Ukrainian Regionalism Intensification:
forces behind

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the
Nationalism Studies Program

CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Summer 2007

ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the issue of regionalism and ethnicized identities in post-Soviet Ukraine. Ukraine as a historically heterogenous society (in ethnic, linguistic and religeous terms) has a tradition of mostly peaceful coexistence of Ukrainian majority and numerous minorities. However, after its independence in 1991 issues of federalism, second language and related are being set on and off the agenda with different salience. During and after 2004, it can be argued, that ethnicized regionalism intensified in Ukraine coming to the fore of pubic discourse and being in particular associated with a secessionism initiative. This regionalism and the reasons behind its intensification in recent years are under scrutiny in the paper.

In particular the opposition intensified between Russophiles and pro-Ukrainians – two losely defined social groups, that are regionally concentrated to some extent and differ in terms of political and cultural preferences. In particular the selective focus is made on the Donbas region in the East of Ukraine and the L'viv-centered Western Ukraine.

The paper outlines the nature of regionalism tensions in Ukraine and explores several possible roots of its intensification. In particular it addresses such potential explanations as: deep-seated differences between the regions, a reaction to ultra-nationalist rhetoric, a response to overnationalistic state policy, a consequense of party system consolidation, natural development of democratic representation, foreign influence and the political-economic elite manioulation. The latter factor is looked at specifically since it is less studied in the literature so far, yet, as argued in this paper, is a core driving force behind the increasing regionalism in Ukraine. In particular, this factor will be backed by a discussion of the mechanism of political-economic elite manipulation in Ukraine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Anton Pelinka – for continuous support and encouragement;

Dr. Will Kymlicka – for extraordinary helpfulness, and bright ideas;

Dr. Mária Kovacs & Dr. Andras Kovacs – for useful comments during the thesis seminar

Dr. Rogers Brubaker – for valuable comments

Daniel Bochsler – for valuable comments

3rd CEU Graduate Conference organizers (especially George I. Jiglau & Dr. Carsten Q.
        Schneider) – for motivating me to work harder and giving valuable comments

My husband Mykhaylo Salnykov – for enabling and facilitating my MA studies at CEU

Mr. Soros – for the University I enjoyed being at so much

Lord Jesus – for creating a wonderful world and having perfect love to us.

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GLOSSARY

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States

Maidan – Independence Square in downtown Kyiv, location of the Orange revolution

Oblast – administrative-territorial unit in Ukraine, equivalent to Land, province, state etc.

PEG – political-economic group

Rukh – national-democratic movement and party in Ukraine, translated as "movement"

UPR – Ukrainian People's Republic

1. INTRODUCTION

The current paper deals with the issue of regionalism and ethnicized identities in post-Soviet Ukraine. In particular I look at the reasons behind the arguably increasing salience of regional, and often ethnicized identities in Ukraine. After country's gaining independence in 1991 federalism, second official language and related issues are being set on and off the agenda with various degrees of attention being paid to them. It can be argued that during and after 2004 ethnicized regionalism intensified in Ukraine, coming to the fore in pubic discourse and in particular lead a secessionism initiative. Therefore the phenomenon of ethnicized regional identities and the reasons behind their intensification during the recent years are under scrutiny in the paper.

The research puzzle for this study is in the intensification of identities itself. As significant historically inherent differences are obvious between the Ukrainian regions many experts expected the country to explode with interethnic conflict at the early 1990-s at the time of chaotic start of transition. This did not happen, however, and therefore the Ukrainian society was reassessed as less diverse and more consolidated. Nevertheless, with the passage of time, instead of even greater consolidation through a period of common history as one state, economy and informational space, the indicators of revived regional and ethnic identities appear. This counterintuitive situation attracted my attention for the current research.

It is not easy to specify the concrete objects of my investigation. Identities in Ukraine are often complex and large numbers of population feel attachment to different forms of multiple or transition identities, therefore it is hard to name groups involved into the tense relations without falling into a somewhat misleading simplification. Nevertheless, it is possible to name the main opposing social groups as "Russophiles" and "pro-Ukrainians" since such titles would refer to linguistic, cultural and foreign policy attitudes of the majority of people undergoing the process of identity crystalization.

These identified groups, holding differing identities, are also regionally concentrated and, therefore, it is possible to talk of not simple diversity of views among the Ukrainian population, but about the attitudinal diversity among regions as well. In addition, the regional identities are often associated with ethnic specificities of a particular region and therefore we can talk of ethnicized regional identities, even though they are not ethnic *per se*. The quantity of such regions in Ukraine is debated, ranging from two to eight regions. Even though it would be useful to analize this entire complexity, it goes beyond the scope of this paper, which will mostly pay attention to the two extreme cases: the Donbas (part of Eastern Ukraine) identity versus the Western Ukrainian one, with only occasional reference to other regions' specificities. In addition, the nationalities policy of official Kyiv will be addressed, since it is not reflexive of any single regional policy preference.

Focusing on the roots of such regional identities intensification I try to make an overview of various possible sources of crystalysed regional identities capturing the multiple ideas discussed in the literature. In particular, these explanations include: historically formed inherent differences between the regions, a reaction to ultra-nationalist rhetoric, a response to overnationalistic state policy, a consequense of party system consolidation, development of democratic representation and foreign inflence. In addition, I also address the political-economic perspective on the issue, whereas I find it useful in analyzing the case of Ukraine, yet at the same time relatively understudied in the literature. This argument goes that regional political-economic elites use ethnic rhetoric to mobilize people in their support and to turn the masses against the reforms that are unnprofitable for the regional elite.

The significance of the issue is manifold and will be adressed in the concluding chapter in greater detail. Here it can be briefly indicated that the addressed problem has implications for the issues of democratic quality, development, as well as interconnection between international structures, actors and norms with the local post-communist reality of Ukraine.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dealing with *regionalism* is a vital part of understanding contemporary Ukraine in general[1] and regionalism debate is the most central to the current study. In the case of Ukraine the question, weather regionalism matters or not is mostly off-topic, almost all area specialists spend pages on addressing the issue. Only O'Loughlin (2001) goes against the current suggesting that the emphasis on regionalism in Ukraine is bogus. According to him, other interregional and intra-regional factors are more influential, borders between the regions are blurred, and differences within regions are also significant. However, such a view is marginal, and it is analysed and contested in the Barrington/Herron (2004) paper. However, among the authors, who agree on the importance of regions, there is no consensus on what specification of regionalism is most accurate and useful in the case of Ukraine (Barrington & Herron 2004: 54).

The simplest is the two-region model, which divides Ukraine into East and West by the Dnieper river. The alternative is the four-region model consisting of East, West, South, and Center (Arel 1992). The modification of this model is, for example, used by the "Image-control" sociological institute that divides Ukraine into the West, Center, South/East and Donbas/Crimea, saying that those are four distinct regions and it is meaningless to ignore this division. Finally, the eight-region model shows an even more detailed, complex and interesting picture (Barrington & Herron 2004: 70). This classification is based on detailed differentiation of economic development patterns, differing historical experiences and demographic features of the regions. As a result it differentiates the following regions: East, East-Center, North-Center, South, West-Center, South-West, West[2] and Crimea.

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[1] For example a lot of work on this issue was done by Birch 2000, Barrington 1997, 2001, 2002, Kubicek 2000, Holdar 1997, Craumer & Clem 1999, Wilson & Birch 1999.
[2] Donets'k, Luhans'k; Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovs'k, Zaporizhzhia; Poltava, Kirovohrad, Cherkasy, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Sumy; Kherson, Odesa, Mykolayiv; Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, Khmelnyts'kyi, Rivne, Volyn'; Chernivtsi, Zakarpattia; L'viv, Ivano-Frankivs'k, Ternopil' respectively.

Regionalism in Ukraine correlates to some extent with ethnicity and is often analysed in a tie with ethnic politics. Therefore, the assessment of the nature of Ukrainian nationalism after the collapse of the Soviet Union and especially the state's *nationalities policy* is relevant. Some authors, for example Harasymiv (2002) suggest a view that Ukraine's interethnic tensions were traditionally minor even though some separatist/autonomist/federalist discussion was present on Ukrainian lands in 1990-1992. In contrast, others, such as Bukkvol (1997: 44-45) – though admitting that Russians were not disadvantaged in Ukraine – is sceptical of peaceful coexistence of the two ethnic groups and perceives future mobilization of the Russian population in parts of Ukraine (South-Eastern and the Crimea) as a credible threat whereas this ethno-group is overall dissatisfied with Ukraine's independence.

An interesting debate in the literature on these issues is between Kuzio (1998) and Wilson (1997). The former is talking of only weak and civic nationalism that exists in Ukraine, while the latter accuses the Ukrainian state of extreme discriminatory nationalism. Kuzio argues that Ukrainian post-1991 nationalities policy was merely statist and not nationalistic; while Wilson insists that Ukraine turned into a nationalizing state, no better than the extreme example in the Baltics. The authors diverge on many points and the dissonance goes that far that, for example, Kuzio provides data on immense support to Ukraine's territorial integrity across the regions, while Wilson brings up different polls to prove the overwhelming support to federal type of governance and significance of secession sentiments. There definitely are also authors in between these two extremes, such as Motyl (1993), Wanner (1998) or D'Anieri et al. (1999), for example. The partial explanation of those varying interpretations is in the usually present bias of social studies authors who analyse the objects of their studies from the perspective of the ideal-type society they personally prefer. As a result, the authors sometimes select facts and aspects of reality to demonstrate their version of history as plausible as possible.

Even though in this paper I acknowledge the multifaceted nature of interregional tension in Ukraine and try to present the etiology of regionalism intensification, my primary emphasis is on constructivism as opposed to deep-seated historically formed differences. The reason for this lies primarily in the fact that voluntary construction of regional identity is less studied in the

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literature today, while is an exciting and policy-relevant topic. Thus, for example, a number of authors, such as Wilson (1997) or Kuromiya (1998) did a great job in describing the historically formed deep-seated differences between the regions of Ukraine. However, not much is written on the recent factors, that might have enhances regional identification.

Based on the general studies on the *political economy* of Ukraine, such as Puglisi (2003), Babanin et al. (2002), Bondarenko (2000), Bukkvol (2002), Crawford (1995), Dubrovskyi (2000), Kutsenko (2004), Tomenko (1999), and van Zon (2000) to name a few, it is abvious that Ukraine is heavily diverse in terms of economic structure, and consequently both the popular lifestyles and attitudes as well as the types of elites are different across regions as well. Therefore, I draw attention to the fact that interregional tensions in Ukraine cannot be discussed without reference to political-economic differences between the regions, with East being more industrialised and dominated by oligarchic clans and the rest of Ukraine – more agrarian and less dominated by regional elites.

My hypothesis about the interrelation between regionalism development and the political economic elites is connected to the point of Buzduhan (2002) who emphasizes an important tendency of dramatic decrease of profit rates of Ukrainian political-economic groups (PEGs) involved in various beyond-legal[3] activities in different sectors of the economy. Since such decrease in profit rates is comparable in time to intensification of regional divide with every other elections (D'Anieri 2005) it might be a sign that the two phenomena are interconnected.

The work of Tatur (2004) is particularly interesting since she makes a comparative study on the mechanism of *creating regions by regional elites* through institutional, economic and cultural instruments. According to her, the regions emerge as a result of voluntaristic action of regional elites that create regions utilizing administrative-legal, economic and cultural-symbolic (historic) resources to create the regional identity (Tatur 2004: 21). This actor-centered approach includes the analysis of regional government bodies, regional branches of state administration,

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[3] The term 'beyond-legal' stands for economic activities that are most probably unjust in respect to society but are possible mostly due to gaps in legislation (characteristic to the years of transition) rather than through violating laws.

interest and cultural organization, managers of state firms and private entrepreneurs (Tatur 2004: 40). What is more several contributions in the Tatur's volume such as Zimmer (2004), Šabić (2004) and Šabić /Zimmer (2004) particularly analyze the resources available for region creation and the strategies used by elites in the West and East of Ukraine utilizing rich data of about 120 interviews. In general, the approach of the volume is reminiscent of the synthetic ethnosymbolism theory of Antony Smith, which implied that both cultural material and voluntaristic actions contribute to the creation of identity (Smith 1999).

Finally Snyder (2000) - the representative of elite persuasion theory – is worth mentioning here. Though I have several reservations to the mentioned book[4], its elite-centered framework appears useful for the analysis of Ukraine. Snyder argues that nationalistic conflict emerges during democratization if (a) institutions are weak and (b) elite is threatened by democratization and starts using nationalist arguments to justify some kind of partial democracy (Ibid.: 32, 85). In Ukraine such framework may be quite relevant since the state is weak and undergoes only the stage of formation. At the same time the political-economic elite is indeed threatened by the national-democratic opposition since 2000, therefore the part of Snyder's argument suggesting that under such conditions threatened elite resorts to acceleration of nationalist sentiments is worth checking.

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[4] E.g. using "nationalism" and "national conflict" interchangeably; leaving no space for bottom-up nationalism.

3. IDENTIFYING REGIONS

There is no consensus on how many regions are there in Ukraine since there are no clear criteria for identifying a region. Consequently, a variety of interpretations as well as misperceptions are possible.

The most straightforward way of regions' identification is _ethnicity_-based, however in the case of Ukraine this method is not very productive. Ukrainians are in minority only in Crimea[5], however their majority in all other territories does not prevent immense regionalism in the rest of Ukraine. In Wilson's terms Ukrainian society is bi-ethnic and bi-lingual, but not necessarily bi-polar (1997: 21). Saying this he refers to the fact that 1/3 of ethnic Ukrainians are Russian-speaking. For Wilson, thus, the essence of regional difference is mostly linguistic and not ethnic. Similarly, Kuzio (1998: 46) acknowledges that, though titular nationality in Ukraine makes up 77.8%[6] (more than in Kazakhstan, Latvia and Estonia, and only slightly less than in Russia), Ukrainians are disunited by history, language, religion and political culture. Thus, the difference inside the Ukrainians' group is substantial. On the other hand, the salience of having a non-titular ethnicity does not appear that great. For example, since 1989 till 2001 the percentage of Russian population in Ukraine dropped from 22 to 17%, even though only 3% of Russians migrated out of Ukraine during the economic crisis in 1990-1993 (Kuzio 1998: 97). Such change is largely explained by the identity shift in favour of civic Ukrainiannes among children of mixed and Russian families (Stebelsky 2005, Varfolomeyev 2003, Kuzio 2003). Another useful illustration of mere ethnicity's low importance is that Russians in L'viv and Kyiv remained non-mobilized and, what is more, held nearly identical views on the issues of Ukrainian language, schools, currency and armed forces as Ukrainians did in those regions, according to the findings of Bremmer (Kuzio 1998: 97).

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[5] Ukrainians - 24.4 %, Russians - 58.5 %, Tatars - 12.1% (Census 2001, http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/results/general/nationality/crimea/)
[6] Census 2001, http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/results/general/nationality/crimea/)

As for the _language_, besides Wilson (1997) this factor was considered explanatory for Ukrainian regionalism by Arel (1998) and Craumer/Clem (1999). According to the poll on the language of convenience Ukrainophone Ukrainians make up 40%, Russophone Ukrainians – 33% and Russians – 20% (Wilson 1997: 22). Although Wilson admits that those categories blur at the edges, he treats them as three distinct groups (1997: 23), reflecting the three parts of Ukraine.

However, Barrington/Herron's (2004: 76) analysis shows that regions have an independent effect on, for example, electoral results and they are not mere corollaries of ethnicity or language spoken. The authors suggest the 8-region model of Ukraine (see attachment 1) arguing that regions emerge from the _intersection of several parameters_ including historical heritage, economic structure, and demographic features. Therefore, ethnicity, or language are just not enough to explain the extent of regionalism in Ukraine. Thus so far it is clear that regions in Ukraine are defined by a combination of variables and it is simplistic to reduce them to mere inter-ethnic or inter-linguistic differences, which mostly comprise the demographic part of the story only, although overlap with the historical aspect to some extend as well. However, the economy part remains largely understudied so far and will be addressed in section 6.6.

Although the attitudes of people converge across the regions on many socio-economic issues, on the issue of joining NATO, and on the principle of equality before the law irrespective of ethnic origin; the attitudes diverge when it comes to federalism, state language, dual citizenship and foreign policy.

Western Ukrainian region has a stronger attachment to the Ukrainian state at large and the region's nationalist discourse places a great value on the unity and strength of the country (Šabić 2004: 227). In addition, Western Ukrainians have strong attachment to the Ukrainian identity and clear sense of "otherness" towards all Ukraine's neighbours. In contrast, Eastern Ukrainians know that they are different from Russians in Russia, however are unsure who they are (D'Anieri et al. 1999: 50-51). In Donbas and Crimea regional as opposed to state identity is

prevailing, and therefore support to <u>federalism</u> is higher. Nevertheless, Kuzio (1998) argues that the support to territorial integrity is comparatively high across the board despite the interregional variations. Even in eastern Ukraine it never got too far and the support to the prospect of just becoming a region of Russian has low support among the population according to opinion polls (D'Anieri et al. 1999: 57). In contrast to this Wilson (1997: 166) refers to the March 1994 local poll data demonstrating that 80% of Donets'k voters supported the idea of federalization of Ukraine, 87% supported introducing Russian as a second state language and 89% agreed that Russian should be a local language in Donbas. Supportive of the mention poll indeed, *Russian as a second language* is preferred more in the East and in Crimea. Thus in 2000-2001 81-93 % of Donets'k population were in favour of making Russian the second state language (Zimmer 2004: 258).

Foreign policy is a salient matter as well. The West is more kin on joining the EU, while the East and especially Crimea is looking forward (or rather backward) to closer ties with Russia and the CIS block. This fact, however, does not have to be interpreted in necessarily or only ethnic terms. Crimea and Donbas have strong regional identities, which acquire more sense in the supra-national rather than national entity and therefore the nostalgic Soviet sentiment is strong in these parts of Ukraine since they used to feel their greater status when Ukraine as a sovereign republic was only illusory. Similarly, Kharkiv region in the North-East of Ukraine is also nostalgic of Soviet times since it enjoyed the status of Ukrainian capital for some time under communists and until now the centers its identity around that fact. For example, In the city of Kharkiv it is possible see the public slogan like "Kharkiv – the first capital of Ukraine". In addition, since Eastern territories did not use to have meaningful historical links with the EU states, they are naturally somewhat resentful of this *terra incognita*. Finally, there is a possibility that the idea about the EU among the population of Eastern Ukraine is somewhat distorted which will be discussed in section 7. Interestingly, the support to NATO is low in all the regions of Ukraine, though even lower in the South-East as well. By the way, a peculiar fact related to the foreign policy orientations is that even though Eastern and Western Ukrainians identify equally with other

Ukrainians, 11% of Western and 47% of Eastern Ukrainians think to have things in common with Russians (Miller et.al 1998: 266, in Zimmer 2004: 255).

An important and not yet studied much aspect is regional difference in terms of <u>social capital</u>. As Eastern Ukraine and in particular Donbas are much more urbanized and industrialized than other parts of Ukraine the level of civil society is lower here, and as Zimmer (2004: 254) put it "the common good orientation of the population exhibits strong signs of anomie". This fact fits into a more general argument originating from modernization theory which goes that socialism accomplished "incomplete" or "fake" modernization, which was not accompanied by the creation of modern institutions, such as procedural legitimacy, autonomous civil society and solidarity among others (Tatur 2004: 24). Indeed, even though Eastern Ukraine is highly unionized, trade unions function more on the behalf of the elites than vice versa and this fact is accepted at the level of workers themselves (Zimmer 2004: 239)[7]. Although Melanie Tatur classifies both L'viv (Western Ukraine) and Donbas Ukrainian regions as representatives of neo-patrimonial patron-client type of governance relations, it can be argued that the mentioned features are much less present in Western Ukraine due to later incorporation into the Soviet Union and a legacy of being part of European states. The lower level of social capital, trust and civil society in Donbas may be additionally illustrated by the fact that 2/3[rds] of Donbas people believe that rallies have no impact on politics (Kuzio 1998: 85). Similarly, in a TV poll broadcasted in April 2007 people from L'viv mostly answered that it makes sense to support decent politicians in different ways, while people in Luhans'k (Donbas) answered either that it makes no sense or that there cannot be a decent politician. Such stunning difference in social capital is surely not an inherent feature for these regions. Donbas largely lost its social capital due to the famine of the 1930-s which not only killed millions of Ukrainian people but also destroyed rural integrative structures, which were replaced but products of massive industrialization – both places of refuge and societal weakness (Zimmer 2004: 239). Indirectly indicative of the low social capital level is also the sad fact that Donbas is the leader in crime rate, drug-abuse and HIV/AIDS, imprisonment, divorce and abortion level in–

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[7] Zimmer (2004: 300) provides a story about the miners who came to their employee asking him to coordinate the creation of a trade union on their enterprise.

all this being accompanied by poor associative potential Ukraine (ibid.: 253, 297). People in Donbas rarely engage in public activities and lack solidarity[8].

Eastern Ukrainian population is also more <u>pragmatic</u> and less frequently expresses political demands; therefore, the secessionism threat in 2004 came as a surprise. Miners' strikes in 1989 brought up only the issues of social and economic grievances concerning consumer goods, salaries, working and living conditions (Zimmer 2004: 239). One miner's phrase expressed pretty much the attitude of many in the region: "It's all the same to us what language we speak, as long as we have sausage" (Kuromiya 1998: 333). Such attitude definitely created significant resentment among the more politically engaged Western Ukrainian population; thus even the national-democratic party "Rukh" leader called Donbas residents "sausage people".

To summarise, significant differences can be observed between the regions. However, they should not be treated in ethnic terms only. As demonstrates by significant body of evidence presented here, as well as used in the Barrington/Herron (2004) paper, regions in Ukraine make sense as products of combinations of certain economic, demographic and historical conditions. Consequently the identities in Ukraine, even though attached to particular regions, cannot be called in ethnic or linguistic terms and are termed as "ethnicized" in this paper.

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[8] For example, Zimmer (2004: 298) mentions the story of a woman who experienced the envious attitude of her neighbors after she got a small compensation from the local mine administration for the death of her husband in the industrial incident.

4. REGIONALISM INTENSIFICATION

Regionalism - both in the sense of centrifugal political forces (political regionalism) and the salient diversity of regional identities inside Ukraine (popular regionalism) - was always part of the Ukrainian reality. As early as in 1990 already independent Novossiya republic was advocated by certain element in the Southern Ukraine (Bukkvoll 1997: 29). In September 1991 the Donets'k oblast council set up the committee to organize a referendum on re-establishment of the short-lived 1918 Kryvoriz'ko-Donets'ka republic (Ibid.: 28). However, apart from the limited public discussion such initiatives did not become articulated in the form of explicit political claims, Crimean case being the only exception. In general, therefore, it can be argued, that Ukraine managed to maintain the status of peacefully coexisting linguistically, religiously and otherwise heterogeneous society, especially in comparison to other post-communist cases undergoing transition. The region analysts used to expect significant social unrest during the first wave of democratization in the chaotic 1991 because of the diverse mixture of Ukrainian society. As expressed by Barrington/Herron (2004: 59) "Ukraine is a country, in which ethnic tensions were thought to be a serious potential problem, yet where serious ethnic conflict did not develop". Harasymiv (2002) in particular argued that Ukraine's interethnic tensions were traditionally minor. Even in Crimea at the beginning of transition, in 1992, the opinion poll showed that only 15% of Crimeans wanted to join Russia, while 42% preferred to stay in Ukraine, even though Russians comprise more than 50% on the peninsula's population (Motyl 1993: 92). Considering such comparatively favourable conditions for future nation- and state-building it might have been expected that after 15 years of independence the society would become more consolidated. However, the evidence observed shows the contrary, the society became more polarized that consolidated, even despite the fact that the percentage of Ukrainians grew and the percentage of Russians fell since the census of 1989. The conclusion appears that identities became more

salient during this period of time, even though not ethnic identities (as discussed in the section 3), then ethnicized regional identities for sure.

The salience of regionalism indeed, seemed to have decreased to some extent in the course of transition. For example, in 1993 the coordination committee for the miners strikes decided to "remove from the list of demand any questions concerning autonomy for Donbas in any form, as it might lead to discord in society and damage the unity of Ukraine" (Bukkvoll 1997: 29). Moreover, the allegedly Russophile President Kuchma pursued the policy beneficial for the entire country and its nation-building, in contrast to what was expected from him by the pro-Russian groups he was backed by. Tellingly, in June 1995 Kuchma said that "there [was] no longer any danger of Ukraine splitting up the way Yugoslavia did" (Ibid.: 25).

However, after such period of the seeming consensus, political regionalism started intensifying again. According to the observations of D'Anieri (2005: 242) Ukrainian regionalism was becoming increasingly more salient from elections to elections[9]. In addition, in 2004 Ukraine experienced a secessionist movement in its eastern territories. Even though secessionism talks did take place in Eastern Ukraine in early 1990-s, they never grew into a formal initiative (D'Anieri et al. 1999: 66). In contrast, in 2004 the South-Eastern Ukrainian Republic consisting of Donets', Luhans'k and Kharkiv oblasts has formally threatened its separation from Ukraine. On the meeting in Severodonetsk the leaders of Eastern regions decided to hold a referendum on greater autonomy from Kyiv. In particular, the Donetsk regional council voted 156 against 1 to stage the plebiscite vote on December 5th 2004. In 2005, moreover, the referendum on introduction of Russian as a second language was run in the autonomous republic of Crimea and in 2006 Russian was proclaimed a regional language by two oblasts[10], even without a mandate for that. Similarly, in Crimea there seems to be a certain revitalization of Russophile identity. While in 1998 the Crimean parliament adopted the constitution recognising Ukrainian as the only state language throughout Ukraine (D'Anieri et al 1999: 67), in 2005 it recognised Russian as a second regional language and tried to initiate a referendum on the status of Russian language in

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[9] Thus, in the recent presidential elections the West of the country voted over 90% for Yuschenko and the East in a similar proportion for Yanukovych – with this cleavage being even more significant than it was in 1991 (D'Anieri 2005: 242).
[10] In May and July 2006 Mykolayivs'ka and Kharkivska oblast councils proclaimed such decision.

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Ukraine. Finally, the metamorphosis of President Kuchma is telling in itself. At the beginning of his first presidential term around 1994 Kuchma expressed agreement with his predecessor Kravchuk that for a successful social integration Ukraine needed a centrist type of politics (Kuzio 1998: 49). However, at the end of his second term Kuchma allied with the "Party of Regions" faction thus enabling the turning of Ukraine into a parliamentary republic, with proportional type of elections.

Overall, during and in the aftermath of the 2004 Orange revolution the issue of East-West divide in Ukraine is often speculated upon in political rhetoric in Ukraine, as well as in foreign media. Therefore, the following part of the paper will deal with exploring the possible reasons for such ethnicized regional tension intensification.

5. EXPLAINING REGIONAL IDENTITIES: DEEP-SEATED UNDERPINNINGS

Before addressing the recent, and especially constructivist, factors that underlie the interregional tension in contemporary Ukraine it is vital to acknowledge the differing features that are historically formed in different regions since such characteristics undoubtedly lead to certain level of diversity and mutual misunderstanding.

The steppes of **Donbas** were part of the Russian empire since the 17th century, however they remained poorly inhabited till the middle of the 19th century, when commercial mining was launched in the region (Zimmer 2004: 235). During the Soviet period, as Kuzio (1998: 83) writes, Donbas used to be the "show-case of communism", its local economic elites would usually bypass Kyiv and move to Moscow directly. Indeed, in Soviet times the region had a feeling of its primary role in building a better future because of forced industrialization and modernization (so central to the ideology of socialism with its cult of miners and steelworkers), which was largely concentrated in the region. This legacy has strong impact on the contemporary self-perception of Donbas residents. For example, the interviewees from Donets'k express the belief that Donbas will not only rise again and save Ukraine from economic crisis, they also believe in Donbas' significant role in general worldwide development (Zimmer 2004: 262). Thus the self-perception of the region may be expressed in *primus inter pares* terms[11]. Along with industrialization Eastern Ukraine was also heavily Russified (Kuromiya 1998, Kuzio 1998, Motyl 1993). Firstly, because industrialization was accompanied with detachment from traditions and population mixture since it had to represent the glorious achievement of the modern internationalist regime of the Soviet Union. Therefore, people from many nationalities were both sent and arrived voluntarily to the

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[11] As one of Zimmer's (2004: 261) interviewees put it "…All the money that exists today in Ukraine, as a rule originates from the export of our products. Therefore I think that the role of the Donbas and around us of the Luhansk and Dnipropetrovs'k oblasts is the most important for Ukraine in general". The other person expressed the view that "Donets'k oblast … is an achievement of world civilization", And the one expressed the opinion that "so far the rest of the world hasn't produced techniques such as those, that are known to the scientists of Donets'k and produced here" (Zimmer 2004: 336).

dynamically developing region (Zimmer 2004: 253, Kuromiya 1998). Eastern Ukraine had also suffered from the famine of 1930-s, which was not the fate of Western Ukraine, yet not a part of the Soviet Union at a time. The famine served a denationalizing function no less than the function of creating a class-less society since the millions, who died because of the famine, comprised the Ukrainian-speaking rural population. It is also argued that the region of Donbas is characterised by a specific type of political culture that envisions the ideal type of political governance as a <u>decentralized</u> structure. The argument goes, that Donbas supported independence of Ukraine to get freedom from Moscow, which was felt to exploit the region. However, consequently the region also wanted to get further autonomy from Kyiv, unwilling to have a new "exploiter" above it (Kuromiya 1998: 333). The Japanese historian proceeds in explaining that Donbas since its industrial birth used to be a land of freedom for many outcasts, who were not accepted in other parts of Ukraine, Soviet Union or the Russian Empire, such as: Jews, Christian protestants, followers of different radical ideologies and alike. Donbas was imagined to be an "exit" in Hirschman's terms, even though was also characterised by severe discrimination and exploitation[12] (Kuromiya 1998: 336). "The problem is not just that Donbas has a large Russian population or that it is highly Russified linguistically and culturally. Whenever Kyiv has attempted to build a nation, the Donbas has acted like an anti-metropolitan Cossack land, resisting Kyiv's nation-building" (Kuromiya 1998: 337). In this respect, the author continues, - considering the centrality of Cossack image in the Ukrainian nation-building project - Donbas appears to be the most Ukrainian of all Ukrainian lands[13]. To summarise, Donbas is firstly characterised by heavy Russian influence; secondly, Russification was reinforced by denationalization brought by industrialization, the famine and migration of workers of different nationalities; finally, because of being a "showcase of communist vanguard region" Donbas has strong regional identity, which presupposes the region's primary role in the country's development.

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[12] To symbolise such seemingly incompatible combination Kuromiya named his book "Freedom and Terror in the Donbas".
[13] For sure, the allegory is beautiful as well as useful to some extent. However, two comments are appropriate: Cossacks were not anti-statist overall, they aimed at creating a free Ukrainian state; secondly it is unclear why freedom-loving people of Donbas tolerate the local regional level of control.

The **Ukrainian West** is extremely contrasting to the region of Donbas. Firstly, it has a longer history since after the fall of the Kyiv Rus Western Ukraine was independently governed in the framework of Halych-Volhynia Kingdom established in 1199. After being a part of Polish Kingdom and the Austro-Hungarian Empire the region gained independence again as a Western Ukrainian People's Republic in 1918 and shortly united with the Ukrainian People's Republic with the capital in Kyiv. After the power in Kyiv was captured by communists, Western Ukraine became Polish again and only after the World War 2 it was incorporated into the Soviet Union. As a result of its ancient history and late incorporation into the political orbit of Moscow L'viv – the main city of Western Ukraine – is often considered a stronghold of Ukrainian culture, which is reinforced by low industrialization of Western Ukraine. Thus the Western identity is built in attachment to Europe, high civilization and culture. Longing for independence Western elite and masses wanted recognition as the most Ukrainian part of Ukraine, in other words were looking forward to becoming a different type of *primus inter pares* region.

After Ukraine's independence both regions were disappointed. Donbas did not get better living conditions it hoped for and continued feeling exploited. What is more, instead of the glory Donbas people used to enjoy as a vanguard region, they were now at times referred to as "not true Ukrainians" or as "culturally backward" by some Western radicals. Expectedly, the people of Donbas are unwilling to give up their status of a hero-region and accept the role of a victim as russified, alienated Ukrainians; therefore, they often perceive Ukrainianness with resentment since it implies not such a prominent role to Donbas and its regional identity (Portnov 2005). Today, even though it is legitimate to say that Eastern Ukrainian population is largely forcefully denationalised, it is the fact that the majority of people in this part of Ukraine prefer Russian language and value the Russian culture a lot. Therefore, even though the region was purposefully Russified at a certain point in history, the current generation's attachment to Russian culture was a natural free choice (Khmelko 2006). Thus from the perspective of this generation the resentment they feel to disrespectful attitude of Ukrainian radicals towards them is fully understandable.

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On the other end of the country, in Western Ukrainian L'viv, the grievance is similar in the sense that the region was also aspiring the status of the primary important region and trying to be a cultural competitor to the industrialized Donbas however did not get the wanted respect after Ukraine's independence. Perceiving themselves as the last true Ukrainians, as the heart of Ukraine, much of Western residents expected due respect from the rest of Ukraine, while in reality they were often taken as either evil or not pragmatic enough nationalists, who should be restrained and therefore not let to central power (Šabić & Zimmer 2004: 107). Considering also a de facto Russified cultural space of Ukraine, it is understandable that even after Ukraine's independence the Western region elite and population did not get the country they longed for for so long.

It can be summarized that both Donbas and the Western region feel own superiority and want the relevant respect from the rest of Ukraine. However, the difference between the regions is that L'viv agenda reinforces the all-Ukrainian nation-building project, while the Donbas one hardly fits it. The additional dynamic comes from Crimea, which has very distinct history mostly related to the Tatar population. However, today the attitudinal differentiation of the region is probably most ethnic based due to 54% Russians on the peninsula. The region of Kharkiv is also special due to its ambitious self-perception as the "first capital of Ukraine" since it used to be a communist capital of Ukraine between 1917-1934.

As demonstrated the deep-seeded differences between the Ukrainian regions are present and should be considered in designing policies. However, it is also important to remember that those differences are not merely ethnic: Russians in central and western regions hold almost the same attitudes on nationally-sensitive issues as do Ukrainians. Therefore, the tension is not ethnic but rather regional and thus the reasons for it should also be looked for in the regional not ethnic peculiarities.

The regional differences demonstrated above make the interregional tension understandable. However, as time goes these differences were supposed to become less salient, while in reality they became even stronger. Therefore, the question remains: what triggered these

regional identities and led to their reinforcement (especially around 2004) despite the expected

process of gradual consolidation of the Ukrainian society.

6. EXPLAINING THE REINFORCED IDENTITIES: RECENT FACTORS

As seen from the preceding section there is a deep historically formed identity difference between the Ukrainian regions. What is more, there is a degree of resentment between these identities. Nevertheless, this tension is not inherently ethnically-based. It remains unclear, however, what stimulated the reinforcement of these identities in the recent years. I will make an overview of the possible driving forced behind the process under scrutiny, such as nationalizing state policies, radical nationalist movements, party system consolidation, democratic representation development, business-minded elite manipulation, and foreign influence.

6.1 Nationalizing Policies

Suspecting that the increase of regional tensions is a consequence of harsh nationalizing policies is logical, especially considering that many other transition states may be characterized as radically nationalizing right after gaining independence. Thus Arel and Wilson refer to post-independence Ukraine as to a nationalizing state also (Kuzio 1998: 172). Similarly, Hughes/Sasse (2003: 28) mention the Ukrainian state among the guilty ones in terms of minority protection. In this context an overview of Ukraine's nationalities' policy is relevant. However, prior to that a short excursus into the history of Ukrainian political thought on the issue would also be useful.

As the overview of Antoniuk (2003) shows the legacy of political thought on the nationalities' issue was comparatively liberal in Ukraine. Although there was a group of people who followed the "Ukraine – for Ukrainians" agenda, for example, M. Mikhnovs'kyi – a political activist of the beginning of the XX century – they were representing rather a minority view. The cornerstone of contemporary Ukrainian historiography and a president of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) since 1918 M. Hrushevs'kyi suggested in his work "Free Ukraine" to recognize

"any expressions of Ukrainian chauvinism, exceptionalism, intolerance towards other nationalities a national crime" (Hrushevs'kyi 1917: 12). Despite the unstable and hostile international environment, the UPR issued the laws "On the creation of Jews' councils" in 1917 and "On the national-personal autonomy" in 1918. Moreover, the Central Council (parliament of the UPR) deliberately included national minorities' representatives into its members in proportion to the number of national minorities inhabiting Ukraine (Antoniuk 2003). In addition, the Central Council created in the structure of its executive branch a general secretariat for interethnic relations and three separate ministers for Russians', Jews' and Poles' issues (Khrystiuk 1921-2: 85-86).

In independent Ukraine some radicals proposing exclusionary version of nationalism can also be found, however, the political and social mainstream is rather supportive of the inclusionary national policy and the state decisions are illustrative of this. Traces of exclusionary nationalism remain among certain groups in the West of Ukraine as well as in Crimea, but there is no radicalism among the influential political and cultural elites, especially in Kyiv (Motyl 1993: 96). On the other hand, the purely multicultural approach (dominating the international discourse today as discussed in Kymlicka (2007) is at odds even with inclusionary nationalism and was not much utilized in Ukraine until recently[14]. This entirely civic view of a nation and promotion of fully multi-national version of Ukraine can be found in the proposals of L'viv historian Yaroslav Hrytsak, who follows the tradition of 20th century Ukrainian leading political philosopher of Polish origin Vyacheslav Lypyns'kyi (Motyl 1993: 80).

The Preamble of the Ukrainian *Constitution* of 1996 is written "in the name of the people of Ukraine – citizens of Ukraine of all nationalities"; thus "people of Ukraine", not the "Ukrainian people" are sovereign in the country. At the same time article 11 of the Constitution names Ukrainians the titular nationality[15] and Ukrainian the only state language in the country. D'Anieri et al. (1999: 64) also mentions that the Constitution presupposes a degree of affirmative action to

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[14] During and after 2004 the representatives of the "Regions' Party of Ukraine" started talking of reforming Ukraine according to the Western multiculturalism models in the sense of introducing a federal system, proportional elections, two-chamber parliament, two state languages and dual citizenship.
[15] Kuzio (1998) also mentions that Crimean Tatars are given a status of indigenous people along with Ukrainians in Ukraine. However, I failed to confirm this information, even though the national-democratic forces in Ukraine, including the President Yuschenko, support granting Tatars such a status and a respective law is waiting its turn on the agenda of the Ukrainian Parliament.

Ukrainian language, culture and history. Nevertheless, articles 10, 11, 22, 53 and 119 guarantee the right for enjoying minority cultures, and in particular languages (including in the educational space).

The *National Security Doctrine* adopted in 1997 repetitive of the Constitution proclaimed Ukrainians a titular nation, Ukrainian a single state language and encouraged affirmative action to Ukrainian history language and culture (D'Anieri et al 1999: 64).

1989 law *"On Languages in Ukraine"* recognised Ukrainian a state language, while Russian was granted a not so clear status of the "intercommunication language". The law also gave employees 3 to 5 years to ensure adequate knowledge of Ukrainian to the degree needed to execute the official responsibilities. Finally, the document set an aim of Ukrainianizing the higher education by the end of the century.

A new *citizenship law* was issued in 1991. It represented a liberal "zero-option" law, granting Ukrainian citizenship to everyone residing in Ukraine at the time. The only conditions were the agreement to recognise and obey the Constitution and the knowledge of Ukrainian language sufficient for communication.

In November 1991 the *"Declaration on the rights of nationalities"* granted equal rights and declared that Ukrainian state guarantees the right to use the Russian language freely, and to use a different language side by side with the Ukrainian in regions were several national groups live compactly (Wilson 1997: 149). A year later, in 1992, a law *"On national minorities"* also granted equal rights to all citizens who obey the Constitution and laws of Ukraine and respect the state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In the international dimension Ukraine has ratified the *Framework Convention on National Minorities* in 1997 and the *European Charter of Regional Languages* in 2005.

By 1996-1998 the overall consensus was reached among the Ukrainian elite on the issue of nation-building meaning that the state should be based on Ukrainian ethnicity, however defined in civic terms. Such stand was opposed only by the "Communist Party of Ukraine" and the radical

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left "Progressive socialist party of Ukraine" that demanded two titular languages and two titular nations in Ukraine (D'Anieri et al. 1999: 64).

Talking of this *de facto* consensus it is important to emphasize that the often-reiterated contrast between the "nationalist" President Kravchuk and the "pro-Russian minority" President Kuchma is somewhat misleading. D'Anieri et al. (1999: 60) suggests, that Kravchuk was never a nationalist and used nationalism only to build the state, rather than the other way around. Thus affirmative action for the Ukrainian language was targeting state-building, not nation-building. He was with centrist forces to recognize Ukraine as a multi-national state through policies preventing interethnic and interregional strife; his speeches never referred to "national struggle", "national goals" or "national mission"; he was equally criticized by nationalists and leftists. Similarly Kuchma, following the established policies was rather a statist, and neither president can be called a nationalist (Ibid.: 1999: 62). Interestingly, though Kuchma ran on the anti-nationalist agenda, he did not reverse the general policy concerning national issues. In particular, his speech contained the following words "…the central theme of the twentieth century is the appearance of the Ukrainian nation, its transformation from an ethnographic to a conscious political and cultural community" (D'Anieri et al. 1999: 62). In contrast to his electoral program, he agreed on the necessity of the unitary state and, similarly to Kravchuk, opposed recognising Russians as the second titular nation in Ukraine. Moreover, Kuchma abandoned the issue of Russian as a state language shortly after winning presidency (Ibid.: 64). He was also very receptive to the new Ukrainian historiography, which he widely utilised in his speeches, even though it contrasted the former Soviet or current Russian perspective a lot (Ibid.: 69). Motyl (1998: 26) makes a similar assessment that in the circumstances of the Russian threat (perceived or real) even Kuchma continued the pro-Ukrainian state-building discourse of his predecessor. Therefore, both Kravchuk and Kuchma stood strongly for unitarianism, with Kuchma even performing as a hard-liner concerning the issue of Crimean separatism.

The Ukrainization of education in Ukraine is often discussed in the literature. In 1992 the Ministry of Education Commission issued a report proposing a reform enhancing the national form of education, reviving the culture and traditions of Ukrainian people (Wanner 1998: 82). On

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the practical side it involved the reduction in the number of Russian-language schools, decreasing of the state monopoly on curricula design to allow measured regional autonomy, decentralization of educational bureaucracy in favour of regional boards, encouragement of regional adaptation of curriculum and encouragement of experimental and private schools (Ibid.: 83). Thus in 1992 the central government issued a decision to convert school instruction into Ukrainian[16] (Ibid.: 88) and in 1993 all entrance exams, with the exception of Crimea, were also shifted to Ukrainian. By 1993-1994 academic year the percentage of Ukrainian schools in Kyiv went up from pre-independence 20% to over half of the schools according to Arel (1995). Interestingly, these tendencies were associated with little protest, moreover interviews revealed the general agreement of parents and teachers with such reforms[17] (Wanner 1998: 85, Kuzio 1998: 185). Russian literature became part of world literature, Ukrainian language, literature and history were introduces as mandatory instead of the Russian/USSR analogues (Wanner 1998: 85).

Rewriting history is another peculiar issue discussed a lot. The two aspects Wanner (1998) draw attention to were the story of famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine and the Chornobyl accident. The presentation of the famine in new Ukrainian textbooks is more complex, blaming not only Stalin for the tragedy but also the entire Soviet system and the numerous collaborators of the cruel regime on the local level in Ukraine, including the officials on the village level (Wanner 1998: 96). The second difference Wanner notes is that the Chernobyl explosure is given little attention in the newer textbooks (possibly, due to the independence and the regime change euphoria). The third reinterpreted area was the origin of Belarusian, Russian and Ukrainian nations as well as the heritage of the Kyiv Rus. In contrast to the Soviet vision of the three nations as three branches that came out of one nation inhabiting the Kyiv Rus, the new Ukrainian historiography views Kyiv Rus the pre-Ukrainian state, and Russians and Belarusians not as brothers that came out from the same Rus nation but as ancient neighbours.

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[16] Higher education as well as primary schools into Ukrainian language curriculum, with secondary schools given a more gradual transition plan (secondary school children were given an option to finish in Russian (Wanner 1998: 88)
[17] This little opposition is even more significant considering the fact that parents realized the sad perspective that their children will know the literature and the language they themselves used to learn good enough (Wanner 1998: 89)

It is obvious that both educational system and historiography underwent significant change. However, a number of remarks are relevant here. Primarily, the fact that Russian subjects were replaced by the Ukrainian subjects is not enough to conclude that the Ukrainian state was nationalizing as Wilson (1997) and other authors do. If the level of re-nationalization of education does not exceed the proportion of titular nationality of the country, it is only legitimate to talk of de-Sovietization of the educational system.

Changes in historiography deserve a similar comment. Wanner (1998) mentions that due to being overtly nationalistic the new Ukrainian historiography deserves the same level of scepticism as the Soviet one. However, the mere fact of having a national flavour does not make historiography nationalizing. If the level of historical fabrication in the new version of history is lower than in the previous one (assuming that history is not a fully subjective area of studies) then it can rather be qualified as de-Sovietizing, especially in cases when a more comprehensive picture is presented or more historically trustworthy facts are provided.

Finally, the Ukrainianization of education system *de yure* was far from the situation *de facto* and therefore it is hardly possible to talk of people, who would fail getting education or passing the entrance exams because of their official turning into Ukrainian language. Not only students but also teachers in Russian-speaking regions would latently proceed doing business as usual with no viable threat of punishment. Moreover, despite the state affirmative action to the Ukrainian language it is not always possible to get education in it. A telling example is that in 2005 student S. Melnychuk had to appeal to the court to defend his right to get his education in the Eastern-Ukrainian National Dal University (located in Kharkiv) in Ukrainian language[18]. The court ruled in favour of the student's appeal, however, unfortunately, as a result of such activism, the student was expelled from the university on the basis of failing the academic requirement since he wanted to pass exams and attend lectures in his native - and also state - language[19]. Similar situation is also observed in Crimea, where in 1995 out of 300 schools only one was Ukrainian-language and two more were Tatar-language, while Ukrainians and Tatars make up 25

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[18] http://www.khpg.org/index.php?id=1165179802
[19] http://osvita.org.ua/news/26939.html

% and 10 % of the peninsula's population (Kuzio 1998: 88). Interestingly, according to the Bremmer's survey 43 % of Simferopol (the Crimean capital) population expressed willingness to have Ukrainian-language schools (Kuzio 1998: 171). On the all-Ukrainian level in 1994-1995 academic year 42.7 % schoolchildren continued being taught in Russian (Kuzio 1998: 172), compared to 72% of ethnic Ukrainians in the country and 55-61% of people whose native language or language of convenience is Ukrainian (Kuzio 1998: 180).

The situation in media is also not reflecting the ethnic composition of the Ukrainian society since only 46% of the country's publications are in Ukrainian, and in particular the Ukrainian-language newspapers comprise only 32%. Moreover, In 1995 Russian-language programs occupied 2/3 of TV broadcasting (not including ORT – the most popular Russian TV channel in Ukraine) (Bukkvoll 1997: 39). In Crimes only 1.7 % and 3% of TV and radio broadcasts are in Ukrainian (Kuzio 1998: 88).

On the other hand, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine[20], ethnic Russians obtain over 20% of high positions in Ukrainian politics[21] and public service. In addition, two million children in Ukraine get full secondary education in minority languages[22]. Even though it appears to be less than national minority children in Ukraine it is also probable that minority parents might choose to educate children in Ukrainian language schools as well. There are also 169 media items in minority languages, 46 of them are all-Ukrainian[23]. Finally, the state contributes administratively and financially to national minorities' holidays' celebration. As expressed by Kuzio (1998: 97) "Ukrainian authorities were always conscious of the need not to provoke such a large minority. A state programme for the development of Russian culture and language was adopted in late 1994 – ahead of similarly adopted programmes for Ukrainian culture and those of national minorities, other than Russians. It can also be argued that since many Ukrainians are Russophone the proportion of Russian language education and media should be adjusted not to ethnicity but to the language of population. However, many

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[20] http://www.mfa.gov.ua/mfa/ua/publication/content/379.htm
[21] Compared to 17.3% of Russian in the population of Ukraine.
[22] There are 1880 Russian, 94 Romanian, 69 Hungarian, 12 Tatar, 4 Polish, 9 Moldavian schools as well as 2242 bi- or multi-lingual schools. In regular schools minority language groups can be organized if 5 or more children are willing to join.
[23] As attachments to the Parliamentary newspaper "Voice of Ukraine" 6 other papers in minority languages are issued.

Russophone Ukrainian prefer Ukrainian education as well as well understand and use the language freely.

While Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin used to claim that Russians and Russian-speakers were increasingly discriminated against in Ukraine and G. Yavlinskii from "Yabloko" party lamented over "the big problem with Russian schools in Ukraine", it can be argued based on public opinion poll that almost identical (9.2 and 9.4) percentage of Ukrainians and Russians indeed experience discrimination in Ukraine (Kuzio 1998: 194-195). Even the Russian ambassador to Ukraine Mr. Smolyakov, as well as the Russian governmental newspaper "Rossiiskaya Gazeta" (29 April 1997) denied accusations that Ukraine was implementing the policy of Ukrainization (Kuzio 1998: 176).

In line with the presented evidence, Casanova (1998: 87) agrees that the Ukrainian state can be characterized as "nationalizing" in the most minimal sense only. Bukkvoll (1997: 38) also joins the conclusion that the Ukrainian state has treated Russian minority relatively well since independence based on the formal and informal methods of accommodation, polls of the ethnic comfort, and statement of international observers. Motyl wrote in 1993: "While attempting to enhance the woeful status of Ukrainian…, policymakers have prudently accepted the legitimacy and reality of Russian as the language spoken in most of Ukraine's cities, including Kiev, and used in much of Ukraine's media. Ukraine's Russian-speaking population is thus in no danger of being forcibly "Ukrainianied" (Ibid. 81). To summarise in the words of Kuzio (1998: 83): "at the current level of "Ukrainisation" it would take 80 to 100 years for the proportion of the Ukrainian-language schools in the Donbas to equal the number of ethnic Ukrainians living there". Thus returning to the central question of the paper, I would suggest that even though changes in humanitarian area might have led to some emotional discontent among the radical Russophiles in Ukraine, the scope and form of the supposedly nationalizing state policy was not characterized by human rights violation, as well as provided space for some collective rights as well. Therefore, the

nationalizing state policy could cause some effect[24], however, was most probably not the main reason for intensified regional ethnicized tensions in Ukraine.

6.2 Nationalistic Movement

Beside the formal state policy, it can be also argued that radicalization of Russophile attitudes might have been caused by the radical nationalistic social movement and over-nationalistic discourse coming from the West of Ukraine. Arel (2005), for example, suggests that in the context of spreading Western Ukrainian rhetoric, which presupposes a particular Galician type of Ukrainiannes, the Eastern Ukrainian population might well have felt excluded from that new Ukrainian identity. Therefore, in order not to be excluded from the public realm as well the need to reinforce some kind of alternative collective identity came to the fore for them.

Indeed, it is possible to find plausible ground for such logic. At the end of 1980s – the beginning of 1990-s a number of nationalistic groups[25] were established in L'viv – a stronghold of Ukrainian national movement - as well as in Kyiv, as a center of Ukrainian intelligentsia. Obviously, some of those groups were radical in their views. For example, the citizenship criteria proposed by Ukrainian Helsinki Union were similarly strict to the radical Estonian and Latvian versions (Wilson 1997: 62). In addition, as the national-democratic activists got disappointed in the nationally unconscious position of Donbas population they at times allowed themselves too harsh phrases at times. For example, V. Pavliv – the editor of the L'viv magazine "Postup" once called Eastern Ukrainian people "denationalized sausage heads, who vote with their bellies" (Lieven 1999: 47, in Zimmer 2004: 255).

However, such examples are not representative of the entire national-democratic movement. The "Rukh" party 1992 program, for example, stated that "for historic, ethnic, economic, political and social-psychological reasons Ukrainian society is not homogenous", therefore, "Rukh view Ukraine as a multi-national state (formed) from the multinational nature of Ukrainian society." Similarly, the Republican Party spokesperson argued that "the most effective

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[24] For example, the "Intermovement of Donbas" was created as a reaction to the 1989 Ukrainian language law.
[25] Ukrainian Helsinki Group, The Lion Society, Independent Creative Intelligentsia, Committee in Defence of Ukrainian Catholic Church, Ukrainian Culturological Club, Student 'Hromada', and even ultra-nationalist UIA, DSU, UNP.

integrating factor (in building a new Ukrainian state) will be territorial patriotism" (Wilson 1997:

148). Nationalists supported the "zero-option" citizenship law in 1991, even though objected to

Russian demand of dual citizenship introduction. They also supported a rather liberal "Declaration

on the rights on nationalities" in 1991 (Wilson 1997: 149).

In addition, the fact that Ukrainians chose a former national communist over national-

democratic candidates for presidency[26] in 1991 suggests that Ukrainians were not too

nationalistic, differently from many other post-Soviet republics. Similar lack of support to

nationalistic agenda repeated in 1994 presidential election when voters traded the incumbent for

a more leftist and Russophile program of Kuchma (D'Anieri et al. 1999: 59). The support to

nationalists in the parliamentary elections was not very articulate either. In 1994 nationalist

parties got only 13.8 % from the total parliamentary vote (10.9% of which were for the moderate

nationalists) (Wilson 1997: 137).Thus even though Western regions' intelligentsia attempted to

promote the idea of Galicia as a source of true Ukrainianness preserved on their lands, they

succeeded neither in politics nor in getting wide popular support. As a result L'viv elite is rather an

outsider in Ukrainian politics, while Donets'k secured a role of insider in the country's central

politics (Zimmer 2004: 349).

Even though there exists the Ukrainian extreme right that advocates "Ukraine for

Ukrainians only" it is not more radical, while numerically and electorally less significant than the

equivalent movements in advanced Western European democracies (Khomchuk 1995: 40-44).

According to the April 1995 survey, only 1.5 % of respondents supported the radical nationalists.

Moreover, "nationalists" are ranking first in the negative trust list. Thus 76 % of population

expresses either "complete distrust" (60.3%) or "distrust more that trust" (15.7%) to the

nationalists (Casanova 1998: 86-87).

Based on such unimpressive formal achievements and low informal popular support the

story Wilson (1997) is telling about the radical nationalist attitudes characteristic of Ukrainian

public arena appears misleading. The nationalistic rhetoric and radical expressions of national

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[26] Such as V.Chornovil from "Rukh".

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movement, indeed, might have caused some effect in terms of reinforcing regional and ethnic identity among the Eastern Ukrainian population. However, considering the proportion of radicals in the movement, as well as the scope of the movement's support it most probably was only a push-factor[27] for reinforced alternative identities. In other words, it might have create shirt-term resentment to nationalist news on the TV, for example, however required an additional pull-factor to result in a strong Eastern Ukrainian identity reinforcement, saying nothing of mobilization.

6.3 Party System Consolidation

The third part of a story may be related to the process of Ukrainian party system formation. In the middle of 1990-s Ukraine could "boast" having more than 100 political parties, which is a rather typical disease for young democracies. The majority of those parties obviously had no political function in reality. What is more, a significant number of parliamentary seats was occupied by the independents (Harasymiw 2006). In contrast, today it is possible to identify several dominants party actors and independent members of parliament are rare. Moreover, the figures of the "Institute for Sociology of the Ukrainian Academy of Science" show that the percentage of those who think that there are parties to be trusted in Ukraine grew from in 25.5% 2004 to 42.9% in 2006 (Heyets 2007: 6). These facts are illustrative of the process of consolidation of the Ukrainian party system.

Arguably, in early 2000-s for a circle of the dominant incumbent elite there rose a necessity to counterbalance the newly organised massive national-democratic opposition represented by V. Yuschenko and his "Our Ukraine" party block. Therefore, a myriad of non-ideological and no-agenda pro-government parties were gradually transformed into a more articulate pro-presidential "Party of Regions" (formerly known as "Party of Regional Revival of Ukraine") right before the 2000 parliamentary elections. To differentiate itself from the opposition and to pose itself on the electoral market to gain significant support the new ideology was needed. The version chosen centered around regional peculiarities of Ukrainian regions (which mostly meant only one – Donbas region) and proclaimed support to Russian as a second state

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[27] Push/pull factors used in the terminology of Nodia (2000)

language, dual citizenship, federalization, Russian-speakers' rights protection and alike. Thus for successful party formation the appeal to and reinforcement of the ethnicized cleavage was utilized. This was a logical way to go according to Brubaker (2004), who mentions that ethnic identity is much easier to awake or create than any other, e.g. class identity.

6.4 Democratic Representation Development

An additional explanation for ethnicized regional identities intensification goes that it is possible that communities started expressing their identities simply because they could, because they had the possibility to do so.

However, the Russophile population could do so even before. The previous President of Ukraine Kuchma was coming from the East of the country, was Russian-speaking himself and won the Presidential electoral campaign promising to make Russian a second language and expressing an overall pro-Russian minority stand. Moreover, Kuchma did not fulfil his humanitarian electoral promises and soon after elections continues the state-building policy launched by his predecessor Kravchuk. In this context the Russophile population might have had an additional impetus to express their protest even before 2004. However, this did not happen, and thus the situation required special explanation

The useful part about this argument, however, is that not every identity expression should be necessarily called radicalization. Exercising multiple identities is an inherent part of liberal democracy and therefore identity expression is not always radicalism or a result of manipulation; other factors kept stable there could be expressions of regional identities as well. In addition, at the beginning of transition people might have been too preoccupied with physical survival as opposed to identity issues. However, after the economic situation stabilized, it can be that more post-industrial issues gained more support in the population. Finally, it can also be argued that the normal democratization process helped people to learn that participate is useful and to learn how to participate. For example, in the case of Ukraine the growing expression of Crimean Tatar as well as Ruthenian identity may be qualified as such that happens because there is a symbolic

material for identity and a possibility to express it. However, in the case of regional Russophile identity, other factors are also at play and they are to be discussed in the next section.

6.5 Foreign Influence

6.5.1 Kin-state impact

The primary aspect concerning the foreign influence on regionalism in Ukraine is the role of the Russian Federation. According to the triadic nexus theory (Brubaker 1996) nationalist mobilization is influenced by three factors: the kin-state policy, the policy of the nationalizing state and the strategy of the minority itself. Therefore, the impact of Russia on the development of the Russophile identity in Ukrainian regions appears highly relevant, especially considering the strength of Russia as an international and (even more) regional player. Russia represents the image of the historical homeland to the 17.3 % Russians living in Ukraine. However, it additionally enjoys the status of cultural centre for a far wider number of residents of Ukraine – mostly, those that are nostalgic of the advantages of the common Soviet past.

Previously Bolsh|evik Russia, for example, justified its political expansion by the preferences of the largely Russian population of non-Russian borderlands. Post-Soviet Russia in its turn invented the concept of the "near abroad"[28], which is populated by the "blood relatives", in order to initiate a discussion of elaborate schemes of those relatives' rights protection, including the demand to introduce dual citizenship (Motyl 1998: 27), Russian as a second language and additional group rights.

6.5.2 Multiculturalism discourse

The second foreign influence aspect is related to the Western multiculturalism rhetoric. At the end of the XX century many international bodies such as the United Nations, the EU and others focused on the issues of national minorities. Moreover, the previously predominant human rights framework applied to minorities issues shifted towards the importance of collective rights

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[28] This terms was condemned by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly as the reflection of Russian imperial ambitions in the Opinion No 193 (1996), http://assembly.coe.int/documents/AdoptedText/ta96/EOPI193.HTM

that should be granted to national minorities and indigenous peoples (Kymlicka 2007). In particular those rights can be better ensured if the country has dual citizenship, several state languages, multi-lingual educational and bureaucratic system, bi-cameral parliament, decentralized administrative structure (which often implies strong parliament and a weak president), as well as proportionla electoral system for it to favor minority's parties.

The influence of multicultural discourse on the negotiations process in Ukraine is indicated by the often reference of the Ukrainian Russophile polititians to the western rhetoric of minortity protection. Even though the Eastern Ukrainian "Party of Region" alienates the non-Russian national minorities in Ukraine[29] it often uses the general minority protection rhetoric in political negotiations or public addresses. In addition, this Russophile party also refers to international experience on minority's accomodation and good governance. In particular the reference is often made to recently reinforced decentralization trends in Europe. The multiculturalism policy experience of such states such as the UK, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain and Canada in terms of federalism or several official langiuages is often suggested for implementation on the Ukrainian ground. Finally, the subsidiary principle promoted by the European Union is also mentioned as the good practice to be implemented in Ukraine.

6.6 Political-Economic Elite Manipulation

The final aspect to look at is the possibility that ethnicized regional identities are being spurred as a result of elite manipulation. In the case of Eastern Ukraine, and especially Donbas, the elite is a well-consolidated group with very substantial economic interests. Since this feature is quite distinct to the region, it is worth considering the relationship between political-economic elite and regional identity, and if the change in circumstances for this elite might have led to changed articulation of regional identity.

Hellman et al. (2003: 752) rightly notes that after the fall of communism attention was stuck to reduction of state influence over the economy, while the opposite danger was overlooked

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[29] For example, the Crimean Tatars throughout the history of Ukraine's independence allied with national-democratic forces and counterbalanced the "Party of Regions" faction in the Crimean parliament.

and economic agents soon became a threat to the polity, especially considering weak civil society and state in post-communist countries. Ukraine is a good example of this phenomenon of state capture by the political-economic elite, also known as oligarchs.

In contrast to classical economic actors, who maximize profit from conventional market economic activity, an oligarch would maximize rent from influencing a state (Hellman 1998). Called less poetically, political-economic group (PEG) obtaining both economic (financial, industrial) and political (plus media) capital increases its profits by unofficial use of this advantage.

As was discussed before, Donbas region in the Eastern Ukraine inherited a specific economic structure, which is associated with significant potential profits. Due to the greater stakes the region is characterised by greater domination of oligarchic elements as well (Šabić/Zimmer 2004: 352). In the case of Donbas a successful merger of regional administration and business-elite created a hand-operated economy; as a result the local administration continuously intervenes into the economy on the firm-level. In these conditions, political power represents the pre-condition for economic success (Zimmer 2004: 290). The story of Ukrainian transition provides immense evidence of such political-economic power merger. For example, in 1998 two free economic zones were set up in the Donets'k region, as well as 27 development priority areas. Noteworthy, these economic incentives did not lead to (and were not designed for) attracting foreign investors; instead, they facilitated wealth accumulation schemes for the local barons. Another telling example is that in 1999 the law *"On Conducting an Economic Experiment Concerning the Ore-Mining and Metallurgical Enterprises of Ukraine"* was passed. According to this law 67 ore-mining and metallurgical enterprises were granted cancellation of all prior debts, their new arrears were discounted by 50%, and enterprise profit tax was set at 30% of the usual tax. In addition, when profitability of Ukrainian coal sector was at a loss of 50% it still received governmental subsidies (Babanin et al. 2002). As a result the World Bank assessed the situation with the coal industry in Ukraine as one of the major reasons for country's budget deficit (Zimmer 2004: 323).

During early transition it was comparatively easy to obtain access to politics in order to pass preferential laws since the "right" people would easily get to power in the condition of not many alternatives. After 2000, however, when national-democratic opposition for the first time got majority in the Parliament, it became increasingly difficult to use the legislative body for passing such laws and the incumbent elite felt threatened by the challengers. Moreover, on the contemporary stage the Eastern Ukrainian business elite has extensive property and economic power unlike in 1991 and this may help explain the recent revitalization of the regional identity.

In addition, with the course of transition the purely shadow economic activities brought less profits (see Figure 1; Table 1), which also increased the necessity to look for new ideas – for example the decentralization of power in order to both keep the majority of taxes in the region as well as have more freedom in terms of the style of governance at the local level.

Figure 1. Income of Ukrainian PEG's, 1990-2002, % per year
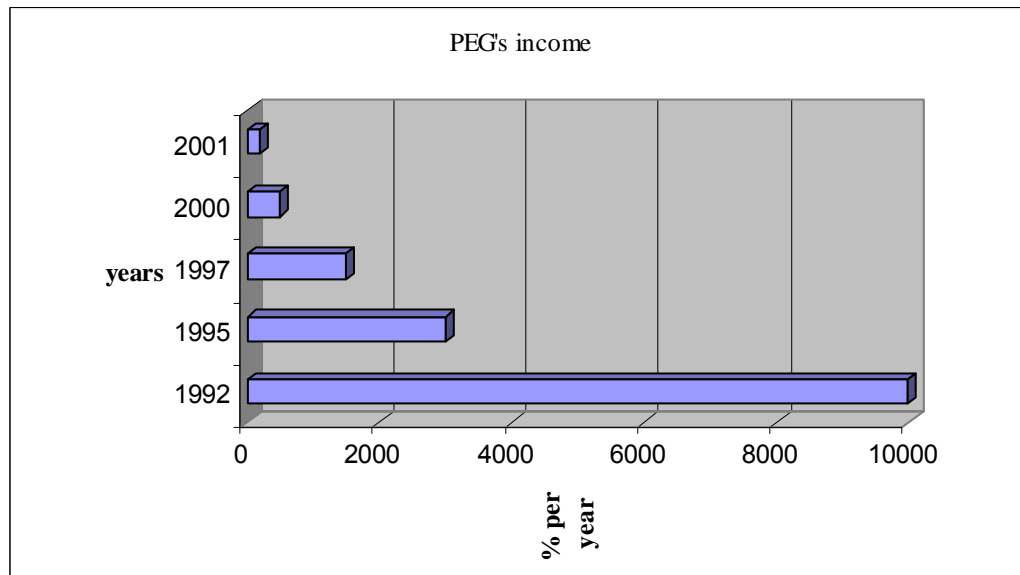
Source: based on Buzduhan 2002.

Table 1. Stages of Ukraine's 'oligarchic economy'

Period	Main sector involved	Main Operations	Profit
1992-1994	Financial sector	credit operations in conditions of hyperinflation	up to 10000% per year
1995-1996	Gas sector	export of Russian gas bought for the state money	up to 3000% per year
1997-1998	Oil products	gave Russian raw materials to petroleum processing plants and took the gasoline back from them at the cost price	up to 1500% per year
1999	Energy sector	controlled regional electric power stations and sold energy	up to 500% per year. Yushchenko – Tymoshenko government reduced this income to 200%.

Source: based on Buzduhan 2002.

Based on these tendencies - the rise of the national-democratic opposition and the need to obtain greater political freedom through decentralization - it was logical for consolidated Eastern Ukrainian elites to form a strong party. Thus for the success of the entire business a strong constituency also needed to be created[30].

Thus, it is argued that regionally based Eastern Ukrainian political-economic elite resorted to creating a new type of profit source – ethnicized identity, which could bring both political power and greater administrative decentralization. Extensive playing the nationality card started in advance of the Presidential elections in 2004 and reached its peak during the Orange revolution when Eastern Ukrainian big industry PEGs were threatened by the newly formed smaller scale and geographically dispersed PEG backing Yuschenko. Therefore, they resorted to escalation of sub-national feelings to mobilise their constituency and to prevent its partial turning into the constituency of the challenger. This process represents what Greenfeld (1992) refers to saying that nationalism is an ideology produced by the ressentiment of new elites against either older elites or other countries. In the case of Ukraine, however, we see older elite' ressentiment against newer elites. In addition, Snyder (2000) argues that in order to achieve only partially

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[30] However, resorting to a strong party solution was not the only one possible. Part of the elite shifted to purely legal economic activity considering affiliation with politics not that necessary any more. For example, Ukraine's major steel mill "Kryvorizhstal'"(before its privatization in 2005) was controlled by influential Pinchuk and Donets'k PEGs and yet denied the many subsidies it used to enjoy in order to stop anti-dumping investigations and be able to enter the international market.

democratic regimes, elites use nationalist rhetoric. Snyder's elite persuasion theory does apply to

the case analysed here, however not fully because it refers mostly to the post-communist political

elites, who use the nationalistic rhetoric in order to remain in their office despite the regime

change. However, in the Ukrainian case not just political, but also regional business elite was

interested in maintaining political power in the hands of its allies and preventing both economic

and political reforms in the country.

In this way it may be the case that the increasing interregional tension is resulting from

nationalistic political rhetoric of regional political-economic elite that aims at broadening the

spectrum of politically relevant issues and win political power in Kyiv, enjoying subsequent

economic benefits as a result.

A popular myth distributed in the East of Ukraine is that Donbas is feeding the entire

country. This statement is easy to believe in given the immense level of industrialization in the

East of Ukraine. For example, 70% of private capital and state industry is located in Donbas,

Odesa, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovs'k oblasts, city of Kyiv and the Crimea (Kuzio 1998: 59).

Nevertheless, the level of subsidies given to many industries in the mentioned regions is not

usually stated. It is those subsidies that PEGs are looking for and it is them that make the claim of

Donbas feeding Ukraine not plausible.

The suggested hypothesis about the top-down spurring of the Russophile regional

identity may be also reinforced by the fact that other (non-Russian) ethnic minorities, that reside

in the regions with different patters of economic development, and consequently are not linked to

any major regional political-economic group, do not normally complain about being discriminated

by the Ukrainian state even though the freedom of speech is not restricted. On the contrary,

Tatars and other national minorities cooperate with national-democratic forces[31].

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[31] For example, Mustafa Dzhemiliov, the political leader of Crimean Tatars explained his affiliation to the "Rukh" party and later "Nasha Ukrayna" party by saying that Ukrainian national-democratic movement originates from human rights movement and the leader of Rukh views the issues on the autonomy of Crimean Tatars, the Tatar language and the status of Tatars as indigenous to Ukraine in the same way with the Tatar elite.

Kuzio (1998: 78) refers to Laitin/Perersen/Slocum argument that if regional groups are not excluded from central governance there should not be much of opposition to the introduction of a nationalizing policies. This rule seems to be in play in Ukraine: when Eastern Ukrainian elite continued holding monopoly on power there was no talk of federalism, Russian as state language or related issues at the political negotiations level. Yet after the established groups were challenged by national-democrats (as well as realized their decreasing profits from the usual state rent) nationalistic issues started to be used to both secure place in politics and push for devolution of power in the country. The mechanism used for such identity mobilization will be discussed in the next section.

7. CREATING THE REGIONS: IDENTITY REINFORCING RHETORIC

The preceding discussion suggests that the interests of the Eastern Ukrainian political-economic elite are translated into their strategy of emphasizing the etnnicized regional identity of the Russophone population of the Ukraine's East. The mobilization of regional ethnicized identity is undoubtedly grounded on certain symbolic resources historically available in the region; however, in addition, a degree of nationalistic rhetoric is also required. D'Anieri (2005: 242) recognizes that regionalism intensification during the 2004 electoral campaign took place mainly due to the inflation of nationalism themes by the incumbent forces, represented by the candidate for presidency V. Yanukovych. Therefore, the current section intends to discuss the mechanism of this identity intensification process at greater depth.

It was already emphasized that the Eastern Ukrainian business elite had higher than average interest in controlling the public attitudes in order to ensure its representation in power structures. This was based on the greater stakes the Donbas economic structure has to offer in terms of potential profit in comparison to other regions of Ukraine. In addition, the hand-operated nature of the region's economy required the economic lobby's presence in power as well. However, besides the interest in controlling public opinion, it can also be argued that the Eastern elite had far greater possibilities to do so, for instance in comparison to nationalistic Western elite.

This statement rests primarily on a rather strong administrative and economic control of the informational space in the Donbas region. The merger of economic and public arenas created the possibility to control the large percent of the media market available for the Eastern Ukrainian population. For example, a number of influential media sources are owned by local economic barons, among them such as the TV channel "Ukrayina", the all-Ukrainian daily "Segodnia", etc.

Secondly, the public opinion manipulation becomes more feasible in the conditions of the lower social capital, which is the case of the Eastern (in comparison to Western) Ukraine as was

discussed previously in this paper. With the lower level of social capital and civil society, there are greater opportunities for regional elites in forming the public opinion (Kuzio 1998: 78). The case of the Russophone Eastern Ukrainian population is very relevant here, since this group remains comparatively amorphous in the Ukrainian society and struggles with confusing self-identity, which prevents it from self-organization according to Wilson (1997: 92).

Thirdly, the "taming" of trade-unions and preventing the alternative regional elite from entering the public arena created the monopoly on power.

Finally, the manipulation in the Eastern region was more viable since a large part of the Donbas population is merely striving for its physical survival, most often unable to find a different job or go working abroad, which is a typical economic solution for Western Ukrainian young people. As a result the Donbas people are more eager to partake in paid activities, in particular rallies or commercial voting.

Thus the merger of different types of power, the low social capital and the need to struggle for survival made the people of the region more easy to threaten, bribe or even convince. Therefore, overall, it can be argued that Eastern Ukrainian people are easier to "buy" and less probable to engage genuinely into a struggle for political purposes.

Economic difficulties, in addition, caused the disenchantment of the Donbas population with Ukraine's independence. Under such conditions it is easy to turn the popular dissatisfaction into a resentment towards "nationalists", who allegedly brought independent Ukraine into being. Explaining the region's socio-economic problems with the negative influence of "nationalists" in the center is one of the strategies commonly used. It is partly grounded on the fact that admitting Donbas' own structural problems would be associated with denying the regions heroic identity as of an old industrial region (Zimmer 2004: 347). In addition, blaming nationalists in the capital lets the elites to turn the popular discontent against the economic reforms that are at odds with their own business interests. As a result, despite Donbas' economy being in a partly decaying situation, there is virtually no discursive acceptance of this fact. On the contrary, the public arena is characterised by no awareness of the crisis and the need for restructuring is denied

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(Zimmer 2004: 346). Playing the nationalistic card for economic matters was already used in Donbas during the early transition as well, when the anti-market Donbas elite effectively capitalized the dissatisfaction of the masses and turned it against the reform-minded circles in Kyiv. For example, in 1993 the miners' strike demanded regional autonomy for Donbas convinced by the elite that their level of living was low because nationalistic Kyiv was taking away all the money. Similarly in 1996 the governor V. Scherban' instigated miners' strike in order to secure greater regional autonomy (Zimmer 2004: 269, 271). In this respect the chronic feeling of being exploited is very interesting in Donbas. Kuromiya (1998) mentioned that because of feeling exploited Donbas rebelled against Moscow and continues rebelling against Kyiv today. The slogan that "Donbas feeds the entire Ukraine" is a leight-motive the regional identity and even recently, during the Orange revolution it was utilized again. However, the region's role in "feeding Ukraine" is not that crucial and such self-perception is far from reality. As long ago as in the early 1970-s coal was already imported from Kuzbass (Siberia) because Ukrainian coal resources were considered not economically minable (Marples 1991: 185 in Kuromiya 1998: 239). Since then the technical equipment of Ukrainian mining industry became outdated. Today Donbas is still the industrial center of Ukraine, contributing 20 percent of the country's GPD and accounting for a 1/3 of the country's export revenue. However, at the same time, the large number of state enterprises are unprofitable, lack efficiency and survive only because of state subsidies (Lyakh 2001, in Zimmer 2004: 242). Thus the real contribution of the region is far from the stereotypic "bread-winner" of Ukraine. Despite the significant structural problems in the Donbas economy, this fact was mostly denied by the interviewed local administrative personnel (Zimmer 2004: 263). Thus the region wants to continue believing in its inherent wealth and strength and therefore is willing to accept the explanations about nationalists who take away the money coming from Donbas.

Even though trade unions are supposed to represent the bottom-up forces in socio-economic relations, this function is almost absent in the Eastern Ukrainian region. Most of the trade unions have close ties with power structures, while independent unions are rather marginalized actors (ibid.: 303). Moreover, for the unwillingness to cooperate with the local

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authorities and the organization of the 10 000 anti-Yanukovych strike in Donets'k in 2000[32] the

independent trade unions' leaders are being harassed and threatened (Zimmer 2004: 319-320).

In this way not only the bottom-up forces are being restrained in the society, but the rise of the

alternative elite is also prevented to some extent. The political-economic elite dominating the

region follows the neo-patrimonial style of governance accompanied by low entrance level. In

practical terms the red directors governing the region, driven by the desire to control the immense

economic potential of the region, successfully discouraged the formation of alternative regional

elite or any kind of empowerment of social interests (Zimmer 2004: 241).

Another factor facilitating public opinion manipulation is the class structure of the Donbas

consisting of a lot of unskilled labor. This social layer, suffering from chronic money shortages,

impossibility to find a different job, having a low level of education and insignificant interest in

politics is especially easy to manipulate both by spreading nationalistic information, but even

more effectively – by paying for "proper" voting or participation in a rally. Thus it is no wonder why

the support to nationalistic matters comes from insecure workforce form outdated heavy industry

districts.

While sceptically assessing the possibility of secessionism revitalization in Ukraine, Kuzio

(1998) once stated, that only if radical right obtains the parliamentary majority in Kyiv would

people in Donets'k be ready to raise the issue of separation. However, waiting for the sizable

radical right to get into power in Kyiv would take a long time, since, for instance, as a result of the

1994 parliamentary elections only 10 out of 450 deputies were elected from that side of political

spectrum. Therefore, even though the democratic opposition did not represent the radical right, it

was often presented as such in the discourse targeted on Eastern-Ukrainian population in order

to mobilize them in support of the regional powers.

The case of the Orange revolution that took place in 2004 is especially telling in terms of

the ethnicized regional identity intensifying rhetoric. As the Orange revolution represented a

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[32] Interestingly, the Independent Trade Union Group of Ukraine supported politically the Ukrainian democratic opposition during the course of transition (Zimmer 2004: 303).

critical moment for the then incumbent elite, the latter's strategy of mobilizing popular support by nationalist[33] rhetoric was revealed quite well.

Despite the fact that a national-democratic candidate, namely Yuschenko, was called the nationalist by the incumbent regime, the campaign of Yanukovych – the pro-establishment candidate - was at the very least no less nationalistic, even though Yanukovych himself has publicly declared nationalism a disease.

Aiming at anti-American sentiments Yanukovych was accusing his opponent of working for the US government and selling out Ukraine to the NATO. The democracy promotion programs were referred to as the projects of Western secret services, which aimed to obtain a marionette, namely Yuschenko, as a president of Ukraine. To communicate this image better the establishment would, for example, call the challenger "Bushchenko" or refer to the fact that Yuschenko's wife was born and worked in the US[34]. In contrast, Yuschenko's team would stress on the detachment of the place of birth from the political-ideological position illustrating it by the fact that Yuschenko himself comes from the North-Eastern Ukraine.

Language was one of the central issued in the campaign rhetoric. Yanukovych was trying to gain additional electoral support for his promotion of higher status for the Russian language and therefore the pro-regime campaign "informed" Eastern Ukrainians that the nationalist opposition was going to ban the Russian language, close Russian schools, ban the literature of Pushkin…, "fence Donets'k with thorny hedge", and "bring Crimea on its knees" (Bojcun 2005).

It was popularly claimed that the oppositional team was driven by a fascist-type inter-ethnic hatred. In this line the challenger was presented as *nashist* (derivative from "fascist" and "Nasha Ukrayina" - the party block of Yuschenko). In reality, however, Yuschenko's "Our Ukraine" block never included more than one nationalist group – the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists. In contrast, the authorities were supported by the "Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists", the "Rukh

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[33] Or rather "anti-nationalistic", or even "anti-Ukrainian" rhetoric
[34] However, the Russian political technologists, that stood behind the incumbent regime's campaign, failed to recognise that there was no such social base for anti-americanism in Ukraine (Kuzio 2005: 37). Ukraine never tried to compete with US, it was therefore never an enemy.

for Unity", the "Brotherhood", and the "Ukrainian Nationalist Assembly" according to Kuzio (2005: 38).

The presentation of Yuschenko as a nationalistic may be illustrated, in particular, by the phrase "…the country will split into 'Russian East' and 'nationalist west…" in "Izvestiya" newspaper. The same paper would also call Yuschenko "extreme nationalist" and "surrounded by nationalists" (Hubenko 2005). The "Youth Against" column of the Table 4 demonstrates the presentation of the opposition's agenda by the Yanukovych team. Such leaflets were distributed to the audience during the pop-music concert in support of the incumbent candidate and represented the national-democratic program of Yuschenko in a blatantly distorted form (see bold font, for example).

Table 2. **Pro-Yanukovych musical tour leaflet contents**

Youth Against	*Youth For*
Nationalism	Patriotism
NATO	Economic union with Russia
Terrorism	Stability
National minorities discrimination	Russian and Ukrainian languages equality
Ukrainian troops in Iraq[35]	Peace in the world
Foreign security service in Ukraine	Free national development

Source: Klid 2005.

To protect the people from the allegedly coming discrimination the solution of separatism was brought up. Yanukovych was in favour of the separation of the South-Eastern Ukrainian Autonomous Republic or at least he supported the discussion of this issue to reinforce the perceived difference between Ukraine's East and West and gain more votes from the East as a result. In addition, the Yanukovych's campaign was also widely appealing to historical ties with Russia and was attempting to resurrect the nostalgic images of the Soviet past.

It can be definitely also argued that national-democratic forces also played a nationalist card, appealing to the otherwise latent Ukrainian feelings of its potential electorate. However, the

[35] By the way the Ukrainian soldiers were sent to Iraq by "pro-Russian" President Kuchma way before the 2004 elections.

possible degree to which the opposition could ethnicize the electoral campaign was more limited compared to the situation for Eastern Ukrainian elite. Firstly, the national-democratic block of economic and political elite did not represent a particular region and, therefore, could not employ the administrative and media resources at the local level. Secondly, a significant part of national-democratic constituency was young, educated and representing the middle class – the groups that were not so easy to manipulate. Thus even though representing the national-democratic forces, Yuschenko did not use the language issue in his political strategy. In particular, the potentially available option of mobilizing voters in order to not let the introduction of Russian as the second state language was never employed.

Importantly, Yuschenko's nationalistic themes were not directed against one part of a country or against a cultural group as such. Instead, they referred to non-intervention of foreign forces into the country as well as opposed the abuse of democratic rights. This civic nationalism motive of the Orange campaign was, in particular, expressed by the popular revolutionary song "Together we are many", which encouraged people to imagine their larger community context, as Anderson (1991) would say, and not to be afraid of supporting the democratic movement. Similarly, Yuschenko's campaign slogan "I believe, I know, We can" raised trust and summoned proactive actions. The orange campaign color was itself a mechanism of creating a community. A week before the first round, people were encouraged to show their support to the opposition by wearing orange. Orange ribbons, scarves, clothes and orange stickers in public transportation became quickly widespread, and as D'Anieri (2005: 242) notes, "all the state control over the media could not do anything to counter the message sent by all this orange".

The fact that oppositional "nationalism" was not ethnic-based may be illustrated by an interesting detail that a lot of old Soviet Russian-language songs addressing anything orange in their lyrics were also very popular during the revolution. This is illustrative of the predominantly civic nature of the "orange" nationalism and the absence of resentment to Russianness *per se.* It should be acknowledged, however, that among the transparencies used during the revolution some contained phrases like "Ukrainian nationalism – the hope of the Nation!", "Our aim – A

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Nation-State". Nevertheless, it can also be argued, that the statements like that had no ethnic implications (even though did not represent multiculturalism either). Such slogans rather expressed the reaction to the neo-imperialist forces coming out of Russia and thus were targeted not against non-Ukrainians in Ukraine, but potential oppressors from the outside of Ukraine. One of the slogans, for example, expressed this point explicitly: "For the World Without Empires! The Future is With Nationalism" (Martseniuk 2005). The acceptance of Russianness as such is represented, in addition, by one of the songs ("Color of the Run" by Bilozir/Yehorov) written for the oppositional protests on Maidan. Half of it was written in Ukrainian and the other half – in Russian in order to encourage the unity of different parts of Ukraine and to soften the language division issue.

The attitude to the opposing group was also expressed by both the elite and the protesters in the non-antagonistic way. The "Peace to You" message created in between the election rounds aimed to reach the Eastern electorate scared that the opposition was Nazi. When the pro-Yanukovych East-Ukrainian officials started threatening the region's secession, the pro-Yuschenko protesters started scanning "Glory to Miners!"[36] and "East and West Together!", encouraging the fellow citizens from Eastern regions to join the greater Ukrainian identity. Pro-unity slogans were frequent among the people on Maidan. Thus among the transparencies brought by the pro-Yuschenko protesters there were such as "Donbas, join us!", "Ternopil+Donbas – we love you. United Ukraine!", "We cannot be divide, Ukraine is our mother!", "Donets'k – you aren't an enemy! Come join us for Perogies!", "Donbas, we are one nation. Welcome to our family for tea/coffee!", "Donbas and Carpathians – We are not to be Divided!", "Dear Donbas, Come to us!", "We ♥ Donbas!" (Martseniuk 2005). The outreach of Eastern Ukrainian population reached its peak on Maidan when Yuschenko's ally, Yuliya Tymoshenko, encouraged people to exercise love towards the opponents:

> "Now trains and buses with our Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv friends are approaching Kyiv, they will be here absolutely left on their own, therefore we need to dress them warmly, feed them and … reagitate."

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[36] since miners represented a significant part of the East-Ukrainian population

According to the argument I am presenting, the regional ethnicized identity intensification refers mainly to the mobilization of Russophile Eastern Ukrainian population. However, in addition to this, the central Ukrainian population has also arguably realizes its Ukrainian-ness more vividly as a reaction to the Russophile rhetoric of Yanukovych and his allies. This factor might have even decided the results of the presidential elections in 2004 since Yuschenko won exactly due to the shift of central Ukrainian voters to the national-democratic side. Thus it may be the case that Russophile rhetoric mobilized not only pro-Russian but also pro-Ukrainian elements in the society. Moshes[37] and Kuzio (2005: 39) also find that Yanukovych lost the center of Ukraine because of his language program, in other words because of the Ukrainian identity mobilization in response to his Russophile rhetoric. In a similar way, a too intrusive position of Russia, especially during the presidential campaign in 2004, worked in a counterproductive way for Putin (D'Anieri 2005). According to Herd (2005: 29):

> "By its technology of intrusion Moscow has deepened the split in Ukrainian society - but to its own disadvantage. Russian presence let the radicals to resurrect the elements of national-liberation struggle and to return at least part of the citizens to 1991 that is to struggle for Ukraine's independence from Russia".

To summarise, the hypothesis about the ethnicized regional identity reinforcement by the means of elite's rhetoric may be illustrated by the evidence of such rhetoric utilization. It is also important to differentiate the nature of nationalistic rhetoric of the Eastern Ukrainian elite versus the national-democratic elite because the methods, scope, content and audience of those discourses differs significantly.

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[37] Talk at the University of British Columbia, January 2006

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

8.1 Summary of findings

The paper focused on the phenomenon of ethnicized regional identities intensification in Ukraine and aimed at capturing the various possible reasons contributing to this process. Different regions of Ukraine are characterized by distinct history, cultural heritage, demographic and economic structure. As a result, the regions also acquire significant symbolic material that underlies the deeply seated differences between the regional identities and this diversity has to be respected and acknowledged during policy-making.

However, the mere fact of varying historically formed regional characteristics does not answer the question of why did regional identities intensify in the course of transition even though they were expected to become less salient as the society became more stable and consolidated. This puzzle could be approached from a multiplicity of perspectives. Firstly, the regionalism intensification might have been a reaction on the overly nationalistic state policies. However, the analysis of this factor revealed that independent Ukraine's nationalities policy - even though can be called Ukrainianizing - was hardly illiberal or strict. Therefore, this factor might have contributed to the outcome only marginally.

Secondly, the regional identities could be intensified because of the informal radical nationalistic movement. The exploration of this factor demonstrated that indeed it could have certain effect, however, was not a dominant force due to the narrow scope of the nationalistic movement, its low support among the population and marginal representation in high politics.

The third part of the story dealt with the logic of party system consolidation. According to this argument, the ethnicized regional identities were easy to use for stabilizing the party system and singling out several dominant actors based on the ethnicized inter-regional cleavage. This

argument can be assessed as plausible, however, not very strong, being rather an intervening driving force in relation to the core (political-economic) driving force.

The fourth possible explanation is that the expression of regional identities might have grown simply due to the fact that people had the possibility to exercise their identity in the democratic space. In addition, they learned why and how to express their identities as the process of democratization and economic stabilization went on. Nevertheless, this explanation cannot be considered too influential since it does not explain why the regional identities did not reveal themselves earlier, under the conditions of political uncertainty or under the rule of the Russophile President.

The fifth explanation rests on the role of international forces, namely the impact of Russia as a kin-state, as well as the spread of the Western multiculturalism discourse. These factors are assessed as moderately contributing to the regional identity politics intensification.

Finally, the sixth explanation of regional identities intensification lies in the area of political-economic elite manipulation. The argument goes that Eastern Ukrainian elite engaged in reinforcing the regional identity through nationalistic rhetoric in order to: (a) maintain parliamentary majority even after the consolidation of strong national-democratic opposition, and (b) to lobby the political power devolution. In this way, the political-economic actors tried to secure higher profit rates for their business by means of getting more political power and administrative freedom brought by the stronger regional ethnicized constituency. This version of the story is, in addition, backed by the overview of the nationalistic rhetoric use and may be considered a major factor for intensified interregional tension in Ukraine.

To summarise, the qualitative assessment of the evidence available in support of every factor suggests that *such factors as nationalizing state policy and nationalistic social movement had only marginal impact on the studied outcome; party system consolidation, democratic development and foreign influence may be treated as contributing factors; while the political-economic elite impact is qualified as a core factor associated with the studied phenomenon*.

8.2 Significance

The reached conclusion about the significance of the top-down business elite's impact on regional identities intensification in Ukraine might sound as not too novel or as a too sceptical one. Foreseeing the possibility of both reactions, I find it necessary to articulate the significance of this paper's findings.

The first important aspect that the suggested conclusion implies is the problem of democratic deficit. Since according to the presented argument a significant part of Ukrainian population gets distorted information concerning the socio-political and economic reality in the country, this social group makes sub-optimal electoral choices. As a result, a small part of the population gains business benefits from regional identities intensification, while the majority of population looses significantly in the process. This is because the undemocratic elites do not pursue the average people's well-being, and even the ethnicized promises are most often abandoned after the elections. In addition, the society remains less open because of the merged media, economic and administrative power necessary for controlling the public opinion.

The second important consequence is that the country's development is hindered in the circumstances of growing tension. A number of efforts, as well as material resources, is spent on, firstly, making the regional or ethnic identities more salient; and, secondly, additional efforts and resources are devoted to solving the problem of the intensified interregional tension. Finally, the focus of the people's attention on the socio-cultural diminishes the bottom-up demand for structural economic reforms, which prevents the increase of the general well-being. In addition, even though there is no danger of Ukraine's splitting apart (since elites themselves are not interested in such a scenario), the social cohesion of the society is strongly threatened. Irrespective of the reasons behind the regional identity intensification and related to it social mobilization, negative attitude of one social group to the other is there to stay for a period of time, in this way decreasing the level of social capital, which indirectly influences development overall.

The third significant point is that the findings imply that minority groups are not necessarily equal. Even though in this paper the main attention was drawn to the Russophile

community only, it can be mentioned here that it is significantly different from, for example such minorities as Crimean Tatars (native for Crimea) or Ruthenians (native for the Carpathian mountains region). As the latter minorities are not related to significant economic interest groups and show no signs of controlling or significantly influencing the preferences of their members they can be hardly treated in the same way with the Russophile minority of the Eastern Ukraine. This case refers to the big question currently on the agenda of international law and philosophy of minority rights, namely what are the different types of minorities and what different types of treatments (if different) do they deserve?

Finally, the identified possible nexus between the Western multiculturalism-promoting institutions and the Ukrainian political-economic elite is significant and curious in itself. While the former aim at achieving greater level of human rights protection, the latter have much more narrow interests despite using the same rhetoric and having similar tactical goals. Therefore, there is a danger that the governance institutions designed to accommodate the sub-national communities in order to prevent tensions possible otherwise, may in fact be accommodating elites instead.

8.3 Further extensions

In the section dealing with identifying the Ukrainian regions it was mentioned that all eight Ukrainian regions differ between themselves and represent an independent factor associated with different patterns of social attitudes and behaviour. Although in this paper I focused mainly on the Donbas and the Western Ukrainian regions, it is highly interesting to conduct a systematised investigation on all eight regional identities since the dynamics, as well as causal mechanism, is expected to differ among them. In addition, focusing on the regions other that the two extremes, which were addressed in this paper, may show a more complex and interesting dynamics. The Donbas and the West differ in all the potentially possible cleavages present in Ukraine. Therefore, the analysis of regions that differ only in respect to some of the cleavages can reveal additional information.

The rhetoric of the Eastern Ukrainian political economic elite often refers to the experience of Western countries in diversity accommodation and suggests copying the Western multiculturalism models in Ukraine. In this context it would be useful to assess how productive would multiculturalism institutions be on the Ukrainian ground: would they enhance democracy and development due to the inherent benefits of such institutions, or they might work in a counterproductive way in the Ukrainian context and driven by self-interested motivations? Since the nexus between the Ukrainian business lobby and the European structures is quite viable, it is important to assess whether implementing multiculturalism-inspired political institutions will be a part of solution or a part of the problem in the case of Ukraine.

A comparative analysis of the presented case study with other post-Soviet cases also appears promising, since it will show how wide-spread is the political-economic manipulation phenomenon. In addition, comparative methodology may help identify more general casual patterns involving the factors addressed in this paper or even their combinations.

The final interesting aspect for further exploration is from the field of normative studies. As was mentioned in the literature review, there are different assessments of the post-independence situation with minorities' rights in Ukraine, since the majority of authors are biased being either influenced by radically multicultural or strongly nation-building ideas. When it comes to policy making the choice between the two ideologies appears very difficult since both positions have justice-based arguments in their favour. Therefore, it may be useful to further discuss which of the two strategies: multicultural diversity promotion or inclusive nation-building (similar to the French model) is more feasible in the context of post-Soviet non-Russian republics.

APPENDIX 1:

Eight-Region Model of Ukrainian Regionalism
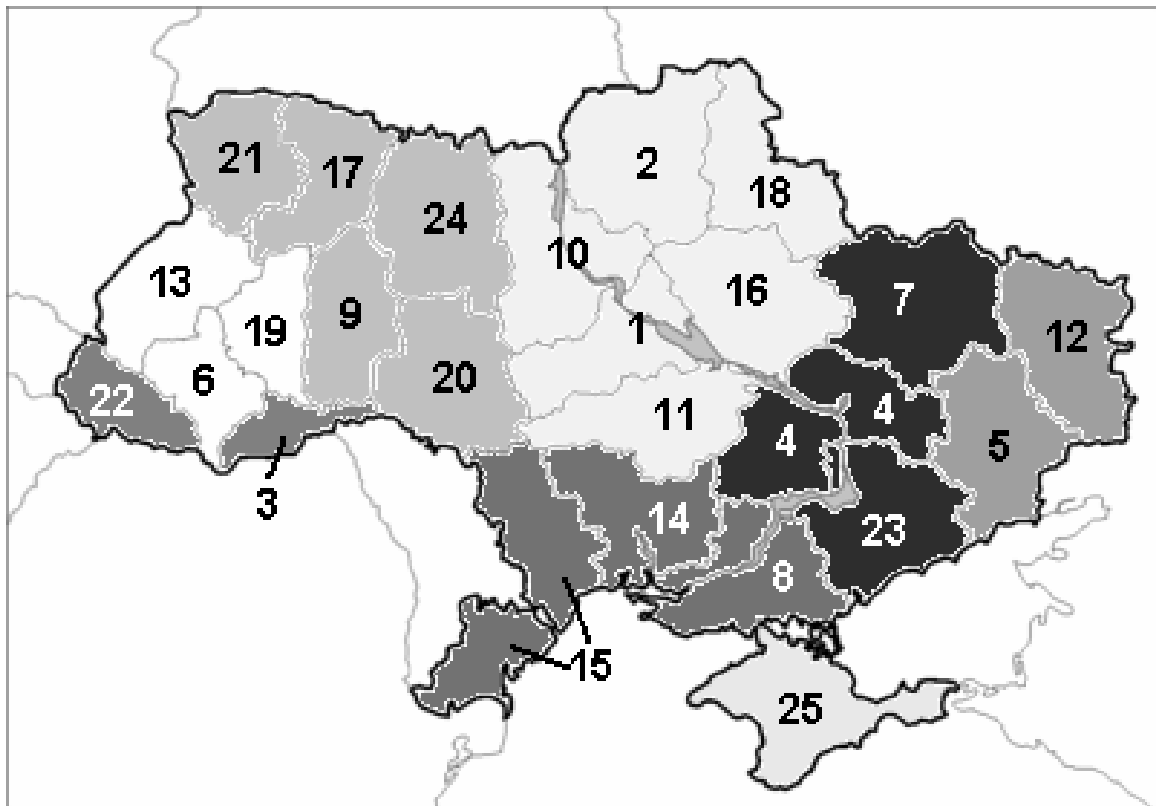
Based on: Barrington/Herron (2004)

Names of Oblasts:

1 – Cherkasy	14 – Mykolayiv
2 – Chernihiv	15 – Odesa
3 – Chernivtsi	16 – Poltava
4 – Dnipropetrovs'k	17 – Rivne
5 – Donets'k	18 – Sumy
6 – Ivano-Frankivs'k	19 – Ternopil'
7 – Kharkiv	20 – Vinnytsia
8 – Kherson	21 – Volyn
9 – Khmel'nyts'kyi	22 – Zakarpattia
10 – Kyiv	23 – Zaporizhzhia
11 – Kirohohrad	24 – Zhytomyr
12 – Luhans'k	25 – Crimea
13 – L'viv	

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