

Worker Insecurities in Ukrainian Industry: The 2000 ULFS

By Guy Standing and László Zsoldos *

International Labour Office, Geneva

April 2001

*Guy Standing and László Zsoldos are with the InFocus Programme on Socio-Economic Security, International Labour Organization.

For more information on the InFocus Programme on Socio-Economic Security, please see the related web page <http://www.ilo.org/ses> or contact the Secretariat at Tel: +41.22.799.8893, Fax: +41.22.799.7123 or E-mail: ses@ilo.org

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2001

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to the ILO Publications Bureau (Rights and Permissions), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. The International Labour Office welcomes such applications.

Libraries, institutions and other users registered in the United Kingdom with the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HE (Fax: +44 171436 3986), in the United States with the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923 (Fax: +1 508 750 4470), or in other countries with associated Reproduction Rights Organizations, may make photocopies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose.

ISBN 92-2-112483-5

First published 2001

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

ILO publications can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or direct from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Catalogues or lists of new publications are available free of charge from the above address.

Printed by the International Labour Office. Geneva, Switzerland

Foreword

This is the first report of results from the seventh round of the Ukrainian Enterprise Labour Flexibility Survey, carried out in 2000. Over its annual rounds, the ULFS is charting the main developments in the industrial labour market of this major European country, which when it emerged as an independent country following the break up of the Soviet Union contained nearly 52 million people. Since then, largely because of the huge economic and social decline, the population has shrunk to below 50 million, in less than ten years. This astonishing demographic fact is the single most important indicator of the seriousness of the economic decline in that period.

The following paper tells a worrying story, about factories struggling to survive and produce, about workers in their many thousands faced by chronic insecurity, affected by wage cuts, loss of benefits, and so-called “administrative leave”, while threatened by the fact that those factories have already lost many thousands of jobs. Previous rounds of the survey have documented many of the major changes, and this round demonstrates that new trends have begun that indicate that finally labour market restructuring is taking place.

All views and conclusions are those of the authors only and not necessarily the ILO's. Thanks are due to the Ukrainian Ministry of Statistics, which was responsible for the fieldwork, Nadezhda Grigorovich and Natalya Vlasenko, colleagues in UNDP, Kiev, which helped finance the survey, and Igor Chernyshev, of the ILO's Bureau of Labour Statistics and the Socio-Economic Security Programme.

Contents

Foreword	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Structural characteristics of Ukrainian industry in 2000	2
3. Capacity utilization in 1999-2000	7
4. Labour surplus in Ukrainian industry	10
5. Redundancies and employment decline	14
6. Concealed unemployment in Ukrainian industry	20
7. Vacancies and labour turnover	26
8. Job restructuring	27
9. The changing position of women: Prospects of marginalization	28
10. The impact of restructuring on older workers	35
11. Changes in wages, earnings and benefits	36
12. Skill formation and the erosion of training	45
13. Concluding remarks	46

1. Introduction

Ukraine's industrial enterprises have struggled to survive ever since the country emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union as an independent nation in 1991. A decade of economic decline has impoverished the country, leading to sharp declines in life expectancy and a per capita income equivalent to \$25 per month. Previously integrated into the Soviet 'military-industrial complex', in 1991, its economy plunged into what is best described as *hyper-stagflation*. Output over the remainder of the decade shrunk by over 50 per cent. Inflation in 1993 alone was over 10,000 per cent. In 1994, the worst effects of the price liberalisation wore off, but still the annual inflation rate exceeded 500 per cent. In the ensuing six years the essential restructuring of production and distribution was almost paralysed, with modest reforms in some areas being held back by inertia elsewhere. In 1999, consumer prices rose by more than 100 per cent for the eighth year in succession.

The economic depression had wrought terrible social damage. After a decade of continuous decline in living standards, in 2000 the average monthly wage was 280 UAH - about US\$42 at the current exchange rate - although there are reasons for regarding this as a severe *over-estimate*, for reasons to be elaborated later. Many observers claim that activities in the informal (legal, but petty in scale) and black (illegal) economy have grown substantially, which is surely true. But even if one assumes that such activities account for as much as a third of total income, average incomes would still be extremely low and inadequate, especially bearing in mind that the poor often have least chance to indulge in concealed income-earning activities.

More telling is the pattern of demographic developments. Since Ukraine became an independent nation, the population has shrunk in the wake of a substantial decline in life expectancy. After approaching 52 million earlier in the decade, in 2000 the population fell below 50 million. Average male life expectancy at birth had fallen to 63 years, while for women it was just over 74; it has apparently stabilised, and may have risen slightly, but for men in particular it is still lower than when the country became independent.

For restructuring to arrest the decline and to begin a process of economic regeneration, what happens in and around industrial firms is crucial. Raising productivity will be a key to economic regeneration; it has been abysmally low. Official data suggest that although employment fell in the 1990s, it fell by less than output. Nevertheless, total employment shrunk by about *one-third* between 1990 and 1999, with employment in agriculture and in industry falling by over 40 per cent, while 'services' have expanded by about 15 per cent.

Unemployment has been largely disguised. Although it rose thereafter, even in 1995, the registered unemployment rate remained below 0.5 per cent. By 2000, it was hovering below 5 per cent. The unreliability of such figures and related labour market trends is considered elsewhere.¹ In reality, there is reason to believe that unemployment has long been very high and that the labour market deterioration has continued into the new century. The open unemployment rate measured by the Labour Force Survey has

¹ ILO-CEET, *The Ukrainian Challenge: Reforming Labour and Social Policy* (Budapest and Kiev, ILO-CEET and UNDP, 1999).

risen from insignificant levels in the early and mid 1990s to over 12 per cent now. Women's unemployment rate (11.6 per cent) has been slightly lower than men's, even though women have comprised 62 per cent of all the unemployed who have registered with public employment exchanges. The youth (16-24) unemployment rate is 13.1%, possibly reflecting the fact that young relatively educated workers have relatively good opportunities. The number of *long-term unemployed* has multiplied almost tenfold in the last five years of the decade, in which time the median duration of unemployment rose from about six months to eleven months.

In 1994, the ILO and the Ukraine Department of Statistics conducted the first round of the Ukraine Labour Flexibility Survey (ULFS1), a survey of industrial establishments in six regions - Kiev City, Kiev Region, Donetsk, Kharkov, Lvov and Nikolaev.² It covered a random sample of establishments giving a cross-section of industries in each region.³ As in related surveys in Bulgaria, Hungary, Russia and elsewhere outside the region, the methodology involved interviews with senior managers and two questionnaires, one completed by the establishment, the other administered orally in discussion with managers, often accompanied by senior staff.⁴

In 2000, the ULFS7 involved the same methodology, applied to all 26 regions of the country, covering 1684 industrial firms employing 1,099,163 workers. It is the largest and most comprehensive survey of developments in the industrial labour market ever conducted in the country.

This is the first report of findings from the ULFS7, with emphasis on aspects of restructuring, labour surplus and labour shedding. Other papers will go into more detail on the more important topics. We begin with a brief review of the main signs of restructuring in industrial firms in the late 1990s.

2. Structural characteristics of Ukrainian industry in 2000

In terms of industrial structure, there has been a big relative shift away from heavy engineering over the past decade. Food processing accounted for the largest share 28.6 per cent of firms covered by ULFS7, followed by the category designated in Ukrainian statistics (and used here for convenience) as "light industry", which comprised textiles, garments, leather, glassware and china production (Figure 1).

Gradually, Ukrainian industry has become less monopolistic. According to managements, in 2000 11.3 per cent of all factories were a **monopoly** in their sector, with a further 7.5 per cent believing they had a monopoly in some of their products, not all. About 11.8 per cent of state establishments believed they were monopolists,

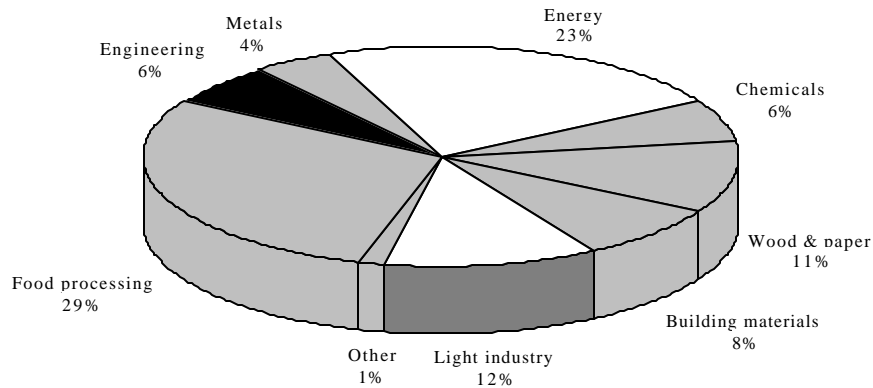
² For an analysis, see G. Standing, "Labour market dynamics in Ukrainian industry in 1992-1994: Results from the ULFS", *ILO-CEET Report*, No.11 (Budapest, ILO Central and Eastern European Team, September 1999).

³ The unit of the survey was an *establishment*, which statistically should be distinguished from an *enterprise*, which consists of one or more establishments. The average size of establishment, in terms of capital, employment, sales, etc, is considerably smaller than for enterprises.

⁴ We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the cooperation and assistance of the Ministry of Statistics of Ukraine, which handled the fieldwork with considerable expertise.

considerably below the figure in 1999 (19 per cent), while 15.4 per cent of all firms with more than 1,000 workers did so.

Figure 1: Industrial distribution of establishments, 2000, All Regions

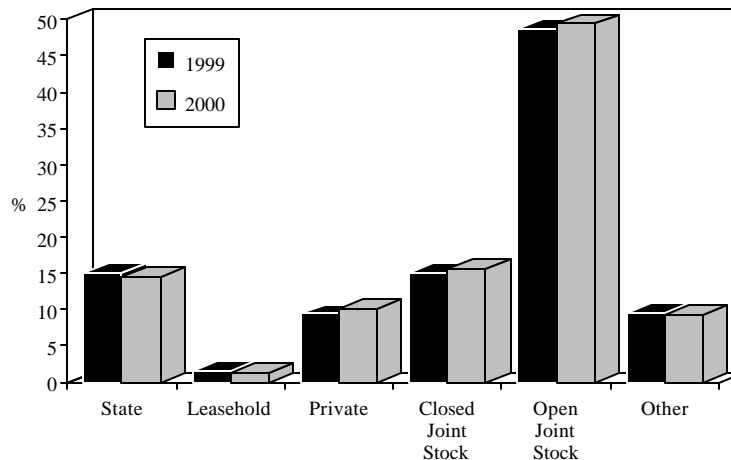


Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

The **employment size** distribution showed that 52.8 per cent had fewer than 250 workers and 15 per cent had more than 1,000, with the share of larger establishments being much less than was the case in earlier rounds of the survey, continuing the longer-term downward shift in the size distribution. Overall, the mean average size of establishment had shrunk to 654 workers, ranging from 2,466 in metals and 1,248 in the energy sector to 264 in wood and papers, reflecting the large-scale nature of industrial production in Ukraine, even in 2000. The largest average size was in Donetsk (2,141), followed by Zaporizhzhya (1,527); the smallest was in Ternopil (255).

In terms of **property form**, there had been considerable restructuring. By 2000, only 15.2 per cent of all firms were state-owned, compared with 32.3 per cent five years earlier. The categories that had come to predominate were closed and open joint stock enterprises, particularly the latter (Figure 2). This was similar to the changes that had taken place in Russian industry.

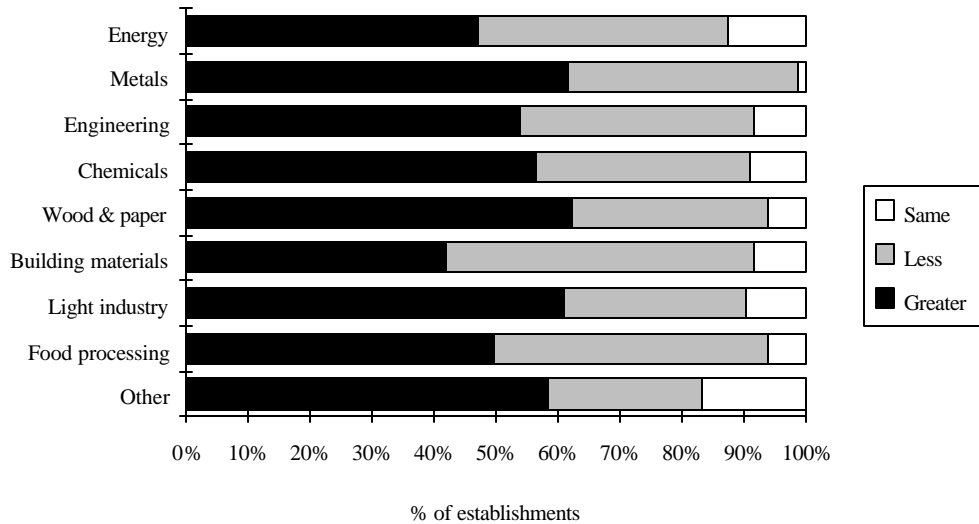
Figure 2: Property form distribution of establishments, 1999-2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

The property restructuring was expected to continue. Thus, 9.2 per cent of all firms planned or expected to change property form in 2000, and 22.7 per cent of leaseholdings and 11.2 per cent of state enterprises planned to do so. Most of those planning to change expected to become open or closed joint stock companies.

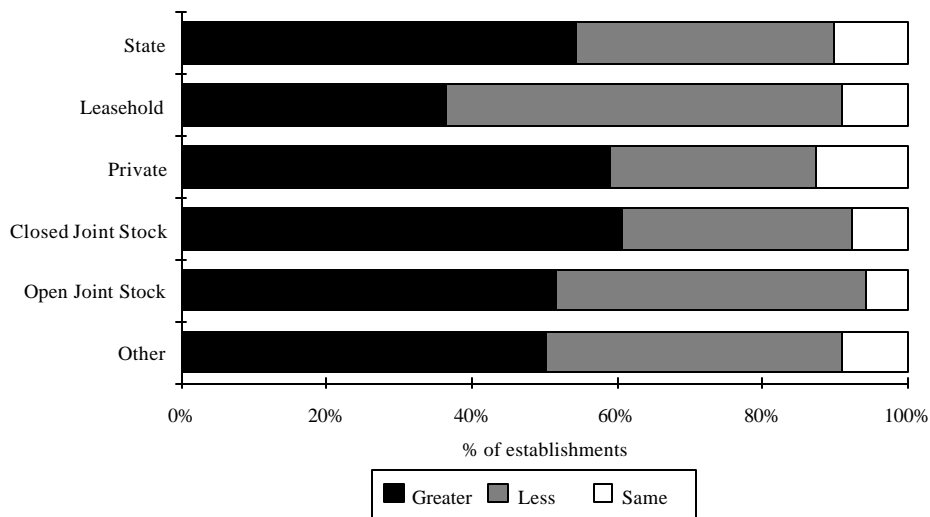
Figure 3: Change in sales in real terms, 1998-99, by industry, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1673

After more than a decade of relentless decline, there was a glimmer of hope in that for the first time, a majority of firms reported that sales in real terms had risen over the past two years. However, for the whole of manufacturing, 38.6 per cent of all firms reported that they had declined, with a further 6.8 per cent reporting no change (Figure 3). Leaseholdings, open joint stock and state enterprises were relatively likely to have experienced a decline, and the small private sector and closed joint stock enterprises an increase (Figure 4).

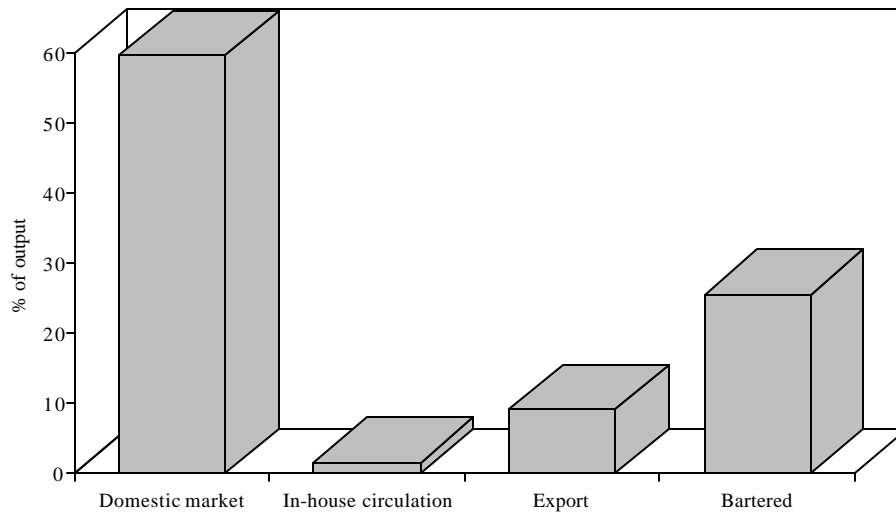
Figure 4: Change in sales in real terms, 1998-99, by property form of establishment, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 686

In terms of distribution of output, Ukrainian industry has remained heavily oriented to the domestic market, which accounted for 59.6 per cent of sales in 1999 (Figure 5). This was actually greater than a year earlier. The proportion of firms exporting some of their output had increased, but on average only 9.2 per cent of total output was exported, less than a year before. State enterprises actually exported more of their output than other firms.

Figure 5: Distribution of output, 1999, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1459

One worrying pattern deserves to be highlighted. Much more was being bartered - 25.6 per cent of total output compared with about 7 per cent six years earlier. Both the number of firms bartering and the percentage of output bartered had increased since 1992. Similarly, more firms sold output to their workers and more gave output to their workers than was the case six years earlier. The latter two forms of distribution accounted for over 4.6 per cent of total output, with a further 1.6 per cent going for in-house circulation.

As for other signs of restructuring, the survey considered three forms of innovation - product, capital and work process. Over 16 per cent had reduced their product range over the past two years, compared with 40.8 per cent that had increased it, with state establishments being slightly more likely than others to have reduced the range. About two in every five had made some technological change in production, with state enterprises being the least innovative in that respect. And 31.6 per cent had made some definable change in work organisation, with fewer state enterprises having done so than joint stock firms (Table 1). So, in terms of technology there were signs of change; later papers will consider the quality and impact of those changes.

Senior managements were asked to identify the “main economic difficulty” faced by their firms in the previous six months. The most common response was lack of sales 34.7 per cent (although this was much less prominently the main problem than was the case in earlier years), followed by high taxes (23.1 per cent), lack of raw materials (15.7 per cent), customers’ inability or unwillingness to pay (9.8 per cent), and suppliers’ financial position (6.7 per cent).

Table 1: Technological innovation, by property form of establishment, 1998-2000, All Regions
(% of establishments having made a change)

Property Form	Change in range of products		New technology	Change in work org.
	Increase	Decrease		
State	32.5	8.8	40.0	32.1
Leasehold	36.4	13.6	45.5	27.3
Private	48.2	7.1	46.3	33.5
Closed Joint Stock	50.6	13.4	42.6	33.2
Open Joint Stock	37.9	20.6	38.9	31.8
Other	45.5	18.2	29.4	25.3

Source: ULFS7, n = 1671

One creeping structural change has been in the means by which managers are appointed, since the mode of “corporate governance” could be an important determinant of the firm’s performance and approach to restructuring.⁵ Marking a significant change from the mid-1990s, in only 12.8 per cent of establishments had top managers been appointed by a line **Ministry**. In 20.1 per cent that had been done, formally at least, by the **work collective**, in 16.5 per cent by **enterprise boards**, and in 3.3 per cent by **local authorities**; the remainder were appointed by a combination of methods. This represented a sharp decline in the role of line Ministries since the mid-1990s, coupled with an increase in the role of boards of directors.

In the ‘heavy’ industries of energy, chemicals, metals and engineering, managers were more likely to have been appointed by Ministries, whereas in ‘light’ industry, building materials, wood and paper, engineering and food processing they were more likely to have been appointed by work collectives. Some 20 per cent of managers were appointed for two years or less (usually on a one year contract), 15.5 per cent were appointed for three or four years, 37 per cent were appointed for five years, 0.2 per cent for longer, and 27.1 per cent were appointed without a fixed term or formal contract. Managerial appointments, on average, have become shorter than in the early 1990s, as recorded in ULFS1. And many more managers are now on formal employment contracts. In this respect, at least, Ukraine has been moving towards international norms.

One old, widely-criticized ‘structural’ feature of Ukrainian enterprises was dependency on government **subsidies**. However, remarkably - given the image of factories being maintained by state assistance - 97.2 per cent reported that they were not receiving a subsidy for production purposes, and only in the energy sector did many firms appear to be receiving subsidies. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the primary reason for this virtual disappearance has been the lack of financial resources.

As expected, receipt of a government subsidy was more common in state establishments, although even here there had been a strong decline in the share receiving such assistance. Half the subsidies had come from the national budget, the remainder coming from regional and local authority budgets.

⁵ Issues of corporate governance have attracted considerable discussion in the context of the transformation of soviet-style enterprises. For one perspective, see G. Standing, “Promoting the “Human Development Enterprise”: Enterprise restructuring and corporate governance in Russian industry”, *Labour Market Papers*, No.8 (Geneva, ILO, October 1995).

A final structural feature worth stressing is that 16.4 per cent of factory managers believed there was a strong possibility that their firm would go bankrupt in the next 12 months, with a further 18.6 per cent being uncertain. Managers in the building materials sector were particularly pessimistic, whereas firms in chemicals and metals were most sanguine. Leasehold, open joint-stock and state establishments were most inclined to anticipate bankruptcy. The most mentioned main reason for expecting bankruptcy was difficulty in selling the output (26.4 per cent), followed by indebtedness (22.4 per cent), and rising prices of raw materials and other inputs (21.3 per cent). The growing fear associated with debt deserves to be emphasised.

In sum, there was still widespread pessimism about economic prospects, and managers seemed realistic. While property form restructuring had occurred on a wide scale, and while there had been a corresponding shift in forms of managerial appointments, the continuing decline in sales highlights the persistent structural crisis.

3. Capacity utilization in 1999-2000

With the continuing economic slump in the country, it was not surprising that the level at which factories were operating in early 2000 was well below capacity, and that this was down from 1999, which in turn was down from the mid 1990s.

Overall, according to the firms' estimates, by 2000 firms were operating at merely 45.3 per cent capacity - down on a year earlier and over 21 per cent below what had been the level in 1993. This is extraordinarily low by international standards and even by comparison with the low levels recorded in Russian industry.⁶

The lowest levels in 2000 were in food processing and building materials, the highest in metals followed by wood and paper (Figure 6). The biggest decline since 1993 had been in food processing, almost certainly reflects the inability of people to afford food, bearing in mind that there has been widespread resort to private small-scale farming and consumption and sale of home-grown food.⁷

Private firms tended to be operating at relatively high capacity (Figure 7), although the level was lower in all property forms than in the mid 1990s. There was no apparent relationship between size of establishment and capacity utilization (Figure 8). And declines had continued in most regions (Figure 9). All these figures suggest that the decline in output was due primarily to aggregate demand factors, not to restructuring.

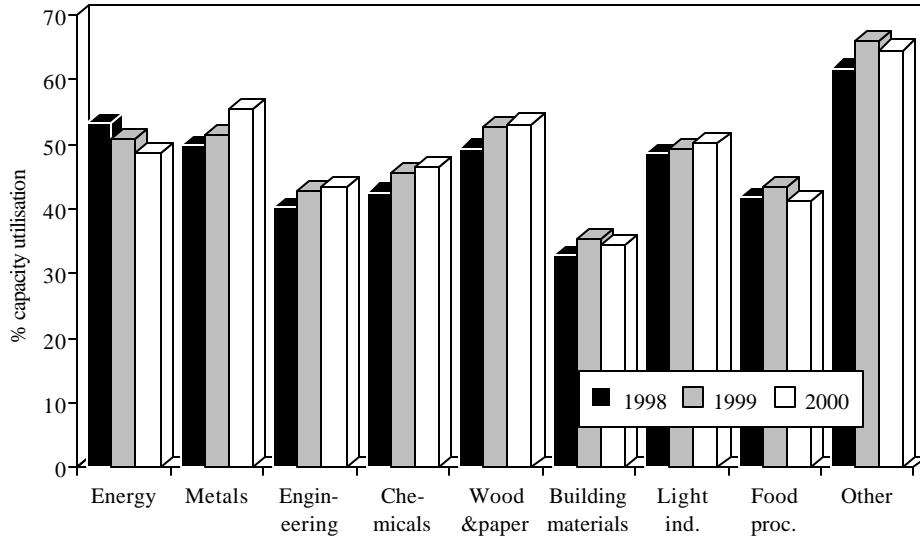
One complication in interpreting changes in capacity utilization arises from a tendency for large-scale establishments in difficulty to opt for **restructuring by divesting**, by detaching production units, closing or transferring them to other managements or selling them or their equipment and facilities. Such divesting is a potentially desirable aspect of restructuring, and featured throughout the 1990s. According to ULFS7, 11 per cent of all firms had detached a production unit over the past two years, with that being relatively common in building materials and in metals.

⁶ G. Standing, *Enterprise Restructuring and Russian Unemployment: Reviving Dead Souls* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996). The figures in the text are unweighted mean averages.

⁷ Between 1985 and the mid 1990s, the number of city residents' plots of land doubled, reaching 6.8 million units for an urban population of 35.4 million.

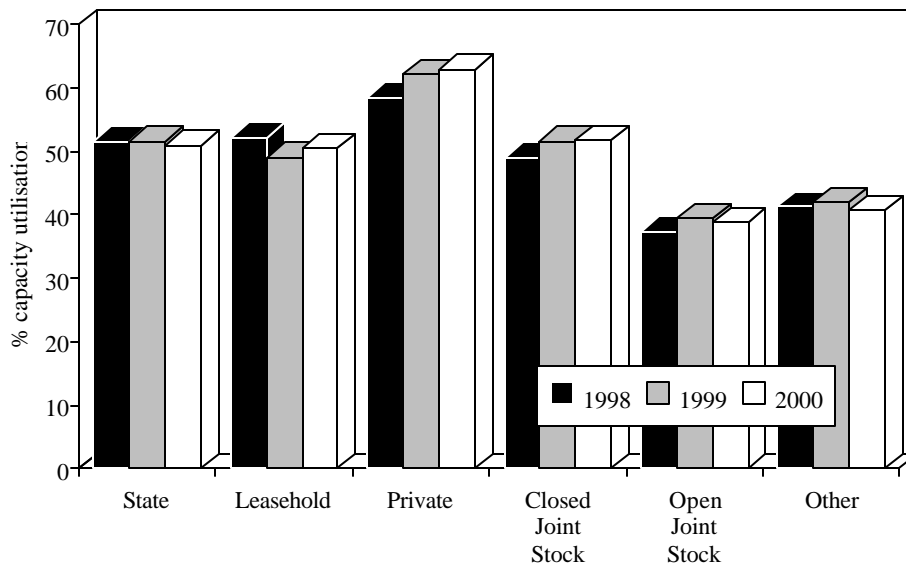
However, there was no sign that this was associated with variations in capacity at which firms were operating.

Figure 6: Capacity utilization, 1998-2000, by industry, All Regions



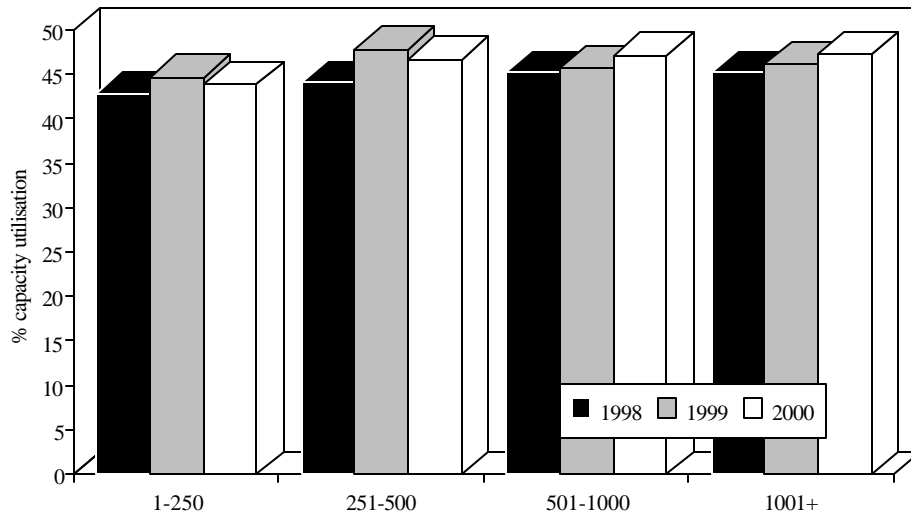
Source: ULFS7, n = 1596

Figure 7: Capacity utilization, 1998-2000, by property form, All Regions



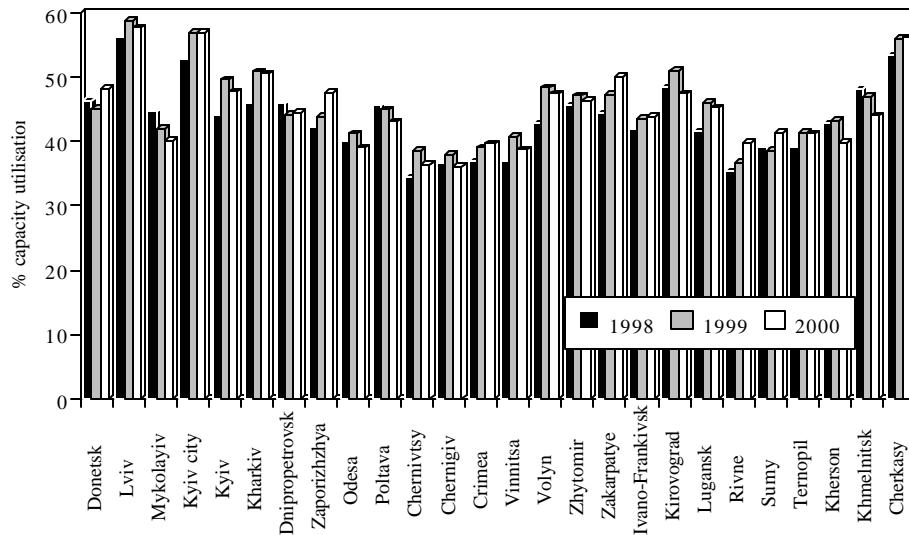
Source: ULFS7, n = 1596

Figure 8: Capacity utilization, 1998-2000, by employment size, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1593

Figure 9: Capacity utilization, 1998-2000, by Region



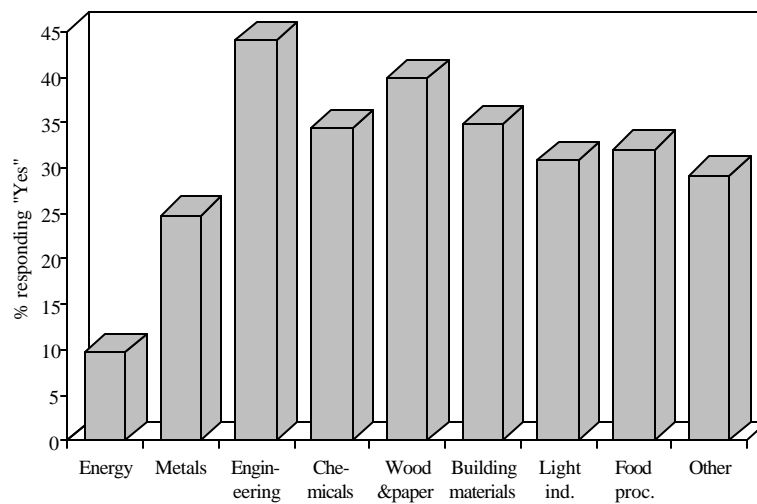
Source: ULFS7, n = 1596

In sum, the remarkably low capacity utilization levels indicate the enormous slack in the Ukrainian economy, which has remained much worse than in the early 1990s. As we have recognized in earlier reports, no doubt much of the ‘unused capacity’ is obsolete, and unlikely to be restored to operation. However, to write off over 50 per cent of capacity at a time of extremely low living standards would be too draconian for the country’s economic well-being. In the longer-term, writing off old plant would be desirable, but for the next few years phasing out that capacity at a slower pace would be more prudent.

4. Labour surplus in Ukrainian industry

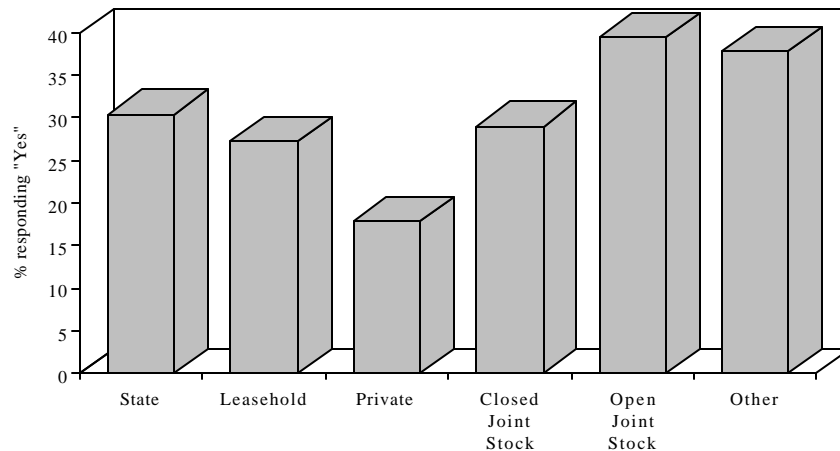
With capacity utilization rates crashing, by 2000 over 34 per cent of firms reported that they could maintain their current level of production with fewer workers, with a further 6.9 per cent being unsure. Except in the energy sector, this was reported widely across all industries, supporting the view that it was low demand that was the main cause of the dismal industrial performance (Figure 10). The figures actually underestimate labour slack, since larger firms were more likely to report being able to cut employment. There was no simple correlation between ownership-management form and this measure of labour surplus, although perhaps open joint stock establishments were most inclined to report it (Figure 11).

Figure 10: Percent of establishments that could produce same output with fewer workers, by industry, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1672

Figure 11: Percent of establishments that could produce same output with fewer workers, by property form, 2000, All Regions

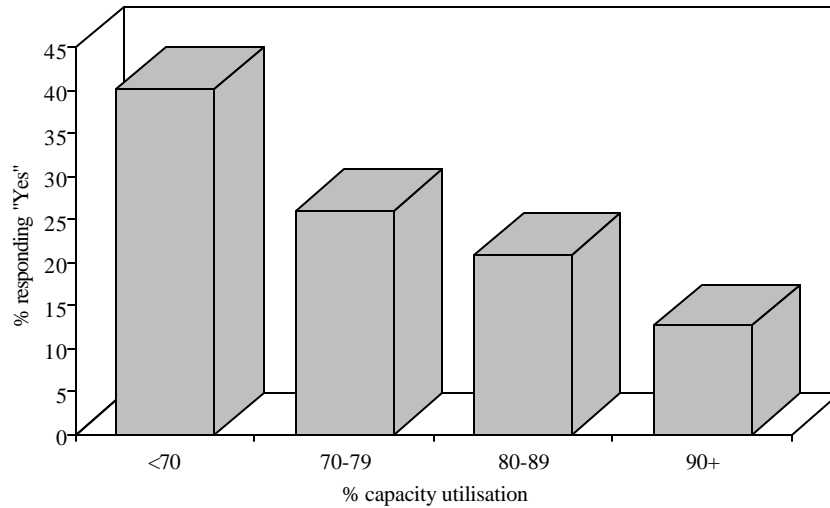


Source: ULFS7, n = 1672

Those operating at very low levels of capacity utilization were most likely to have surplus workers (Figure 12). And those in which capacity utilization had fallen sharply

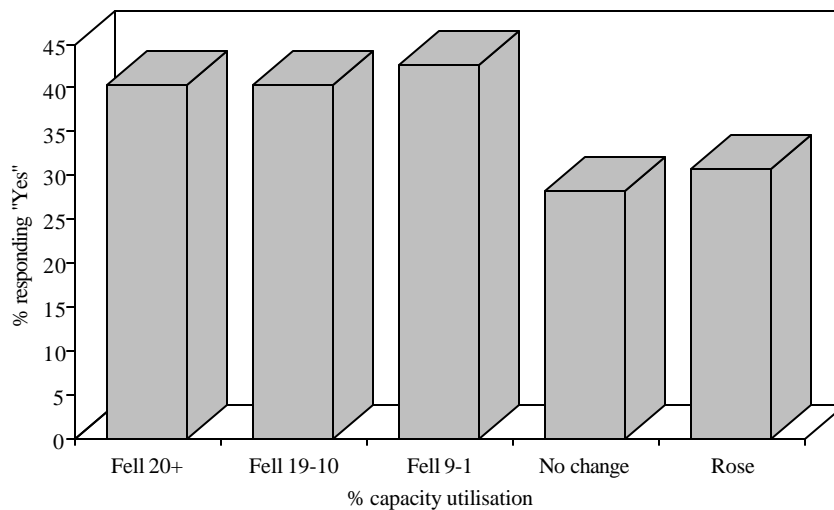
were most likely to report this (Figure 13). Perhaps more surprisingly, those that had cut employment were more likely than others to estimate that they could cut employment, although 30.7 per cent of those that had *raised* employment over the past year also felt they could produce the same amount with fewer workers.

Figure 12: Percent of establishments that could produce same output with fewer workers, by capacity utilization, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1563

Figure 13: Percent of establishments that could produce same output with fewer workers, by change in capacity utilization, 1998-99, All Regions

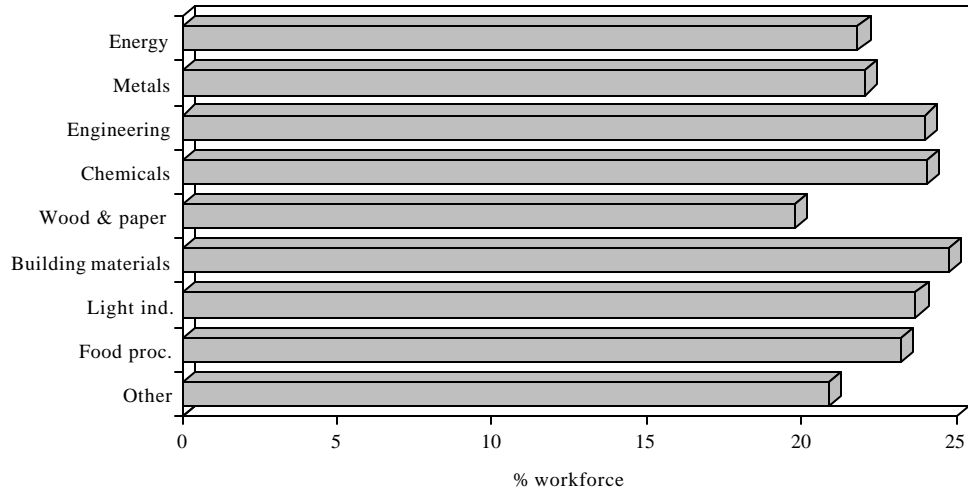


Source: ULFS7, n = 1519

Those firms reporting that they could produce the same with fewer workers were asked to estimate what percentage of the workforce they could cut without reducing output, other things equal. If we assume all other firms had no surplus labour in this sense, we find that, according to the managements, *Ukrainian factories could have cut employment by 7.9 per cent without affecting output*. Of just those that reported being able to reduce employment without affecting output, the figure was 23.1 per cent.

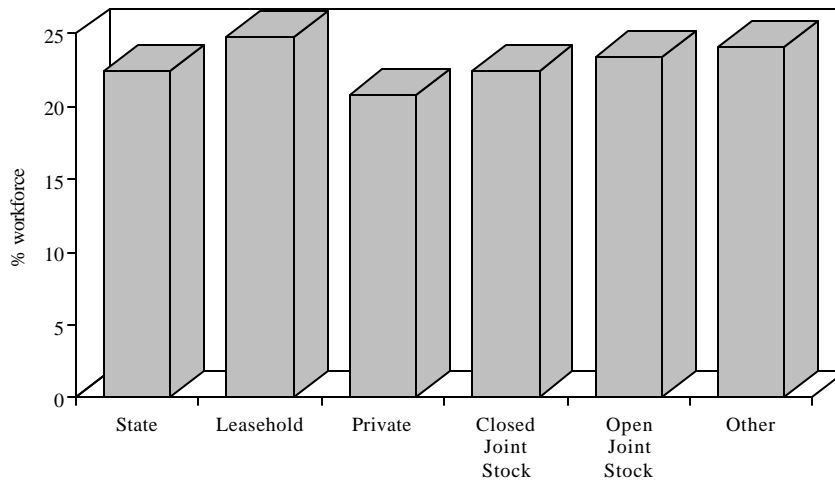
This form of “labour hoarding” was spread across most industries, regardless of size and property form (Figures 14-15). It is a subjective estimate, and may say as much about managerial attitudes as about what could be achieved.⁸ We may surmise that the data give lower bounds for the number of jobs that could be cut, given the prolonged period in which managements were attuned to maximising employment.

Figure 14: Percent of workforce to cut without affecting output, by industry, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 570

Figure 15: Percent of workforce to cut without affecting output, by property form, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 570

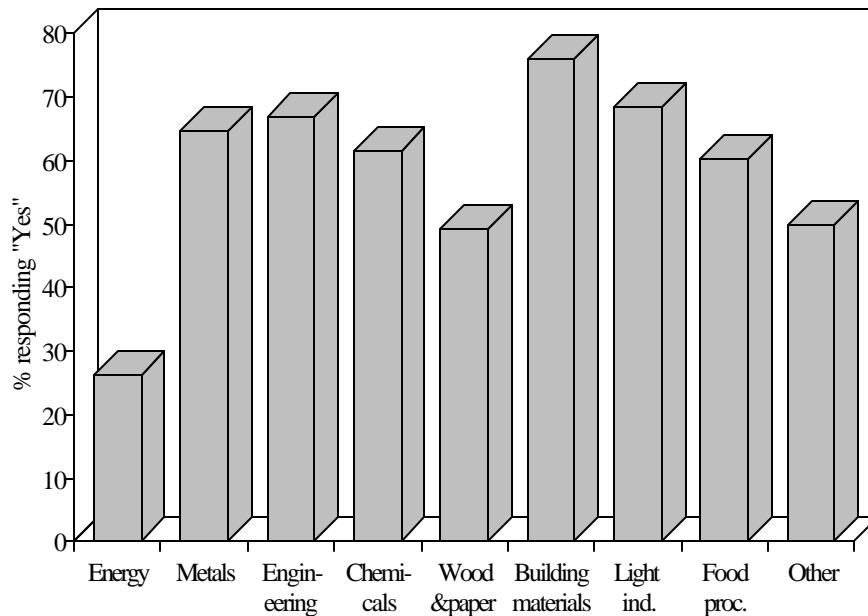
⁸ Managers appointed by - or in their minds responsible to - work collectives seemed more likely to report that they could cut employment without affecting output.

Those managers who reported that their firms could cut employment were asked what had been their main response to surplus labour, besides making retrenchments. No less than 32.9 per cent said they had put workers on unpaid leave, and a further 3.3 per cent said that their main response had been to put workers on partially paid leave. This understates the incidence of these practices, because other firms resorted to unpaid leave as a secondary measure.

Managements were also asked whether they had experienced a period in the past six months in which they had too little work for their workforce lasting for two weeks or more. This proxy measure of labour surplus was used primarily to lead to questions about managerial reactions. Overall, 60.9 per cent had experienced this, with high levels in all sectors except energy (Figure 16).

It was relatively common in firms with fewer than 500 workers. Managements had reacted in various ways, but more than half of them reported that the main measure had been to put workers on *unpaid administrative leave* (Table 2) - implying that more than one in every three firms had done this. Use of this measure was substantially greater than in the mid-1990s. Cutting hours and putting workers on partially paid leave were also common responses. A majority of firms (55.7 per cent) had also made *internal transfers* of workers to avoid or limit redundancies (Figure 17).

Figure 16: Percent of establishments having too little work for workforce in 1998-99, by industry, All Regions



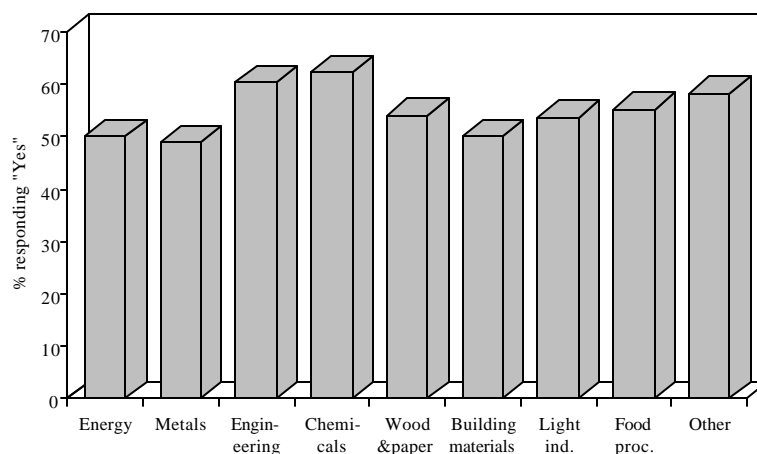
Source: ULFS7, n = 1663

Table 2: Main measure taken in response to surplus labour besides retrenchments and transfers, All Regions, 1998-99 (percentage of establishments taking specified measure)

Main measure	%
None	2.1
Cut normal hours	24.5
Unpaid leave	54.0
Partial paid leave	5.4
Stop production	8.1
Transfer to other work	2.9
Other	2.1
Do not know	0.9

Source: ULFS7, n = 1025

Figure 17: Percent of establishments making internal transfers to limit redundancies, by industry, 1999-2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1011

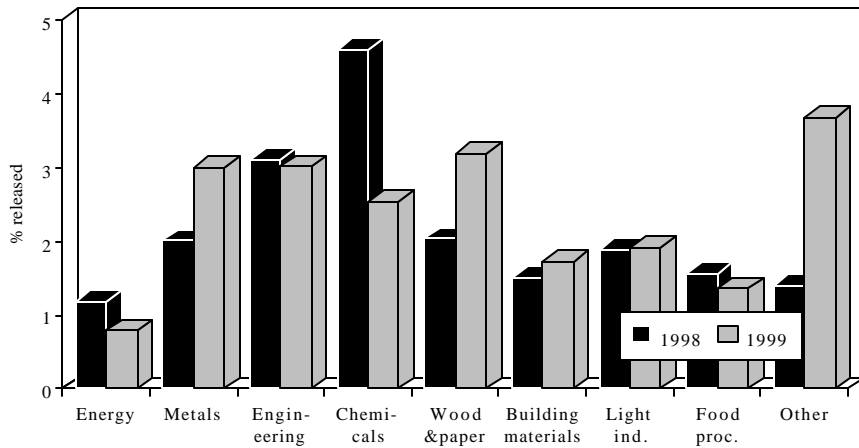
5. Redundancies and employment decline

In Ukraine, it is little use relying on conventional ideas about labour market reactions to an economic depression. Conventional textbooks indicate that if aggregate demand falls sharply, employment should fall very sharply too. But standard statistics in Ukraine suggest that employment has fallen by much less than output. Some observers attribute this to enterprise rigidities, and to “soft budget constraints”. The reality is that they have been able to rely on less costly ways of reducing employment than by cutting employment. They can just put workers on “unpaid leave”, or simply not pay wages. This may have concealed the depth of labour market decline, but it is building up a crisis of enormous proportions.

There has been a common perception that Ukrainian factories have been unwilling or unable to make workers redundant. In fact, even in the early 1990s redundancies occurred.

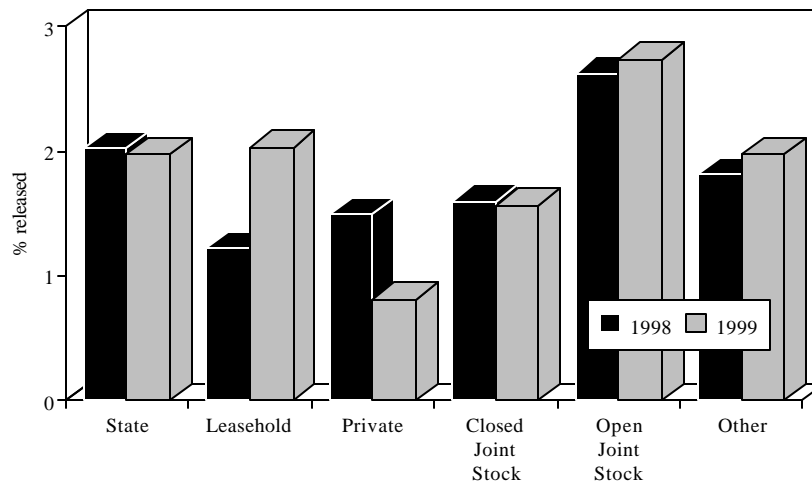
According to ULFS1, nearly two-thirds resorted to redundancies in 1993-94. But they tended to release small numbers of workers. This pattern has continued. In 2000, 47.4 per cent *had made redundancies in the past year, accounting for 2.2 per cent of all jobs* (Figures 18-19). These figures exclude workers who had left by other means, including those ‘induced to resign’.

Figure 18: Per cent of workforce released, 1998-99, by industry, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

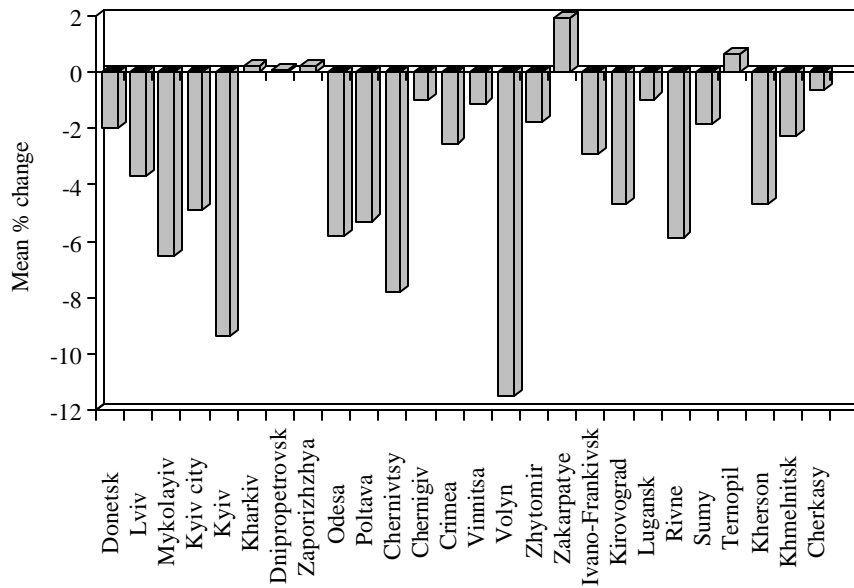
Figure 19: Per cent of workforce released, 1998-99, by property Form, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 689

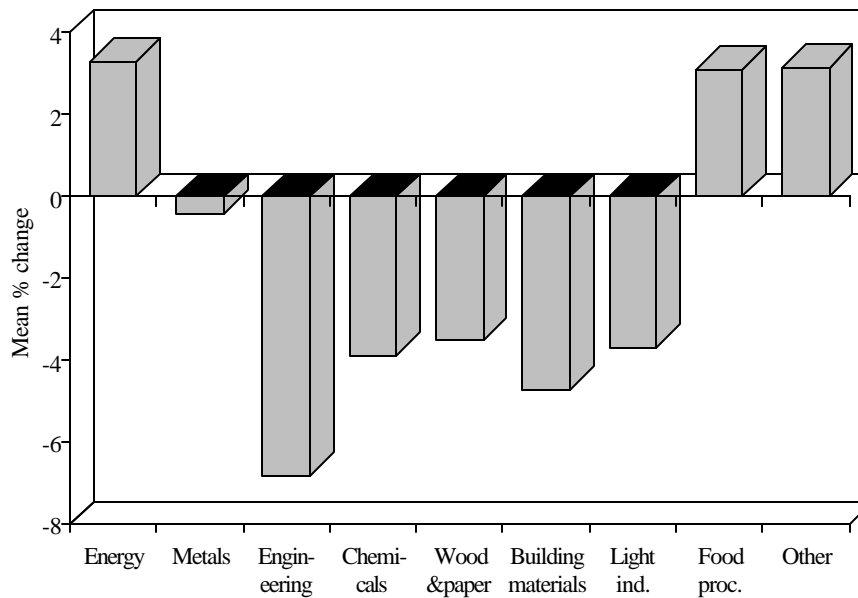
The fact is that employment has been cut steadily and substantially. In 1999-2000, in the 1,684 factories, **employment was cut by 21,344, or by about 2 per cent overall.** Although it rose in energy and food processing, employment declined in most regions and industries, and in all size-categories of firm (Figures 20-22). It stabilised only in firms in which sales in real terms had grown. Notable is that state enterprise managers were no more inclined to hold rigidly onto their workforces than others. Those that had cut jobs most also tended to report they could cut employment by relatively large numbers without affecting output.

Figure 20: Per cent employment change, by region, 1998-99



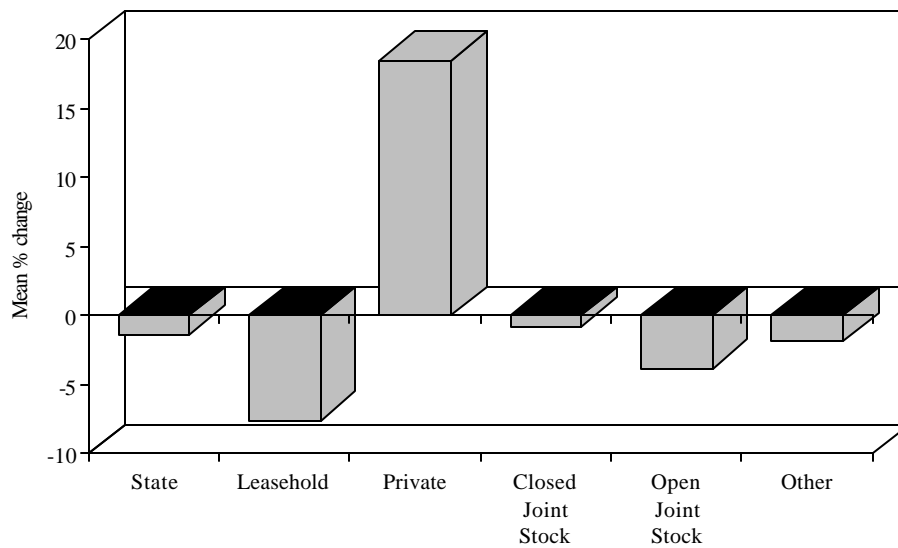
Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

Figure 21: Per cent employment change, by industry, 1998-99, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

Figure 22: Per cent employment change, by property form, 1998-99, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

Managements were asked what impact sales changes had on employment in the past two years. Of those that had experienced a cut in sales, 51.3 per cent said that the main result had been a cut in employment, 8.2 per cent that it had been reduced work intensity. This marked something quietly momentous, for it was the first time that a majority had responded to sales decline by cutting employment, and reflected a marked reduction in the tendency to respond by reducing work intensity.

In firms with sales up, 50.2 per cent reported that they had increased employment as a result, while 20.5 per cent had merely increased work intensity. One can take these results as further testimony of labour slack. State establishments seemed no more or less likely to have cut employment as a result of declining sales than other firms.

The managers' perceptions of the impact on employment of structural changes are also worth noting. Of those that had changed property form, 6.5 per cent estimated that the change had resulted in lower employment, compared to 13 per cent that believed it had raised employment. In firms that had narrowed the range of products, 78.4 per cent said they believed that had resulted in a cut in employment, whereas 55.9 per cent of those that had increased the product range believed that had increased employment. In firms that had made some technological innovation in production, 36.5 per cent believed that it had raised employment, 9.9 per cent that it had been labour displacing. And of those that had made work reorganisation to improve efficiency, 37 per cent believed that it helped to raise employment, while 12.9 per cent thought it had resulted in labour displacement.

To examine employment change more systematically, a multiple regression was estimated in which the dependent variable was the percent employment change over the past year. The following was estimated by ordinary least squares regression:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PEMPCHG} = & \mathbf{a} + \mathbf{b}_1\mathbf{S}(\text{IND}) + \mathbf{b}_2\mathbf{EMPSIZE} + \mathbf{b}_3\mathbf{S}(\text{PROP}) + \\ & \mathbf{b}_4\mathbf{S}(\text{REG}) + \mathbf{b}_5\mathbf{CHCAP} + \mathbf{b}_6\mathbf{CHSALES} + \\ & \mathbf{b}_7\%BC + \mathbf{b}_8\%FEM + \mathbf{b}_9\%LVE + \mathbf{b}_{10}\%MAT + \\ & \mathbf{b}_{11}\mathbf{SUB} + \mathbf{e} \end{aligned}$$

where the independent variables are:

$\Sigma(\text{IND})$	= binaries (1,0) for industrial sector, the omitted category being the energy sector;
EMPSIZE	= employment size of establishment in mid 1999;
$\Sigma(\text{PROP})$	= binaries for property form of establishment, the omitted category being state establishments;
$\Sigma(\text{REG})$	= set of binaries for region in which establishment located, the omitted region being Donetsk;
CHSALES	= per cent change in sales 1999-2000;
CHCAP	= per cent change in capacity utilization rate 1999-2000;
%BC	= per cent of workforce classified as manual workers (skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled) in 1999;
%FEM	= per cent of workforce in establishment consisting of women in 1999;
%LVE	= per cent of workforce on administrative leave as of March 2000;
%MAT	= per cent of women workforce on maternity leave, March 2000;
SUB	= dummy, 1 if establishment was receiving state subsidy, 0 otherwise;
e	= error term.

Omitting the results in which the regional dummies were included, which had no substantial effect on the remaining coefficients, the results of this function are presented in Table 3. The main finding of note is that firms had adjusted employment to demand, as measured by changes in sales. In other words, firms were tending to adjust employment in response to market pressures, even though the labour surplus figures testify to a continuing reluctance to do so.

As for employment expectations, given the widespread labour surplus, it was not surprising that many managers were pessimistic about employment prospects. Over 19 per cent expected to cut jobs in the next 12 months, whereas 13.1 per cent expected employment to grow (Figure 23). The glimmer of hope is that the latter figure was much greater than in previous years. Expectations of cuts did not seem to vary by property form (Figure 24), but the larger the factory, the more likely the expectation of job cuts (Figure 25). And the greater the decline in employment in the past year, the higher the probability of expecting a decline in the next.

Although useful for indicating the pattern of expected employment, these figures should be interpreted as overly optimistic, if the results from the past rounds of the survey are any guide. In both Ukrainian and Russian industry, during the 1990s many more firms cut jobs than had anticipated doing so, and far fewer of those that had expected to increase employment subsequently did so.

In sum, employment had shrunk further in 1999-2000 and managements expected it to continue to shrink. It would be a mistake to characterise Ukrainian industry as rigid in terms of employment or hoarding labour to the point of providing an explanation for the misleadingly low official rate of unemployment in the country.

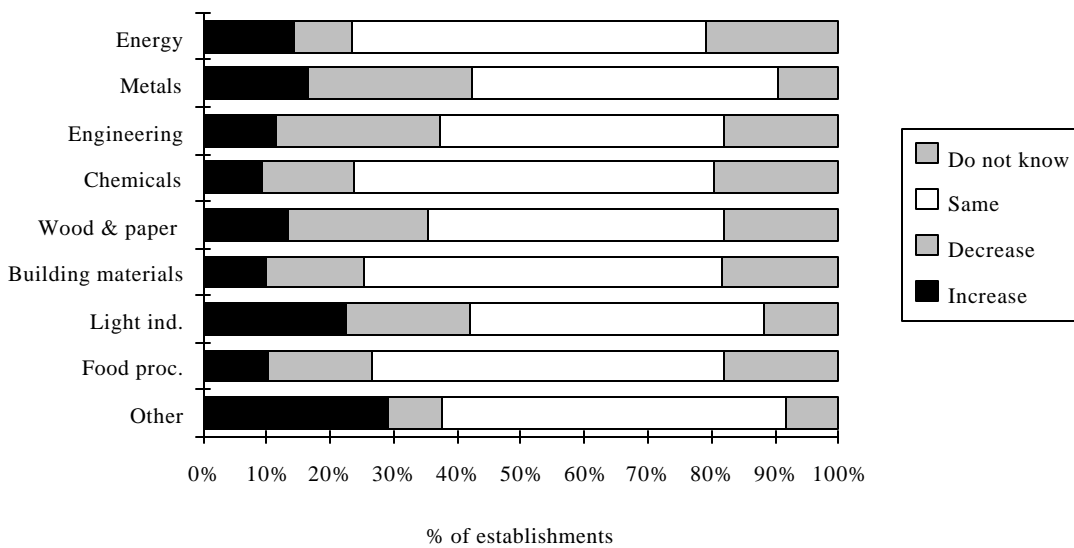
Table 3: Per cent employment change, 1999-2000, All Regions

Variable	Coefficient
(Constant)	75.9760
Industry	
Metals	-6.7755
Engineering	-21.9051 ***
Chemicals	-12.4450
Wood & paper	-9.0278
Building materials	-8.5605
Light industry	-4.1232
Food processing	2.5955
Other	-9.3179
Property Form	
Leasehold	-1.8422
Private	4.5386
Closed Joint Stock	8.5373 *
Open Joint Stock	-2.1659
Employment Size	0.0002
% Capacity Utilization	0.1134 **
% Sales Change '99-99	0.0039
% Manual Workers '99	-1.1940 ***
% Unionised 2000	8.1653

R² = 0.0769
 F = 2.6829

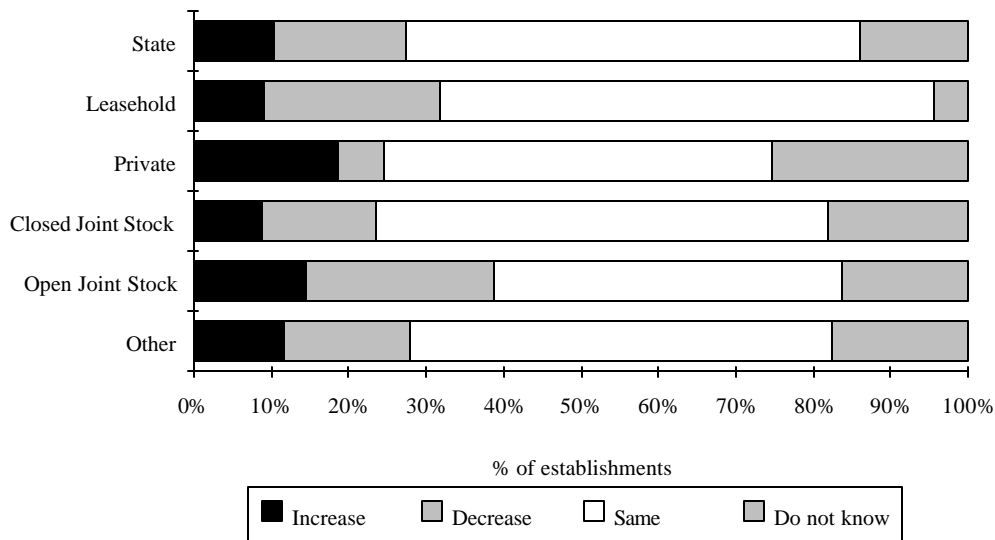
Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

Figure 23: Expected employment change in next year, by industry, 2000, All Regions



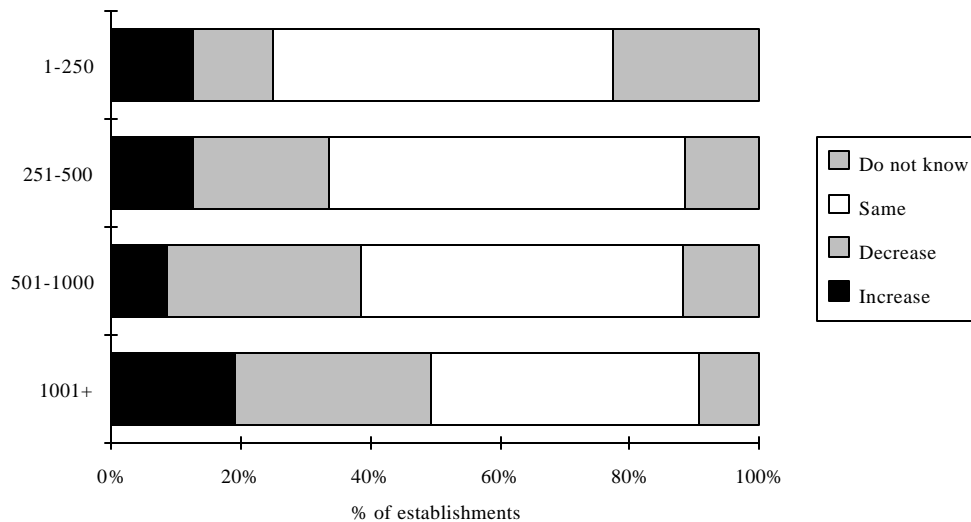
Source: ULFS7, n = 1660

Figure 24: Expected employment change in next year, by property form, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1660

Figure 25: Expected employment change in next year, by employment size, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1654

6. Concealed unemployment in Ukrainian industry

We alluded earlier to the incredibly low “registered” unemployment in Ukraine. There are many reasons for being sure that official figures chronically understate actual unemployment. Among them are the unemployment benefit system, which has scarcely provided the unemployed with decent benefits or *any* benefits, and the undeveloped nature of the employment exchanges. Also important are behavioural reactions by firms restricting the emergence of unemployment in its conventional form. The following considers the extent of invisible or concealed unemployment.

Unemployment as administrative leave

One way by which Ukrainian firms have responded to the economic slump is by placing workers on “administrative leave”, mostly unpaid although in few cases with something like a minimum wage income provided from the firm’s wage fund. There are various reasons for managers to prefer to put workers on leave rather than release them or to cut the working time of the work force or to cut wages.

First, by doing that, they avoid having to pay severance pay. Under Ukraine’s **Employment Law**, employers must pay three months of severance pay to any worker released for economic or ‘organisational’ reasons, the monthly amount being equivalent to the average wage received by the worker over the previous three months. By putting workers on administrative leave, they not only avoid severance pay but may succeed in inducing unwanted workers to leave the establishment “voluntarily”.⁹

Under the **Employment Law**, a worker on unpaid leave - or in the three months during which he or she is paid severance pay - cannot receive unemployment benefits, and also has no incentive to register at an employment exchange, given the very low probability of finding a job through a local exchange. As a result, they would not be counted as unemployed. Indeed, those on unpaid leave are counted as employed, even if they had been on such “leave” for many months.

Second, managements were encouraged to resort to this practice by the wage tax, or the ‘tax-based incomes policy’, by which firms raising money wages above a certain amount were penalised by a tax.¹⁰ By putting some workers on unpaid or partially paid leave the average wage is lowered, as is the wage bill, allowing workers actually working to be paid higher wages while lowering the amount paid as wage tax.

Third, for workers it has been rational to remain on administrative leave rather than quit to become unemployed, because there remains a possibility that the leave is temporary and access is retained to some of the enterprise’s social security and benefits, such as healthcare and use of the firm’s social amenities. Quitting would mean loss of severance pay and temporary loss of entitlement to unemployment benefits.

These factors have surely created the unfortunate situation of extensive administrative leave, eroding the workers’ income and employment security. It is also economically inefficient because it restricts labour market mobility, and it gives an artificially inflated image of the level of employment.

The data show that unpaid and partially paid administrative leave - or in conventional international parlance “lay-offs” - had increased considerably since the mid-1990s. In March 1999, 47.1 per cent of all factories had some workers on administrative leave; in September 1999, the share was 45.4 per cent; in March 2000, it was back to 46.8 per cent. This refers to full-time administrative leave, and does not include workers put on short-time work or sent on prolonged holidays, which were symptoms of the same phenomenon.

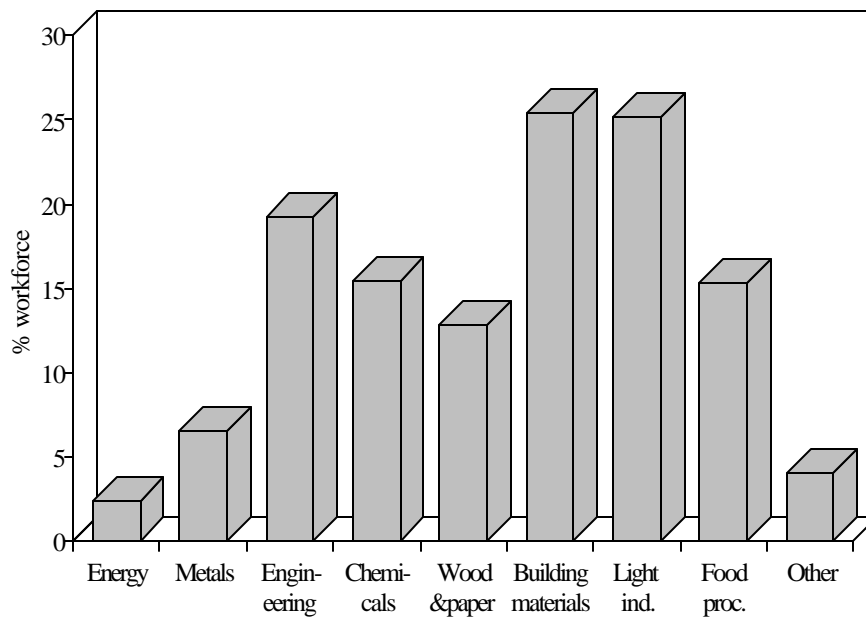
⁹ This may explain the high level of ‘voluntary’ departures from employment recorded in official statistics in Ukraine. For an analysis, see ILO-CEET, 1994, op.cit., chapter 2.

¹⁰ For a review of this policy in Ukraine, see ILO-CEET, 1994, op.cit., chapter 4.

Of firms that resorted to administrative leave or lay-offs, the average share of the workforce affected was 37.7 per cent in March 1999, 38 per cent in September 1999 and 35.5 per cent in March 2000. So, while nearly half of all industrial firms were putting workers on lay offs, they were putting over a third of their workers on such lay offs. Most of that was in the form of unpaid leave, although the share receiving some token pay had risen. Thus, the completely unpaid share was just under 47 per cent in both March 1999 and March 2000, when the remainder were classified as on “partially paid” administrative leave, almost certainly receiving no more than the minimum wage (an amount well below a subsistence level of income).

In late 1999 and 2000, the depth as well as the incidence of administrative leave remained high. *These workers are classified in conventional statistics as employed, but should be counted as unemployed, given their low probability of recall. Taking all firms, including those that did not resort to lay-offs, 17.9 per cent were on unpaid leave in March 1999, 17.3 per cent in November 1999 and 16.1 per cent in March 2000. Some regions were particularly badly affected. In early 2000, on average, in Chernivtsy and Volyn, 25.9 per cent and 26.8 per cent of all industrial workers were laid-off, respectively.*

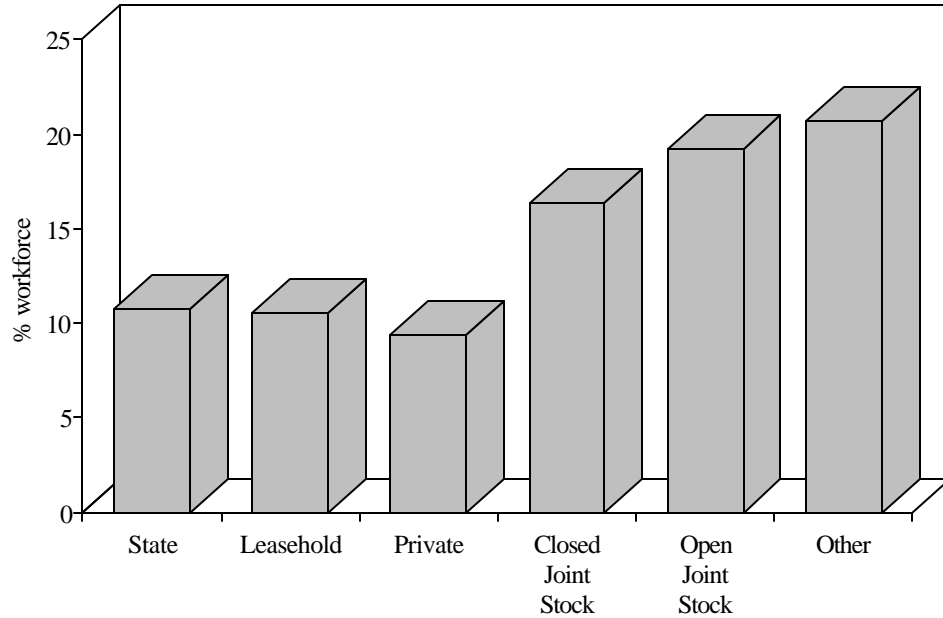
Figure 26: Unpaid and partially paid administrative leave, by industry, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

In March 2000, the industries with the largest share of establishments resorting to lay-offs were light industry and building materials (Figure 26). The practice was greatest in joint stock firms, suggesting that workers’ voice in ownership was limiting retrenchments (Figure 27). Finally, in terms of incidence of firms affected, lay-offs were most extensive in Chernivtsy, followed by Ivano-Frankivsk.

Figure 27: Unpaid and partially paid administrative leave, by property form, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

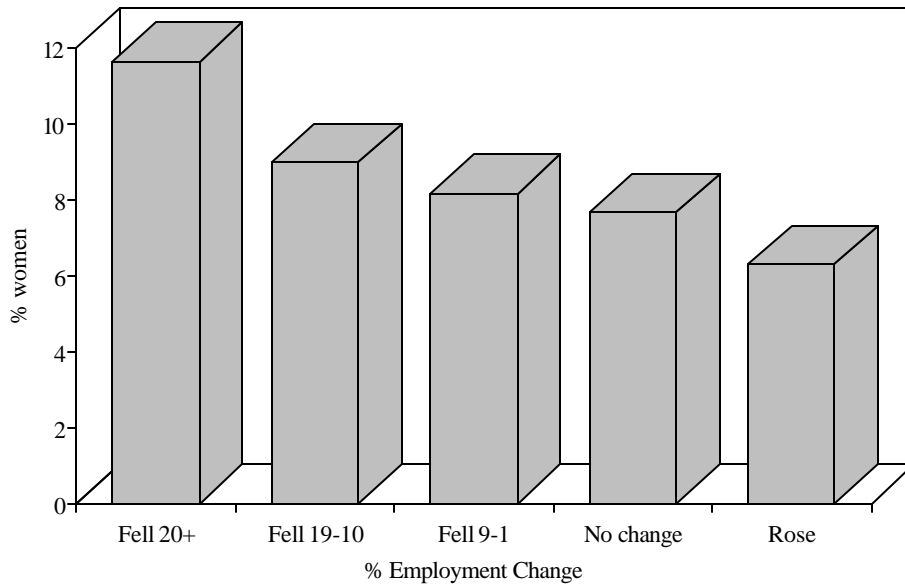
“Maternity” Leave

A peculiar phenomenon observed in early rounds of the ULFS was the high level of maternity leave. This has continued, and should be seen in the context of the extremely low and declining fertility rate in Ukraine. It seems women workers have been encouraged to extend maternity leave for two or three years, as a result of either overt encouragement by managements, or by their perception of the prospect of very low incomes if they returned to their jobs, or because they were under no pressure from managements to return.

In 2000, expressed as a weighted average share of employment, 8.3 per cent of all women workers were supposedly on maternity leave, amounting to 3.7 per cent of the total male and female workforce. In official statistics, they were classified as employed, but we may surmise that most should not have been counted as such in line with international definitions or national practices in western European countries.

Firms that had cut employment had higher proportions of women on maternity leave than others (Figure 28). Unless one believes that employment cuts were associated with rising fertility, this suggests that maternity leave was being used as a mechanism for limiting dis-employment, or for concealing unemployment. This was accentuated by the regulation blocking firms from discharging women when they were on maternity leave. This could be regarded as *regulation failure*.

Figure 28: Per cent of employed women on maternity leave, 2000, by per cent employment change, 1999-2000, All Regions



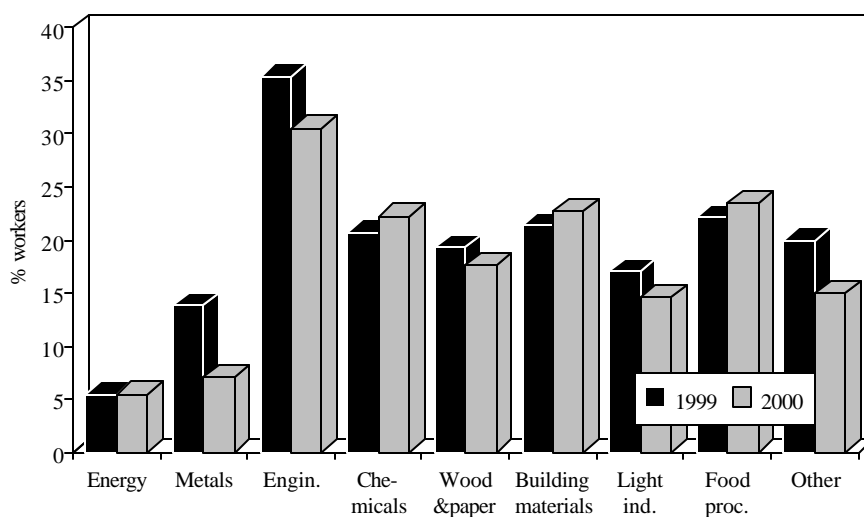
Source: ULFS7, n = 1668

Short-time Working

Another means by which unemployment is disguised is by resort to short-time working. This too had increased since the mid-1990s, but seemed to have stabilised at a very high level, with 43 per cent of firms reporting that workers were on short-time in March 2000, compared with 43.5 per cent a year earlier. Of those resorting to short-time, 18.4 per cent (weighted average) of their workforce was on short-time, the average time lost amounting to eight hours per worker per week. Perhaps surprisingly, neither energy nor metals seemed to resort much to short-time working (Figure 29). In terms of the total workforce in all industrial firms, in early 1999 an average of 22.7 per cent of workers were put on short-time, and in 2000 this was 21.3 per cent.

Actual average working time was 32 hours per week for workers and 33.8 for employees, excluding those on short-time or administrative leave, implying a further form of labour surplus, given that the standard working week averaged 39.5 for workers and 39.6 for employees in March 2000. Although this form of non-working existed in all industries, it was greatest in energy and construction materials, in which weekly non-working time averaged 6.7 and 5.1 hours respectively. These figures also indicate that working time had shrunk during the late 1990s.

Figure 29: Per cent of workforce on short-time, by industry, 1999-2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

Summary of labour slack

Thus, as summarized in Table 4, there are several complementary forms of labour surplus. Taken together, they paint a picture that should fill policymakers with foreboding. Limiting the job cutting over several years has built up a backlog that could become a deluge of job-shedding. Holding onto surplus workers is not just an artificial way of preserving jobs. As we have argued for some time, it is a factor undermining the long-term viability of firms, demoralizing all workers and making productivity so low that profitability and investment are almost impossible.

There are two related aspects of this. First, employment insecurity has been growing. Significantly, 15.1 per cent of firms reported that they had converted some jobs from permanent (regular) to temporary or casual, slightly more than in the previous year. Second, this implies that the employment elasticity with respect to further economic downturn could be expected to grow. When the deluge comes, it could be an avalanche.

Table 4: Indicators of surplus labour, or "concealed unemployment", in Ukrainian industry, ULFS7, 2000

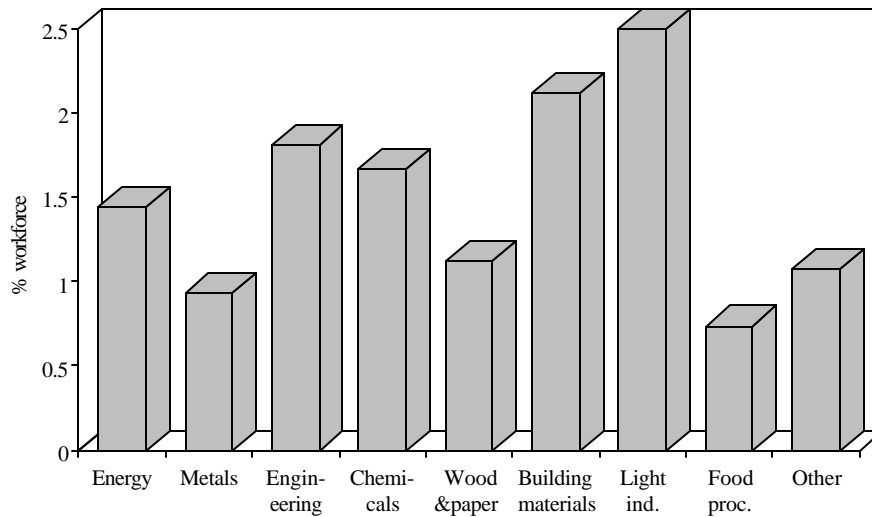
Indicator	% of employment*
1. Could produce same with fewer workers	34.1
— % employment cut possible, if yes	23.1
— % employment cut possible, all firms	7.9
2. Unpaid administrative leave	13.3
3. Partially paid administrative leave	2.1
4. Fully paid administrative leave	0.9
5. Short-time, working fewer days or hours per day	18.4
6. Maternity Leave	
— % of women	8.3
— % of all workforce	3.7
7. Per cent of establishments having wage arrears	69.0

Note: * In full-time equivalent numbers for all firms, including those with zero. All figures are weighted estimates for size of firm, as of May 2000.

7. Vacancies and labour turnover

With the very substantial labour surplus and declining employment, it was not surprising that the *vacancy rate* was very low, the average being 1.5 per cent of total employment (Figure 30). Although one should always be cautious about interpreting vacancy statistics, since the concept is notoriously complicated, the data suggest that there were very few job openings in Ukraine factories in 2000.

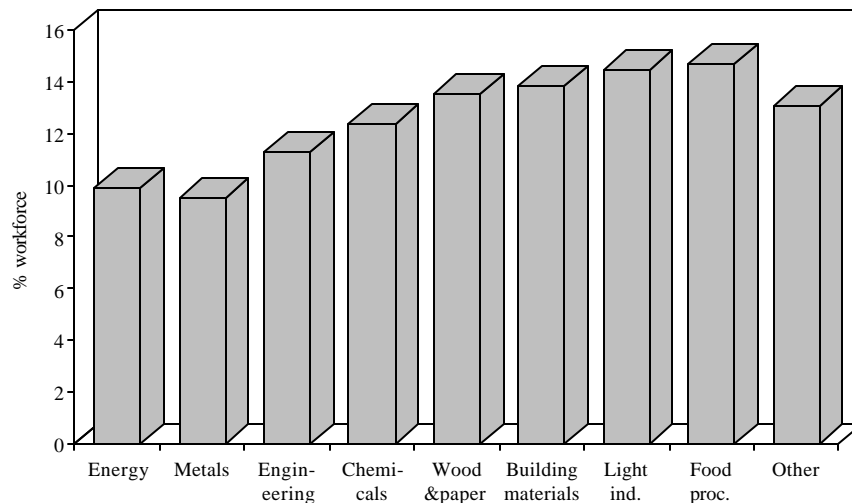
Figure 30: Vacancy rate, by industry, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

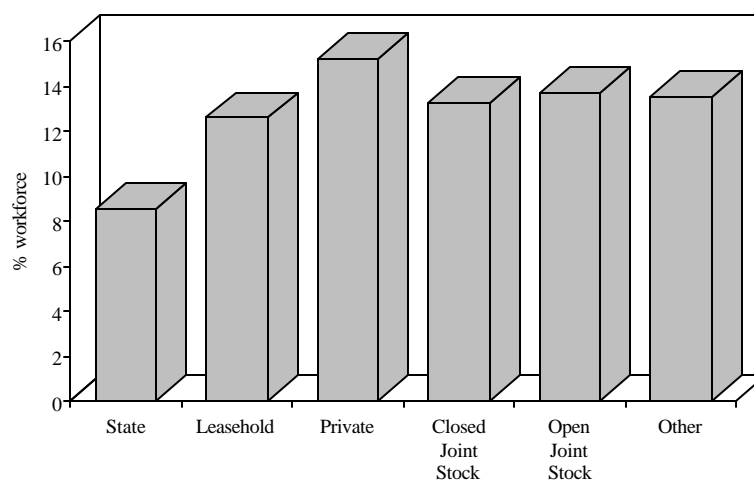
Even so, *labour turnover* was high throughout Ukrainian industry. This is contrary to the image - misleading - of low labour mobility by international standards. According to the ULFS7, it was highest in light industry and lowest in the energy sector (Figure 31). Although in this respect state establishments were no different than others on average, private firms seemed to have above average turnover (Figure 32).

Figure 31: Labour turnover, by industry, 1999-2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

Figure 32: Labour turnover, by property form, 1999-2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

Turnover figures relate to all forms of departure from firms. Within that total, there were some *internal transfers* (i.e., movement of workers from one establishment of an enterprise to another unit), which accounted for 0.7 per cent of total employment, a similar *retirement* rate, of 0.8 per cent, a high “*resignation*” rate, of 8.6 per cent overall, with 10.9 per cent in light industry, an extremely low *dismissal* rate, of 0.3 per cent, and a modest *release* or redundancy level, of 1 per cent, leaving 1.8 per cent as unclassified or unclear. Although there are conceptual ambiguities in each of these categories, the general picture is that there was no impediment to labour turnover.

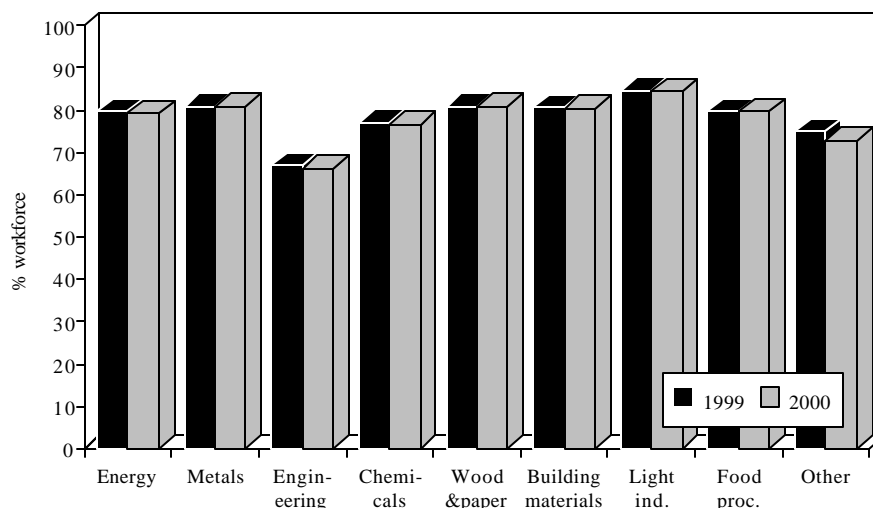
8. Job restructuring

Traditionally, ‘Soviet’ industry relied heavily on a technical division of labour that produced a structure of employment that by international standards was “distorted”, involving a very high share of manual, semi-skilled jobs, whereas the international trend has been towards much greater reliance on non-manual labour. To the extent that Ukrainian industry was overweighed by manual labour, it will have to change rapidly if economic restructuring is to succeed.

Across all manufacturing, in 2000 the share of manual workers remained high by international standards, with so-called “blue-collar” workers accounting for 76.1 per cent.¹¹ Comparing the job structures in 2000 with those in 1999, there was no sign of any significant restructuring (Figure 33). Actually, the percentage of unskilled jobs increased slightly. The share of management and ‘specialist’ employees and technicians increased, whereas the share of supervisory grades and ‘general service’ employees stayed about the same. The manual worker share tended to be higher in large-scale establishments.

¹¹ The conventional terms are unsatisfactory, primarily because it is the jobs that should be labelled, not the workers, who may possess a wide range of ‘skills’ and ‘competencies’, which may be more or less technical and complex than required in the jobs.

Figure 33: Manual worker share of employment, by industry, 1999-2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

Although the manual share was similar in the various property forms, earlier rounds of the survey showed that in the late 1990s private firms had lower 'skilled' shares and higher 'unskilled', had cut the skilled worker share considerably, and had increased their share of managerial and specialist employees. Perhaps private firms were regrading some jobs as unskilled to lower wages, a feature of privatisation in other central and eastern European countries. One might hypothesise that the economic restructuring will produce a more dualistic job structure, and by this means increase income inequality in the labour market.

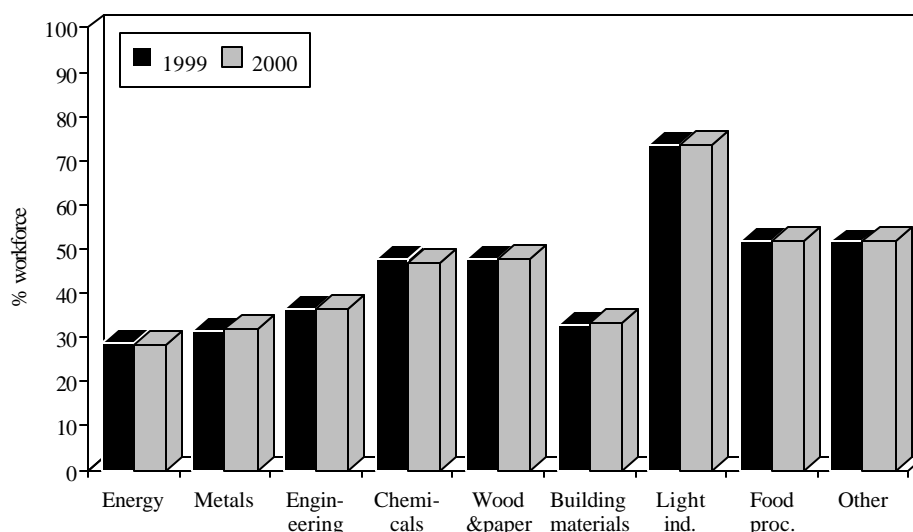
9. The changing position of women: Prospects of marginalization

Throughout the 'transition' phase, one issue of industrial and employment restructuring to have attracted considerable attention throughout central and eastern Europe has been its alleged impact on the status and economic roles of women. A widely held view is that women and other vulnerable groups have been 'marginalized' by rising unemployment and employment restructuring. However, there are reasons and evidence to suggest that this grossly over-simplifies what has happened.

In Ukraine, according to the best available statistics, women actually comprise a slight *majority* of all employed workers, which partly reflects the fact that women comprise a majority of the population, particularly in middle and older age brackets. But also women's labour force participation rate has remained high, at over 63 per cent for women aged 16-64, compared with 73 per cent for men. Women's unemployment rate at 11.6 per cent is actually slightly lower than men's, even though women have comprised 62 per cent of all the unemployed who have *registered* as unemployed.

In Ukrainian industry in 2000, women comprised about half of total employment, although their share varied from three-quarters in light industry to just under a third in the energy sector (Figure 34). Although the industrial ranking is similar to the international pattern, the overall level is remarkably high by international standards.

Figure 34: Women's share of employment, by industry, 1999-2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

The earlier rounds of the survey showed that, as in Russian industry and contrary to popular assertions, in the early phase of restructuring *women's share of industrial employment actually increased*.¹² In 1999-2000, their share remained at that high level. This position may be eroded if market mechanisms coincide with the growth of various forms of discrimination and disadvantage. Accordingly, it is worth examining the nine main means by which women might be disadvantaged in the process of restructuring.

(i) Disadvantaged by industrial restructuring?

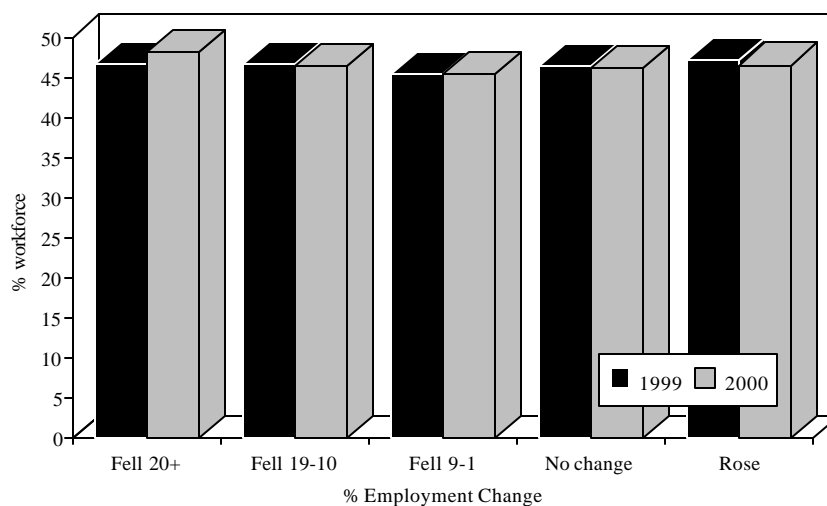
Women's share of employment could rise or fall because of the changing industrial structure within manufacturing. In fact, the pattern of industrial decline in employment that has been taking place should in itself preserve women's share of employment, since relatively rapid falls in total employment have been in sectors in which women have comprised a minority, whereas they have comprised a substantial majority in light industry and food processing.

(ii) Disadvantaged by employment restructuring?

Women could be adversely affected by the size restructuring of employment. The data indicate that in 2000 women comprised a majority of all workers in medium-sized firms, but had lower shares in both large-scale and small-scale firms, where their share was relatively low (46.3 per cent in 1999, 46.3 per cent in 2000, both slightly lower than in 1994-95). However, there was no relationship between women's share and changes in total employment (Figure 35). This implies that employment decline, in itself, would not disadvantage women since men would be just as likely to lose jobs, unless women were disproportionately selected for retrenchment.

¹² G. Standing, "The position of women in Russian industry: Prospects of marginalisation?", *World Development*, Vol., No., Feb.1994, pp.

Figure 35: Women's share of employment, by employment change, 1999-2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 684

(iii) Disadvantaged by property-form restructuring?

In terms of different property forms, women comprised a relatively low share of employment in state and in private firms (private: 41.2 per cent). So, in itself property form restructuring may be expected to have little if any effect on women's share of employment. However, as suggested below, there are reasons for thinking that property form restructuring could reduce their relative employment.

(iv) Disadvantaged by discrimination in recruitment?

The most common form of 'discrimination' in labour markets is via recruitment practices. In this regard, the majority of industrial managements reported that in recruiting manual *workers* they had no particular preference for men or for women. However, there had been a growth in discrimination since the early 1990s. In 1994, 18.9 per cent claimed to prefer to recruit men, whereas in 2000 26.6 per cent did so. And whereas in 1994, 7.2 per cent said they preferred to recruit women, only 3.3 per cent did so in 2000. As in 1994, firms favouring women were concentrated in light industry (Table 5). The overall picture is that overt discrimination was not as strong as in many countries, but that the trend should cause some concern.

As for *employees* ("white-collar"), there was less overt discrimination in recruitment, with 7.8 per cent reporting a preference for men and 3 per cent for women, which reflected a net shift in favour of men over the past five years. In sum, while recruitment preferences might have contributed to industrial segregation, in the main there did not yet appear to be strong discriminatory preferences among managements.

Table 5: Gender preference in recruiting workers and employees, by industry, 1999-2000, All Regions

	for Workers			for Employees		
	Men	Women	No diff.	Men	Women	No diff.
Energy	52.8	0.0	47.2	17.0	4.7	78.3
Metals	58.9	0.0	41.1	21.9	5.5	72.6
Engineering	37.6	1.0	61.4	7.8	2.1	90.1
Chemicals	21.2	3.0	75.8	7.1	1.0	91.9
Wood & paper	27.2	1.1	71.7	9.4	2.2	88.3
Building materials	46.6	0.0	53.4	11.4	1.5	87.1
Light industry	8.1	12.6	79.3	2.5	7.1	90.4
Food processing	10.4	4.4	85.2	4.6	2.5	92.9
Other	16.7	0.0	83.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	26.6	3.3	71.0	7.8	3.0	79.2

Source: ULFS7, n = 1678

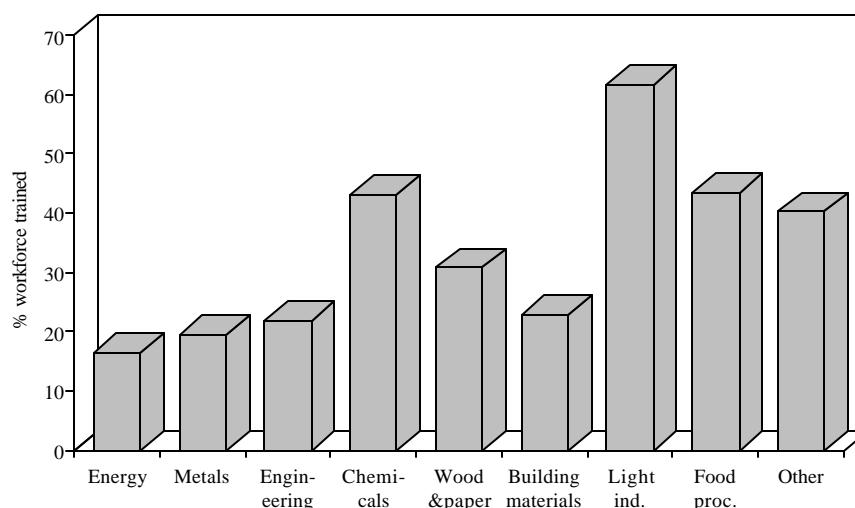
(v) Disadvantaged by training practices?

For women to retain their high share of employment in the course of restructuring, they will surely need to have equal access to vocational and job training, within and outside enterprises. In this respect, women might suffer from a mix of *structural disadvantage* (through being concentrated in firms or sectors not providing training) and *overt discrimination* in the allocation of training, coupled with *behavioural adaptation* on the part of women workers themselves.

What is the evidence? As far as training practices are concerned, there *appeared* to be a slight tendency within firms to discriminate against women, in so far as on average the share of women among those having received training in the past year (35.6 per cent) was less than the female share of employment, and their share had declined since 1995. Although the overall difference was moderate, their low share should be a source of concern in some industries (Figure 36). However, in terms of overt discrimination, it was at least encouraging that few managers (11.9 per cent) stated that they preferred to provide men with training; an even smaller number (2.8 per cent) who said they preferred to give training to women, so that overtly at least there was little sign of gender discrimination. However, this reflected a slight increase in pro-male discrimination.

Perhaps more surprising was that women's share of employment in firms that provided training was higher than in firms where there was no training (Table 6), implying that *if* there were discrimination against women in training it was offset by their concentration in firms providing training. In that sense, as shown in all rounds of the survey, women have had a slight structural advantage. This does not justify any discrimination, but may help reduce an important source of gender-based inequality.

Figure 36: Female share of workers trained, by industry, 1999, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1022

Table 6: Women's share of employment, by provision of training, 2000, All Regions

Type of Training	Yes	No
Entry Level Training	46.2	47.0
Retraining for Performance	46.6	45.8
Retraining for Upgrading	46.5	45.7

Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

(vi) Disadvantaged by labour surplus conditions?

Women could also be adversely affected by the incidence of labour surplus or by discriminatory treatment when it comes to making redundancies. Given the fact that their share of employment rose as employment declined, there is no strong evidence to suggest discriminatory treatment in this regard so far.

However, in 2000 women comprised roughly the same share of employment in firms with surplus labour, i.e., in those reporting that they could produce the same level of output with fewer workers, as in others. They accounted for 47.1 per cent in factories with surplus labour compared with 46.1 per cent in others. They also made up a similar share in factories reporting that they had too little work for their workforce as in others (46.4 per cent in both cases). Thus, this does not appear to have been a source of structural disadvantage so far.

(vii) Disadvantaged by industrial segregation?

Women could also be adversely affected by being increasingly concentrated in a few industrial sectors, a pattern of “industrial segregation” that could accentuate other labour market disadvantages. In Ukraine, such segregation has been pronounced. However, there is no sign of *growing* segregation, merely evidence that to achieve a

more balanced labour force in a market-oriented economy, policymakers should redress a long-standing pattern of segregation that shows no signs of diminishing.

(viii) Disadvantaged by occupational segregation?

Perhaps the most pronounced structural form of labour market disadvantage faced by women in all central and eastern European economies is the pattern of *occupational segregation*, inherited from the Soviet era. This should be a long-term concern.

As in most countries, in 2000, women made up a minority of supervisory and managerial groups and of skilled workers, whereas they made up a substantial majority of general service and ‘specialist’ employees and technicians. In 1999-2000, there was no slippage in their occupational profile; if anything, it had shifted in the direction of less segregation and some upgrading (Table 7). Moreover, their share of managerial employees had increased steadily since 1993, as shown in ULFS1, and their share of unskilled workers had declined, while their share of total employment had risen. Although within-group shifts may have been unfavourable (which we simply do not know), these figures do not point to any deterioration in the extent of occupational segregation.

Table 7: Women's share of occupational categories, 1999-2000, all industries, All Regions

% share	1999	2000
Management	60.5	60.5
Shop floor	42.5	42.3
Blue collar	42.5	42.3

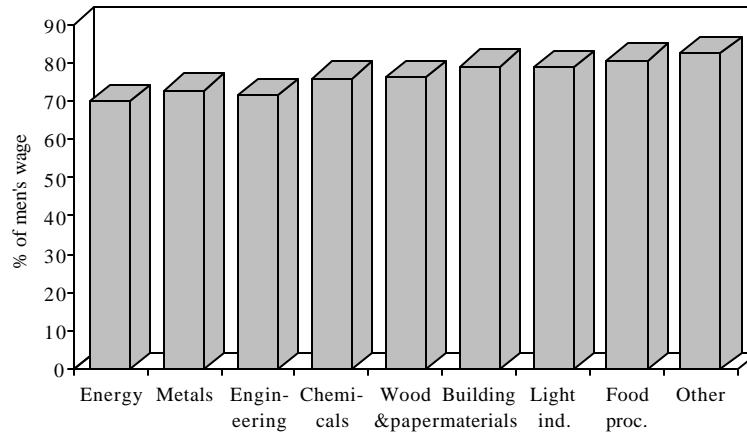
Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

(ix) Disadvantaged by income?

Finally, women could be disadvantaged by discrimination in terms of wages and earnings, and in particular could be adversely affected by a decline in their *relative* earnings. One must be cautious about interpreting the data on this issue, in part because of reporting difficulties - because traditionally Soviet industry never reported or collected earnings data on men and women separately - and in part because average wages and earnings data are affected by differences in duration in jobs and working time variations. With those caveats, the data suggest that women do face some income disadvantage.

On average, according to management estimates, in 2000 women's wages were 77.9 per cent of men's, varying from 71.8 per cent in energy firms to 81.9 per cent in food processing and 80 per cent in light industry (Figure 37) These figures should be cause for concern. There has been a *small but steady fall in women's relative wages since 1993*, notably in light industry. Although they need to be supplemented by more refined data, the figures suggest that women's relative wages have not improved, although the differentials compare favourably with those found in many market economies. The challenge will be to ensure that they do not deteriorate, so that the gap is narrowed rather than widened.

Figure 37: Estimated women's average wage as percentage of men's, by industry, 1999, All Regions

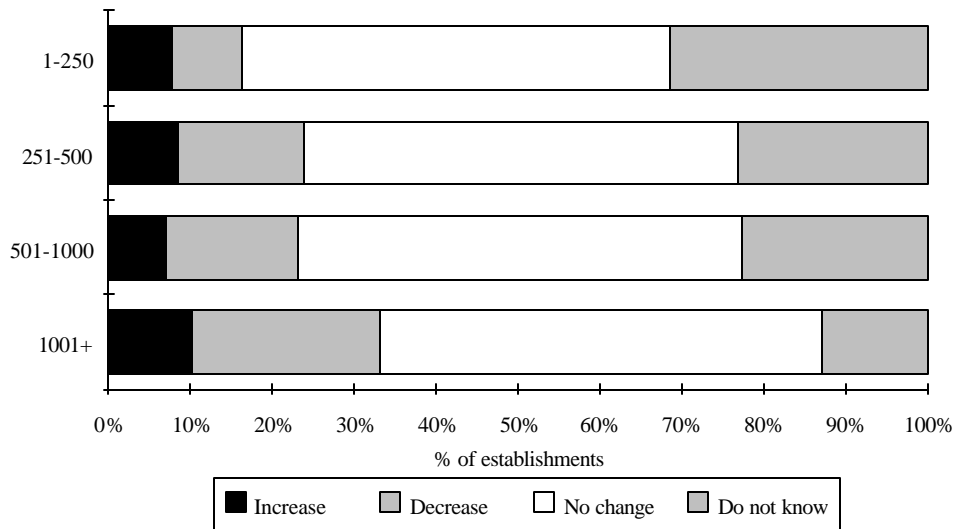


Source: ULFS7, n = 1684

Finally, more firms (12.9 per cent) expected women's share of employment to fall over the coming year than expected it to rise (8.2 per cent). Expectations of a decline were above average in the chemicals industry, and in larger firms (Figure 38). Here one must be cautious, since the proportion expecting the share to decline was less than in 1994, and the proportion expecting it to rise was greater. Similar negative expectations were not borne out in 1994 and 1995.

In sum, the results show several warning signals that should be monitored. While women's employment in the industrial labour market has not deteriorated dramatically, there are strong suggestions that their relative incomes have deteriorated.

Figure 38: Expected change in women's share of employment, by employment size, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1648

10. The impact of restructuring on older workers

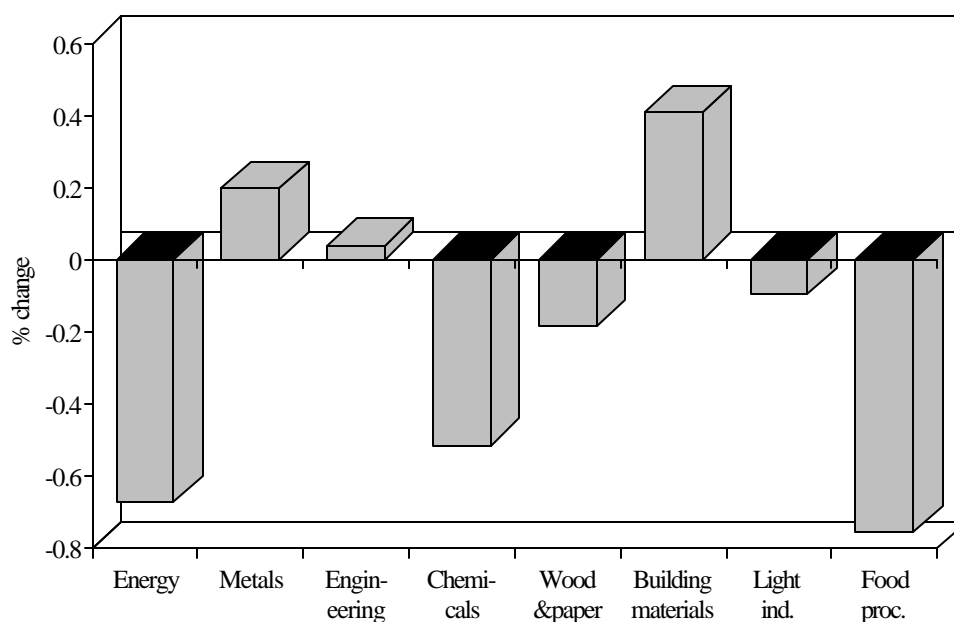
Another group of workers threatened by restructuring consists of workers in their 50s and 60s. Throughout central and eastern Europe, in spite of - and in part because of - the early age at which older workers have been eligible for state pensions, large proportions of workers continued to work well past the standard retirement age. However, since 1990 their displacement from employment has been substantial in most parts of the region. Ukraine seems reticent to move in that direction.

As in 1994, there continue to be many pensioners working in Ukrainian industry. According to ULFS7, they accounted for 11.9 per cent of total employment in 2000. Their share was particularly high in the metals sectors, and in large-scale firms. There had been minimal change - a *fall* of 0.3 per cent overall - although this reflected considerable inter-sectoral variations (Figure 39).

Perhaps change will accelerate. Over a quarter of all establishments expected the pensioner share of employment to fall in the coming year, with particularly large numbers of firms in the chemicals industry expecting that to happen (Figure 40). Newly privatised, private and large-scale firms were more inclined to expect to cut than other firms. A similar tendency was found in the first round of the survey, and as we see older workers had not experienced a net displacement.

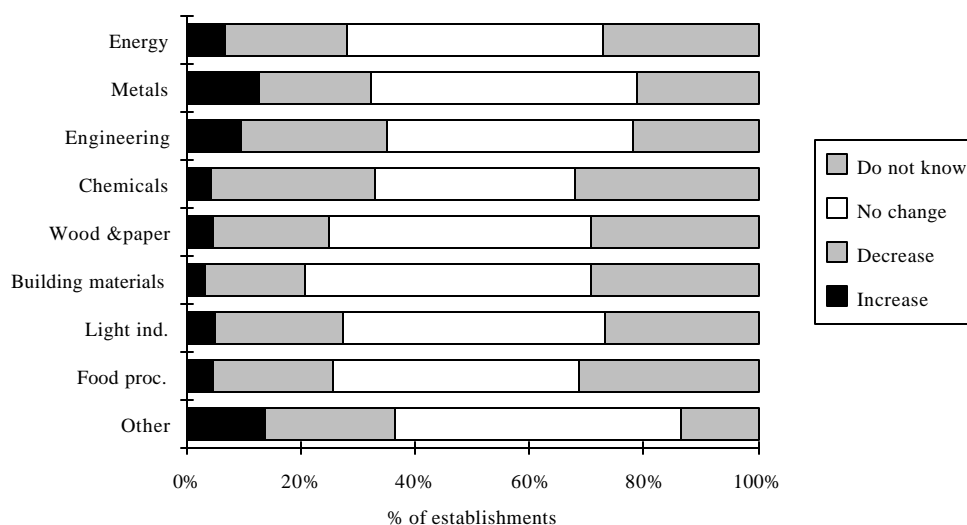
In brief, the position of older workers had not deteriorated, although one could expect that many will be eased out of jobs as the overall decline in employment accelerates.

Figure 39: Change in Pensioner Share of Workforce, 1999-2000, by Industry, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1673

Figure 40: Expected Change in Pensioner Share of Workforce in Next Year, by Industry, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1587

11. Changes in wages, earnings and benefits

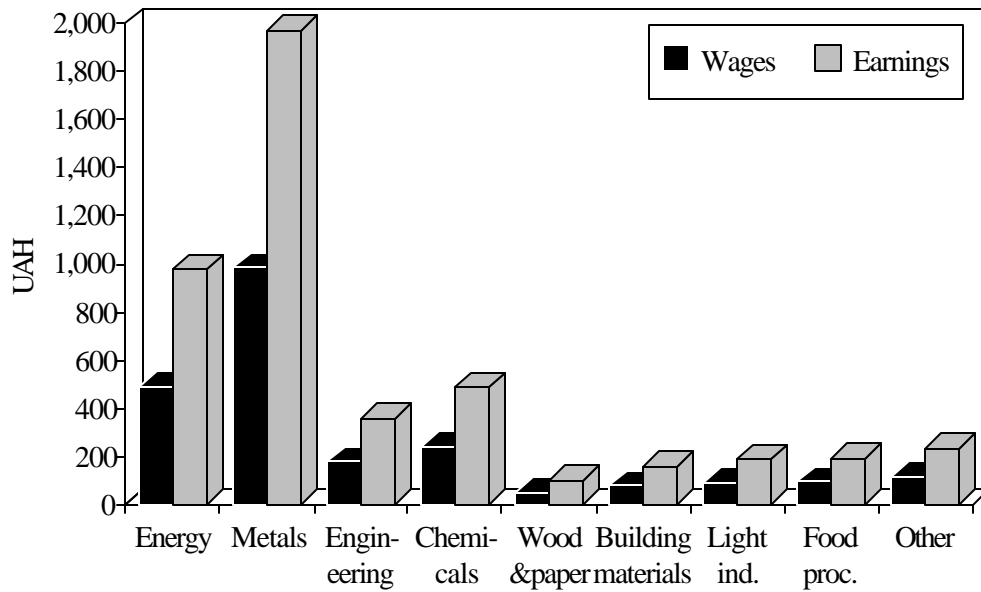
In the context of the stagflation in the Ukrainian economy, and with the changes in production and employment, wages and earnings were almost certain to change in many ways. There were also expected to change in the context of the gradual shift from the so-called “wage tariff” system and payment of wages based on allocations of “wage funds” to industrial enterprises, supplemented by “social consumption funds”.

In Ukrainian industry, as of early 2000, the average monthly wage was 4,053,912 (Kbv) or 180.7 UAH, and average earnings were 9,096,740 (Kbv) or 361.4 UAH.¹³ As they were one year earlier, average wages and earnings were highest in the energy sector and lowest in wood and paper products and light industry (Figure 41). Once the clear wage leader, the engineering sector had declined to be one of the lowest paying.

Across regions, average wages were lowest in Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernigiv and Kiev, probably reflecting the industrial structure in those regions. Across size categories, they were lowest in small-scale establishments (Figure 42), and across property forms they were highest in private firms (Figure 43). In each case, the observed pattern might reflect the effect of other characteristics of the firm, which will be considered in a more detailed analysis of wage determination.

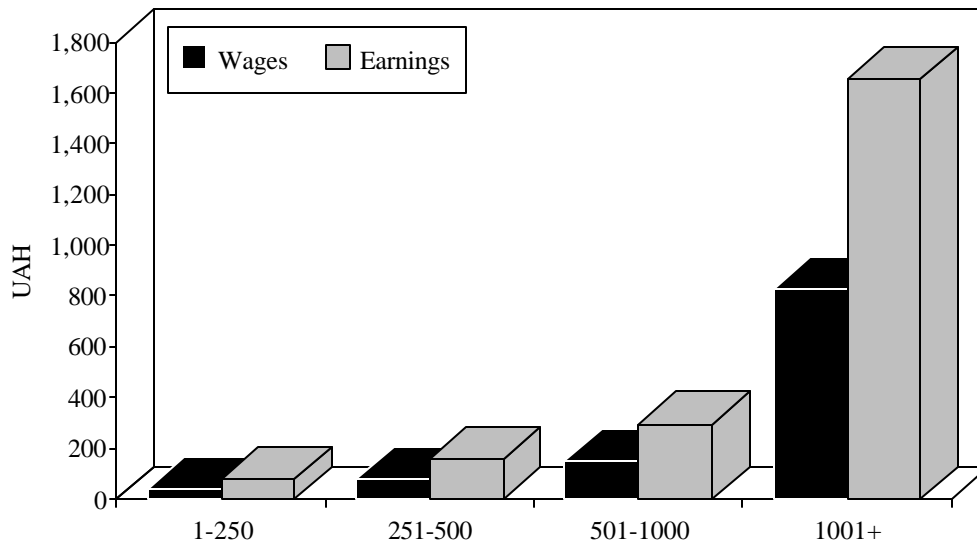
¹³ At prevailing exchange rates, those figures represented about \$44 and \$61, respectively. The data on wages and earnings should be interpreted as approximations, since reporting such data has been a sensitive matter, especially given the tax-based incomes policy, which encouraged under-reporting, and the difficulties many firms had in paying wages. The wage reported was often not the wage paid, because of non-payment and “wage arrears”.

Figure 41: Average monthly wage and earnings, by industry, 2000, All Regions



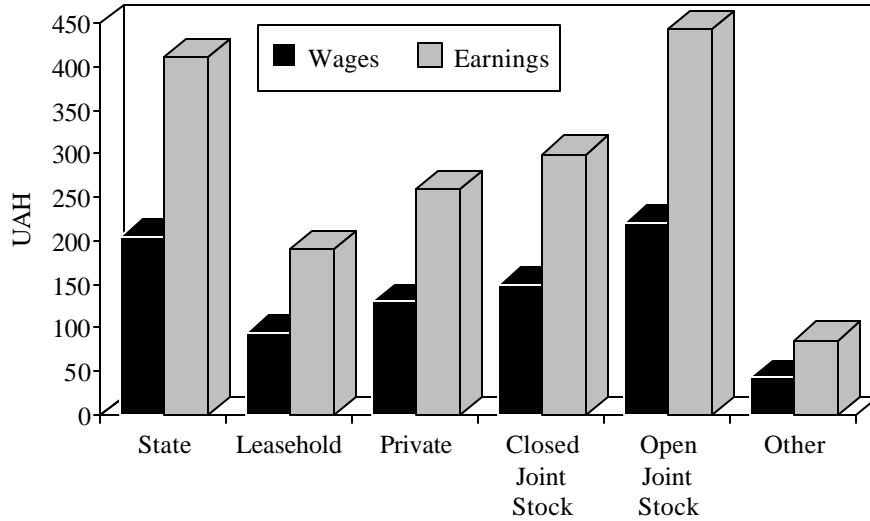
Source: ULFS7, n = 1661

Figure 42: Average monthly wage and earnings, by employment size, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1655

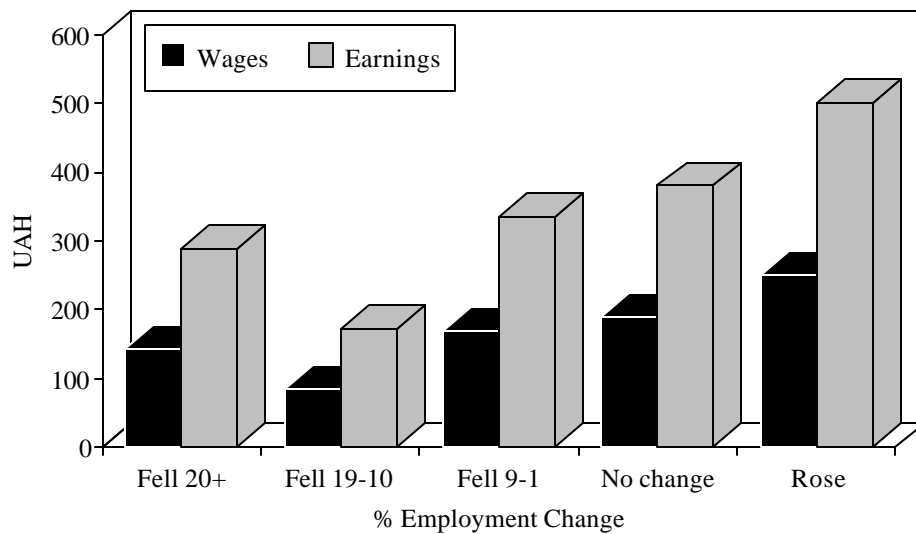
Figure 43: Average monthly wage and earnings, by property form, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1661

Average wages and average earnings were positively correlated with employment change, with wages and earnings being lowest in firms that had cut employment by over 10 per cent (Figure 44). This was also found in 1994 and suggests that the labour market was beginning to operate in the way that one would expect in a market-oriented economy.

Figure 44: Average monthly wage and earnings, by employment change, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1647

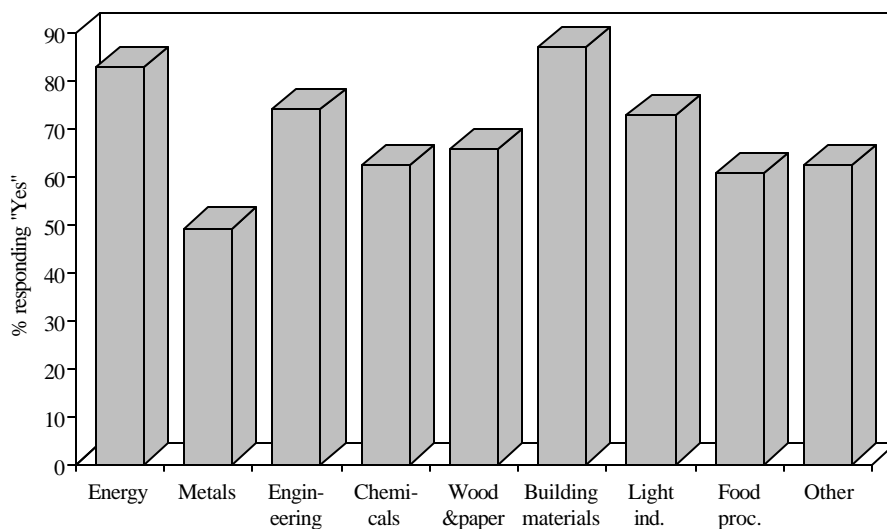
Average wage and average earnings functions were estimated in which the dependent variables were logarithms of the average wages or earnings and in which structural characteristics and economic performance variables were the independent variables. Although more formal models could be estimated, OLS regressions showed the following statistically significant relationships:

- Firms in engineering, metals, chemicals, building materials, wood products, light industry and food processing sectors all paid lower wages than in energy;
- There were substantial regional variations in wages;
- Private firms paid higher average wages than state firms, but not higher earnings;
- Firms that had cut employment had lower average wages and earnings than others; there was an inverse relationship between employment change and wages;
- There was no relationship between the female share of employment and wages or earnings;
- Firms operating some form of “profit sharing” scheme were paying below-average wages and earnings;
- Presence of a trade union was associated with lower wages and earnings.

There is one way in which one would say precisely the opposite, and it is a development with far-reaching and negative consequences. As in 1994 and 1995, in 2000 one of the most notable aspects of the Ukrainian labour market was that many firms were unable to pay their wages, or at least had such difficulty in doing so that they were delaying payments or were paying only part of them. This applied just as much to those firms that had put workers on unpaid leave as those that had not.

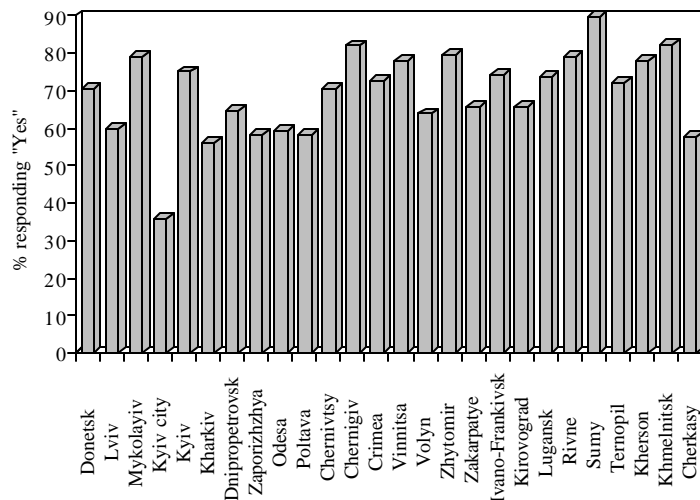
According to ULFS7, in 2000 69 per cent of all factories reported that they had great difficulty in paying wages, which was the case in nine out of every ten firms in several industries (Figure 45). The difficulty was found in all parts of the country, although firms in the capital, Kiev, were least likely to have the problem (Figure 46).

Figure 45: Difficulty in paying wages, by industry, 2000, All Regions



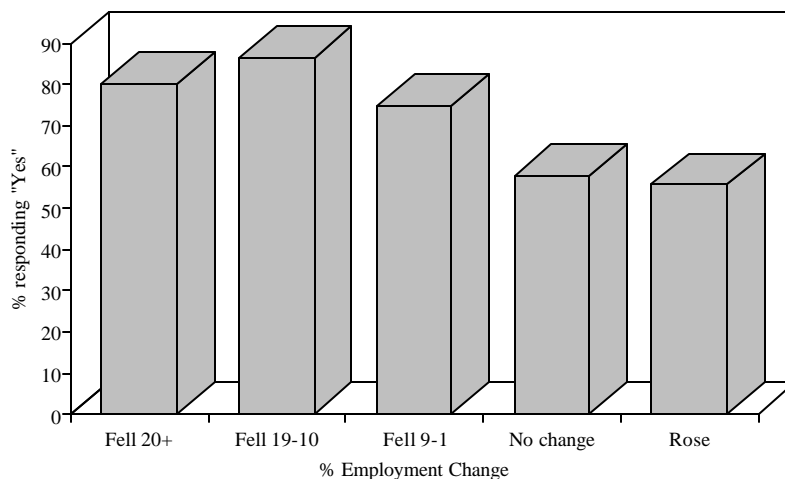
Source: ULFS7, n = 1674

Figure 46: Difficulty in paying wages, by region, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1674

Figure 47: Difficulty in paying wages, by employment change, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1660

Large-scale establishments were the most likely to be affected, but there was little difference by property form. It was more common in firms that had cut employment, although even 55.6 per cent of those that had increased employment had experienced difficulty in paying wages (Figure 47).

The difficulty had led to the most contentious issue of all. *Three out of every five (58.9 per cent) factories had not paid contractually agreed wages, in all or part, and on average they had not paid wages for 5.8 weeks - which was an improvement on the findings for 1999 but was still more than was the case with firms in wage arrears in 1995, when the phenomenon was in its infancy.* In an inflationary economy, wages

delayed are wages cut. Wages not paid at all imply that the worker is redundant in all but name.¹⁴

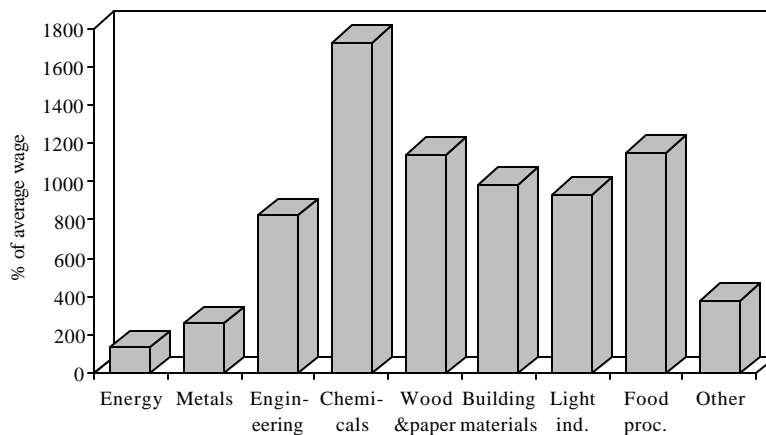
In spite of the widespread difficulty in paying wages, which had led to “wage arrears” and non-payment of contractual wages, money wages had risen in 1998-98 to offset inflation, even though they fell in real terms. In the survey managements were asked what, beside prices, had determined wage rises granted in the period. Over half (51.7 per cent) of the firms reported that no other factor had been important.

A related change was the growth in *wage differentials*, an important aspect of industrial and labour market restructuring. Wage data were obtained for broad occupational groups, and also on minimum levels of remuneration in the plant. The latter were collected because in the pilot for ULFS1 we found that some groups were being paid extremely low wages, to enable the management to pay higher wages for other groups and to keep the average wage down so as to limit wage tax obligations.

Whatever the reasons, with decentralisation of enterprise management and erosion of the old wage tariff system, a category of *impoverished industrial workers* has emerged. This contrasts with the former system, in which there was emphasis on “levelling”, which meant there were neither very high-paid nor very low-paid workers. By the mid 1990s, a category of lower paid workers had emerged, and by 2000 the data are telling a sad story of an impoverished minority of workers in most firms.

Managements were asked to identify the lowest paid group in the plant. On average, these were receiving about a third of the average wage, or just over one-quarter of the average earnings (Figure 48). In absolute terms, they received 1,808,202 Kbv (96.14 UAH) per month (or about \$17 at the prevailing exchange rate), which was below the official subsistence income.¹⁵

Figure 48: Lowest wage as per cent of average wage, by industry, 2000, All Regions



Source: ULFS7, n = 1659

¹⁴ Some economists have interpreted the apparent fact that wages have fallen more than employment as indicating desirable wage flexibility. This is simply silly.

¹⁵ The officially estimated subsistence income at the time was just over 2 million Kbv.

The lowest average minimum was in engineering. Overall, about 7.4 per cent of the workforce were on the minimum level, with above-average proportions in small-scale establishments. In terms of property forms, the proportions were highest in open joint-stock firms and were lowest in closed joint-stock enterprises, perhaps reflecting the 'solidaristic' influence of work collectives in the latter and a tendency for wage differentials to be wider in private firms.

Both the wage tariff system and the statutory minimum wage have played diminishing roles in the wage determination process in Ukrainian industry, and in the labour market in general. As in the international economy, there has been and will continue to be growth of *wage flexibility*. That will also be an aspect of enterprise and labour market restructuring. Wage flexibility can be excessive for both efficiency and equity objectives. Yet without some flexibility, labour mobility, incentives and productivity will suffer, and labour market adjustments will be slowed.

Although there is a long process of wage reform ahead in Ukraine, the data suggest there is considerable wage flexibility already, some of it perverse. This is shown by the finding that the more flexible share of total cash remuneration was fairly high, in that "bonuses" comprised 37.2 per cent of total earnings, ranging from 27.5 per cent in the energy sector to a high of 39.7 per cent in the wood and paper industry.¹⁶ The bonus share was lower in large-scale firms. The share was highest in private firms, which might reflect the existence of other forms of remuneration, or simply that remuneration was genuinely more flexible in them.

Another traditional aspect of the wage system has been that a large part of worker remuneration has been in non-monetary form. For various reasons, the *ratio of non-wage benefits to wages* was high in the Soviet system. Yet for the wage to function as a mechanism for work motivation and mobility, the real wage needs to rise. In 2000, as in 1995, wage "distortion" remained considerable. In fact, while money and real wages were low and had fallen substantially in real terms, most firms provided a wide range of fringe benefits and services - one reason for doubting a conventional image that service employment has been low in countries such as Ukraine, because many service functions were internalised in manufacturing enterprises.

Most firms provided managerial employees and regular wage workers with entitlements to a wide range of benefits, whereas non-regular workers - casual labour, those on fixed-term contracts, and so on - had a severe disadvantage, as shown in Table 8. The figures raise two concerns.

First, if enterprises in some sectors and in the core of the economy provide a wide range of benefits while others cannot do so, and while more workers are locked out of that relatively privileged core, then the pattern of benefit provision will contribute to the growth of socio-economic inequality. *Enterprise-based benefits may become a bigger factor in the growth of inequality than wage differentials. Indeed, although much has been made of the enormous growth in income inequality in countries of the former Soviet Union, if the changing incidence of enterprise benefits were taken into account, growth in inequality would be much greater. It is therefore pertinent that firms with below-average wages were less likely to be providing various benefits than those with*

¹⁶ These were lower than the corresponding figures in Russian industry, although there the bonus share had been rising. Standing, 1996, op.cit.

above-average wages (Table 9). The pattern of enterprise benefits has tended to worsen income inequality very considerably.

Table 8: Per cent of establishments providing benefits, all regions, 2000, All Regions

	Employees	Regular workers	Non-regular workers
Paid vacation	100.0	100.0	40.4
Additional vacation	42.5	46.8	11.1
Rest houses	42.6	42.7	13.2
Sickness benefit	91.6	91.5	55.0
Paid health services	18.6	18.8	9.1
Subsidised rent	5.1	5.6	1.4
Subsidies for kinder gardens	11.4	11.7	4.1
Bonuses	65.3	67.9	36.9
Profit sharing	41.4	38.7	12.5
Loans	73.7	73.8	27.0
Retiring assistance	57.5	57.4	11.0
Supplementary pension	5.2	5.9	0.6
Possibility for training	38.9	38.9	7.2
Interest-free loans	22.9	22.9	3.6
Subsidy for canteen or benefit for meal	19.9	22.2	13.2
Subsidised consumer goods	12.5	12.6	8.0
Transport subsidies	14.8	15.5	8.1

Source: ULFS7, n = 1671

Table 9: Per cent of establishments providing benefits, by average wages, 2000, All Regions

Benefit	Employees		Regular workers		Non-regular workers	
	Below	Above	Below	Above	Below	Above
Average wage						
Paid vacation	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	39.7	44.4
Additional vacation	41.4	48.3	45.0	55.4	10.3	14.9
Rest houses	37.1	69.2	37.3	69.2	11.1	22.8
Sickness benefit	91.4	93.5	91.3	93.5	54.8	56.1
Paid health services	15.7	33.4	15.9	33.1	7.6	17.0
Subsidised rent	4.4	8.7	4.5	10.8	1.1	2.7
Subsidies for kinder gardens	7.5	30.0	7.6	31.0	2.8	10.4
Bonuses	61.5	85.3	64.6	85.7	34.3	50.2
Profit sharing	41.1	44.3	38.6	40.1	12.9	10.5
Loans	71.9	84.0	71.8	85.0	26.1	32.0
Retiring assistance	55.9	68.0	55.7	68.0	11.0	11.6
Supplementary pension	4.3	9.4	5.2	9.4	0.6	0.4
Possibility for training	33.2	66.9	33.4	65.9	6.2	11.9
Interest-free loans	22.4	26.6	22.3	27.0	3.6	3.8
Subsidy for canteen or benefit for meal	18.2	29.4	19.7	35.2	11.7	21.5
Subsidised consumer goods	12.3	14.2	12.3	14.9	7.3	11.4
Transport subsidies	12.7	24.7	13.4	25.3	6.4	15.9

Source: ULFS7, n = 1656

Firms that provided housing to their workers had a statistically significantly higher average wage and earnings than those that did not. And the average wage and earnings

of firms that admitted to having abandoned social facilities were lower than in those that had not done so.¹⁷

Second, if Ukrainian industry moves towards the international pattern in which enterprises resort increasingly to non-regular labour, or in pursuit of external labour *flexibility*, then a growing number of workers will be disentitled to occupational or enterprise welfare.

In respect of both these concerns, in 1999-2000 the proportion of firms paying for or providing most forms of benefit to workers and employees declined. There were two exceptions. An increasing share of firms provided vacation and financial assistance for retirement, both reflecting the need to cut employment.

One cause of the high incidence of benefits is the tax-based incomes policy, since high taxes on money wages encourage managements and unions to favour a shift from money wages to non-monetary forms of remuneration. Economic stagflation and the difficulty in paying wages also encouraged them. *Any trend away from money wages is potentially damaging for productivity and labour mobility. For that reason alone, policies should be introduced to encourage enterprises to shift "social service" functions to district authorities*, so that those outside firms (notably large, older firms) may have access to benefits and services, and so that money wages may be raised as an incentive to work and a means of promoting labour mobility.

In that context, recent trends are intriguing. In spite of the parlous state of most enterprises, and to some extent perhaps because of that, 4.9 per cent of establishments had extended the range of benefits provided to their workers during the past year, compared with 5.6 per cent that had curtailed or ended a benefit, mostly subsidies of some sort. The benefit most commonly added during 1999-2000 was "food compensation", whereas during the mid 1990s compensatory payments or provision in kind were extended to compensate for high food prices. But the additional benefits mentioned were ingenuous, including free bakery products, interest-free loans, travel subsidies, child sickness benefits, funeral, wedding and childbirth grants and free healthcare.

The most common benefit cut or reduced was annual leave, so that while some firms were adding them others were removing them. Among other benefits that a few firms were cutting were food price compensation, travel fare subsidy and subsidized food. About 12.2 per cent of the factories had transferred some social facilities to local authorities in the past year, and 36.5 per cent of large-scale firms had done so. *This was a profound trend in the latter part of the decade.*

In sum, fringe benefits remain a very important component of workers' remuneration, and represent a means of accentuating socio-economic inequality.

¹⁷ Footnote pending due to wage problem

Average earnings in factories that provided workers with housing was 360 UAH, compared with 257 UAH for those that did not do so. The average for those that had abandoned social facilities was 294 UAH and for those that had not done so it was 275 UAH.

A form of “benefit” is good safety and healthy working conditions. In 2000, nearly 29.8 per cent of all firms had safety committees, 49.7 per cent had a safety department, 13 per cent had both; in 7.6 per cent there were neither.

There has been concern about safety procedures, but there has been little evidence that these have collapsed. Perhaps this reflects the effect of regulations and union pressure.

12. Skill formation and the erosion of training

To promote labour market and employment restructuring and labour mobility, worker training is important. In Soviet industry enterprises provided much of the training that was undertaken. Whether or not that imparted much skill is debatable. Nevertheless, training was a part of the enterprise culture.

To examine the extent and forms of training in Ukrainian industry, we considered the three levels - entry-level *training*, that is for workers newly recruited, *retraining* for improvement of performance in the job or to move workers between jobs with comparable ranges and levels of tasks, and training for *upgrading*, that is to raise the grade or status of a worker.

As in Russian industry, a majority of firms (75.1 per cent) provided some training for newly hired workers. However, the figures look less impressive when we realise that this was quite a lot down on 1994 and that in 68 per cent of all firms providing training, it was informal and on-the-job. Only 13.4 per cent provided classroom training in the enterprise and 8.6 per cent provided such training off the premises. Moreover, with “privatisation” and restructuring, there could be a decline in training, for it was less often provided in private and small-scale firms.

Overall, more than three-quarters of firms provided such training. Small-scale firms were less likely to do so than large-scale. And those firms that had cut employment the most (more than 20 per cent) were the least likely to be providing training. These are signs that accelerated restructuring could lead to erosion in the provision of entry-level training.

For retraining for job performance, which was provided in 69.4 per cent of firms, 16.2 per cent of establishments provided formal classroom teaching on the premises and 1.3 per cent did so off them. Surprisingly, more (75 per cent) provided retraining for upgrading than training for newly recruited workers, again with private firms, small-scale establishments and those having cut employment by large numbers being much less likely to be providing such training. More of this training was ‘formal’, involving classroom and off-the-premises courses, but still most was ‘informal’ and on-the-job.

What should be of more concern is that, although 16.4 per cent had increased them, 23.5 per cent had cut training programmes, in their entirety or partially, over the past year. Cutting training was particularly common in the building materials, light industry and chemicals. During the 1990s, there was a massive erosion in industrial training.

Traditionally, industrial enterprises set up and operated training institutes. But in 2000, only 10.8 per cent were paying for a training institute (down on 1994), 23.6 per cent were paying institutes for training workers sent for training (up on 1994), and 5.1 per cent were paying grants to trainees while on training courses (also up). This compares favourably with the practice of firms in many countries, although one would

have to probe into the quality of the training in order to make a judgment. What should be a source of concern is that 70.5 per cent of the firms that had done so were no longer paying for training institutes, and 15.6 per cent of those paying for institutional training were planning to stop, with a further 27.4 per cent contemplating doing so.

So, there was a situation in which there was considerable informal training and an erosion in the provision of institutional training and retraining, at a time when more formal off-the-job training was required to facilitate enterprise and job mobility.

13. Concluding remarks

In 2000, industrial enterprises in Ukraine were in still deep in structural crisis, even more so than revealed in the first round of the Ukraine Enterprise Labour Flexibility Survey. Contrary to some representations, there had been a substantial cut in employment and the job cuts were continuing. There was no evidence that there were institutional barriers to such cuts. However, the extent of concealed unemployment was very considerable, and it has increased.

It is important for commentators to appreciate that the concealed unemployment is as bad for those affected as open unemployment, since the absence of wage income means that poverty is almost guaranteed, even if they might have access to some residual enterprise benefits. They do not have access to unemployment benefits or labour market policies to assist them to obtain alternative livelihoods. Moreover, the phenomena means that the actual unemployment is doubly underestimated, because the concealed unemployed are not added to the openly unemployed and because they are counted as employed, thus lowering the numerator and raising the denominator in calculations of the unemployment rate.

It would be wrong to describe Ukrainian enterprises as rigid, although the forms of labour market flexibility have scarcely been typical of a market-oriented economy. Although the enterprises have responded to the depression by cutting employment, they have turned far more to unpaid and partially paid administrative leave, short-time working and “unpaid employment” involving wage arrears or the non-payment of contractual wages. The result is that the system has experienced a perverse form of *wage flexibility*. Indeed, the paradox is that **wage flexibility has been excessive**.

This is not the conventional view of labour market mechanisms in countries of the former Soviet Union. There are two orthodox interpretations. The first is that open unemployment has remained low because of the persistence of a “soft budget constraint” in enterprises, in which lack of financial discipline and accountability leads managements to retain excess workers, despite the cost of doing so. The second is that the labour market is highly flexible, so that workers prefer to take wage cuts and do so, rather than become unemployed. Both variants are misleading.

The fact is that in Ukraine labour has become a highly variable production cost, not a fixed cost as labour is often characterised in market economies where employment contracts preclude the Ukrainian practice of putting workers on unpaid leave or the convenience of simply not paying workers when they cannot or do not wish to do so. The result is extreme wage flexibility. A cost is considerable *employment inflexibility*. Sooner or later the latter will collapse, and then there will be a deluge of job losses. That will be harder to handle for policymakers than if the real unemployment problem was recognised now.

It is still recommended that in Ukraine, as in the Russian Federation, the authorities should take measures to tighten the “wage constraint” and reduce wage flexibility, to oblige enterprises to pay contractually agreed wages and benefits. Only by doing so will they foster efficient employment restructuring, and only then will there be a chance that national and international agencies will devote adequate attention to the enormous unemployment crisis, which is now emerging.

Further postponement of employment restructuring will impede economic reform and precipitate a labour market crisis sooner or later. Above all, concealing unemployment through excessive wage flexibility has had profound social consequences, measured ultimately in the lower life expectancy, rising poverty and growing inequality that disfigured Ukraine in the 1990s. Conventional statistics and conventional interpretations have hindered a proper understanding of those linkages. If proper policies are to emerge, that must change.

