”, none of whom has any sufficient authority to set the common agenda, reference points, and programs for solidarity actions at least for a critically significant part of the sector.

Let's address to the possibility of using landmark ideas, strategies, and figures of the social-political field in order to actualize the solidarity potential. While analyzing the public-political field and discussions which are conducted, it is possible to assume that it is the strategic guidelines — “Political protest” or “Public-political dialogue” — that act most often as the principal cause of the absence of consolidation and manifestations of solidarity in the actions of both third sector and all democracy-oriented public. Accordingly, it would be necessary to assume that the evaluations of these two opposite strategies would be polar or, at least, sharply different.

However, the data demonstrates¹⁹ that the opposite strategies of advancing and defending one’s interests (the “Political protest” and the “Public-political dialogue”) have similar profiles of perception. Although there are the existing distinctions, we do not observe any sharp divergence between the evaluations. Thus, on the basis of one’s adherence to different strategies, there should be no sharp confrontations between representatives of organized civil society. It is necessary to assume that fierce disputes and conflicts on this question, as a matter of fact, “cover” some other more essential disagreements (See Diagram 43²⁰).

Diagram 43. Comparison of the evaluation profiles of the strategies “Political protest” and “Public-political dialogue”



The following pair is the dates applying for the Independence Day status (“July 3rd” and “March 25th”) — they traditionally symbolize Belarusian citizens’ different attitudes to the history and evaluations of the present day. Besides, the event itself — the national holiday — is a special factor of unity and consolidation.

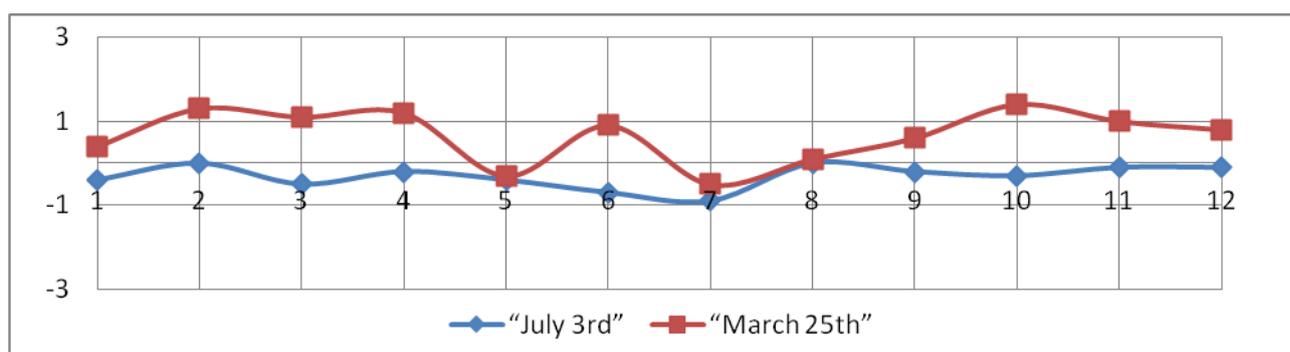
¹⁹ See Table 17.

²⁰ In diagrams 43-49, the horizontal scales are: 1 — “Difficult — Easy”, 2 — “Evil — Kind”, 3 — “Cold — Hot”, 4 — “Dirty — Clean”, 5 — “Old — Young”, 6 — “Silly — Clever”, 7 — “Quiet — Loud”, 8 — “Slow — Fast”, 9 — “Simple — Complicated”, 10 — “Cowardly — Courageous”, 11 — “Weak — Strong”, 12 — “Unhappy — Happy”; average arithmetic values for each scale are presented vertically.

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The data proves that these two dates have opposite evaluations practically in all scales. It means that in respondents' consciousness these two dates are too far from each other. Simultaneously, it is obvious that in relation to these dates it is impossible to use the opposition tactics since the "July 3rd" has no sharply negative connotations, but more likely acts as a pretext for contradictory evaluations (See Diagram 44).

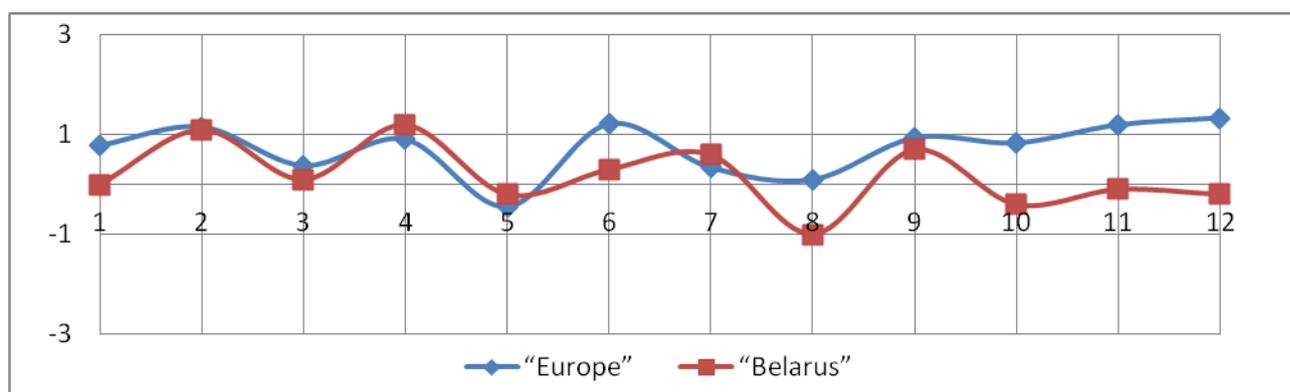
Diagram 44. Comparison of the evaluation profiles of the dates "July 3rd" and "March 25th"



"Belarus" and "Europe", as objects of attitude, are the prospects and frameworks, which can be established for one's self-determination in social, cultural, and political reality. What are the Belarusians oriented on in their actions and in their evaluations of the situation and their actions?

The data shows that, in the space of respondents' perception, "Belarus" and "Europe" are close enough; only some indicators differ. It allows us to consider that they can strengthen each other as values and reference points. At the same time, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the evaluations themselves are not too high that means there are contradictory attitudes and a low mobilization potential of such "objects" (See Diagram 45).

Diagram 45. Comparison of the evaluation profiles of the objects "Europe" and "Belarus"



The "Human rights" and the "Stability" are the values which symbolize different images of the future of the country, different reference points in the country's present day. Resisting political forces appeal to these very values, searching for support among Belarus' citizens and consolidating people around their actions.



Respondents' answers demonstrate that, first, these values are not so far in people's perceptions and evaluations, i.e. they have no symbolical value that marks different political aspirations. Second, if the "Human rights" gravitate more to the positive pole of the perception space, then the "Stability" causes rather inconsistent evaluations, but not negative ones (See Diagram 46).

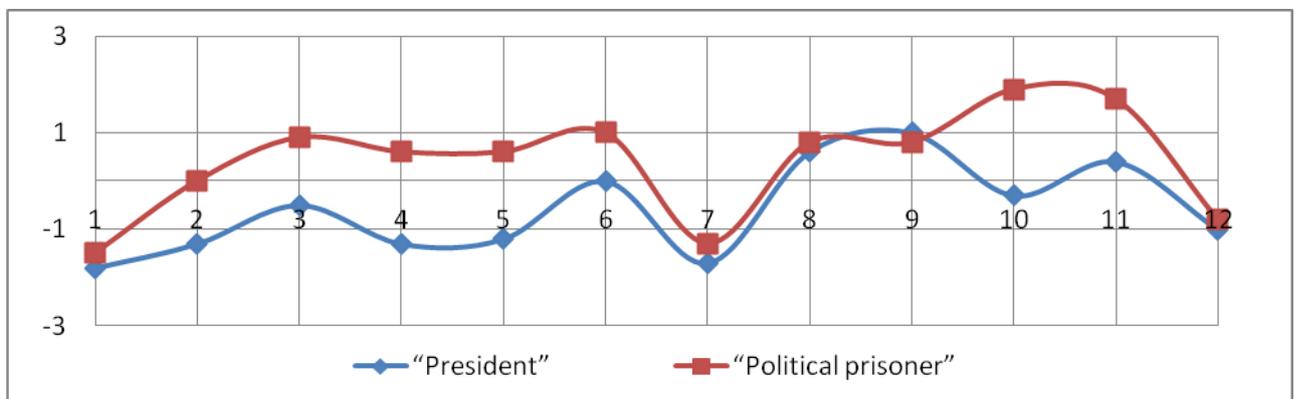
Diagram 46. Comparison of the evaluation profiles of the values of "Human rights" and "Stability"



The "President" and the "Political prisoner" are the "characters" of the Belarusian public-political field, who have obviously opposite images in Belarus; they also act as a symbolical point for positioning both in the country and abroad, in the world arena.

In organized civil society representatives' perception, they diverge, but this divergence is not so considerable as it might be expected. The arrangement of these positions in the perception space is sometimes very close, which speaks about ambiguous attitudes towards these figures. Probably, their even though antagonistic, but still coherence makes these "objects" very close to each other in something, e.g. in their high degree of politicization. It is also necessary to notice that if the attitude to the "Political prisoner" looks more unequivocal, then the "President" is characterized by more contradictory perceptions (See Diagram 47).

Diagram 47. Comparison of the evaluation profiles of the political figures "President" and "Political prisoner"

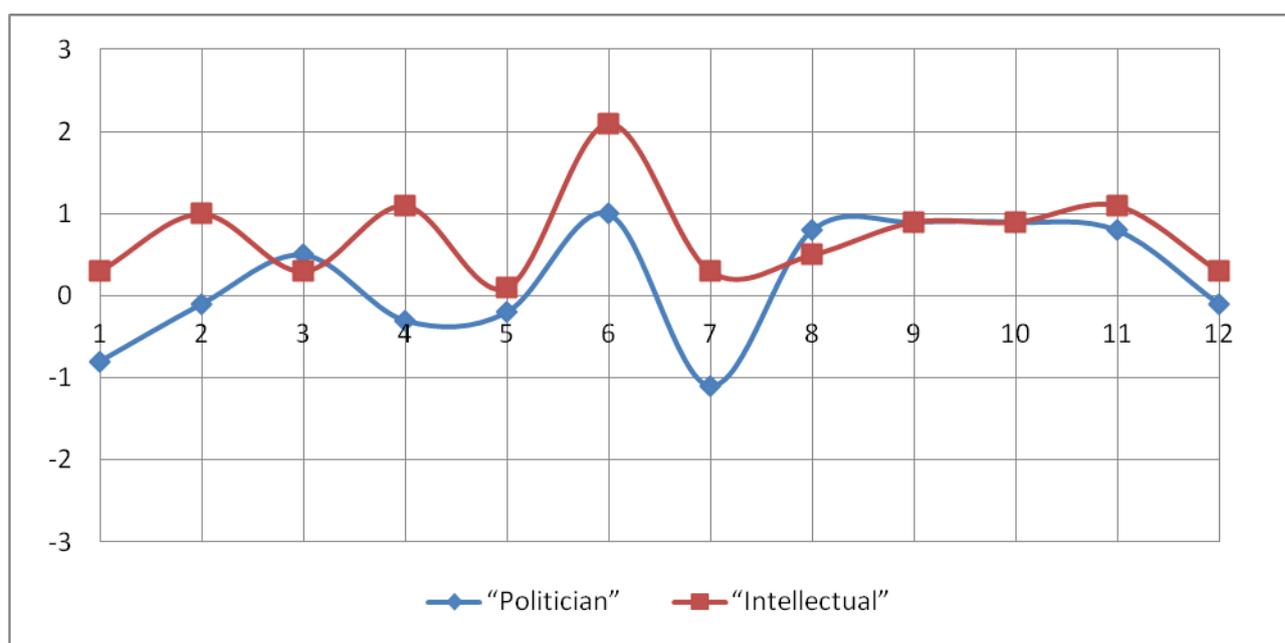


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The “Politician” and the “Intellectual” are the figures who traditionally act as centers of solidarity, consolidation of people around themselves, offering ideas, actions, etc.

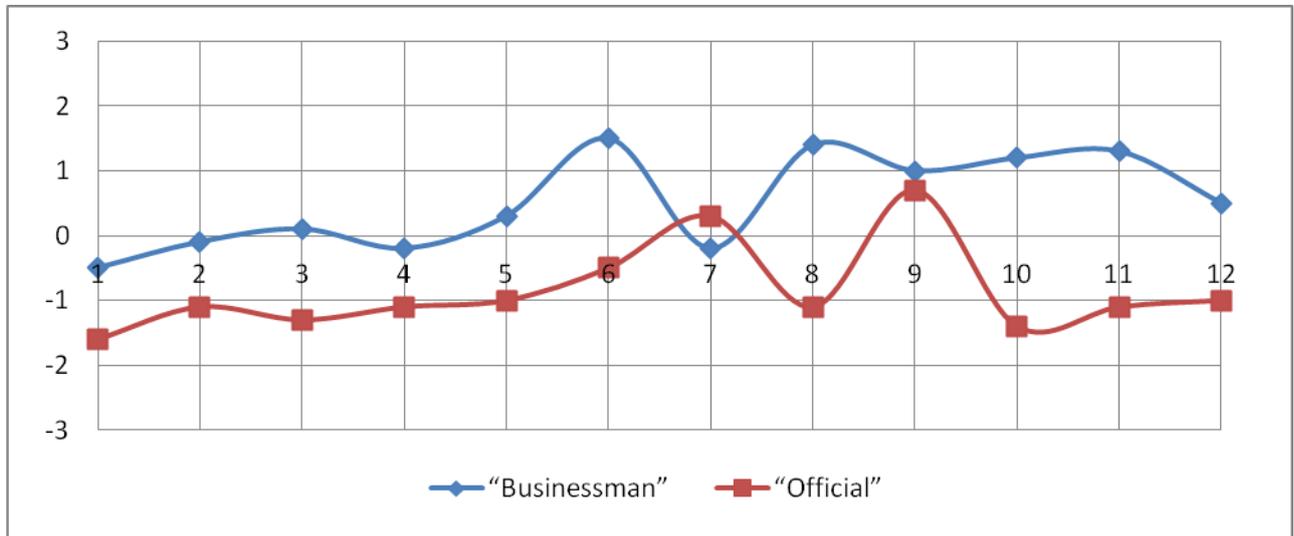
The perception of these figures in the field of organized civil society happens to be amphibolous because we see that they are very close as for a number of characteristics, but some characteristics make these figures very far apart in the perception space. Possibly, the attitude to these figures is difficult per se and is not realized completely. It is possible to say that among representatives of organized civil society the “Politician”, as a figure, causes negative connotations more often and, thus, has a smaller potential of attracting people. The “Intellectual” seems to have a bigger potential; however, this data characterizes only abstract figures or ideal images, but speaks nothing about their real contents (See Diagram 48). The latter is proved by the data on the “opinion leaders” that is presented above.

Diagram 48. Comparison of the evaluation profiles of the figures “Politician” and “Intellectual”



The “Official” and the “Businessman” are the social types that symbolically represent various complexes of values and guidelines. Besides, these two social positions are associated with different conceptualizations of methods and ways of transforming the country and solving problems.

It is obvious that this contradistinction finds its reflection in respondents' perception, too. It is possible to assume that the ideas, projects, etc., connected with the logic and way of action of business, as well as proposed by business, will have bigger support than those of officials (See Diagram 49).

Diagram 49. Comparison of the evaluation profiles of the figures “Businessman” and “Official”

Generalizing the carried-out analysis of the possibilities of mobilizing the solidarity potential among representatives of organized civil society, it is possible to say the following.

The Belarusian third sector has no vivid leaders whose opinions and positions its representatives are focused on in their actions. The possibility of mobilizing and turning the solidarity potential into real actions cannot lean on significant persons in the public field. All this will be carried out in the near future in a random way if there is a corresponding concatenation of circumstances.

In the space of organized civil society representatives' perceptions and evaluations, the following things are polar (widely spaced): the dates competing for the right to designate the beginning of the country's independence; values (human rights and stability), reflecting different orientations in social development; the political figures "President" and "Political prisoner", as well as the social roles "Official" and "Businessman". Such an arrangement demonstrates that within the framework of the task of solidarization these "objects" cannot be and should not be united. In this case, the attempts of building a compromise variant, which includes both values, both dates, and both figures, are doomed to failure.

The objects "Belarus" and "Europe" happened to be very close in perception, as well as the strategies "Political protest" and "Public-political dialogue". If to be guided by them as by objects of solidarization, then one has to search for a way of uniting them, to look for a compromise image which is possible and realistic.

The cultural-social positions "Politician" and "Intellectual" are antinomic and multivalued in the designation of the place and in the establishment of relations between themselves. The contradictoriness of the evaluations characterizes these "objects" as those with a weak potential of solidarity and mobilization because they cause difficult and ambiguous attitudes.

Findings and conclusions

Summing up the presented analysis, we can draw the following general conclusions.

The Belarusian organized civil society has a low potential of solidarity actions. Despite separate cases of activation and wide manifestation of solidarity, we do not have any stable foundations to count on solidarity or to make any calibrated plans and strategies of mobilizing and using the existing potential.

In the environment of the third sector, there are several dividing lines: concerning the subjective perception of the significant objects and in the communicatory and behavioral strategies. They do not allow one to perceive all organized civil society as something uniform and whole, from the point of view of a possibility of displaying solidarity in relation to the problems and questions which are intrinsically in the sphere of interests of civil society.

One of the essential bases for the NGOs sector's segmentation is the attitude towards politics, the sphere of political actions, and active opposition to the existing regime. We observe not only conscious and stable "depoliticization" of a considerable part of public organizations and their members, but also the complicity and contradictoriness of perceiving everything that has to do with this sphere even among those who do not avoid the political space.

The structure of social identification and comprehension of belonging to and participation in various social groups presents a potential possibility to lean on the feeling of "We" and trust in relation to the people whose points of view and Weltanschauung are shared. The carried-out analysis does not make it possible to unequivocally evaluate the solidarity potential, the grounds for solidarity actions at the level of conscious identities and trust. However, even at this level, the analysis results show the inner heterogeneity of third sector activists' points of view and beliefs even at the level of the most common notions such as conceptualizations of politics.

While evaluating a possibility of receiving support, representatives of organized civil society count, first of all, on relatives and colleagues, i.e. the circle which they are constantly in. Any other forms of social unity (more or less formal) are not trusted much. Still, the NGOs sector is extremely unhomogeneous. The degree of trust in colleagues divides its representatives into three almost equal parts:

- 1) those who count on aid from public organizations in any situations;
- 2) those who count on possible support only in the rights protection sphere;
- 3) those who do not count on any support from human rights defending and any other public organizations in any situations.

It is possible to speak about the importance of the factor of the available experience of solidarity actions in the formation of trust structures.

The analysis of organized civil society representatives' perception of the significant objects and values, which protection and advancement (or resistance) their solidarity actions can lean on, demonstrates that none of them

is perceived unanimously and homogeneously. Some of these “objects” can stimulate disagreements and misunderstanding, rather than support and solidarity — each of the “objects” unalterably splits all representatives of organized civil society in two, sometimes into three groups, which evaluations significantly differ from each other. The majority of images, values, and signs that are actively used in the rhetoric of civil action are filled with inconsistent connotations and evaluations, which at the deep level are disintegrating, rather than promoting solidarization. The biggest disintegrating effect is observed in the case with the value “Human rights”, the figures “Politician” and “President”, and the two dates applying for the main national holiday: “July 3rd” and “March 25th”.

Inside organized civil society, it is possible to specify three various types of its representatives whose grounds for and potential of solidarity actions differ from each other:

1. The group (less than 1/5 of the whole sample) called the “**Politicized activists**” has a high potential of solidarization, experience, and readiness for joint actions in various forms. The semantic and descriptive reference points of such solidarity are the values of human rights, European orientation, and resentment against the existing state administration forms in Belarus and all symbols of the current regime.
2. About 1/3 of organized civil society representatives (the group “Skeptics”) will be extremely selective and skeptical if there is an appeal to wide solidarity, especially to solidarity in the political field (not connected with the concrete activity of a public organization). They demonstrate a critical attitude towards the whole complex of images, values, positions, and strategies. Despite their wide experience of participation and involvement in various forms of actions (including solidarity ones), this group is characterized by its weak readiness to express its support due to its experience and disappointment in possibilities of achieving its purposes. As a result, their attention and efforts are concentrated on concrete topics and problems, as well as their own actions, excluding wide solidarity.
3. More than a third of representatives of organized civil society (the group “Inhabitants”) are similar in their orientation on depoliticization, in the acceptance of the existing circumstances in the Belarusian situation, and in the aspiration to seek for compromises by connecting different discourses and systems of values. This group may be able to manifest solidarity, but not “protest” solidarity; it is ready to display “yes” solidarity. Its sphere is, first of all, social services and assistance. Also, the form of solidarity actions should not demand much from these people.

There are two types of the behavioral and communicatory strategies:

1. The first strategy is based on the pro-active practice of various kinds of solidarity manifestations, orientation on public communication, and readiness for discussions with a wide range of opponents. It presupposes the active use of trusted sources, has mainly a national scale, and is focused on wider political processes. This strategy is characteristic of less than 50% representatives of the third sector (“**Those involved in solidarity actions**”) who are concentrated in the organizations that work with topics of human rights and development of civil society, sometimes — ecology and Belarusian culture.
2. The second strategy is inherent, first of all, in representatives of the organizations that work with various social themes (youth, education, sustainable development, and social problems). This strategy is built on



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selective involvement in solidarity actions, which are thematically and territorially limited by a city, social group, etc. The communicatory practice of this group (**“Those participating selectively in solidarity actions”**) is more focused on the close circle which, unlike the first type, is more diverse and includes people with different points of views and guidelines.

These two types can count on different types of solidarity: “Those involved in solidarity actions” — on the exact public message and short-term readiness to support the circle of the people who are constantly present in the public space; “Those participating selectively in solidarity actions” — on closer and long-term involvement in the solution of local problems concerning a rather narrow circle of people. However, in both cases, it is possible to rely most of all on support in the form of signing collective appeals.

The evaluation of the internal possibilities of mobilizing and strengthening the solidarity potential, which is available in the environment of organized civil society, shows that egalitarianization and equality concerning opinions deprive the field of the third sector of any essential leadership displays and readiness to be guided by someone. The Belarusian third sector is a “crowd of leaders”, none of whom has any sufficient authority to set the common agenda, reference points, and programs for solidarity actions at least for a critically significant part of the sector.



Afterword: from research results to their practical interpretation

At first, the received results of the research into Belarusian organized civil society's solidarity potential can seem unexpected and even shocking for those who have been engaged in the development of civic activism and building of public solidarity for many years. The conclusions of our research pinpoint sharply enough the topical problems, which are present in the third sector of Belarus. However, it is necessary to notice that these problems are not new — they did not appear unexpectedly because of these or those internal or external reasons. The situation shown in the research characterizes the condition of organized civil society in our country throughout recent years. It finds its reflection in the number of people who come to support activists in court, in the results of numerous attempts to consolidate democratic forces, in the activity during actions and campaigns, and in comments and discussions of strategies and separate figures on web-sites and social networking services. Thus, the research only constates and describes the existing fact — the condition of the solidarity potential of the third sector in Belarusian society. Simultaneously, we constate it at the generalization level that differs from intuitive evaluations and personal experiences, which deal with factual manifestations of solidarity. Being based on the data of the sociological poll, the research results allow us to voice a number of quite reliable statements, which are beyond private opinions and separate evaluations. It allows us to highlight several important practical problems that can make it possible to revise public-political actors' strategies and actions.

First, the third sector is not a certain special place in the Belarusian public structure, where there are people with similar points of view and beliefs, who have common reference points in public and political life. It not just includes people who demonstrate a variety of social conceptualizations (which is traditionally considered to be civil society's maturity); we cannot and should not think that these conceptualizations have general axiological frameworks and, thereby, believe that the third sector is an axiomatic source of democratic transformations in the country. Even the most basic guidelines, values, and conceptualizations cannot and should not be attributed to representatives of public organizations as their common and integral characteristic. The reference to such guidelines, values, and conceptualizations, as well as the relying on them, requires some special substantiation.

Second, the research shows directions and reference points for purposeful work with third sector representatives; it specifies groups that are close in the social space and that have similar features, ways of perceiving public relations and the situation in the country, as well as a number of communicatory strategies, which set diverse ways of behavior and forms of interaction with colleagues and the external world. These groups of Belarusian organized civil society can act as a potential source of collective solidarity actions, but in strictly defined situations, being based on a limited set of values and reacting to different contents of the message sent to them. Leaning on the conclusions of this research, it is possible to say that in the third sector, the forms of solidarization, which escape the limits of the traditional oppositional forms of political activity and oppositional discourse, will have a wider potential.

Third, in the strategies of political and public transformations, which are based on mass displays of solidarity, the aprioristic expectation and stake on public organizations, which are meant to be a social base of this solidarity, are unreasonable. Here, it is possible to count on partial involvement, but taking into account that it will be connected very closely with the subjects and contents of the actions, which need to be supported, and that every



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time only a part of this or that social group will be activated. In order to launch mass solidarity actions, a wide social nucleus should be looked for not inside organized civil society, but beyond its borders (by using other bases while extracting social groups). At best, solidarity actions initiatives can appear inside organized civil society, but their further support cannot be limited by representatives of the third sector and will necessarily demand to leave its frameworks.

Fourth, organized civil society was generated and fixed as a separate sector in the Belarusian public structure. We observe the changing of this sector's functions in the general system of social-political relations, when the third sector carries out, first of all, the function of stabilizing the established social order. Public organizations became a legitimate place of work (they provide employment) for a certain circle of people; they present possibilities for professional self-fulfillment and self-actualization for those who do not find a place in the state system; NGOs become a source of developing new kinds of activity; NGOs compensate the restrictions of the state system of social services and supplement a set of social services for the population, etc. Despite the semi-legality and instability of the existence of separate public organizations, the sector as a whole becomes more and more a space for the full-fledged existence (the basic workplace) of rather a big group of people; it even has quite certain career trajectories. NGOs carry out a number of important tasks for society, which are not implemented in the state and commercial sectors, thus becoming a necessary addition to the public system in certain spheres (social aid, informal education, etc.). At the same time, the function of civil society as an element that transforms the whole system of public relations, as the basic engine of changes, pales into insignificance. Thus, one has to revise the guidelines and perceptions of public organizations as of a natural and obvious source of social and political changes in society. A differentiated approach to and search for new centers of transformations, which can be beyond the field of organized civil society, are needed.

Fifth, the changing of organized civil society's functions is not exclusively a Belarusian phenomenon. The sector's high professionalization and its embedment in the general society functioning system are a common trend and a strategy of European civil society's development. NGOs promote more and more the stability of the system they are built in and are less and less a transformation factor. This circumstance needs the reflection, problematization, and criticism of the conceptualizations of civil society, which are in the basis of the strategies and programs of developing democracy and transformations in the post-Soviet countries. It is necessary to seek for and to design the tools and means that will make it possible to develop a civil society which is not organizationally structured.

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Research results report

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