

The destruction of political space: the case of Ukraine, 2014

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Abstract. To overcome the metaphoricality of the term "political space" that is an actual for political sociology, the concept that is pointed by this metaphorical term, is being criticized. The derivative metaphor "destruction of political space" is used to analyze the Ukraine crisis. A retrospective analysis of the preconditions of the crisis and events that resulted in the change of power in 2014 shows that the derivative metaphor can effectively work in political sociology in the study of macro-political processes.

Keywords: *the destruction of political space, the Ukrainian crisis, the normative concentration zones, cleavage, divided society.*

Introduction. Space is one of the most common metaphors in sociology. It is used as a stable, familiar and understandable term. In fact, none of the sociological approaches has freed this term from metaphorical kind. In political sociology, the same metaphorical character is peculiar to the "political space" construction. Using a tool of the critical paradigm of political sociology "a criticism of the concept", we will try to determine the cognitive capabilities of the derivative metaphor "the destruction of political space". In order to overcome the confusion of the imaginary obviousness and plainness of this metaphor meaning, we apply it to an equally apparent event-processional unity that was called in the world the "Ukrainian crisis", and in Ukraine itself was unequivocally called "a revolution of dignity".

Publications. The destruction of political space as a terminological metaphor was considered only in previous publications of the authors of this article [13]. The themes of the social and political space at the conceptual level were developed by G. Siemmel, P. Sorokin, T. Parsons, M. Merleau-Ponty, A. Lefebvre, J. Turner, P. Bourdieu, P. Stompka, A. Filippov [15]. Sociological analysis of the events of the Ukrainian crisis in the categories of political space has not previously been carried out.

Purpose of article. Determine the applicability of the metaphor "the destruction of the political space" to the Ukrainian crisis-2014

Materials and methods. Terminological analysis of the metaphor "the destruction of political space". A retrospective critical analysis of the preconditions and the first sequence of events of the Ukrainian crisis (2012-2014) based on the results of author's direct observation and reports of open sources.

Results. A metaphor "the destruction of political space" in political sociology

Johnathan Turner interpreted social space as a whole as an organized space of interaction [3], and pointed to the importance of "normalize" for the micro level of social space. Social space is both order and chaos; a political space is a collection of different variations of order, in each of which chaos is local and secondary. Social space is organized by the social structure as a whole; the organized nature of the political space is, first of all, the normative function provided by the relevant institutions. Norms in politics perform a restrictive function, establish and define boundaries. They mark the reference points of political space, open the way for social consciousness to understand and interpret political space. Normativity "creates" a political space through political and power institutions. These

institutions function as "normative concentration zones" (the author's term).

The metaphor of "destruction" is applicable to political space at least to its reflection in the social consciousness. How can the political space be "destroyed"? By collapse, the deconstruction of normativity, the dysfunctionality of political institutions, destructive attacks on a normative concentration zones. The reduction of confidence in certain political and security institutions leads to the fact that instead of ordering the political space, they radically distort its characteristics, down to destruction [13].

The destruction of political space as a process can combine natural prerequisites with the deliberate impact of agents. As natural prerequisites for the destruction of political space, social divisions (or "cleavages" in the terminology of S. Lipset) most often appear. We will try to show how the destruction of political space occurred during the "Ukrainian crisis" in 2014. Let us list the divisions that have become natural prerequisites for this destruction (a detailed description of them can be found [2]).

Divisions, cleavages, break-ups: the deepest of them.

Language "break-up". It is the most severe kind of ethnic division. The modern measurement of the language break-up lies in the fact that since 1991 there exist two Ukraines – Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking. Nature of the bilingualism problematisation in Ukraine is connected **firstly** with the fact that linguistic choices have clearly-defined regional allocation. **Secondly** since 1991 the state policy has been based on the principle of monolingualism; at the same time during the whole period of existence of Ukraine a tendency of exclusion of Russian language from the majority of the fields of usage has been implemented.

Cultural "break-up". In most generalized view it is possible to say that the South-East is focused on collectivist values with a historical support on the orthodox base; the values of the Soviet civilization are deeply rooted here. Among them there are not isolationist self-sufficiency; construction in a reference point of production and socially useful work, an industrial and city way of life; primacy of international communications in all spheres of the state activity; continuation of the Soviet festive and household traditions (including "ideological" holidays – the May Day, anniversary of October revolution, of Great Victory on May, 9, etc.). The western areas, on the contrary, profess mainly individualistic and farmer values a support for which is the Catholicism. The major place in structure of value and standard consciousness is taken by a community with European civilization, by nationalism of various inten-

sity, rejection of the Soviet cultural sample in all its nuances, accompanied by a high level of a cultural expansionism.

Political (including geopolitical) "**break-up**". It is expressed in repeatability of electoral preferences: inhabitants of the southern and eastern areas vote for those political forces which make slogans and the programs focused on increase of the status of Russian, economic stability and every possible cooperation with Russia and CIS countries. The geopolitical breaks lies in basis of this break-up. The West Ukrainian areas long time developed as a part of Austro-Hungary, then Poland, Hungary, Romania. The characteristic ethnic nationalism for them with the powerful anti-Russian core, caused both natural historical conditions of development, and results of ideological processes of the beginning of the XX century in Eastern Europe, put insuperable barriers between them and other Ukraine. The situation became complicated because of the unitary device the inefficiency of which was leveled in huge federation of the Soviet Union, but was shown in the period of independence.

The destruction of political space in Ukraine crisis:

Ukraine also approached to crisis of 2014 without visible social prerequisites: the economic situation against universal crisis was rather steady, readiness to active protest was slight (although the level of social dissatisfaction was high) [9]. At the same time "technological" preparation for attempt of overthrow of the power was quite obvious, though seemed focused for other term (namely on presidential election of 2015).

Destruction of the normative concentration zone "authority (legitimacy) of the president":

On the one hand, information campaign against the incumbent president V. Yanukovich accrued: series of publications and reportings in mass media, regular speeches of oppositional politicians on the subjects "the criminal clan (Family) of V. Yanukovich captures all richness of Ukraine" and "magnificent life of the dictator V. Yanukovich in Mezhygorye's which is an illegally seized residence". We should point out that the main claim of the second topic is seizure of the residence, excessive luxury in the form of, e.g. golden toilet sink did not get any proof.

Destruction of the normative concentration zone "authority (legitimacy) of law enforcement":

On the other hand, a number of information and organizational actions for zeroing of authority of law enforcement agencies (militia) and judicial system was carried out:

- episode with rape in Vradiyevka [6, 7] (with revolt rehearsal against militia),
- episode with raped and burned O. Makar [4] (with simultaneous stimulation of anti-elite moods),
- episode with the father and the son Pavlichenko [1, 5] (with rehearsal of street riots performed by football ultras);
- the series of protest actions organized by opposition parties under the name "Ukraine, get up!" (Took place in regional centers in Spring 2013. In South-East faced opposition of both local authorities and citizens).

The starting point of the Ukrainian crisis was not signing by V. Yanukovich of the agreement on association of Ukraine with the European Union, it became so-called unexpected for public. The beginning of street protests was especially technological: the conclusion of people to streets was declared by the known journalist M. Nayem who actually acted as the political figure and executed the caller's

function by the social network "Twitter". Quickly enough protests began to fade, without having received, despite active information support of a number of the central TV channels, mass support.

The situation sharply changed in connection with carried out in the night of November 30 for December, 1, dispersal of demonstrators. Running forward, we will note that dispersal in literal sense was a media event: any proofs, except low-informative shots of the surveillance cameras confirming its excessive rigidity it wasn't presented; victims of "bloody dispersal" did not get considerable injuries; outside attention of journalists and the oppositional politicians who have immediately fulminated dispersal, there were provocations which security officers declared, and the answer on which allegedly and there were rigid actions (about these provocations it will be told below).

At the same time how TV channels showed the above shots, the quick reaction several political actors was published at once. Fading protests proceeded and accepted more aggressive character. On a central square within several days gathered, by different estimates, from several thousand to several tenth of thousands of people. The organized groups of young people were distinguished from them in masks (so-called "balaclavas"), armed in baseball bats, bludgeons, metal pipes, gas sprays, the traumatic weapon and "Molotov cocktails". Contrary to statements of mass media and oppositional politicians the security officers standing in a cordon, were not armed with anything, except rubber bludgeons and protective equipment (a regular set at order protection with possible mass collisions; thus boards, helmets and bullet-proof vests supplied not all security officers).

New Destruction Agents – Natural Born Destructors:

Protests quickly expanded and expanded geographically. In the center of the capital powerful barricades were built (including blocking highways), tents were established. The above-mentioned organized groups of young people consisted in most cases of football fans ("ultras") and members of the far right radical extremist organizations which have united in federation "Right Sector". Then in interview of one of commanders of "Berkut" Kusyuk [8] it became clear that "bloody dispersal" was preceded by provocative attacks of football fans and the right radicals on the security officers who were "squeezing out" few protesters from the area at night on November 30. In response to provocations with use of bits, barrels and cobblestones, according to the statement of the commander of "Berkut", security officers applied rubber bludgeons in full compliance with the regular instruction (at the slightest threat of life and to health to the employee of special troops "Berkut" it is obliged to neutralize the menacing: to bring down it from feet and to deafen or immobilize a bludgeon).

The mass of right radicals protesting led by assault groups (groups "Maydan self-defense forces" joined "Right Sector" with the same set of arms plus a helmet and boards) began to besiege the building of parliament, presidential administration, to take government and official agencies (The Ukrainian house, the Trade Unions Building, the capital city hall), locating there on a lodging for the night and further stay.

Protests with different intensity proceeded up to the end of February of the 2014th year. From the most important details it should be noted:

- every time, when intensity of protests decreased (as a result of awareness of hopelessness, as a result of slackness of leaders, as a result of a compromise with the power), there was (casually or not, but it is certain at "the necessary moment") the event causing new splash. Among those there were a beating/kidnapping of journalists and activists of the Euromaydan, provocative information messages (about cruelty of security officers, about participation of "the Russian special troops", etc.), aggressive actions of radicals and murder by unknown snipers of protesters and passersby;

- active support to protesters was given by officials of the USA and the European Union – up to acceptance of personal participation in protest actions with Euromaydan visit, distribution of "humanitarian assistance" and negotiations with activists and leaders of opposition;

- leaders of opposition could not formulate accurately the positions and requirements of protesters, and also not always found with the last a common language, however regularly did messages on not contractual capacity of the power (at the same time steadily demanding at all negotiations with it, and resignation of the president);

- the considerable part of the Ukrainian journalists took a position of active support and participation in protests (T. Chernovol, M. Nayem, S. Leschenko, etc.), even taking part in fights against militia with a claim on journalist inviolability;

- primary slogans of Euromaydan ("For Eurointegration") right after the break-up were changed into anti-government, anti-President and ultra-nationalistic ("Nation above all", "Ukraine above all", etc.). At the regional Euromaydans (which were organized mainly in the region centers of Western and Central Ukraine) one could hear really anti-Russian and anti-Semitist slogans. In particular, the traditional slogan of military nationalists of the time of World War II "Overcut Russians" became if not an everyday slogan. The slogan "Those who do not jump are Russians" became popular not only at meetings but also in social networks (in both given slogans an offensive Ukrainian word "moskal" was used);

- participants of Euromaydan changed from one protest to another but not considerably. Mainly the citizens of Western and Central, but not Southern and Eastern regions of Ukraine were represented there. As a result, South-East where half of population of Ukraine lives composed only one sixth of Euromaydan. Definitely, this shows that division of political protest area into Maydan and Euromaydan coincides with regional division of the country, confrontation of West and Center against East and South;

- one can state that activities of Euromaydan "effectively" crowned dehumanization of the personnel of law enforcement agencies which started in summer. In conflicts between Euromaydan and militia in the period from February, 18 to March, 20 representatives of law enforcement agencies died [10]. During 3 days in February from February, 18 to February, 20 four of them died, 1270 were injured, 150 of them were wounded [14]. Overnight on February, 21 in the stream from Maydan a typical episode was shown – activists were carrying an unconscious militiaman (policeman in Ukraine) and tried to take him to one of the tents. The man living in the tent wanted to call the doctors but on getting to know that the hurt person was a militiaman he said: "No, doctors are not necessary, he is a militiaman";

man he said: "No, doctors are not necessary, he is a militiaman";

- shooting down people became the central episode of Euromaydan. Opposition, activists of Euromaydan and mass media blamed the representatives of security and law enforcement agencies but they did not manage to provide any proof and even after the revolution new heads of General Prosecutor's did not investigate this episode. After the revolution the information was given that sniper shooting was fulfilled in several directions: in the direction of protestants and in the direction of militia from the side of buildings which were under control of protestants (including the superintendent of Euromaydan, future secretary of National Defense and Security Council (SNBO) of Ukraine A. Parubiy).

Destruction by death and fixation by blood:

Despite the random character of victims and high potential of the fact that shooting was organized by "heads" of Euromaydan with provocative aims the activists of Euromaydan created a so-called necrocult named "Heaven Hundred" in the framework of which died people were presented as heroes who died of criminal authorities for the just cause. This was the start of irrational events at Euromaydan.

Final destruction: the destruction of the normative concentration zone "political agreement":

Euromaydan ended with the state coup-d'etat after the double break of compromises between the current authorities and protestants who were represented by the opposition. On February, 12 the President V. Yanukovich agreed to form coalition government, and on February, 15 all detained during the protests were released by amnesty, and on February, 17 the movement "Right Sector" prepared all its military groups with the purpose of "peaceful meeting". On February, 21 V. Yanukovich signed the agreement with the opposition the fulfillment of which was guaranteed by the representatives of the EU and the USA. As soon as police, inner military troops and participants of meeting left the center of Kyiv, the leader of Right Sector claimed that he did not recognize the agreement between opposition and the President and if by the morning February, 22 V. Yanukovich does not resign the Right Sector will take the Administration of the President by storm [12]. V. Yanukovich left Kyiv with life threat, Verkhovna Rada used it and illegally appointed the acting President one of the opposition leaders A. Turchinov (Parliament speaker) and announced the preterm presidential elections on May, 25 2014. The coup-d'etat happened.

Conclusions. The destruction of political space fulfilled the function of central technology in the Ukrainian crisis. The process, indicated by this metaphor, relied on social and historical premises, but was manageable. It is not so much the "nature" of this process that is important, but the fact that public consciousness perceives it as the destruction of political space and reacts accordingly. We state: for the public consciousness, the destruction of political space took place in 2014, together with the coup. Resistance in the Crimea, the Donbass, Kharkov and Odessa was a reaction to destruction. This reaction consolidated the destruction at the value level as irreversible: the blood of the victims on both sides of the conflict recorded the cleavages as irresistible. It can be argued that the destruction of political space leads society to a divided society [11]. The processes going

on in Ukraine since 2014, block the development of society and the state. The reason is that these processes are carried out in the coordinates of the destroyed political space, they are based on the destroyed normative concentration zones, they are oriented to the combination of "ruins" with the old topography. The political space was destroyed, as was its normative constitution. However, carriers of alternative

normality were not given the opportunity to play a major role in the design of a new political space. Such carriers were "separatists" (before the war they were called "federalists"), and ultra-right radicals along with veterans of the ATU. Both of them occupy different, but equally marginal positions. From their access to the process of constructing political space will determine the fate of Ukraine.

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Разрушение политического пространства: кейс Украины, 2014

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Аннотация. Для преодоления метафоричности актуального для политической социологии термина «политическое пространство» реализуется критика понятия. Производная метафора «разрушение политического пространства» применяется для анализа Украинского кризиса. Ретроспективный анализ предпосылок кризиса и событий, завершившихся сменой власти в 2014-м году, показывает, что производная метафора может эффективно работать в политической социологии при исследовании макрополитических процессов.

Ключевые слова: разрушение политического пространства, украинский кризис, зоны нормативной концентрации, раскол, разделенное общество.