

# HUMANITARIAN PREREQUISITES OF THE EMERGENCE OF SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS IN INDEPENDENT UKRAINE

Lytvynenko Kyrylo<sup>1</sup>

*The intensification* of separatist movements in the East and South of Ukraine in 2014 has led to the extremely negative consequences for the state, such as loss of the effective state control over some large parts of the territory, destabilization of the Ukrainian society, social and economic crisis, and others. An effective response to separatist movements is impossible without understanding of the nature of separatism and separatist movements, the reasons for their emergence and development, which makes them prioritized objects for the scientific study. In this article, the purpose of which was to identify prerequisites of the emergence of separatist movements in independent Ukraine, we consider the internal and external factors that hindered the establishment of indivisible national humanitarian space, led to creation of artificial social and cultural boundaries within the state and spreading of anti-Ukrainian sentiments within its society. The most significant of them are the weakness and inconsistency of national humanitarian policy which resulted in the fragmentation of the humanitarian space, absence of concrete steps aimed at overcoming the negative remnants of the Soviet era in the field of culture, education, national mentality, lack of an adequate response to the humanitarian impact, which was carried out by pro-Russian forces and the Russian Federation that, as a result, has created the grounds for the intensification of separatist movements in Ukraine.

**Keywords:** human security, separatism, humanitarian space, information and cultural space, language and political conflict.

The events of 2014 that led to the loss of territorial integrity Ukraine, need a theoretical conceptualization and adequate interpretation in order to prevent the recurrence of such events in the future. In our opinion, such notions as «annexation», «terrorism», «external aggression», «hybrid warfare» do not fully reflect the processes that led to the loss of the Crimea and the respective parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. They focus on the external factors, such as the pro-imperialistic policy of the Russian Federation, as well as the criminal nature of the political authorities which governed in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, but at the same time they ignore the objective prerequisites of the so called «Crimean Spring» and exacerbation of separatist sentiments in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as in Odesa, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and other cities of the East and South of Ukraine in the first half of 2014.

One can assume that without the external support from abroad the separatist movements in the Crimea and the Donbas region would not reach their goals, but it is also clear that for many years they enjoyed some connivance or assistance of the local authorities and the negligence of the central government. Such situation has created the grounds for the spread of anti-Ukrainian sentiments as well as the ideology of the so called «Russian World». We should remember that such organizations as «Russian Bloc», «Slavic party», «Faithful Cossacks», «Congress of Russians organizations of Ukraine», «The Republic Party of the Crimea», «The United Fatherland «Russian Commonwealth», «People's Cathedral» and many others have operated freely in the legal field Ukraine and influenced the minds of its citizens for years. Moreover, the representatives of the anti-Ukrainian forces were able to use legislative tools to strengthen separatist and pro-Russian tensions in Ukraine.

<sup>1</sup> Науковий керівник – С.І. Здіорук, кандидат філософських наук, доцент.

In view of this, the phenomenon of separatism and separatist movements as well as their nature and preconditions of their emergence should be thoroughly analyzed in scientific researches in the field of social and political processes, ideological, political and cultural transformations in modern Ukraine.

Such studies will have not only the local importance as the situation of Ukraine is not unique. Its occurrence was facilitated both by regional and global trends of the modern world politics.

The issues of separatism and related secession processes were researched by V. Andriash, J. Kabestan, I. Rafalskyi, N. Fosenko, J. Buchanan, V. Divak, J. Sorens, O. Pavkovich and others. The related issues of the emergence of nations and the concept of nationalism were thoroughly studied by such thinkers as R. Brubaker, T. Nairn, E. Giddens, E. Smith, B. Anderson, E. Gellner and others. The phenomena of separatism and secessionism in Ukraine could hardly be understood adequately apart of the processes of formation of the Ukrainian identity, the emergence of the political nation, the role of the ethnic factor in it and the preconditions of integration of cultural communities. The studies of M. Stepyko, T. Bevz, M. Karmazina, O. Mayboroda, T. Loboda, M. Riabchyk, V. Yaremchuk are devoted to the aforementioned issues.

There is no common opinion in the modern science on the nature of movements that aim at separating of some territory from a state in order to accede it to another state or to form a new state. Some scientists highlight economic and political factors of their emergence. However, since the purpose of any separatist movement lies in the implementation of a particular national or quasi national project, it has to appeal to such real or imagined national community characteristics as language, culture, religion, historical memory, identity, etc.

Therefore, the aim of the present article is to study the humanitarian prerequisites of separatist movements in Ukraine.

First of all we should notice that the differences in the interpretation and translation of the notion «humanitarian» can lead to some confusion. Traditionally the Western science understands «humanitarian» object as one that is aimed at strengthening human well-being or overcoming certain negative phenomena associated with natural disasters or anthropogenic factors. The basis of this interpretation comes from the translation of the Latin word «humanus» – human, and humanitas – human nature, humanity. Hence, the

«humanitarian» is usually interpreted as relating to the realization of human needs, first and foremost, in the security, social and material spheres. Thus, the English term «human security» refers to the concept proposed in the UNDP Human Development Report, which states that an ordinary person, citizen should be the main object of the national security systems [16].

We should also keep in mind that the concept «humanitarian» in the Western science usually means the relation of the object to the sphere of humanitarian law which governs the methods and means of warfare, as well as the protection of the civilian population, or the mechanisms for providing humanitarian assistance or social reforms, designed to provide protection and welfare of a certain victim group of people. In the domestic science there is a different approach to the interpretation and use of the notion «humanitarian», which proceeds from a general understanding of the subject of the humanity sciences. For example, Prof. M. Stepyko defines «national humanitarian space» as an environment in which a system of ideas, values, ideals, myths, stereotypes and images that influences people's minds and thus determines the direction of development of a nation and a state is forming and operating [11].

Some scholars equate the notion of «humanitarian space» with the notion of «informational and cultural space». The latter concept provides for understanding of tools that can be used in domestic humanitarian policy. Thus the draft Law of Ukraine «On the National and Cultural Product» defines «informational and cultural space» as a complex of spheres of cultural and informational activities and means of meeting of cultural and linguistic needs of the citizens of Ukraine including the areas of art, cultural, educational and entertainment activities, broadcasting of electronic media, domestic production of publishing products, market of other cultural products and services, Ukrainian Internet resources and related areas of educational and scientific activities [7].

We should stress that the national humanitarian space is a broad concept, and in addition to the informational and cultural space it also covers the educational, scientific, spiritual, normative and other respective sphere of social life, aimed at forming and maintaining the sustainable functioning of the value orientations of citizens of a particular state, formation of the basis of their national identity, the perception of the value of own national state, history, culture, social and national interests, etc. The researchers of the National Institute for Strategic Studies in Ukraine, for example, consider that national humanitarian space also include artistic,

cultural and educational spheres, cultural and leisure activities (both professional and amateur), the airtime of electronic mass media, the national market of print media, book publishing and book distribution, other cultural and artistic products and services, as well as related fields – education, science, activity of civil society structures, state-church relations [11].

Respective domestic interior policies should ensure the stable functioning of this environment through the activities aimed at protection and development of its humanitarian space. It should be noted that the integrity of the national humanitarian space presume the maintenance of the internal interconnections of its elements which cover the entire territory of the country and are stronger than the connections with some external elements generated abroad. Thus, protection and development of common nationwide symbolic systems (language, values, historical and cultural heritage), provision of qualified cultural products to the citizens as well as preservation of the national humanitarian space from aggressive and/or destructive external influences should be cornerstones of national domestic policy in this field.

The lack of effective protection of the humanitarian space may lead to the deepening of internal contradictions in the society along the lines of social, ethnic, linguistic, regional differences, the lack of effective policy against external threats and erosion of the national identity.

For the purpose of the present article we define humanitarian prerequisites of the emergence of separatist movements in independent Ukraine as a group of factors which interfered the development and protection of the national humanitarian space of Ukraine, created preconditions to alienation of the respective regions from the national humanitarian space of Ukraine, formation of local specific «pro-Russian» values and outlook of local population and therefore – possibilities of emergence of separatist tensions in the respective regions.

The long-term impact of the soviet ideology on the social conscience of the citizens of Ukraine and the specific Soviet policies regarding language and cultural issues have definitely created strong barriers for the development of national humanitarian space of independent Ukraine.

The policy of support of the national cultures of the Soviet and autonomous republics of the Soviet Union was aimed at the strengthening of the unity of population of the totalitarian state and the formation of «a new historical community – the Soviet people».

Therefore, it seriously hindered the natural development of these cultures. The cultural institutions functioned under the strict control of the Party's and repressive bodies and any expression of national identity could entail charges on the ground of «bourgeois nationalism».

For the respective reasons such control was particularly harsh in Ukraine and after the short period of the «Executed Renaissance» of the 20's (the key figures of which were executed or repressed) Ukrainian culture was marginalized and Ukrainian language was ousted from the main spheres of social life in the country.

As a result, many Ukrainians treated their national culture as something secondary, provincial, hopeless, sometimes dangerous. At the same time totalitarian system of education and social relations inculcated to its citizens such typical features as the lack of self-consciousness as a subject of own fate and the history, political nihilism, conformism, absenteeism (indifferent attitude to the situation regarding their civil and political rights), ambivalence, obedience to authority, indifference to social needs, paternalism, low level of political culture, political limitations. A large part of the population was characterized by social apathy, passivity, opportunism, legal nihilism etc. [4, p. 8].

According to M. Riabchuk, the soviet ideology and propaganda was aimed at preventing of the formation of all-Ukrainian identity by imposing artificial ideas of separateness of Eastern and Western Ukraine even after all ethnic Ukrainian lands were united within the framework of the Soviet Union. Back in 2011 he noted that the residents of the Central Ukraine felt that there was a wider social distance between them and the Western Ukrainians than between them and Russians. At the same time southern and eastern Ukrainians considered that not only «westerners», but also Ukrainians from the Central Ukraine were more different from them than even Russians or Belarusians [8, p. 388].

The labor migration processes in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions as well as the settlement of the Crimea in the postwar period have led to the substantial increase in the number of ethnic Russians in these regions. According to the 2001 census 58 % of the population of the Crimea considered themselves as Russians, 24 % – as Ukrainians. 75.5 % of the population of the peninsula chose Russian language as their native.

Since the independence of Ukraine the national composition of the population of the Donbas has changed. According to the census of 1989 approximately 50.7 % of the residents of the Donetsk region were ethnic Ukrainians and 43.6 % were Russians.

In the Luhansk region 52.1 % of the population was consisted of Ukrainians and 39.1 % of Russians. According to the 2001 census 73.45 % of the citizens considered themselves as Ukrainians and 18.57 % as Russians; in the Luhansk region Ukrainians composed 58 % of population and Russians – 39.1 %.

Over the same period the percentage of people who considered Ukrainian as their native language has decreased from 30.6 % to 24.1 % in the Donetsk region and from 34.9 % to 30 % in the Luhansk region. At the same time the number of people who considered Russian as their native language increased from 67.7 % to 74.9 % [1]. It should be noted that the process of russification of education, information space and other spheres of social life of the regions was conducted mainly by the means of Ukrainian domestic policy and by the Ukrainian politicians who considered desirable the further rapprochement of Ukraine with the Russian Federation. The process of russification created favorable grounds for the emergence of the separatist sentiments given the activities of a large number of the pro-Russian political and social forces in the regions over the same time.

For the past 25 years some favorable opportunities for distribution of the pro-Russian ideology in the Crimea have existed. The pro-Russian political forces have always played important and often even leading roles in the domestic policy of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The ideological influences of the neighboring state have also been spread by the structures of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol as well as by the various organizations such as Popular Front «Sevastopol-Crimea-Russia» which was financed directly from Russia. The local leaders of the Donbas aimed at preservation of the soviet identity of the population of the region and the myth of the separateness of Donbas and its superiority over the other regions of Ukraine which allegedly used their resources and tried to impose foreign pro-Western values, Ukrainian language and culture in the region.

The complex of social and economic changes associated with the development of Ukraine and its society, economic crisis, low living standards, high level of unemployment, corruption, empowerment of oligarchs led to the negligence of the issues associated with the formation and protection of the national humanitarian space and caused some disappointment of population of some depressed regions in the ability of the Ukrainian authorities to improve their lives and facilitated the emergence of nostalgic sentiments for the USSR and the mythical «strong hand» which could bring order to the state. In this case certain pro-Russian political forces have created the image of the Russian president V. Putin

as the exemplary «strong hand». In 2005 they even registered the Party of the Putin's Policy in Ukraine (previously known as the Slavic People's Patriotic Union).

The language issue has always been used for empowerment of separatist sentiments and implementation of pro-Russian policies. The lack of the effective language policy that could prevent the process of russification as well as the usage of the language issue as a tool of manipulation of the voters' minds by some political groups led to the emergence of the phenomenon which was called in the scientific discourse as «linguistic and political separatism». S. Savoyska defines it as the linguistic and political phenomenon which has its own specific characteristics and occurs in the state which experiencing various kinds of attacks on the historical memory of its people, national unity, national integrity and its language, which is being degraded, speculated and used for the purposes of political manipulation, where its official status is called into question and some other language of national minority obtains official status of the second national language or regional language. Such situation may result in the division of a state into separate autonomous or independent formations that may function independently or accede to some other state [9, p. 80].

The main threat was in the actions of the political forces that manipulated the language issue in order to destabilize the situation in Ukraine. The pro-Russian political forces for a long time successfully slowed down the spread of Ukrainian language in the educational and other social spheres in the South and Eastern regions of Ukraine. It is noteworthy that such actions were accompanied by various complaints regarding the «forcible ukrainization», oppression of Russian language and culture, discrimination of Russian-speaking citizens etc. Thus, the artificial barriers to the process of consolidation of Ukrainian society were created and the division of the regions of Ukraine by the language criteria became the issue of political importance.

According to the polls conducted by the NGO „The Space of Freedom“ in 2011–2012 the percentage of students who studied in Ukrainian language has decreased in the Crimea (from 8.1 % to 7.8 %), Dnipropetrovsk (from 81.4 % to 80.9 %), Luhansk (from 48.5 % to 48.1 %), Odesa (from 72.4 % to 72.1 %), Kharkiv (from 74.9 % to 74.4 %), and Kherson (from 84.9 % to 84.5 %) regions. In the Donetsk region only 48.3 % of students got education in Ukrainian language [10].

Also in the years which preceded the emergence of the separatist movements in Ukraine the notable trend of the domination of the Russian-language content in

the information space of Ukraine occurred. Thus in 2013 the share of newspapers published in Ukrainian decreased to 30.2 % and only 50 % of books published in Ukraine were in the official language. Most of them were educational. At the same time the massive import of books from Russia exceeded the share of books produced in Ukraine in several times. By the October of 2013 the share of Russian-language content broadcast in prime-time on the top 8 TV channels exceeded 50 % while the share of Ukrainian-language content was only 31.8 % and the share of «bilingual» programs was at the level of 2.2 % [13].

One of the most significant and far-reaching consequences of the linguistic and political separatism in Ukraine were the attempts to legalize Russian language as the second national or at least regional language in Ukraine. Such promises were included to the political programs of many parties and some local governments made attempts to implement them.

For example in 2006 the regional governments of Donetsk, Kharkiv and Luhansk regions as well as Sevastopol, Mykolaiv and Odesa City Councils adopted the decisions to provide Russian language the status of regional language. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine adopted the conclusion which confirmed that the mentioned decisions were contrary to the Constitution and laws of Ukraine [11], such actions of the local governments aggravated the linguistic and political conflict within the country and inspired the relevant political forces to lobby the pro-Russian interests.

In this context we should note the adoption of the Law of Ukraine «On the Principles of the State Language Policy» also known as «The Law of Kolesnichenko – Kivalov» which entered into force on August 10, 2012 and is still in force despite the recent dramatic changes of socio-political situation in Ukraine. This document provides a significant expansion of the use of languages of regional minorities, if the number of its users is at least 10 % of the population of a particular region. In accordance with the law, the local councils as well as the residents of the respective areas are entitled to initiate the assignment of a particular regional status to some language if they collected the signatures of at least 10 % of the population.

Also media, TV and radio companies were entitled to choose the respective regional languages for their products. It was assumed that the state should not obstruct the free re-transmission of radio and TV broadcasts from neighboring countries in these languages and ensure freedom of expression and free

dissemination of information in these languages. Thus, the law limits the ability of the state to ensure its information and humanitarian security.

In general, we can assume that the real purpose of the «Law of Kolesnichenko – Kivalov» was to deepen linguistic and political conflicts in Ukraine, strengthen and legitimate positions of Russian language and Russian ideological influence in Ukraine, fragment Ukrainian humanitarian space and exclude certain regions from it with a view of subsequent strengthening of humanitarian impact of our neighboring countries on them. The law also allows the possibility of actual discrimination of Ukrainian-speaking population of the areas where some other language obtained the regional status.

The linguistic separatism was only one of the tools which were used by Russia and pro-Russian forces in order to promote gradual alienation of the respective regions from the national humanitarian space of Ukraine as well as to form artificial cultural and symbolic space based on the ideas and values of so called «Russian World» which have been underlining the value of shared Ukrainian-Russian history (especially its Soviet period), alleged interrelations in cultural, economic, social and other spheres and necessity of close cooperation (ideally – merge) in the future.

For the past years local pro-Russian forces of the respective regions successfully resisted dissemination of Ukrainian humanitarian space on their territories and maintained the functioning of cultural and symbolic contexts aimed at the formation of specific outlook, values and identity of local population. The central authorities practically had a very small impact on cultural or educational spheres in these regions. On the other hand, local pro-Russian forces have successfully implemented their strategy aimed at the preservation of soviet symbols and toponymics, imposition of Russian historiography and deepening of interregional contradictions.

We can recall the functioning of branches of some Russian universities and academia in the Crimea, establishment of contradictory monuments «to the victims of the OUN-UPA» in Luhansk [15], Simferopol [1] and other cities, organization of events aimed at strengthening of local pro-Russian outlook, i. e. different festivals («Great Russian World» or celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the royal House of Romanov in the Crimea) as well as commemorative events which supported soviet and imperialistic symbolism and values of the «Russian World» (i. e. 9 May's celebrations characterized by extensive usage of soviet, communist symbols, «Immortal Regiment»

marches accompanied by the pro-soviet and pro-Russian rhetoric concerning the greatness of the soviet past and solidarity of the post-soviet states). Such actions deepened the feeling of the local population that its values, ideals and outlook differ significantly from the values, ideals and outlook of other Ukrainians (especially Westerners and those who support pro-Western course of the development of Ukraine). Alas, lots of such actions were financed by the central and local budgets and were supported by some highest officials and popular political forces.

Since its independence Ukraine has failed to make clear steps to ensure the effective functioning of its national humanitarian space. On the other hand there were created lots of preconditions for further alienation of the respective regions of Ukraine. In 2005 O. Kryvytska noted that language bipolarity, instability, language separateness and conflicts in the sphere of education which were used in Ukraine as tools of political struggle, could lead to the autonomization of Zakarpattia region, revival of Donetsk – Kryvyi Rig Republic, creation of the Roman administrative region of Bukovyna, declaration of unity with Russia and official legitimization of bilingualism in Ukraine [6]. It should be noted that this prediction has partly been justified and some of its parts has not lost its topicality.

It should be noted that along with the internal factors which weakened the national humanitarian security of Ukraine there was also a large destructive impact on it from abroad. According to V. Horbulin there are three groups of the key components which correlate with the actions of «hybrid war» in the current Russian practice. They are as follows: 1. Traditional military means (using of regular troops, weapons and special forces); 2. Quasi military activities (formation and support of illegal armed groups, support and radicalization of separatist movements, using of both official and illegal private military companies); 3. Operations of non-military nature (including means of economic pressure, cyber-attacks, means of diplomacy, manipulations in information space) [3].

We should mention the aggressive information and cultural external policy of the Russian Federation which has been working on the preservation of its influence on the so called «post-soviet states» since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The targeted russification of the certain regions of Ukraine, dominance of the Russian-language content in the media and attempts to legitimate the status of Russian as a regional language were used to keep Ukraine in the sphere of political influence of the Russian Federation. It seems that the political leadership of Russia keeps trying to

revive the empire which would be consolidated by Russian language, culture and traditional values which are currently widely declared and distributed by the Russian Orthodox Church. The main purpose of the Russian external humanitarian impact of this kind was formulated by V. Putin in late 2006: «The «Russian World» is able and should unite all those who cherish Russian language and Russian culture no matter whether they live in Russia or abroad» [12].

The lack of reliable mechanisms of protection and development of national humanitarian space of Ukraine allowed Russia and pro-Russian forces in Ukraine to use a variety of technologies aimed at alienation and cultural isolation of the entire regions of Ukraine, erosion of the Ukrainian identity and promotion of the idea that the only possible future for Ukraine is the integration with the «brotherly country» which is strongly tied with Ukraine by language, culture and common glorious past. The Russian and pro-Russian information channels disseminated messages concerning the uprising of the Russian Federation as the new world's superpower, the «decay» of the Western World, discrimination of Russian people in Ukraine by pro-Western political forces and so on. The main messages of Russian political media discourse were aimed at objection of independent Ukrainian identity, promotion of the idea of unity of «Russian people» of Russia and Ukraine, blaming of pro-Western Ukrainian political forces and so on.

The results of this «soft power» policy could be clearly noted during the events of the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine (ending 2013 – beginning of 2014) when the pro-Russian information influence actually split Ukrainian society into two opposing camps. At the same time the Russian media interpreted the annexation of the Crimea and support of the armed separatist movement in the East of Ukraine as noble and justified measures aimed at the protection of Russian-speaking population from the humiliation by Ukrainian nationalist forces. Russia has been successfully retranslating such messages through the different information channels to its target audience in Ukraine and its conflict-affected areas until now. The Russian aggression against Ukraine first in the Crimea and then in the Donbas was accompanied by a large-scale information campaign, which was reflected in the integrity of messages, the total disinformation of key target groups and the large-scale use of fake information at all levels [5].

There is no doubt that Russia will continue to use its influence in humanitarian and information spheres as it has proved to be an extremely effective tool for achieving its foreign policy goals. The forms and

methods of the hybrid war which Russia wages against Ukraine may change depending on the countermeasures which Ukraine or international community will be able to take.

We may summarize the aforementioned by the following **conclusions**:

■ One of the most important components of the national security is the protection of national humanitarian space as it forms the identity of citizens and forms the basis for national consolidation. Preservation of the integrity of humanitarian space (which does not deny its internal diversity) is the key for sustainable development of the state and society and their resistance to external negative impacts.

■ Formation of the consolidated humanitarian space has been one of the main tasks of the state building in Ukraine since the time of proclamation of its independence. However, the implementation of this task was hampered by the respective internal and external factors. Some of these factors were significantly empowered by the activities of certain pro-Russian political forces with the assistance and direct support of the Russian Federation.

■ Weakness and inconsistency of the humanitarian policy of Ukraine, fragmentation of its

humanitarian space as well as negative trends in the Ukrainian internal policy and in the economic situation of the country as well as strong information and cultural influence of Russia and pro-Russian forces have created favorable preconditions for alienation of the respective Ukrainian regions from the national humanitarian space of Ukraine and formation of the specific local identities and outlook which corresponded with the values and ideology of the so called «Russian World». Tense attitude to the Ukrainian central authorities, other regions of Ukraine and Ukrainian pro-western political course along with extensive and direct support from Russia created pre-conditions for the emergence of the respective separatist tensions in the Crimea, Luhansk and Donetsk regions.

■ Humanitarian component is also will be present among the tools of the «hybrid war» which Russia apparently will wage against Ukraine under the guise of «the Minsk Process», the «Normand Format», etc. It aims at political and economic weakening of Ukraine as well as at preserving and deepening of the internal social and cultural contraries which may facilitate the emergency of another conflict. Further development of the national humanitarian policy should take into account this disappointing prospect as well as previous negative experience.

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