

THE ROLE OF THE STATE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF UKRAINIAN  
POLITICAL ELITE IN THE RESURRECTION OF ETHNIC CONFLICT:  
EURO-MAIDAN AND THE CIVIL WAR IN POST-SOVIET UKRAINE

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the role of the Ukrainian political elite and the state in the resurrection of ethno-political conflicts in post-Soviet Ukraine. It firstly investigates how Ukrainian political elite's management of existing ethno-political attitudes on the state level has caused the evolution of Ukrainian crisis from so called peaceful protests to a seemingly ethnic conflict. Secondly, it answers the question how newly emerging ruling class during the post-Soviet transition period has affected the political and ethnic polarization in Ukraine. The thesis comes to following conclusions: Firstly, as a result of Maidan process and its impacts on ethno-political separation between the Eastern/Southern and the Western/Central Ukraine by 2014, contemporary post-Soviet Ukraine cannot be classified as a civic state anymore to the contrary some scholars' claims. The ongoing civil war between nationalizing/re-ethnicizing post-Maidan Ukrainian state and the pro-Russian political elites in the Donbass generated an unbreachable drift between the titular nation and Russian minority in today's Ukraine. Secondly, this post-Euro-Maidan "nationalizing" process caused the break-up of Ukraine through triggering separatist volitions of Russian-speaking minorities living in Crimea, Eastern and Southern Ukraine, namely Novorossiya today. And thirdly, the peoples of Novorossiya could not reach a successful secession from the tyrant Kiev regime to form an independent republic since the administrations of self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics are heavily under dominancy of pro-Russian nationalist elites despite the presence of progressive forces in Novorossiya today. These pro-Russian elites spread their reactionary and right-wing chauvinist/nationalist ideologies, discourses and regulations to hold down these progressive forces at governmental level.

Keywords: Ukraine crisis, nationalism, post-Soviet Ukraine, state, elites

## ÖZ

ETNİK ÇATIŞMANIN OLUŞUMUNDA DEVLET VE SİYASAL ELİTİN ROLÜ:

EURO-MAIDAN VE SOVYET SONRASI UKRAYNA'DA İÇ SAVAŞ

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Bu tez, Sovyet-Sonrası Ukrayna coğrafyasında etno-siyasal çatışmaların oluşumunda siyasal elitin dönüşümünü ve devletin rolünü ele almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu araştırma, öncelikli olarak yerel ve ulusal Rus eliti ile Rus azınlıklar hususunda, Ukrayna siyasal elitinin devlet kademesinde mevcut etno-siyasal tutumunun, Ukrayna Krizi'nin sözde barışçıl gösterilerden, görünürde etnik bir çatışmaya evrilmesinde nasıl bir rol oynadığını sorgulamayı amaçlamaktadır. İkincil olarak bu çalışma, Sovyet-Sonrası Ukrayna'da kapitalizmin restorasyonunun, yeni oluşan yönetici sınıfla birlikte, Ukrayna toplumundaki siyasal ve etnik kutuplaşmaya nasıl etki ettiği sorusuna yanıt aramaktadır. Tüm bunlar ışığında, bu tez, Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna coğrafyasında etno-siyasal çatışmanın ve milliyetçiliğin dirilişiyle ilgili şu sonuçlara ulaşmıştır: İlk olarak, Euro-Maidan sürecinin Güneydoğu Ukrayna ile Batı/Orta Ukrayna arasındaki etno-siyasal ayrışmaya etkisinin bir sonucu olarak, bir çok araştırmacının iddia ettiğinin aksine günümüz Sovyet-Sonrası Ukraynası, artık yurrttaşlığa dayalı milliyetçiliği (civic) benimseyen bir devlet olarak sınıflandırılmaz. Brubaker'ın "üçlü bağ" ve "millileştirici devletler" modeli temelinde, Donbass bölgesinde, millileştirici/yeniden etnikleştirici Maidan-Sonrası Ukrayna devleti ile Rus azınlık arasında devam eden iç savaş, Ukrayna'yı, çekirdek milliyet ile ülkenin en büyük azınlık nüfusunu oluşturan etnik Rus azınlığın arasındaki sınırların bulanık olduğu bir ülke olarak tanımlamayı artık imkansız hale getirmiştir. İkinci olarak, Euro-Maidan'ın hemen sonrasında, Ukrayna devletinin yoğun ve şiddetli bir "millileştirme" sürecine girişmesi, Kırım, Doğu ve Güney Ukrayna'da yaşayan Rus-dilli azınlığın ayrılıkçı istemini tetiklemiş, neticesinde Ukrayna'nın parçalanmasının yolunu hazırlamıştır. Son olarak, bu çalışma göstermektedir ki, Novorossiya halkları, sadece baskıcı Kiev rejiminden ayrılıp kendi cumhuriyetlerini kurarak tam bir özgürleşmeye varmayı başaramamışlardır: Bugün Novorossiya cumhuriyetlerinin cephe hatlarındaki ilerici güçlerin varlığına rağmen, Donetsk ve Luhansk'daki halk cumhuriyetlerinin yönetimleri, Rus milliyetçisi/şovenist söylemler ve anayasal düzenlemeler yoluyla sürekli olarak gerici ve sağ/muhafazakar ideolojilerini hakim kılmayı, yönetsel düzeyde bu yollarla Novorossiya'daki ilerici güçleri tasfiye etmeyi amaçlayan Rus yanlısı milliyetçi elitlerin egemenliği altında bulunmaktadır.

*Dedicated to My Beloved Parents...*

*And to the Greatest Victims of the Wars- the children- in Ukraine, Syria and  
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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BYuT: Blok Yuliyi Tymoshenko (the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc)

CIS: the Commonwealth of Independent States

CPU: the Communist Party of Ukraine

CPSU: The Communist Party of Soviet Union

The DNR: Donétskaya Narodnaya Respúblika

The DPR: the Donetsk People's Republic

EU: European Union

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

The LNR: Luganskaya Narodnaya Respublika (the Luhansk People's Republic)

NATO: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NEP: New Economic Policy

OSCE: the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The OUN: the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists

SSR: Soviet Socialist Republic

The UPA: Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiya (the Ukrainian Insurgent Army)

The US: the United States

The USSR: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, after the emergence of new independent states,<sup>1</sup> the relationship between the titular ethnic group and geographically concentrated non-titular ethnic groups has been a potential source of instability and conflict in each independent states. In this sense, post-Soviet Ukraine, as one of those republics which declared independence in 1991, and as an ethno-religiously heterogeneous society, became a research focus for many scholars of the state, nationalism and the nation-building process. The issue of what kind of a state post-independence Ukraine would be with its large Russian minorities becomes a central one in the literature. Taras Kuzio (2001a), for example, classifies post-Soviet Ukraine as a non-nationalizing and civic plural-liberal state which is an “unconsolidated democracy that grant polyethnic rights to their citizens” (Kuzio 2001a: 149). Contrary to Kuzio, Rogers Brubaker (1996) defines most of newly independent states as “nationalizing states” since in almost all of post-Soviet republics, identified within the context of ethnocultural limits, eponymous nationality is sharply prominent from the citizenry as a whole, and the elite of the core nation dominated in the state administration. Yet, he indicates particular exceptions including

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<sup>1</sup> After the dissolution of the USSR, fifteen new states having internal relations with different ethnic groups in themselves: Russian Federation, Ukraine, Estonia, Lithuania, Letonia, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Moldova.

Ukraine where the boundaries between the core (Ukrainian) national identity and minority (ethnic Russian) national identity are blurred (Brubaker 1996: 104). However, both perceptions of Kuzio and Brubaker need revisions considering the current circumstances in Ukraine after the Orange Revolution in 2004 and the civil war period with 2013-2014 Euro-Maidan process with a focus on the elite-manipulation and the state attitudes towards particularly ethnic Russian minority. Within this context, this thesis investigates post-Soviet Ukraine since the process of 2013/2014 Euro-Maidan, and it argues that in post-Soviet Ukraine, the elite cadres have radically promoted ethnic nationalism of the titular nation in the state administration against the ethnic Russian minorities, although the elite cadres controlling the state periodically had tried to establish a balance between civic and ethnic nationalisms especially before Euro-Maidan period.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, due to the absence of a sole and supranational authority that has the power to regulate ethnic relations, new state authorities- and by extension political elites- became the dominant determining actors in regulating domestic ethnic relations. In these newly formed states, nationalist ideologies dominated in the state administrations played a very significant role in the regulation of inter-ethnic relations in post-Soviet republics (Pamir 1997; Bremmer 2006), including Ukraine. As supporting the interests of the titular ethnic groups against other local ethnic groups concentrated in the same territories, these state administrations caused both an increase in the potentiality of internal ethnicity-based tensions and problems with the ‘external motherlands’ of alienated ethnic groups. To put it another way, post-Soviet political elites as the state administrations fell back upon the use of state power and nationalism as an instrument for the regeneration of

the titular ethnic group's identity and backing their interests against a possible threats that can be presented by other local ethnic identities for the formation of nation-state structure in the post-independence period: These states literally became "nationalizing states" (Brubaker 1996) and Ukraine is not an exception as this thesis claims and as the some scholars in the current literature rather overlook.

This thesis also argues for the need to contextualize post-Soviet Ukrainian political instability by focusing on its economic dimension. It shows that the post-Soviet Ukraine's political instability and the ethno-political tensions during the civil war within the Maidan protests in 2013 were catastrophic reflections of the Ukraine's integration efforts to capitalist system. It argues that Ukraine's capitalist integration efforts exacerbated its national question and specifically ethnic relations between the Western and Eastern Ukraine (today's Novorossiia). To make this point, this thesis firstly investigates how Ukrainian political elite's management of existing ethno-political attitudes on the state level has influenced the evolution of Ukraine crisis from so called peaceful protests to a seemingly ethnic conflict. Secondly, it examines how the transition to the post-Soviet period has affected the political and ethnic polarization of Ukraine by a newly emerging ruling class which used nationalism and multiethnic affiliations as an instrument.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, several problems that might also lead particular existing inter-regional and global impacts have been emerged in the geography of Eurasia ranging from migration to oligarchic networks, from economic destructions and corruption to monopolistic accumulation of military weapons including nuclear ones belonging to the Soviet era in a few new independent states. In most of the post-Soviet republics, oligarchic networks infiltrated in the state

institutions; the political and economic elites became the fundamental determinants of political and economic processes, they restructured ethnic and identity politics as well as the economic policies of the newly independent states while trying to integrate with neoliberal market economy. Concordantly, the internal migrations governed by the central planning system in the Soviet period became an international question with the end of the Soviet Union: This gigantic demographical transformation mostly affected almost twenty-five million ethnic Russians living in the Soviet republics outside the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic by the year of 1989 (Sheehy 1991). The issue of the rights of ethnic Russian population living in these territories caused both ethnic-oriented disputes in domestic affairs, and conflicts between ethnic Russian minorities along with the Russian Federation, and other post-Soviet state administrations as it can be obviously seen in Ukraine today.

After the end of the Cold War between capitalist and socialist blocs by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the former Soviet bureaucrats and newly composed economic and political elites built a consensus in the post-Soviet region about the impossibility of a communist trajectory in the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> In this direction, most of liberals had expectations that the formation of the aforementioned consensus would be based on the fundamental institutions of market economy and the values of liberal democracy within the context of a global-scale capitalist integration (see Fukuyama 1992: 93). However, this great expectation of liberals regarding a rapid global scaled integration of post-Soviet states into neoliberal system brought a series of significant problems in front of these countries: Even in the most “successful” former Soviet

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<sup>2</sup> In 1989, Boris Yeltsin defined the communist targets in the Soviet Union as “transcendental daydream” (*zaoblochnaya mehta*) (Dunlop 1994: 40).

republics achieving integration into global system such as Estonia, the transition to capitalism has sparked off ethnic nationalism rather than promoting liberal democracies. In most of post-Soviet states, ethnic origins began to be perceived as a fundamental quality for the enjoyment of the rights and freedom, while neoliberal impositions of market economy such as privatization were used for providing economic and political hegemony of the former Soviet elites. These conditions constituted one of the most significant obstacles for the establishment of liberal democracy and well-functioning market economy based on a solid foundation in post-Soviet republics (Shelley 1995: 56-59).

As can be seen in contemporary post-Soviet Ukraine case, one of the most devastating outcomes of the collapse of the Soviet Union was that the member republics gained their independence as unitary nation-states, but this did not bring in becoming a 'free country' or allegedly 'emancipated from the Soviet oppression'. With the abolition of Soviet central authority, an economic and political power abyss emerged in the region to be filled by the oppositions to the Soviet regime, corrupted political elites from the remnants of the Soviet regime, and collaterally oligarchic networks turning out to be an instrument of using political force (Shelley 1995: 56-60). While the weakening of state control resulted in a serious increase in the level of violence, business holders became a newly created capitalist class with the capitalist integration process of post-Soviet states and bureaucratic cadres began to gravitate towards racketeers and mafia networks with the purpose of providing security and preventing themselves from rising violence. In this way, the relationship between oligarchs and mafia networks became an essential component of post-Soviet capitalist

system, as even economic structure began to turn out to be a mafia and corrupt as a result of the accumulation of capital of these coteries (Nazpary 2002: 193).

### **Research Problem**

This thesis addresses a classical research problem about how political elites relate to the state and nationalism in the newly formed states. I argue that the Ukrainian case cannot be explained by these existing macro theories of nationalism because these theories tend not to see the reciprocal, and even dialectical, relations between the state, ruling elite and nationalism. Therefore, theories cannot truly assess all connection between these three dynamics and fall short of in analyzing the current situation in Ukraine. My specific research problem on elite-nationalism relation in the context of Ukrainian case is as follows:

While many sources show the possibility of elite manipulation over the state and nationalism, whether this manipulation could go to the point of dragging a country into a social-political devastation, taking the risk of losing an ethnic group living in that country, and even dividing a country into two for their self-interests through inducing nationalist sentiments among the society is my puzzle. Simply, the problem is about the paradox that an elite can manipulate nationalism in a newly emerging states even to the point of destroying the unity of these states that they control. I argue that, Ukraine is the first and sharpest example that indicates the elites can have such a destructive role for the division of a country and igniting ethno-political conflicts among post-Soviet republics. In comparison to other post-Soviet cases, the impact of the relationship between the elite, the state and nationalism is the specificity of Ukraine in terms of its consequences. Even though the research problem is not unique to the

Ukrainian case, the Ukrainian case has its own specificities as one involves a violent ethnic conflict, an unsuccessful secession attempt and more importantly a gray zone regarding the international law in the current international system. Thus, I examine how the state and particularly the elite-oriented nationalism in the post-independence period have influenced ethnic relations among society and the current civil war in Ukraine along with neoliberal transition.

When Ukraine gained its independence in 1991, it experienced both the conditions inherited from the Soviet period and the nature of neoliberal system that independent Ukraine had to adopt itself into global economic system. Economic interdependence to the former Soviet region and correspondingly 1992 crisis, which resulted in a great economic destruction for all post-Soviet republics were two of these conditions. In addition to this process of economic destruction, Ukraine inherited from the Soviet period at least 22% of the population of Russian ethnic minority in proportion to its general population (Kaufman and Hardt 1994: 1082-1086). As can be seen in all post-Soviet state administrations, in Ukraine, also state and political elites fell back upon the use of state power and nationalism as an instrument for the resurgence of the titular ethnic group's identity and backed their interests against possible threats including other local ethnic identities particularly Russians that could have become a menace in the process of a unitary nation-state formation in the post-independence period.

To be able support the main arguments of this thesis, I examined the following aspects and indicators, even if these aspects and indicators periodically show alterations depending on the interests of the power blocs in the Ukrainian state's and

the political elites' broader policies: Language policies in both education, cultural and political sphere, constitutional regulations, attacks on cultural symbols and nationalizing through rewriting the past, an explicit collaboration and promotion of fascist and Neo-Nazi political organizations and their anti-Russian, anti-communism and xenophobic discourses over non-titular minorities. Yet, I also focused on the state administrations of Novorossiya republics and the attitudes of pro-Russian elites which, I believe, exacerbated nationalism and chauvinism such as by removal of any internal potential threat against pro-Russian elites of Donbass and the Kremlin, and by a strict emphasis and discourse on "Great Russian chauvinism," Russian nationalism and Russian Orthodox religion at the Constitution of Donetsk People's Republic. To examine these, I will first focus on some theoretical insights about the complicated relations among the state, elite and nationalism in the following section.

### **Interaction between the State, the Elites and Nationalism**

An understanding of the state and elite control of the state is a necessity to understand the elites' utilization of nationalism to control the state in newly independent states.

Regarding the relationship between the state, nationalism and the elite in this thesis, I focus on the state is one of the organizations in society such as classes, religious and linguistic communities, or ethnic groups. On the one hand, there might be collaborations or conflicts between the state and these fractions of the society regarding the distribution of power, providing social control, or sharing of scarce resources; on the other hand, the state has an identity that is able to embody different

components of these fractions. Therefore, the interests of social groups or political/bureaucratic elites are embedded with the state interests.

This perspective can be carried to the Ukrainian situation in the following way: Evolution of nationalist segregation in Ukraine since its independence indicates a form of state apparatus acting independently from the dominant class in particular periods within the context of inconsistencies in the state administrations. Post-Soviet Ukraine state administrations followed particular policies of increasing or decreasing the extent of “nationalizing,” encouraging or restraining the rights of ethnic Russian minorities depending upon the changing interests and the purposes of the state rather than the interests of political and bureaucratic elites owing to the presence of Russia, or European Union factor as external authority factors.

The mutual relationship between the state and nationalism is mostly taken into account by modernist scholars. John Breuilly considers nationalism as a political movement aiming to capture or use state power justified by nationalist contentions (Breuilly 1993: 1). In this regard, Breuilly presents the state as an instrument of a purpose for nationalism, i.e. nationalism aims to form a state and the elites do this in this process. Lowell W. Barrington (2006) enhances Breuilly’s argument of the state as a purpose for and the instrument of nationalism. Although one of the objectives of nationalism might be the creating a new state, the principal question is the fate of nationalism after the establishment of this new state. Barrington claims that if the establishment of the state is the ultimate purpose for nationalisms led by the elites, nationalism carries on its existence after achieving this purpose. Breuilly also examines the approach of the state to nationalism under the name of “state-led

nationalism.” Yet, both Barrington and Breuille present state-led nationalism as a policy for extending the state territories, or as actions against particular groups and individuals that have potential to be a threat for the interests of dominant nation and the state. This limited definition makes his “state-led nationalism” concept problematic, because nationalism is able to serve for the state and the elites in many other areas which Breuille underestimated (Raphael 1995: 366). For instance, nationalism may help elites to present the elite interests as the state interests, and to receive support from the masses to sacralize the state and legitimize the state actions.

At this point, Charles Tilly’s definition of state-led nationalism would be more suitable in acknowledging how state-nationalism may serve to the elites’ interests. According to Tilly (1994), state-led nationalism serves “the demands of the ruling class who spoke in a nation's name that citizens identify themselves with that nation, and subordinates other interests to those of the state” (Tilly 1994: 133). In other words, state-led nationalism points out the construction of nationalism from the top-down, or by the state itself. Therefore, state-led nationalism instrumentalizes nationalism to provide obedience of the nation, and the stability of the state by forming the nationalist feelings among society.

In explaining how the equilibrium of social classes is secured, the concept of authoritarian state reveals particularly one feature of such states relevant for my discussion: This feature is that parallel power networks cross-cutting the formal organization of the state have also grown – networks that exercise a decisive share in its activities, that promote a growing material and ideological community of interest between key civil servants and the dominant mass party, and consolidate policy

communities cementing the dominant interests outside the state apparatus with the forces inside at the expense of popular forces (in Jessop 2008: 131-132). Here, the existence of a parallel power networks cross-cutting the state indicates the positioning of nationalism within the authoritarian state. In addition, the state always modifies so called natural or pre-given components of nationhood. Therefore, it always integrates elements such as economic unity, territory, language and tradition into the basic spatio-temporal matrix of capitalism (Jessop 2008: 136).

In Ukraine, one of the conflicting ethnic nationalisms (Ukrainian or Russian nationalisms) could not have control over the state apparatus and its policies as a state ideology. For this reason, state-led nationalism during this period (1991-2004) has developed as a civic nationalism that generally does not lay emphasize on Ukrainian nationalism and thus does not threaten Russian nationalism or Russian minority living in the country – until the process of Euro-Maidan in 2014.

When the concept of the state in post-Soviet Ukraine is examined, it is seen that the state apparatus and the ruling elites have taken an active role in the regulation of this economic unity, territory, language and tradition by utilizing nationalisms in different intensities. Such a definition of the state concept presents a quite useful argument by emphasizing the role of nationalism within authoritarian state model, and that state power is not a neutral organization. In this respect, the modern nation and nationalism are always an output of capitalist state intervention, and should not be taken into account as pre-political or primordial. Thus, in this thesis nationalism in the formal organization of the state in Ukraine after the break-up of the Soviet Union can be clearly understood within this context.

In this thesis, I use the concept of ‘elite’ as an “echelon of the ruling class,” more clearly, as the strongest representative of the dominant class directly having a role in the nationalizing and ethnicizing policies at the state level, but at the same time a class fraction that can ideologically reshape the ideas and discourses of the masses. Yet, it should be also noted that such use is useful insofar as it accounts for certain social realities to which a purely class conception cannot be sufficiently applied to. In my opinion, post-Soviet Ukraine is a quite reasonable case to show that the “elite” conceptualization can be useful to analyze the role of the state and that the elite can function as an “echelon of the dominant class” in the revival of ethno-political conflicts in the region. The next section discusses how the role of elite is conceptualized in the formation of nationalism according to nationalism literature.

### **Nationalism and the Role of the Elite in the Literature on Nationalism**

Theories of nationalism and the role of elite in the literature are generally shaped in three fundamental veins: First, the primordialist approach which considers nations and nationalism as “given” phenomena and therefore elite intervention in nationalist project is presented as irrelevant since primordial commitment is essentially an action of emotion and exaltation; it is not related to the individual interests of the elites or the masses promoting nationalist ideology (Eller and Coughlan 1993: 187). Second, the ethno-symbolist approach which gave weight to the significance of thoughts and cultures questioning the source of nationalism in both, whether from the existing ethnic legacy within the role of the intelligentsia, or comprehending nationalism as an ideology spread from the West (Dieckhoff and Jaffrelot 2005: 79-80). This view also underemphasizes the role of the elite interest in national projects. Thirdly, the modernist approach considers nations and nationalism as a product of

industrialization and modernization process, when the elites struggling for the consolidation of a new state power along with national interests had actively involved in and deployed nationalism.

The most significant common ground of all modernists is that nationalism cannot be taken into account without the emergence of capitalism and industrialization; pre-capitalist societies had no social, political and economic conditions that nations and nationalism has emerged; therefore, nations can be considered as a sociological necessity only within the modern era (Smith 2003; Gorski 2006; Ichio and Uzelac 2005). Modernists concentrates on particularly the spread of industrialization and capitalism, by extension the social, economic, political and cultural circumstances as the main reason for the emergence and development of nationalism, (e.g. Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1992).

Similar to Gellner's state and elite-oriented nationalism, Hobsbawm (1990) also defines nations/nationalism as invented traditions by the ruling classes which feared the demolition of the existing order through the participation of large masses of people in politics. At that point, the aim of the ruling class is to provide a controlled transition into mass democracy and the protection of people's loyalty to the order. The nation and other invented traditions which would be a bridge between the past and the future could ensure this loyalty and prevent the demolition of the existing order. Therefore, Hobsbawm, by referring to Gellner, claims that the state and the nation should not be taken into account independently from each other. As Gellner (1983) determines that nationalism takes the pre-existing cultures and transforms them into a nation; thus, nationalism sometimes invents the nations, while most of the time it

warps it (Gellner 1983: 49). However, Hobsbawm criticizes Gellner's theory of nationalism that his approach purely based on state and elite-led nationalism ignores grassroots movements and the views from below. In the final analysis, although Gellner and Hobsbawm consider nationalism as an invented phenomenon, they give too much significance to the role of the state and the elite.

Fourthly, contrary to the nationalism theories of Hobsbawm and Gellner based on the role of state and the elite, Anderson (1991) sees nations as imagined communities which became prominent as an output of capitalist relations of production and the spread of technology in different regions of the world. However, contrary to Hobsbawm and Gellner, his theory undervalues the role of the state and the elites by concentrating on the role of print capitalism and the spread of technology. Emerging nationalism in Eurasian territories after the dissolution of the Soviet Union indicated that capitalism, the role of the states/elites and nationalism cannot be separately taken into consideration in studying the civil war in Ukraine.

In the literature, these classical theories of nationalism ignore (e.g. primordialism), underestimate (e.g. ethnosymbolism), or homogenize (e.g. modernism) the elite role in state-led nationalist projects. Yet, the elites that contribute to state-led nationalism and these elites may be heterogeneous and in competition and even in conflict.

As the functional characteristics of nationalism are examined in the relations between state and power, the role of the elites is one of the fundamental arguments which comes to the forefront (Mann 1992). This examination is, on the one hand, based on the instrumental role of the ruling elites arising from consideration of their own

interests; on the other hand, it highlights power and interest struggles between elite groups and opponent elites (Snyder 2000; Brass 1985, 1991). The struggles among the elites may transform this type of analysis of nationalism into a class analysis. For instance, Hroch (1985) emphasizes class structure in the evolution of nationalism and national belongings. In other words, the role of the elites is significant understanding that nationalism is constructed in relation to class dynamics. In parallel to this, Löwy (1993) indicates that neoliberal elites manipulate nationalist feelings to preserve or to gain back their power. To do so, they propose a desire of advanced nations or regions, while severing all ties with backward areas so that they keep their resources and to be able to integrate with neoliberal European market. This motivation is presented as one of the reasons for explosion of nationalism which afflicted the whole former socialist bloc such as Russia, Azerbaijan and Croatia.

In particular conditions, the state can play the determinant role in the creation of a new form of national elite to be able to make titular nationality more dominant through weakening other minority groups. Michael Hechter (1975), in his theory of internal colonialism, claims the idea that by ignoring the establishment of a national culture, states prefer to build the dominance of a core culture which aims to weaken other ethnic identities by building ethnic boundaries. This preference in Hechter, like Tom Nairn's uneven development of capitalism<sup>3</sup>, requires not only distinctive culture

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<sup>3</sup> Nairn's nationalism theory emphasizes that nationalism is not a direct product of the development of world economy, or not an output of particular processes such as industrialization and urbanization. The source of nationalism is uneven development of capitalist economy since eighteenth century (Nairn 1981: 137). At that point, Nairn indicates the particular role of the elites in nationalism; he argues that the elites in backward countries as a result of uneven development of capitalist economy had no choice to take the law in their own hands (Özkırımlı 2010: 75). In this respect, nationalism theory of Nairn highlights the positive role of nationalism for the emancipation of oppressed people along with the role of the elites. However, there is a quite problematic situation with Nairn's arguments that nationalist movements do not always take place in economically backward countries or regions, as it can be seen in contemporary Catalonia and the Basque country, or Hungarian and Czech nationalism in the

of the peripheral community, but also the emergence of political elites who can mobilize the masses by employing nationalist sentiments.

In the post-Soviet period, Ukraine displayed a situation similar to what Hechter depicts particularly considering the emergence of a new capitalist class with the dissolution of Soviet Union, the adaptation attempts of Ukraine into the neo-liberal world order, the domination of Ukrainian political and economic life by the oligarch and the opening of a road to ethnic conflicts within the country as a result of particular national policies of the state and the elites. Through a different interpretation referring to internal colonialism approach, Kuzio claims that most of non-Russian Soviet republics inherited many ethnic and cultural inequalities from the Soviet period, while ethnic Russians frequently dominated the fields of economy, politics and culture in post-independence period as well. Within this perspective, Kuzio, with a quite problematic and contrary to the fundamental argument of this research, asserts that titular nationalities in these republics produced nationalisms as a reaction to internal colonialism of the Soviet Union and its devastations (Kuzio 2005a: 230). Yet, I consider rising nationalisms in post-Soviet states as a product of triadic and reciprocal relations between homeland, ethnic minorities living in the homeland and external states, following Brubaker's "triadic nexus" model, for claiming to protect the rights of these ethnic minorities rather than solely a reaction to internal colonialism of the

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Habsburg Empire of 19th Century. Both Breuilly and Orridge determines that the Hungarians and the Czechs in the Habsburg Empire of 19th Century were the most privileged communities of the empire; however, both the Hungarian and the Czechs became the heart of nationalisms in the Revolutions of 1848 (Breuilly 1993: 413; Orridge 1981: 181-182). Thus, it should be said that the same nationalist movement attracts different social classes in time, while sometimes it may never reach the masses. Within this context, it is not possible to hypothesize that uneven development of capitalism always affects every region in the same way, and it always resulted in a nationalist reaction in every segments of the society. All these developments cannot be predicted before; hence, each country and each period of time should be separately examined without strong generalizations (Zubaida 1978: 69-70).

USSR in the past. Because laying all the burden on the USSR and internal colonialism cannot provide a concrete solution to understand the current situation in Ukraine. The problem that Ukraine has been experiencing today is a question of post-Soviet period which should be extensively examined within post-socialist context. In the next section, I will elaborate on instrumentalist approaches which seems to help overcome this problem.

### **Instrumentalist Approach to Nationalism as the Theoretical Framework of this Study**

The role of the state elites in the formation of identity-building process of post-Soviet republics is a focus of this study. The arguments on this matter mostly centers upon Rogers Brubaker's conceptualization of "nationalizing states" within his model of "triadic nexus" (1996). His "nationalizing states" model within triadic nexus provides a very significant background to understand the contemporary developments in Ukraine regarding the role of the Ukrainianization policies of the state and political elites.

Brubaker's model of a triadic nexus of nationalism proposes a dynamic, interdependent relations among three spheres: a newly independent "nationalizing state," a "national minority," or ethno-cultural group settling within it, and an "external homeland" state of the "national minority" (Brubaker 1996: 4-5). According to Brubaker, a nationalizing state is the state of an ethno-cultural core, as economic, political, religious, linguistic, demographic and cultural dominancy of this ethnic core is promoted and supported by the state (Brubaker 1996: 431). In other words, the nationalizing state engages in a process of social engineering, and provides

the transformation of ethnically heterogeneous identities into national states by using the states for supporting core ethnic identity.

Brubaker identifies in his model of triadic nexus that the “nationalizing state” claims the role in the name of a titular/core nationality, which is described in ethnic and cultural terms of the majority of the population, regarding itself as the legitimate “owner of the state”. Yet, in spite of having its own state, the core nation is seen as being in a weak political/cultural, economic, or demographic position within the state and due to this perceived weakness it has a heritage of discrimination against the previously dominant nation’s members. Therefore, the concept of “nationalizing nationalisms” clings to justify the use of state power as “compensatory” and the sole remedial solution to be able to promote the particular interests of the core nation (Brubaker 1996: 5). The “external national homelands” are the reactions to “nationalizing nationalisms” from a trans-border nationalism perspective which claim the rights to observe the conditions of national minorities and watch over the interests of their ethno-national kin in other states through asserting the status of national minorities in these states as an internal matter of external homelands (Brubaker 1996: 5).

Strikingly Brubaker indicates Ukraine as an exception when he claims that “all of the new states, the ethnoculturally defined, state-‘owning’ core nation is sharply distinct from the citizenry as a whole” (Brubaker 1996: 104). However, as this thesis argues, today there is a null and void point in Brubaker’s argument on Ukraine, because the ongoing civil war between the nationalizing Ukrainian state and the separatist forces in Donbass region of Ukraine does not make possible to define

Ukraine as a country where “the boundary between the respective core nations and Russians, who comprise the largest minority in both states, is blurred” (Brubaker 1996: 104). I argue that, although there were periodical fluctuations and alterations between civic and ethnic nationalisms in the state administrations of Ukraine since its independence, firstly the 2004 Orange Revolution, and then the Civil War of Donbass in 2014 as a result Euromaidan process paved the way for deep fractures in nationalism perception of the Ukrainian state in favor of being an ethnic nationalizing state-nationalism. Therefore, the contemporary Ukraine could no longer be defined as a civic state. Interestingly, Brubaker’s earlier account of Ukraine needs to be revised by utilizing his own model of triadic nexus. At this point, it should be digressed that “the perception” of the national minority to the scope of the aforementioned state’s nationalizing nationalism, here, becomes a very significant determinant, because even if a state does not necessarily use nationalizing policies, the rhetoric arising from the mobilized titular nation may be perceived as nationalizing by the national minority (Brubaker 1994: 69).

Brubaker suggests that these key components can be seen in a nationalizing state: “1) the sense of ‘ownership’ of the state by a particular ethno-cultural nation that is conceived as distinct from the citizenry or permanent resident population as a whole, and 2) the ‘remedial’ or ‘compensatory’ project of using state power to promote the core nation’s specific (and heretofore inadequately served) interests.” (Brubaker 1996: 431). Therefore, here, it can be deduced that a nationalizing state cannot be determined by that state representatives or the intellectuals, but it is determined by the perception of national minorities and external homelands of those national minorities whether it is a nationalizing state or not (Brubaker 1996: 63). After this emphasis on

the perception of national minorities and their external homelands, Brubaker propounds three alternative state models within the context of interaction between state and identity: 1) Civic state model based on citizenship which take all citizens in, irrespective of their ethnic belongings, 2) The model of binational or multinational states having two or more ethno-cultural core nations, 3) Hybrid model of minority rights which the state is understood as a national, but not nationalizing; and which the members of the minority groups are guaranteed not only equal rights as citizens, but also protected them with citizenship-based and specific minority rights in principle (Brubaker 1996: 432). From this point, Brubaker suggests that the most appropriate method within the context of state-identity relations for the nationalizing states of post-communist period is the institutionalizing of hybrid model of minority rights (Brubaker 1996: 433).

Despite his emphasis on the role of elites and states in shaping the national question, Brubaker dismisses a class analysis regarding the relationship between the capitalist state and social classes. Thus, I argue that the readers are not offered a class conception of the elite in Brubaker's model of 'nationalizing state' and triadic nexus. It is obvious that Brubaker's elite conception in his analysis undermines the socio-economic aspects in forming the national question in post-socialist states. Taking a differential behaviors of the state apparatus in nationality policies along with the Ukrainian ruling elite into account, this thesis introduces Brubaker's precious analysis of the triadic nexus model by integrating class connection of the elite and the state.

In the final analysis, I use the term "nationalizing state" for explaining post-Soviet Ukraine state administrations' elites which have fallen back upon the use of

state power and nationalism as an instrument. This instrument is used for the regeneration of the titular ethnic group's identity and backing their interests against possible threats that can be presented by other local ethnic identities. Although Brubaker's approach of nationalizing states may be an effective explanation, it has some deficiencies especially related to the generalizations arising from the concept itself. Therefore, in the case of Ukraine, it is necessary to use the 'nationalizing states' approach of Brubaker to develop a better explanation about Ukraine itself as a nationalizing state.

Although Brubaker (1996) accepts the manipulation power of the elites over the masses, does not insist on elite creation of nationalism in all cases. For instance, he indicates clearly that the role of the elite is insufficient to account for the nationalistic attitudes of Serbs in the Krajina region of Croatia in the early 1990s (Brubaker 1996: 72). However, Brubaker still strongly emphasizes that nations are constructed. This issue brings other assertions that nations and nationalisms are elite creations, as he claims that nationalisms in the USSR and its successor states are a consequence of policies and manipulations by the Soviet state elites, and the new elites of the former Soviet republics which attempted to integrate with global capitalism.

Contrary to insufficient emphasis of Brubaker on the role of the elite, Paul Brass substantially highlights the role and purpose of the elites as follows:

[Elites] who draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups, be it a language of an ethnic group, the already existing status, the political/administrative devolution or decentralization of the political power, in order to protect their well-being and existence, or to gain political and economic advantage, not for their groups, but for themselves first and foremost (Brass 1991: 8).

Thus, the elites transform the nationalist sentiments into militant activism. At that point, Brass claims that ethnic conflicts and nationalism are results of complex and particular forms of interaction between the political leaderships of centralizing states and elites of mostly peripheral ethnic groups which are formed and determined by multiple internal and external loyalties and allegiances (Brass 1991: 9). I shall argue that this analysis explains Euro-Maidan when the internal or external power and interest struggles at the state level among Ukrainian political elites and non-Ukrainian elites of particularly ethnic Russian minority are taken into consideration.

Besides, Brass argues that in all multi-ethnic states, ethnic/nationalist conflicts are aggravated from variable aspects: First of all, control over the state and its resources leads to an increase between the elites of ethnic groups. Secondly, the state inevitably discriminates between the ethnic groups within its territorial borders, and that this discrimination mostly takes place in favor of the titular ethnic identity. And thirdly, the centralizing state consciously jeopardizes the existence of the elites of ethnic minority groups for the sake of centralizing or nationalizing the state, but ethnic elites staying out of the state power may also continue to create nationalist movements to be able to keep struggles for power alive (Brass 1985: 28). Brass also claims that different segments of the society, because of their interests, might choose to collaborate with strong domestic or external economic, religious or political elites and authorities, as they might adapt to the culture or language of a dominant group for the sake of obtaining, or preserving power. Such kind of a collaboration between internal elites and external authorities generally leads to inflame ethnic rivalries (Brass 1996: 89). Strong economic and political ties of regional elites particularly in Eastern

Ukraine with the Russian state can be an example for this collaboration between internal elites and external authorities.

Brass' theory helps us to understand how the Ukrainian civil war has been shaped by the relations between internal political and economic elites and external authorities for the sake of the interests of both the state and the elite. It is a matter of the connection between the Ukrainian state elites, the West and European Union, and between Russian minority and Russia as an external strong authority. Therefore, in the light of Brass' elite theory, this thesis concentrates on the relation between the role of the elites and the state in the occurrence of ethnic conflicts in Ukraine; it does so, through an investigation of how Ukrainian political elites, in relation to local and national Russian elites and Russian minorities, managed the existing ethno-political attitudes at the state level had influenced the evolution of Ukraine crisis from so called peaceful protests to seemingly ethnic conflict.

### **Research Questions**

This thesis poses two primary and two secondary research questions to be able to understand the current conflicts and ongoing civil war over the role of state and the political/power elites through the instrumentalization of nationalism and ethnic differences in Ukraine society. I argue that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the transition to capitalism, Ukraine has experienced the emergence of a new capitalist class and the emergence of a new political and economic elite (oligarchs) as influential actors on the state level. These emerging new capitalist class and the elite have instrumentalized nationalism by manipulating ethnic affiliations among Ukrainian society in favor of the creation of a unitary nation-state that would serve to

the interests of both the state and the elites themselves, although the interests or political and economic motivations of the elites and the behavior of the state apparatus can differ from each other. As a result of this, Ukraine in post-Soviet period has begun to suffer from a bloody ethnic-based civil war.

In this sense, the first primary questions of the study are as follows: “How has Ukrainian political elite’s (in relation to local and national Russian elites and Russian minorities) management of existing ethno-political attitudes at the state level influenced the evolution of Ukraine crisis from so called peaceful protests to seemingly ethnic conflict?” Also, “how has the transition to post-Soviet period affected the political and ethnic polarization in Ukraine along with newly emerging ruling class?”

Apart from these research questions, I attempt to answer two secondary questions: “What kind of policies have been implemented by Ukraine political elite which can be regarded as inflaming nationalism among Ukrainians and Russian minorities?” and “What were the attitudes of pro-Russian political and economic elites in the conflict between Ukraine government and the Eastern/Southern Ukraine, particularly People Republics of Lugansk and Donetsk?”

### **The Role of the State and the Elite Literature on Post-Socialist Ukrainian Nationalism**

This thesis aims to contribute to the literature on the current Ukraine conflict and the national question when most of the existing studies concentrates on security and geopolitics-oriented analyses, and try to understand the civil war in Ukraine within the context of international disputes and power struggles between the West and Russia, security concerns and geopolitical position of Ukraine (e.g. Larrabee, Wilson, Gordon

2015; Götz 2015; Walker 2015; Piet 2014; Ivan 2015; Auer 2015). Beyond any doubt, the attempts for an establishment of hegemonic influence of the Western powers such as European Union and the United States over the region of Eurasia (where Russia can be a potential threat for the existing hegemonic order), and security concerns of Ukraine due to its geopolitical significance for both Russia and the West cannot be ignored. Yet, the analyses only based on these arguments are not adequate to understand the identity dynamics behind the current Ukrainian crisis related to the state and the elite-led nationalism as an instrument of politics.

There is a considerable number of studies about the role of the state and the elite in the rising nationalism in post-Soviet Ukraine. For instance, Alexandra Goujon (1999) emphasizes the role of the intellectuals and the elites that spread the ideas by the Popular Front - which guided national demonstrations in the Union republics in the late 1980s. These demonstrations can be regarded as the part of the role of national political elites to use them to provide new political and ideological spheres in the new order. Within this context, Goujon evaluates Ukrainian nationalism through two aspects which are the emergence and development of nationalist movements, and the creation of the state and nation- as a nation-state building process (Goujon 1999).

Andrew Wilson (1997, 1998), in parallel discussion to Brubaker's triadic nexus, argues that the declarations of Ukrainian state for the purpose of constructing a multi-ethnic civic state are contradictory with its ethnic policies promoting the sole state language, privileged titular nation and a Ukrainian national historiography. Wilson (1997) examined Ukrainian nationalism and its impact on the political sphere of independent Ukraine, and discusses that specifically ethnic, historical and linguistic

factors of Ukrainian state and society restraint the appeal of ethno-nationalism, even if the existence of many ethnic Ukrainians. He, however, claims that ethno-nationalism has a strong sentimental invitation to the different ethnic groups in Ukraine which have a potential to disrupt Ukraine's efforts for the establishing an inclusive civic state. Yet, unlike what Wilson claims, this restraint has actually turned into secessionism led by the Russian minority and armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine with Euro-Maidan process. Thus, contrary to Wilson's argument, ethnic, historical or linguistic factors cannot solely play a role in the restraint of nationalism. In the Ukrainian case, the national homeland's policies over ethnic minority, the perception of this minority of 'exclusion' or 'exploitation,' and the stance of the external homeland regarding the minority issue as well as nationalist discourses of the elite are determinants of the emergence of secessionism.

Ian Bremmer also stresses the significant role of the nationalist elites in the mobilization of the masses for a common nation ideal, historical identity and a homeland during the process of independence. Yet, he determines that after independence, the elites of the newly formed nation-state experienced new objectives, obstructions and rules which would require new solutions. Within this context Bremmer believes that even though nationalist elites must mobilize the masses for the sake of the awakening of nationalism and the continuation of the independent statehood, it would be obviously deceptive to approach the nationalists within a state or ethnic group as a unitary actor. Hence, Bremmer's main point is that the competing agendas of the elites in mostly spasmodic environment within post-Soviet order, including post-Soviet Ukraine, had a great potential to create a broad range of conflict from social and political struggles for ethno-cultural identities to the clash of arms

(Bremmer 2006: 141). Although Bremmer is quite right about competing agendas of the elites in spasmodic environment in post-Soviet order, he overlooks that the elites as a social category of the dominant class can periodically play a role as a unitary actor for social formation, while they also have the maneuver ability to ignite ethno-political conflicts through particular discourses and policies by using the state apparatus as an instrument. This thesis shows that social classes take part in the zone of class struggles (which is the state), while political elite as a social category within the dominant class can periodically have a role of being a unitary actor due to this autonomy of the state apparatus. Yet, at the same time the political elites can drag a country into a violent breakup through particular policies and discourses.

David J. Meyer (1996) draws attention to a very striking point as to why the Russians living in Donbass had not mobilized based on ethnic motivations until 2014. According to him, Russified Ukrainians, sharing mostly the same fears and demands of the ethnic Russian minority, dominate the local administrative institutions in Donbass. The aforementioned Russified Ukrainians, or Russian-speaking Ukrainians, and thus local elites of Donbass, have utilized their infrastructural power and financial basis to attach the Russian minority in an alliance in order to make political and economic demands. The demands of the Russified Ukrainians from the Ukrainian government are not completely particularistic or ethnic-oriented in nature. Instead, Meyer determined that the demands of the Russified Ukrainians and ethnic Russians of the Donbass are political, cultural, regional and economic in nature. Thus, the Donbass Russians believed that an ethnic mobilization against the Ukrainian government was not necessary as being ethnic Russian minority identity, “but as part of a larger, multi-ethnic, political alliance,” while the ethnic Russian minority in

Ukraine thought it more effective to seek their objectives through mobilizing around social concerns instead of an ethnic-basis mobilization (Meyer 1996: 320). Yet, this thesis will indicate that the Kiev regime has followed certain exclusionary policies against ethnic Russian minority living in Ukraine following the Euro-Maidan in 2013. When Russian chauvinistic and reactionary stance of Novorossiia republics is also taken into account, these reciprocal nationalist practices implemented by the Kiev government and separatist Russian minority, therefore, show that the crisis in Ukraine is significantly derived from ethnic-based dynamics.

Another scholar studying Ukrainian nationalism, Paul Kubicek (1996, 1999, 2000), only focused upon the radical right of the Ukrainian nationalism, and equates Ukrainian nationalism with solely the sphere of Ukrainophones, the Western Ukraine and regionalism, and center right national democrats. While regarding the Western Ukraine as “the bastion of nationalism,” he argues that nationalist sentiments are powerful especially in the Western Ukraine where is the home to Ukrainian nationalists and national democrats (Kubicek 2000: 273). This regional division, Kubicek emphasizes, will pose particular obstructions to constitute a monolithic, tolerant political community within the territories of post-Soviet Ukraine, and even it will rarify both the internal and external agenda of the Ukrainian elite (Kubicek 2000: 273). Yet, the recent Ukrainian case has shown that a nationalism –which is Russian nationalism- has emerged in the Eastern Ukraine where seceded from the post-Maidan Kiev government due to its nationalist oppression over minorities. Thus, the nationalism practiced by the core nation has brought forth another nationalisms because of certain reasons.

## **Rationale and the Purpose of the Thesis**

This thesis, mainly based on Brubaker's nationalizing state conceptualization and Brass' theory of elite-manipulated nationalism, aims to understand the ongoing Ukraine crisis within the context of particular state policies as well as the role of Ukraine's transition to capitalist system. In this sense, interdependent relations among the state, the elite, and the restoration of capitalism will be the main components in the analysis of nationalism in post-Soviet Ukraine. In parallel to the research problem, this research has two fundamental purposes: Firstly, the thesis examines how Ukrainian political elite's management of existing ethno-political attitudes at the state level has influenced the evolution of Ukraine crisis from so called peaceful protests to seemingly ethnic conflict considering local and national Russian elites and Russian minorities. Secondly, it examines how the transition to post-Soviet period has affected the political and ethnic polarization in Ukraine along with newly emerging ruling class by using nationalism and multiethnic affiliations as an instrument.

## **Methodology of the Thesis**

This thesis is based on a case study research which examines the current Ukraine civil war in terms of the relations between the state and identity-building process along with the role of the elites. In parallel with this, through using both qualitative and quantitative data, research method will be basis on secondary sources analysis via discourse analysis.

**Secondary Sources Analysis:** For secondary sources analysis of the study, I screened reports, articles, books and newspaper columns (between 2013-2016) related

to the topic such as *the Guardian*, *the National*, *Kyiv Post*, *the Ukrainian Weekly*, *International Journal of Socialist Renewal*. I also examined the collection of some statistical data from state institute of statistics such as Central Election Commission-International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS), and State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, especially on demographic formation and change of ethnic structure, or population throughout historical process since pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods. In addition to these, by taking into consideration their possible biased aspects, previous documentaries and interviews from the inside of Ukraine civil war and Crimea such as *Ukraine Crisis Today: Banderschtadt: Unmasking Ukrainian Fascism*, and *Ukraine Inferno*. The aim of inclusion of these kinds of documentaries and interviews is to be able to analyze the discourses and attitudes of both ethnic Ukrainians and Russian minorities living in Ukraine (and of course in today's Novorossiia) and Crimea as well as the state elites on the current conflicts. Therefore, I will discuss how the state and the elites play a significant role through using nationalism and ethnic discriminations in the escalation of ethnic tensions which transformed them into a bloody civil war. The empirical evidence of the thesis comes from the analysis of scholarly material written on Ukraine particularly after its independence and with a focus on Euro-Maidan and the Civil War period.

**Discourse Analysis:** For the discourse analysis, the author will examine 1996 Constitution of Ukraine within the context of its relevance to minority rights based on ethnicity, linguistic and socio-cultural aspects, particularly for ethnic Russians living in the country along with the amendments in the constitution in 2004, 2010 and 2014 to be able understand how the state and political elites have influenced the minority

rights of the ethnic groups, and whether they had a great effect on ethnic separations in Ukraine at constitutional level. The author also examines the constitutional draft of the Donetsk People's Republics to investigate how the political elites of Novorossiia republics emphasize on Russian nationalism as well as "Great Russian chauvinism" and Russian Orthodox religion.

### **Chapter Plan of the Dissertation**

This thesis is divided into four chapters. In this chapter, I elaborated on the research questions and purpose of the study as well as theoretical and methodological framework through an investigation on general literature regarding the role of the state and the elites in the rise of nationalism. Subsequently, I scrutinized the theories which are basis of this thesis: primarily Rogers Brubaker's nationalizing states and triadic nexus model, and secondly, Paul Brass' theory of elite competition.

The second chapter describes that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and thus with the creation of independent Ukraine as a new nation-state, how a nationalizing Ukrainian state and a new kind of ruling elite in the name of the formation of a modern nation-state as a necessity for the consolidation of capitalism through nationalizing and re-ethnicizing policies were emerged after a brief analysis of the late Tsarist Russia and the period of the Soviet Union. To do this, I examine particular fields such as constitutional and linguistic policies of Ukrainian state, and examine the political discourses of newly formed Ukrainian elite over ethnic minority groups. It concludes that even if the Ukrainian state is defined as a "nationalizing state," the extent and intensity of this nationalizing periodically shows alterations and fluctuations between ethnic and civic nationalisms in line with the attitudes of the

ruling elites which dominated the state apparatus during the process of the post-independence period.

The third chapter of this thesis investigates the path to the civil war based on ethno-political breakup of Ukraine under the guidance of two camps of Ukrainian political elite and the impact of elite-led nationalism on the heels of the 2014 Euro-Maidan and its aftermath. This chapter presents that on the one hand, how the Ukrainian state and the political elites as well as the formation of Ukrainian territories entered into a new phase in the direction of the establishment of an “ethnically pure” Ukrainian state through legal amendments in language policies, media, minority rights, rewriting the history and de-Russification of ethno-cultural context of Ukrainian society along with an explicit collaboration with fascist and Neo-Nazi political organizations at the governmental and constitutional levels. On the other hand, how the administrations of Novorossiia republics, proclaimed their independence from the Kiev government, intensely and dialectically promulgate a right-wing conservative and regressive political line through Russian nationalist and chauvinist discourses to suppress the existence of progressive forces of separatist movement at the state level.

In the last chapter of the thesis, the author summarizes and draws the final conclusion and implications of the study by showing three fundamental lines in current Ukrainian conflict which are oppressive post-Maidan government dominated by ethnic nationalist and fascist Ukrainian political elites, the state administrations of self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics dominated by pro-Russian nationalist elites, and progressive forces such as socialists, communists and other working class movements in the struggle of Donbass people. In this chapter of the

thesis, I also make some evaluations on the model of “triadic nexus”: First, the national minority group persecuted by the nationalizing state does not trigger an ethno-territorial conflict alone. Second, the relationship between national minority and kin-state depends on the particular interests of these actors rather than on primordial and deeply-rooted emotional bonds. And lastly, as a zone of class struggles, the changing behavior of the state apparatus on different spheres of social institutions such as nationalism perceptions is one of the factors that determine the triadic relations between the nationalizing states, the elites and the national minorities.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THE SOVIET ERA AND THE PERIOD OF INDEPENDENCE: TRANSITION TO POST-SOCIALISM, THE REVIVAL OF THE ELITES AND THE UKRAINIAN NATIONALISM IN THE NEW (DIS) ORDER**

This chapter of the dissertation argues that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, an independent Ukrainian state, emerged as a “nationalizing state” directed by a ruling elite. The formation of a modern nation-state was a necessity for the consolidation of capitalism, and done by nationalizing and re-ethnicizing policies in particular fields such as constitutional, linguistic, regional/economic over ethnic minority groups. Yet, as I argue, even if the post-independence Ukrainian state is a “nationalizing state,” the extent and intensity of this nationalizing periodically shows alterations and fluctuations between ethnic and civic nationalisms in line with the attitudes of the ruling elites dominating the state apparatus. Post-Soviet Ukrainian ruling elites’ shifting attitudes between civic and ethnic nationalisms had a constant: The attempt to restrain the dominant Russian identity (in a broader a Russophone identity sense) to a certain extent, and to follow particular policies to promote the titular ethnic nationality. In this period, the Ukrainian political or ruling elite could managed to abstain from a clash of interests among different elite groups because of

particular economic and political motivations such as Ukraine's economic dependence to the centre, Russia and the impact of the oligarchs. The elite made collaborations through particular alliances and blocs as "the political organizer and unifier." Hence, it is not possible to explain this period in Ukraine with the nationalism theory of Brass, which emphasizes on the correlation between the elite manipulation for particular political and economic interests and the rise of ethnic tensions. However, Brass' approach becomes useful for the period after 2004, when firstly the 2004 Orange Revolution, and then the process of the 2013-2014 Euro-Maidan led to transform this compulsive state of collaboration, or conflictlessness, between the political elites into violent tensions and deep ethno-political divergences.

Ukrainian ethnic awareness goes before pre-1991 as accepted in the literature (e.g. Magocsi 1996; Szporluk 2000; Plokhly 2006; Kubicek 2008). However, due to the lack of an independent state experience throughout the history, Ukraine did not have a chance to introduce a state-led nationalism from the late Tsarist Russian to the late Soviet period. As a result of this absence, Ukrainian nationalism was invented by particular political elites, intellectuals and the peasantry as a class-based movement during this era rather than purely an elite movement. Therefore, the "nationalism" of this period is not a "nationalizing state" nationalism in Brubakerian sense; but rather, a reactionary movement, especially against oppressive Tsarist rule because of the Russification policies of the Russian Empire particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Beyond all question, the relevant republics also had identity-based demands before the independence period, despite the limited level of the impacts of nationalist movements in gaining independence at the end of the disintegration process of the Soviet Union. For instance, some scholars (e.g. Von Hagen 1995; Barrington and Herron 2004) argue

that there were particular identity-oriented demands and nationalist movements before the year of 1991, and a seeking for the establishment of an independent state can be observed in the pre-independence period in Ukraine. Yet, contrary to the most of the former Soviet republics, a unity in the common identity-based demands cannot be seen even among the ethnic Ukrainians in the pre-1991 period of Ukraine. With a ratiocinative interpretation, it can be said that this dividedness on identity-oriented demands is derived from the partition of Ukrainian territories among the borders of many states in the course of historical process. Therefore, the deprivation from a common historical continuum due to different histories of each geographical regions of modern Ukraine causes certain discussions about whether Ukraine has a history, or there is more than one Ukraine. Also this lack of common historical continuum has weakened the common identity resistance spots of people seeing themselves as an ethnic Ukrainian which can be moved to the level of nationalism.

Before the analysis of post-independence period, the next section will briefly examine how the Soviet leaderships from Stalin to Brezhnev affected the national question in Ukraine to understand the current ethno-political polarization in the region.

### **Ukraine as a Soviet State from Stalin to Brezhnev: From *the Korenizatsiia* to the concepts “Great Russian People” and “New Historical Community of People”**

The policy of *Korenizatsiia* (indigenization) which was adopted in the early years of the Soviet rule had an impact on Ukrainian nationalism. In the year of 1922, the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) had only 56.000 members which equals to 0.2% of the population. Moreover, most of the members in the party were ethnically Russian and Jewish, while only 11% of them were able to speak the Ukrainian

language. Soviet administration under the leadership of Lenin, therefore, considered a larger extent indigenous membership to the CPU: In 1923, the Bolsheviks officially adopted the policy of *korenizatsiia* to encourage local elites to give the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic a more predominant Ukrainian identity. With the policy of *korenizatsiia*, both party members and government officials were mostly composed of ethnic Ukrainians for the first time (Kubicek 2008: 99). The policy of *korenizatsiia* basically included two political developments: The first of these developments was the legal use and learning of local languages in government, education, political propaganda, literature and other spheres related to social communication. Secondly, the official assignments and active participation of non-Russian population in the government, the Communist Party and its local institutions (Tuminez 2003: 89-90). As a result of *korenizatsiia*, by the year 1927, 70% of the business in Ukrainian SSR was being operated in Ukrainian, compared to the year of 1925 which was only 20%. More spectacularly, 83% of elementary schools and 66% of secondary schools were taught instructions in Ukrainian, and almost all ethnic Ukrainian students were registered in Ukrainian schools by 1929. Moreover, most of the books and newspapers in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic were in Ukrainian by the end of the 1920s, and the investments in education by the Soviet government provided a dramatic rise in literacy rates by more than 50% by 1927. The Bolsheviks even allowed for religion, especially the Ukrainian Autocephalous (Independent) Orthodox Church which was established in 1919, and with the support of the Soviet authorities, seized the control of St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev (Kubicek 2008: 99).

During the Krushchev and Brezhnev periods, *korenizatsiia* began to mean a cadre policy between ethnically Russians and non-Russian ones (Tuminez 2003: 90).

Within this context, it can be inferred that in both the *korenizatsiia* of 1920s and especially the periods of Krushchev and Brezhnev amplified the identical awareness and national consciousness in Ukraine, while it synchronously improved the Soviet consciousness which led to have deep labyrinthic impacts on Ukrainian nationalism.

One other factor shaped the pre-Independence Ukrainian nationalism is related with the industrialization thrust of the Stalin period, which is marked by replacement of New Economic Policy in favor of a total state control over the economy and state initiated industrialization. This industrialization thrust in the Soviet Union was taken place particularly in the east and the south of Ukraine. For instance, in this period, the Donbass region became a more powerful coal center. State investment for Ukrainian industry caused Ukraine to supply more than 70% of the Soviet Union's coal, iron ore, and pig iron by 1932 and Ukraine produced more metal and machines than France and Italy, and almost as much as Great Britain. With the industrialization and modernization, for the first time, ethnic Ukrainians became the preponderance of industrial labor force of the republic and the Soviet Ukraine was one of the leading industrial centers of Europe (Kubicek 2008: 100-101).

Yet, these great industrial developments were not cost-free: In 1932-1933, as in 1891 and 1921, a terrifying famine, *the Holodomor*, arose to the surface in Ukraine territories along with particular regions of the Soviet Union which many people died of starvation. Although the existence of *the Holodomor* is accepted by many historians, there is no a consensus on the reasons of this famine in the Soviet Union, mostly occurred in Ukraine. According to Mark Tauger (2001), contrary to intentionalist views to *the Holodomor*, the famine in Ukraine occurred, because the Soviet Union

experienced a chronic drought and particular serious earlier natural disasters in 1932. Within this context, in his analysis of the famine, *the Holodomor* occurred due to “a highly abnormal combination of environmental and agricultural circumstances” (Tauger 2001: 47).

On the other hand, Kubicek (2008) asserts that *the Holodomor* was a result of the Soviet administration, in which under Stalin had to seek control over the wealthy and resistant peasantry against collectivization policy and those who were against the collectivization were sent to labor camps in Siberia and the Far North. According to him, the famine was to suppress Ukrainian nationalism which took its class sources from mostly the peasantry. For suppression of Ukrainian nationalism, many intellectuals and the elites were also arrested, being accused them of the affiliation to illegal Ukrainian nationalist organizations (Kubicek 2008: 108). In this way, in Kubicek’s argument, Stalin disrupted two major veins of the Ukrainian nationalism which are the wealthy peasantry, and nationalist Ukrainian elites and intellectuals.<sup>4</sup>

Timothy Snyder (2010) also asserts that the famine was “deliberate,” because many deadly policies were applied mostly to Ukraine, arguing that the Soviets “made sure that the term genocide, contrary to Lemkin's arguments, excluded political and economic groups.” Therefore, the Ukrainian famine, for Snyder, can be regarded as “somehow less genocidal because it targeted a class, kulaks, as well as a nation, Ukraine” (Snyder 2010: 413).

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<sup>4</sup> For Stalin’s report presented in the 17th Party Congress on 26th January 1934 including particular economic indicators about the collectivization and the situation of *the kulaks*, see. Stalin, J.V. (1934) ‘Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of C.P.S.U.(B)’, in *Works*, (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House), Vol. 13, 1930. available at: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1934/01/26.htm#1>

Irrespective of these discussions, *the Holodomor* was one of the most tragic and contradictory events in the relations between the Soviet state and the Ukrainian nationalism, which rely on peasant class. Both *the Holodomor*, and later on, the massive collaborations of especially the peasants and national elites with Nazi Germany during the World War II formed the current ethnic structure of today's Ukraine at the end of the war.

The reforms of Khrushchev in nationality policies, in reversal of industrialization/modernization trajectory for agricultural production, in localization of education by encouraging own national histories for each republic and in increasing number of local administrators in the republics led to even more rise in national consciousness of the Ukrainians rather than a common Soviet identity. One of the most important reform of Khrushchev was the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula (which majority of the population was ethnically Russian) to the Soviet Ukraine from Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic as a gift for the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereyaslav. Besides, some of Ukrainian political and national elites and intellectuals who had been condemned under Stalin rule, such as Mykola Skrypnyk who is the symbol of Ukrainianization, were rehabilitated. The debates about the need to protect the Ukrainian language against attempts to make Russian the predominant language in the Ukrainian republic began to rise among intellectuals and the elites (Kubicek 2008: 112-113).

Leonid Brezhnev's period was marked with three major developments with regards to the Soviet Ukraine. First, Brezhnev proposed an idea of "unity" into the agenda in 24<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union with the emphasis

on “the survival of the *nations*” to accommodate the interests of different nations within a multi-national state, the Soviet Union and the common interests of the Soviet peoples as a whole (Farmer 1980: 3). Within this context, this was the first time that Brezhnev, a Soviet leader, defined the Soviet Union as a sole nation, which is a *Soviet nation (natsiia)*. It was a move from the concept of citizenship comprised solely by Russian, Ukrainian or Estonian identity to a concept of citizenship based on the Soviet nation in itself. This trajectory officially denoted that any nationalist movements within the Soviet Union would not be tolerated, and an idea of the Soviet nation would take the place of national identities of each Union Republics including the Ukrainian nation (Farmer 1980: 62-63)<sup>5</sup>.

Second, as a consequence of the Helsinki Accords in 1975, the territories annexed from Poland to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic officially became the part of Ukraine. When Ukraine became an independent state in 1991, its borders were defined based upon the Helsinki Accords of 1975. Third, in 1977, the Constitution of the Soviet Union was promulgated. It did not accord broader rights for the Union Republics; it enfranchised the right to secession for the republics within the Soviet Union (Kuzio 2007:18). This right in the 1977 Constitution played a very significant role in the declarations of independence of the Soviet Republics including Ukraine

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<sup>5</sup> On the classification of the term “unity” and the Soviet narod in class grounds rather than the ethnic affiliations, V.M. Honchareva writes as follows:

“We know that the term *narod* is used in two meanings: 1) as a synonym for the term “nation” (for example, in such expressions as the “Russian nation”, the “French nation”, the “Ukrainian nation”, etc. 2) in its own meaning to designate the “working people”. Obviously, the category “Soviet narod” is not used in the same sense as Russian narod or French narod. This term describes the unity of the working people of the Soviet Union without regard to their national affiliation. The category “Soviet narod” signifies not so much the uniformity of language or ethnic composition, as the unity of USSR workers regardless of their differences in lifestyle, mentality, culture, and so forth. That is, it is a unity of an international type” (Farmer 1980: 70).

where the state and the elite-led nationalist sentiments dramatically increased as a result of Gorbachev's *perestroika*, *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiya* in the final phase between the years of 1985 and 1991.

### **The Era of Reforms and the Dissolution:**

#### **A Nationalism That does not Seek Independence**

In the last period of the Soviet Union, the problems that occurred due to the inadequacy in the existing economic planning which should have responded the needs of the Soviet republics began to explicitly come to the light particularly after serious stagnation in the Soviet economy in the post-1980 period. The Soviet elites set off on a quest for several reforms to be able to overcome this stagnation such as *perestroika* (economic restructuring), *glasnost* (openness), and *demokratizatsiya* (democratization). Especially *perestroika* had exacerbated nationalisms; most nationalist movements and elites (mostly organized within the Rukh party in Ukraine) demanded economic independence by presenting economic problems as a pretext (Kubicek 2008: 120-121), while *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiya* which clearly enabled the ethno-identical expressions, which resulted in the growth of nationalist organizations, and transformed the demands for economic independence into the demands for independent state (Kaiser 1992: 373).

Gorbachev's *glasnost* which was introduced in 1986 encouraged more open discussions, more leniency to the critique on the former Soviet policies, and "freedom" on media, art and science; but it also enabled people to articulate their grievances against the Soviet government. Many people in the Union Republic, under the leadership of nationalist, republican elites (such as Leonid Kravchuk), did not only

voice complaints against the Soviet authority, but also wanted to restore the situation which would mean an independent state (Kubicek 2008: 121).

*Glasnost* led to non-Russian members of the Republics' correlation of political and economic troubles with ethnic identities. Therefore, ethnic/national consciousness was reproduced through publications of nationalist organizations in non-Russian languages such as Ukrainian (Karklins 1989: 209). *Demokratizatsiya* was put into practice in 1988, and initiated several reforms such as multi-contested elections based on open process of candidacy and vote by secret ballot (Breslauer 1991: 241). In this sense, it would not be wrong, if we say that the Soviet elites attempted to implement a series of reforms with *perestroika*, *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiya* to rehabilitate the system by using the fundamental notions of liberal democracy and capitalism. In other words, the Soviet system, which had already begun to corrupt with the former reforms, was completely shackled within the chains of capitalism by the Soviet elites themselves. Therefore, *perestroika*, *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiya* brought nationalist sentiments into view in the Soviet republics including Ukraine, even if in different contexts and different levels, while these reforms encouraged the desires of "being an independent state" of the Ukrainian nationalists.

Another significant effect of Gorbachev reforms on openness and political life took place in the sphere of rising organizations apart from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The formation of the political parties having a goal for the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state occurred in September 1989 with the first congress of the Rukh (People's Movement of Ukraine for *Perestroika*) (Poniotto 1991: 177). After the rise of grassroots support for the Rukh and the strong criticisms of the

Communist Party of Ukraine from the Ukrainian nationalist elites, Gorbachev immediately visited Ukraine, and dismissed the General Secretary of Ukraine Communist Party, who rejected the idea that the Ukrainians are a separate ethnic identity, although he was an ethnic Ukrainian (Kubicek 2008: 130). In these circumstances, for the first attempts to mobilize the masses in Ukraine, on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1990, the Rukh and its nationalist elites tried to organize the people and protest against the Soviet government in the anniversary of the declaration for independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic in 1917 (Motyl and Krawchenko 1997: 247-248), while the second party congress of the Rukh in 1990 played a significant role for the Ukrainian nationalism by explicitly delivering the opinion in favor of the independence of Ukraine (Motyl and Krawchenko 1997: 249-250). Popular support to different nationalisms in the Soviet republics was examined in the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union in March 1989, and the Supreme Soviet Elections in 1990. In Ukraine, as a result of the Supreme Soviet Elections, the Rukh-supported candidates (although the Rukh was banned from the elections as a party) won ¼ of the Supreme Soviet deputies (Duik and Karatnycky 1993: 9). In other words, it was a victory for nationalists. These results relatively encouraged the Ukrainian nationalists for the sake of the realization of national desires.

In this period, the marker of Ukrainian nationalism was its limited character; it was not demanding an independent state, unlike the Baltics. Ukrainian nationalism of this period can be regarded as a follower, or an observer of the pioneer nationalisms such as the Baltic nationalisms, and determined its strategies according to the achievements of these leading nationalisms (Stevens 2004: 137).

I argue that the reason behind this relatively limited and belated actions of the Ukrainian elites for the independence is that in the era of the Soviet dissolution, the path to the independence was mostly guided by the (ex) communist elites. For instance, in March 1990 the Supreme Soviet Elections, which the participation of nationalist Rukh movement was banned, another nationalist party, the Democratic Bloc, managed to receive only 118 seats out of 450 seats, as the Communist Party of Ukraine maintained its dominancy in the Supreme Soviet (Birch 1995: 1156). However, in the course of the events, significant oppositions among the communists began to rise, and the reformist bloc in the Communist Party, including Leonid Kravchuk, came closer to nationalist discourses for the sake of more sovereignty and politically shifted to the center (Birch 1995: 1158). Even though Kravchuk had a past of violently suppressing the nationalist movements in the Soviet Ukraine, he and his reformist bloc started to comprehend the new reality of the Soviet Union: “Promoting” and receiving democracy and sovereignty with open arms would provide political elites with a better opportunity for political legitimacy than preserving the Soviet order. Therefore, ex-communist, new nationalist Ukrainian political elites mostly from the reformist bloc embraced the idea of a Ukrainian sovereign state (Kubicek 2008: 134).

This shift is visible in the following cases: In many crucial polls in the Ukrainian Rada, reformist bloc of the Communist Party composing approximately 1/3 of the communist deputies collaborated with the nationalist opposition (Motyl and Krawchenko 1997: 253).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, on the heels of the attempted coup d’etat in

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, in the referendum of March 1991, as an addition to the question about the continuation of the USSR, a question was also addressed to the Ukrainian voters that “*Do you agree that Ukraine should be part of a Union of Soviet Sovereign States on the basis on the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine?*” through issuing a decision, and Kravchuk suggested to answer “yes” for both question. 70% of the whole Ukrainian people voted positive for the question about the continuation of the USSR,

August 1991, Kravchuk abstained from condemning the attempt; however when the attempted coup d'état failed, he renovated his sovereignist discourses with anti-communist and nationalist discourses to be able to keep pace with new conditions (Motyl and Krawchenko 1997: 255). With this way, Kravchuk and his reformist bloc made inroads into the survival of the former communist cadres in the new conditions through gradually embracing nationalist objectives and discourses as a former communist. In this period, a significant part of the ruling elite, which guided the path to the independence, were originally from the Soviet *nomenklatura*, and also particularly opposed to these communist elites. In other words, in this period, the path to the independence was mostly conducted by the ex-communist, but new nationalist political elites.

The transformation of the Ukrainian political elites of this period is explained by Kuzio in five major phases (1998): In first phase, the elite tends towards the diversifications in itself, and begins to share power struggles in politics between the elites of new regime and the remnants of the former Soviet system. Thus, the former Communist Party's *apparatchiks*, meaning the ruling bureaucrats in the military and heavy industrial sectors, did not constitute the political elites by themselves alone. They shared the arena of politics with populist/political demagogues, free-market promoters, unsatisfied workers as well as newly mobilized and abruptly waxing ethnic groups and national elements. While the institutions and principles of the *ancien*

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while this proportion was 38,8% in the Western Ukraine, and 18,7% in Galicia. For the second question about Ukraine, 80,2% of whole Ukrainian people voted positive, whereas this rate was 63,6% in the Western Ukraine, and 44,2% in Galicia. In addition to these, in Galicia, another question about the independence of Ukraine was added to the referendum by the force of local nationalist elites, and people participating in Galician referendum voted 88,4% in favor of the independence of Ukraine (the question was that “*Would you like Ukraine became an independent state, which can independently decide all questions of domestic and foreign policy, providing equal rights to citizens regardless of nationality and religious views?*”) (Birch 1995: 1158-1159).

*régime* were gradually wiped away, this composition formed a new national political elite in the progress of time. In the second phase, the transformation of the elites was put into practice by a part of the former ruling elite class and a collaborator of the Soviet regime through embracing the new order and declaring their loyalty to this newly-established regime as in the example of Kravchuk. By this way, new political regime created its own political elites, as it weakened the ties with the former regime, and the elites that are in opposition to the new regime conceded to integrate with the new order, or had to immigrate to Russia. In the third phase, the discontent in Ukrainian society was directed to the mobilization of national movements and sentiments rather than the economic conditions and reforms by the national elites. Thus, the most significant point for Ukrainian nationalism was the awakening of a national consciousness in the society. In 1992-1994 Kravchuk administration propagandized the positive sides of the central government without extremely criticizing the former regime for creating a Ukrainian national consciousness, nation and state-building by emphasizing on the concepts of “national unity” and “national brotherhood.” In the fourth phase, the convergence of economic and political/cultural nationalists was witnessed. Kuzio points out the connection between the nation-state and national capital and claims that nationalism enables a monopolistic barricade to international competition for protecting the domestic market and accumulated capital. Therefore, both the political and the economic elites converge for tying their financial security with survival of the independent Ukrainian state against one of the main “threat,” Russian culture and capital. Thus, this congruence between the aim for national capital accumulation and for the formation of new national bourgeoisie ascertained the newly independent state’s national identity.

In the last phase, in the path to independence and the post-1991 period, the Ukrainian political elites collaborated with the elites of the former Soviet regime with the aim of achieving an independent state; with this way, the elites of the new order prevented the transformation of the nationalization movement into a potential purification process from the national identity (Kuzio 1998: 23-27).

From all these five phases of the transformation of the Ukrainian political elites in this period, it can be deduced that the ruling elite of the former Soviet regime was assimilated by the political elite of the new order. I also argue that the elite class emerging as a result of this transition to post-socialist period is not actually a continuation of the ancient regime; but at the same time, it does not completely coincide with the patterns of the new order which the oppositions to the former Soviet regime has conceived either. Ultimately, the output of this unification is a new, extensive and embedded class of economic and political elites. The formation of this class of economic and political elites, which will be later transformed into a form of oligarchy with full integration with neoliberal world order, has a crucial role in terms of the legitimacy of political system, because the intelligentsia along with potential power struggle between the elites of the former regime and the elites of the new order having political power has also a significant influence on the prestige and the legitimacy of the newly-established system, or the state.

In explaining the relation between the elite composition, coherence and struggle, existing models seems to partially explain the current circumstances. For instance, although Kuzio's model is quite useful to understand the transformation of the Ukrainian political elites on the heels of the period of independence and the late

Soviet period, it cannot provide an accurate analysis of the processes after the Orange Revolution. The process of the Orange Revolution, and more importantly Euro-Maidan and the path to civil war process in Ukraine in 2014 resulted in a sharp division within Ukrainian political elites into two poles as pro-European Union and US, pro-Russia and communist separatists. Also, Brass's view on the correlation between the role of elites and the rise of ethnic tensions for Ukraine is not accurate for this period because of the presence of a peaceful congruence among the aforementioned political elites. Yet, Brass's account becomes more useful for the period after 2004 Orange Revolution, and certainly the process of 2014 Euro-Maidan protests when violent divergences have been experienced among the elites, as I will discuss in the later sections.

### **The Period of Independence: A Non-Ethnic Nationalism Installed**

Ukraine experienced the path to its independence process firstly under the influence of the reformist communists, and then the centrists, or of the ideologically amorphous but detached from ethnic nationalisms (Shevel 2004: 10). This detachment was clearly seen in the electoral law and the civil codes of the independent Ukrainian state. In the civil code of October 1991, all permanent residents were granted granted Ukrainian citizenship as (Shevel 2004: 1) as article 1 indicates in the following way:

...Persons who at the time of entry into force of this Act were residents of Ukraine, irrespective of origin, social and property status, race and nationality, sex, education, language, political views, religious convictions, birth and nature of occupation, who are not citizens of other states and who do not object to acquiring citizenship of Ukraine (Barrington 1995: 741).

In addition to this, 1991 Civil Code of Ukraine enabled that those of whom one of their parents at least was born in Ukraine can have the right to acquire Ukrainian

citizenship (Shevel 2004: 2-3). This understanding of citizenship did not regard “being Ukrainian” as a component of the Soviet people or a general Slavic culture and presented the Ukrainian identity as a supra-identity. However, the Civil Code’s understanding of citizenship was not also based on the citizenship perception of the Rukh-oriented Ukrainian nationalism, which presented that the Ukrainian nation has an ethnic core, and the center of this core is located in the Western Ukraine.

The context in which the Code was produced displayed the sharp division between Ukrainian left and Ukrainian nationalists. The Code was a product of the communist-dominated legislative branch, which proposed to introduce dual citizenship for distracting from the boundaries among national/ethnic communities and for familiarizing the society with the idea of a common state. Yet, the proposal was not accepted. Moreover, the proposal of the Ukrainian nationalists was also rejected as it suggested Ukrainian citizenship of ethnic Ukrainians living in external lands with the emphasis of ethnicity as the basis of citizenship, i.e. ethnic nationalism. After all is said and done, two sharp divisions, the communists and nationalists had to make a compromise on the arguments of centralist, (i.e. national communists who were the former communists), new nationalists. At the end, a territorial-based understanding of citizenship which grounds on neither ethnic identity nor dual citizenship was legislated in the Code (Shevel 2004). Thanks to such a kind of citizenship law of Ukraine 1991, there were not any significant restrictions on the political rights of ethnically non-Ukrainian people, and even the political elites of the Eastern Ukraine such as Donbass region including Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts where highly Russian-populated carried on their influence in local governments as well as central administrations.

Due to the influence of non-exclusionist civil code and the constitution, Ukraine manage to experience a government constituted by the former communists, new nationalists, in other words national communists, rather than an ethnic or radical Ukrainian nationalist and anti-communist administration aiming the isolation of Russian minority living in the territories of Ukraine. The Code that excludes ethnic Ukrainian nationalism from the state caused that the ruling and political elites could not use Ukrainian nationalism. Therefore, the impact of ethnic nationalism remained weak until 2004 Orange Revolution, and then the process of Euro-Maidan protests in the last days of 2013.

In this period, the formal political processes, such as the referendum for independence, the presidential elections and composition of the first parliament indicate the same trend: First, in the referendum on the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1991, %90.32 of participants voted in favor of the independence, while the “vote yes for independence of Ukraine” was at surprisingly high levels in the eastern oblasts of Ukraine. Correspondingly, in the presidency elections, Vyacheslav Chornovil, the candidate of ethnic nationalist Rukh received 23.27% of the votes, and the former communist, new nationalist (national communist) Leonid Kravchuk was elected as the president of the independent Ukrainian state by taking 61.59% of the votes (Lalpychak 1991)<sup>7</sup>. At this point, it can

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<sup>7</sup> In The Referendum on the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine on 1st December 1991, in the oblasts of the Western Ukraine, votes in favor of the independence were about 95%. For instance, Ternopil: 98.67%, Khmelnytsky: %96.30, Lvov: 97.46%, Ivano-Frankivske: 95.81%, and Rivne: 95.96%. In the eastern and southern part of Ukraine, this proportion was relatively lower compare to the Western Ukraine, but higher than the expected. For instance, Kharkov: 75.83%, Donetsk: 76.85%, Lugansk: 83.86%, Autonomous Republic of Crimea: 54.19%, and Sevastopol City: 57.7% (Lalpychak, C. (1991) ‘Over 90% vote yes in referendum; Kravchuk elected president of Ukraine’, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, Kiev Press Bureau, Vol. LIX, No. 49, December 8, 1991).

be deduced that mass support for the independence was quite strong in the early period of independent Ukraine; however, the majority of the Ukrainian society did not support the Rukh-oriented perception of independence which regards the independent Ukrainian state as a component of the Ukrainian ethnic identity through canalizing the Western Ukrainian nationalism. According to Marko Bojcun (1995), Kravchuk's success was due to his ability to create a national consensus among the nationalists/democrats and the communists. The consensus was built on that the Communist Party elites were convinced to approve the decision for the abolishment of the party and independence of Ukraine, if they would maintain their privileged positions within the state apparatus and economy. In this regard, the establishment of an independent state did not result in a real change in the ruling state elites, and Kravchuk, trying to maintain the existing cadres which aimed to rule the state with an independent, amorphous and non-partisan identity, created, with Bojcun's term, the "party of power" which is able to remain in power in every condition, indeed (Bojcun 1995: 240-241).

In addition to these, after the independence of Ukraine, the distribution of votes in the first parliamentary elections in 1994 was significantly affected by the economic depression in Donbass region and resulted in a delay in emergence of identity-related concerns. The inflation rate rocketed to 10.000%, and many strikes arose particularly by coal miners because of this economic downturn (Aslund 2003), while it mostly harmed the industrial regions of southern and eastern parts of Ukraine like Donbass where Russophones mostly lived (Bojcun 1995: 230). In this period, radical nationalists and, in a broader term, the right wing political parties that were strong supporters of neoliberal market economy, and liberation of Ukraine in the integration

with the West and European Union rather than Russian Federation and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). They were able to receive 15.5% of the votes.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the left wing political parties defending the integration with the CIS and state ownership-based economy achieved a great success by taking 36.3% in total (Bojcun 1995: 235) (See Appendix, Table 4). In this respect, the existing economic devastation provided a significant opportunity for the victory of the left wing political parties in the first parliamentary elections in 1994. The economic discontent and the negative reactions to the dissolution of the Soviet Union particularly in the eastern part of Ukraine resulted in the dominance of the Ukrainian left in the Verkhovna Rada, also owing to the support of Russians living in Ukraine. In this period, infrastructural concerns (such as economy) rather than super-structural apprehensions (such as identity orientations) shaped the fundamental motivations in the Ukrainian society (Kravchuk and Chudowsky 1994: 146).

In the same year, in the run-off presidential elections, Kravchuk started off with a political campaign based on the discourses of securing the independent Ukrainian state and its territorial integrity, and tried to gain support of the left parties in the parliamentary elections. Kuchma's rhetoric in favor of Russophiles in Ukraine, his promissory about economic recovery and anti-corruption discourse rather than a Ukrainian nationalist and pure identity-based discourse won through the majority of the Ukrainian society. The victory of Kuchma in 1994 was as a success of his program in balancing liberal economic policies of the Ukrainian nationalism with forging closer

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<sup>8</sup> This rate might be increased to the levels of 23.5% with the centralist political parties which are between two opposition poles, the nationalists and the leftists, in rhetoric; but generally in favor of the nationalists and the right wing political parties in terms of their policies and strategies. The vote rate of central political parties in 1994 Elections of Ukraine was 8% (Bojcun 1995: 235).

ties with CIS accommodating identity related demands of ethnic Russians and Russophones. In other words, the success of Kuchma's program owes to Kravchuk's opposite program of pragmatism, i.e. - his pragmatic use of nationalism for particular strategies and aims (Ponarin 2000: 1536-1538), which lays claims to the fundamental values of the Ukrainian nationalism (such as territorial integrity) along with the attempts to close with the Ukrainian left.

In 1991-1994, Ukrainian parliamentary and presidential elections showed that even if nationalist political organizations are not in power, particular nationalist discourses may exist within these so-called non-nationalist political organizations. The reverse situation is also valid; although theoretically nationalist political parties are in power, the nationalist discourses may not be brought into the power as in the examples of the differences of the programs in Kravchuk and Kuchma. Overall, in this period, the nationalist movements' impact displayed fluctuations according to the aims and agendas of the political elites and Ukrainian nationalism had an impact at the core of the Ukrainian state as a tool for nation-building. In other words, although Ukraine has experienced the path to its independence and post-independence period under the guidance of the former communist elites, the idea of nationalism penetrated to these ruling classes.

However, it should be also remarked that during this period, the understanding of nationalism was based on a relatively non-exclusionary citizenship, which provided weak ethnic stresses. This dominant nationalism that was effective in the state administration mostly grew into a civic-based nationalism which circulated and was supported by the former communist elites and moderate nationalists - such as the Rukh.

In this sense, nationalism in the state administration was quite different to that of the ethnic Ukrainian nationalists, i.e. Ukrainian National Assembly and Ukrainian Conservative Republican Party or ethnic Russian nationalists in Ukraine, which claim Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Russians as the regional parts of the “great” and “one” Russian nation (Kuzio 2002a: 141-144).

An analysis of this period reveals that even though the ruling elites involved some ethnic emphases in the organization of the state in particular periods, the state was the site for the consolidation of a civic nationalism by the formerly-communist elite cadres. This elite managed to transform the state apparatus into an instrument for the reproduction of nationalisms with a great impact over ethnic configuration in post-Soviet Ukraine: Then, this period is followed by a period of fluctuations between civic nationalisms and ethnic nationalisms, and the attempts to providing a balance between civic and ethnic nationalisms as nationalism have already injected by the ruling elite into the state apparatus, as explained in the next section.

### **The Fluctuations in the Scales of Nationalisms between Civic and Ethnic Nationalisms during the Unstable Equilibrium of Compromise, 1991-1998**

In 1991-1998, independent Ukrainian state trying to integrate with neoliberal market experienced a series of problems related to economic depression, such as declining economic growth, hyperinflation, unemployment and job losses, and lack of foreign investment because of the economic shock of the Soviet dissolution and the output of capitalist transition process along with the unwillingness of Kravchuk

administration to perform economic reforms (Kubicek 2008: 149)<sup>9</sup> (See Appendix, Table 1). In the following period, under the Kuchma administration, the Ukrainian economy concentrated on more and more privatization for capitalist integration; however, for Kuchma, privatization resulted in the problem of corruption. Individuals who had political ties within the ruling elite cadres began to exploit illegally privileges to buy shares of economic enterprises through plundering the companies and labor of the Ukrainian middle and lower classes for the sake of making profits and even taking advantage of political positions as well as economic power, while this situation created a very strong influence of a group of oligarchs. Therefore, Kuchma proposed radical economic reforms, but failed to implement the program due to strong political resistance to the application of a free market economy. The resistance was especially strong in the eastern part of Ukraine (Kubicek 2008: 151) where a separatist People's Republic of Donetsk and Lugansk composing several communist elements in their own government is dominant today. Yet, the general Ukrainian population was not convinced either: According to a survey in 1995, only 31.4% of Ukrainian population claimed that they would benefit from private property, and only 23.8% of the population thought that free prices, and thus the transition to free market economy was a good idea, while 54% of Ukrainian society regarded the state as the main responsible for providing basic human needs (Kubicek 1997: 106-107).

Within this context, particular clans both among the ruling elites and the oligarchs became a major political and economic power in the state administrations in Ukraine and they sought their particular interests so that reform agenda of Kuchma

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<sup>9</sup> In this period, Ukrainian economy was so weak and collapsed that the verb "Ukrainianize" acquired the meaning in the Russian language as "to bring to ruin" (Kubicek 2008: 149).

administration dramatically lost its weak momentum (Wilson 2000: 196), and suffered from lack of the mass support. This heavy destruction of Ukrainian economy led to a skepticism about the notion of democracy, the existing government along with the political elites, and even the experience of an independent Ukrainian state: Many surveys in the early 1990s indicated that almost 90% of Ukrainian society thought that the path which Ukraine followed after its independence was not the right way (Aslund 2001: 384).<sup>10</sup> Probably one of the most interesting survey result was that the Ukrainians were less and less enamored with the idea of an independent state: For instance, a survey in 1996 indicated that 56% of the participants thought that Ukraine ought to unify with Russia in a single state (Kuzio et al. 1999: 124). More significantly, political elites of the eastern part of Ukraine which are composed of mostly Russophiles or ethnic Russian minority groups became leaders of Ukraine's most powerful economic/oligarchic *clans*. This situation can be observed in this passage about the silence of Donbass separatism at that time which would rapidly occur on the heels of Euro-Maidan process after 2014 as follows:

The Donbas local elites have, in general, comfortably integrated within those of the independent Ukrainian state. The Donbass elites understand that they have better opportunities within Ukraine than within a Russia which does not require another decaying industrial region with more troublesome coal miners...Asked whether the Donbass would be better in Russia the Chairman of Donetsk oblast council, Vladimir Shcherban, replied: "There are no 'what ifs' in history. We have what we have. And we have to work from this reality instead of engaging in guesses. Donbass is an inalienable part of Ukraine" (Kuzio 1998: 83).

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<sup>10</sup> Although there occurred particular economic growth in the late 1990s, a survey in 1999 showed that %94 of participants were not pleasant with the current conditions of post-Soviet Ukraine, mostly because of economic reasons such as economic instability, unemployment, poor living conditions and lack of wage payments, while 27% of the population gave support for the market economy, 30% of the Ukrainian people regarded central planned economy as positive, and 25% of them thought that a combination of the market economy and central planned economy should be implemented for Ukraine (IFES 1999 Survey, available at: [www.ifes.org](http://www.ifes.org)).

The years of economic depression between 1991 and 2000 can be considered as a period of the fluctuations between civic and ethnic nationalisms in the state administration.<sup>11</sup> In this period, several political parties and allies were defending the interests of business environment together with oligarchs, such as the alliance between *Hromada* for backing the interests of big-business class in the industrial city, Dnipropetrovsk, and *Razom* reflecting the interests of the capitalists in Donbass region (Birch and Wilson 1999: 276), or the creation of the Green Party<sup>12</sup> (Kubicek 2008: 147). These political organizations and alliances, which were mostly located in the right wing of the political scale, were used by the state and the elites for sustainability of the existing economic order by instrumentalizing the discourses of Russian or Ukrainian nationalisms in order to divide the mass support for the Ukrainian left. That is to say, these kinds of political organizations managed to hide the regional political and economic interests of the capitalist elites in Ukraine through using particular nationalist discourses (Kuzio 2005c: 118).

As Melvin Hinich, Valerii Khmelko and Peter Ordeshook (2002) claim that political and economic elites, or oligarchs, had a strong desire for the continuity of the existing capitalist economic order in Ukraine, and reached a consensus on an alliance with Leonid Kuchma against the communists and socialists candidates in the 1999

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<sup>11</sup> In 1998 parliamentary elections, the Ukrainian Communist Party managed to be victorious by taking %24.65 of votes, while the mass support for the left wing parties such as the Ukrainian Socialist Party and Peasant Party Bloc, and Progressive Socialists was at the level of %40 in total (Birch 1998: 150).

<sup>12</sup> The Green Party was founded in 1990, however then, its name was relocated to the big-business environment who thought the name might appeal to voters. Thus, under the roof of the Green Party, capitalist class and oligarchs tried to provide a background for the legitimacy for the sake of the interests of the big-business environments (Birch and Wilson 1999: 278).

Ukrainian Presidential Elections.<sup>13</sup> One of the fundamental reasons behind the Kuchma's victory against the rising Ukrainian left can be considered as his multi-dimensional identity politics: First of all, Kuchma basically emphasized the protection of the independent Ukrainian statehood, and brought the discourse of "communist threat" to forefront (Nagle 2000). He embraced and benefited from Kravchuk's nationalist discourse, and gained the support of most Ukrainian nationalists. For instance, Kuzio (2005c) claims that the Ukrainian society did not vote for the corrupted and failed reform agenda of Kuchma, but they did vote for the independence of Ukraine in the 1999 Presidential Elections.

Yet, I think Ukrainian nationalists regard the communists as a threat for an independent Ukrainian state due to their close ties with Russia. Therefore, Ukrainian nationalist elites also chose alliances with Kuchma. In other words, the communists were presented as an external forces collaborating with the Russian Federation, and a threat for the independence of Ukraine by the Ukrainian nationalist elites so that the Ukrainian citizens voted in favor of anti-communism, or anti-Symonenko. It was not a support for Kuchma's corrupted and unsuccessful policies at all. On the one hand, Kuchma acquired great support from Ukrainian nationalists in Western Ukraine through an emphasis on the independence Ukrainian statehood along with a "communist threat" discourse; on the other hand, his Russian-oriented identity policy divided the votes of the Ukrainian Communist Party, and provided 59% of the votes in the eastern part of Ukraine (Klobucar, Miller and Erb 2002: 318). Within this

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<sup>13</sup> In these elections, Kuchma (36.5% of the votes) and communist candidate Symonenko (22.2% of the votes) became successful in the first round, while Kuchma managed to become the new president of Ukraine in the second round of the elections by taking 56.3% of votes against Symonenko who were able to take 36.8% of the votes.

context, Kuchma, again, managed to be the victorious in the 1999 elections against Petro Symonenko, who was blamed for being a “Soviet nationalist,” through getting benefit of the state and the media as an ideological apparatus of the state (Kubicek 2008: 147). At that point, it should be highlighted that Kuchma consolidated his political strategy upon three sphere: Firstly, an emphasis on the independent Ukrainian statehood for attracting the civic Ukrainian nationalism (Klobucar, Miller and Erb 2002: 329); secondly, a heavy anti-communist discourse to attract ethnic Ukrainian nationalism; and lastly, an emphasis on the discourse based on Russian identity to be able to get support from the ethnic Russian nationalism, although he promised to establish closer ties with European Union, the United States and NATO before the elections by rhetorically taking the fundamental foreign policy components of the Western Ukrainian nationalism as a basis (New York Times 1999).

During this period, 1991 citizenship law was extended by an amendment in 1997, and the right to acquire Ukrainian citizenship became more comprehensive by extending citizenship rights to children and descendants of those who were born in Ukrainian territories and permanent residents. With this way, in Ukraine, the definition of citizenship was made based upon the territorial affiliations, and the right to be a Ukrainian citizen was extended by including particular additional groups (Shevel 2004: 2-3). From all these circumstances, despite the victory of the Ukrainian left in the parliamentary elections of 1999 and seemingly positive 1997 amendments in the Civil Code, Leonid Kuchma, as a figure of the Ukrainian political elites pursuing an intentional indecisiveness and fluctuations between civic and ethnic nationalisms, became a determinative component for the Ukrainian political life in this period.

## **Seeking Equilibrium between Civic Nationalism and the Rising Ethnic**

### **Nationalisms: Preponderating Ethnic Nationalisms, 2001-2010**

Between the years of 2001 and 2010, particularly the process of the Orange Revolution starting in 2004, can be considered as a period of seeking an equilibrium between civic nationalism and the rising ethnic Ukrainian nationalism. In this period, several developments indicate the promotion of civic nationalism, such as amendments in the Civil Code in 2001 under Kuchma administration until 2005<sup>14</sup> and the parliamentary elections in 2002. Yet, ethnic nationalism in Ukraine began to dramatically rise after the electoral victory of the Ukrainian nationalist and liberal political parties, the electoral bloc of “Our Ukraine (*Bloc Nasha Ukraina*)” under the leadership of the former prime minister of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko by taking 23,6% of the votes and 112 seats in the Verkhovna Rada. While the Ukrainian Communist Party managed to take 20% of the votes and 65 seats, despite the electoral victory of Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine Bloc, his party could not provide the required majority and remained in the opposition (Wilson 2002). Another oppositional source was the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko (BYuT), under the leadership of Yulia Tymoshenko who was a former deputy prime minister, and who was charged with corruption under Kuchma administration (Kubicek 2008: 166). As Leicht (2004) identifies that the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko which was able to take 7.3% of the votes

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<sup>14</sup> 1991 Civil Code of Ukraine enabled that those whose one of their parents at least was born in Ukraine can have the right to acquire the Ukrainian citizenship (See pp. 69-70). During this period, 1991 citizenship law was extended by an amendment in 1997, and the right to acquire the Ukrainian citizenship became more comprehensive that in addition to this, those who were born in Ukrainian territories and permanent residents, their children and descendants have had a right to acquire the Ukrainian citizenship anymore, thanks to the amendment in 1997. With the amendments in the Civil Code of Ukraine in 2001, those whose at least one of parents and/or brothers/sisters were born in Ukrainian territories, permanent residents, have had a right to acquire the Ukrainian citizenship (Shevel 2004: 2-3).

and 22 seats in the Rada, similar to Our Ukraine Bloc, included particular ethnic nationalist and liberal/capitalist groups (Leicht 2004).

In this period, both the political blocs of Tymoshenko and Yushchenko involved many ethnic nationalist, and even fascist fractions for the sake of their interests. While the aforementioned fractions became quite influential in the state administrations, they were also expelled from the blocs or brought into the forefront since the political elites of the blocs rhetorically used the Ukrainian nationalism. For instance, in 2004, the ethnic Ukrainian nationalist and fascist political organization, All-Ukrainian Union *Svoboda*, was discarded from the Our Ukraine Bloc by Yushchenko due to racist and anti-Russian and anti-Semitic discourses of Oleh Yaroslavovych Tyahnybok, the leader of *Svoboda*. In a speech, Tyahnybok says that “there is a need for Ukraine to be finally returned to Ukrainians from the "Muscovite-Jewish mafia that runs Ukraine today” (in Kuzio 2004), and:

“They were not afraid and we should not be afraid. They took their automatic guns on their necks and went into the woods, and fought against the Muscovites, Germans, Jews and other scum who wanted to take away our Ukrainian state” (in Bohne 2015).

Yet, although Yushchenko took some pseudo measures against fascist discourses of *Svoboda* for the sake of sustaining the Western support, he and his collaborator Tymoshenko as the national liberals also collaborated with other far-right political organizations such as the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Ukrayinskykh Natsionalistiv*). At this point, I would like to remind a quotation from Antonio Gramsci’s article, Neither Fascism Nor Liberalism: Sovietism, in L’Unita about how fascisms and far-right nationalisms are mutually fed with liberalism and capitalism

that I think that it is quite relevant for Ukraine's post-socialism period in terms of the alliances and electoral blocs among fascist, nationalist and liberal political organizations:

The worker, the peasant, who for years has hated the fascism that oppresses him believes it necessary, in order to bring it down, to ally himself with the liberal bourgeoisie, to support those who in the past, when they were in power, supported and armed fascism against the workers and peasants, and who just a few months ago formed a sole bloc with fascism and shared in the responsibility for its crimes. And this is how the question of the liquidation of fascism is posed? No! The liquidation of fascism must be the liquidation of the bourgeoisie that created it...There is no possibility for the liquidation of fascism on the plain of parliamentary intrigues, only a compromise that leaves the bourgeoisie at the lead along with armed fascism at its service. (Gramsci 1924).

Political leaders of the Orange Revolution led by Yushchenko and Tymoshenko put forward themselves as the vanguard of this "revolutionary" alteration that would supposedly abolish Ukraine of corruption, the futility of the existing government, and dependence on the Russian Federation, while they would implement comprehensive economic reforms, encouraging a Ukrainian national and cultural awakening, and aspire after Ukraine's membership for the European Union and NATO (Magocsi 1996: 733). Yet, with the Orange Revolution, in the presidential elections at the end of the year 2004, Yushchenko's victory paved the way for coming to the fore of the Ukrainian ethnic nationalism in the state administration, and although Yushchenko somewhat tried to sever the ties with extremists fractions of these nationalisms, far-right nationalist and fascist political organizations began to be drawn together with Tymoshenko who ambitiously embraced the ethnic Ukrainian nationalism, particularly after the elections in 2006. Tymoshenko's prime ministry in

2007 under Yushchenko's presidency led to a meteoric rise of the Ukrainian ethnic nationalism in the state administration.

As can be seen, in the period of 2001 and 2010, the influence of Ukrainian nationalism in the state administrations has undergone particular fluctuations and changes in particular periods: As a result of tough competition between civic and ethnic nationalisms, ethnic Ukrainian nationalism burst into sight through the collaborations of nationalist and liberal Ukrainian political elite, particularly Yushchenko and Tymoshenko along with the 2004 Orange Revolution. All this framework in triangle relationship between the Ukrainian state, elite and the class alliances and blocs can be evaluated within the context of differential behavior of the state aiming to balance between two different directions of nationalism. The first direction includes a certain kind of "separation" between the economic and the political levels, and between the "relations of production-consumption-circulation" and the state apparatus which is the descriptive of the capitalist mode of production. Second direction provides the formation of classes and the class struggles in the capitalist mode of production and social formations. At this point, such a behavior of the state apparatus changing independently from the dominant classes with the establishment of power blocs among various fractions of the bourgeoisie (as in the case of Ukraine: electoral blocs and alliances between liberals and fascist/ultra-nationalist groups) are attributed to the capitalist state a certain role as political organizer and unifier, and as a component for the creation of the "unstable equilibrium of compromises" in nationalism understandings of the state administrations.

## **The Marginalization through Identity Politics:**

### **A Focus on Law and Language Policies**

The independent Ukrainian state, in the early post-Soviet period, did not experience sharp divisions between ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Russians, mostly because of the Soviet identity which led to a blurring<sup>15</sup> the divisions among the society throughout the ethnic and cultural lines as well as the existence of a remarkable amount of Russophones population as a titular ethnic group in Ukraine. Thanks to this situation, it can be said that sharp ethnic, cultural and even linguistic divisions between ethnic Ukrainians and Russians in Ukraine remained relatively weak, at least in the urban regions (Wolczuk 2000: 673)<sup>16</sup>. The linguistic distribution of residents of Ukraine in 2009, Map 3 in Appendix.

As Kataryna Wolczuk (2000) indicates that the existence of particular multi-identity, or hybrid communities weakening the ethnic boundaries between ethnic Ukrainianhood and Russianhood can be interpreted as a potential activator of a nation-building process which is not based on an ethnic identity. Yet, having multi-identities

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<sup>15</sup> One of the most distinctive examples for this immanence can be considered as *the Surzhyk* which is a composite language between Ukrainian and Russian languages. *The Surzhyk* language became a target of the Ukrainian nationalism which aims to put the ethnic Ukrainians and Russians into sharp relief through the differences between the Ukrainian and Russian languages (Bernsand 2001: 40), while some of them even think that the Ukrainian nationalists must struggle with this “disease” for the Ukrainian language in force, because they believed that the aforementioned language assimilate the Ukrainian language in countenance of the Russian language (Krouglov 2002: 228). For more details about *the Surzhyk* language, see. Bernsand, N. (2002) ‘Surzhyk and National Identity in Ukrainian Nationalist Language Ideology’, *Berliner Osteuropa Info-Freie Universitat Berlin*, No. 17, pp. 38-47.; Krouglov, A. (2002) ‘War and Peace-Ukrainian and Russian in Ukraine’, *Journal of Language and Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002, pp. 221-239.

<sup>16</sup> For instance, Shulman (2006) describes that in the early 1990s, daily use of Russian language almost caught up with the use of Ukrainian language. The reason behind this situation was that a significant part of ethnic Ukrainians living in particularly the Northern and Eastern parts of Ukraine preferred to use the Russian language. For more details. Shulman, S. (2006) ‘Cultural Comparisons and Their Consequences for Nationhood in Ukraine’, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2, June 2006, pp. 250.

or the hybridity of these communities conversely became a target of the ethnic nationalisms in post-Soviet Ukraine. The aforementioned communities were called for ethnic re-identification and return to the “self”; and therefore they were synchronously marginalized the Ukrainian nationalist elites and the Ukrainian state (Wolczuk 2000: 674-675). That is to say, in post-Soviet Ukraine, there are a considerable amount of hybrid, or multi-identical communities- such as the Russophone Ukrainians which led to a fuzziness of ethnic dividedness until the civil war period of 2014.

This blur in ethnic divisions of Ukraine did not erode ethnic divisions of the Ukrainian society; since ethnic Ukrainian nationalist elites referred to such hybrid communities as “Russophone Ukrainians” and therefore sparked off new social, cultural and national divisions to marginalize them. Ethnic Ukrainian nationalism at the state level attempted to redefine the aforementioned marginalized communities in favor of the ethnic Ukrainian identity. During this process, the presence of a remarkable amount of the Russophone Ukrainian population became a significant obstruction in front of the state administrations and these populations became the targets of ethnic nationalists’ nationalizing policies with the anxiety of a possible ethnic conflict and territorial secession (Riabchouk 1998: 83-94). Yet until the process of Euro-Maidan protests in 2013 which the country went on the verge of an ongoing civil war, while the Crimea was annexed by Russia through a referendum, and the people living in the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine decided to secede from the central Ukrainian government. Thus, one of the major fears of the political elites, who try to turn the scale in favor of the ethnic Ukrainian nationalisms against the civic nationalism, destructively took place in post-Soviet Ukraine.

As can be seen throughout the Chapter II, the independent Ukrainian state in the post-Soviet era defined the *nation* with particular ethno-cultural components as distinct from the concept of citizenship in different periods of time, conforming to Brubaker's conceptualization of nationalizing states. The state administration attempted to benefit from state power for the sake of bringing political and economic motivations of core-titular ethnic group into forefront. Brubaker clearly indicates this legitimization exertions of "nationalizing" the titular ethnic group in this passage as follows:

Nationalizing nationalisms involve claims made in the name of a "core nation" or nationality, defined in ethno-cultural terms, and sharply distinguished from the citizenry as a whole. The core nation is understood as the legitimate "owner" of the state, which is conceived as the state *of* and *for* the core nation. Despite having "its own" state, however, the core nation is conceived as being in a weak cultural, economic, or demographic position within the state. This weak position – seen as a legacy of discrimination against the nation before it attained independence – is held to justify the 'remedial' or "compensatory" project of using state power to promote the specific (and previously inadequately served) interests of the core nation (Brubaker 1996: 5).

With this way, the state policies implemented by the elite cadres in the state could shape particular identity values; such as ethnic and national identities, or language were instrumentalized mostly in favor of the political and economic interests of the core nation. However, the level of this nationalizing policies shows particular periodic fluctuations and alterations within the Ukrainian state administrations.

### **The 1996 Constitution's Impact on National and Ethnic Identities**

The impact of the state and the elite cadres within the framework of law-making on ethnic and national identities can be best seen in the constitutional structures of the countries including particularly minority rights and language policies.

In this sense, the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine and language policies of the Ukrainian state administrations have a crucial role to understand the extent of “nationalizing” over national and ethnic identities.

In the preamble of the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine, the concepts of “Ukrainian people” and the “Ukrainian nation” are referred to as two fundamental identity categories<sup>17</sup>. The ruling elites strived for presenting the concepts of the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian nation as regardless of an ethnic context since these concepts can be used interchangeably in the Ukrainian language. For instance, the concept of the “Ukrainian people,” which may also describe the ethnic Ukrainians according to its format and place of use in the Ukrainian language, is used for indicating the identity category being directly associated with the state. This concept is used in the preamble of the Constitution 1996 as “the Ukrainian nation” (*Ukrainskyi narod*) consisted of “citizens of Ukraine of all nationalities” to be able to highlight its usage regardless of its ethnic context (Wolczuk 2000: 679). Wolczuk (2000) specifies precisely the Ukrainian state and the elite’s usage of the aforementioned concepts as follows:

“Ukrainian people” as the bearers of sovereignty, something that was demanded by the national democrats. The Ukrainian constitution adopted in June 1996 established an implicit hierarchy of constituent communities forming the “people”: (1) the Ukrainian nation (*Ukrainskyi narod*) composed of “citizens of Ukraine of all nationalities”; (2) the Ukrainian ethnic nation (*natsiia*); (3) indigenous people (*korinni natsii*), that is, ethnic groups with no homelands outside Ukraine, and thus with a special affiliation to Ukrainian territory; (4) national minorities (*natsionalni menshyny*), that is ethnic groups with homelands outside Ukraine, which were granted collective rights to cultural autonomy. (Wolczuk 2000: 679).

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<sup>17</sup> Constitution of Ukraine, Preamble, *Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University* available at: <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/quotes/constitution-of-ukraine-preamble>, and <http://www.infoukes.com/history/constitution/index-en.html#r0>

Yet, Stephen Shulman (2005) claims that the most conspicuous emphasis on ethnic Ukrainian nationalism in the 1996 Constitution can be seen in the Article 11 of the Constitution. This article grants a special role to the titular ethnic group as follows: “The State promotes the consolidation and development of the [Ethnic] Ukrainian nation, of its historical consciousness, traditions, and culture”, and “...promote development of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity of all indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine.” It remains vague that ethnic Russians are not specifically referred in the decree as a clear denial of the Eastern Slavic national identity (Shulman 2005: 38). Even so, the 1996 Constitution followed a policy which tried to redefine the concepts of “people” and “nation” on the basis of a civic or territorial understanding of nationalism, while it presents the ethnic identities as a synonym of “nation.” This situation changed with the 2014 amendments in the Constitution which initiated many violations of rights of the ethnic Russian minority living in Ukraine.

The 1996 Constitution and its amendments showed that the law-making elite cadres tried to ascribe an official meaning to the concept of *nation*, when the concept of nation has attributed different and contextually different meanings for the contexts regarding civic (citizenship) and ethnic based identities. In the pre-independence period elite-induced state nationalism was configuring not only the titular nation but also non-titular ethnic groups. The state in Ukraine followed particular re-ethnicizing policies supporting the non-Russian ethnic groups to decompose the Russophones who are seen as remnants of colonizers by the Ukrainian nationalists (Holm-Hansen 1999: 167). For instance, the Declaration of Rights of Nationalities in 1991, the 1992 Law

on National Minorities in Ukraine and the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine show the legal parts of re-ethnicizing policies of the independent Ukrainian state (Cserniczko 2005: 98).

The Declaration in 1991 forbids the discrimination based on the nationality (Cserniczko 2005: 98), while it guarantees equal economic, political, cultural and social rights for all individuals and national minorities living in Ukraine at the Article 1 (Bugajski 2000: 170). The Article 2 of the Declaration enacts that the state is responsible for the providing necessary conditions for the development of languages and cultures of the national minorities (Cserniczko 2005: 98) including allow[ing] for the language of any national minority group which was compactly settled in an administrative-territorial unit to function alongside the state language (Bugajski 2000: 170). This responsibility of the state as an assurance of national and cultural development of all nationalities in Ukraine provided a guarantee for the free use of Russian language with the intent of consolidation of inter-ethnic relations at that time (Lakiza-Sachuk 1998: 39). Depending on this, the Article 3 of the 1992 Nationality Law of Ukraine in 1991 enables the formation of a “national minority” definition: “Those citizens of Ukraine who are not of Ukrainian nationality and declare their national identity belong to national minorities.” The article 11 of the 1996 Constitution emphasizes the constitutional responsibility of the state regarding freely choosing or re-establishing their nationality of the Ukrainian citizens (Cserniczko 2005: 98) by saying:

The state promotes the consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, of its historical consciousness, traditions and culture, and also the development

of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of all indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine.<sup>18</sup>

All these legal developments indicate that the Ukrainian state intended to weaken the domination of ethnic Russian culture and language, by recognizing Russophones as a national minority whose rights were guaranteed by the state. In this way, Ukrainian state also prevented the potential reactions from the international community about the minority rights.

Furthermore, the state entitled the right to self-government for non-Russian minorities, such as Romanian and Hungarian minorities, and the largely Russified Jews, Bulgarians and the Poles. These groups were categorized as national minority by these kinds of state policies so that they could revive their own ethnic consciousness. Yet, Buromensky determines that the law included neither a description of such a national or cultural autonomy, nor the procedure and conditions of its existence (Buromensky 1994: 38). For instance, the Ukrainian state opposed to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1992<sup>19</sup> because of the existing Russian question rather than the concerns or hostilities over supporting non-

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<sup>18</sup> In addition to this, the Article 53 of the Constitution entitles the right for the education in the mother language for the national minorities. See. 1996 Constitution of Ukraine, Adopted at the Fifth Session of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on 28 June 1996, available at: <http://www.infoukes.com/history/constitution/index-en.html#r0>

<sup>19</sup> Ukraine signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2005: “Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 19 September 2005. Ukraine declares that the provisions of the Charter shall apply to the languages of the following ethnic minorities of Ukraine: Byelorussian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Greek, Jewish, Crimean Tatar, Moldavian, German, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Slovak and Hungarian.” (Council of Europe, Reservations and Declarations for Treaty No.148 - European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages), Declarations in force as of today Status as of 23/04/2016, available at: <http://www.coe.int/tr/web/conventions/search-on-treaties/-/conventions/treaty/148/declarations>

Russian minority languages. Therefore, it can obviously be deduced that the reactions against the ethnic identity-oriented politics of the Ukrainian state stemmed from the ethnic Russian population rather than non-Russian minorities living in Ukraine (Kuzio 2005a: 230).

The reaction of Russian populations to these policies would make sense in the light of Fournier's arguments. Fournier claims that the resistance of the Russian population in Ukraine was against the labelling policies of the Ukrainian state as "ethnic group" and "national minority"; because such labelling "minority" would lead to a differentiation from the non-Russian Russophones living in Ukraine. Fournier interprets this case that the Russian population prefers not to be the minority, but to maintain the 'empire-generated' hybridity (Fournier 2002: 415): Thus, while it resisted labelling as a national minority and ethnic category by the Ukrainian state, the Russian population living in Ukraine demanded to be identified as part of a Russian ethno-linguistic community such as compatriots (Kuzio 2002b: 232). This demand in the identification of the Russian population necessarily takes us to the language policies in regards to the impact of the Ukrainian state and the ruling elites on re-ethnicizing and nationalizing policies.

## Language Policy

### As an Instrument for the Re-Ethnicizing and Nationalizing Trajectory

The period between the end of the Second World War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 is denoted as “asymmetrical bilingualism”<sup>20</sup> which means that while the Russians mostly remained as monolingual, the non-Russophone populations must have been bilingual to be able to gain a place at any level of the system (Coulby 1997: 127-128). In the period of independence, Ukrainian ruling elites in the state administrations tried to use the state apparatus for removing this “asymmetrical bilingualism” as a reminder of Soviet heritage. The state administrations of Ukraine mostly followed language policies to give the Ukrainian language prominence as the language of titular/core nation by putting the Russian language on back burner and by promoting non-Russian minority languages (Stepanenko 2003: 121-122) (See Appendix, Chart 1).

In the pre-independence period of Ukraine, the language of titular ethnic group was declared as the sole official language with the 1989 Law on the Languages in the Ukrainian SSR (Stepanenko 2003: 116). In this way, the dominant position of the Russian language tried to be balanced in favor of the Ukrainian language (Fournier 2002: 420-421). However, the Ukrainian elites within UkSSR were quite late to declare Ukrainian as the sole official language within the context of the Law of Language compared to other Soviet republics seeking independence. This situation is considered as “a defensive reaction of the communist old guard, which could no

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<sup>20</sup> For more details on *asymmetrical bilingualism*, see. Ozolins, U. (2003) ‘The Impact of European Accession upon Language Policy in the Baltic States’, *Language Policy*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2003, pp. 218.

longer justify the status quo, since eight Soviet republics had enacted language laws earlier in that fateful year” (Arel 1995: 599).

The 1989 Law on the Languages in the Ukrainian SSR, on the one hand, transformed the Ukrainian language into the sole official language as well as the primary language of education; on the other hand, the Russian language was described as “the language of inter-ethnic communication” in Article 4 of the 1989 Law (Bowring 2009: 81)<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, Article 25 of the Law<sup>22</sup> replicates Khrushchev’s decree in 1958 on the language of education which guaranteed the right to freely choose the language of education (Janmaat 1999: 498), as the state is the responsible for being a financial supporter of all citizens including not only the Ukrainian-language schools, but also other educational institutions instructed in Russian and other minority languages (Bowring 2009: 83). Therefore, even if the state declared Ukrainian as the sole official language, the dominant position of the Russian language in social sphere was not legal confronted in the early period of the Ukrainian state. In this period, although the Russian language in primary education did not face a critical challenge,

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<sup>21</sup> According to Article 4 of the 1989 Law on the Languages in the Ukrainian SSR: “In the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Ukrainian, Russian and other languages shall be the interethnic communication languages. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic shall provide for the free use of the Russian language as the interethnic communication language of people of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.” For more details, see. Bowring, B. (2009) ‘Language Policy in Ukraine: International standards and obligations, and Ukrainian law and legislation’ in Juliane Besters-Dilger (ed.) *Language Policy and Language Situation in Ukraine: Analysis and Recommendations* (Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang GmbH), pp. 57-100. See also, ‘Law of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic on Languages in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic’, *Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady Ukrayiny (VVR)*, 1989, Vol. 45, pp. 631, available at: [http://www.minelres.lv/NationalLegislation/Ukraine/Ukraine\\_Language\\_English.htm](http://www.minelres.lv/NationalLegislation/Ukraine/Ukraine_Language_English.htm)

<sup>22</sup> According to Article 25 of the the 1989 Law on the Languages in the Ukrainian SSR, “The free choice of the language of education shall be an inalienable right of citizens of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic shall guarantee the right of each child to upbringing and education in the national language. This right is protected by the establishment of a network of pre-school establishments and schools with upbringing and teaching in the Ukrainian and other national languages.”

but its use in the higher education was challenged. According to Article 28 of the 1989 Law on the Languages in the Ukrainian SSR on “Language of Education in Vocational Schools, Specialised Colleges and Higher-Education Institutions,” the language of instruction at the higher education institutions in Ukraine is Ukrainian (See Appendix, Table 2-3). This Article implies that a language of national minority is only allowed to be a language of higher education in a region in which the majority of the population is formed by the relevant minority group<sup>23</sup>. Jan German Janmaat (1999) claims that because the only region where the ethnic Russians compose the majority of the population is the Crimean Peninsula, the language of a national minority remained limited to only this region, while a remarkable amount of the ethnic Russian population, or Russophones in the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine could not take advantage of this right.<sup>24</sup>

Although 1989 Law on Languages in the Ukrainian SSR set sight on the establishment of an equilibrium between the Ukrainian language and the other minority languages including Russian, many regulations in the Law arranged to favor

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<sup>23</sup> Article 28 acts that “In the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the educational and upbringing work in vocational schools, specialised colleges and higher-education institutions shall be conducted in Ukrainian; in cases covered by parts two and three of Article 3 hereof, it shall be conducted also in the national language of the majority of the population together with the Ukrainian language...Groups educated in the relevant national language may be set up for training the national staff in such institutions...In such institutions, the Russian-language groups may be set up for citizens of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, who studied their national language in the general education schools together with the Ukrainian and Russian languages, for citizens of other union republics and foreign citizens, as well as in cases specified by the relevant state authorities. The same state authorities shall specify the educational institutions with the Russian language of education...In all groups with the Russian language of education and non-Ukrainian-language educational institutions regardless of their subordination, the study of the Ukrainian language shall be ensured.” (‘Law of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic on Languages in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic’, Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady Ukrayiny (VVR), 1989, Vol. 45, pp. 631, available at: [http://www.minelres.lv/NationalLegislation/Ukraine/Ukraine\\_Language\\_English.htm](http://www.minelres.lv/NationalLegislation/Ukraine/Ukraine_Language_English.htm))

<sup>24</sup> As a necessity of this law, the Ukrainian state turned the language of higher education in the Southern and Eastern Ukraine, where a substantial amount of the ethnic Russians and Russophones, into the Ukrainian language (Janmaat 2008: 13).

the Ukrainian language and to suppress the Russian language. During this period, as Wilson (1996) writes, most of the nationalist elites have argued that the context of the education in Ukraine should effectively contribute to the interests and motivations of the Ukrainian state and the revival and cultivation of its national spirit (Wilson 1996: 157). In accordance with this purpose, language policies and educational/ideological institutions of the state such as the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine have an important place in the implementation of nation-building process. For instance, Anatolii Pohribnyi, deputy education minister in 1992-1994, sought to create an ethnolinguistic educational system, and the education in the Ukrainian language became compulsory for the ethnic Ukrainians who would start to the primary education (Janmaat 2008: 7). All these demeanors of the Ukrainian state can be considered as a restraining attempt of the Russian language through particular language and educational policies, and controlling the Russophony within the borders of ethnic Russianity in Ukraine for the sake of the reproduction of the Ukrainian language, and by extension Ukrainian national identity by the way of setting Russian as a minority language (Janmaat 2008: 7). In a similar manner to the 1989 Law, the state declared Ukrainian as the sole official language in the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine, and according to the Article 10, the state was defined as the responsible for “the comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of social life throughout the entire territory of Ukraine,” while the same article enacts that “In Ukraine, the free development, use and protection of Russian, and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine, is guaranteed,” and specifically emphasizes on the Russian language<sup>25</sup>. Yet, although this special emphasis on it at the constitutional level, the

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<sup>25</sup> ‘Ukraine’s Constitution of 1996 with Amendments through 2004’, *Constitute Project*, (Oxford University Press), p. 4, available at: [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Ukraine\\_2004.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Ukraine_2004.pdf)

Russian language was categorized as a minority language (Stepanenko 2003: 117) contradictory to the demands of the ethnic Russian population living in Ukraine<sup>26</sup>.

In 1999, under the prime ministry of Yushchenko and the presidency of Kuchma, particular reforms on press, media and even cinema sectors (Labunka 2008) as well as executive and legislative branches of the state apparatus regarding the emphasis on the Ukrainian language and national identity have been taken place. The ruling elites of the period founded the Ukrainian State Committee for Information Policy and Television and Radio Broadcasting, *Derzhkominform*, led by leading Rukh member and the Ukrainian nationalist Ivan Drach (Kuzio 2001b). In the year of 2000, the State Committee for Information Policy and the State Committee for TV and Radio were amalgamated into *the Derzhkominform*, and all-Ukrainian broadcasts only in Ukrainian was supported by *the Nastrada* which is the National Council for TV and Radio (Kuzio 2000). In 2001, the Ukrainian state and the ruling elites made particular regulations regarding tax cuts and subsidies for the publishing books in Ukrainian language, while a decree was introduced that all advertisements in televisions, radio and billboards shall be in Ukrainian language. Furthermore, in 2004 *the Nastrada* declared that all national and interregional broadcasts shall be in Ukrainian. This policy of *Nastrada* implies that “the broadcasting is to be allowed in other languages only at the regional and local levels where ethnic minorities are concentrated, but even here at least half of the program content must be in Ukrainian” (Shulman 2005: 40). After extensive criticisms against the reforms of Yushchenko and Kuchma, *Natsrada*

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<sup>26</sup> In 1999, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine declared that the use of Ukrainian as the official state language in all territories of Ukraine at the governmental and local administrative levels is obligatory, although Russian and other national minority languages could be also used along with the Ukrainian languages within the limits of the law (Stepanenko 2003: 117-118).

decided to delay the implementation of the decree until 2005. The Kuchma and Yushchenko government signed the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages<sup>27</sup> which at the least provides the ethnic Russians and Russophones an opportunity for the protection of their languages at state level, and encouraged Russophones to challenge the Ukrainization policies of the state via human rights rhetoric (Shulman 2005: 40).

The Ukrainization policies of the state and the ruling elites sparked vast scale reactions particularly by the ethnic Russians and Russophones. The Party of Regions under the leadership of Viktor Yanukovich insisted that the Russian language, in Ukraine, should be at an equal level with Ukrainian (UNIAN Information Agency 2009), and petitioned for granting official language status to Russian (Mite 2006). Within this context, Yanukovich's party presented a law draft about Russian as "the official language," or "the second state language," but the law was not passed in parliament despite the support of the communists (Moser 2014: 105-106). Thus the existing constitutional structure on the language policies of the Ukrainian state

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<sup>27</sup> Although its rejection of the charter in 1992, the reason behind the Ukraine's acceptance of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages later on may be considered as the 1996 Constitution. With the Constitution, Ukraine has already deliver the commitments of the Charter with regard to Russian and education language, therefore it would not be brought in new responsibilities for the Ukrainian state. According to Article 8 of the Charter: "With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State: i) to make available pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or ii) to make available a substantial part of pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or iii) to apply one of the measures provided for under i and ii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient; or iv) if the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of pre-school education, to favour and/or encourage the application of the measures referred to under i to iii above..." (See. 'European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages', *European Treaty Series- No. 148*, Strasbourg, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1992).

continued to remain in force within the context of the 1989 Law on the Languages and the 1996 Constitution.

Overall when the impact of the state and the elite cadres on ethnolinguistic policies in education, mass media, and all spheres of social life were taken into account, the legal framework was promoting ethnic nationalism. In this sense, particular re-ethnicizing and nationalizing policies and the constitution were instrumentalized for promoting the Ukrainian language as the language of core nation and for weakening Russian language. In this period, the Ukrainian state's ruling elites purposed weakening the domination of ethnic Russian culture and language by trying to generate the consent of the Russophones to acknowledge their national-ethnic minority status in return of guaranteeing their national and cultural rights by the state. In this way, the state also prevented the potential reactions from the international community about the minority rights.

### **The Process of Capitalist Restoration and the Rise of the Oligarchs as the Political and Economic Elites in Power**

One of the biggest challenge experienced by the independent Ukrainian state was the adoption and integration with market capitalism. It was a sharp transition to the command economy, even though many scholars claim that the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union had been introduced before the Union Republics' declarations for the independencies in 1991, and even in the period of pre-Gorbachev reforms (E.g. Bland 1995; Keeran and Kenny 2010). This restoration involved the integration of the Ukraine's economy with the principles of neoliberal market economy which was mostly commanded by the US and the European Union (Magocsi

1996: 736). Ukraine had a command planning economic system before its independence, which basically meant the absence of private property, and the state control on economic affairs and the means of production (Kubicek 2008: 12). Then, the transition to capitalism resulted in prevalence of economic dependence (see Table 6) to the former centre of the Soviet Union, i.e. Russia (Ericson 1991: 12)<sup>28</sup>. This economic dependency to the centre informed the rising nationalisms in the post-Soviet Ukraine that the state administrations in Ukraine could not completely sever all ties with the centre, and had to periodically weaken particular nationalist attempts against the Russian dependency of the Ukrainian state (Flassbeck, Hoffman and Lindler 1994: 355).

The literature on post-Soviet republics recognizes the role of states' economic policies in promoting the titular ethnic identity (see Smith, Law and Wilson 1998). Thanks to economic and employment policies, a propertied class, mostly composed of the members of titular ethnic groups was created by the Ukrainian state. The emergence of a local elites, as a result of this process, aimed to guarantee the national revival and cultural dominancy in the independent republics. Yet, as it was mentioned in previous sections of the research, in the early period of the independent Ukrainian state, ethnic nationalist policies of the state apparatus relatively remain weak due to the lack of support particularly from the southern and eastern oblasts of Ukraine where an intense ethnic Russian population live (Smith and Wilson 1997: 854-856). In this

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<sup>28</sup> The centralized administration during the Soviet period determined both the process of production and redistribution in economy. That is to say, interregional economic activities within the Soviet Union were realized under the supervision of the center which was the Russian Federation, while this situation created a mutual interdependency among the Union Republics. (See. Seliverstov, V. (1991) 'Inter-republican Economic Interactions in the Soviet Union' in Alastair McAuley (ed.) *Soviet Federalism, Nationalism and Economic Decentralisation* (Leicester and London, Leicester University Press, pp. 111-127.

sense, it should be said that although the Ukrainian state implemented particular economic policies for the sake of nationalization of the elites by using the state apparatus as an instrument; yet its attempt to promote the economic interests of the titular ethnic group remained relatively limited in this period (Stepanenko 2003: 121-124).

The state was also influential on the regionalization of the ethnic groups through regional economic policies in Ukraine (Jackson 1998; Nemyria 1999; Kubicek 2000; Wolczuk 2003; Barrington and Herron 2004). While during the presidency of Kuchma, government expenditures and state investments were increased in the ethnic Russian populated Eastern Ukraine in 1994, yet to be withdrawn in the 1999 elections. The region was mostly subvented the Communist Party of Ukraine, and collaborated with the Ukrainian nationalists and liberals in the Western Ukraine for the sake of national interests and acceleration of market economy in Ukraine (Birch 2002). For instance, the state share in total transfers in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, where has a majority of Russians and supported the communists in 1999 elections, was shortened from 3.4 percent in 1995 to 2.5 percent in 1999, and to 0.4 percent by the year of 2000. Furthermore, while the state share in total transfers in Donetsk oblast, where has an intense Russian population, was shortened from 6.7 percent in 1995 to 0.1 percent in 1998, and was shortened from to 4.6 percent by the year of 1996, and 2.9 percent in 2000. In Table 4, it can be also seen how governmental support for particular oblasts of the Western Ukraine increased between 1995-2000 which indicates the impact of the state apparatus on the ethnic identities within the context of regional economic policies, indeed (e.g. see Lvov) (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Trade and European Integration 2002: 26) (See Appendix, Table 4).

Meanwhile, the Western Ukraine, which does not have any heavy industrial activities, began to be supported by the governmental subsidies, even though there was decreasing government support for other heavy industrial regions in the Eastern oblasts of Ukraine. In addition to these, Western regions of Ukraine received EU funds after the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement during the years of 2000s for regional development (Lendel 2002). Therefore, ethnic Russian populated regions of Ukraine did not receive a significant benefit from the harmonization process of the European Union, while they had lost the existing limited governmental subsidies. This situation led to rise particular discontents among the Russian minority living in Donbass region of Ukraine, and the desire of the local elites of Donbass began to cry out against the government for the sake of economic autonomy (Kubicek 2000: 276).

As it was mentioned before, an economic elite within the Soviet *nomenklatura* had started to emerge as a result of Gorbachev's *perestroika* in the 1980s. According to Rosaria Puglitsi (2003), the economic elite was created by four major channels: The economic elites accumulated the wealth through the trade of metals and chemicals purchased at state-regulated prices through the trade of imported products such as the Russian oil and gas at subsidized prizes and export of foreign exchange; via subsidized credits and via the budget subsidies, mainly intensified in the agricultural sector, and the coal and the gas industries (Puglitsi 2003: 104). Thus, a growing class of the economic elites in the late period of the Soviet Union managed to hold the reins of political power along with the strong potential to control economic affairs of the state apparatus, and became a dominant determinant in the Ukrainian politics and economy (Aslund 2005: 10), and gained more and more power thanks to the policies of the Ukrainian state. That is to say, economic policies of post-Soviet Ukrainian state along

with the ruling elites provided a strong basis for the rising of the oligarchs as an economic and political elite power which had already begun to develop gradually within the Soviet *nomenklatura* after the *perestroika*.

When the Ukrainian oligarchic structure is analyzed, it can be seen that the oligarchs in Ukraine do not create a unified organization, but strongly organize themselves within particular political organizations serving in the interest of the capital especially during the coalition of Yushchenko and Tymoshenko, i.e. *Our Ukraine*, which was the “hero” of the Orange Revolution, and the Party of Regions under the leadership of Yanukovich (Kuzio 2008). Thus, in the post-Soviet period, the reconstruction of the Ukrainian economy was formed depending on the political and economic interests of the oligarchs, and they became an unalienable part of the corrupted Ukrainian political life. However, the dominance of the oligarchs in political and economic mechanisms of Ukraine paradoxically created an obstruction for an anti-Russian nationalist agenda when the Ukrainian state administrations were trying to adopt particular ethnic Ukrainian nationalist policies.

This paradoxical obstruction is mostly derived from the economic dependence of Ukraine to the centre, Russia, as well as the economic interests of the oligarchs within the framework of the relations with Russia<sup>29</sup> regardless of ethnic identity until 2014. Until 2014, the state administrations in Ukraine preferred having good relations due to dependency to the centre; yet, after the Orange Revolution, under the presidency of Yushchenko, Ukraine followed a series of serious integration policies with the West

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<sup>29</sup> For the economic indicators and charts about the import-export data, trade balances and destinations of Ukraine until 2013, see. *The Observatory of Economic Complexity* by Alexander Simoes, available at: <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/ukr/>

and pursued a path for a fully adapting to neoliberal economic system. For instance, Ukraine's membership to World Trade Organization in 2008 increased the trade between Ukraine and the West and weakened the economic dependence on Russia (Woehrel 2008: 6-7), and also removed economic obstructions for the consolidation of an ethnic Ukrainian nationalism within the state (See Appendix 5, 6).

In the final analysis, this chapter analyzed the role of the state and the new form of the ruling elites in the era of the Soviet dissolution and the period of the Ukrainian independence by focusing on the transition to capitalism and its reconsolidation attempts by the state administrations over the Ukrainian identity and nationalism in the new (dis)order. The developments in the post-Soviet Ukraine was marked by the restoration of capitalism, and the struggles between civic and ethnic nationalisms under the dominancy of the state and the elites. As *perestroika* under Gorbachev took the first steps to flame the transition to capitalism and the integration to world economy, this process was guided by ex-communist, new nationalist-liberal elites. In this sense, the policy of *perestroika* had an important effect in the intensification of nationalisms, and nationalist movements and elites in the Soviet Ukraine which demanded for economic independence by indicating economic problems as a reason. *Glasnost* and *demokratizatsiya* also contributed to the process by promoting the ethno-identical expressions among the Soviet society which resulted in the strengthening of nationalist organizations, and which stirred up the transformation of “demands for economic independence” into “demands for independent state.”

After independence, the Ukrainian ruling elites of the new and ancient regimes gave consent for sharing the political stage, and while the elites of the former Soviet

regime maintained to their existence within the new system, neoliberal order in the independent Ukrainian state formed its own elites to be able to create an integrity and balance with the elite remnants of the ancient regime. In this period, although the concentrations on nationalisms at the state level underwent periodic fluctuations between civic and ethnic nationalisms, ethnic Ukrainian nationalism was installed in the state by the 2000s thanks to the political elites and reforms on constitutional structure. Specifically, the Law of the Languages and the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine provided a basis for the Ukrainian state to implement particular re-ethnicizing and nationalizing policies through the ideological tools of the state apparatus such as education, mass media and ethnolinguistic policies. The legal structure of the Ukrainian state was tried to be instrumentalized by the Ukrainian ruling elites for the revival of the Ukrainian language as the language of core nation through receding Russian language into background. Finally, it can be said that the post-Soviet Ukrainian state, concordantly to the “nationalizing state” notion of Brubaker, identified the nation in terms of particular ethno-cultural elements, and nationalist ideologies in power attempted to benefit from the state apparatus to promote the political, cultural and economic motivations of the core-titular ethnic group at the cost of a violent civil war in the southern and eastern parts of the country by the year of 2014.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THE ROLE OF THE UKRAINIAN STATE AND POLITICAL ELITES IN THE NEW PHASE OF POST-SOVIET UKRAINIAN NATIONALISM: EURO-MAIDAN AND THE CIVIL WAR IN UKRAINE**

Throughout Chapter II, I scrutinized the extent and intensity of the Ukrainian state's nationalizing and re-ethnicizing policies which show particular fluctuations between the elements of ethnic and civic nationalisms in harmony with the attitudes of the elite cadres dominated in the state administrations. However, as I show in this chapter, with the 2013-2014 Euro-Maidan protests against Yanukovich and the civil war right after the aforementioned revolt, the Ukrainian state and the political elites entered into a new, but irremediable, phase in the post-Soviet Ukrainian nationalism towards the direction of the establishment of an ethnically pure Ukrainian state. This new nationalizing nationalism is visible in the juridical amendments in language policies, media, minority rights and in rewriting the history and cultural context of Ukraine as well as in explicit collaboration with fascist and Neo-Nazi political organizations at the governmental level. Such an intensified and violent “nationalizing” process on the heels of Euro-Maidan paved the way for the break-up

of Ukraine through the exacerbation of separatist movements of Russian-speaking minorities living in Crimea and Novorossiia.

No matter how the nationalizing state and the homeland nationalism have strong ties, the triadic relations do not result in conflicting environment in all cases. For instance, such a conflictual situation cannot be seen in Estonia at least for now, even if the rights of ethnic Russian minority have been under attack of a nationalizing state since 1991. In this respect, Ukraine has become a distinctive example for the emergence of an environment of conflict.

The increasing conflicts in contemporary international system derived from a unitary nation-state perception based on the majoritarian democracy, and relying on capitalism have led to particular problems about minorities, and make the representation of different identities especially among the multi-ethnic societies important (Sisk 1996; Guelke 2004; Janda, Berry and Goldman 2008; Maleska 2013). Within this context, as Brubaker (1996) identified that in particular circumstances, a country, which was dominated by conflict between the central government and national minorities, is a contiguous country. Thus, if there is a powerful external homeland of the minority group affected it, the potentiality for secessionist demands of these minority groups can be more drastic against the nationalization policies of the states (Brubaker 1996: 5). The triangular relationship among Ukraine, ethnic Russian minorities and a powerful external homeland or kin-state, which is Russia, is an exemplary case in this manner.

The historical trajectory leading to violence and annexation to the Russian Federation is as follows: In the last days of 2013, mass protests mostly dominated by

liberals and the Ukrainian nationalists along with fascist and far-right political organizations, which consider the membership of Ukraine to European Union as an opportunity for the breaking the ties with Russia, particularly in the western and central parts of Ukraine have erupted against the Yanukovich administration, which rejected to sign Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement. Seemingly peaceful demonstrations against Yanukovich government turned into a violent conflict between the state police power and armed groups of rebels, and this violence led to the downfall of Yanukovich.<sup>30</sup>

This historical trajectory marked by violence is not typical for “the triads” however. In the case of Ukrainian conflict, several factors contribute to the violent nature of the Ukrainian crisis at that particular point in history.

One factor was the Russian minority’s self-perception as a separate ethnic group even before the Ukrainian state’s harsh nationalizing policies until 2014. The Russian minority had left the thought of peaceful coexistence in Ukraine with ethnic Ukrainian nationalists and has felt themselves insecure due to the policies of the post-Maidan Ukrainian state and elites. Culturally and politically strong ties of the Russian minority to Russia and the idea of a new Western/European Union-based orientation of ethnic Ukrainian nationalists along with the violence against minorities have played a crucial role in this change in perception.

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<sup>30</sup> More than fifty protesters and three policemen died in these conflicts, and this violence led to the downfall of the president Yanukovich. For details, see. Gatehouse, G. (2015) ‘The Untold Story of the Maidan Massacre’, *BBC News*, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015, available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31359021>

Another factor is the external homeland, which is Russia, as Brubaker designed in his conceptualization of triadic nexus. In the Ukrainian case, Russia has followed a policy supporting the ethnic Russian minority living in Ukraine. This stance has encouraged the secessionist movement of the Russian minority and led to such a result in conjunction with other factors. Before the Euro-Maidan process, for instance during the Orange Revolution in 2004, there was no such encouraging stance of Russia for the ethnic Russian minority.

Third factor is sharply and ethno-politically divided political elites in Ukraine especially starting in the Orange Revolution in 2004, and peaking by the Euro-Maidan in 2013. As discussed in Chapter 3, as a zone of class struggles, the state is not an institution serving primarily the interests of only a class in the beginning, but it will act in the long term as the bastion of the dominant class. In the case of Ukraine, it is seen that the capitalist class and fractions, by extension the ruling elites within this class and the newly formed state, were in collaboration with each other independently from the interests of the dominant class for the sake of the national integrity and the continuity of the Ukrainian state. Meanwhile, the struggle for domination of the state and power in Ukraine takes place between two elite fractions fundamentally polarized in ethno-political manners within the capitalist class: Pro-Russian political elite versus Pro-Western and European Union political elite. Yet, this state has been an apparatus that serves the interests of the ruling class in the long-term particularly during the period of fluctuations between ethnic and civic nationalisms in Ukraine. Ethnic Ukrainian nationalist elites began to perceive the Russian minority as a security concern and ignited the conflicts through certain policies, discourses and practices. All

these policies have irreversibly alienated the Russian minority against the Ukrainian state.

Stefan Wolff (2004) claims that although the definitions of an ethnic group might vary, if a group, whose members believe that they have a common historical past and distinctive cultural values, sees itself different and separates itself from the “other” communities within the society, this group is defined as an “ethnic group,” or “ethnic community.” In parallel with this, if a group is different from the titular identity within the state and is in a minority situation according to the majority of the population, this group is identified as an “ethnic minority.” In this sense, when a preponderance ethnic group follows an exclusionist nationalist policy and claims the root of the state by favoring a particular ethnic community, this situation may be reacted by ethnic minorities within society which might result in separatist volitions and conflicts (Guelke 2012: 32).

Last factor is the complications in Ukrainian society’s deeply divided character by the time 2014. Harry Eckstein (1966), in his analysis of political divisions, identifies “deeply divided society” as a separate category of political division apart from specific policy differentiations and cultural differences. He states that when the potential objective separation-based divisions which can emerge such as racial, ethnic, tribal and regional differences among particular social groups are similar, or the same with the political differences of the aforementioned groups, this society is at risk to experience deep divisions (Eckstein 1966:33-35). At this point, ethnic identity creates strong political affiliations among the members of these social groups, and paves the way for the formation of a background for conflictual groups (Nordlinger 1972: 7).

The deep dividedness incited by these differences within society is seen their exact reflections in the political sphere and it leads to violent conflicts at this stage. As in the case of Ukraine, members of the groups may feel, or believe that their identities, cultural values and material interests hang by a thread, or they are in a conflictual situation with the other identities existing in the society. Therefore, the aforesaid members of these groups embark on a quest of identity-oriented political organizations through many channels such as political parties, paramilitary organizations, trade unions, and armed resistance organizations (Nordlinger 1972: 7).

This thesis argues that in the case of Ukrainian conflict, the politicization of ethnic differences has not randomly occurred but created by the elite. One of the most explicit indicators of the existence of social divisions in Ukraine is seen that ethnic Russians as a minority nation in Ukraine have an identity consciousness, and depending upon this identity consciousness, they have particular political demands. Furthermore, mostly the separation of political elites and rival candidates as pro-Western and pro-Russian in the elections, and the regional division of the votes can be evaluated as a reflection of this communal subversion to the political sphere. Within this context, it is clear that social divisions in Ukraine coincide with each other in terms of particular ethnicity, regional, linguistic, and even religious spheres. Although some studies (e.g. Zon 2001; Barrington 2002) claim that regional divisions in Ukraine are the most influential factor for the emergence of the aforementioned conflicts, this thesis points out the importance of the considering the impacts of regional and linguistic factors at constitutional level, the state behaviors and elite manipulations over language issues as a whole for more reasonable analysis of the ethno-political conflict and civil war in Ukraine.

It is obvious that there is an ethnic dividedness between the Ukrainian nationalists and the minority nationalities. On the one hand, pro-Western Ukrainian nationalists, who are geographically positioned in mostly the western part of the country and who are religiously affiliated with the Ukrainian-centered churches, and the Ukrainophones. On the other hand, there is a minority group which can be regarded as pro-Russian ethnic minorities living in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, who are Russophones, and religiously affiliated with the Moscow-centered churches. Simply, the social divisions in Ukraine clash at many different axis: Such an antagonistic coincidence of these divisions is a negative situation in terms of their potential for conflict formation, and it is an unsolicited status after the conflicts erupted regarding the conflict management (Lijphart 1977: 80-81). Therefore, ongoing conflicts in Ukraine should be taken into account as distinguished from the relations between Russians and Ukrainians.

To be more precise, the main problem behind this civil war and social divisions in Ukraine is not the ethnic differences *per se* but the identity politics of the Ukrainian state and the elite cadres as well as the majoritarian administrations of Ukrainian politics which presented a unitary nation-state formation as a necessity for the integration with capitalist world system. As Chapter II discusses, the ideologies of social groups dominated in the state administrations determine the identity policies of the state in Ukraine. Therefore, the Ukrainian state apparatus was stuck between the Ukrainian nationalism and pro-Russianism, and failed to produce certain mediating policies to reconcile two different perceptions since the 2004 Orange Revolution, and then after the 2014 Euro-Maidan during the civil war period of Ukraine.

As was mentioned in the Chapter II, during the post-independence period, there were also two main poles in the issue of the definition of state's ethnic identity: First that of ethnic nationalists, who argued that the infant nation-state should be built as "the state of the Ukrainians," whereas the second pole, that of civic nationalists, who were mostly the elites of the Eastern Ukraine, asserted that the state must be established based on a bond of citizenship rather than an ethnic identity (Subtelny 2000: 607). The first pole nourished the ethnic Ukrainian nationalism, and placed importance to the use of the Ukrainian language as well as bore enmity against Russians due to the perception of "exploitative Russia," and therefore followed certain exclusionist policies over ethnic Russian nationalities living in Ukraine. Then the second pole, mostly sought the Eastern Slavic nationalism, argued that Ukraine is composed of two main ethnic identities as the Ukrainians and Russians, that it is a bilingual and bicultural country with a common history with Russia (Shulman 2004: 38-39). At this point, it is clearly seen that different perceptions and narratives on history as a reflection of nationalism, and correspondingly the differences in the attitudes towards the relations with Russia can also be evaluated as the adjuvant phenomena for the existing polarization between two poles of the political/ruling elites (Zon 2001: 225).

There are particular determinant causes of ethnic conflicts and civil wars such as the demands for right of ethnic minorities, and ignoring political and cultural autonomies of these national groups by the state and the ruling elites (Brown 1997: 8). It is remarkable that the Ukrainian state followed a liberal arrangement regarding the national minorities for the infant Ukrainian nation such as in the 1990 Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine, "The Ukrainian SSR guarantees equal protection of the law to all citizens of the Republic regardless of their origin, social or economic status,

racial or national identity, sex, education, language, political views, religious beliefs, type and character of occupation, place of residence or other circumstances,” in 1991, “ The Ukrainian SSR is independent in solving issues associated with science, education, as well as cultural and spiritual development of the Ukrainian nation and guarantees all nationalities living on the territory of the Republic the right to free national and cultural development,” and guaranteeing the equality of the languages in 1992 (Jaworsky 1995: 22-23). Therefore, it can be said that the reconciliatory policies regarding the demands for rights of national minorities at the state level and among the elites had a positive effect on the existence of a non-conflictual environment during the first years of independent Ukraine. However, of course, we cannot explain the reasons behind the conflicts within a multiethnic society only through an emphasis on the multiethnic structure of that society: The emergence of an ethnic conflict requires a strong identity awareness of the ethnic group, having a political objective, and the denial of the demands of minority group by the majority ethnic group (Wolff 2004: 5). The political motivation of an ethnic group can be only the recognition and preservation of its culture, but it can also be a political secession. However, if this political secession as a political motivation of the ethnic group is seen as an obstruction for granting secessionist ethnic community particular rights, the conflict and crisis cannot be resolved, or managed, as in the case of the current civil war in Ukraine.

### **The Road to the Euro-Maidan: The Oscillation between Ethnic Nationalisms**

After the 2004 Orange Revolution, under the presidency of Yushchenko and his prime-minister Tymoshenko, while Ukraine kept Russia’s distance as far as possible, and tried to establish strong ties with the European Union, it also began to follow particular policies to able to maintain the support of ethnic Ukrainian

nationalists especially living in the Western and Central Ukraine which put Yushchenko and Tymoshenko into the power (Zon 2005: 382). This coupling of the pro-EU and pro-Ukrainian identity approach is visible in linguistic policies of the administration: For instance, in 2007, Yushchenko-Tymoshenko administration prioritized the Ukrainian language in public institutions including new educational establishments, TV and radio broadcastings, and other cultural activities such as theaters. It also promoted Ukrainian language in the regions predominantly populated by non-Ukrainian minorities, particularly in the Crimea (Roudik 2007) for the sake of making use of the Ukrainian language widespread to form it as an element of a supra-identity. The Ukrainian state administration under Yushchenko and Tymoshenko gave priority to ethnic Ukrainians and promoted the Ukrainophones who “belong to the Ukrainian nation.” Therefore, in this period, the state administration concentrated on the idea of formation of “Ukrainianhood” as the sole ethnic identity as a part of nation-building processes (Kuzio 1998: 198). However, at this point, a very crucial problem emerged due to such the nation-building process: Ethnic Ukrainian identity is a political and cultural identity which is mostly predominated in the Western and Central Ukraine. Thus, it can be said that after the Orange Revolution in 2004, the Ukrainian state administration under Yushchenko and Tymoshenko tried to consolidate ethnic identity, which is ethnic Ukrainian nationalists, and supported them for the power.<sup>31</sup> Then, such ethnic Ukrainian nationalist policies of Yushchenko

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<sup>31</sup> Although a limited amount of support for the Orange “Revolution” in the Eastern Ukraine, majority of the support to this movement came from the western and central regions of Ukraine. When the data related to this issue is examined, in the Eastern Ukraine, 58,5% of the citizens consider the Orange Revolution a coup d’etat, while this proportion in the Southern Ukraine is %66,7. On the other hand, in the Western Ukraine, 67,9% of the citizens regard the Orange Revolution a reasonable mass protest movement and a conscious citizenship struggle for acquiring individual political rights, while this proportion in the Central Ukraine is 59,7% (Shekhovtsov 2013: 731). At thisp point, there is a very dangerous situation which would paved the way for the process of Euro-Maidan, indeed that as the Ukrainian state elites try to create their own nation-state formation, a large part of the society,

government also resonated Russian-dominated Crimea and the Eastern Ukraine, where they were excluded, alienated and faced with de-Russification.

The impact of the exclusion of Russian minority manifested itself in the 2010 presidential elections. Viktor Yanukovych, whose presidency was precluded by mass demonstrations due to allegedly an electoral fraud (or a *coup d'état*, as the most of the citizens in the Eastern and Southern Ukraine believed), was elected as the president of Ukraine once more time (Harding 2010). Yanukovych was born in one of the eastern oblasts of Ukraine, Donetsk, and supported by the coal and steel industrialists (Kuzio 2012). When he became the prime-minister of the Kuchma government in 2002, Yanukovych paved the way for an authoritarian rule, and he got the support of only the eastern part of the country when he became a candidate for the presidency in 2004 (Riabchuk 2012: 1-2). As Kuchma took support of businessmen and particularly Eastern Ukrainian oligarchs in his presidency, he presented Yanukovych as a candidate for firstly the prime-ministry, and then the successor presidency to be able to maintain the support of the Eastern and Southern Ukraine's votes and political elites as well as oligarchs (Kuzio 2005b: 30). However, this policy naturally led to the deprivation of support from the ethnic Ukrainian nationalists in the Western and Central Ukraine, especially from small and medium businessmen, and Yanukovych's presidency in 2010 made this division more apparent.

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particularly in the Eastern and Southern oblasts of Ukraine, in terms of ethnic, linguistic, cultural and political structure was excluded and alienated by bringing the ethnic Ukrainian identity into the forefront, and thus the alienated social/ethnic groups attempted to plunge into particular quests (Shekhovtsov 2013: 732) such as separatist volitions which erupted with the 2014 Euro-Maidan process in the long run. [For more details, see. Shekhovtsov, A. (2013) 'The Orange Revolution and the Sacred Birth of a Civic-Republican Ukrainian Nation', *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 41, No. 5, pp. 730-743].

Yanukovych ruled Ukraine between the years of 2010-2014, and he tried to follow a fluctuated balance policy between Russia and the European Union through determining the policies according to the interests of Ukraine (Peleschuk 2010). Yet, although Yanukovych aimed to remove his “pro-Russian” impression which was a label for him since his prime-ministry period, and emphasized the promise of establishing balanced relations with Russia and EU in his speeches, he gave significant concessions to Russia such as extending the lease for Russia’s Black Sea Fleet in Crimea in the first two years of his power (Harding 2010). With this agreement<sup>32</sup>, Russia had a claim to dispatch a considerable amount of infantry, military aircraft and navy in Crimea; however, Yanukovych and his elites in the state administration, as a necessity of this balance policy, rejected the idea of joining a customs union with Russia (Pifer 2012). In the course of time, Yanukovych’s state administration began to come into the forefront, but particularly serious problems emerged in the Ukrainian domestic policy, because the necessary financial support for Ukraine was not provided by the EU (Pifer 2013).

In November 2013, Yanukovych cancelled the European Union Association Agreement which was an economic and political partnership pact in favor of, with the words of the Ukrainian prime-minister of the Yanukovych administration, Mykola Azarov, “the national interests” on the heels of a meeting with Putin (Traynor and Grytsenko 2013) because of allegedly Russia’s pressure on Ukraine in terms of economic sanctions. After this action of Yanukovych on the rejection of the agreement

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<sup>32</sup> Kharkiv Pact, or Kharkiv Accords was signed on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2010.

with the European Union, mass demonstrations began to emerge against the government in the Independence Square (*Maidan Nezalezhnosti*).

Although there were many segments of the society which aimed to protest the government against corruption, economic depression and unemployment, Ukrainian nationalists and fascists particularly in the Western Ukraine dominated the Euro-Maidan (Luhn 2014). Fundamental aims of these nationalist and fascist organizations leading to the protests and conflicts was the formation of a Ukrainian national identity which would differ from Russian culture, and even, which would have a potential to be in a conflict with the Russian identity. The aforementioned groups believed that Yanukovich and his supporters from the Eastern Ukraine, particularly Donbass region, guided the country towards Russian sovereignty and this had to be prevented at all cost (Trenin 2014: 5). After the Maidan protests in November 2013, Yanukovich had to resign, but both nationalist/fascist character of Euro-Maidan left behind a reactionary anti-Maidanist, anti-Western, locally anti-capitalist cultural heritage based on mostly Eastern Slav nationalism led by pro-Russian oligarchic clans.

Alexander Buzgalin (2015) clearly analyzes the relationship between pro-Russian oligarchy and the industrial working class particularly in the rural regions of the Central and Eastern Ukraine as follows:

Historically, pro-Russian oligarchic capital has been associated mainly with the industrial working class and with rural areas of central and eastern Ukraine, where the Russian-speaking population predominates. This capital has been tied up with flows of raw materials, goods and capital oriented toward Russia... The pro-Western oligarchs, unlike the former, have traditionally been associated mainly with the so-called petty bourgeoisie (also described as the “middle class”), and with the de-classed layer now often referred to as the precariat. These layers have to a large degree focused their attention and hopes on the EU, and consequently, have been drawn more into the orbit of pro-Western capital, or of capital based in western Ukraine (Buzgalin 2015: 332).

After the resignation of Yanukovich, newly formed post-Maidan Ukrainian government under the presidency of Petro Poroshenko, who is a Ukrainian oligarch, immediately attacked minority rights through ethnic, cultural and linguistic legal arrangements, and rewriting Ukrainian history through wiping of the Soviet legacy and Russian influence at constitutional level as a necessity of the nationalizing state under the label of Ukrainization. Overall, when the state administrations of Kravchuk, Kuchma, Yushchenko and Yanukovich are examined, it can be seen that ethnic Ukrainian nationalism and the Eastern Slavic nationalism, mostly under the roof of civic nationalism, became the main topic of the agenda within a tidal and variational relation. As a result, during each Ukrainian state administrations, the Ukrainian state maintained peaceful relations with particular ethnic groups, while it excluded, or alienated other ethno-political, cultural or linguistic communities. Such a failure in the creation of a common, integrative national identity for the Ukrainian society since the independence period inevitably leads to the concentration of different ethno-cultural groups on their own identities.

In the next section, I will focus on particular policies of the Ukrainian nationalizing nationalism with a focus on the elite-induced language policy of the state and the politics of symbols and history writing in order to understand the processes leading to separatism in Novorossiia.

## **The Segregation through Language Policy of Post-Maidan Ukrainian State and the Elites**

In the newly independent Ukraine, although only the Ukrainian language was defined as an official state language, and approximately half of the society used the Russian language in daily life, this paradox did not lead to a serious reaction until the 2014 Euro-Maidan conflict. Although there were particular fluctuations and alterations in the issue of suppression on the Russian language until the Orange Revolution in 2004, under the Yushchenko presidency on the heels of the Orange Revolution, control over the use of the language issue in education, cultural activities, cinema and TV-radio broadcastings intensely increased. Russian language was officially overshadowed in higher education, and Russian was removed from almost all the lists of pre-requisite and moved to the list of additional courses in the secondary education, while using only the Ukrainian language in documentation in higher and secondary education such as class registers and curricula became obligatory (Litovchenko and Muradyan 2014: 43). The Yushchenko government also adopted a law which decreed that foreign films in cinemas had to be demonstrated in only the Ukrainian language, and banned foreign languages including Russian in cinema without Ukrainian dubbing (Muravyev and Talavera 2014). Yushchenko's policies on language intrinsically created a sense of exclusion in ethnic Russian population particularly in the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine. Such a sense of exclusion was incited and exploited by the local elites using it as leverage to protect themselves from an exclusion from the Ukrainian politics. For instance, following the protests in 2004, political elites who supported Yanukovych threatened the central government to trigger the separation of their regions from Ukraine; however, brutal reaction of the

Ukrainian state, they stepped back to propagandize the federalization of the state (Wolczuk 2007: 539).

Yet, afterwards, the language issue became a significant component, and even a symbol of the Ukrainian political life and regional distinctiveness, thus the nationalizing policy of the Ukrainian state administrations as well as the discourses of ethnic Ukrainian nationalists. The symbolization of the language divisions following the Orange Revolution has promoted the sensitivity of the masses and the elites against the language policies of the Ukrainian state administrations from this date on (Kulyk 2009: 23-23). Furthermore, the explicit promotion of the Ukrainian language by the state and the ruling elites as well as political ones paved the way for certain fascist and far-right political discourses: These kinds of political organization such as All-Ukrainian Unity Svoboda, which virulently defends the use of the sole Ukrainian language in Ukraine, was widely welcomed in the local councils of the Western Ukraine, particularly in Ivano-Frankivsk, Lvov and Ternopil in 2007, and was represented in the parliament, by extension at legislative level, in 2012 by taking more than 10% of the votes (Olszański 2012: 1-2).

After the victory of Yanukovich in the 2010 presidential elections, language policy was rearranged once more: the Verkhovna Rada passed a new law *On the Principles of State Language Policy* which allowed the use of minority languages in the government and educational institutions of the oblasts where the relevant ethnic communities form at least %10 of the population on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012 (Muravyev and Talavera 2014). This law which was put forward by the delegates of the Party of Regions as the enforcement of the European Charter of Minority Languages adopted

by Ukraine, was declared as a detailed code promoting the status of not only the Russian language, but also all minority languages existing in the Ukrainian territories (Litovchenko and Muradyan 2014: 45).

The results of this law were quite disputable: On the one hand, the law de facto provided the Russian language as the second official language within particular oblasts in the Eastern and Southern Ukraine considering their ethnic compositions. Yet, it did not give a nationwide status for Russian; therefore, Russian-speaking citizens could not get any benefits from the law in practice. Quite the contrary, the status of the Russian language even regressed compare to the previous law from the language of the international communication to the language of ethnic minority (Litovchenko and Muradyan 2014: 45). On the other hand, pro-Ukrainianization supporters including political elites protested against the new law, because they thought this language law would trigger Ukraine's de-Ukrainization by putting Ukrainian on the back burner. For instance, ex-president and an ethnic Ukrainian nationalist Yushchenko, quite nationalistically, gave a speech about the new language law as follows:

We are being offered...a plan of Russification, in which the national language is not needed. Finally, we are being offered a strategy for de-Ukrainization...If you want to preserve Ukraine, first of all, preserve its language...And if you give up the European course, you will get Moscow's policy, dependence on Moscow, from which our humiliation and the loss of our independence always comes'' (Kyiv Weekly 2012).

This situation, indeed, clearly demonstrates that even in allegedly favorable actions of the state and the ruling state for the ethnic Russians living in Ukraine, the Russophones suffered from this language battle between ethnic Ukrainian nationalism and the Russian language supporters, as the recent events in the post-Euro-Maidan

process have shown. Only two days after the fall of Yanukovich in 2014, one of the first actions of new post-Maidan government, which was formed by the coalition of ‘liberal democrats’ Batkivschyna, the Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform (UDAR) and fascist Svoboda under the presidency of Arseniy Yatsenyuk, was the repeal of the law on minority language of 2012 in the Verkhovna Rada. Although interim president Oleksandr Turchynov vetoed the repeal due to the reactions from the United Nations regarding human rights and the respect for the national minorities, this move of the first Maidan ruling elites led to the escalation of separatist volitions in Crimea, and the Southern and Eastern Ukraine since it generated the perception that the Ukrainian state would take away the rights of the Russian-speaking population through a growing discrimination against them (Ghosh 2014).

Another significant impact of the nationalizing language policies of the post-Maidan Ukrainian state administration shows itself in the ban of Russian media, TV and radio broadcastings in Ukraine. The Ukrainian state administration after the Maidan in 2014 firstly banned the broadcasting of Russian TV channels for the fact that they allegedly pose a threat for “the national security and sovereignty” of Ukraine (the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council of Ukraine 2014: 1-2).<sup>33</sup> This view can be clearly evaluated as a violation of human rights and freedom of the press for de-Russification of Ukraine. Moreover, approximately a year later from the ban of Russian TV and radio broadcastings, the Verkhovna Rada has passed a code which

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<sup>33</sup> For details, see: ‘OSCE slams Ukraine’s repressive censorship of Russian TV channels’, *RT News/TV-Novosti*, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014, available at: <https://www.rt.com/news/russian-tv-suspended-ukraine-242/>; ‘Ukrainian court bans Russian TV broadcast’, *RT News/TV-Novosti*, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2014, available at: <https://www.rt.com/news/ukraine-court-bans-russian-tv-245/>; ‘Banning TV, radio broadcasts poses threat to media freedom in Ukraine, OSCE representative says’, *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)*, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014, available at: <http://www.osce.org/fom/115832>

banned Russians from founding or being taken part in a TV business or radio stations in Ukraine by declaring Russia as an aggressor state (Radio Free Europe Free Liberty 2015). Lastly, as an indicator of how the Ukrainian state and the elites manipulate the nationalist feelings among the society, the Ukrainian government followed new bans and measures on Russian films including any films made since the year of 1991 which “glorify the work of [Russian] government bodies” as well as the Russian film-makers and Russian books which allegedly consist of Russian nationalist messages (Solohubenko 2016).

Media, as an ideological tool of the state, has a significant role in the imposition of the nationalist ideology of the Ukrainian state and the ruling/political elites of Ukraine for the sake of the attempts to the Ukrainization through the de-Russification of the country, and the language issue is a crucial component of the media for this purpose. Many journalists and TV channels in Ukraine such as Novy Channel, STB, 1+1 and 5 Channel is used as a propaganda tool of the Ukrainian state apparatus (Litovchenko and Muradyan 2014: 45) to promote Ukrainian nationalism, anti-Russianism and anti-communism. The Ukrainian state and the elites intensely make use of these media organs to be able to stimulate the actions which present the Russian-speaking citizens in Ukraine as “the second-class citizens,” and encourage particular Western Ukrainian colloquialisms to promote the Ukrainian language against Russian (Litovchenko and Muradyan 2014: 46). As in the political and economic sphere of Ukraine, oligarchs, in other words economic and political elites, dominate and control the media (Konończuk 2015: 1). In this respect, one of the impacts of the change of the state administration after Maidan and the ongoing civil war in the Donbass was the removal, or weakening of the effect of the pro-Yanukovych oligarchic clans, and

increasing wealth and power of pro-Western Ukrainian oligarchs in all sphere of the Ukrainian political life. For instance, Rinat Akhmetov, who was the wealthiest oligarch of the country from the Eastern Ukraine having strong ties with Yanukovich, has been significantly weakened after the Maidan process, while the influence of Ihor Kolomoyskyi, the governor of Dnipropetrovsk, uniquely increased thanks to his collaboration with post-Maidan Ukrainian state administrations along with the current president Poroshenko and the former prime-minister Yatsenyuk (Konończuk 2015: 4-6). These oligarchs own almost all mass media tools, and conduct particular campaigns and propaganda in the promotion of the Ukrainian language against Russian state, Russian culture and language<sup>34</sup> with the governmental incentive. Since television is one of the most dominant factors in shaping the public opinion Ukraine, using the press and media to be able to impose nationalizing and re-ethnicizing process of Ukraine through the language policies, media has been crucial for the Ukrainian state and political elites.<sup>35</sup>

After all, it can be said that language policies of the Ukrainian state and the nationalist discourse used by the Ukrainian elites against Russian language and Russian culture ignite the wick of fascist hostilities against national minorities, particularly Russians, and the separatist perceptions of the ethnic Russians as a reaction. For instance, Ukrainian nationalist elites, particularly members of the far-

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<sup>34</sup> Kolomoyskyi's economic dominance includes a wide range of sectors: mass media (many television and radio stations, including one of the most popular TV channels, 1+1 Channel), banking (PrivatBank which is the largest bank of Ukraine), oil (control of Ukrnafta, the most significant oil company in Ukraine), chemical (including DniproAzot), and airlines (including MAU) (Konończuk 2015: 6).

<sup>35</sup> According to a 2015 poll in Ukraine, 94% of the participants told that they get their news from television, whereas 42% of them also get information from the Internet, and 52% of the respondents only trust TV [ Fedets, I. (2015) 'Oligarchs on the Airwaves', *Foreign Policy*, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015, available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/11/11/oligarchs-on-the-airwaves-ukraine-media/>

right Svoboda led by Oleg Tyahnybok which is a component of the post-Maidan state administration, have even threatened to completely forbid the Russian language and even called for the purification of Russian speakers from the Ukrainian citizenship (Ghosh 2014). Such threats on language issue may lead to explicit violations of human rights even in the parliament, the Verkhovna Rada. In May 2016, for instance, a session in the Verkhovna Rada was cancelled, because Ukrainian nationalist political elites attacked a deputy from the Party of Regions for speaking in Russian, as they began to shout that “According to law, the speeches in parliament must be in Ukrainian!” (Karpenko 2016).

Finally, in contemporary circumstances during the post-Maidan process, it can be said that the language issue faces a new trend with the attempts to awaken the Ukrainian language by particular policies of the state and the political elites within the borders of Russophobia and anti-communism. The elites and the state apparatus in Ukraine, today, try to use nationalist terror against particularly lower and middle class to be able to nationally mobilize the masses, while the language policies in all sphere of life have become one of the fundamental instruments for the Ukrainization, thus de-Russification, of the Ukrainian society.

### **Nationalizing through Rewriting History and the Attacks on Cultural Symbols by the Post-Maidan Ukrainian State and the Elites**

For the newly independent state of post-Soviet Ukraine, the maintenance of the Soviet historiography tradition was possible only within the condition of “reunification”; however, instead, post-Soviet Ukraine since 1991 set the continuation of the independence and the building of a distinctive national identity as

an ultimate target (Kuzio 2002b: 247). The path to pursue a distinct national identity instead of “reunification” was chosen because the Soviet historiography fundamentally aimed at the erosion of national identities through building a Soviet-dominant identity, because the discourses on national identity were marginalized within a class context, or weakened the social recognition of the unique and distinctive national identities (Kuzio 2002b: 245-246). Therefore, in all post-Soviet republics except Belarus, the writing the history was based on the tradition of an anti-Soviet historiography.

The state administrations in post-Soviet Ukraine brought a titular ethnic group-based historiography to the forefront (Kuzio 2006: 418-419). Although such an understanding of historiography was embraced by both ethnic nationalist and civic nationalist state elites, their aims were totally different: Contrary to ethnic nationalist state administrations of Ukraine, civic nationalist elites, who usually remained aloof from the titular ethnic group-based nationalism, acted with the concerns about the maintenance of Ukraine’s independence (Wolczuk 2000: 686). Yet, the tide turned into state-induced ethnic nationalism as it was in the language policy, with the 2004 Orange Revolution, and lastly the process of the 2014 Euro-Maidan along with the civil war: The understanding of historiography in the Ukrainian state completely suffered a change in favor of the emphasis on the ethnic Ukrainian nationalism which aggravates the nationalizing and re-ethnicizing policies through the rewriting the history and the particular attacks on cultural symbols and myths associated with the Soviet heritage, communism and Russia.

In the post-independence Ukraine, the originality and archaic culture of the Ukrainian ethnic identity and its distinctiveness from the Russian identity were

highlighted as a manifestation of the fundamental aims of the dominant historiography for the consolidation of the state's independence. In this period, while the arguments of ethnic Ukrainian nationalist elites were used as a reference point in the historiography, at the same time, the state administrations synchronously remained aloof to the disquisitions which are based on the antagonism against the ethnic Russians and Russophones (Wolczuk 2000: 681-682). The early independent Ukrainian state administrations principally avoided to include a historiographical interpretation which has a potential threat for the unity of the country, and which were able to disambiguate the points of ethnic conflict among society due to the identity structure as a result of demographic dynamics between the western and the eastern territories of the country (Wolczuk 2000). Precisely while the Kravchuk period in 1991-1994 and Kuchma's first presidency (in 1994-1999) can be evaluated as an example of official history of the Ukrainian historiography, the second term under the Kuchma presidency between 1999-2005 can be regarded as the sole period that the Eastern Slavic School which emphasized the proximity of ethnic Russians and Ukrainians as a form of equality and the maintenance of state's independence (Kuzio 2006: 413-415). Yet, after the Orange Revolution in 2004, under the presidency of Yushchenko, the exactly opposite to the understanding of the Eastern Slavic School emerged. This new tradition of history writing was based on an anti-Russian ethnic Ukrainian nationalism, and was taken place by the state itself (Kuzio 2006: 423).

The shift in the historiography tradition from post-independence Ukraine to post-Orange Revolution Ukraine can be further exemplified as follows: In post-independence Ukraine, under the Kravchuk and Kuchma presidencies until 2005, the

Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)<sup>36</sup>, which was founded against the Polish government subjugating the Western Ukraine in 1929 and allegedly struggled against Nazi and Soviet hegemony according to the ethnic Ukrainian nationalist historiography, was discreetly approached by the state-led Ukrainian historiography. In other words, early state administrations of post-Soviet Ukraine under Kravchuk and Kuchma were estranged from the basic claims of the Ukrainian nationalist history writing on the role of the OUN and its military fraction, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), but remained neutral (Wolczuk 2000: 682).<sup>37</sup> This abstention of the state administrations mostly stems from different perceptions to the OUN and the UPA from two different regions of Ukraine, the West and the East: For instance, in the Western Ukraine, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army are still perceived as the organizations struggled for the independence of Ukraine against both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union (Plokhly 1995: 711), while the people of the Eastern Ukraine perceive them as anti-Soviet and the collaborators with Nazis

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<sup>36</sup> The founder component of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists was the particular Ukrainian nationalist and right-wing political elites and intellectuals such as Yevhen Konovalets, Mykola Stsyborsky, Dmytro Dontsov (Shekhovtsov 2011: 207-210). For more details, see: Shekhovtsov, A. (2011) 'The Creeping Resurgence of the Ukrainian Radical Right? The Case of the Freedom Party', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 63, No. 2, pp. 203-228. According to Anders Rudling (2011), the Nazis and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists had many common sides: "The OUN shared the fascist attributes of anti-liberalism, anti-conservatism, and anti-communism, an armed party, totalitarianism, anti-Semitism, Fuhrerprinzip (the Fuhrer principle), and an adoption of fascist greetings." OUN leaders stressed to the German Nazi leadership that they shared the Nazi worldview and goal of a fascist Europe" [see: Rudlin, A. (2011) 'The OUN, the UPA and the Holocaust: A Study in the Manufacturing of Historical Myths', *Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, No. 2107, Center for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, p. 3].

<sup>37</sup> In ethnic Ukrainian nationalist history writing, while the OUN and UPA are dignified with the discourses of "national heroism" and the myths of "resistance", under the Kravchuk and Kuchma presidency, their struggles against Nazis and Poland were appreciated at the state level, but not through a tradition of the history writing. The "resistance" of the aforementioned organizations against the Soviet regime was not supported at both the state level and the historiography during these periods until the Yushchenko (2005) and then Maidan (2014) governments (See Kuchmas's "1993 law on the status of and social security guarantees for war veterans"; Marples, D.R. (2006) 'Stepan Bandera: The Resurrection of a Ukrainian National Hero', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 4, pp. 555-566).

as an influence of both the current Russian and the Soviet historiography (Rodgers 2007: 513).

Yet, in post-2004 Ukraine, contrary to the state policies and the attitudes of ruling elite during the Kravchuk and Kuchma period, for instance during the Yushchenko period, ethnic Ukrainian nationalist historiography including particular the myths based on the rhetoric of ‘exploitation,’ ‘resistance’ and ‘suffering’ under the Soviet Union and communism intensely gained momentum at the state level. In this period, particular Ukrainian nationalist organizations such as the OUN were directly and unconditionally declared as the symbol of “national heroism” (Katchanovski, Kohut, Nebesio and Yurkevich 2013: 214). As can be seen in the speech of Yushchenko in the commemoration of the Victory Day in 2007<sup>38</sup> that the members of the OUN and UPA, which are still regarded as the collaborators of Nazis during the World War II by the significant part of the Eastern and Southern Ukraine, became in the equivalent status with the veteran soldiers of the World War II at the state level. Furthermore, those who struggled for the independence of Ukraine within ethnic nationalists and anti-Soviet organizations have granted legal recognition by also aggrandizing Roman Shukhevych, the leader of the anti-Soviet Ukrainian Insurgent Army:

We pay tribute to every Ukrainian hero who fought for the liberation of the homeland from totalitarian attackers during the hard days of war. The memory of every soldier, every victim and every rescuer of Ukraine remains eternal and indivisible for our nation forever (Action Ukraine Report/US-Ukraine Business Council 2007).

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<sup>38</sup> On 9<sup>th</sup> May 1945, the triumph of the Soviet Union and its allies over Nazi Germany in Berlin.

Shukhevych defined the members of the UPA as “courageous resistance to fascist occupants” during his speech for the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of triumph over Nazi Germany (European Jewish Press 2008).

Besides these, in 2008, Yushchenko’s state administration proposed a *Law on the Official Status of Fighters for Ukraine’s independence in 1920s-1990s of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* which prescribed that the Ukrainian state should give the status of “war veterans” who participated to political, guerilla, underground and combat activities for the independence of Ukraine in 1920s and 1990s as part of the nationalist and even far-right organizations such as the OUN and UPA, the Ukrainian Military Organization (UVO), Karpatska Sich, and the Ukrainian Liberation Army as well as particular nationalist leaders such as Konovalts, Bandera<sup>39</sup> and Shukhevych (Zerkalo Nedeli 2008). Such kinds of policies at the state and constitutional level would unquestionably lead to particular impacts in the history writing of Ukraine as it can be seen in the current circumstances in Ukraine which neo-Nazi and fascist organizations swarm at all level of Ukrainian political, social and cultural life from the parliament to the military and the streets.

After the electoral victory of Yanukovich in 2010, the tradition of historiography began to be reinterpreted again: President Yanukovich quickly revoked the law of the Yushchenko government on the status of war veterans which explicitly promotes the rise of the Ukrainian nationalism and fascism (Shkandrij 2015: 1). However, in 2015, post-Maidan state administration under the presidency of

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<sup>39</sup> For the question of who Stepan Bandera is, see: Lazare, D. (2015) ‘Who Was Stepan Bandera?’, *Jacobin*, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015, available at: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/09/stepan-bandera-nationalist-euromaidan-right-sector/>

Poroshenko, again, passed a law which has extended the official recognition of the nationalist militias and so called national heroes such as Stepan Bandera which collaborated with Hitler's Germany during the WWII, and which is one of the most common symbols of the fascist and neo-Nazi political organizations such as Svoboda and the Right Sector in Ukraine (Lynch 2015). According to law passed by the Verkhovna Rada, the UPA and other ultra-nationalist organizations would be eligible for the official commemorations as the symbol of "national heroism" for Ukraine at the state level (Sokol 2015).<sup>40</sup>

This is not a surprising action for the post-Maidan government, because both during and after the Maidan, liberals, nationalists and fascist/Neo-Nazi political elites collaborated with each other, and made coalitions to form a new government. For instance, fascist militias and neo-Nazi organizations, today, are represented in the Verkhovna Rada, and upper stages of the government: Igor Mosiychuk, who has worked for the Right Sector and the former deputy chair of the parliamentary committee on law enforcement of the post-Maidan government, says in an interview which can be clearly understood the hostile perception against non-Ukrainians that "for me, the notion of a nation and of being Ukrainian, is a spiritual link between the dead, the living and those who are not born yet. It's both a blood link and spiritual link," while one of his men spoke Russian, he reprimands that "I am Ukrainian! I am Ukrainian, and a Ukrainian does not speak the language of those Russkies!" (Moreira

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<sup>40</sup> As a reaction, the president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin said that "the peoples of Russia have gone through extreme ordeals in fighting the Nazis. That's why we find the policy of encouraging Nazism, extremism, stirring of hatred between the nations and escalation of military threats inappropriate... Such practices have caused a bloody drama in our neighboring Ukraine" (See: 'Ukraine bans Communism & Nazism, celebrates UPA nationalists as 'freedom fighters', *Russia Today*, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015, available at: <https://www.rt.com/news/248365-ukraine-bans-communism-nazism/>)

2016). Moreover, many deputies of ultra-nationalist political organizations, Svoboda and the Right Sector, such as Oleh Tyahnybok and Dmytro Yarosh, were assigned to the government's branches and ministries. In parallel to this, the Ministry of Defense, by extension the post-Maidan state administrations of Ukraine, officially used and formed the armed wings of the aforementioned fascist and neo-Nazi political organizations to be able fight with the separatists in the Eastern Ukraine, Donbass, such as the Azov Battalion which is officially a part of the National Guard of Ukraine/the Ukrainian Armed Forces under the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Moreira 2016)<sup>41</sup>, and these battalions composed by mostly the fascist militias of the political organizations in the Verkhovna Rada are financially supported by the Ukrainian state itself as well as the Ukrainian oligarchs such as Ihor Kolomoyskyi (Sharkov 2014). Besides that, when the symbols used by the Azov Battalion as an official part of the Ukrainian Armed Forces are investigated, it can be seen that the aforementioned symbols clearly designed and used by the inspiration of one of the SS division *Das Reich* of the Nazi regime (Luch 2014) as Figure 1 shows.

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<sup>41</sup> See also: Pancevski, B. (2014) 'Kiev lets loose Men in Black', *The Sunday Times*, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2014, available at: [http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/world\\_news/Ukraine/article1409316.ece](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/world_news/Ukraine/article1409316.ece); Peterson, N. (2015) 'A Ukrainian National Guard Unit Trains to Fight to the Death', *Newsweek*, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015, available at: <http://europe.newsweek.com/ukrainian-national-guard-unit-trains-fight-death-323891?rm=eu>

**Figure 1. Nazi Inspirations in the Symbols of the Azov Battalion as an Official Brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces**



*Source:* 'Wolfsangel in E. Ukraine: Foreign Policy talks to deputy leader of 'pro-govt' Azov Battalion,' Russia Today, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2014, available at: <https://www.rt.com/news/185708-nazi-symbols-ukrainian-troops/>

In this respect, it is obvious that the rejection of the UN resolution, which called for fighting glorification of Nazism, racism and xenophobia by the US, Ukraine and Canada was not a coincidence.<sup>42</sup> All these actions of the Ukrainian state and the elites are an indicator of that the state apparatus along with the elite manipulation in the post-Maidan process attempt to follow the nationalizing and re-ethnicizing policies under the roof of the Ukrainianization, de-Russification and de-communization through the

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<sup>42</sup> A total of 115 out of 193 UN member-states voted in favor of the resolution which was proposed by Russia. Apart from the rejection of three countries (the US, Ukraine and Canada), other 55 member states, including mostly from the European Union and the Baltics, abstained. For details, see: 'Ukraine, US, Canada do not back Russia-initiated UN resolution on heroization of Nazism', *TASS News Agency*, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2014, available at: <http://tass.ru/en/russia/761115>; 'Russian diplomat says it is indicative US, Ukraine vote against anti-Nazi resolution at UN', *TASS News Agency*, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014, available at: <http://tass.ru/en/world/763655>

collaboration with fascist and neo-Nazi forces, propagating ethnic nationalist language policies in all sphere of life and re-writing the history.

Post-Maidan Ukrainian state administration, as a “necessity” of a pure nationalizing state and society based on the sole ethnic Ukrainianhood, followed particular de-communization policies while rewriting the Ukrainian history at the constitutional level: According to two laws enacted in 2015, the Soviet symbols were banned, and the sympathy or the promotion for communism was criminalized, while the glorification of nationalist groups (with Kyiv’s term, “national heroes”) collaborated with the Nazis during the WWII have become legal in Ukraine as a direct incursion to the Soviet past and communism as well as the ethnic Russians living in Ukraine, and the forbidden of freedom of speech and expression.

The first law, *On the Condemnation of the Communist and Nazi Totalitarian Regimes*, bans both Soviet and Nazi symbols: Selling a Soviet souvenir, or singing the Soviet national anthem(s) such as the International, would be punishable by up to five years in prison at individual “crimes,” and up to ten years in prison at organizational crimes. Therewithal, with this law, the denial of “the criminal character of the communist totalitarian regime of 1917-1991 in Ukraine” shall be regarded as a criminal offence by the Ukrainian state (Shevel 2016: 1). The second law, *The Legal Status and Honoring of Fighters for Ukraine’s Independence in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, enables the recognition of nationalist groups, such as the OUN and UPA, as the “freedom fighters” and “national heroes” of Ukraine, and makes any questioning about the legitimacy of these organizations’ actions a criminal offence (Luhn 2015). Also, the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) was banned, the use of the term

“communist” was also explicitly forbidden, and the Communist Party of Ukraine justifiably rejected to change its name, emblem or its party constitution (Amnesty International 2015). In addition, the post-Maidan Ukrainian state introduced decrees for renaming of thousands of localities by removing Soviet-period names (Shevel 1: 2016). According to this amendment, there are many locations requiring the aforementioned renaming, particularly in the southern and eastern oblasts of Ukraine.<sup>43</sup>

In the light of these legal developments, as Shevel states, the laws would much more intensify the existing domestic divisions in Ukraine through sharply marginalizing, or alienating the southern and eastern oblasts from the rest of the country, as this action have a strong potential for significant reactionary outputs in the times of the existing civil war, and the territorial disputes with Russia as well as economic depression (2016). As a matter of fact, separatist struggles in the east and south, and the decision to the secession of the Crimean people were a consequence of the oppressive nationalizing and re-ethnicizing policies of the post-Maidan Ukrainian state.

Moreover, although the relevant law claimed to ban both Soviet and Nazi symbols in rhetoric, as can be seen in the examples above, the Ukrainian state administrations and the elites did not only allow Nazist, xenophobic and fascist discourses and symbols, but also promoted and encouraged them at the state level such as in the parliament or in the Ukrainian Armed Forces under the roof of the Ministry

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<sup>43</sup> The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory claims that 877 places required to be renamed by 21st November 2015. Some of the regions in the renaming list of the Ukrainian state as follows that in the eastern part of the country: Donetsk with 10 cities, 27 towns, and 62 villages; Dnipropetrovsk with 3 cities, 10 towns, 71 villages; and Kharkiv with 27 towns and 70 villages. Next on the list are eastern and southern regions: Crimea with 1 city, 11 towns, 54 villages; Odessa with 2 cities, 4 towns, 49 villages; and Lugansk with 6 cities, 25 towns, 23 villages (Shevel 2016: 2).

of Internal Affairs. Within this context, these actions should be considered as a new and distinctive - but an oppressive - phase of Ukraine's nation-building process by favor of the state apparatus and the political/ruling elites.

In Ukraine, new kinds of myths of the post-Soviet historiography are thrown into sharp relief via the state apparatus and the elites by turning them into new symbols. The most conspicuous reflection of these symbols regarding the reinterpretation of the post-Soviet historiography can be also seen in the national holidays and monuments which were erected in commemoration of the nationalist organizations such as the OUN and UPA. For instance, under the presidency of Yushchenko, the deputies of the Lvov Regional Council and Chernivtsi Regional Council (National News Agency of Ukraine 2008) officially declared the year of 2008 as "the Year of Stepan Bandera," one of the ultra-nationalist leaders of the OUN and UPA, as the monument remembrance to Bandera was erected in Lvov in 2007 (Rossolinski-Liebe 2014: 496). As a reaction to these developments mostly in the Western Ukraine, many monuments and statues, such as "the Memorial for the victims killed by OUN-UPA" or the monument "the Shot in the Back," were began to be unveiled by the initiations of the political elites and local administrations of the relevant regions in the eastern and southern oblasts of Ukraine, where the ethnic Russian population mostly lived, notably under the guidance of Simferopol within the borders of Crimea, and other ethnic Russian-populated oblasts (Dembinska 2010: 312). On the other hand, surviving members and the survivor leadership cadre of the OUN and UPA were nationally claimed as "heroes" and became the symbols of "the resistance for independence" myth through the new interpretation of historiography and the state policies under the Yushchenko presidency (Luciuk 2007; Lisova 2006).

Although Yanukovych had abandoned all official commemorations of the UPA during his presidency between the years of 2010-2014 (Katchanovski, Kohut, Nebesio and Yurkevich 2013: 215), the post-Maidan government under Poroshenko maintained to follow the restoration of ethnic Ukrainian nationalist policies through explicitly attacking on communism, Russian components of the country and history in order to create the national identity of Ukraine without a Russian influence. Within this context, it is clear that the political elites of post-Maidan Ukraine aim to reinvent the Ukrainian, and to remove all reminders of the Soviet socialism. Regarding this issue, the words of Kiev deputy mayor Oleksiy Reznikov very well reflect the attitudes of the Ukrainian state and the elites as follows: “Elimination of communism has to happen in people’s heads and consciousness...Symbolism irritates some people and creates a certain aura that we need to get rid of” (The Associated Press 2015). In this direction, post-Maidan Ukrainian state administration attempts to erase “the Great Patriotic War” from the textbooks in Ukrainian education (Tyzhnia 2014), while Poroshenko, in a speech regarding the Independence Day of Ukraine, nationalistically used the term “the Patriotic War” for the current war in Ukraine in 2014.<sup>44</sup> The same controversial fluctuations on the post-Soviet historiography such as Holodomor, national holidays, monuments and commemorations can be seen in all Ukrainian state administrations since its independence, until 2014.

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<sup>44</sup> Poroshenko says that “The events of recent months have become for us a real war, even if undeclared. Perhaps it will enter history books as the Patriotic War of 2014. A war against foreign aggression, for Ukraine, for her freedom, for honor and glory, for independence. It is a Patriotic War because all have risen up for the defense of the country: from children to the elderly. The war for freedom has become a national movement. I am convinced that the battle for Ukraine will end successfully for us thanks to the national solidarity multiplied by the courage and heroism of our soldiers” (Tyzhnia 2014).

In sum, all these efforts after the process of Euro-Maidan imply a new stage for the promotion of the post-Maidan Ukrainian state's legitimacy under the heading of the reinterpretation of the Soviet period through rewriting the history with the dominance of the Ukrainian nationalism, de-Russification and de-communization. These kinds of policies of the Ukrainian state administrations to shape the national identity through the cultural and historical reinterpretation of the past as a part of "nationalizing" process did not turn into a state policy independently of the governmental changes, but were influenced by the changing state administrations and the political balance of power until the 2014 process of Euro-Maidan. In this sense, this should be totally regarded as a new phase for the post-Soviet Ukraine compared to the previous state administrations which were dominated by intense fluctuations between ethnic Ukrainian nationalism and civic nationalism, because with the self-determination of the peoples of the Eastern Ukraine and the Crimea, post-Soviet Ukraine is now on the verge of an irreversible road with its "pure" ethnic Ukrainian identity and the new stage of nation-building from de-Russification to the Ukrainization. The next section will discuss how these policies and discourses have had reactions in Crimea and Donbass to understand the role of the state and the elite in the emergence of secessionism.

## **Separatism in the South and East Ukraine: The Crimea and Donbass**

The civil war in the Donbass has been commonly presented in the Western-oriented and mainstream information channels as a consequence of Russia's military aggression against the post-Maidan government of Ukraine.<sup>45</sup> However, such interpretation leads to overlook the fact that the separatist demands in the South and East Ukraine (particularly in the Crimea and Donbass) emerged as a direct reaction to the violent nationalizing and re-ethnicizing policies of the new post-Maidan regime in Ukraine along with a mass mobilization under the guidance of local elites in these territories. In this regard, internal factors including the clash of interests, by extension political and economic motivations, of pro-Ukrainian/EU and pro-Russian elites in the Western and Eastern Ukraine have a crucial role in the civil war in Ukraine.

Nationalism, at this point, is used as one of the main instrument of the Ukrainian political elites to be able mobilize the masses against so called "Russian threat," while separatist movements in Donbass show much more heterogeneous character, which also contains anti-fascist, anti-oligarchical and anti-neoliberal discourses and practices. Although particular dangerous tendencies of Russian nationalism emerged as a reaction to chauvinist Ukrainian nationalism in the early

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<sup>45</sup> For instance, the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations and the the US Ambassador Samantha Power, evaluates these separatist movements in the region as the intervention of Russia in Crimea, specifying that "there was nothing grassroots-seeming about it" (For details, see: 'This Week Transcript: Ambassador Samantha Power' (2014), *ABC News*, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2014, available: <http://abcnews.go.com/ThisWeek/week-transcript-ambassador-samantha-power/story?id=23293462&page=2>; Besides, Three ex-U.S. ambassadors of Ukraine, charged the Russian Federation in a joint article with "running an insurgency in Ukraine's east" and recommended that an order from Putin would oblige separatists to leave their arms (For details, see: Pifer, S., Herbst, J. And Taylor, W. (2014) 'Does Putin Want War?', *The National Interest*, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014, available at: <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/does-putin-want-war-10305>

period of anti-Maidan, international character of the region substantially managed to balance Russian nationalism, at least in the streets (Shapinov 2015). Yet, the course of the events has shown that political elite, by extension pro-Russian oligarchy, is still effective at governmental level of self-proclaimed people' republics in Donetsk and Luhansk.

Theories of elite-manipulated conflicts emphasize the decisive role of political leadership which corresponds to the ruling political elites in Ukraine as well as the oligarchic clans (Matuszak 2012; Melnykovska and Schweickert 2008; Graham 1999). This crucial role of the elite firstly provides the regulation of discursive logic of the conflict; secondly financial and organizational resources of the parties in the conflict; and lastly coordinating the first steps of violent acts to be able to mobilize more supporters for the relevant ethnic or political group. However, in the Eastern Ukraine, although political elites (particularly pro-Yanukovich Party of Regions) had a significant role in the coordination and triggering of anti-Maidan protests and separatist movements, their role was mostly balanced in the course of the events by the people of Donetsk and Luhansk (Kudelia 2014: 5). Despite the expectations of Ukrainian media and post-Maidan political elites, anti-Maidan movement did not lose its intensity after the coup d'etat, but transformed itself into a form of people's resistance against the repressive policies of post-Maidan government from a formal phenomenon supported by pro-Russian elites (Litovchenko and Muradyan 2014: 77). From this aspect, contrary to the emergence of Euro-Maidan protests, the role of political elites in anti-Maidan and separatism in the Southeastern Ukraine shows discrepancies in terms of its motivations and intensity.

Pro-Russian opposition elites to the post-Maidan government also utilized particular discourses to mobilize the masses in the East and South Ukraine. The Party of Regions and Yanukovich as well as the Moscow have presented the post-Maidan government as “fascists” and Maidan as ‘a coup’ (Kudelia 2014: 5). The Party of Region used military-related and warlike symbols during the anti-Maidan protests such as the Ribbon of St. George<sup>46</sup> as an identity marker specifying the anti-fascist character of Donbass as distinguished from nationalist character of the Western Ukraine (Kudelia 2014: 5). Besides, it should also be said that although Donbass communists have a very significant role in the armed struggle against the post-Maidan Ukrainian government, Moscow and pro-Russian nationalist elites of Donbass have a deep fear for a social revolution by these communist cadres in the region which could be spread across the border. Therefore, the Russian Federation along with pro-Russian political elites of Donetsk and Luhansk tried to suppress communist and working class movements (i.e socialist Prizrak Brigade whose leader Alexey Mozgovoy was suspiciously assassinated in 2015) which demand seizing the control and ownership of

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<sup>46</sup> The ribbon of Saint George is a military symbol in Russia which consists of black and orange striped-color pattern. It is historically regarded as a component of many military decorations awarded by the Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union and contemporary Russia. Although the ribbon of Saint George had no significant value for the public sphere (Goncharova 2015), it began to be revived by the year of 2005, as a reaction to the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (Shevchenko 2015). During conflicts in 2014, in Ukraine, the symbol was used by pro-Russians and some anti-Maidan separatist groups, particularly in the southern and eastern oblasts of Ukraine as a symbol of separatist sentiment. See: ‘Kyiv Ditches Separatist-Linked Ribbon As WWII Symbol’, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014, available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-ukraine-st-george-ribbon-wwii-commemoration/25375013.html>; For more details, see: Goncharova, O. (2015) ‘Ukraine breaks from Russia in commemorating victory’, *Kyiv Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015, available at: <http://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/kyiv-post-plus/ukraine-breaks-from-russia-in-commemorating-victory-388068.html>; Shevchenko, V. (2015) ‘Russia awash with symbols of WW2 victory’, *BBC News*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015, available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32650024>; Kashin, O. (2015) ‘Hunting swastikas in Russia’, *Open Democracy*, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015, available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/oleg-kashin/hunting-swastikas-in-russia>

private enterprises, nationalization, or voicing anti-capitalist and anti-oligarchic slogans (Kagarlitsky 2014).<sup>47</sup>

From this point of view, it is clear that pro-Russian elites of Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics embrace particular oppressive policies against any kinds of opponents, even if these opponents are in mass struggle against Kiev government in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. This peremptory attitude of the Novorossiia elite firstly revealed itself in the process of the first general elections on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2014. The Communist Party was banned from participating the elections due to allegedly "many mistakes in submitted official documents" and pro-Russian leaders were brought into the forefront (Hyde 2014). After the exclusion of the communists from the People's Soviet in the DNR, interestingly, Donetsk administration, mostly dominated by pro-Russian elites, began to pursue a process of de-communization almost as the post-Maidan Kiev government did. Contrary to Kiev, although particular cultural symbols and political figures such as Soviet emblems, hymns or Lenin monuments still stand, local communists of Donetsk have been expelled from practically everywhere. Moreover, in the early days of May 2016, two deputies of the Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic were expelled from the Donetsk council due to allegations that the aforementioned deputies did not follow the discipline of the ruling block and voted "against" a rule which was agreed by the entire clique in the Supreme Soviet, parliament (Kovalevich 2016). Then, on May 11,

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<sup>47</sup> Even if the leaders having sympathies for the pre-revolutionary monarchy and nostalgia for the Imperial Russia, such as Igor Strelkov, who is the military leader of the Donbass militias, were removed by the collaboration of Russia and pro-Russian nationalist elites of Donbass. See: Kagarlitsky, B. (2014) 'Eastern Ukraine people's republics between militias and oligarchs', *Links-International Journal of Socialist Renewal*, translated by Renfrey Clark, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2014, available at: <http://links.org.au/node/4008>

the local law-enforcement attempted to hinder a block of the Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic, which carries red flags and communist symbols, from playing a part in the rally in the Day of the Republic (Left Russia 2016). Yet, some of Donetsk politicians claim that these kinds of actions of pro-Russian nationalist in Donetsk is the prescription from the Kremlin to "suppress the communists" which can be a potential threat for Russian oligarchs as well as the interests of Moscow with their anti-oligarchic and anti-capitalist veins. The communists and progressive forces in Donetsk were one of the largest and most organized initiators of the Donbass insurrection against oppressive and fascist post-Maidan government to defend Lenin's monuments in 2014 and seizing local administrative buildings in the Donbass (Kovalevich 2016). In this respect, the words of a pro-Russian elite (incognito, "M.K") of DNR government explain very well the current situation in this issue:

It's simple, in the Republic there will be two public organizations, 'Donetsk Republic' and "Free Donbass"... Everyone else will just have to play along! The Communists in the last year were not allowed to register their list, and what they did was getting their people on Donetsk Republic's list, but had not ceased their political activities. Here's the decision of the political Council and removed. Here we will do as you're told and nothing else! (The Newspapers 2016).

Certainly, the ruling elites of the Donbass People's Republic (Novorossiya) have adopted particular clauses into its constitution that could lead to regard the people's republics as a continuation of the former order or the newly established Kiev regime such as the ban on abortion<sup>48</sup>, defense of private property<sup>49</sup>, the specification

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<sup>48</sup> According to article 3. "...the recognition, observance, respect and protection of [ human rights ] – is the duty of the DPR, state authorities and public officials and are guaranteed from the moment of conception.", and Article 12.1. enacts that "Fundamental rights and freedoms are inalienable and belong to everyone from the moment of conception."

<sup>49</sup> In terms of economic aspects, as it turns out that there will be no socialization or nationalization of private property in the current situation, at least for now. Although the struggle of left movements in the frontline, pro-Russian elites of the DNR administration did not follow anti-capitalist or anti-oligarchic policies due to the Russian influence. According to Article 5.1, "Private, state, municipal

of the Orthodox Church as the state religion and thus hostility to homosexuality<sup>50</sup> (Tait 2016). These kinds of policies of the Donbass elites, indeed, reflect not only their conservative, regressive and Russian nationalist impositions but also their methods and strategy, which would be one of the most challenging obstacles for the progressive forces including communists and working class movements (i.e. Miner's Division and Prizrak Brigade), as the aforementioned pro-Russian elites present themselves as a local proxies of the Kremlin. Russian nationalism and chauvinism in the ruling elite's discourse of the DNR administration also reflects itself in the Constitution of the Donetsk People's Republic. For instance, in the preamble of the Constitution, through a quite strong emphasis on Russian Orthodox religious, Russian ethnic identity, culture and tradition, it is written as follows:

...Establishment of a sovereign independent state, based on the restoration of a unified cultural and civilizational space of Russian World, on the basis of its traditional religious, social, cultural and moral values , with the prospect of becoming a part of "Greater Russia" as halo territories of the "Russian World (The Constitution of the Donetsk People's Republic 2014).

Here, Russian nationalism along with a strong affiliation to the religion –Russian Orthodoxy- is indicated as the fundamental basis for the new state. For instance, when the constitution is examined, the word "Russian World" and the emphasis on religion can be seen multiplexed times. In addition to this, many exclusive statements for non-Russian minorities can be seen in the constitution, such as:

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and other forms of property are recognized and equally protected in DPR." And according to Article 28.1. "The right of private property is protected by law."

<sup>50</sup> According to Article 31.3 of the Constitution, "any forms of perverted unions between people of the same sex are not acknowledged not allowed and will be prosecuted in DPR."

“...feeling itself like an integral part of the “Russian World” as Russian civilization ...” or

“...thinking about the indivisibility of fate of the whole “Russian World” and still willing to remain its partakers...” or

“...remaining committed to ideals and values of “Russian World” and honoring the memory of their ancestors ...”

According to Article 6.2 of the Constitution of the DPR, “public authorities in Donetsk People’s Republic while exercising its powers and performing of its duties, fully consider and respect traditional religious, social, cultural and moral values of ‘Russian World’.” At this point, it is definitely understood that the phrase, “Russian World,” along with Russian traditional religious –Russian Orthodoxy- and Russian values are used as a practical determinant in the administration and decision-making process at the state level. This is quite odd, because the people of the Donbass justifiably have decided their right to self-determination by the reason of nationalist and fascist oppression of the Kiev government. Yet, at the constitutional level, we see that the ruling elite of the Donetsk People’s Republic implement quite exclusionist, Russian nationalist and religious foundations in the establishment of the new state, whether it is reactionary to the nationalism of the Kiev regime or not.

As the meaning of the term, “Russian World” is minimized to “reunite with Great Russia, which is in fact today’s the Russian Federation, it is also referred to the claim of supremacy of those “traditional religious, social, cultural and moral values.” For instance, the Russian Orthodox Church under the Moscow Patriarchate is exalted and raised to the status of state religion in the constitution with these statements:

“...past experience and the role of Orthodoxy and Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) are accepted and respected , also as a backbone of ‘Russian World’.” And,

“...confessing the Orthodox Faith (Christian Orthodox Catholic faith of Eastern Confession) of Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) and recognizing its cornerstone of the ‘Russian World’ ...” ” A similar statement is seen at the Article 9.2. as follows:

“In Donetsk People’s Republic leading and dominant belief is the Orthodox faith (Christian Orthodox Catholic faith of Eastern Confession) professed by the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate).” Also Article 4.2. exemplifies this situation:

“Social policy of Donetsk People’s Republic aims to create conditions, ensuring a decent life and free human development, people’s welfare, access to the main material and spiritual benefits, based on understanding of the traditional religious, social, cultural and moral values.”

Besides these constitutional clauses that support pro-Russian identity of the DPR, the ruling elites of Novorossiya republics, contrary to the Kiev regime, aim to provide an equality between Russian and Ukrainian languages. For instance, according to Article 10.1, Russian and Ukrainian languages are determined as the state languages, and Article 19.2 enacts that “everyone has the right to use their native language in language of communication, upbringing, education and creativity.” However, this equality in the language issue could not be reflected to particularly the spheres of religion and nationality because of the acute emphasis on Russian Orthodox

religion and Russian nationalism through exclusionist discourses with the encomia praising “the Greater Russia” and the traditions of “Russian World.” The political discourses and slogans of most of Novorossiia political elites and their Russian nationalist followers have yelled of Russian imperial expansionism. In particular cases, this attitude transforms itself into a direct support for “Great Russian Chauvinism,” embracing fantasies of “Russian tanks in Lvov”<sup>51</sup>, a thinly-veiled hatred of everything Ukrainian, and expressions regarding the “artificial nature of the Ukrainian state” (Buzgalin 2015: 342). Such kind of nationalistic stimulations at the state and constitutional levels by the hands of the ruling elites of the DNR do not contribute an emancipation of the Eastern Ukrainian peoples; contrarily, it creates a second edition of the post-Maidan Kiev regime, or Putin’s Russia where the combination of bourgeois and national-religious values create a right conservative, regressive and clerical state that would suppress and disappoint the struggles of the progressive forces in the Donetsk and Luhansk.

All these developments, particularly beginning with the process of 2014 General Elections in the DNR and LNR, firstly show that democratic, anti-fascist and anti-oligarchic discourse and volitions of the rebels in Donbass are under threat. Although the existence of progressive forces in the struggle against the Kiev government on the streets, there are also major forces which do not desire the formation of people’s republics as a model of revolutionary and progressive anti-capitalist development and people’s democracy within the Kremlin as well as the administrations of Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics. In these self-proclaimed

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<sup>51</sup> Lvov is the largest city in the Western Ukraine, and is historically the center of Ukrainian nationalism.

republics, pro-Russian elites composing the state administration continuously attempt to remove the anti-fascist and anti-oligarchic inclinations of the mass movement with ancestral ideas such as Russian nationalism and Great Russian chauvinism; hence they mislead the potential of the masses onto a path which is profitable for the presence of old elites along with both Russian and the Eastern Ukrainian oligarchs (Butterfield 2014).

In conclusion, by the Euro-Maidan protests in 2013-2014 against Yanukovich government, and the eruption of civil war in East Ukraine, the Ukrainian state and the political elites as well as the formation of Ukrainian territories entered into a new phase in the direction of the establishment of an “ethnically pure” Ukrainian state through legal amendments in language policies, media, minority rights, rewriting the history and de-Russification of ethno-cultural context of Ukrainian society along with an explicit collaboration with fascist and Neo-Nazi political organizations at the governmental and constitutional levels. Such an intensified attack on ethnic Russian minority in all sphere of cultural and political life for the sake of “nationalizing” process right after the Euro-Maidan paved the way for the break-up of Ukraine through the exacerbation of separatist movements of Russian-speaking minorities living in Crimea, and Eastern and Southern Ukraine where is now called Novorossiia constituted by the Donetsk People’s Republic and Lugansk People’s Republic. However, the course of events after the separation of the aforementioned regions showed that peoples of the Eastern and Southern Ukraine (Novorossiia) could not achieve the emancipation through only seceding from the oppressive Kiev regime. Despite the existence of progressive forces such as communists and socialists in the frontlines of Donbass, the administrations of self-proclaimed people’s republics in

Donetsk and Luhansk are under hegemony of pro-Russian nationalist elites who intensely aim to promulgate regressive and right-wing conservative vein through Russian chauvinist and nationalist (both in terms of ethnic and religious) discourses and constitutional regulations to be able to suppress these progressive forces at the state level. In this respect, for the future of the people of the Donbass, it should not be forgotten that Russian nationalism or chauvinism cannot be an alternative to Ukrainian fascism. Therefore, the struggle of progressive forces of the Donbass in the frontline for the sake of the establishment of a democratic government and internationalist political line in both Novorossiya, Ukraine and Russia is not only against the post-Maidan Kiev regime, but also against pro-Russian nationalist ruling elites of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics who prevail a nostalgia for the Russian Empire and the idealization of "Great Russian chauvinism." And it is obvious that the political struggle against Russian nationalism and chauvinism will not be easier than the war against the Kiev regime.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

In this thesis, the role of the state and Ukrainian political elite's transformation in the resurrection of ethno-political conflicts in post-Soviet Ukrainian space has been analyzed. To do this, I initially formulated the primary research question of how the Ukrainian political elite's management -in relation to local and national Russian elites and Russian minorities- of the existing ethno-political attitudes at the state level had influenced the evolution of Ukraine crisis from so called "peaceful" protests to seemingly ethnic conflict. In addition to the first primary question, I also raised a second primary question which aims to investigate how the transition to post-socialist period has affected ethno-political polarization of Ukrainian society regarding the formation of a new ruling class to examine the impact of the newly emerging elite on the ethno-political disintegration after the transition of the independent Ukraine to neoliberal/capitalist world order. Apart from the primary questions, this dissertation aimed to answer the following subordinate questions to be able to understand the current conflicts and ongoing civil war over the role of the state and political elites through the instrumentalization of nationalism and ethno-political differences in Ukrainian society: Firstly, what kind of policies have been implemented by Ukraine

political elite which can be regarded as inflaming nationalism among Ukrainians and Russian minorities? Secondly, what were the attitudes of pro-Russian political and economic elites in the conflict between Ukraine government and the Eastern/Southern Ukraine, particularly People Republics of Lugansk and Donetsk?

Depending upon the research questions of the dissertation, I argued that with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the transition path to capitalism, newly independent Ukrainian state has experienced the emergence of a new capitalist class along with the political and economic elites –oligarchs- at the state level. This emerging new capitalist class and the elites instrumentalized nationalism by the manipulation of ethnic affiliations among Ukrainian society in favor of the creation, and then continuation, of the unitary nation-state formation needed for the interests of both the state and the elites themselves, even if the interests- or political and economic motivations- of the elites and the behavior of the state apparatus can differ from each other in particular periods such as in early independence period under Kuchma and Kravchuk administrations. As a consequence of this, post-Soviet Ukraine 23 years later from its independence, began to suffer from a bloody ethno-political-based civil war in its eastern territories with ethnic Russian minorities.

This thesis attempted to explain this trajectory and came to the following conclusions regarding the role of the state and political elite in the resurrection of ethno-political conflict and nationalism in post-Soviet Ukrainian space: Firstly, Ukrainian case has shown that civic nationalisms may be ethnicized under particular circumstances, especially depending on the attitudes of the elite fractions and the state policies over ethnic minorities and political segments in society. Therefore,

“nationalizing nationalisms” of the states should be taken into consideration as a process, and examined in their own historicity.

Secondly, this process shows that ethnic differences may turn into ethnic and/or political conflicts under certain conditions. If an ethnic minority living in a country has strong political affiliations to the external homeland (which is Russia in the case of Ukraine), it also has a strong identity consciousness. Depending on this strong identity consciousness, minority group makes certain political demands, especially when it felt under a threat and found a support from the external homeland. Yet, the presence of this kind of an external homeland and the identity perception or consciousness of minority group cannot be sufficient alone to ignite an ethno-political conflict in a society. At that point, nationalist discourses of the elites and the state policies over minority group practiced by these ruling elite fractions become the determinative in the emergence of violence and secessionist movements against the nationalizing state, as I discussed throughout the thesis but in detail particularly in Chapter III.

Thirdly, Ukrainian case indicates that nationalism manipulation of the elites does not only result into “nationalizing nationalisms,” but also reaction of the minority groups. As a reaction to nationalizing nationalism of the state apparatus, minority group, and the political elite of this minority group, promotes its own nationalism against nationalizing nationalism that threatened the existence of the aforementioned minority as I discussed throughout the thesis but specifically in Chapter III regarding Crimea and Donbass region.

Fourthly, the Ukrainian case shows that the countries that are historically affiliated with “civic nationalism” can transform into “ethnic nationalism” when the necessary conditions are met. As a result of Maidan process and its impacts on ethno-political separation between the Eastern/Southern and the Western/Central Ukraine by the year of 2014, contemporary post-Soviet Ukraine cannot be classified as a civic state anymore, to the contrary most of scholars claim (e.g. Brubaker 1996; Kuzio 2001a). Based on Brubaker’s “triadic nexus” model and “nationalizing states” concept, the ongoing civil war between nationalizing/re-ethnicizing post-Maidan Ukrainian state and the pro-Russian political elites in the Donbass make impossible to define today’s Ukraine as a country “where the boundaries between the respective titular nation and ethnic Russian minorities, which form the most populated minority in Ukraine, is blurred” contrary to Brubaker (1996)’s argument. To explain the historical conditions under which a seemingly “civic nationalism” may evolve into “ethnic nationalism,” I focused on the elites’ role in competing for the control of the state and installing nationalism in accordance with their interests. To understand the difference among periods when the elite pursue a civic nationalism for its own long term interest, periods when a state could not be fully controlled by the elite and therefore giving mixed messages of ethnic and civic nationalism, and the periods when one group and therefore one form of nationalism gets dominance, I brought a concept of the state which follows some policies on nationality question independently of the interests of dominant class for a particular period. In this state conceptualization, the state has been an apparatus serving the interests of the ruling class in the long-term particularly during the period of fluctuations between ethnic and civic nationalisms in Ukraine, while the struggle for domination of the state and power takes place between

two elite fractions fundamentally polarized in ethno-political manners within the capitalist class: Pro-Russian political elite versus Pro-Western and European Union political elite. Despite the periodical fluctuations and variances between civic and ethnic nationalisms within the Ukrainian state administrations since its independence, firstly during the 2004 Orange Revolution, and lastly the 2014 Euro-Maidan process paved the way for sharp and irreversible fractures for both the territorial integrity and nationalism perception of the Ukrainian state and political elites in the direction of creating a purely ethnic, de-Russified, anti-communist and nationalizing state.

Fifthly, an independent Ukrainian state, with a Brubakerian sense, was formed as a nationalizing state. Post-Soviet Ukraine created its own ruling elite/oligarchs for the sake of the formation of a modern nation-state as a necessity for the consolidation of capitalism through nationalizing and re-ethnicizing policies in particular fields such as constitutional (1991 Civil Code and 1996 Constitution of Ukraine), linguistic (the Declaration of Rights of Nationalities in 1991, and the 1992 Law on National Minorities in Ukraine, law on education policy, regulations on mass media and cultural affairs), regional/economic policies over ethnic minority groups. However, during the post-independence period, even if the Ukrainian state is defined as a “nationalizing state,” the volume and intensity of this “nationalizing” periodically shows fluctuations between ethnic and civic nationalisms in line with the political motivations of the ruling elites dominated the state apparatus. Within this context, after independence, the Ukrainian state and the ruling elite intended both weakening the domination of ethnic Russian culture and language through imposing the idea of consent for being a national/ethnic minority on the Russophones on condition that securing their national and cultural rights by the state, and repressing the potential

reactions from the Russians and also international community about the minority rights. Despite the aforementioned periodical fluctuations, the post-Soviet Ukrainian state tries to restrain the dominant Russian identity to a certain extent, and follows particular policies with the intent of promoting the titular ethnic nationality, regardless of the ruling elites' policies toward civic or ethnic nationalisms; in a manner of speaking, as a "state reflex."

The state as a zone of class struggles is not only an apparatus which serves the interests of only a class in the beginning under all circumstances, but it acts as the bastion of the dominant class in the long-term. The ruling elites within the capitalist class and the newly formed state are in collaboration with each other independently from the interests of the dominant class in the cause of certain issues such as the national integrity and the continuity of the state apparatus. In addition, the struggle for domination of the state (or power struggles) may take place between two elite fractions ethno-politically polarized in principle within the capitalist class. Yet, under particular conditions, the state as the political organizer and unifier may promote political collaborations between these polarized elites within the capitalist fractions. Such a state behavior naturally affects the intensity of nationalisms practiced by the ruling elites, policies implemented by the state apparatus and elite discourses. Within this context, the post-independence period of Ukraine until the 2004 Orange Revolution should be evaluated as a period that the Ukrainian political elite refrained from a clash of interests among different elite groups because of the continuity and survival of the newly independent state as well as particular economic and political motivations such as Ukraine's economic dependence to the centre, Russia. For the prior principal of Ukrainian elites, survival of the new state, different political veins resorted making

collaborations through particular alliances and electoral blocs as “the political organizer and unifier.”

Sixthly, the Ukrainian case shows that ethnic differences may turn into ethno-political conflicts under certain circumstances. If an ethnic minority has a strong political affiliations to its external homeland - which is Russia in the case of Ukraine-, it also has a strong identity consciousness. And depending on this strong identity consciousness, minority group has particular political demands against the state promoting the titular identity, especially when it felt itself under a threat and found a support from the external homeland. However, such a kind of stance by the external homeland and only identity perception or consciousness of the minority group is not sufficient alone to inflame an ethno-political conflict. At that point, state policies and nationalist discourses of the polarized elites on national minorities practiced by these ruling elite fractions play a determinative role in the emergence of conflicts and separatist volitions against national homeland.

By the 2004 Orange Revolution, political polarization in Ukraine sharply increased, but it did not turned into an ethnic armed conflict, although there were serious indications about the promotion of ethnic Ukrainian nationalism, and de-Russification policies under Yushchenko government. The process of the 2013-2014 Euro-Maidan protests against Yanukovich paved to transform the compulsive state of collaboration, or conflictlessness, between two polarized political elites into violent tensions, and paved the way for a violent ethno-political armed conflict. With the post-Maidan Ukrainian regime composed of ethnic Ukrainian nationalists and fascist political elites at the state level, post-Soviet Ukraine entered into a new phase in the

direction of the establishment of an ethnically pure Ukrainian state. As the post-Maidan Ukrainian regime collaborates with neo-Nazi and far-right political elites in the Verkhovna Rada and upper levels of the Ukrainian state, it also heavily attacks on Russian values, culture, the Soviet past and communism through particular canals such as constitutional amendments in language policies, media, minority rights, de-Russification of all social sphere of life, and rewriting the history and cultural context of Ukraine. Such an intensified and violent “nationalizing” process following Euro-Maidan naturally paves the way for the break-up of Ukraine through triggering the separatist volitions of Russian-speaking minorities living in Crimea, and Eastern and Southern Ukraine where is now called Novorossiia composed of Donetsk People’s Republic and Lugansk People’s Republic. To sum up, ethnic Ukrainian nationalism, rising during the 2004 Orange Revolution, and peaking after the 2014 Euro-Maidan protests against pro-Russian Yanukovich, shows itself on the state and constitutional levels through instrumentalization by the ethnic Ukrainian nationalist political elites such as language policies, attacking on cultural symbols and nationalizing through rewriting the past, and an explicit collaboration and promotion of fascist/Neo-Nazi political factions along with their anti-Russian, anti-communist and xenophobic discourses.

Lastly, the Ukrainian case has shown that secessionist movements against the oppression of the state apparatus have a significant potential towards becoming “nationalizing.” In this respect, nationalizing nationalisms of the state ignite ethnic nationalism in secessionist movements, who rebelled against the oppression, due to strong effect of external homeland and the elite’s nationalist stance. As for the struggle against oppressive post-Maidan Kiev regime in Donbass, the course of events after the

separation of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts demonstrates that the peoples of Novorossiia could not reach a full-emancipation through only seceding from the Kiev regime and establishing their own republics. Although there is the presence of progressive and revolutionary forces in the frontlines of Novorossiia republics today, the administrations of self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics are heavily under dominancy of pro-Russian nationalist elites who potently purpose to spread their regressive and right-wing conservative ideologies through Russian nationalist and chauvinist discourses and constitutional regulations to be able to hold down these progressive forces at governmental level.

This thesis shows that there are three major lines in current Ukrainian conflict: On the one hand, oppressive post-Maidan government dominated by ethnic nationalist and fascist/neo-Nazi Ukrainian political elites; on the other hand, state administrations of self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics dominated by pro-Russian nationalist elites, who use the discourses on "Great Russian chauvinism" and religious emphasis in the name of Russian Orthodoxy, mostly oriented by the Kremlin. Brass claimed that ethnic conflicts and nationalism arise from complex and particular forms of interaction between the political leaderships of centralizing states and elites of mostly peripheral ethnic groups formed and determined by multiple internal and external loyalties and allegiances. When we examined ethno-political conflicts in Ukraine within this context, one of the most significant motivations of the ongoing civil war arises from the clash of interests between two polarized political elites: pro-Western, pro-EU and anti-Russian political elite strongly collaborated with fascist and neo-Nazi political construction on the one hand; and pro-Russian nationalist elites on the other hand.

So, although these circumstances fundamentally determine to ignite the wick of the conflict, it cannot explain all dynamics of the civil war in Ukraine. Therefore, repressive attitudes of the Ukrainian state, particularly the post-Maidan state administration, against ethnic Russian minorities in the East and South Ukraine also have an importance in terms of emergence of progressive forces in the side of separatists. Within this context, progressive forces such as socialists, communists and other working class movements in the struggle of Donbass people, which is mostly represented in the frontline rather the state administrations, come insight as a third party of this conflict. It is clear that separatist movement in the Eastern Ukraine is not homogenous, and it consists of different political veins. Thus, apart from the war against the Kiev, there is also an internal struggle for power in Novorossiia. It seems that the administrations of self-proclaimed republics in Donetsk and Luhansk are mostly under hegemony of pro-Russian nationalist elites, and they try to suppress any progressive forces that can be a threat for their interests as well as the commands of the Kremlin to keep the existing oligarchic, capitalist order.

The Ukrainian case shows particular patterns about the model of “triadic nexus.” First, the national minority group persecuted by the nationalizing state does not trigger an ethno-territorial conflict alone. Such a conflict between the minority and the nationalizing state is also ignited by the consensus between nationalizing state and external national homeland on citizenship and political status as well as the repression perception of the minority group. In other words, the politicization of an ethnic minority and the emergence of the idea of secessionism hinge upon the stances of nationalizing state and the external homeland state in post-Soviet states. Thus, nationalist discourses of the elites and the state policies over minority group practiced

by these ruling elite fractions become the determinative in the emergence of violence and secessionist movements against the nationalizing state.

Second, the relationship between national minority and kin-state depends on the particular interests of these actors rather than on primordial and deeply-rooted emotional bonds. For instance, in Ukraine, Russia as an external homeland state has played one of its biggest cards against the post-Maidan Kiev regime, which aims at breaking away from Russia and integrating with the West, by promoting separatism for practical reasons. It should not be forgotten that Ukraine has been one of the most significant region for Russia against the West in terms of geopolitical and economic interests. Therefore, while Russia can play its Russian minorities card against anti-Russia Ukrainian government to not to lose its most significant regional periphery, it does not take a similar stance towards the oppressed Russian minority in Estonia for instance... at least for now.

Third, changing behavior of the state apparatus regarding political interests and domination of power rather than economic motivations of the elites is one of the factors that determine the triadic relations between the nationalizing states, elites and the national minorities. Political elites having different political orientation within the capitalist class and the newly formed nationalizing state can be in collaboration with each other independently from the interests of the dominant class on particular issues such as the national integrity and the continuity of the state apparatus. The power struggles for the state may occur between two or more ethno-politically polarized elite fractions within the capitalist class as in the Ukrainian case. However, the state apparatus as the political organizer and unifier at the beginning promotes political

collaborations between these polarized elites within the capitalist fractions for a short-term. Yet, the state will act as the bastion of the dominant class, or take a stand with one of the fractions struggling for power in the long-term. A state behavior like this necessarily has an effect upon the intensity of nationalisms carried out by the ruling elites, policies followed by the nationalizing state and the elite leading the emergence of armed conflicts in the long-term.

Finally, the preferences of the oppressed minority regarding the home state should not be restricted between two alternatives as integration with the home state, or protest against it and annexed to the external homeland state. For the future of the people of Novorossiia, it should be once again remembered that neither “Great Russian chauvinism” nor nationalism can be an alternative to Ukrainian fascism, or ethnic Ukrainian nationalism. To be able to establish a democratic government and internationalist political order, the struggle of progressive forces in the frontlines of Donbass War should not be only against the oppressive Kiev regime, but also against pro-Russian nationalist elites of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics yearning a nostalgia for the Imperial Russia through the idealization of a composition of “Great Russian chauvinism,” nationalism and Russian Orthodox religion. And there is not the shadow of a doubt that the political struggle of these progressive forces against Russian nationalism and chauvinism will not be easier than the fight against the post-Maidan Kiev regime.

## APPENDIX

Map 1. The States of Post-Soviet Space



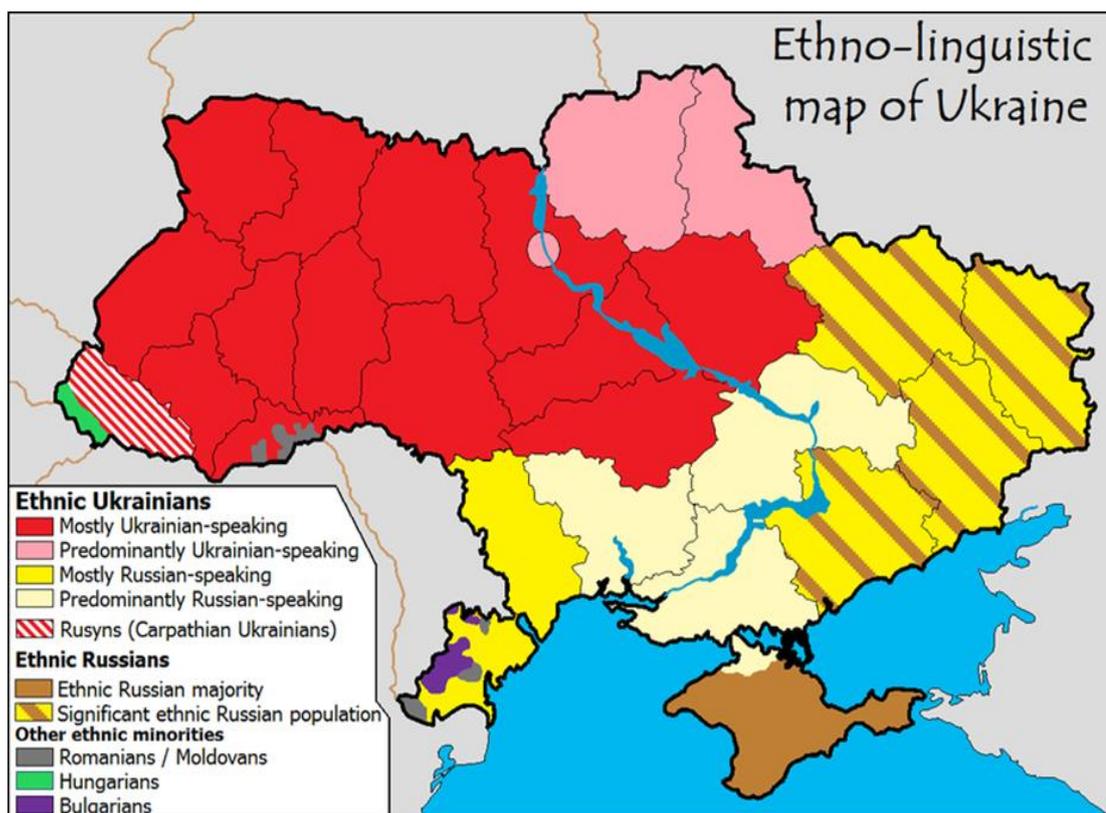
Source: The Library of the University of Texas, available at: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

Map 2. Languages of Ukraine



*Source:* 2009 Information from the Kiev National Linguistic University and data from 2001 Ukrainian Census

**Map 3. Ethno-Linguistic Map of Ukraine**

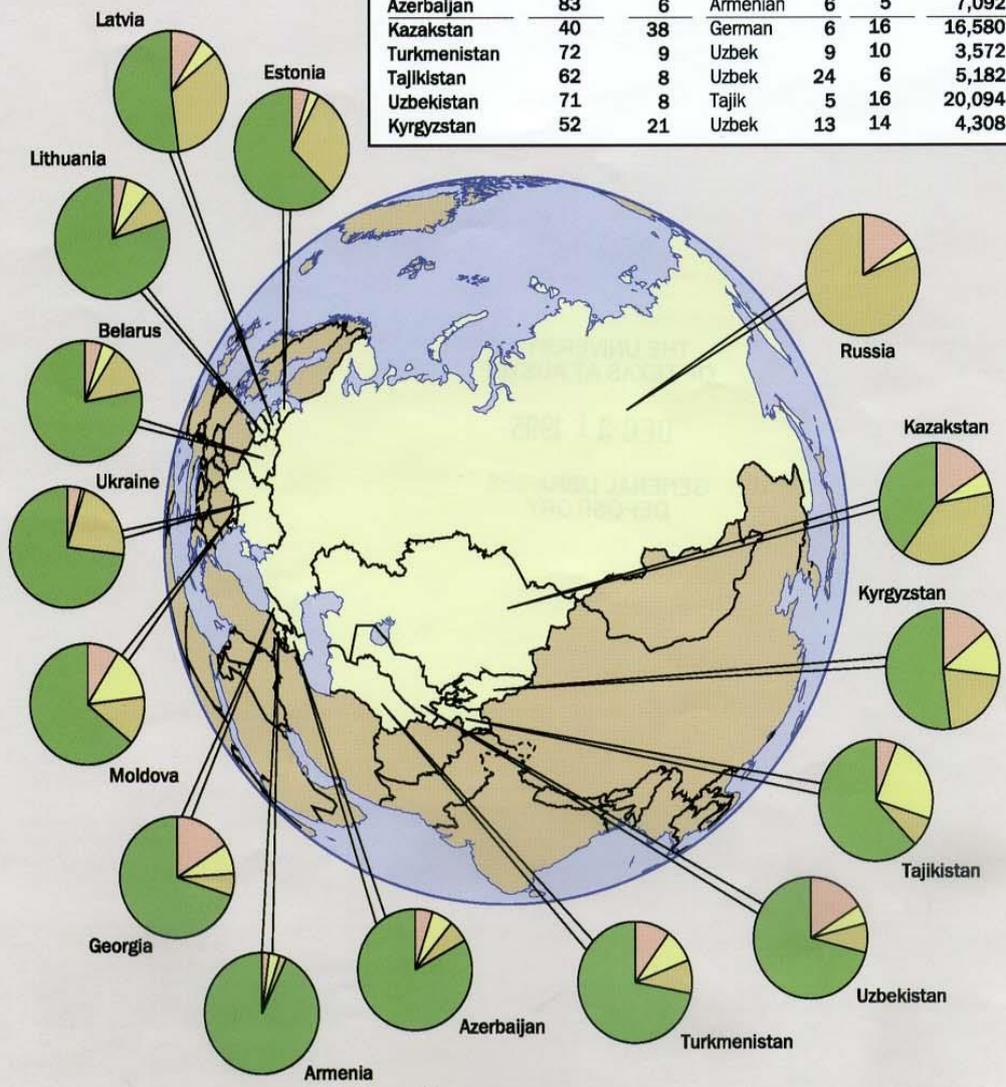


*Source:* Fisher, M. (2013) 'This one map helps explain Ukraine's protests,' *Washington Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

Map 4. Comparative Ethnic Groups in the Soviet Union by 1989

Comparative Ethnic Groups in the Former Soviet Union, 1989

Country	Titular Ethnic Group (percent)	Russian (percent)	Minor Ethnic Group (percent)	Other (percent)	Total Population <sup>a</sup> (thousands)
Russia	-	82	Tatar	4	147,553
Estonia	62	30	Ukrainian	3	1,573
Latvia	52	34	Belorussian	5	2,678
Lithuania	80	9	Polish	7	3,695
Belarus	78	13	Polish	4	10,195
Ukraine	73	22	Jewish	1	51,578
Moldova	64	13	Ukrainian	11	4,359
Georgia	70	6	Armenian	8	5,431
Armenia	93	2	Azeri	3	3,326
Azerbaijan	83	6	Armenian	6	7,092
Kazakhstan	40	38	German	6	16,580
Turkmenistan	72	9	Uzbek	9	3,572
Tajikistan	62	8	Uzbek	24	5,182
Uzbekistan	71	8	Tajik	5	20,094
Kyrgyzstan	52	21	Uzbek	13	4,308



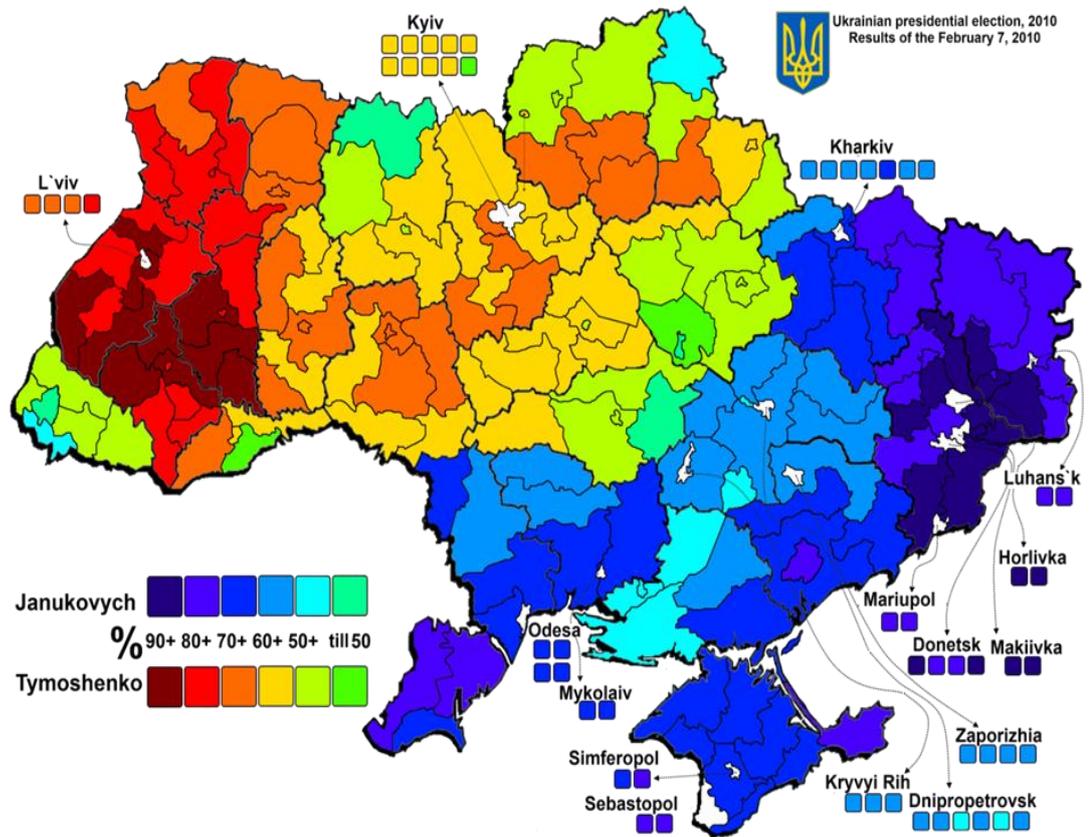
\* The 1989 Soviet census reported two different figures for the total population of each republic. One is based on the number of people in the republic on the day the census was conducted. This map uses the other, which is based on the number of people reporting the republic as their place of permanent residence. Source: US Bureau of the Census.

Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

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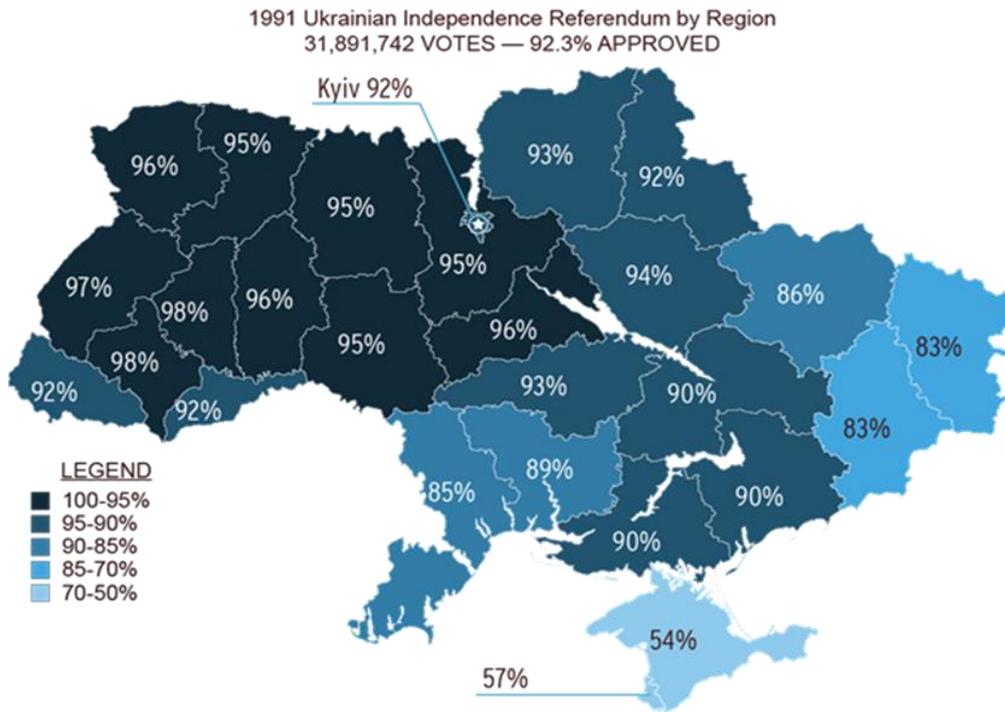
Source: The Library of the University of Texas, available at: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

Map 5. The Results of 2010 Presidential Elections



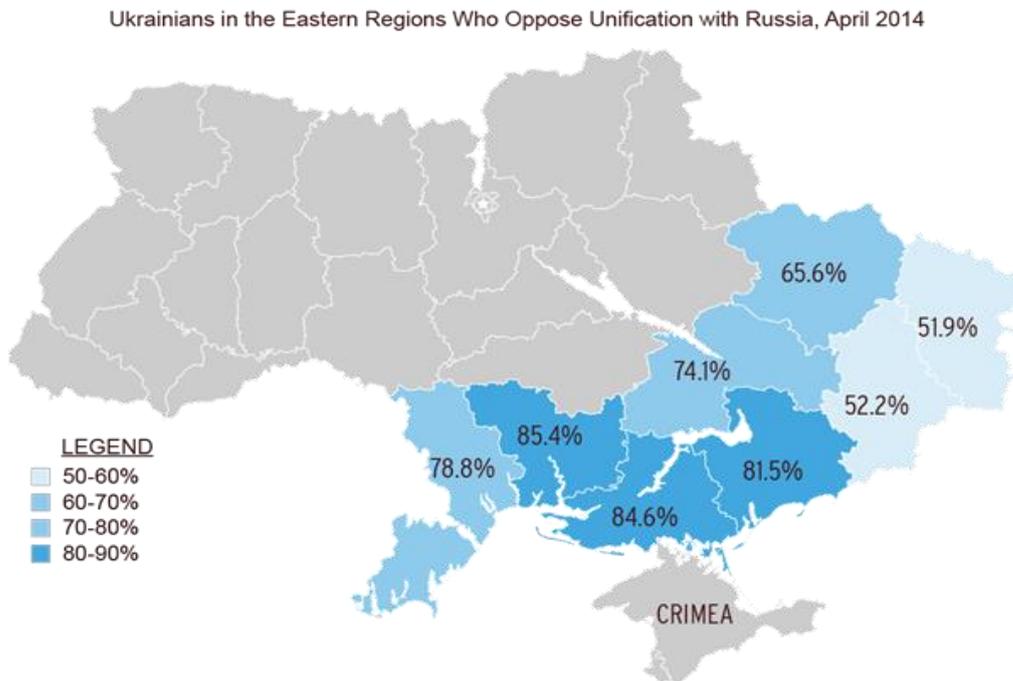
Source: By Vasył Babych (Own work) [CC BY 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

**Map 6. The Results of the 1991 Ukrainian Independence Referendum by Region**



Source: Data from Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council) of Ukraine and the State Archival Service of Ukraine

**Map 7. Ukrainians in the Eastern Region Who Oppose the Unification with Russia, 2014**



Source: Kiev International Institute Of Sociology (KIIS), The Views And Opinions Of South-Eastern Regions Residents of Ukraine

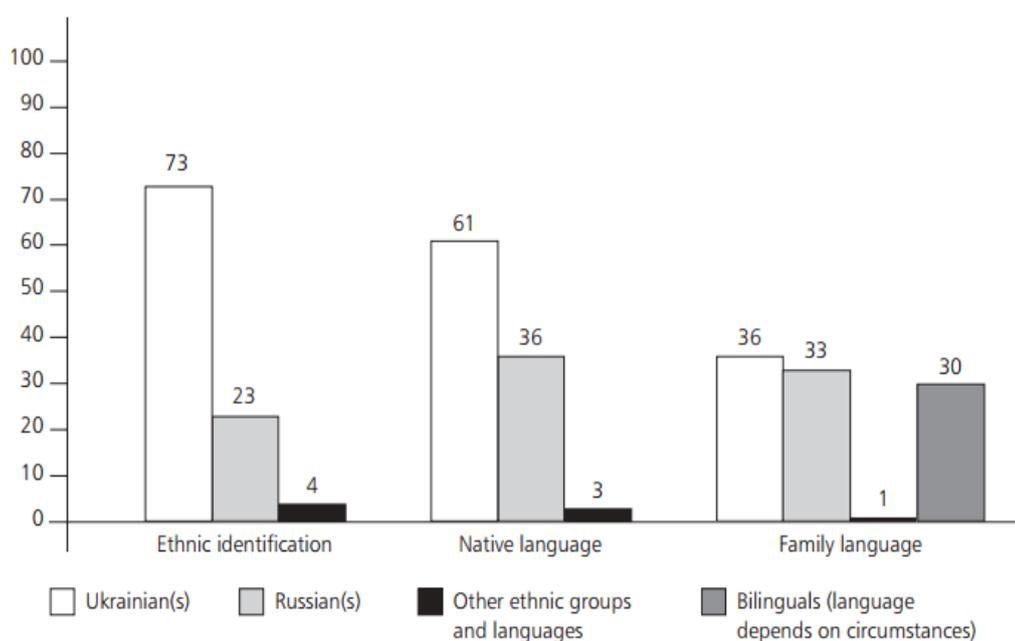
**Table 1. The Ukrainian Economy between the years of 1991-1999**

Economic Variable	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Inflation Rate (%)	161	2730	10155	401	182	40	10	20	19
GDP* Decline	-11.6	-13.7	-14.2	-23.0	-12.2	-10.0	-3.0	-1.9	-0.4
Total Employment (1989 =100)	98.3	96.3	94.1	90.5	93.3	91.3	88.8	87.9	85.8
Private Sector as Share of GDP	10	10	15	40	45	50	55	55	55
Foreign Investment, per person	n/a	\$3.40	\$3.98	\$3.18	\$5.26	\$10.42	\$12.46	\$14.86	\$9.92

\*Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the total value of all goods and services in a given country.

**Source:** Data From European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, Reported in Aslund, A. (2001) *Building Capitalism: Markets and Government in Russia and Transitional Economies* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

**Chart 1. Ethnolinguistic Self-Identification of the Ukrainian Society, 1994-1999.**



**Source:** Stepaneko, V. (2003) 'Identities and Language Politics in Ukraine: The Challenges of Nation-State Building' in Daftary, F. and Grin, F. (eds.) *Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Language Politics in Transition Countries* (Budapest, LGI Books), pp. 107-137.

**Table 2. Proportion of Students Instructed in the Ukrainian Language  
In Higher Education Institutions**

Regions	1995/1996 (%)	2002/2003 (%)
East	23	58.9
South	26.9	55.5
Centre-east	61.3	94.2
Centre-west	88.1	97.9
West	99.4	99.1
Kyiv city	67	97
Total Ukraine	51	78

*Source:* Ministry of Statistics. The data for both years were calculated from oblast data on the number of students and the language of instruction in higher education (Ministry of Statistics, 515, 516) in Janmaat, J.G. (2008) 'Nation Building, Democratization and Globalization as Competing Priorities in Ukraine's Education System,' *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 1-23.

**Table 3. Enrolment in Ukrainian-language Schools and the Share of Ukrainians in the Regional Population (in percentages)**

Regions	Schools, 1988/1989	Schools, 1996/1997	Schools, 2002/2003	Ukrainians in population, 1989	Ukrainians in population, 2001
East	15.5	26.7	45.4	59.3	66.4
South	23.4	33.5	49.3	52.5	58.3
Centre-east	60.6	79.0	93.8	88.2	91.3
Centre-west	77.1	89.9	97.4	88.9	92.6
West	88.0	94.5	95.5	89.2	92.2
Kyiv city	20.1	75.8	95	72.4	82.2
Total Ukraine	47.4	60.5	73	72.7	77.8

*Source:* Janmaat, J.G. (2008) 'Nation Building, Democratization and Globalization as Competing Priorities in Ukraine's Education System,' *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 1-23.

**Table 4. Transfers as a Share of Actual Revenue of the Regions, 1995-2000**

Regions	Transfers as % of total revenues						Share of region in total transfers						Regional ranking of amount received					
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Republic of Crimea	7.7	4.2	27.9	19.5	10.6	1.9	3.4	2.1	6.2	4.6	2.5	0.4	13	17	5	11	16/17/18	26
Vinnitszka	10.7	19.7	42.1	41.6	34.0	47.2	2.3	6.5	7.2	7.7	4.8	5.4	18	5	3	2	10	3/4
Volynska	35.0	33.0	52.5	50.5	49.8	52.6	5.0	5.7	5.2	5.9	4.9	4.1	9	9	8/9	6	7/8/9	14/15
Dnipropetrovska	15.0	6.0	12.8	0.1	5.3	3.7	10.8	4.6	7.4	0.1	1.8	1.0	1	11	2	23/24/25	22	24
Donetzka	8.0	7.7	1.4	0.1	9.8	7.5	6.7	7.7	0.8	0.1	4.6	2.9	3	3	23	23/24/25	11	19/20
Zhytomirska	36.7	31.5	55.3	54.1	46.8	56.4	9.4	10.4	9.3	10.6	7.3	5.6	2	1	1	1	3	2
Zakarpatska	38.8	32.9	59.0	49.6	50.3	49.1	5.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	7.7	4.5	5/6	4	4	3/4	2	11
Zaporizka	8.5	0.0	0.6	0.2	20.9	12.1	2.8	0.0	0.1	0.1	5.4	2.0	15	26/27	25	23/24/25	5	22
Ivano-Frankivska	7.9	3.8	26.6	23.1	23.5	52.5	1.7	1.0	3.5	3.9	3.8	5.3	22	22	14	13	13/14	5
Kyivska	16.7	5.8	28.8	10.2	15.9	30.6	5.1	2.3	5.2	2.8	5.1	4.7	8	15/16	8/9	17	6	7/8/9
Kirovogradska	31.2	25.0	43.0	44.9	42.9	48.9	5.7	6.2	4.8	5.5	4.9	4.0	5/6	7	11	8	7/8/9	16
Luhanska	14.4	10.7	13.3	15.4	9.4	28.9	5.3	5.5	3.4	4.3	2.3	4.7	7	10	15	12	20	7/8/9
Lvivska	0.6	6.3	13.4	10.0	9.3	41.4	0.3	2.9	3.2	2.9	2.5	8.0	27	14	18	16	16/17/18	1
Mykolayivska	13.0	5.2	19.4	13.4	16.3	30.7	2.7	1.3	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.9	16/17	20	19	18	21	19/20
Odeska	2.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	4.5	9.1	0.6	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1	1.7	26	26/27	26/27	22	25	23
Poltavska	8.2	1.0	0.7	0.1	24.9	24.8	2.2	0.3	0.2	0.0	6.3	3.1	19	24	24	26/27	4	18
Rivnenska	12.3	8.9	30.8	33.5	15.3	55.3	1.8	1.7	3.3	4.8	2.4	4.4	21	18	16/17	10	19	12
Sumska	4.0	8.4	9.4	14.4	7.4	44.8	0.8	2.3	1.3	2.3	0.9	5.4	25	15/16	21	19	26	3/4
Ternopylska	21.9	32.5	51.3	51.9	49.9	60.2	3.0	6.4	5.3	5.8	4.9	4.6	14	6	7	7	7/8/9	10
Kharkivska	3.8	5.7	3.0	0.1	24.3	18.9	2.1	4.1	1.2	0.0	8.2	4.1	20	13	22	26/27	1	14/15
Khersonska	22.5	31.3	40.6	38.9	36.3	46.0	3.5	8.2	5.1	5.2	3.8	3.9	12	2	10	9	13/14	17
Khmelnitszka	17.8	20.1	39.2	38.4	29.3	49.9	3.6	5.9	5.6	6.7	3.9	4.7	11	8	6	3/4	12	7/8/9
Cherkasska	17.8	2.8	21.8	31.3	17.9	41.3	4.9	0.8	3.6	6.5	3.0	4.2	10	23	12/13	5	15	13
Chernivetszka	25.0	28.9	43.8	37.8	24.4	47.9	2.7	4.4	3.6	3.6	1.6	2.8	16/17	12	12/13	14/15	23	21
Chernihivska	4.8	4.8	25.3	27.1	13.2	50.6	0.9	1.2	3.3	3.6	1.5	5.0	24	21	16/17	14/15	24	6
Kyiv	8.3	0.1	0.0	1.5	4.7	0.1	6.0	0.1	0.0	1.3	2.5	0.1	4	25	26/27	20	16/17/18	27
Sevastopol	15.0	13.5	27.8	20.4	7.4	22.8	1.2	1.6	1.5	1.2	0.3	0.8	23	19	20	21	27	25
Ukraine	12.2	9.8	16.9	14.3	18.3	23.4	100	100	100	100	100	100						

*Source:* 'Ukraine: Moving Forward on Regional Development and Regional Policy,' Country Unit and Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit Europe and Central Asia Region, *Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Trade and European Integration*, Report No. 25945-UA, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2002, pp. 26.

**Table 5. Ukraine's Trade Partners by the year 2014**

(regarding economic dependence to the centre, Russia)

Rank	Ukraine trading partner	↓ Total trade	Imports	Exports	Five-year sovereign CDS basis-point spread	Change in five-year CDS spread over three months
1	Russia	\$12,626.9M	\$7,726.5M	\$4,900.4M	266.3	105.0
2	China	3,108.1	2,273.2	834.9	100.9	26.5
3	Germany	2,344.4	1,869.6	474.7	24.1	-2.4
4	Poland	2,156.0	1,646.8	509.2	76.7	-7.2
5	Belarus	1,805.3	1,283.4	522.0	NA	NA
6	Turkey	1,764.5	596.9	1,167.6	264.3	41.6
7	Kazakhstan	1,277.3	421.3	856.1	215.0	32.6
8	Italy	1,258.2	734.4	523.8	138.3	-36.8
9	Hungary	1,119.1	774.3	344.9	249.8	-19.2
10	Egypt	1,012.9	40.2	972.7	485.0	-125.0

Source: Bloomberg

**Table 6. Legislation Votes on particular Issues in Ukraine by region, 1994-1997**

Vote	Percentage voting in favour				
	West	Central	East	South	Crimea
Restrictions on privatisation (1994)	21.3	52.6	64.2	58.3	36.3
Law on privatisation of small enterprises (1995)	48.8	65.7	61.0	47.6	46.7
Law on foreign investment (1996)	52.7	54.1	61.3	65.9	34.8
Approval of privatisation projects (1997)	51.2	30.5	33.3	28.9	84.2
Ukrainian as official language (1996)	93.5	65.1	41.3	48.8	13.0
Let localities determine language (1996)	7.5	22.9	35.6	46.3	8.7
Text of constitution (1996)	96.8	83.5	63.8	65.8	47.8
Agreement with World Bank (1997)	72.6	34.9	24.5	22.5	28.6
Treaty of Friendship with Russia (1997)	52.4	69.7	86.1	90.0	91.3

Source: Kubicek, P. (2000) 'Regional Polarisation in Ukraine: Public Opinion, Voting and Legislative Behaviour,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 2, pp. 273-294.

## TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

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Adı:

Bölümü:

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### TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:



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