



History is changing. Should symbols also change with it? Opinion of Kherson residents.

Report on Online Sociological Survey

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August

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Methodology: An online survey using an interactive structured questionnaire; a relevant link was sent to potential respondents from the database (online research panel of Kherson community). The sample was based on demographic indicators as of January 1, 2022. Given the indicators, the research margin of error does not exceed 5%, with a probability of 0.95. The sample included Kherson residents both currently residing within the community and those who left Kherson after February 24, 2022 to other regions of Ukraine or abroad. There is currently no official data on Kherson residents' migration, so it is not possible to assess the representativity of the given respondent sample. However, there are reasons to believe that the presented ratio of respondents still residing within the community is greater than the de facto ratio, which may affect the research results.

Research objective: to find out the attitude of Kherson residents to the city symbols

Sample scope: 400 respondents.

Field stage period: June 20 – August 2, 2024.

Research client: Community Foundation of Kherson "Zakhyst".

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The research group carries on activities on increasing and improving the online panel of Kherson city community to align it with the general population indicators and invites all Kherson residents to join the panel. This can be done at: <https://lemur.ua/sign-up>



Most Kherson respondents do not believe that the city's current coat of arms should be changed (59% “no”; 21% “somewhat no”). Only 15% supported the change (6% “yes”; 9% “somewhat yes”). Those wishing to change the coat of arms would like to see the following elements and symbols on it: the Antonivskyi Bridge, a watermelon, (Scythian) sun, the Dnieper, sea/marine symbols, steppe, symbols of Ukraine, and the Chumaks. Other ideas are related to the Kherson residents' resistance to Russian aggression, and also to the Cossacks' history in the south of Ukraine.

Respondents expressed the same opinion on **changing the city flag**: 56% prefer it unchanged, 25% would rather not change it. 5% answered that the flag should definitely be changed, and 8% somewhat agreed. The main change proposals are as follows: remove the coat of arms or the foundation date from the flag, change the color scheme (white to yellow, make it brighter, warm colors, etc.), add other symbols (watermelon, wheat, a ship, or symbols of the indomitable Kherson residents).

The respondents were more unequivocal about **not changing the city brand/logo, the “Scythian Sun.”** 61% don't want to change it at all, and 21% would rather not. Only 9% supported the change (4% – yes, 5% – somewhat yes). The proposed elements and symbols included the Antonivskyi Bridge, the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant, the Dnieper, marine symbols, symbols of liberation or military, etc.

The respondents responded positively to the next question on adding the **“Hero -City of Ukraine”** title to the Kherson symbols. 80% in total support this idea (60% – yes, 20% – somewhat yes).

The most popular unofficial city symbols for the Kherson residents include, first and foremost, **a watermelon** (59%), secondly, **the Antonivskyi Bridge** (56%), and thirdly, **an anchor** (22%). There is a big gap between the popularity of the first two symbols and all the rest. Other answers featured Svoboda Square, Buzkovyy Gai, Chornobaivka (Kherson) Airport, Kakhovka HPP, natural elements like mounds or the steppe, etc.

For the most symbolic Kherson historical figures, first place was taken by **philanthropist John Howard** (43%), while **playwright Mykola Kulish** (37%) came in second. The top 5 also included: artist Oleksiy Shovkunenکو (20%), Kost Hordiienko, Cossack otaman of the Zaporizhzhia Sich (18%), and Hryhoriy Potiomkin (17%). A relatively high number of people failed to answer (18%).

According to the answers, **the colors associated with Kherson** are blue (46%), green (44%), yellow (40%), blue (27%), white (18%), and red (16%).

The last question was about expressions or short phrases that could become a Kherson slogan. The word “indomitable” in various forms was the most popular, followed by “hero city,” “Kherson is Ukraine,” “unconquered,” “fortress,” and “the city of indomitable/unconquered people.” The usual city symbols were also mentioned: watermelons, the sea, sailors, the sun, the Dnieper, etc.

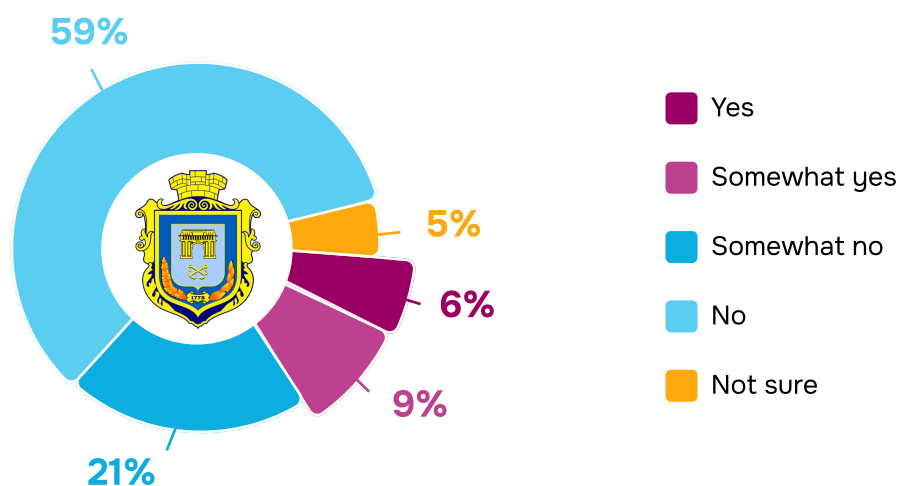
Therefore, the main conclusion of the study is that **Kherson residents generally would rather keep the current city symbols**. The only addition can be symbols of the honorary title “Hero City of Ukraine” – the flagpole top and the ribbon of the honorary award.



Answer Breakdown

City coat of arms (N=400), %

Q.: In your opinion, is it necessary to change the current coat of arms of Kherson?



New city coat of arms (N=61), %

Q.: What would you put on the new Kherson city coat of arms?

A total of 61 responses from those who would like to change Kherson's coat of arms.

Stand-alone symbols: the Antonivskyi Bridge, watermelon/watermelons, sun/Scythian sun, Dnieper/plavni, sea and marine symbols (ship, anchor), fields, forests, bulrush, steppe bird, sheaf/spike of wheat, sunflower, tomato, trident/symbols of Ukraine, Chumaks as a symbol of the South.

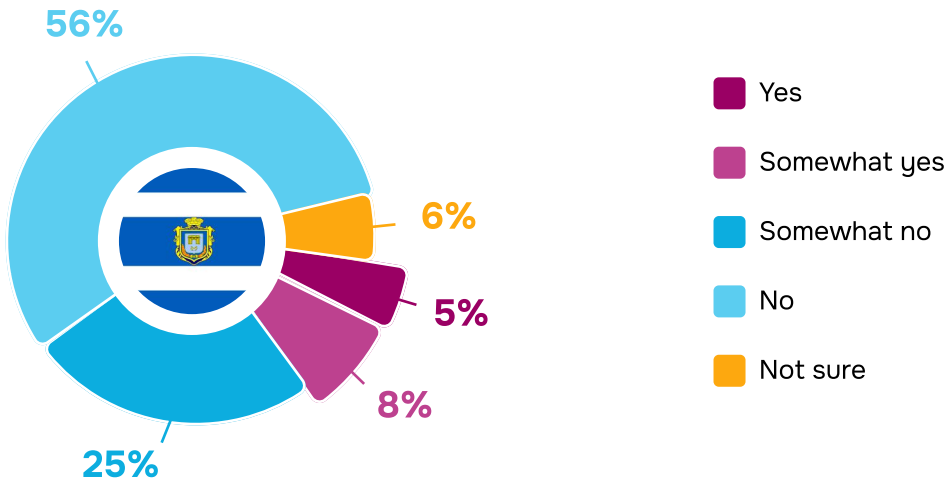
Symbols of Kherson residents resisting Russian aggression: military, victory, courageous/unconquerable people, Hero City.

Cossack symbols: a Cossack, “coat of arms of the Zaporozhian Sich Cossacks,” “We should present the relation to the Cossack past (Oleshkivska, Kamianska Sichs are located on the territory of the Kherson region).”

- Remove/change the year the city was founded.
- Change the name of the city, and then change the coat of arms, respectively.
- Update the design. Set the task to a professional specialist in heraldry.

City flag (N=400), %




Q.: In your opinion, is it necessary to change the current Kherson city flag?



New city flag (N=53), %

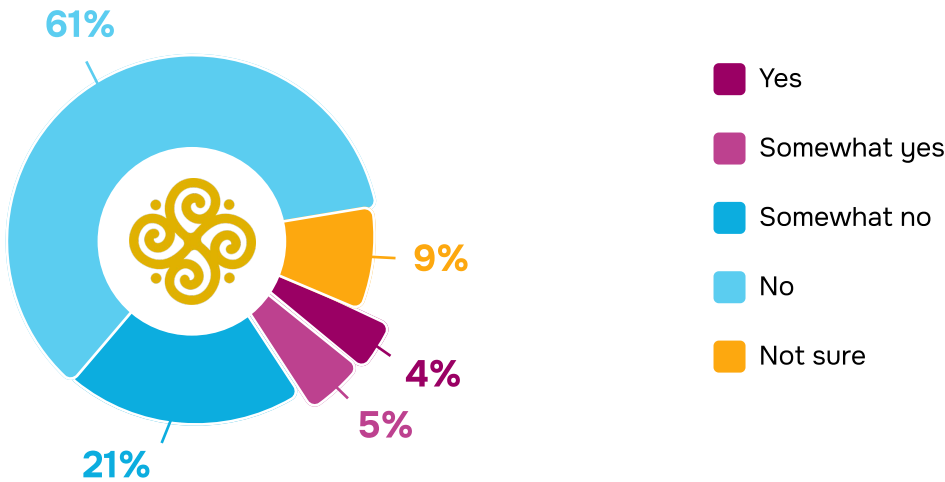
Q.: In your opinion, what should the new Kherson flag look like?

A total of 53 responses from those who would like to change the flag of Kherson. Proposals:

-  **Remove the coat of arms from the flag**/replace it with a new one/
remove the city's founding date from the coat of arms.
-  **Change the color scheme**, replace the white stripes with yellow ones, make it brighter, and add warm colors (white-yellow-blue, green-red-yellow, blue-yellow-green, yellow-green-blue, add colors – yellow/green/blue, etc.).
-  **Add symbols** (watermelon, wheat, ship, Ukrainian symbols, symbols of indomitable Kherson residents and Kherson's liberation).

City emblem (N=400), %

Q.: In your opinion, should the Kherson emblem (identifiable logo), currently the “Scythian Sun,” be changed?



New city emblem (N=35), %

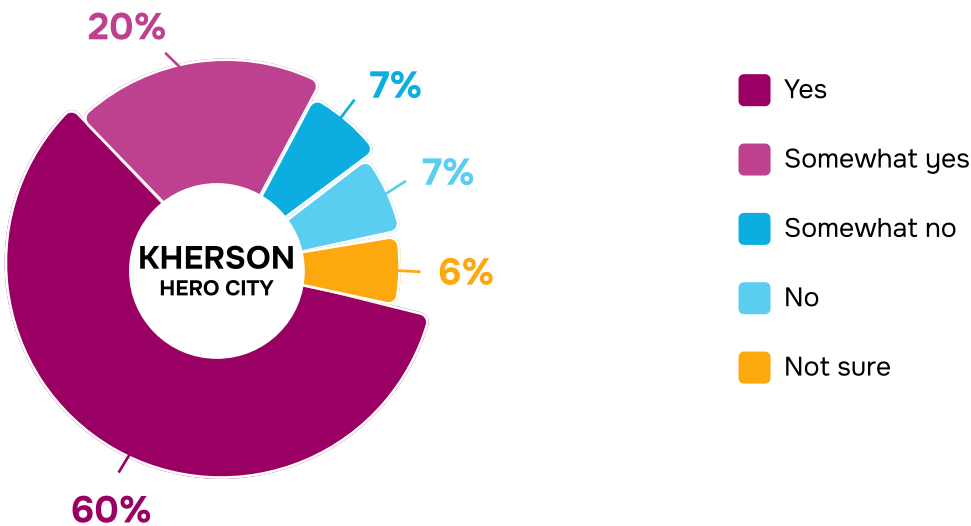
Q.: What would you place on the new Kherson city emblem?

A total of 35 responses with proposals on the Kherson city brand, including the following:

- Watermelon
- Antonivskyi Bridge
- Kakhovka HPP
- Dnipro/waves of the Dnipro
- Ship
- Anchor
- Military
- Symbols of the city's indomitability and liberation/image of indomitable Kherson residents
- Gates of the fortress wall
- City protection dome
- In fact, Kherson's geographic boundaries resemble a heart, thus Kherson is the heart of southern Ukraine.

Hero City of Ukraine” title (N=400), %

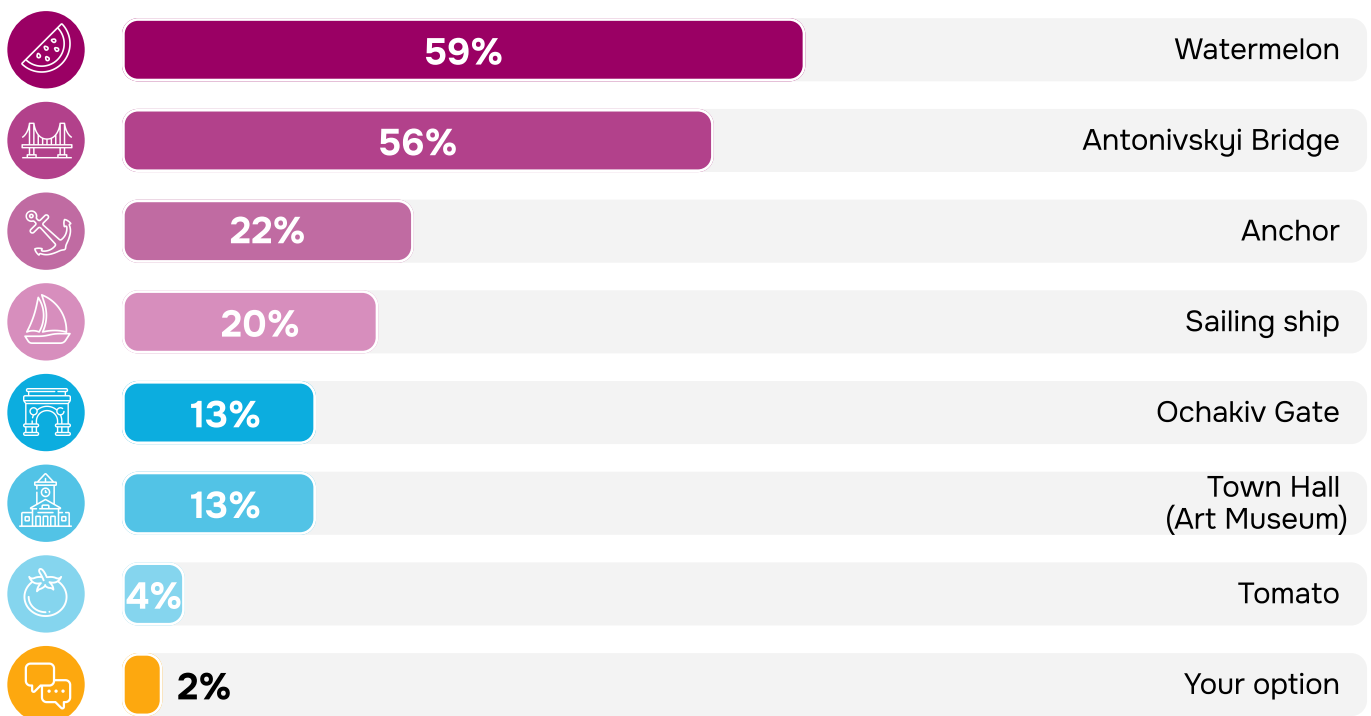
Q.: Should the title “Hero City of Ukraine,” awarded to Kherson in 2022, be on the city's symbols?



Unofficial city symbol (N=400), %

Q.: In your opinion, which unofficial symbol suits Kherson best?

Multiple choice



Other answers:

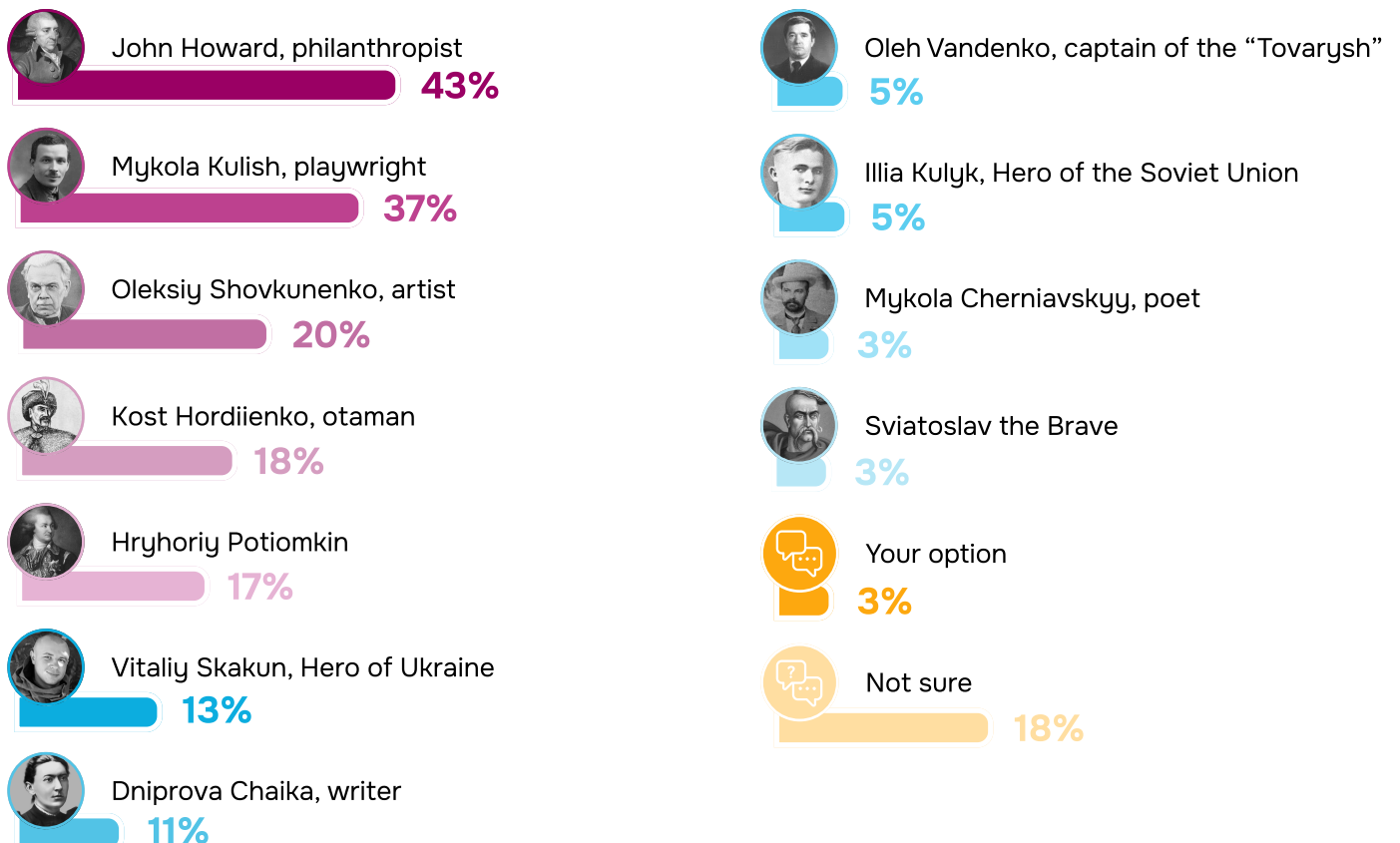
- November 11, 2022,
- Independence Square where the protests took place,
- Buzkovyy Gai,
- Svoboda Square,
- Chornobaivka Airport,
- Kakhovska HPP,
- mounds,
- steppe,
- trees,
- sea,
- frigate,
- Scythian pectoral ornament,
- burning Kremlin.

“History is changing. Should symbols also change with it?”

Historical figures (N=400), %

Q.: In your opinion, which of these historical figures is a symbol of Kherson?

Multiple choice



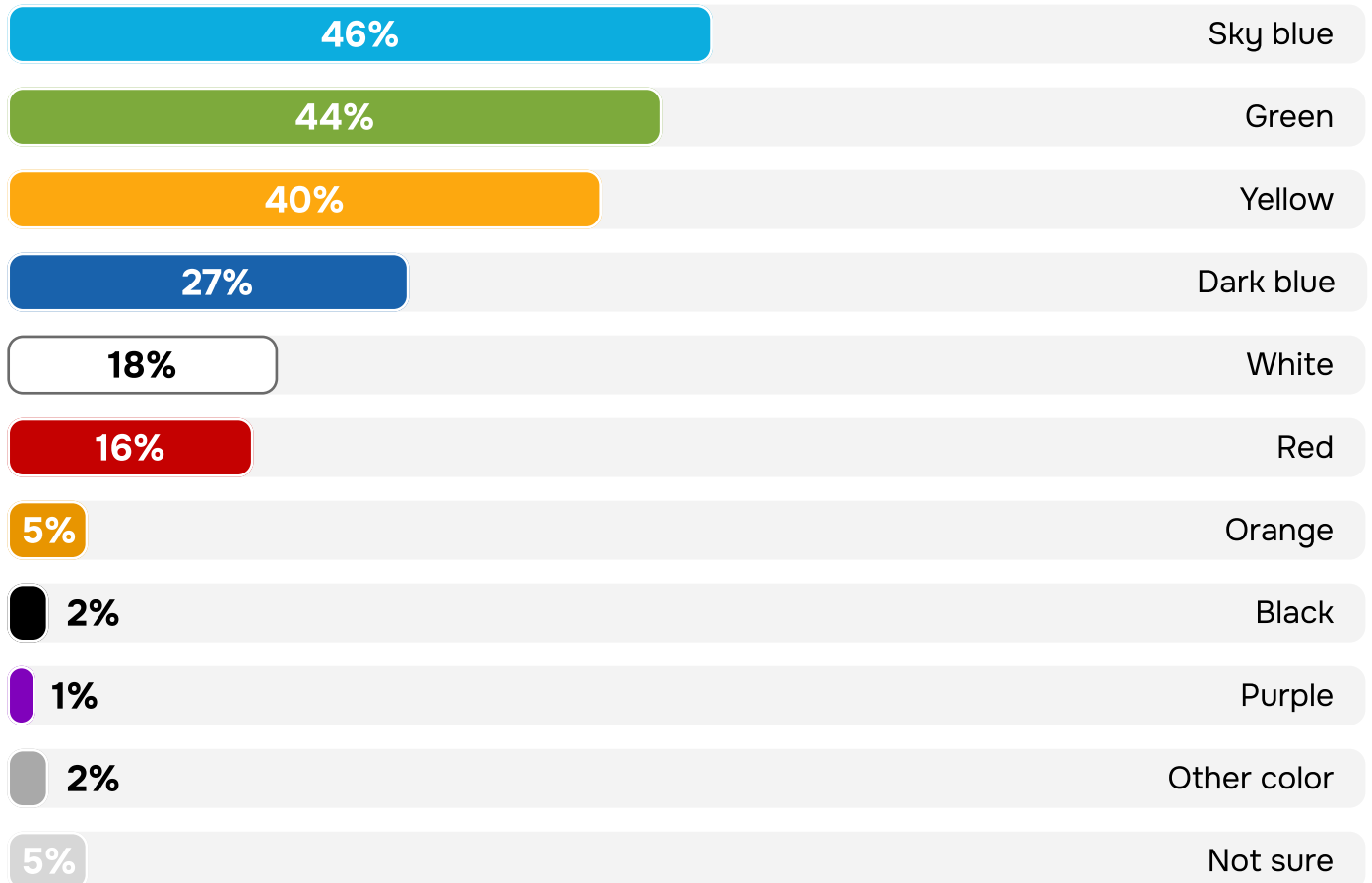
Other answers (your option):

- soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine defending Kherson;
- Volodymyr Prymachenko, Hero of Ukraine;
- Viktor Hoshkevych, museum founder;
- Vsevolod Zabolotnyy, shipyard director;
- Ivan Sirko, Cossack otaman;
- Oleksandr Honobolin, composer;
- Andriy Sokolov, philanthropist, Kateryna Handziuk, activist.
- “It is impossible to name one specific figure as a symbol of Kherson, as each of the above is a symbol of their era, and each of them is important in their historic period.”

Colors (N=400), %

Q.: In your opinion, what color is associated with Kherson?

Multiple choice



Respondents' profile

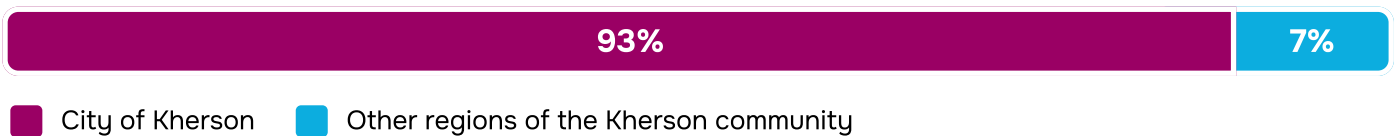
Gender



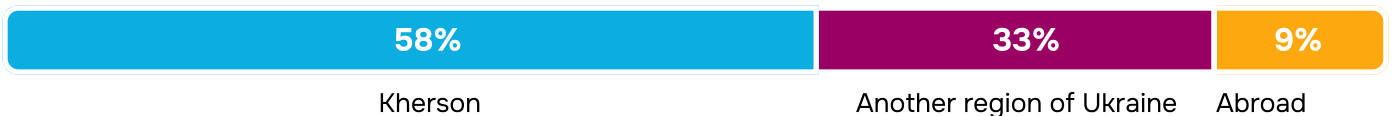
Age



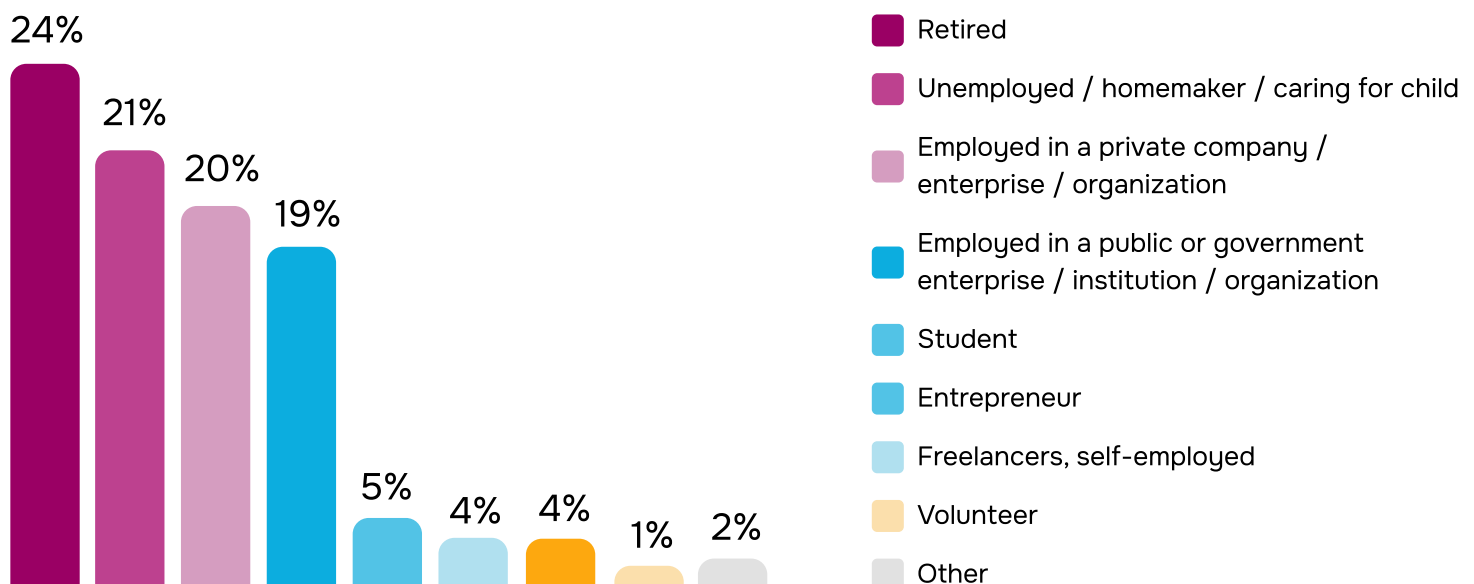
Place of residence before February 24, 2022



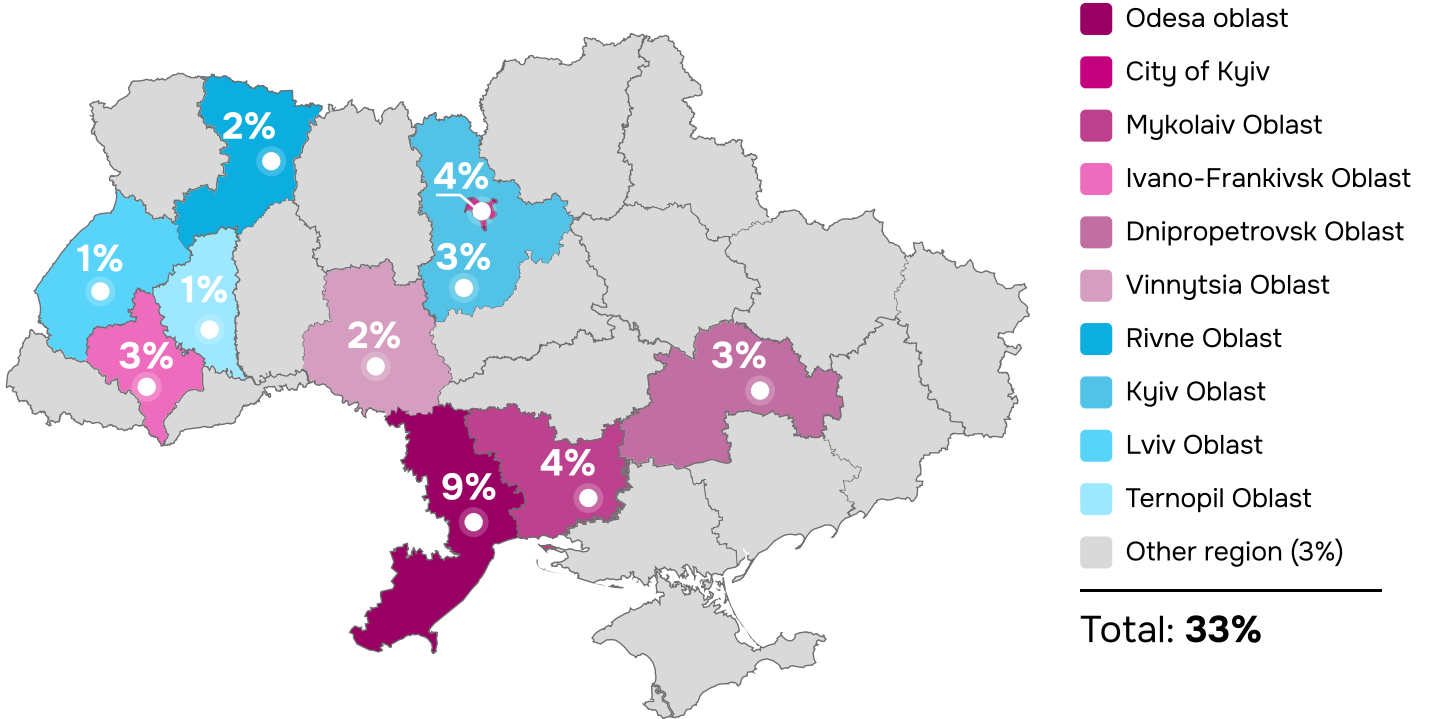
Current place of residence



Occupation



Current region of residence (of those who changed their place of residence after February 24, 2022)



Country of residence (of those who changed their place of residence after February 24, 2022)

