



UNIVERSITY OF PALERMO
MIGRANTS, HUMAN RIGHTS
AND DEMOCRACY
SUMMER SCHOOL

16° Summer School, 27 June - 3 July 2022
Migrants, Human Rights, Democracy

War, nationalism, deserters and refugees: the Russia-Ukrainian conflict as case study

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Monday 27 June - h 11

Part I

Maidan, 2014: the starting point

Maidan (1)



- In November 2013, the President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovič refused to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union
- On the social networks, many citizens were stunned and angry: Ukraine, in their opinion, should be the «natural» EU partner

Maidan (2)

- Mustafa Masi Nayyem, a journalist of Afghan origin, posted a comment on his Facebook wall, in which he **called for a public protest in the center of Kyiv**



Maidan (3)



- This was the starting point of the so-called *Euromaidan*, the pro-EU protest which involved millions of ukrainian citizens

A protest “manipulated” by the opposition parties, or by western powers?



- Some columnists portray Maidan as a sort of **western conspiracy against the legitimate government of Ukraine**
- According to this interpretation, protesters were **manipulated** by the opposition parties, and even by neo-nazi and far-right movements

The “Two Maidans” (1)



- On November 24, the opposition parties – Yulia Tymoshenko’s Batkivschina party, Vitalij Klyčko’s «Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform» and the far-right «Svoboda» group – called for a demonstration in Kiev’s Europe Square (Yevropeiska ploshcha), close to the Maidan Nezalezhnosti: **a second protest started, led by the ukrainian opposition leaders.**

The “Two Maidans” (2)



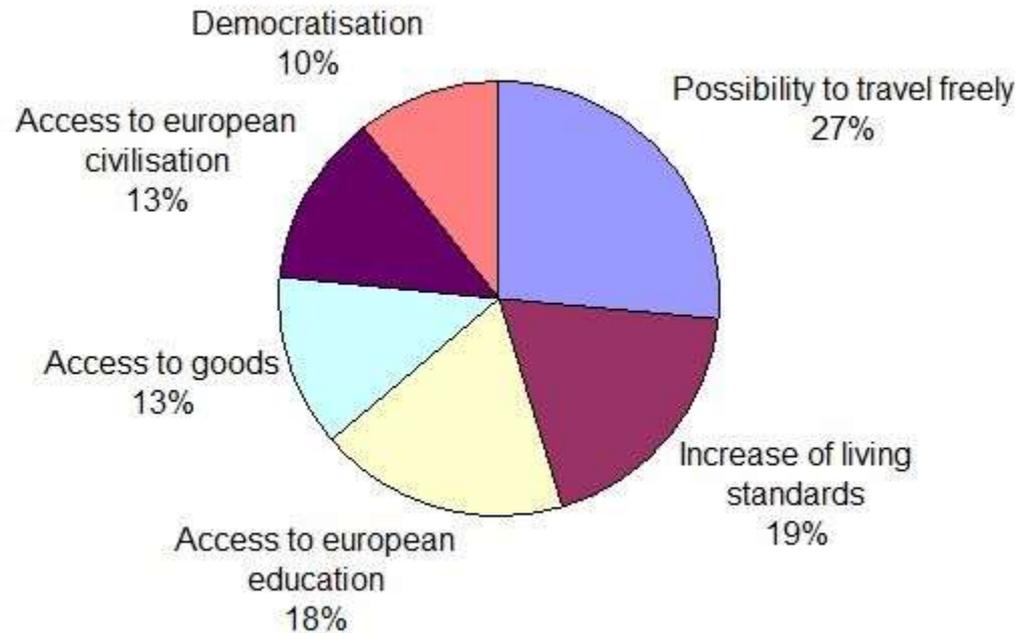
See: Igor Lyubashenko, *Euromaidan: From the students' protest to mass uprising*, in Klaus Bachmann and Igor Lyubashenko (ed.), *The Maidan uprising, separatism and foreign intervention. Ukraine's complex transition*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt 2014, pp. 61-85

- Thus, in this first period **there were two different «Maidan» movements**: the «real Maidan» – that is, the spontaneous protest against Janukovič, started in November 21 – and what we could define the «pseudo-Maidan» – the sit-in at Kiev's Europe Square, entirely led by the ukrainians opposition parties. The neo-nazi activists were not in the «real» Maidan

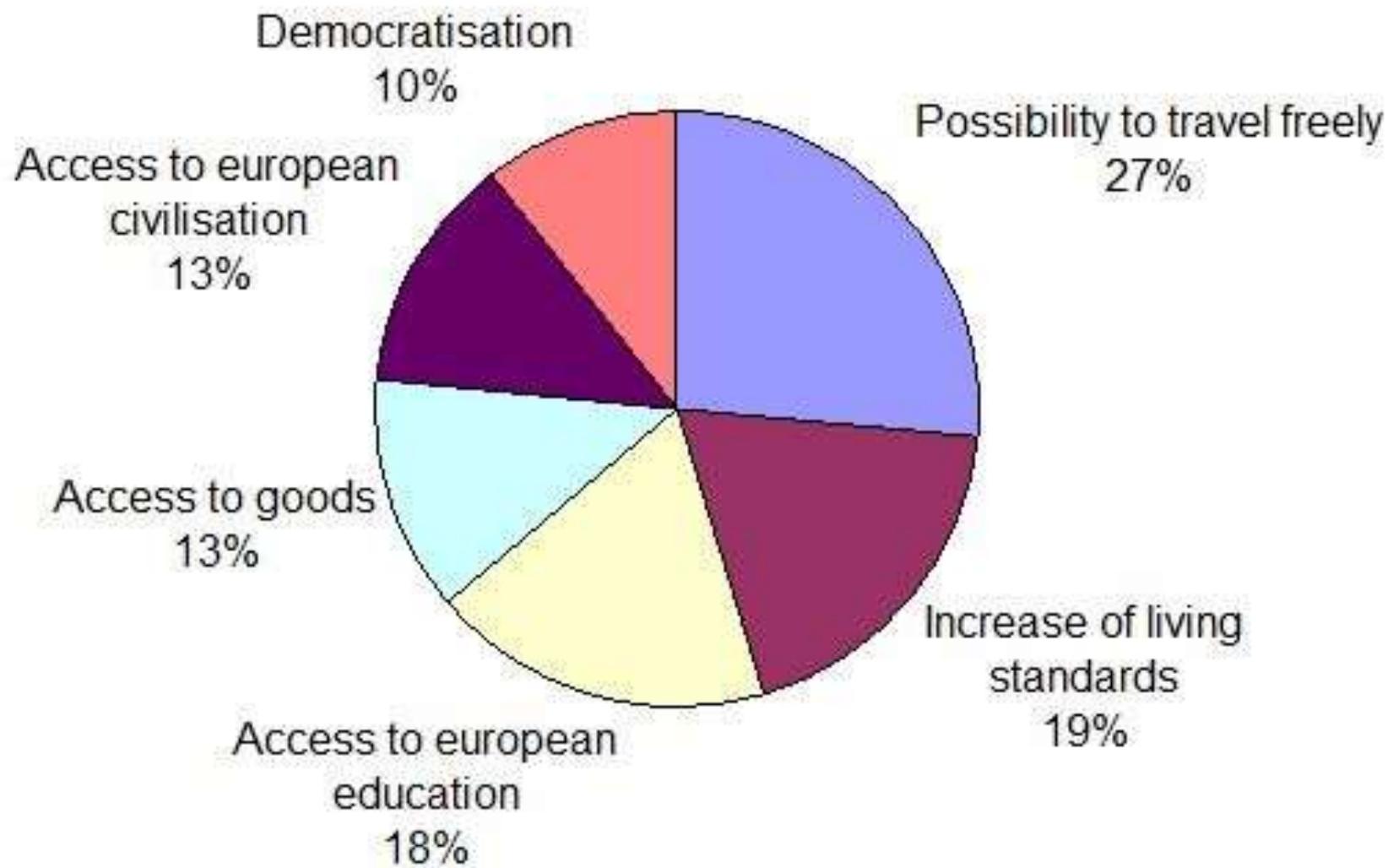
Why the European Union? (1)

- «As a 2011 opinion poll had shown, the main advantages of the European integration as seen by young people (aged 18–29) as being the following: Possibility to travel freely (46.1%), increase of living standard (32.6%), better access to European education (31.8%); better access to goods (21.9%). **Abstract benefits**, like an access to achievements of modern European civilisation and to democratisation **were mentioned by 22.9% and 18.2% respondents respectively**»

Why the European Union? (2)



Source: Фонд Демократичні Ініціативи, Молоді люди усіх регіонів однаково бачать переваги вступу України в ЄС. Результати загальнонаціонального опитування населення, 2013, https://www.irf.ua/files/ukr/programs/euro/eu_poll_ukr.pdf, p. 4



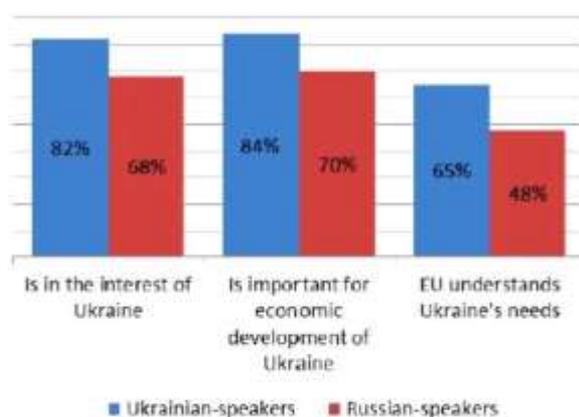
Only the European Union? (1)



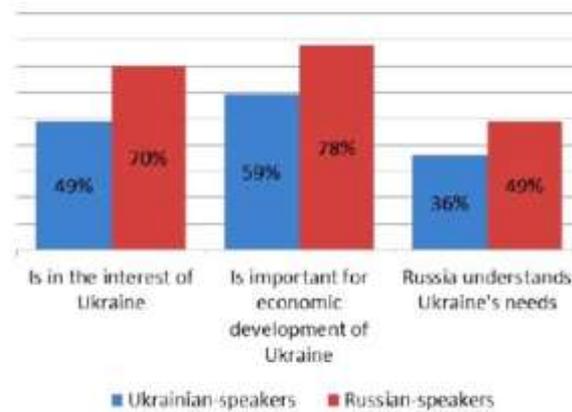
- Furthermore, for many Ukrainian citizens, **a closer cooperation with the EU was not in opposition to a closer cooperation with Russia**
- According to a survey carried out in 2013, both Ukrainian and Russian-speaking citizens were **in favor of a “multivectoral” policy**, that is, an economic cooperation with both Brussels and Moscow.

Only the European Union? (2)

Opinions on cooperation with Russia and EU



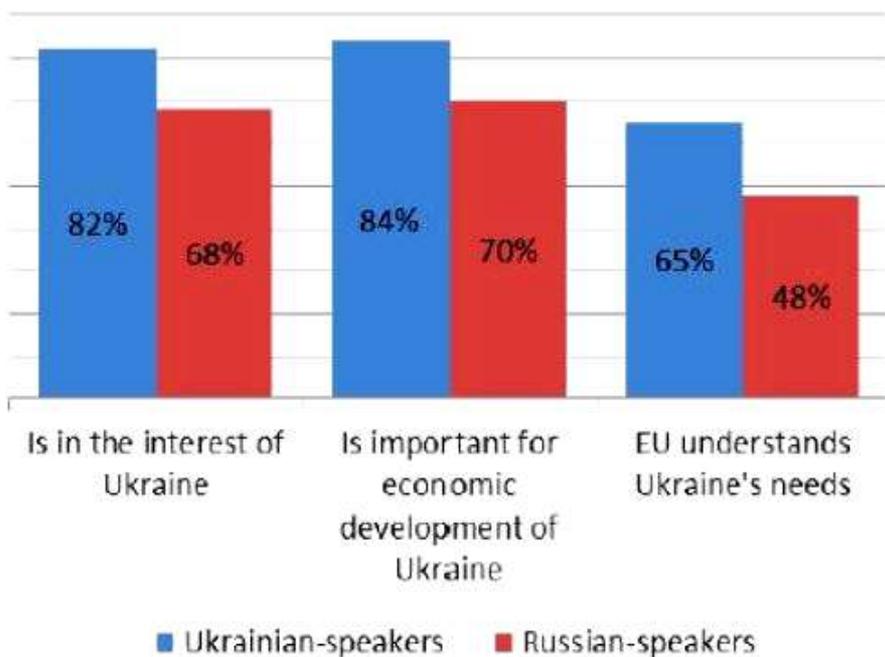
Opinions on closer cooperation with European Union



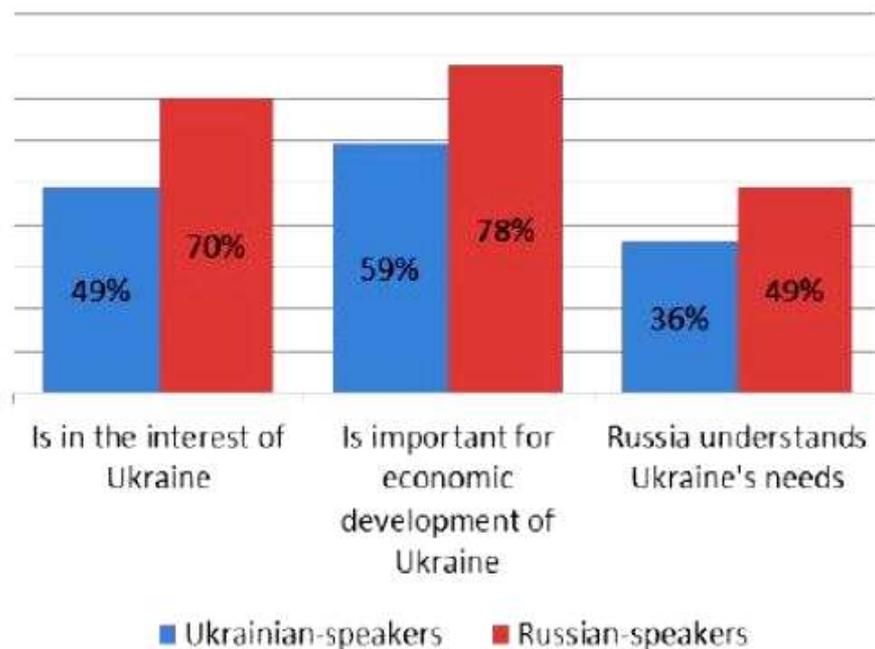
Opinions on closer cooperation with Russia

Source: IPA 2013, cited in Joanna Fomina, *Language, Identity, Politics. The Myth of Two Ukraines*, Institute of Public Affairs, 2014, http://aei.pitt.edu/74064/1/Language_Identity_Politics_the_Myth_of_Two_Ukraines.pdf, p. 10

Opinions on cooperation with Russia and EU



Opinions on closer cooperation with European Union



Opinions on closer cooperation with Russia

Corruption



- The EuroMaidan protest is also a movement against the large-scale corruption in the Janukovič era

Oligarchs (1)



- Viktor Janukovič was a **member of what is usually called the ukrainian «oligarchy»**.
- The term «oligarchs» refers to the former Soviet-era political leaders who, after the collapse of the regimes, took advantage of their positions to privatize the industries that they regulated, took over the former state companies, and became wealthy entrepreneurs and finance magnates.

Oligarchs (2)



- In the 1990s these oligarchs formed several business networks, and three distinct groups or «**clans**» emerged: the Donetsk clan, the Dnipropetrovs'k clan and the Kiev clan.
- **Janukovič quickly emerged as the leader of the Donetsk clan**, which was more powerful than the others because it was rooted in a industrialized and resource-rich area

Corruption (1)

- «The corruption took three forms. The first had to do with **the trade in natural gas** (...). Since 2009, Russia has charged high prices for its gas, but rent-seeking in the Ukrainian gas trade persists domestically. Each year, **Naftogaz bought 18 billion cubic meters of domestically produced gas at the extremely low price of \$53 per 1,000 cubic meters (mcm). The alleged reason for this was to provide consumers with cheap gas**, but probably half the volume wound up being leaked to the commercial sector, where gas prices were based on the Russian price of \$410 per mcm. **Somebody close to Yanukovich made a fortune reselling gas to industrial customers.** The potential for privileged arbitrage was around \$350 per mcm times 9 billion cubic meters, which equals \$3.15 billion (...)»

Corruption (2)

- «Second, Yanukovich **handed out large infrastructure projects at his personal discretion**. Many of these were linked to the Euro 2012 soccer tournament held during June of that year in Donetsk, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Lviv as well as several Polish cities. In general, the Ukrainian government paid twice as much as needed for such projects. Judging from the infrastructure allocations in the state budget, I would assess such infrastructure-related corruption to have been worth at least \$2 billion a year to the Yanukovich family (...))»

Corruption (3)

- «**The third form that corruption took was outright stealing from the government, notably the State Tax Administration and the State Customs Committee.** In Ukraine there is a special word (*deriban*) for theft from the state budget, which is considered a fine art. The Yanukovich family mastered this art, stealing billions of dollars each year. The government that replaced his administration in February 2014 has been assessing how much per year was embezzled from each ministry. The numbers so far are large, with the total annual larceny estimated at \$3 billion to \$5 billion»

Corruption (4)

- «Over each year from 2010 through 2013, these three sources of embezzlement and corruption appear to have generated **about \$8 billion to \$10 billion in ill-gotten annual gains for Yanukovych and his family**»

Anders Åslund, Oligarchs, corruption and European integration, in «Journal of Democracy», vol. 25, n. 3, July 2014, pp. 64-73; the citation is at 65-66.

Janukovič: a neo-liberal oligarch



- Janukovič was also a promoter of **neoliberal and anti-social policies**: during the years of his presidency he negotiated and signed agreements with the International Monetary Fund, and he partially implemented the «austerity» measures recommended by the IMF. This mix of liberal economic policies and corruption impoverished the population, and created the conditions for a social uprising

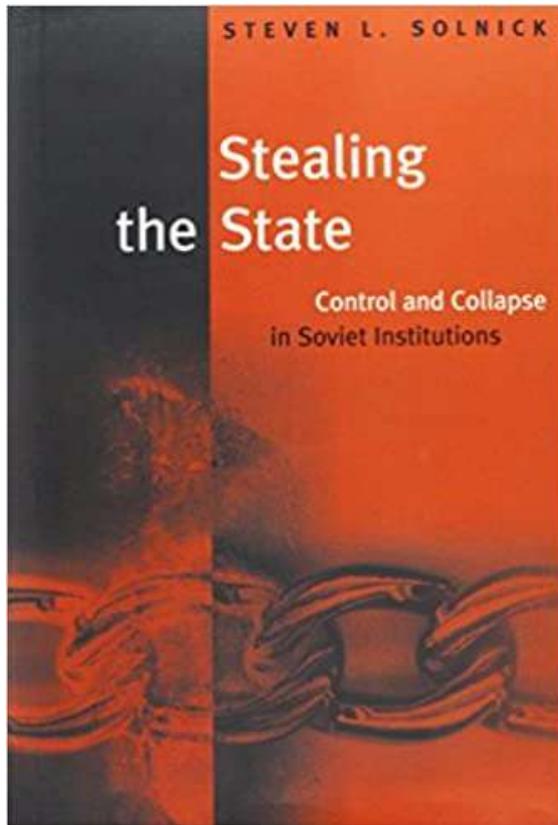
See: Oleksandr Kravchuk, *The origins of Ukraine's debt dependence*, in «Commons/Спільне» website, 30 April 2015, <https://commons.com.ua/en/formuvanny-a-zalezhnosti/>

Further readings (1)



- Yuliya Yurchenko, *Ukraine and the Empire of Capital*, Pluto Press, New York 2017

Further readings (2)



- Steven Lee Solnick, *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions*, Harvard University Press 1998

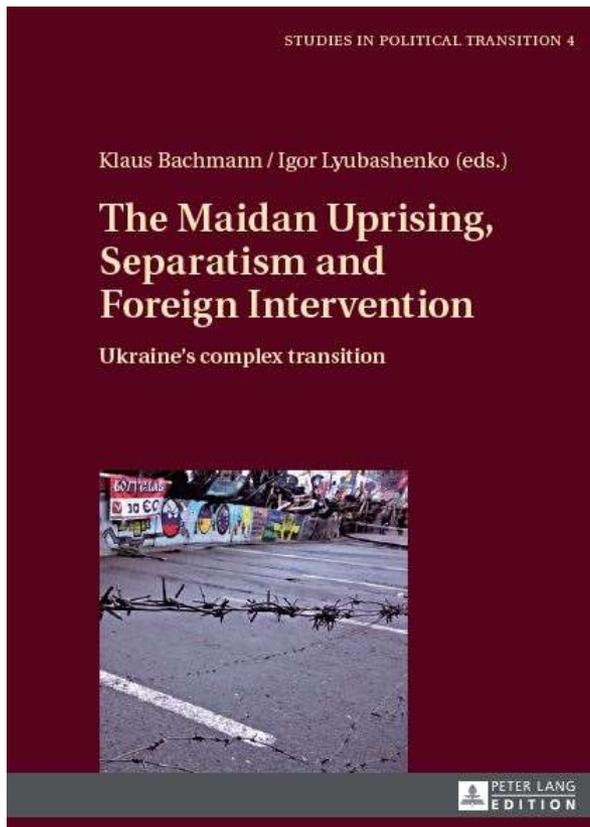
Further readings (3)



- Felix Jaitner, Tina Olteanu, and Tobias Spöri (eds.), *Crises in the Post-Soviet Space. From the dissolution of the Soviet Union to the conflict in Ukraine*, Routledge 2018

Further readings (4)

- Klaus Bachmann, and Igor Lyubashenko (eds.), *The Maidan Uprising, Separatism and Foreign Intervention: Ukraines complex transition*, Peter Lang Edition 2014



So, Maidan was **NOT**



- A “western conspiracy” against the ukrainian sovereignty
- A social protest “manipulated” by the opposition parties or by nazi organizations
- An anti-russian or russophobic movement

Maidan WAS



- A mass movement against the corruption, for the democracy and the social justice
- A part of a wider «**global uprising**» which included the so-called «Arab Springs» in Middle East, the indignados in Spain and the «Gezi Park» movement in Turkey

Repression



See: Open Dialogue Foundation, *Euromaidan. The point of no return for Ukraine*, Warsaw 2014, <https://en.odfoundation.eu/content/uploads/i/fmfiles/pdf/odf-euromaidan-report-eng.pdf>, p. 6; see also Human Rights Network, *Call to protect Ukrainian peaceful protesters and their right to take part in the conduct of public affairs*, <https://humanrightshouse.org/noop-media/documents/19828.pdf>, December 2013.

- On 29 and 30 November 2013, under the pretext of installing a Christmas tree on Piazza Maidan (!), dozen of policemen of the «Berkut» Special Forces violently dispersed about 500 peaceful protesters on Euromaidan
- **Demonstrators were brutally attacked, targeted with tear gas and chased for hundreds of meters out of the square.** Dozens of protesters and independent journalists were injured and arrested

Anti-protest laws, January 2014



- On 16 January 2014 the Verchovna Rada (the ukrainian parliament) adopted a package of «anti-protest bills» limiting legal possibilities to organise civic protests

Anti-protest laws (1)

- «Under the new laws, any organization receiving money from abroad — which, in Ukraine’s case, includes a huge number of groups including the Greek Catholic Church — must register as “foreign agents”, just as they must in Russia. The wearing of helmets or use of bullhorns at demonstrations is prohibited, as is the blocking of residential properties or any convoy of five cars or more. Slander would become a criminal offense, according to the bill, and critics said it is so broadly worded that virtually any act of journalism that criticizes the government or a government official could be defined as slander»

Will Englund, *Harsh anti-protest laws in Ukraine spur anger*, in «The Washington Post», online version, 17 January 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/harsh-laws-in-ukraine-spur-anger/2014/01/17/a1cdb89c-7f63-11e3-9556-4a4bf7bcbd84_story.html

Anti-protest laws (2)

- «**Participants of peaceful assemblies may be jailed for 15 days for wearing a mask or a helmet that prevents identification of a person, or for wearing clothing “which resembles uniform of law enforcement agencies”**. The arrest may take place without the person having any harmful intentions or participating in such activities. This new restriction prevents peaceful protesters from anonymous participation in peaceful assemblies»

Civic Solidarity Platform, Brief legal analysis of the human rights related bills considered during the Plenary Meeting of the Ukrainian Parliament on January 16, 2014 and signed by the President of Ukraine on January 17, 2014, in <https://www.civicsolidarity.org/article/880/ukraine-brief-legal-analysis-dictatorship-law>, 20 January 2014.

Anti-protest laws (3)

- «Participants of peaceful assemblies **may be jailed for up to 15 days for installation of a tent, stage, any small construction or audio equipment used for holding a rally (...)**».
- More strict criminal responsibility is introduced for the following: Blocking of administrative buildings and premises (up to 5 years restriction of liberty, or up to 5 years of imprisonment); Seizure of buildings (up to 6 years of imprisonment); Blocking of roads and transport (up to 2 years of imprisonment); Violation of public order as member of a group, mass disorder which leads to, among others, interference with transportation (up to 2 years of imprisonment); Resisting law enforcement officers, etc.)»

Civic Solidarity Platform, Brief legal analysis of the human rights related bills considered during the Plenary Meeting of the Ukrainian Parliament on January 16, 2014 and signed by the President of Ukraine on January 17, 2014, in <https://www.civicsolidarity.org/article/880/ukraine-brief-legal-analysis-dictatorship-law>, 20 January 2014.

New cycle of protest (1)



- «19 January 2014: Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians gather in central Kyiv, defying the ban on protests. The protest later turns violent, with hundreds of activists storming a police cordon, attacking riot police with sticks and chains in an attempt to push their way towards the Ukrainian parliament. The police respond with stun grenades, leaving a dozen protesters injured»

Nigel Walker, *Ukraine crisis: A timeline (2014-present)*, House of Commons Library, Research Briefing, London 2022, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9476/>, p. 8;

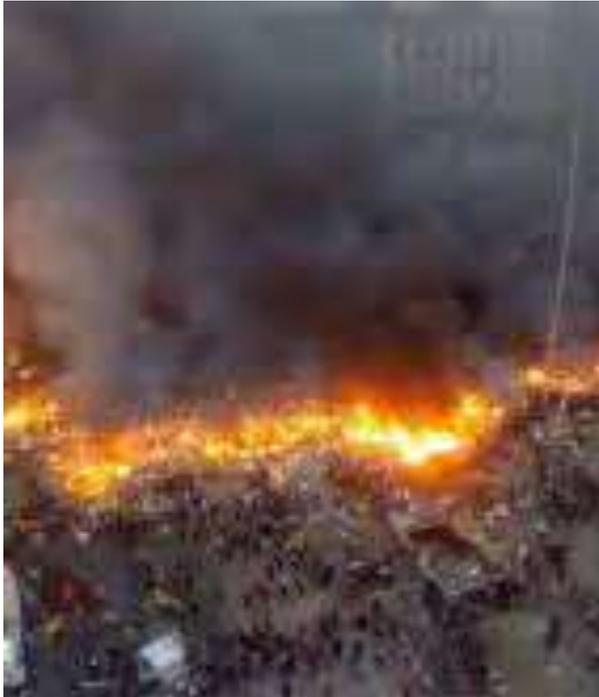
New cycle of protest (2)



Nigel Walker, *Ukraine crisis: A timeline (2014-present)*, House of Commons Library, Research Briefing, London 2022, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9476/>, p. 8;

- «22 January 2014. Two protesters are killed in clashes with police (...). A three-hour meeting between President Yanukovich and the three main political opposition leaders ends without a deal.
- 26 January 2014. President Yanukovich offers key government posts to opposition leaders and suggests making a number of legislative and constitutional amendments»

New cycle of protest (3)



- «28 January 2014. Ukraine's Prime Minister Mykola Azarov resigns. The Ukrainian parliament votes to annul the anti-protest legislation.
- 30 January 2014. In a written statement, the UK's Minister for Europe urges the government and opposition in Ukraine to find a compromise acceptable to all sides»

Nigel Walker, *Ukraine crisis: A timeline (2014-present)*, House of Commons Library, Research Briefing, London 2022, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9476/>, p. 9;

New cycle of protest (4)



- «18 February 2014. At least 22 people are killed and more than 200 seriously injured as protesters clash with riot police in the worst violence since demonstrations began.
- 20 February 2014. Dozens are killed in fresh clashes in Kyiv, the city's worst day of violence for 70 years. The foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland meet with President Yanukovich, hoping to agree a roadmap with the Ukrainian government and opposition»

Nigel Walker, *Ukraine crisis: A timeline (2014-present)*, House of Commons Library, Research Briefing, London 2022, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9476/>, p. 9;

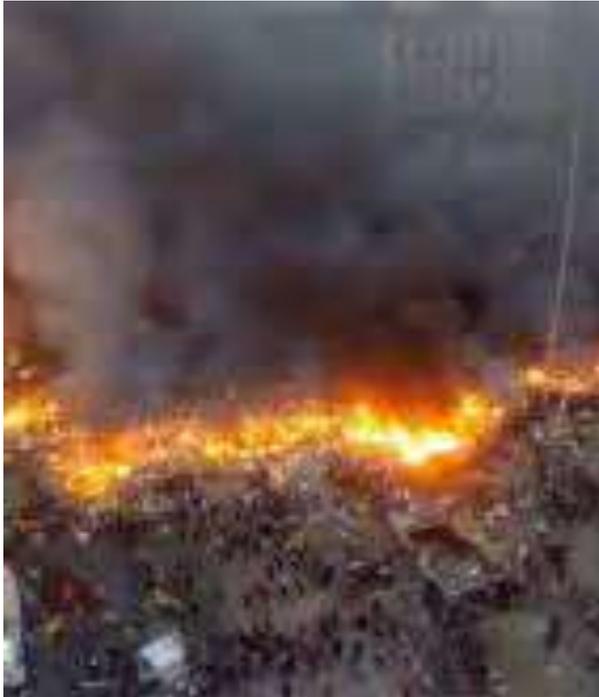
New cycle of protest (5)



Nigel Walker, *Ukraine crisis: A timeline (2014-present)*, House of Commons Library, Research Briefing, London 2022, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9476/>, p. 9;

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The Agreement (1)



- «21 February 2014.
President Yanukovych and
opposition leaders **sign an
EU-mediated peace pact**
that includes plans for
presidential elections before
the end of the year»

Nigel Walker, *Ukraine crisis: A timeline (2014-present)*, House of Commons Library, Research Briefing, London 2022, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9476/>, p. 9;

The Agreement (2)



- A return to the 2004 Constitution, that is, to a parliamentary-presidential form of government
- Holding of early presidential elections before the end of 2014
- Creation of a “government of national trust”
- Withdrawal of security forces from downtown Kyiv, and the cessation of violence

See: *Agreement on the Settlement of Crisis in Ukraine - full text*, in «The Guardian», online edition, 21 February 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/21/agreement-on-the-settlement-of-crisis-in-ukraine-full-text>

Yanukovic flees to Russia



- On 21 February 2014, Yanukovich claimed that, after lengthy discussions, he had reached an agreement with the opposition. Later that day, however, he left the capital for Kharkiv, and eventually to exile in southern Russia.

Nigel Walker, *Ukraine crisis: A timeline (2014-present)*, House of Commons Library, Research Briefing, London 2022, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9476/>, p. 9;

Allegation of a coup



- After several days of lack of certainty about his actual location, President Yanukovich made an appearance in a press-conference on 28 February held from the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, in which **he stated that an armed coup had taken place in Kyiv and that he remained the legitimate president of Ukraine**

Igor Lyubashenko, Euromaidan: From the students' protest to mass uprising, in Klaus Bachmann and Igor Lyubashenko (ed.), The Maidan uprising, separatism and foreign intervention. Ukraine's complex transition, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt 2014, p. 81

The Parliament



- The parliamentary majority interpreted Yanukovych's absence as his *de facto* resignation from the presidency. On 22 February the parliament assumed the political responsibility for the situation in the country and adopted a number of extraordinary measures. It scheduled early presidential elections for 25 May 2014, and it elected Oleksandr Turchynov as acting president of Ukraine

Igor Lyubashenko, *Euromaidan: From the students' protest to mass uprising*, in Klaus Bachmann and Igor Lyubashenko (ed.), *The Maidan uprising, separatism and foreign intervention. Ukraine's complex transition*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt 2014, p. 82

Was it really a coup?

- «According to Professor Viktor Musiyaka, one of the authors of the constitution of independent Ukraine, debating about the constitutionality of the transition process in Ukraine has a questionably value for two reasons.
- First, one should take into account **the de facto anti-constitutional increase of power of the president as endorsed by the constitutional court in 2010, which can be interpreted as an usurpation of power.**
- Second, the change took place in an extraordinary situation (...), [and] the above mentioned decisions were taken by **a legitimately elected parliament, representing the people**, the only source of power according to Ukrainian constitution»

Putin (1)



See: The Kremlin, Address by President of the Russian Federation, 18 March 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>

- In early March 2014, in a speech before the *Duma* (Russian parliament) President Vladimir Putin accused the new Ukrainian government and the Western powers of violating the law
- In this occasion, the pillars of Russian propaganda emerged for the first time

Putin (2)



- According to Putin, Janukovič's departure was the result of **a coup organized by Western powers**, and the new Ukrainian government, led by explicitly Nazi forces, was promoting a very **ethnic cleansing against the Russian-speaking minority**

See: The Kremlin, Address by President of the Russian Federation, 18 March 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>

Putin (3)



- In the weeks and months that followed, these themes were adopted by all media controlled by the Russian government: newspapers such as *Russia Today* and *Sputnik* increasingly **spread misrepresented or even fake news, in order to credit the image of a Russian ethnic minority victim of systematic persecution**

See: Cerwyn Moore, *Russia and Disinformation: the case of Ukraine*, CREST (Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats), Lancaster UK 2019, <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/resources/russia-and-disinformation-the-case-of-ukraine-full-report/>;
Markus Kolga, *Stemming the virus. Understanding and responding to the threat of Russian disinformation*, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Ottawa 2019, https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/20181211_MLI_Russian_Disinformation%20PAPER_FWeb.pdf

The case of “crucified baby” (1)



See: Karoun Demirjian, *Russian media fabricated story about a child getting killed by Ukrainian shelling, the BBC says*, in «The Washington Post», online edition, 8 April 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/04/08/russian-media-fabricated-story-about-a-child-getting-killed-by-ukrainian-shelling-the-bbc-says/>

- The peak of this disinformation campaign was reached on July 12, 2014, when the TV station *Pervy Kanal* (First Channel) interviewed Ms. Galina Pyshniak, a refugee from the city of Sloviansk
- She reported the gruesome scene of a three years old child, a son of a Russian-speaking family, **crucified by Ukrainian soldiers in front of his mother**

The case of “crucified baby” (2)



See: Karoun Demirjian, *Russian media fabricated story about a child getting killed by Ukrainian shelling, the BBC says*, in «The Washington Post», online edition, 8 April 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/04/08/russian-media-fabricated-story-about-a-child-getting-killed-by-ukrainian-shelling-the-bbc-says/>

- This news spread all over the world, but independent investigations conducted by the BBC and by the Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta later proved **that it was completely false**

Reframing



- This campaign had a powerful effect of reframing
- **The political struggle in Ukraine was re-interpreted and re-imagined as an “ethnic conflict”**, that is, a conflict between the ukrainian people and the russian minority

The “Two Ukraines”



- Thus, Ukraine was re-imagined as a country split in two different parts: an “ukrainian” region in the West, and a “russian” (or “russophone”) area in the East

Part II

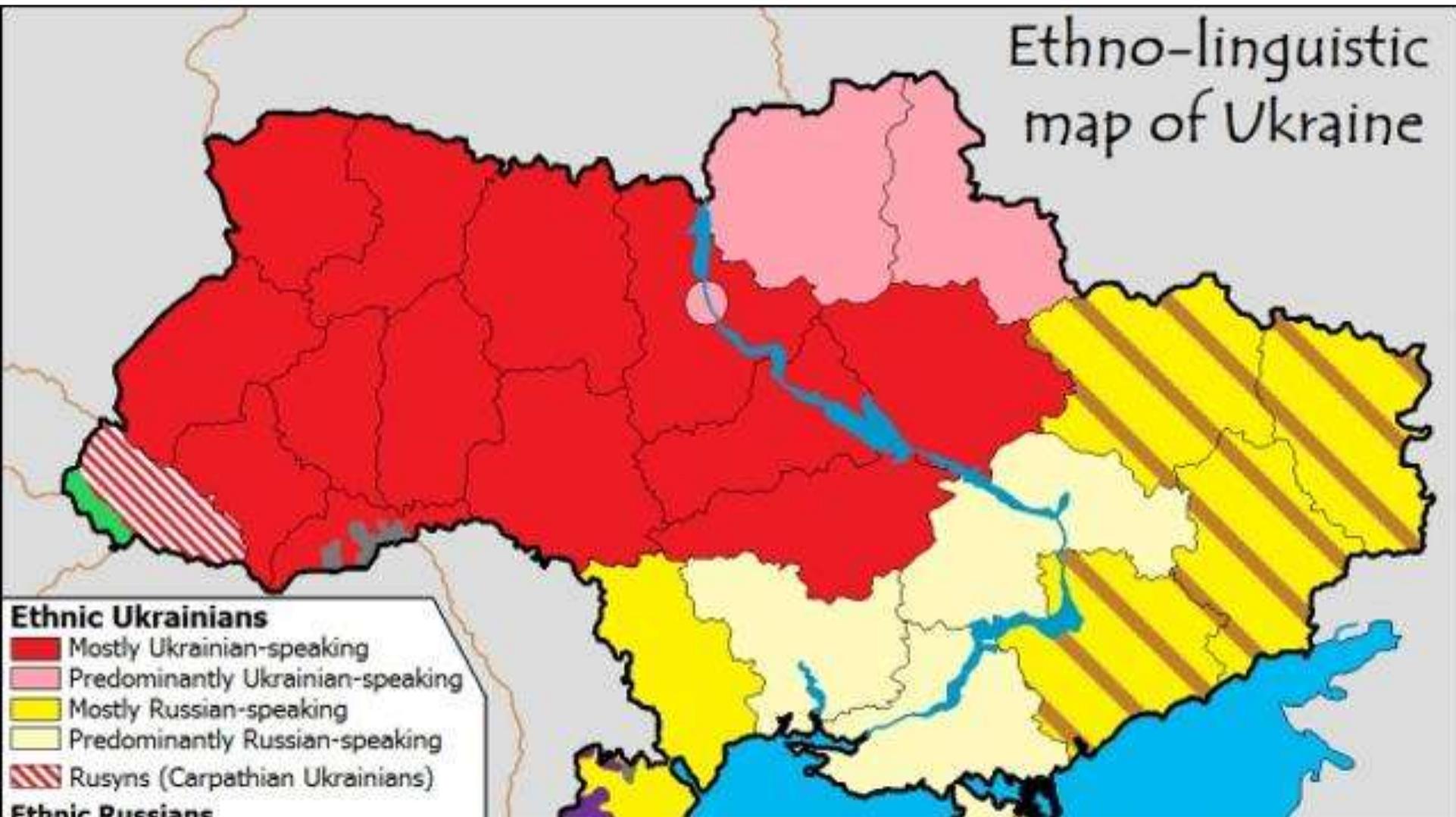
The Myth of Two Ukraines

A misleading map



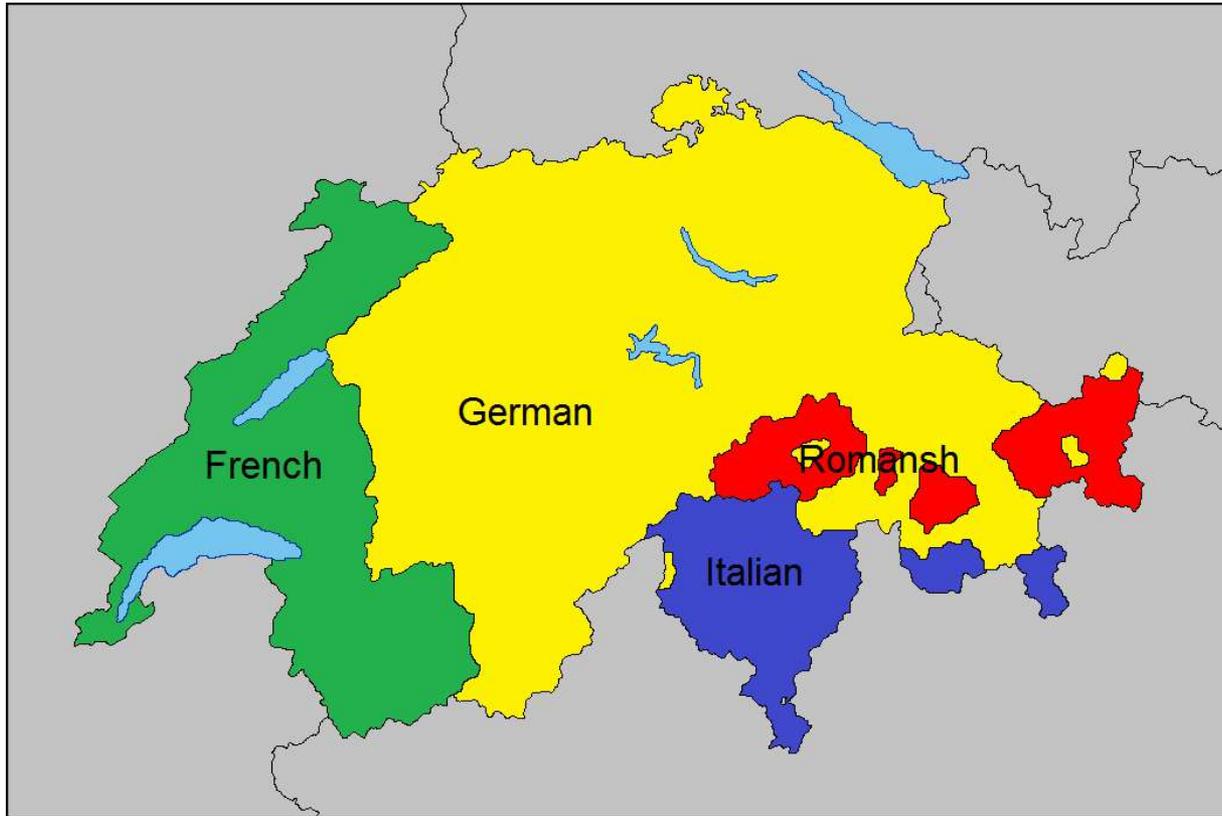
Source: Rainews, *L'Ucraina divisa in due*, <http://www.rainews.it/archivio-rainews/media/Ucraina-divisa-in-due-6c68c790-8c18-4fcd-b45e-3ae64235c9a8.html>, 2014

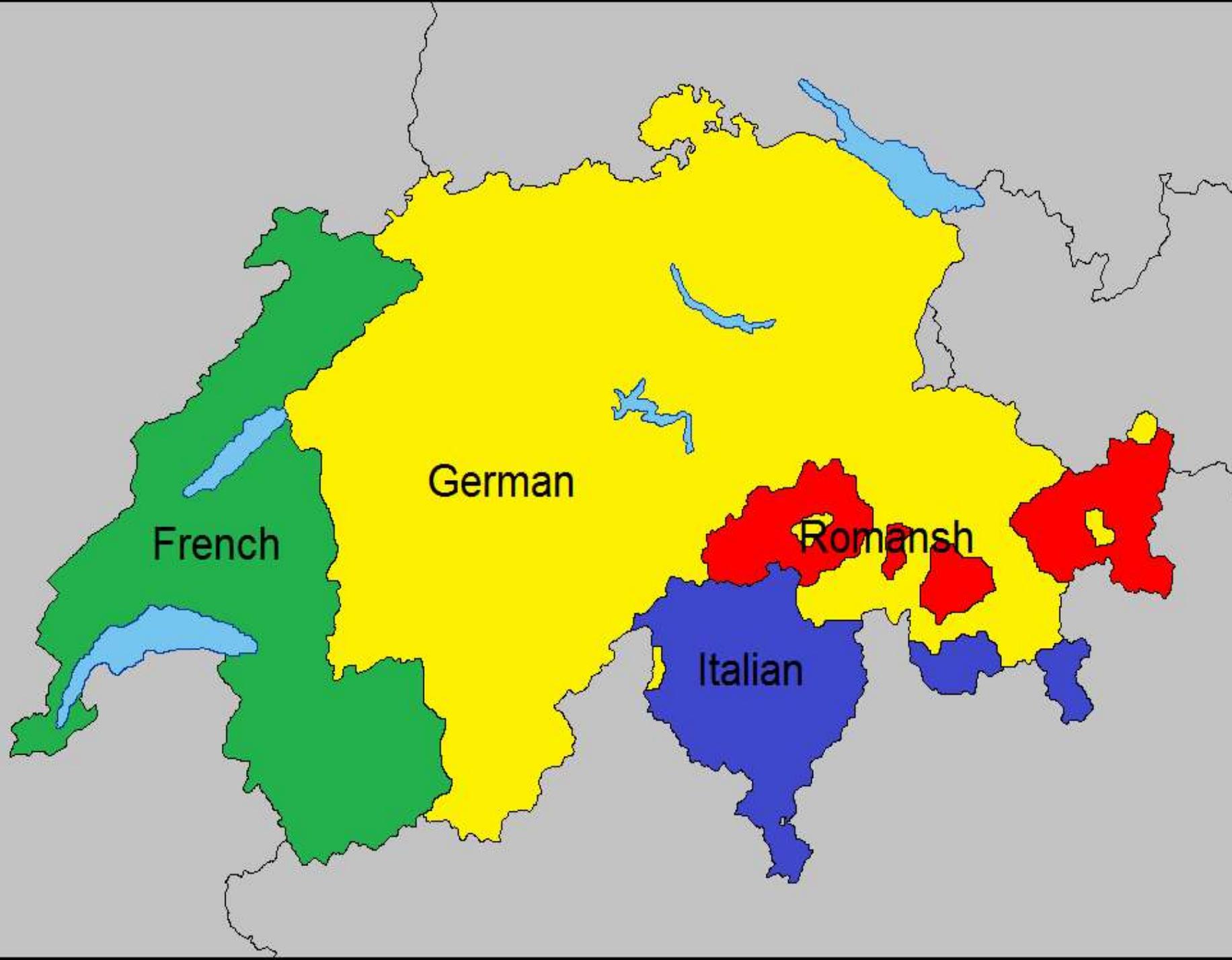
Ethno-linguistic map of Ukraine



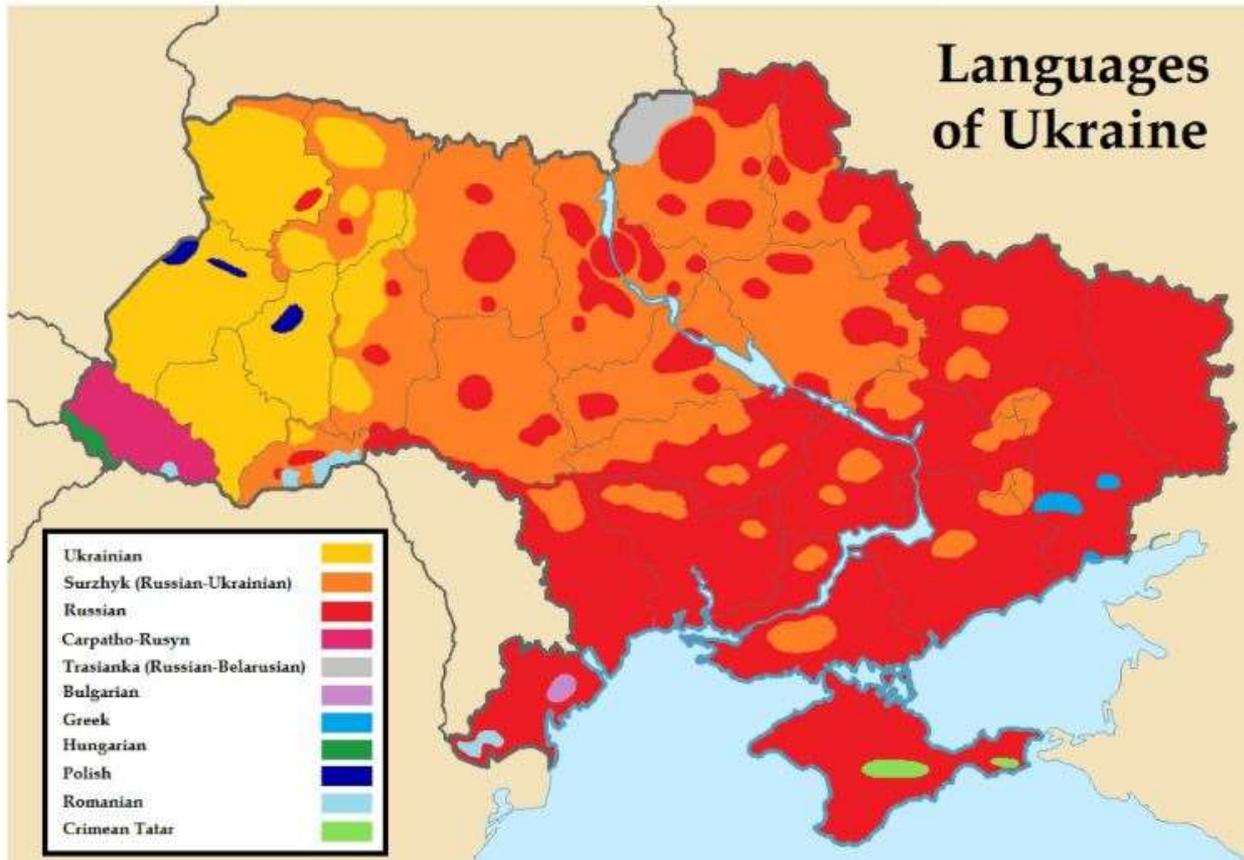
- Ethnic Ukrainians**
- Mostly Ukrainian-speaking
 - Predominantly Ukrainian-speaking
 - Mostly Russian-speaking
 - Predominantly Russian-speaking
 - Rusyns (Carpathian Ukrainians)
- Ethnic Russians**

Like the Switzerland?





A “better” map

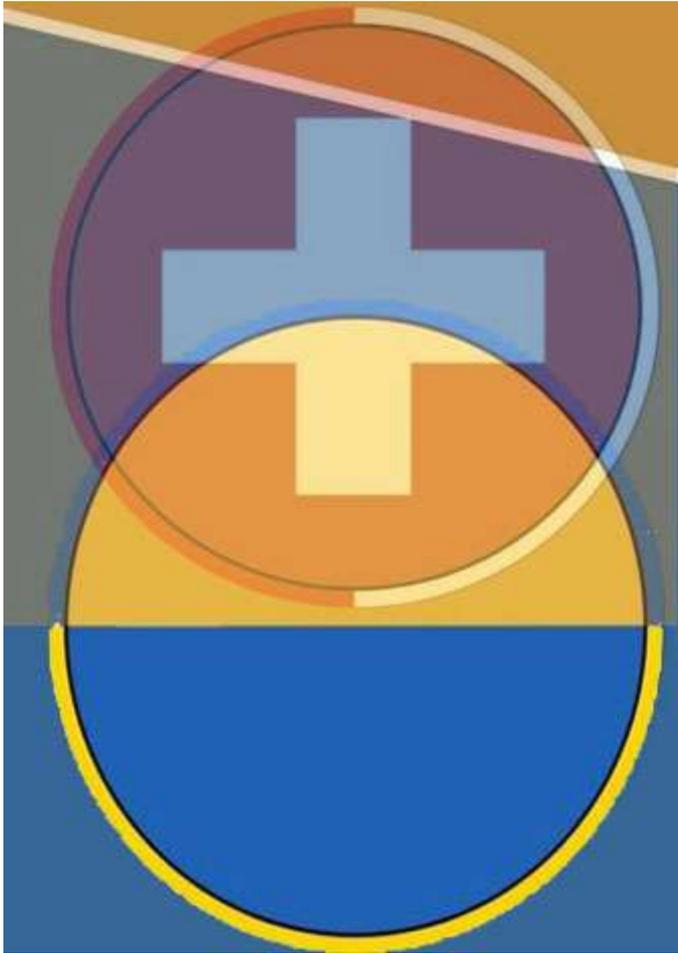


Source: Ortodossi Torino, *Una mappa più seria delle lingue parlate in Ucraina*,
http://www.ortodossiatorino.net/pdfexport.php?cat_id=24&id=2912, 2014

Languages of Ukraine

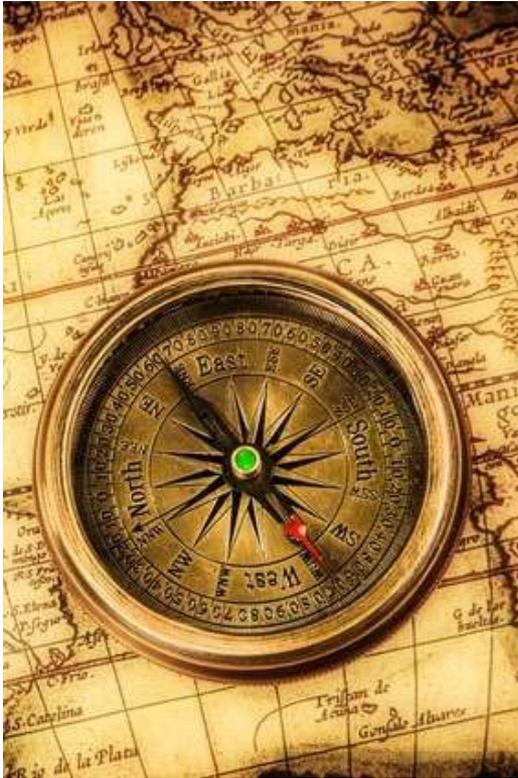


Which is the *real* map? (1)



- The real or supposed existence of two main linguistic groups (the Ukrainian and the Russian) has prompted many commentators to describe Ukraine as a sort of «Eastern Switzerland», with an ukrainian-speaking majority in the western part of the country and some russian-speaking «cantons» in the eastern areas

Which is the *real* map? (2)



- But this description is far from the truth. Ukraine is not divided in two distinct and language-separated «nationalities»: it is, rather, **a widely bilingual and multilingual country, where almost all citizens are fluent in both russian and ukrainian, and where there is no a clear distinction between the two «ethnic» groups**

A multilingual country (1)

- «The claim about two Ukraines can be easily invalidated by juxtaposing declarations about national identity, mother tongue, and the language used in everyday situations. These indicators are very differently distributed. A considerably larger percentage of the Ukrainian population speaks Russian than claims Russian identity. **In other words, a large share of people who identify themselves as ethnic Ukrainians are Russophones**»

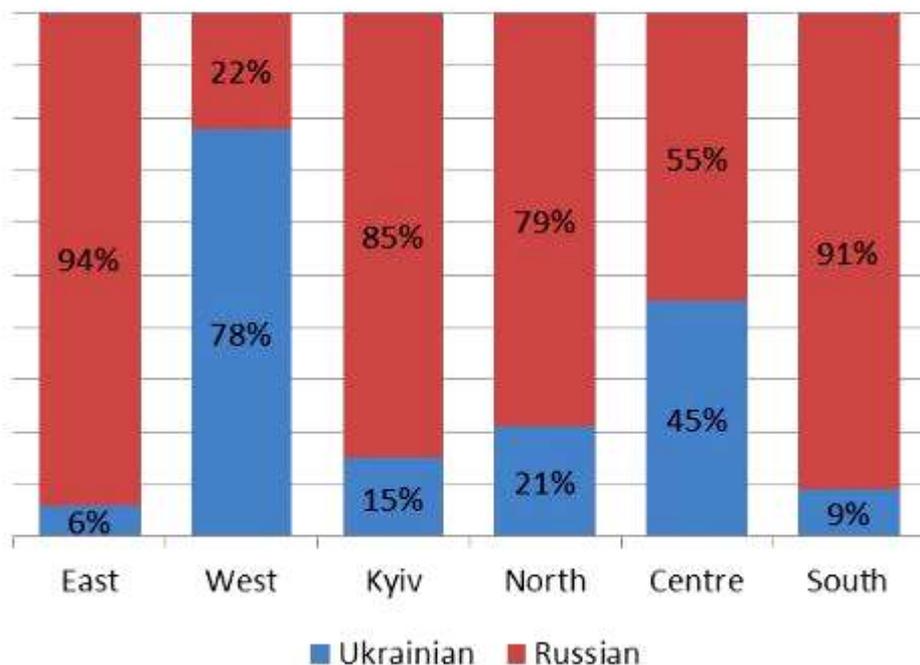
A multilingual country (2)

- «According to census results (2001), 68% claim that their mother tongue is Ukrainian and 30% – Russian. There are also considerable regional differences. In Lviv Oblast, for example, as many as 95% consider Ukrainian as their native language, whereas in Donetsk Oblast the figure is only 24%. Notably, 72% of the residents of the capital claim that their mother tongue is Ukrainian and only 25% that it is Russian»

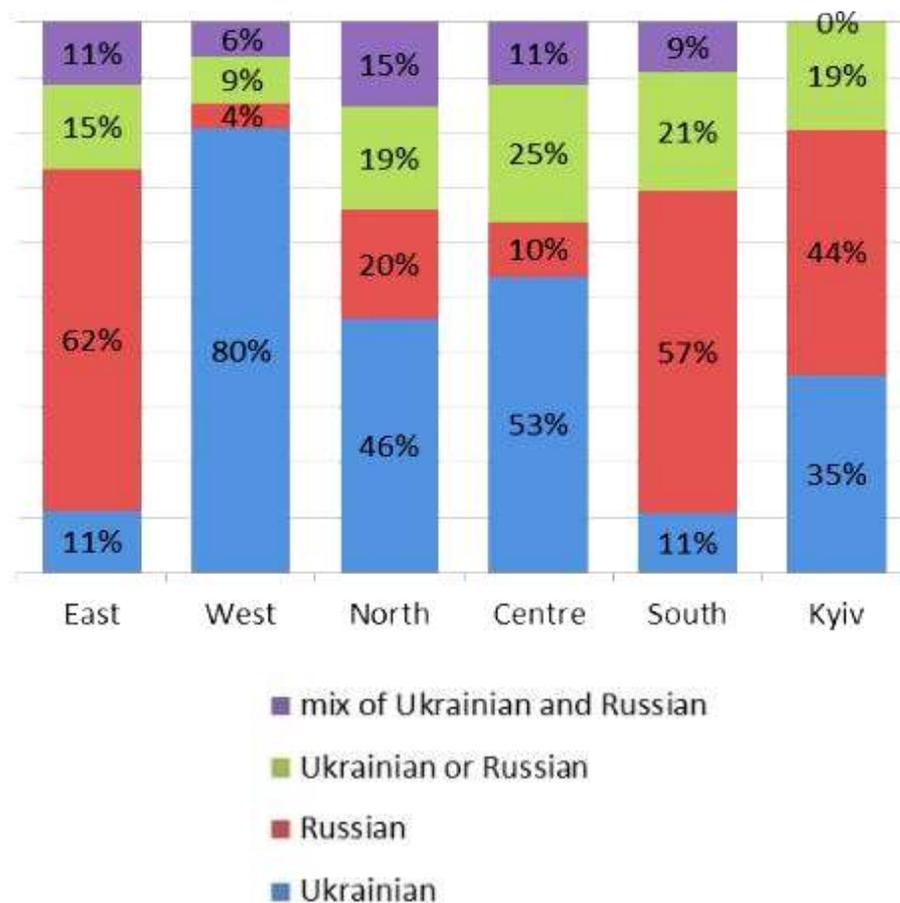
A multilingual country (3)

- «Yet, when we ask about the language that respondents find easier to speak, the situation is somewhat different, and in Kyiv it is diametrically different. When we compare the census results and opinion polls, it turns out that **a considerable share of Ukrainians consider Ukrainian their mother tongue, yet claim it is easier for them to speak Russian**»

Graph 1. Language preferences of Ukrainians*



Graph 2. Language used in everyday conversations at home



A multilingual country (4)

- «The majority of Ukrainians are at least passively bilingual – even if they do not use one of the languages in everyday situations, they understand it perfectly well. **It is not infrequent that while having a conversation, one person speaks Ukrainian and the other – Russian»**

A multilingual country (5)

- «Besides, especially in central Ukraine, **many people speak so-called “surzhik”, a combination of Russian and Ukrainian.** Yet, when asked about their reliance on *surzhik*, people may deny it and claim that they actually speak either Russian or Ukrainian»

A “gift from God”

- «Ukraine received a rare gift from God: **here everybody understands everybody**. Say something in one part of the country in Ukrainian, and you will be understood; say it in Russian, and you will be understood. They will respond in the language of their choice and you will understand. If you don't understand, they will say it in a language you do understand»

«L'Ucraina ha ricevuto un regalo raro da Dio: qui tutti capiscono tutti. Dite qualcosa in russo e vi capiranno. Risponderanno nella lingua che preferiscono e voi li capirete. E anche se non capite, lo ripeteranno in una lingua che potete capire»

Victor Romanovski, Дети галактики, in «Одесский вестник», 21 April 2007, cited in Vera Skvirskaja, *Language is a political weapon, or on language troubles in post-Soviet Odesa*, in Juliane Besters-Dilger (ed), *Language Policy and Language Situation in Ukraine*, Peter Lang Publishing Group, Bristol 2009, pp. 175–200; italian version in Ludovica Grossi, *La questione linguistica in Ucraina*, graduation thesis, Università di Urbino 2018, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326829988_La_questione_linguistica_in_Ucraina, p. 29.

Part III

**The Two Ukraines:
a “self-fulfilling prophecy”**

A “self-fulfilling prophecy”

- «Their main political goal [of the oligarchs] was further accumulation of capital *via* appropriation of state property and tax payers’ money. In such conditions, **the fight for electoral support was most often based on ideologically vacuous populist promises and culturally sensitive issues of religion, ethnicity, and language.** ‘Political technologists’ (often from Russia) designed the most vicious division of electorate into ‘two Ukraines’ (...): Ukrainian language vs Russian, EU orientation vs ties with ‘our brothers’ Russians, etc. **The two Ukraine’s now became a self-fulfilling prophecy.** The lines of division artificially imposed on society were exacerbated by detrimental socioeconomic effects of neoliberal kleptocracy that eventually led to Maidan in 2013–2014»

Yuliya Yurchenko, The making of Ukraine’s multilevel crisis. Transnational capitalism, neoliberal kleptocrats, and dispossession, in Felix Jaitner, Tina Olteanu, and Tobias Spöri (eds.), Crises in the Post-Soviet Space. From the dissolution of the Soviet Union to the conflict in Ukraine, Routledge, London-New York 2018, pp. 159-174. The citation is at 161-162

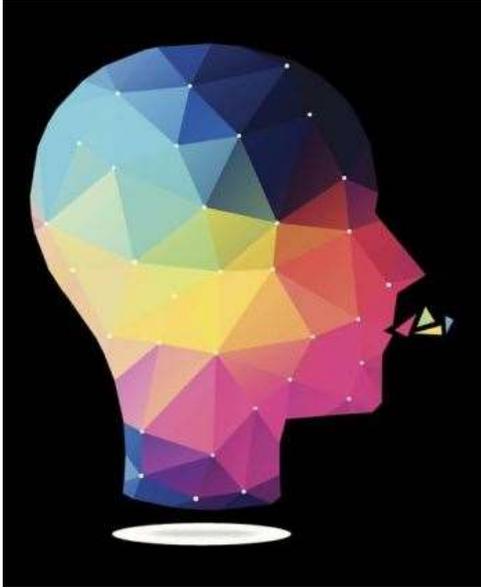
Language policy (1)



See: United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Report HRC/28/64/Add.1, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Mission to Ukraine*, 2015, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/011/00/PDF/G1501100.pdf?OpenElement>

- The Law 5029–VI, adopted on 3 June 2012, recognized the status of “regional languages” to 17 languages, including Russian, in regions where a minority language is spoken by at least 10 per cent of the population
- That allows minority languages to be used in public administration, schools and courts alongside Ukrainian

Language policy (2)



See: United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Report HRC/28/64/Add.1, Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Mission to Ukraine, 2015, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/011/00/PDF/G1501100.pdf?OpenElement>

- Immediately after the Ukrainian revolution, on 23 February 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament voted to repeal the law
- This decision was vetoed by the acting President Oleksandr Turchynov
- In October 2014 the Constitutional Court of Ukraine started reviewing the constitutionality of the law, and on 28 February 2018 it ruled the law unconstitutional

Ukrainization



See: Council of Europe, Venice Commission, CDL-AD(2019)032-e, *Ukraine - Opinion on the Law on Supporting the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language, adopted by the Venice Commission at its 121st Plenary Session (Venice, 6-7 December 2019)*, [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2019\)032-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2019)032-e)

- In April 2019, the Ukrainian parliament voted a new law, which entered into force on 16 June 2019
- The law made the use of Ukrainian compulsory in the work of some public authorities, in the electoral procedures and political campaigning, in school and university education

Homogeneous nation



- The Ukrainian nationalism is based on the myth of an homogenous nation, and its purpose is to push all ukrainians to speak ukrainian language, and non to use the russian

- This doesn't mean that russian-speaking persons are discriminated, or even persecuted, as the russian propaganda says
- **The purpose of ukrainian nationalism is not to push back the “russians”, but to convince them to speak the “real national language”**

The conflict in Donbass



- The conflict in Donbass, started in 2014, **was the very starting point of a new wave of nationalism** in both countries, Ukraine and Russia

Timeline: Crimea

- 23 February 2014: pro-Russian demonstrations were held in the Crimean city of Sevastopol
- 27 February: masked Russian troops without insignia (the so-called “green men”), took over the Supreme Council (parliament) of Crimea and captured strategic sites across the region. Crimea was *de-facto* separated from Ukraine
- 16 March: a referendum, held without international observers, led to the peninsula’s annexation by Russia
- 18 March: Russia formally annexed Crimea

Timeline: the beginning of Donbass conflict

- Early March: local administration buildings were occupied by pro-Russian demonstrators in 11 cities in the east and south of Ukraine, including Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Luhansk. According to numerous reports, many pro-Russian protesters were bussed in from across the border with Russia

Kateryna Pishchikova, *The Conflict in Donbas: Evolution and Consequences*, in Andrea Franco and Oleg Rummyantsev (eds.), *L'Ucraina alla ricerca di un equilibrio. Sfide storiche, linguistiche e culturali da Porošenko a Zelens'kyj*, Ca Foscari edizioni, Venice - Italy 2019, pp. 75-94, available in https://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/media/pdf/books/978-88-6969-383-0/978-88-6969-383-0_ImrPhoh.pdf, p. 78

Timeline: Donbass conflict (1)

- «In mid-April the occupations of local administration buildings as well as of several security service headquarters resumed but were only limited to Donetsk oblast (including Kramatorsk, Sloviansk, Druzhkivka, Horlivka, Mariupol, and Yenakieve). This time **the seizures resembled more closely the Crimean scenario, they were more clearly spearheaded by armed men, a number of whom were identified as those who took part in the Crimean events, most notably the former Russian military intelligence officer Igor Girkin/Strelkov**, who went on the record confirming that he was leading a paramilitary insurgency. The seizures, although often supported by the local population, no longer resembled spontaneous protest action, and were rather part of a coordinated paramilitary operation.»

Timeline: Donbass conflict (2)

- 15 April 2014. Ukraine's acting president, Olexander Turchynov, announces **the start of an “anti-terrorist operation”** against pro-Russian separatists. It is the beginning of the war in Donbass
- 11 May. “Self-rule” independence referendums are held in Ukraine's regions Donetsk and Luhansk, again without independent observers. Creation of two separatist republics

Donbass: casualties



See: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Conflict-related civilian casualties in Ukraine*, 27 January 2022, [https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Conflict-related%20civilian%20casualties%20as%20of%2031%20December%202021%20\(rev%2027%20January%202022\)%20corr%20EN_0.pdf](https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Conflict-related%20civilian%20casualties%20as%20of%2031%20December%202021%20(rev%2027%20January%202022)%20corr%20EN_0.pdf), p. 3

- OHCHR estimates the total number of conflict-related casualties in Ukraine from 14 April 2014 to 31 December 2021 to be 51,000–54,000⁸: 14,200–14,400 killed (at least 3,404 civilians, estimated 4,400 Ukrainian forces, and estimated 6,500 members of armed groups), and 37–39,000 injured (7,000–9,000 civilians, 13,800–14,200 Ukrainian forces and 15,800–16,200 members of armed groups)

The “nazi-question”



- One of the most controversial issues is the presence, in Donbass, of paramilitary groups and militias led by neo-Nazi activists

Azov regiment



- The most famous far-right group active in Donbass was the “Azov Battalion” (now Regiment), who fought for the ukrainian army

Azov and human rights violations



Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch,
“You Don’t Exist”. Arbitrary Detentions, Enforced
Disappearances, and Torture in Eastern Ukraine,
2016,
https://www.amnesty.nl/content/uploads/2016/07/ukrainian_report.pdf?x31794, p. 11

- «Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have received numerous allegations of unlawful detention and the use of torture and other abuses by Azov battalion»
- «Credible allegations emerged of torture and other egregious abuses by Ukraine’s so-called volunteer battalions Aidar and Azov»

The pro-russian nazis

The “popular republics” of Donetsk and Luhansk were also led by far-right activists. The first “Governor of the People” of Donetsk, Pavel Gubarev, was a member of the neo-Nazi party “Russian National Union” (Российский Национальный Союз). In Donetsk, the first Prime Minister was Alexander Borodai, a supporter of white supremacist ideology. One of the leaders of Donetsk republic was Aleksandr Matyushin, an homophobic and anti-Semitic activist close to the far-right philosopher Aleksandr Dugin

Dugin



- Dugin was actually the main inspirer of the pro-Russian separatist movements
- But surprisingly, Dugin was also in part the inspirer of far-right movements in Ukraine, including the Azov regiment

Dugin and Azov? (1)

- «Dmytro Korchyns'kyy [was] leader of the Bratstvo group whose members would go on to later participate in the creation of the Azov battalion (...). Despite the fact that, since the early 1990s, Korchyns'kyy had been one of the most notable figures in Ukraine's ultra-nationalist scene, the Bratstvo leader was, in 2005, invited to lecture in the infamous “Seliger” Russian youth summer camp organized by the Kremlin-affiliated movement Nashi (Ours)»

Dugin and Azov? (2)

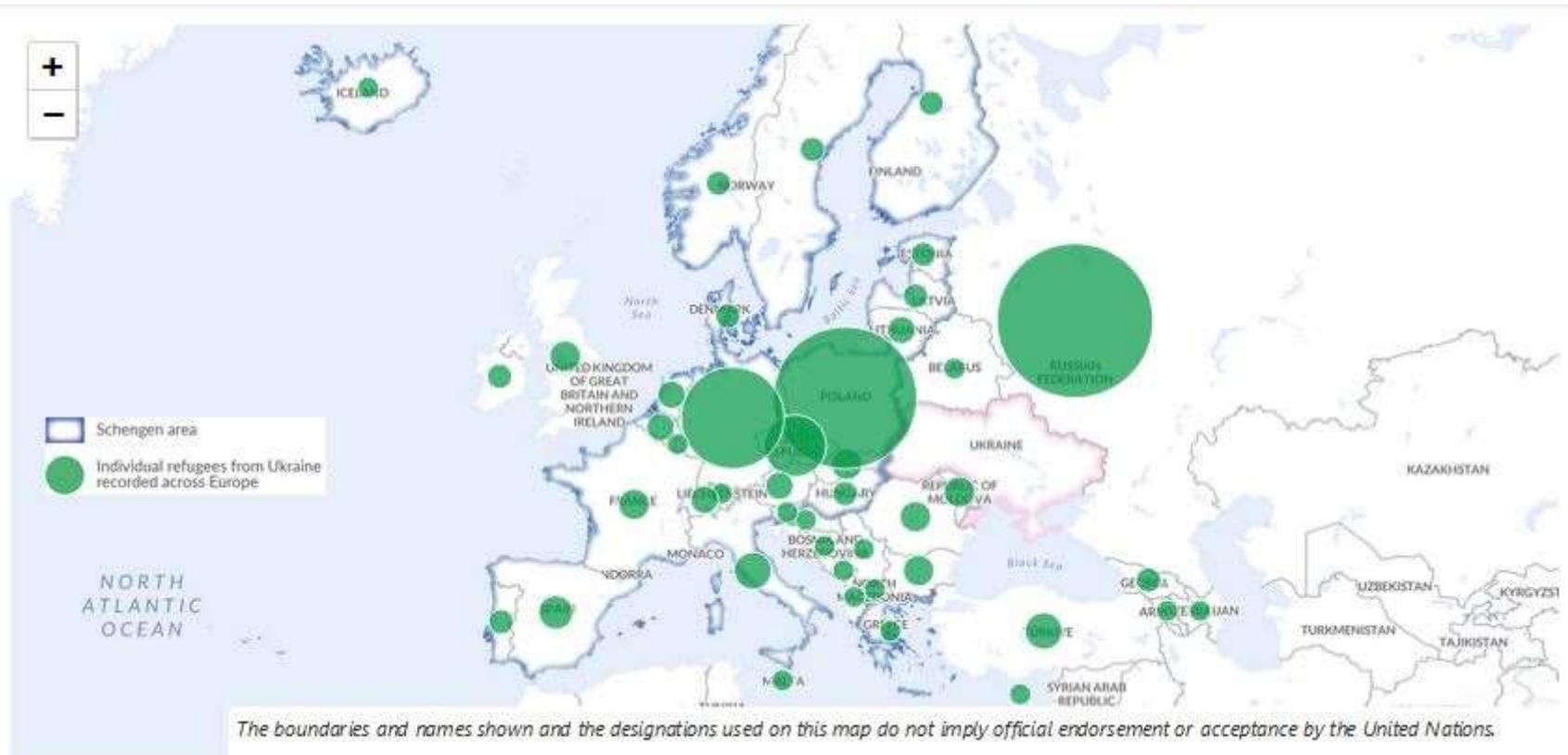
- «Nevertheless, as Viktor Shnirel'man (Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology at the Russian Academy of Science) notes, Korchyns'kyi appeared “at [Dugin's] Eurasian Youth Union rally on 21st September 2005 on Slavic Square in Moscow on the 625th anniversary of the Battle of Kulikovo [where he] called for a relentless war against Atlantic civilization declaring that war was closer than ever»

The current war

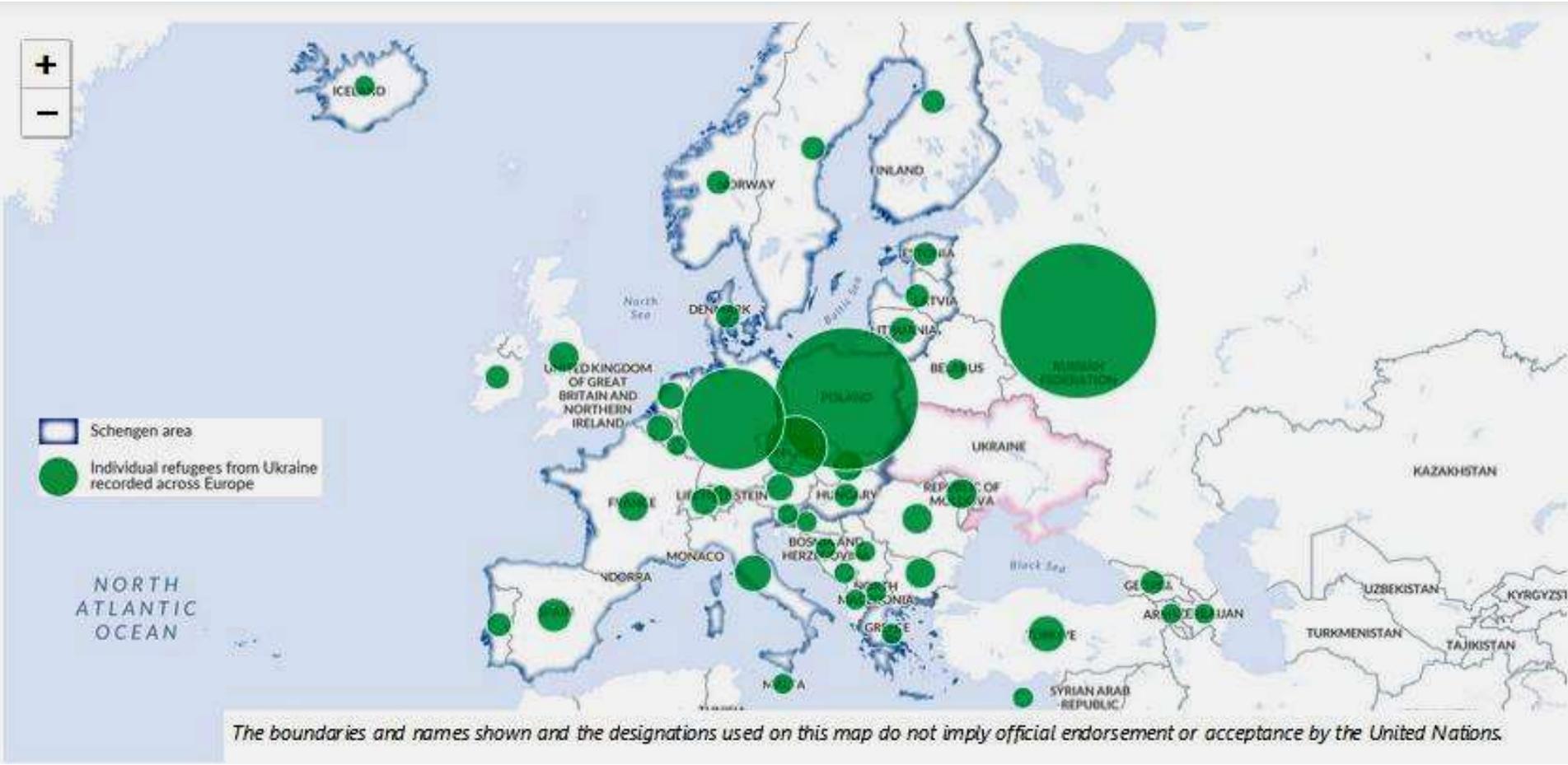


- Of course, the war Ukraine-Russia has favoured the spread of nationalism; and it could also transform the political contrast into a very “ethnic conflict” between two imagined “national communities”

Ukrainian refugees and displaced



Source: UNHCR, *Situation data portal: Ukraine*, update 26 May 2022,
<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>



Data

Individual refugees from Ukraine recorded across Europe

JSON

5,261,278

Source - UNHCR, Government

Last updated 21 Jun 2022

Refugees from Ukraine registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe

JSON

3,514,970

Source - UNHCR, Government

Last updated 21 Jun 2022

Border crossings from Ukraine (since 24 February 2022)*

JSON

8,007,014

Source - UNHCR, Government

Last updated 21 Jun 2022

Source: UNHCR, *Situation data portal: Ukraine*, update 26 May 2022,
<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

Russian refugees

- «In March 2022, OK Russians, a non-profit organization set up to help Russians who oppose the war in Ukraine, estimated that **over 300.000 Russian nationals had left Russia since the invasion of Ukraine** on 24 February 2022. One interviewee with knowledge of the situation estimates that approximately 260 000 – 340 000 Russians have left the country, with the majority understood to have travelled to Kazakhstan and to Armenia, with additional smaller flows to Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Israel and Uzbekistan. Russian nationals have additionally been noted to have travelled to Azerbaijan, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Turkey,³ although data on the scale of these migration flows are not currently available as of May 2022»

Thanks to you all



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