

Anglo-American University
School of International Relations and Diplomacy

International Determinants of Regime Change: The Consequences of Foreign Policy
Pendulum in Ukraine

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School of International Relations and Diplomacy

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A Thesis to be submitted to Anglo-American University in partial satisfaction
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I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree, or qualification thereof, or for any other university or institute of learning.

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I also hereby acknowledge that my thesis will be made publicly available pursuant to Section 47b of Act No. 552/2005 Coll. and AAU's internal regulations.

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ABSTRACT

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The presented study aims to explain the difficulties of regime change in country cases, where both Western democratic states and illiberal regional actors have their interests at stake, by looking at the international determinants of regime change, which received limited attention in the democratization literature. By extending the theory of Linkage and Leverage developed by Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, the research aims to contribute to the wider explanation of what are the consequences for regime change of a country if it is exposed to external influence of both democratic and authoritarian powers. The main purpose is to refine the exact mechanisms connecting external powers' actions and the regime change outcomes in the targeted states – the ways through which promotion of interests of external powers works, and also to provide clarifications about the nature of hybrid regimes resulting from being exposed to both liberal and illiberal external forces. In order to achieve this aim, the case of Ukraine will be investigated in detail by comparing Western linkage and leverage to Russian linkage and leverage, by looking at four different time periods since 1991. The study confirms the hypotheses that the more intense linkage and leverage an external power has over a country, the more influence it is able to impose on regime change; and that if the state is influenced by two (or more) external powers with contradictory interests, or if it is difficult to determine to which side the state has more linkage/leverage - it results in hybrid regime.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The past century has been proclaimed by scholars as the “century of democracy.”¹ A third wave of democratization which began in 1974 has brought more than 30 states to democratic governance already by 1990, which as a result nearly doubled the number of existing democracies worldwide.² “The values of freedom, human rights, and popular sovereignty have continued to gain the world” and by the end of the year of 1990 there were 76 democracies, and only five years later this number grew to 117, reaching 120 by the end of 2000.³ Such dynamic developments in regime change across the continents have inspired scholars to focus on the phenomena of democratic transition and consolidation, and resulted in the creation of a great number of theories aiming to explain it. Despite different approaches to the complex issue of regime change, the majority of authors do agree that there is *no single way, simple model or formula of democracy* which could equally provide explanation for all ‘successful’ cases, and there are still many questions to be answered.

A separate room for scholarly debates was created as a result of the developments in the countries of the post-Soviet space which are characterized by indisputable complexity. A complete difference in the paths these states have taken since 1989 – 1992 is striking: while some of them “have completed transition to democracy; others are hybrids of authoritarianism and democracy; and still others have yet to break with the communist past.”⁴ Post-communist countries are recognized to be unique while there is no similar region in the world which produces so many variations of transition to investigate.⁵ Many of these states

¹ Merkel, Wolfgang, Embedded and Defective Democracies, Democratization, Vol.11, Issue 5, 2004, p.34

² Huntington, Samuel, Democracy’s Third Wave, Journal of Democracy, Vol.2, No.2, 1991, p.12

³ Diamond, Larry, Plattner, Marc, The Global Divergence of Democracies, Journal of Democracy Book, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, p.ix

⁴ Bunce, Valerie, The Tasks of Democratic Transition and Transferability, ORBIS 52, 2007, p.25

⁵ Ibid, p.26

found themselves in the “political grey zone” between democracy and autocracy,⁶ by becoming so-called *competitive authoritarian regimes* defined as types of regimes, where “formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority”, while “incumbents violate those rules so often and to such an extent, however, that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy.”⁷

The case of Ukraine, which will be investigated in the present study is not only a problematic “in-between” hybrid regime of the post-Soviet space, but also an “in-between” case of a country geographically linking the liberal European Union (EU) states and a powerful regional illiberal actor – the Russian Federation. Such neighborhood opens up new horizons for the analysis of the difficulties of regime change in such states.

International determinants for a regime change in Ukraine deserve a closer look. The Orange Revolution of 2004 is considered to be among first signs which pointed to the presence of external actors in domestic political developments of Ukraine and was interpreted by Russia “in terms of geopolitical contestation with the West.”⁸ There are numerous indicators that the foreign policy direction Ukraine has taken had an impact on regime, for example, while since 2004 the country was following the path of democratic reforms and had aspirations to join the EU and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), they were seriously inhibited by another pro-Eastern policy orientation which began when Viktor Yanukovich came to power in 2010.

⁶ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.460

⁷ Levitsky, Steven, Way, Lucan, The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism, Journal of Democracy, Vol.13, No.2, 2002, p.52

⁸ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.460

The Ukrainian crisis, which started at the end of 2013 and is continuing to this day, “has ended the period in Russian-Western relations that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989” and led to a new period of confrontation between the Cold War adversaries.⁹ Ukraine with its historically constantly changing foreign policy vectors between East and West, and a hybrid regime between autocracy and democracy, is now widely considered a “battlefield” between major powers, both willing to spread their influence through two distinct ideologies. Most importantly, Russia is considered to be not concerned “so much by a sense of feeling threatened by democratization taking place in the neighboring countries per se, but rather the Western influence which it believes underlines it (and leading to a decrease in Russia’s influence).”¹⁰

By 2013, Ukraine has turned westwards too sharply and too spontaneously, according to Trenin, and thus, has lost this balance, which was maintained throughout the years. Thus, current situation can be read as the “new battle for influence”, and while its final outcomes are still unclear, one thing is evident: there is a new epoch in the relations between East and West, with Ukraine caught in-between.¹¹ For Russia, Western promotion of democracy is considered to be nothing else but a geopolitical tool used to promote Western interests in Ukraine.¹² Thus, in this “game” any type of regime change could be perceived as *geopolitical tool rather than aim* to democratize a country or bring it to autocracy.

The presented study aims to explain the difficulties of regime change in country cases, where both Western democratic states and illiberal regional actors have their interests at

⁹ Trenin, Dmitri, *The Ukraine Crisis and the Resumption of Great Power Rivalry*, Carnegie Moscow Center, 2014, p.3

¹⁰ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, *Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers*, 2015, p.467

¹¹ Trenin, Dmitri, *The Ukraine Crisis and the Resumption of Great Power Rivalry*, Carnegie Moscow Center, 2014, p.3

¹² Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, *Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers*, 2015

stake, by looking at the international determinants of regime change. By extending the theory of Linkage and Leverage presented by Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, the research aims to contribute to the wider explanation of *what are the consequences for regime change of a country if it is exposed to external influence of both democratic and authoritarian powers?* The main purpose is to refine the exact mechanisms connecting external powers' actions and the regime change outcomes in the targeted states – the ways through which the promotion of interests of external powers works, and also to provide clarifications to the nature of hybrid regimes resulting from being exposed to both liberal and illiberal external forces.

Based on Levitsky and Way's theorization of regime change, this thesis seeks to test the following two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that *the more intense linkage and leverage an external power has over a country, the more influence it is able to impose on regime change, which, in turn, serves as a tool of promoting its interests in that state.* Building on the first hypothesis, the second hypothesis is that if a state is being *influenced by two (or more) external powers with contradictory interests, or if it is difficult to define to which side the state has more linkage and leverage, it results in hybrid regime.*

In order to achieve these aims, the case of Ukraine will be investigated in detail by comparing Western linkage and leverage to Russian linkage and leverage, over the time period starting from the beginning of 1990's when Ukraine gained its independence and became a full-fledged actor of international relations, and ending by the current time.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

To set the context of this study, an overview of democratization literature will be provided and complemented by the review of the recent studies which zoom in on the problematic of triangular relationships between liberal, targeted and illiberal states.

The very *first issue* to discuss in the literature on democratization is that the difficulties for regime change have been extensively investigated by different scholars worldwide, and authors have found the explanations for them in various reasons. For example, Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi have focused on modernization theory and argue in favor of economic reasons to play a central role.¹³ Seymour Martin Lipset has considered economic, social and cultural determinants to be crucial for regime change,¹⁴ while Juan Jose Linz devoted attention to institutional prerequisites,¹⁵ and Valerie Bunce argued economic reasons to be less important than other factors among which are prosperous civil society, strong borders and sudden break with authoritarian past.¹⁶ These perspectives are generally inward-looking, focusing on internal developments of the state required for democratic transition and consolidation.

Despite various approaches, however, many of the scholars still did acknowledge that *international determinants of regime change* might play an important role as well. Huntington has admitted that international environment and external actors have significantly contributed to the third wave of democratization: possibility to establish and maintain strong ties with democratic governments, for example through membership in the EU, have

¹³ Limongi, Fernando, Przeworski, Adam, Modernization: Theories and Facts, World Politics, Vol.49, No.2, 1997, pp.155-183;

¹⁴ Lipset, Seymour Martin, The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited, American Sociological Review, Vol.59, Issue 1, 1993, pp.1-22

¹⁵ Linz, Juan Jose, The Perils of Presidentialism, Journal of Democracy, Vol.1, Issue 1, pp.51-69;

¹⁶ Bunce, Valerie, The Tasks of Democratic Transition, ORBIS 52, 2008, pp.25-40

provided “positive incentives” for the states to move in democratic direction.¹⁷ Valerie Bunce, despite her primary focus on internal determinants mentioned above, has admitted that there are certain “aspects of international assistance that look unusually helpful in encouraging the spread and the consolidation of democracy”.¹⁸ She also mentions that while there is a proof that democracy tends to spread across different regions, “there is evidence that the post-communist region is unusually amenable to diffusion; that is, to the cross-national movement of democracy promoters, new ideas, repertoires of behavior, and institutions.”¹⁹ In his conclusions, also Lipset stresses that “democracy is an international cause” and discusses the importance of various international organizations in promoting democratic values and ideas.²⁰ As Bunce and Wolchik explain, “what we find in the post-communist region is an interaction between favorable domestic conditions and international support.”²¹

Generally, however, the literature on democratization has still paid too little attention to external determinants of regime change which have been only partially addressed, and it “has always been skeptical about the role of external actors in promoting democratic transition and consolidation”, while, somewhat ironically, failures in regime change attempts are usually explained by the existence of powerful regional actors which act as inhibitors to democratic progress.²² International determinants of regime change have received only a secondary role, especially if the topic is “in-between” country cases which border both with democratic and non-democratic neighbors.

¹⁷ Huntington, Samuel, *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, Chapter 5, 1991, pp.275-276

¹⁸ Bunce, Valerie, *The Tasks of Democratic Transition*, *ORBIS* 52, 2008, p.40

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.26

²⁰ Lipset, Seymour Martin, *The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited*, *American Sociological Review*, Vol.59, Issue 1, 1993, p.16

²¹ Bunce, Valerie, Wolchik Sharon, *Favorable Conditions and Electoral Revolutions*, *Debates on Democratization*, edited by Diamond, Plattner, Costopoulos, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010, p.196

²² Börzel, Tanja, *The Noble West and the Dirty Rest? Western Democracy promoters and Illiberal Regional Powers*, *Democratization*, Vol.22, No.3, p.521

The second issue lays in certain biases of the democratization literature. In the study called “*The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism*” Levitsky and Way argue that the so-called hybrid regimes are being investigated as “diminished” forms of democracies, or those which are in their transition towards democratic regimes.²³ However, to the contrary, such regimes might be actually moving in an opposite direction which is autocracy.²⁴ Under such circumstances, they argue, it is more relevant to “stop thinking of those cases in terms of transitions to democracy and to begin thinking about the *specific types of regimes they actually are.*”²⁵ The present study aims to show on the case of Ukraine, how exactly the country was switching between democratic and autocratic paths, depending on external factors, and the outcomes they had for the regime.

One more problem appears, as Tolstrup explains, in the fact that the literature mostly focuses on Western efforts in democracy promotion, while autocracy promotion also exists, which creates certain academic disbalances.²⁶ On the other hand, what is interesting to mention, great powers such as China or Russia also claim to be democracies, having a distinct understanding of what this term is composed of. As, for instance, Jiri Suchanek observes, while China perceives democracy in an absolutely different way, “democratization is an essential component of the national project and preventing liberalism – even worse, foreign liberalism – from harming the Chinese people and undermining Chinese power.”²⁷ Russia is widely known for “instead of trying to join Western civilization” with its values and ideas, to be aiming to develop as its antithesis.²⁸ In sum, the fact that other regional powers

²³ Levitsky, Steven, Way, Lucan, *The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism*, Journal of Democracy, Vol.13, No.2, 2002, p.51

²⁴ Ibid, p.51-52

²⁵ Ibid, p.51

²⁶ Tolstrup, Jakob, *Studying a Negative External Actor: Russia's Management of Stability and Instability in the 'Near Abroad'*, Democratization, Vol. 16, No.5, 2009, p.923

²⁷ Suchanek, Jiri, *Democracy in China: Does Taiwan Set an Example?* Association for International Affairs, April 2014, p.4

²⁸ Shevtsova, Lilia, *The Maidan and Beyond: The Russian Factor*, Journal of Democracy, Vol.25, July 2014, p. 75

do have different visions for suitable “democratic” regime types is not considered enough, which makes the literature suffer from significant bias.

Returning to international determinants of regime change, it should be said that scholars have focused on various forms of external influence such as “diffusion, promotion of Western democracy, multilateral conditionality, and the spread of new communications technologies and transnational human rights networks.”²⁹ Nevertheless, it did not explain the connection between international environment and regime outcomes: international impact was still much stronger in some regions than others.³⁰

The most recent studies have paid attention to these shortcomings and analyzed the role of external actors and their impact on regimes in the targeted states, and do consider external interests imposed with the regime change, however still generally give *priority to internal factors* when it comes to regime change. For example, Tanja Börzel in her analysis of interrelations between democracy promoters, targeted state and non-democratic regional powers argues that “domestic conditions in the target state determine how incumbent regimes respond to the incentives offered by democracy promoters and non-democratic powers to engage in or refrain from democratic change.”³¹ The same logic should then apply to the help offered by autocratic powers. Nevertheless, later the author does stress one critical thing to focus on: while generally the role of external actors is limited, *they only matter when “they empower liberal reform coalitions”, by providing financial or military aid.*³² However, it is known that countries with weak economies are recognized to be especially dependent on

²⁹ Levitsky, Steven, Way, Lucan, Linkage versus Leverage: Rethinking International Dimension of Regime Change, *Comparative Politics*, Vol.38, No.4, 2006, p.379

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.379

³¹ Börzel, Tanja, The Noble West and the Dirty Rest? Western Democracy promoters and Illiberal Regional Powers, *Democratization*, Vol.22, No.3, p.520

³² *Ibid*, p.524

external actors' assistance,³³ and foreign financial aid generally is related to the implication of certain interests. This point is critical to explore in the relationship between external actors' support in the empowerment of ruling elites or the opposition, and the actual external interests being imposed in the target states. For example, Crawford emphasizes that there is a direct relation linking "development assistance to the promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance."³⁴ He stresses that foreign aid has been "the most important tool for democratization since the end of the Cold War, and that development assistance in fact "has always been political."³⁵ Membership in various international organizations also mostly requires a country to comply with democratic standards. The author also points to the fact that the idea behind development aid during the period of the Cold War was indeed used as tool for gaining new allies,³⁶ which provides grounds for the suggestion that in the present context of renewed rivalry between the Cold War adversaries mentioned in the beginning of this study, this can be an issue again.

What is also relevant to the aims of the presented study, following up on the argument that the elites in the countries with weak economies are especially vulnerable to external support, is the fact that in competitive authoritarian regimes, the governments generally have to choose "between allowing serious opposition challenges to proceed, at the cost of possible defeat, and egregiously violating democratic rules, at potential international isolation."³⁷ This issue allows us to see why Ukraine, for example, has been hanging in the position between East and West for decades, fact that will be further investigated in this study.

³³ Levitsky, Way, Linkage versus Leverage, Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change, Comparative Politics, 2006, pp.379-400

³⁴ Crawford, Gordon, Foreign Aid and Political Reform: A Comparative Analysis of Democracy Assistance and Political Conditionality, Palgrave Macmillan, International Political Economy Series, 2001, p.1

³⁵ Ibid, p.2

³⁶ Ibid, p.12

³⁷ Levitsky, Way, International Linkage and Democratization, Journal of Democracy, Vol.16, No:3, 2005, p.26

Recent literature also mostly does not consider the promotion of autocracy by illiberal regional actors to be significant enough. Tanja Börzel, for example, argues that existing literature has only little support for the fact that Russia seeks to promote autocracy or any other regime beyond its borders. She stresses that there is not enough evidence that Russia or China use their “economic and military capabilities to induce autocratic reforms in other countries.”³⁸ However, as this study will show, in the case of Ukraine there is enough evidence to support the argument that Russia indeed *does* promote autocracy (even if it is not a primary aim) by, for example, supporting autocratic regimes. For instance, in 2010, as it will be discussed later in the presented study, Viktor Yanukovich signed the Kharkiv Agreements with Russia prolonging the period of Russian Black Sea Fleet stationing in Crimea until the year 2042, and Ukraine, in turn, was offered additional significant discounts for the Russian gas,³⁹ which has always been an important economic leverage for external “governance”. With a weak economy, Ukraine was especially vulnerable to Russian economic “assistance”, and while it can be argued that it was not related to the promotion of autocracy in the state, already the fact that stationing of foreign military troops was forbidden by the Constitution of Ukraine,⁴⁰ indicates that under external pressure the incumbent government violated the existing laws to the extent it led to autocratic decisions. Another example which will be explored is the Russian economic pressure under which Yanukovich refused to sign the Association Agreement with EU in 2013 – it is a clear indication of interference in internal affairs of the state. As Peter Burnell clearly explains, autocracy export can be manifested in “deliberate attempts to influence a regime in an anti-democratic direction especially by *offering concrete forms of support*”, and does include manipulations

³⁸ Börzel, Tanja, *The Noble West and the Dirty Rest? Western Democracy promoters and Illiberal Regional Powers, Democratization*, Vol.22, No.3, p.521

³⁹ Pirani, Simon et al., *The April 2010 Russo-Ukrainian Gas Agreement and its Implications for Europe*, The Oxford University Energy Studies, 2010

⁴⁰ Buba, Tatiana, *Russo-Ukrainian Relations: Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet*, *International Affairs Review*, p.4

using the tools of soft and hard power “to bolster authoritarian trends and/or destabilize and subvert democratic ones.”⁴¹ Tolstrup summarizes these efforts simply: Russia is using a strategy of increasing its neighbors’ dependence on its economic and other matters, thus securing a tool of interference in internal affairs.⁴²

In analyzing interactions between the West, Ukraine and Russia, Delcour and Wolczuk point out that changes which occurred after the Color Revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia in 2003 – 2004 have illustrated the role external actors play in domestic political changes, however later authors stress that overall, Western powers have played only a limited role before and during the protests in 2013 – 2014, since it was mostly the desire of the people to follow the path of democratic values.⁴³ Such elimination of the role of external actors in this case makes the literature suffer from *absence of the explanations of the mechanisms through which certain values imposed by the external powers shape the public preferences* in a way that can lead to mass protests, and possibly change in political orientation of a country.

Nelly Babayan and Thomas Risse in a similar analysis of the interactions between Western democracy promotion attempts, non-democratic regional powers and political and societal conditions in target states, also argue that “the effects on the ground mostly depend on the domestic configuration of forces. Western democracy promoters are likely to empower liberal groups in the target countries, while countervailing efforts by non-democratic regional powers will empower illiberal groups.”⁴⁴ The mentioned empowerment depends, according to the authors, on leverage of the Western powers compared to those of the illiberal regional

⁴¹ Burnell, Peter, Promoting Democracy and Promoting Autocracy: Towards a Comparative Evaluation, Journal of Politics and Law, Vol.3, No:2, 2010, p.5

⁴² Tolstrup, Jakob, Studying a Negative External Actor: Russia's Management of Stability and Instability in the 'Near Abroad', Democratization, Vol. 16, No.5, 2009, p.933

⁴³ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia's Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.466

⁴⁴ Babayan, Nelli, Risse, Thomas, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers: Introduction to the Special Issue, Democratization, Vol.22, No:3, 2015, p.381

actor, and also on economic and security linkages between the target state and Western powers compared to the linkages to the illiberal powers.⁴⁵ In this sense, authors already point to the presence of external interests in empowering domestic elites in one state.

What is also important is that the recent papers do operate in the framework of the contestation of the great powers interest, by finding out that *interests rather than democracy promotion per se* are reflected in the external determinants of regime change. Also, these interests are considered to become the reasons for the political conflicts within the relationships between West, targeted state and illiberal regional actor.

To summarize, it should be stated that while geostrategic and economic interests of external actors in the promotion of regime change are taken into account in the recent studies, the utmost preference is still given to internal determinants. While the present research does not eliminate the importance of the internal factors, it will apply a theoretical framework offering the explanation of the mechanisms through which external interests are able to shape internal preferences of the targeted states of regime change.

The following section includes the theoretical framework which will be used to answer the research question of what are the consequences for regime change of a country which is exposed to external influence of both democratic and authoritarian powers.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Method

The presented study offers a look at the problematic issue of regime change in Ukraine through the lens of the Linkage and Leverage theory offered by Levitsky and Way.⁴⁶ It allows

⁴⁵ Babayan, Nelli, Risse, Thomas, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers: Introduction to the Special Issue, *Democratization*, Vol.22, No:3, 2015, p.384

⁴⁶ Levitsky, Way, Linkage versus Leverage, *Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change*, *Comparative Politics*, 2006, pp.379-400

us to analyze external determinants through a framework, which according to the authors, opens up new ways for explaining the relationship between the international environment and the differences in the outcomes of regime changes across the globe.

First, a general overview of the theory will be provided, followed by the explanation of its major shortcomings, which this study aims to overcome.

According to the theory, after the end of the Cold War “international environment operates along two dimensions: Western leverage and linkage to the West.”⁴⁷ *Leverage* means “the degree to which governments are vulnerable to external democratizing pressure,”⁴⁸ which can be manifested in different ways, such as: positive conditionality often used by, for instance EU, sanctions, or threat of withdrawing foreign aid, which makes weak economies particularly sensitive to external influence. This dimension can be, however, limited by two important factors: first, the existence of another regional actor able to provide economic or other support to the targeted state, such as Russia or China; or competing objectives of the foreign policies.⁴⁹

Linkage to the West is defined as “the density of ties and cross-border flows” between the targeted state and Western actors and institutions,⁵⁰ which is divided into five dimensions: first one covers *economic linkage*, which consists of trade, foreign investments, credits and provided economic aid; second one refers to *geopolitical linkage*, which means ties to Western states and collaboration with international organizations, alliances or commitments to international treaties; third is *social linkage* which implies the flow of citizens, migration levels, tourism and refugee flows, size of diasporas living in the Western states, and elites of

⁴⁷ Levitsky, Way, Linkage versus Leverage, Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change, Comparative Politics, 2006, p.382

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.379

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.383

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.383

the targeted states educated in Western countries; fourth is *communication linkage* which includes information exchanges, internet-, tele- and radio-communications; and the last one is *transnational civil society linkage*, defined as the density of ties to Western non-governmental/ religious/ party organizations.⁵¹

Linkages are theoretically responsible for generating pressure on autocratic governments; they increase the possibility of Western response to the abuse of power in the targeted states, and, most importantly, *shape domestic preferences* for following the path of democratization. Also, linkage “reshapes the domestic balance of power within authoritarian regimes.”⁵²

Unlike leverage, linkage constitutes a “soft power” in regime change and most importantly it is able to shape the preferences on various social levels – not only among elites but also public. Moreover, linkage generally does strengthen the effectivity of leverage.

The most important aspect in the theory, which underlines the intensity of external pressure, is the *combination of different levels of linkage and leverage*. Particularly, the theory explains why in some cases democratization pressure was low while in others it was high, by pointing to different levels in the combinations of linkage and leverage. These levels are considered to be “critical in understanding cross-national variation in international pressure for democratization” since they “create distinct external environments.”⁵³

To put it shortly, when *both leverage and linkage are high* – the role of external pressure is considered to be most effective by significantly expanding regime change prospects; when *linkage alone is high while leverage is low*, this pressure is indirect, slow and its effectiveness is limited; on the contrary, when *leverage is high but combined with low linkage*, this

⁵¹ Levitsky, Way, Linkage versus Leverage, Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change, Comparative Politics, 2006, p.383-384

⁵² Ibid, p.385

⁵³ Ibid, p.386

pressure can be only partially effective; and finally, *if both indicators are low* – the pressure of external actors is considered to be ineffective and limited.⁵⁴

Thus, the given theory allows not only to see the ways of interaction of external actors with the targeted states, but also to *explain how they shape internal preferences of non-governmental actors and society*. For example, as Delcour and Wolczuk argue, in 2013 people of Ukraine had little understanding of what exactly the Association Agreement with the EU could offer to the state or its citizens, however, they initiated the biggest anti-governmental protests in Ukrainian history by showing their pro-European choice – by expressing “strong support for European values – democracy, human rights, and the rule of law – rather than the policies of the EU.”⁵⁵

The theory therefore offers a quality formula to explain one of the biggest problems in democratization literature by providing the reasoning of why in some cases external determinants might play more decisive role than in others. However, there are certain shortcomings to take into consideration.

First, and most important issue is the lack of objectivity, since while the theory recognizes the role of alternative regional powers able to provide their own economic, military or other support, it does not devote any attention to the fact that also illiberal actors are actually able to interact with the targeted states through the same mechanisms of linkage and leverage, thus, promoting an alternative type of regime change there. International environment does not seem to operate only along Western linkage and leverage as discussed by the authors – Russia or China also do promote regime change through actually the same ways. As Burnell stresses, “comparative evaluations of the performance of international

⁵⁴ Levitsky, Way, Linkage versus Leverage, Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change, Comparative Politics, 2006, pp.386-388

⁵⁵ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.466

support for democracy and for autocratic rule should be undertaken.”⁵⁶ An idea of autocracy promotion is a relatively new one in the democratization field, and is still not developed enough.⁵⁷

In this case, consequently, the issue does not necessarily have to be democratization; it could be an imposition of *any type of regime* operating through the same variables. As Börzel indicates, Russia, China or Saudi Arabia “yield enough hard and soft power” as well, and are also able to counteract Western efforts to impose democratization in certain countries.⁵⁸ With its size, geostrategic significance combined with the dependence of neighboring countries’ from its giant reserves of gas and oil,⁵⁹ Russia can be easily seen as a strong and powerful regional hegemon able to spread its interests across the borders, especially when it comes to its closest neighbors.

As for autocracy promotion, scholars are yet to come with “the most appropriate baseline, the relevant time period and census date for collecting the evidence,” in other words a similar framework of evaluating democracy and autocracy promotion, which is still to be developed by the literature.⁶⁰

Thus, the given study is offering one of the possible baselines of using the methodology of regime change promotion, which will allow us to compare promotion of democracy by liberal powers with promotion of autocracy by the illiberal ones.

Second, while accounting for the utmost importance of geographic proximity for linkage with the West, theory does not explain the ways of dealing with “in-between” cases such as

⁵⁶ Burnell, Peter, Promoting Democracy and Promoting Autocracy: Towards a Comparative Evaluation, Journal of Politics and Law, Vol.3, No:2, 2010, p.3

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.5

⁵⁸ Börzel, Tanja, The Noble West and the Dirty Rest? Western Democracy promoters and Illiberal Regional Powers, Democratization, Vol.22, No.3, p.520

⁵⁹ Levitsky, Way, International Linkage and Democratization, Journal of Democracy, Vol.16, No:3, 2005, p.21

⁶⁰ Burnell, Peter, Promoting Democracy and Promoting Autocracy: Towards a Comparative Evaluation, Journal of Politics and Law, Vol.3, No:2, 2010, p.7

Ukraine (see introduction), which are geographically linked to *both* the democratic EU and non-democratic Russia. Moreover, if one state is able to be affected by both liberal and illiberal actors through the same means, it opens up room for further investigation of the issue of regime change in such countries.

Third, while discussing the general democratizing pressure depending on the different levels in the combination of linkage and leverage, the theory does not explain what the regimes in the targeted states look like when democratizing pressure is indirect, slow or ineffective. The given study will provide particular clarifications for the hybrid regimes, and will show how the foreign policy vectors might affect the countries which are being exposed to the interests of both liberal and illiberal powers.

Thus, the given study offers an extension of the theory by including not only linkage and leverage to the democratic West (US, EU), but also to illiberal regional actors (Russia) to see how they affect regime change prospects in the targeted state (Ukraine) throughout different time periods.

It is necessary to mention that the given study will be focused on a comprehensive analysis of *linkages* between the targeted state and its neighbors rather than on both linkage and leverage, and there are two reasons for this approach. *First*, as Levitsky and Way explain, it is exactly linkage which “blurs the distinctions between international and domestic pressure for democracy, transforming international or regional democratic expectations into powerful domestic demands.”⁶¹ Linkage allows us to focus on international determinants of regime change without ignoring domestic developments. *Second* reason to extensively analyze linkage is the fact, that due to the weak economy of Ukraine since the beginning of its independence, the leverage from both Western states and Russian Federation – manifested in

⁶¹ Levitsky, Way, Linkage versus Leverage, Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change, Comparative Politics, 2006, p.396

numerous loans, credits and foreign aid assistance programs – was always critically high.⁶² While, for instance, the EU was using positive conditionality, Russia, in order to protect all of its interests, throughout decades has used three levers of pressure: economic, territorial and security.⁶³ Thus, high leverage is considered to be always the case from both liberal Western states and illiberal eastern neighbor of Ukraine, while the development of linkage dimensions requires a deeper investigation, and will be decisive in explaining the intensity of external actors' promotion of regime change.

Conceptualization

While we have already given the explanations for the terms of linkage and leverage and their interrelation, this section aims to provide some clarifications on concepts further used in the given study.

First and foremost, it is necessary to indicate, that there is no universally accepted definition of what democracy is among the scholars. An essential point to the issue is that “no scientific field can advance far if the participants do not share a common understanding of key terms in the field.”⁶⁴ For the aims of the given study, however, it is more relevant to explain what is meant by hybrid regimes, which allows us not to draw a precise boundary between democracy and authoritarianism. While generally scholars view hybrid regimes as spoiled versions of democracy, they also can be spoiled versions of autocracy, therefore an “in-between” regime is understood as competitive authoritarianism in the presented study. As it was mentioned in the beginning of this research, competitive authoritarian regime is one in which:

⁶² Levitsky, Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.214

⁶³ Hill, Fiona, Jewett, Pamela, *Back in the USSR: Russia's Intervention in the Internal Affairs Of the Former Soviet Republics and the Implications for United States Policy Toward Russia*, Ethnic Conflict Project, 1994, p.66

⁶⁴ Schedler, Andreas, *What is Democratic Consolidation*, *Journal of Democracy*, 9.2, 2009, p.92

“formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority”, while “incumbents violate those rules so often and to such an extent, however, that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy.”⁶⁵

Such regime has to be distinguished both from stable democratic and fully authoritarian one, since *democratic regime has to meet the following criteria: first*, executives and legislatures are empowered through free and fair elections; *second*, virtually the whole adult population possesses the right to vote; *third*, political and civil liberties are respected; and *fourth*, elected elites have authority to rule, “in that they are not subject to the tutelary control of military or clerical leaders.”⁶⁶ However, in competitive authoritarian regimes, violations of these criteria happen too often and to such an extent that the regime cannot be called fully democratic.⁶⁷ On the other hand, such regimes cannot also be called fully authoritarian, since elites do not openly violate the rules and indicated criteria, but rather choose the ways of bribing, co-optation, different forms of persecutions, etc.⁶⁸

By *liberal external power* which is able to influence the direction of regime development, the presented study points to an “external actor that strengthens another country’s liberal performance” and by *illiberal regional power* it points to an external actor that, on the contrary, “weakens another country’s liberal performance.”⁶⁹

Regime change, in turn, generally implies the situation when authoritarian rule transits to democracy, or vice versa, thus meaning it can move in either democratic or authoritarian direction.

⁶⁵ Levitsky, Steven, Way, Lucan, The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.13, No.2, 2002, p.52

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p.53

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.53

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p.53

⁶⁹ Tolstrup, Jakob, Studying a Negative External Actor: Russia's Management of Stability and Instability in the 'Near Abroad', *Democratization*, Vol. 16, No.5, 2009, p.927

Lastly, the clarification on the difference between leverage and economic linkage should be provided in order to avoid conceptual misunderstandings. While leverage is “the vulnerability to external pressure” which can be manifested through different means, including the withdrawal of the financial aid, which countries with the weak economies are especially dependent on, it should not be confused with the act of providing this aid, it rather constitutes a political pressure of threatening a state not to support it financially in case it does not comply with estimated conditions of an external state.

Method

In order to explain the consequences for the regime change in the countries which are exposed to the external influence of both liberal and illiberal actors, the case study of Ukraine will be analyzed through the theoretical framework of linkage and leverage offered by Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way.

Comparative analysis of the linkages to the Western states versus the linkages to the Russian Federation will be done in order to see which state had more influence to impose on the regime in Ukraine.

Due to weak economic performance throughout the years, Ukraine has been especially vulnerable to external pressure, which implies high levels of leverage from both Western states and Russian Federation.

Both external actors possessed the levers of influence, for instance, as will be discussed in the presented study, Russian Federation always could exchange beneficially low gas prices for Ukraine in return for policy decisions which could benefit illiberal actor. The West, in turn, could threaten Ukraine with aid withdrawal Ukraine was dependent upon, if it does not comply with certain conditions. Therefore, given the fact the leverage was always high to

both external actors, the primary purpose left is to find out to which side Ukraine had more intense linkages during certain periods of time, and what was its relation to the regime change.

Returning to the concepts used in the theory, it is necessary to provide some clarifications due to the fact that Levitsky and Way have used quite vague definitions. By *economic linkage* “trade, investment, credit, and bilateral and multilateral aid flows”⁷⁰ are meant, and in order to evaluate the intensity of economic linkages, this study will look at data on import and export statistics, discuss membership in trade organizations, trade agreements, information on foreign direct investment (where available) and financial assistance from external powers to the targeted state. *Geopolitical linkage* implies “ties to Western governments and participation in Western-led [and Eastern-led] alliances, treaties, and international organizations,”⁷¹ and this study will emphasize not only the membership in certain organizations, but also aspirations to join them, while preparation to join certain organizations requires meeting particular requirements. Also, geopolitical linkage could be seen through intensity of negotiations, meetings, and, most importantly, support of the leadership in the external state. *Social linkage* is defined as “the flow of people across borders, includes migration, tourism, refugees, and diaspora communities, as well as elite education” in external states.⁷² This study will mostly focus on the number of Ukrainians migrating to the Western/Eastern states in certain periods, and look at number of Ukrainians living in those states to see the tendency of growing or declining popularity of external destinations. Where applicable, tourism statistics will also be explored. *Communication linkages* include “cross-border telecommunications, internet connections, and the degree of

⁷⁰ Levitsky, Way, Linkage versus Leverage, Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change, Comparative Politics, 2006, p.383

⁷¹ Ibid, p.383

⁷² Ibid, p.383

Western radio and television penetration and coverage,”⁷³ and this study will focus also on external financial support of local media, external ownership of TV and radio channels, and information exchange through Eastern and Western social networks. Lastly, *transnational civil society linkage* is defined as ties to external “nongovernmental organizations, religious groups, and party organizations.”⁷⁴ The given study will evaluate external support, including financial and technical one, in the development of local NGOs, and look at the spheres of activities of civic society to see their potential influence on regime in the country.

The presented study will use both secondary and primary sources (official documents of international organizations etc.), and will mostly rely on the statistical data for the comparison of the linkages in economic and social spheres.

The findings will be summarized in the Table 1.1 in the conclusions on page 94.

Introduction to the Case of Ukraine

In order to answer the research question of what are the consequences for regime change of a country which is exposed to external influence of both democratic and authoritarian powers, the case study of Ukraine will be investigated in detail by comparing the degrees of linkage relations of the country with Western states and organizations to Russian ones. Leverage, in turn, is considered by this study to be always high to both Western states and the Russian Federation, since due to the weak economy, Ukraine has been particularly vulnerable towards external pressure and was dependent on foreign aid being afraid of its possible withdrawal (for instance, Western states have provided significant sums of money since independence of Ukraine, or EU has widely used positive conditionality to foster Ukraine’s

⁷³ Levitsky, Way, Linkage versus Leverage, Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change, Comparative Politics, 2006, p.384

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.384

reforms, while Russian Federation, was encouraging Ukraine's foreign policy actions with beneficial gas discounts).

The research will be divided into four different time periods: *first* period of 1991 – 2003, which includes the years after Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union until the Orange Revolution; *second* period between 2004 – 2010 which generally describes Ukrainian foreign policy vector as pro-Western oriented; *third* period of 2010 – 2013 which starts with the gaining of power by pro-Russian oriented president Viktor Yanukovich and ends with Euromaidan revolution, which re-shuffled foreign policy once again leading to the Association Agreement with EU; and last, *fourth* period is the one from 2014 until this day, which is again known for Ukraine's turn westwards and for serious deterioration of relationships with Russia, including military aggression from illiberal regional power towards Ukraine. As this analysis will show, during different time periods intensity of relations with external powers varied significantly - the question being how do these different intensities of relations impact regime transformation.

Chapter 4: Period 1991 – 2003: After the Collapse of the USSR

The collapse of the Soviet Union created not only a big number of new independent states, but also a new geopolitical situation in the world. Ukraine has received a chance of following its own path, however, there were many different problems to solve first, among them economic instability, security issues, and foreign policy direction.

In pursuit of an independent foreign policy vector, Ukraine was developing multi-lateral relationships both with Russia and the West for decades. As common knowledge has it, the beginning of the 1990's saw the establishment of closer ties with Western states and

institutions, while Ukraine moved to rapprochement with the East at the end of the year of 1999, when linkages to the West dropped to their lowest point.

As for the linkages to the West, despite the fact that there were various opportunities to build a promising framework for the development of relationships with EU and US, the first thirteen years of Ukrainian independence proved to be generally disappointing in terms of building strong ties.⁷⁵ On the other hand, the collapse of the Soviet Union triggered the establishment and development of economic, geopolitical, social, communication and civil society linkages, which was already an essential change.

As for the East, after the collapse of the Soviet Union there were many issues to solve between Russia and Ukraine. Generally, Russia was trying to “undermine the viability and international standing of the new state and to keep Ukraine within the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] as a satellite of Moscow” while Ukraine was on one hand trying to resist Russian pressure and on another – build an independent state with its own foreign policy objectives.⁷⁶ Russia was aiming to keep its neighbor in its sphere of influence, while at the same time preventing Ukraine from creating new trading alliances which could damage Russian interests in this area, and securing its geostrategic interests in the Black Sea region. In order to protect all of its interests, throughout decades Moscow has used three levers of pressure: economic, territorial and security.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine’s Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, 2010, p.7

⁷⁶ Hill, Fiona, Jewett, Pamela, Back in the USSR: Russia’s Intervention in the Internal Affairs Of the Former Soviet Republics and the Implications for United States Policy Toward Russia, Ethnic Conflict Project,1994, p.66

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.66

Economic Linkage to the West (1991 – 2003)

Liberalization of foreign trade of Ukraine started only in 1994, and progressively by the year 1999, countries such as China, Germany and Italy became among main importers of Ukrainian goods outside of the Commonwealth of Independent States.⁷⁸ Generally, foreign trade, however, remained too sensitive to external factors.⁷⁹ Despite various attempts to diversify Ukraine's export and import destinations in the beginning of 90's, as the following section will show, Russia and the countries of the post-Soviet space were still its major trading partners. Despite this fact, however, rapid development of economic relations with the West should not be underestimated in their role for the development of regime in Ukraine.

According to the International Trade Statistics Yearbook of 1996, valued in thousands of US dollars, imports from EU accounted for \$2814600, while exports to EU – \$1593800.⁸⁰ As the following section will show, these numbers are much smaller than those with Russian Federation.

While it is hard to find precise numbers on foreign direct investments (FDI) to Ukraine for the given period, it should be said that “the share of EU FDI outflows to emerging markets in total EU external FDI flows tended to increase between 2000 and 2004, rising from 15.3 % in 2000 to 43.3 % in 2004.”⁸¹ Since Ukrainian market was only emerging and had a long way ahead of becoming a robust economy, Western FDI flows were not significant enough.

⁷⁸ Dynamics of Ukraine's Foreign Trade, The Current State of Ukraine's Foreign Trade, UCEPS, Available at: http://www.razumkov.org.ua/additional/analytical_report_NSD6_eng.pdf, p.6

⁷⁹ Ibid, p.9

⁸⁰ International Trade Statistics Yearbook of 1996, United Nations Publications, 1997, p.1052

⁸¹ Eurostat, European Union Foreign Direct Investment Yearbook 2006, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2006, p.56

As for the credit and aid flows, dealing with inflation, in 1994 Ukraine has signed its first International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement.⁸² In 1996 it borrowed \$260 billion from EU and later received about \$200 million from the US.⁸³ After 1998 Ukraine has received more than one billion euros from the EU after it signed Partnership and Cooperation Agreement discussed below.⁸⁴ By the end of the 1990's, Ukraine became the third largest recipient of US foreign aid.⁸⁵ It did not only strengthen the linkages to the West, but such dependence on foreign financial assistance has provided a way for Ukraine's long-term dependence on its foreign supporters, which lasts up to this day. As mentioned before, particularly due to foreign aid and credit flows the given study has pointed to the constantly high levels of leverage to the West for the whole period of study.

Generally, economic linkages to the West in the given period of 1991 – 2003 were undoubtedly lower than those to the East, however, still significant for the development of Ukrainian economy.

Economic Linkage to the East (1991 – 2003)

Ukraine became a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States with its creation in 1991, later becoming a part of an Agreement on the creation of Economic Union aiming to generate a “common economic space grounded on *free movement* of goods, services, labor force, capital; to elaborate coordinated monetary, tax, price, customs, external economic

⁸² Aslund, Anders, How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy, Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009, p.4

⁸³ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution change Ukraine's geopolitical position regarding Russia and the west?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, Winter 2010, p.8

⁸⁴ Ibid, p.8

⁸⁵ Kuzio, Taras, Ukraine's Relations with the West: Disinterest, Partnership, Disillusionment, European Security, Vol.12, No:2, 2003, p.23

policy; to bring together methods of regulating economic activity and create favorable conditions for the development of direct production relations.”⁸⁶

According to the International Trade Statistics Yearbook of 1996, a total value of imports from Russia to Ukraine constituted \$8686100, while exports to Russia – \$5527700.⁸⁷ Russia was the main economic partner of Ukraine and compared to European and US import and export destinations, was much more significant in terms of foreign trade.⁸⁸

The situation with credit/aid flows from Russia had been tricky: if Western approach was to provide financial assistance directly, Russian way was slightly different – it assisted Ukraine by, for instance, forgiving Ukraine’s gas debts, which looks more like something in-between Russian economic linkage and leverage, since this forgiveness was usually in exchange for other benefits, which, however, does not eliminate the fact that such “help” was vital for Ukrainian economy and was presented as a friendly gesture. Russia was pressuring Ukraine on economic and security issues, by “making it clear that it will make life extremely difficult for Kiev if it persists in the pursuit of complete independence from Moscow.”⁸⁹ Ukrainian dependence on Russian gas and its growing debts to Gazprom have become means for Russian intervention in Ukrainian internal affairs, allowing illiberal neighbor to threaten Ukraine with an increase in oil prices for many years.⁹⁰

For Russia, Ukrainian market was also significant: firstly, Ukraine was the main transit country of Russian gas (80%) to European states, and second, it was an essential destination

⁸⁶ Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS States Official Website: About CIS, Available at: <http://www.cisstat.com/eng/cis.htm>

⁸⁷ International Trade Statistics Yearbook of 1996, United Nations Publications, 1997, p.1052

⁸⁸ Dynamics of Ukraine’s Foreign Trade, The Current State of Ukraine’s Foreign Trade, UCEPS, Available at: http://www.razumkov.org.ua/additional/analytical_report_NSD6_eng.pdf, p.7

⁸⁹ Hill, Fiona, Jewett, Pamela, Back in the USSR: Russia’s Intervention in the Internal Affairs Of the Former Soviet Republics and the Implications for United States Policy Toward Russia, Ethnic Conflict Project, 1994, p.70

⁹⁰ Ibid, p.74

for Russian foreign direct investments. Businesses invested almost “in all sectors of the economy from heavy industry to food production and telecommunication” in Ukraine.⁹¹

Geopolitical Linkage to the West (1991 – 2003)

Ukrainian Parliament has adopted the Decision “On the Key Directions of the Foreign Policy of Ukraine” in July 1993, by declaring for the first time country’s aspirations of becoming a member of the European Union in the near future, stressing that:

“the priority of Ukrainian foreign policy is Ukrainian membership in the European Communities, as long as it does not harm its national interests. In order to maintain stable relations with the EU, Ukraine shall conclude a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the implementation of which shall become the first step towards its association and, later, full membership in this organization.”⁹²

The second president of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma has signed a cooperation agreement with the EU in 1994, which provided an opportunity for the country of becoming an associate member one day. In the mid 90’s, Ukraine became a member of the Council of Europe (CoE) and was supported by Western states “both financially and technically in helping it transfer to a market economy and a liberal democratic state.”⁹³

In 1998 Ukraine signed the bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU, which opened up new ways for cooperation with the West by establishing political dialogue, supporting democratic developments in the state, developing economy and

⁹¹ Sushko, Oleksandr, *The Impact of Russia on Governance Structures in Ukraine*, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, 2008, p.10

⁹² Mission of Ukraine to the EU Official Website, Available at:<http://ukraine-eu.mfa.gov.ua/en/ukraine-eu/relations>

⁹³ Hatton, Daniel, *Did the Orange Revolution change Ukraine’s geopolitical position regarding Russia and the west?*, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, Winter 2010, p.8

strengthening markets and investments.⁹⁴ Consequently, Ukraine was expected to fully respect democratic values, human rights and the principles of international law. Cooperation with European institutions, thus, has opened up the ways for democratic reforms to emerge and develop in Ukraine.

As Hatton explains, “the unstable nature of the region and the continuing domestic instability in Russia made Ukraine’s geopolitical position of being between the central European and eastern/Eurasian zone important to US strategic thinking.”⁹⁵

Cooperation between Ukraine and NATO started in the early 90’s: immediately after the collapse of the USSR it joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991 and later the Partnership for Peace Program in 1994.⁹⁶ By signing the latest one, Ukraine was obliged not only to “refrain from the threat or use of force” against other states, but also proved its commitment to “fundamental freedoms and human rights and safeguarding freedom, justice and peace through democracy.”⁹⁷ In July 1997, after the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership was signed, NATO started to consult Ukraine on “reform and democratic oversight of the defense and security forces and invited it to participate in NATO-led exercises.”⁹⁸ The NATO Information and Documentation Centre opened the same year in the capital and Ukraine started its diplomatic mission to the Alliance.

Despite these developments, which contributed to the establishment of geopolitical linkages with the West, however, the beginning of 2000’s saw significant warming in Ukraine-Russia relations, and also easing ties generally between East and West, which had

⁹⁴ EUR-Lex: Access to EU law Official Website, Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Ar17002>

⁹⁵ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution change Ukraine’s geopolitical position regarding Russia and the west?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, Winter 2010, p.8

⁹⁶ NATO Official Website: Relations With Ukraine, Updated 2016, Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_37750.htm

⁹⁷ NATO Official Website, NATO-Ukraine Relations: The Background, Media Backgrounder, Available at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_06/20150624_1506-nato-ukraine-bg.pdf p.2

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.2

negative consequences for Ukrainian geostrategic partnership with the West. Particularly, when it became obvious that there is a wide gap between what Ukrainian officials said and did, and no real prospects for reforms were seen, relationships with NATO dropped to their lowest point already by 2002.⁹⁹ After Kuchma was accused for being involved in the killing of journalist Georgiy Gongadze, relations between Kyiv and the West, including both EU and US, significantly deteriorated.¹⁰⁰

It can be summed up, that the existence of pro-Western rhetoric in Ukrainian foreign policy and cooperation with Western institutions should not be underestimated, since these developments did not allow Kuchma to consolidate full scale authoritarianism being afraid of international reactions.

Geopolitical Linkage to the East (1991 – 2003)

After the creation of CIS, there were many controversies in the relationships between Russia and Ukraine. For Ukraine, membership in this organization was “a kind of Commission for the Liquidation of the USSR, while Russia saw it as an instrument to preserve the maximum possible degree of post-Soviet countries’ integration and to carry out their future reintegration.”¹⁰¹ It is widely considered that it was primarily Russian pressure in various aspects which inspired Ukraine to seek closer relations with the West in the beginning of 1990’s.¹⁰²

One of the major issues for confrontations between the countries was the problem of the division of the Black Sea Fleet stationed in Crimean peninsula – a historically essential

⁹⁹ Kuzio, Taras, Ukraine’s Relations with the West: Disinterest, Partnership, Disillusionment, European Security, Vol.12, No:2, 2003, p.26

¹⁰⁰ Sushko, Oleksandr, The Impact of Russia on Governance Structures in Ukraine, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, 2008, p.22

¹⁰¹ Olszanski, Andrzej, Ukraine and Russia: Mutual Relations and the Conditions that Determine Them, CES Studies, Available at: http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00002222/01/uk_ru_mutual_rel.pdf, p.34

¹⁰² Ibid, p.34

geostrategic location of Russian military base. Ukrainian economy was going through difficult times, and the country had serious gas debts to Russian Gazprom, which allowed Russia to threaten Ukraine to terminate the gas supplies in winter time.¹⁰³ After several years of negotiations, The Black Sea Fleet Accords were signed, allowing not only the division of the fleet between two states but also reducing Ukraine's \$3 billion gas debt to Russia.¹⁰⁴

Relations between two post-Soviet countries normalized in 1997 with signing the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership: long-term border disputes were settled, and the new legal framework for the productive cooperation was established.¹⁰⁵ In early 2000, these relations warmed and Kuchma decided to establish closer partnership with the neighboring state. After the “Kuchmagate” scandal in the beginning of 2000’s, which uncovered presidents’ autocratic rule by making public the information of his journalist kidnapping orders, relations with the West dropped by its lowest levels, however, Russian president Vladimir Putin supported Kuchma by visiting Ukraine.¹⁰⁶

To sum up, Russian pressure together with its readiness to reward Ukraine for its cooperation has resulted in intensification of the linkages to the East by the beginning of 2000’s, which was decisive for the direction of regime development in Ukraine.

Social Linkage to the West (1991 – 2003)

With the opened borders and markets after the collapse of the USSR, the flow of people became much easier. Due to the hard inflation in the 90’s, the primary reasons of migration

¹⁰³ Hill, Fiona, Jewett, Pamela, Back in the USSR: Russia's Intervention in the Internal Affairs Of the Former Soviet Republics and the Implications for United States Policy Toward Russia, Ethnic Conflict Project, 1994, p.75

¹⁰⁴ Felgenhauer, Tyler, WWS Case Study 2/99, Ukraine, Russia, and the Black Sea Fleet Accords, Princeton University Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, 1999, p.1

¹⁰⁵ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution change Ukraine’s geopolitical position regarding Russia and the west?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, Winter 2010, p.12

¹⁰⁶ Kuzio, Taras, Ukraine’s Relations with the West: Disinterest, Partnership, Disillusionment, European Security, Vol.12, No:2, 2003, p.34

were mostly economic considerations. Additionally, however, “the democratization of social life removed political, ethnic, religious and other similar reasons for migration, together with other grounds which in totalitarian times allowed refugees to obtain asylum in the Western world”¹⁰⁷. In the period from 1991 – 2001 more than 23,435 Ukrainians migrated to Canada, thus enlarging the already existing diaspora in the country.¹⁰⁸

Despite the fact that CIS states were the primary destinations for migration as discussed in the following section, due to visa-free regime, usage of common language and cultural proximity, European countries such as Poland, Germany and Czech Republic still managed to emerge as alternative target-states for migration. For instance, as for Germany “in 1991, over 2,000 people migrated to this country but in 1995, this figure reached 9,800, and in 2002 - 10,700.”¹⁰⁹ Thus, it can be seen that over the years, the flow of people to European states was growing. As Ukrainian Embassies estimated (the numbers generally tend to vary), at the end of the 1990’s approximately 300,000 of Ukrainians were working in Poland, 200,000 - in Italy, around 200,000 - in the Czech Republic, 150,000 - in Portugal, and 100,000 in Spain, while only 20,000 in the US.¹¹⁰

In the year of 1999 a total number of US nonimmigrant visas issued to Ukrainians was 22,248.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Malynovska, Olena, *International Migration in Contemporary Ukraine: Trends and Policy*, Global Migration Perspectives, GIM, 2004, p.13

¹⁰⁸ Makuch, Andrij, *Ukrainian Canadians in the 2001 Census: an Overview*, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, March 30, 2003, No. 13, Available at: <http://www.ukrweekly.com/old/archive/2003/130319.shtml>

¹⁰⁹ Malynovska, Olena, *International Migration in Contemporary Ukraine: Trends and Policy*, Global Migration Perspectives, GIM, 2004, p.11

¹¹⁰ Malynovska, Olena, *Caught Between East and West, Ukraine Struggles with Its Migration Policy*, Migration Policy Institute, 2006, Available at: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/caught-between-east-and-west-ukraine-struggles-its-migration-policy>

¹¹¹ United States Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs Official Website, *Report of the Visa Office 2005*, Available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/FY05tableXVIII.pdf>

According to 2001 census, more than 1 million of Ukrainians resided in Canada, and according to 2002 census, around 900,000 lived in the US, while American authorities believed it was around 1,5 – 2 millions.¹¹²

Despite important developments, however, generally social linkages remained to be low.

Social Linkage to the East (1991 – 2003)

In terms of population exchange, Russia also was the main migrant destination for the citizens of Ukraine. In times of economic difficulty, in the period of 1994 – 1998, no less than 636,000 people went to Russia in search of better life conditions, and around 270,000 came from Russia to Ukraine.¹¹³

In 2001, more than 8 millions of Russians were living in Ukraine and constituted the largest ethnic group after Ukrainians.¹¹⁴ In 2002, around 2,9 millions of Ukrainians were living in the Russian Federation, by becoming the second largest ethnic group after Tatars.¹¹⁵

After the collapse of the USSR members of families were living in different CIS states, and since there was no visa-regime or language barriers, thousands of people were constantly traveling between the countries for different purposes, by significantly increasing social linkages with Russia.

Generally, social linkages to the East were well-established and high.

¹¹² Chindea, Alin, et al, Migration in Ukraine: A Country Profile, International Organization for Migration, 2008, p.29

¹¹³ Malynovska, Olena, International Migration in Contemporary Ukraine: Trends and Policy, Global Migration Perspectives, GIM, 2004, p.7

¹¹⁴ Census of the Population of Ukraine 2001, National Statistics Committee of Ukraine, Available at: <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/results/general/nationality/>

¹¹⁵ Census of the Population of Russia 2002 Official Website, Available at: <http://www.perepis2002.ru/content.html?id=11&docid=10715289081463>

Communication Linkage to the West (1991 – 2003)

Communications scholars have been investigating the ways through which international communications systems are able to define “cultural change and influence national cultures” for decades.¹¹⁶ Globalization has definitely played a significant role in intensifying these processes over the years.

The breakup of the USSR contributed to the emergence of Western journalism in Ukraine, which “provided contacts for Ukrainian journalists, ideas, and employment opportunities at Western media outlets.”¹¹⁷ Media was considered to play a major role in defining what kind of state Ukraine had to be, and in 1991 American Story First Communications has established a private TV station, ICTV.¹¹⁸ However, the emergence of Western media in the country was not as significant compared to the well-established presence of the Russian ones.

Another important fact is that unlike nowadays, there were no social media communications, which are considered to play a major role for the exchange of information, and internet access was very limited. For example, even in the year of 2000, in Germany with the population of 81,895,925, around 30,2% had an internet access (24,745,957 people), while in the same year in Ukraine with the population of 48,746,269 people, only 0.7 % had internet access (349,113 people).¹¹⁹ Social networks were not created at that times, making information flows much lower than they are nowadays.

¹¹⁶ Dyczok, Marta, *Ukraine’s Media in the Context of Global Cultural Convergence*, University of Western Ontario, *Demokratizatsiya*, 2014, p.234

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.237

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, P.238

¹¹⁹ Internet Live Stats Website, Country Profiles, Available at: <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/ukraine/>

Communication linkages were much lower compared to this day, generally. Western media was only establishing its units, while pro-Russian channels and newspapers already existed and were quite popular. In terms of media coverage, it became more intense only after 2004 Orange Revolution.

Generally, communication linkages to the West were rather low and only emerging.

Communication Linkage to the East (1991 – 2003)

In terms of communication linkages to Russia in the beginning of the 90's, it was considered that "Russian presence on the Ukrainian media market was evident due to the weakness of national media structures", and in the early years of independence, most of the citizens of Ukraine did in fact prefer to watch Russian television channels and read Russian newspapers.¹²⁰ Ukrainian authorities saw the wide presence of Russian media outlets as a signal of foreign interference in its internal affairs, and were trying to limit its impact. In fact, it did shape public preferences during, for example, parliamentary elections in 2002, when Russian media openly and widely supported "pro-authoritarian parties and candidates in Ukraine, accusing the opposition of extremism, nationalism and anti-Russian intentions,"¹²¹ especially taking into consideration the fact that Eastern Ukraine has always felt stronger ties to Russia. In 2002, Russian Press Center opened in Ukraine and served as one of the tools of pro-Russian impact.¹²²

In 2000, Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement of deeper cooperation in media sphere, provisions of which included "a clause where Ukraine agrees to broadcast Russian TV programmes without Ukrainian dubbing and its handing over control over there-transmission

¹²⁰ Sushko, Oleksandr, The Impact of Russia on Governance Structures in Ukraine, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, 2008, p.9

¹²¹ Ibid, p.23

¹²² Kuzio, Taras, Russian Policy toward Ukraine during Elections, Orange Revolution, Demokratizatsiya, p.493

contracts of these programmes by Ukrainian cable operators,” which was considered to significantly limit Ukrainian information sovereignty as it would “result in strengthening the domination of Russian information and political commentary programmes on the Ukrainian airwaves.”¹²³

Internet access was extremely low in the first period of study, as it was explained before, and thus, is not analyzed at this point.

Transnational Civil Society Linkage to the West (1991 – 2003)

Linkages to Western-based NGOs only started to emerge after the collapse of the USSR. US-based non-governmental organization InterMedia has played an important role in the beginning of 1990’s by providing \$7 million USAID funding aimed at the development of independent media, which helped to establish several news agencies, such as UNIAN and others.¹²⁴

The role of EU in funding and strengthening civil society in Ukraine throughout 1990’s was also important, with its main instrument for financial support to the post-Soviet states – Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS).¹²⁵

Many of internationally known NGOs started their work in Ukraine. According to the information of Transparency International (TI), in 1999, TI’s “national chapter in Ukraine developed from a local NGO, Creative Union TORO,” which was registered in 1999.¹²⁶

¹²³ Olszanski, Andrzej, Ukraine and Russia: Mutual Relations and the Conditions that Determine Them, CES Studies, Available at: http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00002222/01/uk_ru_mutual_rel.pdf, p.44

¹²⁴ Dyczok, Marta, Ukraine’s Media in the Context of Global Cultural Convergence, University of Western Ontario, *Demokratizatsiya*, 2014, p.239

¹²⁵ Shapovalova, Natalia, Youngs, Richard, EU Democracy Promotion in the Eastern Neighborhood: a Turn to Civil Society?, FRIDE, Working Paper No:115, 2012

¹²⁶ Transparency International Ukraine Website: History, Available at: <http://ti-ukraine.org/en/about/history>

British Council opened in Ukraine in November 1992, and has been serving as promoter of cultural, scientific and educational exchange between the countries. The “first partnership relations with local cultural venues, with city authorities, local educational institutions (schools and universities)” were created between the years of 1996 – 1999, and in the early 2000’s “supported the initiative of the European Union on development of civil society in Ukraine through British Centers of Civic Initiatives.”¹²⁷ As former Minister of Education of Ukraine mentioned later: “reforms in teaching and learning English are not only about the quality of education, they are also an important democratization tool for the country” since it allows the access to the global educational sources.¹²⁸

Transnational Civil Society Linkage to the East (1991 – 2003)

If transnational civil society linkages with Western states are characterized mostly by the funding and cooperation between NGOs, Russian linkages mostly include religious and party organizations.

In the beginning of 90’s Communist party was banned in Ukraine as a sign of a break with authoritarian past, however, later this ban was lifted and many of the pro-Russian politicians appeared to gain strong support among citizens of Ukraine which had a nostalgia for their Soviet past. While economy was stagnating, the criticism of new government’s economic policies became a significant tool of the party to gain support. In 1998 elections, supported by Russia, the Communist party took 25% of vote. “Two points guided the CPU’s rhetoric in these years: pro-Russian nationalism and social equality. But while it condemned nationalism in words, in effect, the CPU became the main supporter of pro-Russian

¹²⁷ British Council Official Website: Ukraine Profile, Available at:
<http://www.britishcouncil.org.ua/en/about/british-council-ukraine/history>

¹²⁸ British Council Official Website: English as Democratization tool for Ukraine, Available at:
<http://www.britishcouncil.org.ua/en/english-democratization-tool-ukraine>

nationalism.”¹²⁹ The party was quite conservative in nature, and while claiming “to defend the interests of the “people” against the “oligarchs”, it in fact did combine “this rhetoric with social conservatism (death penalty, pro-natalism and persecution of LGBT people).”¹³⁰ The fact of financing and supporting this party, in turn, can also be considered as one among many tools of promoting Russian authoritarianism beyond its borders.

The influence of the Orthodox Church under Russian patriarchate in Ukraine has always been substantial, however, a deeper research uncovers striking numbers. The number of registered church societies under the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine was 7,449 in 1998, while only in one year it grew up to 8,016.¹³¹ In comparison, the number of organizations under the Kyiv Patriarchate was only 1,332 in 1999.¹³² In Ukraine, religious aspect has always been an important historical, traditional and cultural connection to Russia.

Presented factors indicate the strength of transnational civil society linkages to the East for the first period of study.

Results for the 1991 – 2003: Implications for Regime Change

Unlike in the next periods, the first period makes it relatively easy to determine to which side Ukraine was more exposed. Despite significant improvements president Kuchma has made in the development of the relationships between Ukraine and the West, the fact remains

¹²⁹ Gorbach, Denys, *After the ban: a Short History of Ukraine’s Communist Party*, Open Democracy, 2016, Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/denys-gorbach/after-ban-short-history-of-ukraine-s-communist-party>

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Davis, Nathaniel, *Hard Data on Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches*, Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe, Vol. 20: Issue 6, Article 2., 2000, p.23

¹³² Ibid, p.23

he had only little desire to contribute to democratic reforms, and after 1999 the external orientation of Ukraine has shifted towards Russia.¹³³

Generally, the period of 1991 – 2003 is characterized as one of establishing certain ties with the Western world which were non-existent before, rather than creation of strong linkages with US, Canada and EU. Despite the fact that Ukraine was trying to balance between Western and Eastern foreign policy objectives, due to its past connections to Russia, its linkages to the East were still significant enough, and had only intensified by the end of 1990's. A warming in Russian – Ukrainian relations did have significant impact on the linkages of Ukraine to its Western allies, and in fact returned them to the starting point, and authoritarian president Kuchma found himself isolated from the Western world. The year of 2002 became the first year when no Ukraine – US presidential summit was held. US had cut its foreign assistance to Ukraine by nearly half.¹³⁴

Linkages with the EU also declined due to Ukraine's poor reformation record: "Oligarchic centrist political forces, which control the government and parliamentary leadership and are allied to the executive, espouse the rhetoric of reform and integration into Europe but are unwilling to undertake the necessary domestic reforms to back up their support of EU membership."¹³⁵ Kuchma's "rhetoric did not match desire for change" in terms of making significant steps towards democratization.¹³⁶ "By moving back towards Russia in his second term, Kuchma gave up on achieving a geopolitical shift in Ukrainian foreign policy to a more pro-western direction,"¹³⁷ and membership in the EU or NATO was not

¹³³ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution change Ukraine's geopolitical position regarding Russia and the west?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, Winter 2010, p.10

¹³⁴ Kuzio, Taras, Ukraine's Relations with the West: Disinterest, Partnership, Disillusionment, European Security, Vol.12, No:2, 2003, p.26

¹³⁵ Ibid, p.28

¹³⁶ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution change Ukraine's geopolitical position regarding Russia and the west?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, Winter 2010, p.13

¹³⁷ Ibid, p.13

priority anymore. Western countries became irritated “by the widening gap between rhetoric and reality in Ukraine’s domestic and foreign policy.”¹³⁸ After Gongadze scandal, Ukraine became highly dependent on Russian political support.¹³⁹ At the same time, “Ukraine’s vulnerability towards Russian demands and expectations increased in different areas, reaching from economic integration, political penetration to a shared approach to major foreign policy issues.”¹⁴⁰ The year 2000 was declared the “Year of Russia in Ukraine”, Ukraine chaired CIS presidency and common economic space was created – all of these were resulted in the weakening of ties with the West.¹⁴¹

What is vital for the purposes of the given study is that while Western countries and organizations openly criticized Ukrainian government for taking a route towards strengthening autocracy, Russia was not concerned with these issues. One of the examples of promotion of autocracy by Russian Federation is its establishment of campaign prohibiting the presence of OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) election observation group, and instead, creating a separate CIS election observation mission, “which issued only positive statements regarding all elections in CIS countries, even if most international observers detected serious violations.”¹⁴² Another example, during the parliamentary elections in 2002, Russian state owned TV stations did openly support authoritarian parties and candidates in Ukraine.¹⁴³ Democracy, respect for human rights, media freedom and rule of law were seriously inhibited by autocratic rule of Kuchma

¹³⁸ Kuzio, Taras, Ukraine’s Relations with the West: Disinterest, Partnership, Disillusionment, European Security, Vol.12, No:2, 2003, p.23

¹³⁹ Sushko, Oleksandr, The Impact of Russia on Governance Structures in Ukraine, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, 2008, p.22

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p.22

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p.23

¹⁴² Ibid, p.23

¹⁴³ Ibid, p.23

government.¹⁴⁴ An obvious “*trend towards authoritarianism in Ukraine coincided with growing political dependence on Russia. Russia presented itself as a country which openly supported non-democratic developments in neighboring countries.*”¹⁴⁵

According to the Freedom House, generally parliamentary elections in 1994 and 1998 were free and fair, while in 1999 presidential elections were considered unfree, undemocratic, and unfair. IMF has suspended its assistance until the formation of a new reformist government willing to develop in democratic direction.¹⁴⁶

Based on data presented above, it can be stated that despite certain degrees of economic and geopolitical cooperation with the West, generally the linkages remained low compared to those towards Russia (See Table 1.1).

As results for the first period of study show, initially Ukraine was trying to pursue dual foreign policy objectives, which included also an establishment of close cooperation with Russia, however, it is vital to stress that particularly due to the fact that the country was switching between two opposite directions during the whole period – its regime became neither democratic nor full-scale autocratic – it was a competitive authoritarian regime, which started to move towards authoritarian direction as a result of switching to pro-Russian direction. The regime was far from being consolidated autocracy since opposition forces continued to exist and parliamentary elections of 2002 represented an area of contestation, where pro-democratic Western-oriented party “Our Ukraine” headed by Viktor Yushchenko gained significant public support. Most importantly, the opposition gained almost half of the

¹⁴⁴ Sushko, Oleksandr, *The Impact of Russia on Governance Structures in Ukraine*, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, 2008, p.23

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p.23

¹⁴⁶ Freedom House Official Website: *Ukraine 1999 Report*, Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/1999/ukraine>

seats in the Parliament.¹⁴⁷ The elections violations were wide and common, however, hidden behind democratic rhetoric, indicating that Ukraine had already in those years established a competitive authoritarian regime.

Chapter 5: Period 2004 – 2010: Orange Revolution and Beyond

The 2004 Presidential elections in Ukraine were seen by political scholars as nothing else but an area of the contestation between East and West: on one hand, Viktor Yushchenko, widely supported by the West, offered people pro-European choice and on the other hand, Viktor Yanukovich offering close friendship with the Russian Federation.¹⁴⁸ First candidate was promoting the idea of possible NATO membership, while the second one was strongly opposing such possibility.

There have been many studies focused on the foreign policy of Ukraine starting from the year of 2004. Generally, this period is known as one setting a multi-vector foreign policy which has allowed Ukraine to cooperate both with West and East, but not without difficulties. After the Orange Revolution which started from late November 2004, westward-oriented foreign policy remained on track, however, Ukraine realized that European and pro-Russian directions are interdependent and must be harmonized in a certain way.¹⁴⁹ Unlike the first period of study, the second one is much richer in valuable facts indicating the presence of external influence in Ukraine.

The Revolution of 2004 – 2005 has brought significant changes for the relations with the Western world. Mass protests symbolized the common will for change, and the rejection of

¹⁴⁷ Aslund, Anders, How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy, Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009, p.7

¹⁴⁸ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine's Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, 2010, p.15

¹⁴⁹ Freire, Maria Raquel, Ukraine's Multi-Vectorial Foreign Policy: Looking West While not Overlooking its Eastern Neighbor, UNISCI Discussion Papers, No:20, 2009, p.241

Kuchma's authoritarian rule.¹⁵⁰ The new elites were able to come to power as a result of these protests by supporting the idea of Ukraine's European future and by opposing authoritarian past.¹⁵¹ These events were widely recognized to be crucial for country's further democratic path.¹⁵² Revolution was in fact supported by the West, and most importantly, funded by USAID and EU member states, which allowed pro-democratization elites to gain power by strengthening "the role of external democracy promoters there."¹⁵³

Economic Linkage to the West (2004 – 2010)

The Orange Revolution has opened various opportunities for Ukraine to also develop its economic relations with Western states. "After the 2004 enlargement, the EU became *the largest trading partner* of Ukraine, having won *primacy before Russia*; and in December 2005 it granted market economy status to Ukraine."¹⁵⁴ The US recognized Ukraine as a market economy in February 2006.¹⁵⁵ In 2008, much ahead of Russia, Ukraine achieved its desired membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), which also was one of the primary objectives of pro-Western President Yushchenko.¹⁵⁶

EU-Ukraine Action Plan discussed in the following section has provided an "opportunity for convergence of economic legislation, the opening of economies to each other, and the

¹⁵⁰ Freire, Maria Raquel, Ukraine's Multi-Vectorial Foreign Policy: Looking West While not Overlooking its Eastern Neighbor, UNISCI Discussion Papers, No:20, 2009, p.236

¹⁵¹ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia's Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.460

¹⁵² Shapovalova, Natalia, Assessing Democracy Assistance: Ukraine, FRIDE, Project Report, 2010, p.1

¹⁵³ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia's Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.460

¹⁵⁴ Freire, Maria Raquel, Ukraine's Multi-Vectorial Foreign Policy: Looking West While not Overlooking its Eastern Neighbor, UNISCI Discussion Papers, No:20, 2009, p.242

¹⁵⁵ Aslund, Anders, How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy, Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009, p.5

¹⁵⁶ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine's Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, 2010, p.17

continued reduction of trade barriers which will stimulate investment and growth,” and also did increase financial support necessary for the implementation of the agreement.¹⁵⁷

If we take a look at the UN International Merchandise Trade Statistics of 2005, we can see that, for example, (valued in millions of US dollars) imports from Germany grew up to \$3382.8 (while in 2001 it was only \$1348.0), from Poland grew up to \$1405.9 (in 2001 it was \$450.0), and from the US increased to \$710.3 (in 2001 it was \$442.1).¹⁵⁸ If we look at trade statistics with EU as a whole, however, we can see that in 2005 EU exports accounted for around \$13.000 and imports for around \$8.000, while in 2008 it exported for around \$25.000 while imported for around \$14.000.¹⁵⁹ Investment flows from EU to Ukraine accounted approximately for 14 billion of euros in 2008, and were rapidly growing every year.¹⁶⁰

Overall, Western financial support was also striking. The US funding for Ukraine in the year of 2003 “was US\$227.48 million, with only US\$55.11 million for democratic reform programs”.¹⁶¹ In 2004 the US provided Ukraine with \$34 million, and one year later the Congress has approved additional \$60 million.¹⁶² After the revolution, in 2005, it provided extra \$60 million.¹⁶³

To sum up, it should be said that unlike in the first period, economic linkages to the West were quite strong in the period of 2003 – 2010.

¹⁵⁷ EU-Ukraine Action Plan Program, 2.1: Political Dialogue and Reform. Available at: <http://www.enpi-info.eu/library/content/eu-ukraine-action-plan-0>

¹⁵⁸ UN International Merchandise Trade Statistics, Country Profile: Ukraine, Available at: <http://comtrade.un.org/pb/CountryPages.aspx?y=2005>

¹⁵⁹ European Commission, EU Trade Statistics: Ukraine Profile, Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113459.pdf

¹⁶⁰ European Council Official Website, European Union Factsheet, EU-Ukraine Summit, February 2013, p.2, Available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/135637.pdf

¹⁶¹ Wilson, Andrew, Ukraine’s Orange Revolution, NGOs and the Role of the West, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 19, No:1, 2006, p.23

¹⁶² He, Baogang, Working With China to Promote Democracy, Center for Strategic and International Studies, The Washington Quarterly, 2013, p.39

¹⁶³ Wilson, Andrew, Ukraine’s Orange Revolution, NGOs and the Role of the West, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 19, No:1, 2006, p.23

Economic Linkage to the East (2004 – 2010)

Despite the fact that generally the period of 2003 – 2010 is characterized by this study as one where deterioration of the relationships between Russia and Ukraine happened, it is still essential to stress that Russia has always been in fact an essential trading partner for Ukraine, and this period was no exception. However, it is necessary to indicate that, as Freire mentions, with deepening economic ties with the EU, Single Economic Space (SES) within CIS started to become less important.¹⁶⁴

If we take a look at imports by principal countries (value in million US dollars) in 2005, we can see that imports from Russia accounted for \$12842.5, and \$17029.3 from the CIS states.¹⁶⁵ Results for exports were similar – \$7489.8 to Russian Federation, while \$10730.3 generally to CIS states.¹⁶⁶ In 2008 imports from CIS accounted for \$33568 and exports \$23808, while with Russia alone the number was \$19413.6 for imports and \$15735 for exports.¹⁶⁷

Generally, however, even if we compare the total value of exports to EU and to CIS states, we see that EU has become much visible trading partner of Ukraine than all CIS states taken together.

Geopolitical Linkage to the West (2004 – 2010)

The EU launched its European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in 2004, which offered Ukraine deeper prospects for cooperation. Despite the fact it did not frame export of democracy as its main objective, it in fact “has prioritized regulatory convergence with a

¹⁶⁴ Freire, Maria Raquel, Ukraine’s Multi-Vectorial Foreign Policy: Looking West While not Overlooking its Eastern Neighbor, UNISCI Discussion Papers, No:20, 2009, p.246

¹⁶⁵ UN International Merchandise Trade Statistics, Country Profile: Ukraine, Available at: <http://comtrade.un.org/pb/CountryPages.aspx?y=2005>

¹⁶⁶ Ibid

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

view toward improving good governance in the Eastern neighborhood.”¹⁶⁸ In other words, it still indirectly promoted democracy through advertising democratic principles in its targeted states.

In 2005, the newly elected President of Ukraine announced an end to multi-vector foreign policy and new purpose to move towards EU.¹⁶⁹ The same year, the EU-Ukraine Action Plan reinforcing the PCA commitments was signed.¹⁷⁰ Among its main objectives were to upgrade economic and political cooperation, and advanced “approximation of Ukrainian legislation, norms and standards with those of the European Union; further reinforcing administrative and judicial capacity.”¹⁷¹ Most importantly, it also included wide provisions for Ukraine’s commitment to democracy, rule of law, and human rights.

Negotiations on the Association Agreement began only in 2008, while the prospects for the possible offer of membership in the EU did not follow.¹⁷² While Ukraine generally has shown its commitment to the implementation of democratic norms and principles, many scholars suggest there was a lack of credible support from the EU itself when it failed to offer membership to Ukraine, due to its own institutional problems, which “forced the issue of Ukraine off the agenda at a time when it seemed that Ukraine’s leaders had the political will to push through the necessary reforms required for EU membership,” and anyhow after its enlargement in 2004, EU was dealing with other issues rather than Ukraine.¹⁷³ As Hatton points out, “it was unfortunate that Ukraine’s democratic breakthrough came at a time when

¹⁶⁸ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, *Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers*, 2015, p.461

¹⁶⁹ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine’s Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, *University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3*, 2010, p.17

¹⁷⁰ Freire, Maria Raquel, Ukraine’s Multi-Vectorial Foreign Policy: Looking West While not Overlooking its Eastern Neighbor, *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, No:20, 2009, p.242

¹⁷¹ EU-Ukraine Action Plan Program, 2.1: Political Dialogue and Reform. Available at: <http://www.enpi-info.eu/library/content/eu-ukraine-action-plan-0>

¹⁷² Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine’s Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, *University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3*, 2010, p.17

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, p.17

the EU was going through an identity crisis, with many states calling for deepening rather than widening of the Union.”¹⁷⁴

Thus, continuity rather than radical change was the main feature of EU-Ukraine relationships in the period of 2005 – 2011.¹⁷⁵ However, it is necessary to stress that the assistance offered by EU on different fronts was crucial for the development and prosperity of democratic ideas and values both in Ukrainian political sphere and the level of society. The EU factor was a constantly existing rhetoric in Ukrainian internal and external politics, and its role for democratization prospects cannot be underestimated.

As for the relationships with NATO, it intensified with Viktor Yushchenko’s Western aspirations, as NATO membership became one of the new primary objectives. In 2008 the Bucharest Summit was held, as a result of which the leaders of the organization officially welcomed the aspirations of Ukraine and Georgia to join, and underlined the significance of both to the military NATO operations. Also, they stressed the importance of supporting democratic reform and development of Ukraine.¹⁷⁶

Overall, a strong geopolitical shift to the West is visible in the given period of study.

Geopolitical Linkage to the East (2004 – 2010)

The events that took place in Ukraine could not be left without Russia’s attention and were interpreted by its illiberal neighbor “in terms of geopolitical contestation with the West.”¹⁷⁷ As Daniel Hatton shortly explains “Yushchenko’s pro-Western positions meant that

¹⁷⁴ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine’s Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, 2010, p.18

¹⁷⁵ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.462

¹⁷⁶ NATO Official Website, NATO-Ukraine Relations: The Background, Media Backgrounder, Available at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_06/20150624_1506-nato-ukraine-bg.pdf, p.2

¹⁷⁷ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.460

he had few friends inside the Kremlin,” and consequently it started to be aggressive towards its pro-Western oriented neighbor and in fact “was able to influence Ukraine’s geopolitical position by making it harder for it to turn west, thereby keeping Ukraine geopolitically in Russia’s sphere of influence,” which became the primary geopolitical objective for Kremlin.¹⁷⁸

In terms of membership in organizations, it should be said that according to Tolstrup, connection to CIS was facilitating autocracy promotion, for example, by creating its own CIS Election Monitoring Organization, CIS observers did strengthen autocrats by supporting election results in countries where OSCE missions witnessed fraud, and so was with the first round of elections in Ukraine in 2004.¹⁷⁹

As it was already discussed, dependence on Russian gas supplies constitutes a significant “strategic weakness for Ukraine,” and when political tensions were escalating, for example in 2006 and 2009 the illiberal neighbor has interrupted “the supply of gas in order to force Ukraine’s hand on paying increased prices and unpaid fees.”¹⁸⁰ In 2006, shortly before parliamentary elections had to be held, Ukraine has agreed with its neighbor to be provided with the gas for \$53 per 1000m³, however, Russian authorities have sharply changed their mind and have demanded \$250 per 1000m³, which is seen by scholars as an attempt to increase population’s support for the pro-Russian candidate Viktor Yanukovich, who was promising to negotiate better price conditions.¹⁸¹ Interruption of the gas supply as a result of this disagreement did not last longer than few days and the new price of \$95 per 1000m³ was agreed on, however, what is essential to see are the mechanisms of influence through which

¹⁷⁸ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine’s Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, 2010, p.20

¹⁷⁹ Tolstrup, Jakob, Studying a Negative External Actor: Russia’s Management of Stability and Instability in the ‘Near Abroad’, Democratization, Vol. 16, No.5, 2009, p.933

¹⁸⁰ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine’s Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, 2010, p.21

¹⁸¹ Ibid, p.21

the illiberal neighbor was trying to externally influence the direction of political choice in Ukraine. Most importantly, Russian Prime Minister, at the time, Mikhail Fradkov claimed “that the agreed price would not change in 2007 so long as Ukraine *considered Russian interests* in its relations with NATO and the EU in future.”¹⁸² While the given point refers to Russian leverage rather than linkage, its role is vital to support arguments made earlier in this study, that Russia is in fact able to spread its autocratic influence beyond its borders.

In 2008, the conflict between Russia and Georgia has also left another negative imprint on Ukraine-Russia relationships, and has further added fuel to the already problematic divisions within Ukrainian politics: while Viktor Yushchenko has taken pro-Georgian side, Viktor Yanukovich has fully supported Russia’s actions.¹⁸³ The Georgian case has also pushed many scholars and politicians to predictions that Ukraine might be next, and in other words “Russia had demonstrated again, that by showing NATO and the EU that it sees the post-Soviet space as its near abroad it could put off their desire to strongly push for Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic integration.”¹⁸⁴

Generally, the most important point of geopolitical linkage to the Eastern government remains to be weak with no major new developments in the period of 2003 – 2010, while at the same time linkages to the Western were significantly growing. Russian political and economic pressure in the given period reflects Kremlin’s concerns over Ukraine’s turn westwards, and the deterioration of the relations between Ukraine and its Eastern neighbor.

¹⁸² Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine’s Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, 2010, p.21

¹⁸³ Ibid, p.22-23

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, p.23

Social Linkage to the West (2004 – 2010)

Despite the fact that in the period from 2001 to 2009 the main destination country for Ukrainian migrants was Russia, there has been a significant increase of migration to other states. The most popular destinations were Canada, Czech Republic, Poland, Italy, Spain, and Hungary.¹⁸⁵

In 2006, priority countries for emigration were Western states, among which were Germany (9.0%), Canada (6.1%), the US (5.9%). These destinations became especially attractive because of the higher wages, compared to Ukraine or even Russia.¹⁸⁶

Despite the fact that numbers vary significantly across different sources of information, the general trend of increasing migration to the Western states is obvious. Such developments lead to a significant increase for the Western social linkages.

Since 2005, Ukraine has cancelled short-term entry visas for US, EU, Canada citizens, while EU member states responded to such action by cancelling the visa fees for Ukrainian citizens.¹⁸⁷

In 2005, the total number for nonimmigrant US visas issued for Ukrainian citizens was 36,208 which is much higher than the number in 1999.¹⁸⁸

The presented improvements indicated general intensification of social linkages to the West, however, compared to nowadays or even to social linkages to Russia for the same

¹⁸⁵ Migration Policy Centre Team, MPC Migration Profile: Ukraine, 2013, p.3

¹⁸⁶ Chindea, Alin, et al, Migration in Ukraine: A Country Profile, International Organization for Migration, 2008, p.23

¹⁸⁷ Malynovska, Olena, Caught Between East and West, Ukraine Struggles with Its Migration Policy, Migration Policy Institute, 2006, Available at: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/caught-between-east-and-west-ukraine-struggles-its-migration-policy>

¹⁸⁸ United States Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs Official Website, Report of the Visa Office 2005, Available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/FY05tableXVIII.pdf>

period, they were rather on the medium level than represented strong linkages at the same level with Russia.

Social Linkage to the East (2004 – 2010)

According to the Migration Policy Centre research, “from 2001-2009 the known major destination of over half of all Ukrainian emigrants was Russia.”¹⁸⁹ This factor, was however mutual – if we take a look at the emigration data from the Russian Federation we see that Ukraine was also major destination for Russian migrants for many years. Thus, in 2004 around 13,115 people moved to Ukraine, in 2005 – 12,640, and in 2006 – 11,926.¹⁹⁰ In other words, social flows with Russian Federation were significant enough to create strong linkages.

On the other hand, if we take a look at the number of foreigners yearly arriving to Russian Federation, while in 2000 around 74,748 of Ukrainians migrated to Russia, in 2009 this number decreased to 45,920.¹⁹¹

Besides, thousands of Russian tourists preferred Crimea as tourism destination, while Ukrainians went to Sochi. Absence of visas and language barriers together with presence of relatives in the near abroad due to historical reasons were the major reasons why the social linkage between Russia and Ukraine were quite strong.

¹⁸⁹ Migration Policy Centre Team, MPC Migration Profile: Ukraine, 2013, p.3

¹⁹⁰ Chindea, Alin, et al, Migration in the Russian Federation: A Country Profile 2008, International Organization for Migration, 2008, p.33

¹⁹¹ Federal Bureau of State Statistics of the Russian Federation Official Website, The Demographic Yearbooks of Russia, Available at:
http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/publications/catalog/doc_11376742_09312

Communication Linkage to the West (2004 – 2010)

The role of Western media became much more visible and significant than in the previous years. The Western coverage of the Orange Revolution was wide in the majority of Western states.¹⁹²

The Orange Revolution is believed to bring independent media and pluralism. It is considered that the US has been one of the major donors for the development of independent media in Ukraine, and in 2004 USAID has provided financial assistance to the projects which have positively contributed to the creation of independent media during and after the revolution “including the live TV coverage of the protests in Maidan square in Kiev by the independent TV channels which were established with support from USAID.”¹⁹³ USAID launched its U-Media program sponsorship in 2003, which has been continuing its work even in 2011 by focusing on “on institutional capacity building and sustainability.”¹⁹⁴ Under this program more than 1,600 journalists were instructed on current media tools, legislation of the sphere, professional standards etc. Another example is the media support by the National Endowment of Democracy (NED), which in 2009 “awarded 12 grants to support independent media and media development projects for the total sum of almost \$528,000.”¹⁹⁵

Western support for the development of Ukrainian media was generally important, while there was no local funding for the given sphere. Thus, “independent media, especially new

¹⁹² Harasymiw, Bohdan, Ilnytskyj, Oleh, *Aspects of the Orange Revolution II: Information and Manipulation Strategies in the 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Elections*, Columbia University Press, Nov 22, 2007

¹⁹³ Tsetsura, Katerina, *Ukrainian NGOs as Opinion Makers: How Media Organizations Communicate about Progress in New Democracy with Western Donors*, University of Oklahoma, Tripodos No:37, 2015, p.98

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p.98

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p.98

media, which played a crucial role on the Maidan, is a sector where donor support was perceived as most valuable.”¹⁹⁶

Western popular programs, movies, and talent shows gained significant popularity in the given period of study, and there was a visible increase of the adaptation of Ukrainian channels to Western formats.¹⁹⁷

An important development for the given period was an increase in the number of internet users, and also emergence, and spread of the popularity of social media. Despite the fact that in 2004 there were only 1,644,490 internet users, in 2010 this number grew up to 10,635,867.¹⁹⁸ The social network Facebook was created in 2004, however, it was not as popular in those times in Ukraine, especially given the small number of internet users.

Generally, unlike in the previous period, Ukraine was widely present in international media coverage, and its communication linkages to the Western states grew strong.

Communication Linkage to the East (2004 – 2010)

In terms of the flow of information through media and the levels of eastern media coverage in Ukraine, the situation did not change dramatically from the previous period analyzed. The presence of Russian-owned media outlets did in fact contribute to the Russian penetration of the media, and this, in turn, had certain implications for the public opinion in the state.

During the period of revolution, the Russian media claimed Viktor Yushchenko “as anti-Russian during the campaign and Russian officials and money were sent to support

¹⁹⁶ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.463

¹⁹⁷ Dyczok, Marta, Ukraine’s Media in the Context of Global Cultural Convergence, University of Western Ontario, Demokratizatsiya, 2014, p.247

¹⁹⁸ Internet Live Stats Website, Country Profiles, Available at: <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/ukraine/>

Yanukovych's candidacy.”¹⁹⁹ Western support of Viktor Yushchenko was explained by the fact he was a Western puppet while the West wanted to “squeeze Russia out of the post-Soviet space.”²⁰⁰

In terms of media communication channels, Ukraine and Russia have been “even closer than the US and Canada”, according to the interview by James Kramer, a former vice-president of Sony Pictures in Russia, and “probably 80 to 85 percent of the programs that were on Ukrainian prime-time television were Russian produced.”²⁰¹

While Western Facebook still was not popular in Ukraine, and did not have Russian interface, another Russian successful social network Odnoklassniki (“Classmates”) was a quite popular web-site for information exchange. Later, however, VKontakte became the major social network for information exchange in the post-Soviet space. In 2008, VKontakte launched its Ukrainian interface.²⁰² The number of users was continuing to grow, if in May 2007 the general number of users was half a million,²⁰³ in April 2008 this number reached ten millions,²⁰⁴ while Ukrainians constituted a significant number.

To sum up, communication linkages to the East still remained strong enough.

¹⁹⁹ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine's Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, 2010, p.20

²⁰⁰ Harasymiw, Bohdan, Ilnytkyj, Oleh, Aspects of the Orange Revolution II: Information and Manipulation Strategies in the 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Elections, Columbia University Press, Nov 22, 2007, p.135

²⁰¹ Simone, Alina, There's one thing that Russia and Ukraine agree on — their favorite TV shows, Public Radio International, Available at: <http://www.pri.org/stories/2016-07-13/theres-one-thing-russia-and-ukraine-agree-their-favorite-tv-shows>

²⁰² Durov, Pavel, Vkontakte in Ukrainian, 2008, Available at: <https://vk.com/blog.php?nid=70>

²⁰³ Durov, Pavel, Half a Million Users, May 2007, Available at: <https://vk.com/blog.php?nid=49>

²⁰⁴ Durov, Pavel, More than Ten Millions of Users, April 2008, Available at: <https://vk.com/blog.php?nid=75>

Transnational Civil Society Linkage to the West (2004 – 2010)

After 2004 transnational civil society linkages to the West became much more significant by strengthening the local ties to the Western world. An increased support of Western donors to the local NGOs and party organizations has played an important role, and is discussed in the given section.

For example, Germany provided significant support to democracy development in Ukraine through aiding political party foundations. German foundations opened two more offices in Kyiv after the Orange Revolution, and cooperated closely with political parties, youth organizations and different political representatives. Additionally, these foundations supported “education for youth, student exchanges, study visits and training for civil servants and journalists.”²⁰⁵

Through the MATRA project, the purpose of which is an exchange of knowledge and skills between Ukrainian and Dutch NGOs, the Netherlands spent around 12 million of euros in Ukraine in the period of 2005 – 2008.²⁰⁶ United Kingdom has provided financial assistance to “NGOs to support election monitoring, independent media and citizens’ education” in the period of 2003 – 2005, and has generally allocated around 9 million of euros in the period from 2004 to 2007.²⁰⁷ There was also a number of other European states who have supported Ukrainian civil society both financially and technically.

Generally, it should be said that Western countries have significantly contributed to the development of civil society in Ukraine in the second period of study, which essentially increased transnational civil society linkages to liberal countries.

²⁰⁵ Shapovalova, Natalia, *Assessing Democracy Assistance: Ukraine*, FRIDE, Project Report, 2010, p.4

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.4

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p.4

Transnational Civil Society Linkage to the East (2004 – 2010)

Ukrainian ties to Western-based NGOs were and are viewed by Russia as:

“tools of US foreign policy aimed at weakening Russia and undermining its sphere of influence: senior Russian officials believe that Western NGOs such as the National Endowment for Democracy, the Open Society Foundations, the International Republican Institute and Freedom House have worked together with local partners to catalyze uprisings against Russia-friendly regimes.”²⁰⁸

Unlike Western ways of promoting democratization through transnational civil society networks, Russia had slightly different tactics in its use of soft power. Unlike Western-based NGOs, the number of Russian NGOs being “active in foreign policy is fairly small”, however, “contemporary proponents of the Russian World draw on the ideas of the 18th-century German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder on the correlation between language and the process of thinking” and creates certain types of organizations promoting Russian language.²⁰⁹ For example, in 2007 Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a document creating the “Russkiy Mir Foundation” (“The Russian World Foundation”), aiming to promote “the Russian language, as Russia's national heritage and a significant aspect of Russian and world culture, and supporting Russian language teaching programs abroad.”²¹⁰ Around half of the offices of this organization were situated in Ukraine, despite the fact Russian was already a widely used language. Funded by the Russian Ministry of Education and possessing an annual budget of \$15 million, it directed its financial resources “into

²⁰⁸ Lutsevych, Orysia, *Agents of the Russian World: Proxy Groups in the Contested Neighbourhood, Russia and Eurasia Programme*, Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2016, p.6

²⁰⁹ Ibid, p.13

²¹⁰ The Russian World Official Website, Available at: <http://ruskiymir.ru/en/fund/index.php>

projects emphasizing east–west linguistic divisions in the country” and was contributing to the deepening of separatist sentiments in the country.²¹¹

The Russian Orthodox Church established its own organizations such as “Day of Baptism of Rus (Den Khreshchenia Rusi) to promote the union of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia as one Holy Rus.”²¹² Generally, “Ukraine, as the religious core of the Russian World”, was in fact hosting “hundreds of civic groups affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church.”²¹³

As for the party linkages to Russia, in Spring 2013 there were around 14 political parties in Ukraine which could be considered as fully pro-Russian, supporting exclusively pro-Eastern direction of foreign policy, among them 3 different Communist Parties of Ukraine, Progressive Socialist Party, Russian Bloc, United Rus, Workers’ Party of Ukraine (Marxist-Leninist) and others.²¹⁴

As it can be seen, feeling threatened by growing transnational linkages of Ukraine to the West, Russia took action by creating, funding and spreading of its own organizations. It has created strong linkages in the given sphere to the Russian Federation.

Results for the (2004 – 2010): Implications for Regime Change

While the first period of the given study was characterized more as one establishing some ties with the Western governments and organizations and ended up with the development of strong ties between Russia and Ukraine, which could be connected to the evolution of Kuchma’s autocracy foundation, the second period is widely characterized by the

²¹¹ Lutsevych, Orysia, Agents of the Russian World: Proxy Groups in the Contested Neighbourhood, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2016, p.15

²¹² Ibid, p.24

²¹³ Ibid, p.26

²¹⁴ Tyzhden.ua News Official Website, In Ukraine there are 14 Pro-Russian Political Parties Registered, Available in Ukrainian language at: <http://tyzhden.ua/News/79989>

establishment of closer ties with the West, which, according to the Freedom House, led to democratization of Ukraine in 2006.²¹⁵

However, it would be a misinterpretation of the facts to say Ukraine has sharply turned westwards in all linkages: rather than a cardinal breakaway from Russia (as it will later happen in 2013), it was mainly a *geopolitical shift* towards the West accompanied by economic one that had an impact on the regime change. As summarized in the Table 1.1, social, communication and transnational civil society linkages remained relatively same to both East and West.

It should be said that Ukraine's transition to democracy was not happening without challenges, and there were various difficulties which later became a stumbling stone for the democratic consolidation in the country.

In 2006 the pro-Russian oriented Viktor Yanukovich became Prime Minister of Ukraine, and this event has immediately received positive reactions from Moscow.²¹⁶ This, in turn, had significant implications for internal misunderstandings and clashes within Ukrainian government. After Yushchenko called for early legislative elections which finally took place in September 2007, Yulia Tymoshenko returned as a head of the government and confirmed democratization of the country as its main objective, while externally she was supporting dual foreign policy vector, by stating that the European choice of Ukraine should be harmonized with building relations with Russia.²¹⁷ There were various problems which were inhibiting

²¹⁵ Freedom House: Ukraine Report 2006, Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2006/ukraine>

²¹⁶ Freire, Maria Raquel, Ukraine's Multi-Vectorial Foreign Policy: Looking West While not Overlooking its Eastern Neighbor, UNISCI Discussion Papers, No:20, 2009, p.239

²¹⁷ Ibid, p.240

the process of building a strong independent self-sufficient state; however, the biggest issue was “domestic instability together with the management of a multi-vector foreign policy.”²¹⁸

Ukraine in fact has made significant achievements in terms of regime change. Particularly, the Ukrainian parliament “ratified the constitutional reform that will turn Ukraine into a parliamentary republic as of January 1, 2006.”²¹⁹ According to Freedom House, Ukraine generally became a free country with media freedom improved significantly after the Revolution, and in 2006 Ukraine had already more than several thousand of NGOs.

On the other hand, despite essential improvements in pro-democratic direction, as it was explained in the given section, there was a sign of lack of interest in Ukraine’s European aspirations within the West, and the real prospect for EU membership was not expected any time soon. As Hatton clarifies, “although tough reforms were still necessary in order for Ukraine to meet EU entry requirement needs, Ukraine had a democracy and a market economy far more advanced than both Romania and Bulgaria in the late 1990s when the EU put them on course to membership”, and while failures of Ukraine to reform were rooted in its internal political issues, there was also lack from encouragement from EU to help Ukraine to consolidate its democratic aspirations.²²⁰

While economic and geopolitical linkages were stronger to the West, social, communication and transnational linkages were strong enough to both sides, however, what is essential is that over the years Western communication technologies were developing, more and more people were traveling to the West over the years, and Western ideals and values were slowly penetrating all levels of Ukrainian society.

²¹⁸ Freire, Maria Raquel, Ukraine’s Multi-Vectorial Foreign Policy: Looking West While not Overlooking its Eastern Neighbor, UNISCI Discussion Papers, No:20, 2009, p.240

²¹⁹ Freedom House: Ukraine Report 2006, Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2006/ukraine>

²²⁰ Hatton, Daniel, Did the Orange Revolution Change Ukraine’s Geopolitical Position Regarding Russia and the West?, University of Leeds, POLIS Journal Vol.3, 2010, p.18

Chapter 6: Period 2010 – 2013: Reverse to Authoritarianism

As the common knowledge has it, after the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich came to power in 2010, the situation with internal and external policies in Ukraine began to change. Ukraine started to move closer to its Eastern neighbor, and relationships with the West have seen a significant decline, while at the same time it coincided with growing authoritarianism inside the country. Initially, powers of Yanukovich were quite limited due to the existing legislation built by previous government, however, in a short time, “with the help of compliant courts, he expanded the reach of his formal powers far beyond what any previous president had exercised,” by establishing super-presidentialism.²²¹ On the other hand, as will be discussed in the given chapter, Ukraine under Yanukovich was still playing an in-between card in its foreign policy, which consequently had its impact on the type of regime forming in Ukraine. For instance, in 2013 Yanukovich in his conversation with Vladimir Putin called Russia a vital strategic partner of Ukraine, while at the same time presented integration to EU as his top priority.²²²

Economic Linkage to the West (2010 – 2013)

If we take a look at trade statistics between EU and Ukraine, we can see that no major decline in value was witnessed in the period between 2010 – 2013 for EU imports: while in 2010 it constituted €11,547 (mio euros), in 2011 it was €15,152, and in 2012 – €14,643. With EU exports the picture was similar – rapprochement with Russia did not have a significant impact on the trading status with EU: in 2010 export value constituted €17,413, in 2011 –

²²¹ Kudelia, Serhiy, The House that Yanukovich Built, The Maidan and Beyond, Journal Of Democracy, Vol.25, No:3, 2014, p.20

²²² Olearchyk, Roman, Russia Accused of Triggering Trade War with Ukraine, August 2013, Financial Times, Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/99068c0e-0595-11e3-8ed5-00144feab7de>

€21,283, while in 2012 – €23,865.²²³ However, as data below will show, despite the fact that trade with EU remained relatively stable, it also started to increase rapidly with Russian Federation.

The EU was only the *second largest trading partner* of Ukraine accounting for 29% of Ukraine's external trade in 2011, and what is especially important for the purposes of the given research is the fact that by 2013, "bilateral trade grew by more than 160%, well above the average growth of EU trade with the rest of the world."²²⁴

In 2011, the investment flow from EU to Ukraine accounted for 24 billion of euros, growing from 14 billion in the previous period of study (year 2008).²²⁵

In terms of financial support, under the European Neighborhood Policy instrument EU has allocated more than € 470 million only in the period between 2011 to 2013 (to "support action in three priority areas: good governance and the rule of law; facilitating the entry into force of the Association Agreement, and sustainable development, including energy and environment").²²⁶

Generally, economic linkages to the West were strong enough under Yanukovych's rule.

Economic Linkage to the East (2010 – 2013)

If we look at the numbers, it is seen that in the period from 2010 to 2013 trade relationships between the Russian Federation and Ukraine have intensified, while in 2010 imports to Russia accounted for \$22198 (CIS – 26833), in 2012 this number slightly declined

²²³ European Commission, EU Trade Statistics: Ukraine Profile, Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113459.pdf

²²⁴ European Council Official Website, European Union Factsheet, EU-Ukraine Summit, February 2013, Available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/135637.pdf

²²⁵ Ibid, p.2

²²⁶ Ibid

to \$17631, however exports from Russia accounted for \$13431 in 2010, while in 2012 this number skyrocketed to \$27418.²²⁷

There were also serious challenges Ukraine had to overcome. In August 2013, several months before Euromaidan, Russia in response to upcoming signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and EU launched a trade war with Ukraine by pressuring the country to join the Kremlin-led Customs Union comprising of the members of the post-Soviet space.²²⁸

In sum, however, economic linkages to Russia in the given period of study were strong enough and constantly improving.

Geopolitical Linkage to the West (2010 – 2013)

Unlike previous presidents of Ukraine, Yanukovich was the first not to support, and even reject the idea of the membership of Ukraine in NATO. In July 2010, the legislation was changed and Ukraine became a “non-bloc” state, the new law on “The Fundamentals of Domestic and Foreign Policy” law turned NATO membership into an unachievable goal for Ukraine.²²⁹ Therefore, relations with the Alliance dropped to their lowest point due to complete disinterest of new government administration in further cooperation.

At the same time, the given period is characterized by ongoing negotiations between EU and Ukraine on the Association Agreement, including economic cooperation through a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), which later were, however, frozen. As later became obvious, President’s aim was “to obtain the trade and economic benefits of a DCFTA

²²⁷ World Integrated Trade Solution Ukraine Profile 2012, Available at: <http://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/UKR/Year/2012/Summary>, UN International Merchandise Trade Statistics Ukraine Profile (Years 2010 – 2013), Available at: <http://comtrade.un.org/pb/CountryPagesNew.aspx?y=2012>,

²²⁸ Olearchyk, Roman, Russia Accused of Triggering Trade War with Ukraine, August 2013, Financial Times, Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/99068c0e-0595-11e3-8ed5-00144feab7de>

²²⁹ Kuzio, Taras, Ukraine's relations with the West since the Orange Revolution, European Security, 2012, p.13

without pursuing the political requirements of an Association Agreement.”²³⁰ Negotiations on the Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area) were completed in October 2011, at the same time when Yanukovich imprisoned his main political opponent Yulia Tymoshenko, a situation which caused deterioration in relationships with the EU. In December the same year, the EU refused to initiate “the Association Agreement, the purely technical first stage in the process that signals the end of negotiations and completion of a final document.”²³¹

However, by the end of 2013, both EU and Ukraine were ready to sign the Agreement, meaning that in fact even the authoritarian president did comply with EU requirements needed to reach this point. In other words, Yanukovich did sustain some kind of pro-Western policy direction. Generally, however, if we judge the situation by its final outcomes, geopolitical linkages to the West were not as clear as in the previous observed period, meaning that Yanukovich actually never had an aim of pursuing the way of EU integration due to Russian pressure.

Geopolitical Linkage to the East (2010 – 2013)

While Ukraine was trying to balance between East and West, unhappy with any negotiations between Kyiv and Brussels, Moscow pressured Yanukovich “to drop his support for European integration and join the CIS Customs Union between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia in exchange for ‘discounted’ gas.”²³² The Russian-led Eurasian

²³⁰ Kuzio, Taras, Ukraine's relations with the West since the Orange Revolution, European Security, 2012, p.14

²³¹ Ibid, p.16

²³² Ibid, pp.13-14

Customs Union was launched in 2010 and was “expected to become a fully-fledged ‘Eurasian Union’ in 2015.”²³³

Officially, Ukraine claimed it cannot join Customs Union with Russia, since it includes members who are not WTO members, and on the other hand “the EU has warned that countries can only join one Customs Union and therefore Ukraine should decide whether this would be the CIS Customs Union or the DCFTA with the EU”, and while rhetorically Yanukovich was on the side of DCFTA, he did not like the idea it has to be followed by support of democratic ideas and principles at home.²³⁴

The most essential event defining the intensity of geopolitical linkage became the signing of the Kharkiv Agreements between Russia and Ukraine, which extended the period of Russian Black Sea Fleet stationing in Crimea until 2042 – 2047. As it was already pointed out in this study, signing of such strategically vital agreement was not only contradictory to Ukrainian legislation, but as NATO’s Parliamentary Assembly stressed that:

“while the Ukraine’s democratically elected leadership has every right to make strategic foreign policy decisions, it would be preferable that the decisions of such long-term strategic importance were made after extensive and comprehensive public and parliamentary debate, rather than in a haste and without any attempts to engage the opposition.”²³⁵

Yanukovich has never mentioned any plan to allow the Russian military to stay on Crimean peninsula during his election campaign, and while he was always stressing the importance to hold a referendum on whether to join NATO or not, no referendum was offered for the Kharkiv Agreements. As Kuzio explains a 2008 survey shows that “nearly half of Ukrainians supported the withdrawal of the Black Sea Fleet by 2017, as specified in the 1997

²³³ Popescu, Nicu, Dreyer, Iana, *The Eurasian Customs Union: The Economics and the Politics*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2014, p.1

²³⁴ Kuzio, Taras, *Ukraine's relations with the West since the Orange Revolution*, European Security, 2012, p.14

²³⁵ *Ibid*, p.11

treaty.”²³⁶ Gas discounts offered by Russia as a bonus to the rent price helped Yanukovich to sustain economy.

As it is obvious, unlike in the previous period, geopolitical linkage towards Russia became quite strong for the given period of time.

Social Linkage to the West (2010 – 2013)

Over time, the number of Ukrainians living in different parts of the world was growing. In 2011, more than 1,209,085 Ukrainians were living in Canada, comprising ninth largest ethnic minority group in the country.²³⁷ While the number of Ukrainians living in Russia was always striking, the number of Ukrainians residing in Canada was actually similar, while combined with other Western states, it most probably was much more than in Russia alone.

If we look at the general EU visa issuance trends for the period of 2009 – 2012, we can see that each year the number of tourists was increasing: while in 2009, for example, 854,209 Ukrainians received tourism visa of the type C (short-term stays), in 2012 this number grew up to 1,313,727.²³⁸

Also, in 2010 significant progress in Ukrainian migration legislation was made after EU’s presentation of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan, and in 2011 “National Plan on Implementation of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan on visa liberalization was adopted.”²³⁹ According to Ukrainian authorities, “On 23 July 2012 enhanced Agreement amending the Visa Facilitation Agreement was signed envisaging broadening the categories of the citizens

²³⁶ Kuzio, Taras, Ukraine's relations with the West since the Orange Revolution, European Security, 2012, p.11

²³⁷ Community in Canada and US: Ukrainian Diaspora Official Website, Available at:

<http://www.ukrainiandiaspora.ca/>

²³⁸ European Commission, Directorate-General Home Affairs, Overview of Schengen Visa Statistics, 2009 -2012, Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/docs/overview_of_schengen_visa_statistics_en.pdf p.6

²³⁹ Migration Policy Center team, Migration Profile Ukraine, 2013, Available at: http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/migration_profiles/Ukraine.pdf p.5

of Ukraine who are entitled to receive multiple and free of charge Schengen visas until the moment when the short-term visa requirements for Ukrainian citizens to enter the EU are abolished.”²⁴⁰ The Agreement entered into force in 2013.

Generally, social linkage to the West was quite strong and growing throughout the years.

Social Linkage to the East (2010 – 2013)

According to an all-Russian population census in 2010, 1927988 of Ukrainians were living in Russia.²⁴¹ If we look at migration, we can see that while in 2010 the total number of Ukrainians migrating to Russia dropped to 27508 people compared to previous years, in 2012 this number grew up to 49411 people.²⁴²

Generally, social linkages to the East remained high, however, as later data from 2016 will show, throughout years, starting from 2002, the number of living Ukrainians in Russia dropped significantly by 34,49% (around 1 014 973 left Russia during several years).²⁴³ In other words, a constant decline in Ukrainian migration to Russia was witnessed.

Social attitudes towards Russia and its citizens, according to polls, were highly positive and relationships between two countries were seen as brotherly up to the Ukrainian crisis.²⁴⁴

For the same reasons developed earlier in the given study, social linkages to the East were strong enough.

²⁴⁰ Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official Website, Mission of Ukraine to European Union, Available at:<http://ukraine-eu.mfa.gov.ua/en/ukraine-eu/justice/visa-agreement>

²⁴¹ Federal Bureau of State Statistics of the Russian Federation Official Website, Available at: http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/Documents/Vol4/pub-04-01.pdf

²⁴² Federal Bureau of State Statistics of the Russian Federation Official Website, The Demographic Yearbooks of Russia, Available at: http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/publications/catalog/doc_1137674209312

²⁴³ Statdata Official Website, National Composition of Russia, Available at: <http://www.statdata.ru/nacionalnyj-sostav-rossii>

²⁴⁴ Kyiv International Sociology Institute Official Website, Available at: <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=550&page=1&t=10>

Communication Linkage to the West (2010 – 2013)

According to Katerina Tsetsura, “only between 2008 and 2011, Western donors provided more than nine million US dollars to support various independent media projects in Ukraine.”²⁴⁵ These sums are impressive, and show a continuously growing linkage to Western media organizations.

During the rule of Yanukovich, the indicators of the Press Freedom Index put Ukraine to 126th position in 2013, showing dramatic decline from 89th in 2009.²⁴⁶

Unlike in the previous years, internet became much more accessible in the given period of study, allowing users to get an access to both Western and Eastern media outlets, and more than “30 million social network accounts were registered in Ukraine in 2012 , approximately 66 percent of the total population, which puts it on par with the US and UK.”²⁴⁷

Despite growing relation to Russian media in the given period, it is highly important to stress that the impact of Westernization was also at its highest levels. Most importantly, Western-type shows were gaining increased popularity, for example, “Ukraine Has Talent” had higher ratings than political live talks shows (30-35%), “X-Factor” became among top TV shows (25-30%), and Ukrainian version of Western “So You Think You Can Dance” was also among favorites (16-20%), by making these entertainment programs more popular than Russian shows.²⁴⁸ Also, since Euro-2012 took place in Ukraine, it also contributed to Ukraine’s appearance in Western media.

²⁴⁵ Tsetsura, Katerina, Ukrainian NGOs as Opinion Makers: How Media Organizations Communicate about Progress in New Democracy with Western Donors, University of Oklahoma, Tripodos No:37, 2015, p.94

²⁴⁶ Leshchenko, Sergii, The Media’s Role, The Maidan and Beyond, Journal of Democracy, Vol.25, No:3, 2014, p.53

²⁴⁷ Dyczok, Marta, Ukraine’s Media in the Context of Global Cultural Convergence, University of Western Ontario, Demokratizatsia, 2013, p.232

²⁴⁸ Ibid, p.250

In sum, communication linkages to the West were constantly growing and became strong enough by the year of 2012.

Communication Linkage to the East (2010 – 2013)

Generally, despite the fact that over the years it was easier for Ukrainians to access information from any foreign sources, situation with communication and “transcultural flows [became] more complex than the usual global-national dynamic because in addition to globalization, the new/old country continues to be affected by the legacy of Russian/Soviet cultural domination and continued Russian influence.”²⁴⁹

While media freedom was declining under Yanukovich, television was the main source of information for Ukrainians, and “other sources of information to which people turn, the IRI research found, include friends and relatives, print media, and (ominously) Russian television. This last serves Russia as a propaganda weapon—the survey says that every third Ukrainian consumes news crafted in the heart of the Kremlin.”²⁵⁰ The problem was that with growing authoritarian tendencies in the country, media was largely suffering, and was owned by pro-Russian elites.²⁵¹ Under new government, Ukrainian Parliament decreased the quota “for Ukrainian language in broadcast media to 25 percent.”²⁵²

If we take a look at most visited websites in Ukraine in 2011, however, it is seen that Russian-based social Network VKontakte was visited much more than Western Facebook.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Dyczok, Marta, *Ukraine’s Media in the Context of Global Cultural Convergence*, University of Western Ontario, *Demokratizatsia*, 2013, p.235

²⁵⁰ Leshchenko, Sergii, *The Media’s Role, The Maidan and Beyond*, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.25, No:3, 2014, p.53

²⁵¹ Dyczok, Marta, *Ukraine’s Media in the Context of Global Cultural Convergence*, University of Western Ontario, *Demokratizatsia*, 2013, p.249

²⁵² *Ibid*, p.249

²⁵³ *Ibid*, p.251

What is especially important for this period, however, is evidence that while common knowledge does not pay enough attention to media interrelations between different countries, “symbolic values continue to shift, and competition for cultural capital is ongoing.”²⁵⁴

Transnational Civil Society Linkage to the West (2010 – 2013)

Western linkages to civil society in Ukraine were developing despite of the regime that Yanukovich was building. The development of NGOs was boosted by widening of social networks before Euro-2012. A new legislation on Civic Associations was passed in 2012 and “was a prerequisite for the Association Agreement to be signed between Ukraine and the EU and also one of the criteria for developing the EU Eastern Partnership programme.”²⁵⁵

Particularly due to the European integration processes, in the beginning of 2011 the Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum was created in the capital, aiming to bring together representatives of non-governmental sphere “for advocacy and analytical activities in the implementation framework of the Eastern Partnership programme.”²⁵⁶

In 2007, the European Commission introduced the Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development Program sponsored under the Development Cooperation Instrument, which focused on Ukraine after 2011 and granted around one million of euros yearly to the development of civil society in Ukraine.²⁵⁷

What is also important, if we take a look at the allocation of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights funding which was widely focused on the development of

²⁵⁴ Dyczok, Marta, *Ukraine’s Media in the Context of Global Cultural Convergence*, University of Western Ontario, *Demokratizatsia*, 2013, p.251

²⁵⁵ Ghosh, Mridula, *In Search of Sustainability Civil Society in Ukraine*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2014, p.3

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.4

²⁵⁷ Shapovalova, Natalia, Youngs, Richard, *EU Democracy Promotion in the Eastern Neighborhood: a Turn to Civil Society?*, FRIDE, Working Paper No:115, 2012, p.4

NGOs, in the period between 2007 – 2012, we can see that financial support to Ukrainian civil society has increased from 600,000 euros in 2007 to 1,200,000 euros in 2012.²⁵⁸

Transnational Civil Society Linkage to the East (2010 – 2013)

While party linkages to Russian Federation for the given period were obvious, during the times of Yanukovich, a significant increase in “Russian funding for NGOs, youth groups, media clubs and university seminars, which acted as lobby groups” was witnessed.²⁵⁹

In parallel, Russia was continuing to establish its nongovernmental organizations of various types and open its offices in Ukraine. For instance, in 2011 it opened the World Without Nazism organization affiliate in Ukraine, which was presented as international human rights movement, while in fact it was aiming to “promote the narrative of the rise of neo-fascism – and of ‘enemies within’ – in the former Soviet sphere of influence in Europe.”²⁶⁰ The reason of the significance of such organization lays in the fact that later in 2013, particularly these type of organizations were promoting the ideas of the danger of Ukraine’s Nazism and fascism rise for Russian-speaking people living in Ukraine.²⁶¹

With growing internal instabilities in Russia, other organizations supporting Russian ideological stances, such as, for instance, promotion of Eurasian integration for Russia’s neighborhood, operated in the given period of study and most of them were focused on Russia’s near abroad. These organizations were especially active in Ukraine and “focused their narrative on the damaging effects of European integration on the economy and traditional values, and presented regional elites with reports and studies explaining the

²⁵⁸ Shapovalova, Natalia, Youngs, Richard, EU Democracy Promotion in the Eastern Neighborhood: a Turn to Civil Society?, FRIDE, Working Paper No:115, 2012, p.4

²⁵⁹ Ghosh, Mridula, In Search of Sustainability Civil Society in Ukraine, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2014, p.4

²⁶⁰ Lutsevych, Orysia, Agents of the Russian World: Proxy Groups in the Contested Neighbourhood, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2016, p.18

²⁶¹ Ibid, p.18

benefits of joining the Eurasian Union.”²⁶² Also, other newly emerged organizations started to promote Eurasianism and struggle against the long-term American domination in the world among youth in the post-Soviet space, among them were organizations such as Eurasian Youth Parliament (created in 2012), Young Eurasia (2011) and others.²⁶³

Being strongly against any Western activities in their support of NGOs in Ukraine, “Russian groups publish[ed] ‘alternative’ human rights reports, observe[d] elections abroad and act[ed] as human rights defenders for Russians living abroad.”²⁶⁴

Thus, for the given period of study, it was visible that Russia started to actively oppose any spread of Western ideology, including democratization, by creation and spread of its own NGOs.

Results for the 2010 – 2013: Implications for Regime Change

While the given period is mostly known for Ukraine’s turn eastwards, there are several points to stress. While it can easily be seen that geopolitical linkages to the East were much stronger, the same cannot be said for economic and other linkages. Precisely, trade relationships to EU only have made it the biggest economic partner for Ukraine after Russia, while combined with trade relations with the US and Canada *the volumes would be much higher*. Undoubtedly, social linkages to the West intensified due to growing number of tourists, migrants and diasporas in the West, while these linkages were declining with Russia, they were still quite high. The same applies to communication linkages – while due to globalization media linkages to the West became quite intense, Eastern impact was also vital and was used as propaganda tool. Transnational civil society linkages were also high to both

²⁶² Lutsevych, Orysia, Agents of the Russian World: Proxy Groups in the Contested Neighbourhood, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2016, p.20

²⁶³ Ibid, p.23

²⁶⁴ Ibid, p.26

states, with Western continuous funding and support to Ukrainian NGO development, Russia has developed its own organizations to counteract Western efforts to promote democracy through such support. In other words, Yanukovych's growing authoritarianism is mostly explained by the intensification in geopolitical linkages, same as it applied for the previous period of 2004 – 2010, when geopolitics was decisive for the regime implications (See Table 1.1).

As for the type of regime, which was formed in the situation where Ukraine was exposed actually to two foreign powers, rather than one, it would be a mistake to state Yanukovych has built a fully-fledged authoritarian regime. It was hard for him to robustly consolidate his power due to Ukraine's significant regional divisions, where Western Ukraine did not really support his rule, by launching actions of public discontent. Also, he had no clear ideological line, and while he came to power as a strong leader ready to protect the interests of the Russian-speaking Eastern and Southern Ukraine, later "he suddenly began talking up Ukraine's European roots and its ambitions to join the EU."²⁶⁵ Yanukovych wanted to gain support of the citizens of Western Ukraine as well, by showing his aspirations to join EU, while at the same time doing nothing to significantly reform to achieve this aim. Moreover, the president has never really managed to defeat opposition, as for example Putin did, and could not influence sponsorship of opposition forces by wealthy businessmen, and what is even more important – "the opposition was even able to air its views via the national media, which remained more pluralistic than that of any other authoritarian state in the region."²⁶⁶

Freedom House scored Ukraine's regime as Partly Free (3.0 from 2.5 Free in 2010), however, it was not even close to full authoritarianism, as for instance, in Russia (in 2011 it

²⁶⁵ Kudelia, Serhiy, The House that Yanukovych Built, The Maidan and Beyond, Journal Of Democracy, Vol.25, No:3, 2014, p.24

²⁶⁶ Ibid, p.25

was Not Free with score 5.5, where 7 was worst).²⁶⁷ Again, even under Yanukovich Ukraine's regime was rather a competitive authoritarian one rather than fully autocratic.

At the end of November 2013, Yanukovich suddenly refused to sign the Association Agreement with European Union, by deciding to integrate into Eurasian Customs Union with Russian Federation instead, which caused mass protests in numerous cities in the country. Government's decision to use force against the protestors caused even stronger uprising of the citizens. As a result, the country has witnessed the biggest revolution in its history of independence, which took lives of more than a hundred of people due to the armed clashes between special police forces and the people. These events, which lasted for several months, have immediately attracted the attention of the West and Russia. The entire world was following the development of the situation in Ukraine. The following chapter is aiming to analyze the sharp break of Ukraine with Russia as a result of Ukrainians' decision to choose their European path, and investigate its implications for the regime.

Chapter 7: Period 2014 – present: Sharp Break with the Russian Federation and Turn Westwards

The last period of the presented study is generally characterized by a sharp break with the Russian Federation, and a complete turn of Ukraine to the West.

During the months of the Euromaidan protests, opposition against Yanukovich grew so wide that he even managed to lose the support of his own party members, and as a result he had to flee to Russia at the end of February 2014. As a result of pro-European choice of Ukrainians, in March 2014 the political chapters of the Association Agreement were signed,

²⁶⁷ Freedom House: Russia Profile, Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/russia>

followed by signing of the remaining parts in June 2014,²⁶⁸ after the early presidential elections in May 2014, when Petro Poroshenko became a new pro-Western oriented democratically elected head of state. These developments have drastically changed the further development of Ukrainian foreign policy.

What is especially important for the given period of study is the fact that exactly after 2014 for the first time in the history of independent Ukraine, country has turned sharply Westwards by intensifying its linkages to the West, while at the same time linkages to the East dropped almost completely.

Economic Linkage to the West (2014 – present)

While generally the Association Agreement and DCFTA discussed below are expected to boost trade relationships between EU and Ukraine, it is not easy to achieve this aim immediately. DCFTA aims to:

“offer Ukraine a framework for modernising its trade relations and for economic development by the opening of markets via the progressive removal of customs tariffs and quotas, and by an extensive harmonisation of laws, norms and regulations in various trade-related sectors, creating the conditions for aligning key sectors of the Ukrainian economy to EU standards.”²⁶⁹

For economic linkage for the given period, Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) is the most important achievement. It is different from classic trade agreements in many ways, and, as its name suggests, it is much more comprehensive. Most importantly, the

²⁶⁸ European Union External Action Website, A look at the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, Available at: http://collections.internetmemory.org/haeu/content/20160313172652/http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2012/140912_ukraine_en.htm

²⁶⁹ European Commission Official Website, EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/april/tradoc_150981.pdf p.2

EU assists Ukraine in all necessary reforms through financial and technical assistance. The agreement is expected to be beneficial for both parties, and facilitate investments to Ukraine, which is highly important.

Starting from the January 1, 2016, when DCFTA entered into force, most of the import duties between EU and Ukraine have been eliminated, energy security is expected to improve significantly, and transparency of business in Ukraine is expected to improve.²⁷⁰

According to 2014 data, EU was the *main trading partner* of Ukraine ahead of the Russian Federation, unlike in the previous period, meaning economic linkages were stronger with the EU, and moreover, EU was the major source of foreign direct investments in Ukraine (more than 50% of Ukraine's FDI came from EU).²⁷¹

However, it should be stated that this data shows certain decrease in the trade balance between EU and Ukraine before DCFTA entered into force; as can be seen in comparison of 2015 to the years of 2012 – 2013. If in 2013 the value of the total trade with the EU accounted for €37,781 million, in 2015 this number dropped to €26,691.²⁷² In 2015, however, the total value of EU imports accounted for €13,830 euros, while €11,736 for exports which have made EU Ukraine's biggest commercial partner.²⁷³ As data presented below will show, trade indicators with Russian Federation were significantly behind.

While it is too early to estimate concrete consequences of the DCFTA between Ukraine and EU in the given time, theoretically it still does make linkages to EU much stronger than to Russian Federation.

²⁷⁰ European Commission, EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, Economic benefits and opportunities, 2015, Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/december/tradoc_154128.pdf p.2

²⁷¹ Ibid, p.1

²⁷² European Commission, Directorate-General for Trade, European Union, Trade in goods with Ukraine, Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113459.pdf p.3

²⁷³ Ibid, p.8

Economic Linkage to the East (2014 – present)

With the Ukraine crisis developing, Ukraine refused to join the Russian-led Eurasian Customs Union as an alternative to pro-European choice. When Ukraine signed the Association Agreement including the DCFTA it produced significant trade problems with Russia since “DCFTAs with the countries of what it considers its ‘near abroad’ or special zone of influence, are perceived as a direct challenge to its regional ambitions for political and economic leadership.”²⁷⁴

With general relationships spoiled, commercial partnership with the Russian Federation was impacted negatively. Thus, in 2015 imports value with Russian Federation accounted for €6,746, while exports only for €4,353, thus achieving its *historically low levels*.²⁷⁵

According to the World Trade Center Moscow: “the first four months of 2015 showed a 64 percent fall in Russian-Ukrainian bilateral trade” while in certain spheres commerce was fully interrupted.²⁷⁶ Report also stresses that “industrial and technological cooperation is almost ruined: trade turnover of machinery and equipment fell by 42.4 percent.”²⁷⁷ Most probably, such a decline in economic relations will not be easy to fix in the near future.

These details are significant enough to indicate that unlike in the previous years, linkage to the East became much lower.

²⁷⁴ Wolfgang, Koeth, The ‘Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements’: an Appropriate Response by the EU to the Challenges in its Neighbourhood?, p.24, Available at:

http://www.eipa.eu/files/repository/eipascope/20141120085243_EIPASCOPE_2014_WKO.pdf

²⁷⁵ European Commission, Directorate-General for Trade, European Union, Trade in goods with Ukraine, Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113459.pdf p.8

²⁷⁶ Korniyenko, Eduard, Russia-Ukraine trade shrinks 64%, Russia Today, Available at:

<https://www.rt.com/business/262337-russia-ukraine-trade-decrease/>

²⁷⁷ Ibid

Geopolitical Linkage to the West (2014 – present)

The Association Agreement signed in March 2014 has become a central framework for building new relationships between the EU and Ukraine: since that moment, the Agreement has started a process of deep and comprehensive reforms of Ukraine with the assistance of its Western neighbor. Already by May 2014, “no fewer than sixty state agencies in various EU countries have made “twinning agreements” with Ukrainian counterparts for the sake of aiding the latter in their reform.”²⁷⁸

The Agreement includes also confidence in sharing same values and principles, which is important for Ukraine’s regime prospects, deep cooperation on the issues of foreign and security policies, development of the framework of justice and freedoms, and “enhanced cooperation in some 28 key sector policy areas, including transport, environment, cooperation on industrial and enterprise policy, public finance, macroeconomic stability, company law, banking, insurance and other financial services, information society” and other fields.²⁷⁹

With Ukraine’s new pro-Western President Petro Poroshenko’s coming to power in 2014, and growing security concerns due to Russia’s aggression towards Ukraine discussed below, Ukraine’s aspirations to join NATO started to gain significance once again. Condemning Russia’s actions in Ukraine, such as annexation of the Crimean peninsula and military actions in Eastern Ukraine, NATO provided intensified support to Ukraine’s reforms, strengthening institutions and defense sector.²⁸⁰ Most important event which provided a green light for

²⁷⁸ Åslund, Anders, Olygarchs, Corruption, and European Integration, *The Maidan and Beyond*, Journal of Democracy, Vol.25, No:3, 2014, p.70

²⁷⁹ European Union External Action Service, EU–Ukraine Association Agreement: What Does the Agreement Offer? Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/150625-eu-ua_aa_what_does_the_agreement_offer_v.pdf p.1

²⁸⁰ NATO Official Website, Media Backgrounder, NATO-Ukraine Relations: The Background, Available at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_06/20150624_1506-nato-ukraine-bg.pdf p.1

Ukraine to join NATO became its decision of the abolishment of the “non-bloc” status in 2014, which became a reason for intensification of Russian-Ukrainian tensions.²⁸¹

Despite the fact that a deeper research would show much more indicators of Ukraine’s turn westwards, the presented two geopolitical linkages were way too significant and sufficient to show strong geopolitical linkages to the West.

Geopolitical Linkage to the East (2014 – present)

Following Ukraine’s turn to the West geopolitically, its relationships with Russia started to deteriorate progressively. After wide condemnation of Euromaidan protests, witnessing Ukraine’s leaving Russian orbit, Russian officials launched a coordinated disinformation campaign against Ukraine, stating that pro-European protests represent a serious threat to the Russian speaking population of Ukraine. The illiberal neighbor did not recognize the legitimacy of the new government in Kyiv, and interpreted the situation as an “unconstitutional coup and armed seizure of power.”²⁸² Russia continued supporting Yanukovich, as the only democratically elected candidate.

Russian reaction to events in Kyiv received immediate response. Russian military which was already stationed in the Black Sea Fleet executed the occupation of Crimea starting from the end of February, and on March 16, 2014, a referendum calling for Crimea to join Russia was held, which led to illegal annexation of the peninsula. A year later, Vladimir Putin was interviewed in a documentary and openly admitted annexation was well-planned and comprehensively supported by Russian troops.²⁸³

²⁸¹ BBC News, Ukraine Votes to Drop Non-Aligned Status, 2014, Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30587924>

²⁸² Avdeev, Pavel, The Crisis in Ukraine: Root Causes and Scenarios For the Future, Valdai Discussion Club, Moscow 2014, p.35

²⁸³ Kondrashov, Andrei, Crimea: Back to the Motherland, Documentary, Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t42-71RpRgl>

Following the Crimean referendum, pro-Russian separatists in Eastern regions of Ukraine started mass protests calling for referendum as well, which turned into armed violent conflict in April 2014, leading to a hybrid war between Russia and Ukraine. While the armed conflict also refers more to leverage rather than linkage, it is necessary to show which exact factors contribute to a total break of the linkages for the given period of study.

Ukrainian officials have been declaring their intention to exit CIS since 2014,²⁸⁴ a decision which was not approved by the parliament, but it indicates once more the sharp deterioration in geopolitical linkages to the Eastern neighbor. Also, in the beginning of 2017 Ukraine initiated proceeding against Russia at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), accusing illiberal neighbor in the violation of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, both related to the current conflict. According to the official ICJ document, Ukraine “contends that, following the Orange Revolution of 2004, it has been subjected to increasing degrees of Russian pressure and intimidation” and that Russia has been interfering in Ukrainian internal affairs for a long time.²⁸⁵

In sum, geopolitical linkages to the East remain to be at their lowest point since the collapse of the USSR.

Social Linkage to the West (2014 – present)

The Association Agreement discussed above has significantly contributed to an increase in social linkages to the West, as it is aimed at increasing the dialogue between Ukraine and

²⁸⁴ Ukrainian Parliament Official Website, Available in Ukrainian at: http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=50331

²⁸⁵ International Court of Justice Press Release, Ukraine institutes proceedings against the Russian Federation and requests the Court to indicate provisional measures, January 2017. Available at: <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/166/19310.pdf>

EU on migration and asylum issues, and also the introduction of visa-free regime for the citizens of Ukraine in the near future.²⁸⁶

In 2015, around 1,233,530 of Ukrainians have applied to receive Schengen tourist visas, out of which 1,188,357 people received these visas – after Russian Federation and China, Ukraine became the third country by the number of applications and visas issued.²⁸⁷

After a long process of negotiations, in May 2017 visa-liberalization between Ukraine and EU was finally approved, and today is considered to be a historic moment for Ukrainians indicating a sharp break with country's Soviet past.²⁸⁸ This will surely facilitate cross-border movements and further strengthen social and communication linkages between Ukraine and its democratic neighbors.

Since 2014, Ukrainian tourists are issued 10 year visas with multiple entries, while before the maximum period was 5 years. According to the US authorities, “this will affect the lives of tens of thousands of Ukrainians, and will help to facilitate legitimate business and personal travel.”²⁸⁹

While the number of United States tourism visas issued to Ukrainians (only for B1/B2 type) in 2013 was 30,883,²⁹⁰ in 2015 this number grew up to 52,943.²⁹¹

Due to the ongoing conflict, many Ukrainians have asked for asylum in other countries. The number of migrants grew up significantly.²⁹²

²⁸⁶ European Union External Action Service, EU-Ukraine Guide to Association Agreement, Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/images/top_stories/140912_eu-ukraine-association-agreement-quick_guide.pdf p.3

²⁸⁷ Schengen Visa Statistics by Third Country 2015, Available at: <http://www.schengenvisainfo.com/schengen-visa-statistics-third-country-2015/>

²⁸⁸ Radio Free Europe, Poroshenko Hails 'Historic Day' As Visa-Free EU Travel Deal Is Signed, May 2017, Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/eu-ukraine-visa-free-travel-deal-signed/28492872.html>

²⁸⁹ Embassy of the United States in Ukraine Official Website, 2014, Available at: <https://ukraine.usembassy.gov/statements/visa-10.html>

²⁹⁰ United States Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Nonimmigrant Visas Issued Statistics Fiscal Year 2013

²⁹¹ United States Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Nonimmigrant Visas Issued Statistics Fiscal Year 2015

Growing acceptance of Western values in the wake of Russian aggression has impacted public opinion among Ukrainians in a way that more than 55% of people expressed their wish to join the EU,²⁹³ while 57% describe cold attitudes towards Russian Federation.²⁹⁴

Social Linkage to the East (2014 – present)

After Euromaidan, just in one year the number of Russians tourist visits to Ukraine dropped by 77%.²⁹⁵ Also, as it was already mentioned, the number of Ukrainians living in Russia also decreased by almost 35%.²⁹⁶

In January 2015, the Ukrainian government has adopted relevant legislation which requires Russian citizens to travel to Ukraine with an international passport, while before they could travel with national passports only.²⁹⁷ Ukrainian members of parliament have initiated voting for introduction of a visa regime with Russia, however, these attempts have not been successful yet.²⁹⁸

Due to the conflict, a lot of Ukrainians, mostly from Eastern regions, have fled to Russia. According to Russian TASS, more than one million of people moved to Russia, while 280,000 asked for refugee status there.²⁹⁹

²⁹² Slovak Foreign Policy Association Website, Main Ukrainian Trends and Figures in Migration, Available at: <http://www.sfpa.sk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Ukraine-Migration-overview.pdf>

²⁹³ Ukraine Today, 55% of Ukrainians Support Closer Ties With Europe, 2016, Available at: <http://uatoday.tv/society/55-of-ukrainians-support-closer-ties-with-europe-poll-631926.html>

²⁹⁴ Radio Free Europe, Poll Shows More Ukrainians Support NATO, Dislike Russia, Available at: <http://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-poll-more-for-nato-against-russia/28089250.html>

²⁹⁵ Ukraine Tourism and Visitors Statistics, Available at: <http://www.visitkievukraine.com/essential/tourism-statistics/>

²⁹⁶ Statdata Official Website, National Composition of Russian Population, Available at: <http://www.statdata.ru/nacionalnyj-sostav-rossii>

²⁹⁷ Chervonenko, Vitaliy, Visa Regime with Russia: PR or Reality? BBC Ukraine, Available at: http://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/politics/2016/10/161005_visas_russia_vc

²⁹⁸ Ukraine Today, Ukrainian Parliament in session on visa regime with Russia, 2016, Available at: <http://uatoday.tv/politics/ukrainian-parliament-in-session-on-visa-regime-with-russia-780859.html>

²⁹⁹ TASS Russian News Agency Website, Available at: <http://tass.com/politics/903997>

Communication Linkage to the West (2014 – present)

Euromaidan has returned Ukrainian political developments to Western media agenda once more since the Orange Revolution.

The given period of study is especially attractive, since there was a significant increase in the number of internet users in Ukraine – while in 2013 it was around 18,517,737 people having internet access, in 2016 this number reached 19,678,089.³⁰⁰ According to Freedom House, “YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and blog-hosting services such as Wordpress and LiveJournal are freely available and gained significantly more users since the Euromaidan protests in 2013-2014.”³⁰¹ Use of Twitter saw 56 percent increase in 2014, and Facebook usage grew around 9 percent, compared to the end of 2013, and it became a popular tool of communication of Ukrainian politicians with the masses.³⁰² Euromaidan itself has begun with a single Facebook post, where famous Ukrainian journalist called Ukrainians to come to the streets to protest.³⁰³

As the given study has shown, Western-based donors have been supporting Ukrainian media outlet development for years, by helping “to inspire, encourage, and instill values, qualities, and attributes of the independent media.”³⁰⁴ Currently, Western donors continue to financially and technically support the development of media organizations, and key funders include “European Union, Council of Europe, USAID, Open Society Foundations –

³⁰⁰ Internet Live Stats Website, Ukraine Profile, Available at: <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/ukraine/>

³⁰¹ Freedom House, Freedom on the Net, Ukraine Profile 2015, Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2015/ukraine>

³⁰² Ibid

³⁰³ Leshchenko, Sergii, The Media’s Role, The Maidan and Beyond, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.25, No:3, 2014, p.52

³⁰⁴ Tsetsura, Katerina, Ukrainian NGOs as Opinion Makers: How Media Organizations Communicate about Progress in New Democracy with Western Donors, *University of Oklahoma, Tripodos* No:37, 2015, p.93

International Renaissance Foundation, Media Development Fund – U.S. Embassy, the Netherlands Embassy (MATRA), Internews Network, IMS, NED, and IREX.”³⁰⁵

Communication Linkage to the East (2014 – present)

Euromaidan did not only attract close attention of Western media, but also the Russian ones, which later played significant role as a propaganda tool.

Despite the fact that internet connection to the Western media outlets became highly accessible, in 2014 Russian media in fact still had its significant influence in Ukraine.

According to Leshchenko:

“In the south, 47 percent of residents report watching Russian news programs. In the east, the figure is 44 percent. Such levels of exposure to Russian propaganda help to explain the public mood and the outbursts of separatism that have accompanied (and served as a pretext for) Russia’s recent military intervention.”³⁰⁶

Also, the Russian-owned VKontakte social media site is still the most popular social network in Ukraine.³⁰⁷ In May 2017, Poroshenko issued an order to ban several Russian web-sites, among which is VKontakte, and while the outcomes of such decision are still unclear and it is disputable whether such action could be called democratic, it indicates an attempt to further break away from Ukraine’s illiberal neighbor.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Tsetsura, Katerina, Ukrainian NGOs as Opinion Makers: How Media Organizations Communicate about Progress in New Democracy with Western Donors, University of Oklahoma, Tripodos No:37, 2015, p.98

³⁰⁶ Leshchenko, Sergii, The Media’s Role, The Maidan and Beyond, Journal of Democracy, Vol.25, No:3, 2014, p.56

³⁰⁷ VINCOS World Map of Social Networks, Available at: <http://vincos.it/world-map-of-social-networks/>

³⁰⁸ Roth, Andrew, In new sanctions list, Ukraine targets Russian social-media sites, The Washington Post, May 2017, Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-new-sanctions-list-ukraine-blocks-russian-social-media-sites/2017/05/16/a982ab4e-3a16-11e7-9e48-c4f199710b69_story.html?utm_term=.d56e4aff59c7

Previously, both Russia and Ukraine have banned each other's most popular TV channels on their territories, and even launched a media war – Ukraine, being aware of Russian increasing impact, has even banned Russian movies and documentaries.³⁰⁹

Transnational Civil Society Linkage to the West (2014 – present)

It should be said that the relationship to Western governments, media outlets, and nongovernmental organizations have played a key role in overthrowing non-democratic government of Yanukovich.³¹⁰ As presented study have shown, during previous periods of investigation, Western donors such as USAID have been constantly supporting the development of independent media and NGOs, and as a result, people were ready to stand against autocracy imposed by pro-Russian president.

According to the Freedom House, USAID is still actively supporting NGOs in Ukraine, the EU also launched a €10 million program aiming to support the development of civil society role in reform process, while according to EU officials, this sum is much higher in 2016.³¹¹

Transnational Civil Society Linkage to the East (2014 – present)

Transnational Civil Society linkages to the East have seen a significant decline in the period after Euromaidan.

As for the religious organization linkages, the role of the Russian Orthodox Church discussed in the previous chapters has become especially visible during the Ukrainian Crisis,

³⁰⁹ BBC News, Ukraine Bans Russian Films in Media War, 2016, Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36099885>

³¹⁰ Tsetsura, Katerina, Ukrainian NGOs as Opinion Makers: How Media Organizations Communicate about Progress in New Democracy with Western Donors, University of Oklahoma, Tripodos No:37, 2015, p.93

³¹¹ Freedom House, Nations in Transit: Ukraine 2016, Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2016/ukraine>

for instance, by mobilizing people during annexation of Crimea.³¹² According to Ghosh, civil society organizations, political parties and religious institutions are crucial in increasing social cohesion, and this is how pro-Russian organizations of various types operated during Ukrainian Crisis:

“the prevailing Orthodox Christianity has deep schisms, including the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchy (UOC-MP), Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchy (UOC-KP) and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), jeopardizing the integrity of Ukraine, leading to regionalization and separatist tendencies.”³¹³

As for the party linkages, in December 2015, Ukrainian government has banned the pro-Russian Communist Parties in Ukraine “accusing the party of promoting separatism and inter-ethnic conflict.”³¹⁴ Sharp break with authoritarian past also included de-communization prohibiting all communist symbolic.³¹⁵

As for the Russian-supported NGOs, Ukrainian authorities have imposed sanctions on certain organizations, stating that they represent significant threat to national security.³¹⁶ In the fall of 2015 the National Security Council of Ukraine imposed sanctions on more than 12 different “Russian associations, Cossack groups and religious charities, and banned their activity in Ukraine.”³¹⁷ Some of the Russian ideological books were also banned in 2015.³¹⁸

³¹² Ghosh, Mridula, *In Search of Sustainability Civil Society in Ukraine*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2014, p.4

³¹³ *Ibid*, p.8

³¹⁴ The Guardian, *Ukraine bans Communist Party for 'Promoting Separatism'*, 2015, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/17/ukraine-bans-communist-party-separatism>

³¹⁵ Osborne, Samuel, *Communist Party Banned in Ukraine by Kiev Court*, Independent, 2015, Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/communist-party-banned-in-ukraine-by-kiev-court-a6777586.html>

³¹⁶ Lutsevych, Orysia, *Agents of the Russian World: Proxy Groups in the Contested Neighbourhood*, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2016, p.27

³¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.41

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.19

Results for the 2014 – present: Implications for Regime Change

The Ukrainian Crisis which started in the end of 2013 with the Euromaidan protests against authoritarian government and for European integration, and was followed by the annexation of Crimean peninsula by Russian Federation and a hybrid war in Eastern Ukraine, has significantly impacted the linkage relationships to both East and West: as indicated in the Table 1.1, while linkages to the East first have fallen to its lowest levels yet, linkages to the West increased dramatically.

Economic and geopolitical linkages were both stronger to the West. The most essential finding here is similar to those made during studying of the previous period: the most decisive one is the geopolitical linkage, which, in turn, has influenced all the others. Particularly, without a geopolitical turn to the West, Ukraine would have had much stronger trade relations with the Russian Federation (if it had chosen the Eurasian Customs Union), or for example without Association Agreement (geopolitical linkage) and some other regulations, tourism would not be facilitating social linkages with the West. In sum, all linkages could be perceived stronger to the West than Russia for the given period of study. As it is also seen from the presented data, Russian leverage has also increased dramatically.

However, there are certain difficulties arising from these findings. While the pro-Western president Yushchenko had managed to bring the country to democracy in about 2 years, the current president Poroshenko does not seem to be that successful. On one hand, the new government has made the number of most progressive reforms in country's history in the short period of time, while on the other hand, Ukraine is not titled with democratic regime status yet, which makes it difficult to draw precise conclusions. The problem is that under peaceful conditions having a fully-functioning state,

“the changes introduced in the last dozen months would have to be regarded as significant progress. However, the Ukrainian government is acting in an *emergency situation*; with an unfinished conflict with Russia, which is very interested in a fiasco of the New Ukraine project, and with aroused and often unrealistic expectations of the Ukrainian society, which after the revolution hoped for reforms with quickly noticeable results.”³¹⁹

According to Delcour and Wolczuk, Russia makes strong efforts in order to “jeopardize the linked processes of democratization and integration with the Western organizations.”³²⁰

Much will also depend on the development of the relationships between the East and West as such. On November 8, 2016, new president of the United States was elected, who promised to normalize relationships with Russian Federation,³²¹ and Ukrainian progress will be influenced by these developments. It will also be decisive for the regime in Ukraine, since as past experience shows, without strong support of the US and EU, democratization will be hard to achieve.

³¹⁹ Konończuk, Wojciech, *Ukraine’s Reforms: Promises Still Unfulfilled*, Aspen Institute Prague, 2016, <http://www.aspeninstitute.cz/en/article/1-2016-ukraine-s-reforms-promises-still-unfulfilled/>

³²⁰ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, *Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers*, 2015, p.470

³²¹ Tucker, Joshua, *Here’s How Trump’s Election Will Affect U.S.-Russian Relations*, Washington Post, Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/10/heres-how-trumps-election-will-affect-u-s-russian-relations/>

Chapter 8: Key Findings and Conclusions

In order to explain the consequences of the regime change of a country which is exposed to external impacts of both democratic and authoritarian external powers, the case of Ukraine was analyzed by looking at four different time periods through the lens of the Linkage and Leverage theory developed by Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way. The given section will first look at the results of hypothesis testing, and then mark several important findings resulting from the presented study.

Testing of the first hypothesis of the given study that *the more intense linkage and leverage an external power has over a country, the more influence it is able to impose on regime change, which, in turn, serves as a tool of promoting its interests in that state* – was confirmed, and was relatively easy to observe throughout the research. In the periods when linkages to the West were stronger (for instance in 2004 – 2010) significant democratic achievements have been made, while each turn eastwards has always resulted in strengthening of autocratic rule (period after 1999, 2010 – 2013).

However, there is an essential finding related to the given point. Throughout the periods, the most visible linkages which are proved to have an indisputable influence on regime change in Ukraine were geopolitical and economic ones. Thus, the first period of 1991 – 2003 has resulted in geopolitical consolidation of the relationships between Ukraine and its illiberal regional neighbor Russian Federation, which was related to growing autocracy within the country. The second period of 2004 – 2010 has seen an obvious geopolitical and economic shift towards Western countries and organizations, which resulted in wide reforms assisted by the West, and led to democratization of Ukraine. The third period of 2010 – 2013 has, on the contrary, seen geopolitical turn eastwards, which is related to democratic decline in Ukraine and widening authoritarianism. Last period which started in 2014 and is

continuing nowadays is characterized by sharp geopolitical and economic turn westwards, which opened up various opportunities for Ukrainian government to build a strong democratic state, however, due to the ongoing destabilizing military conflict, it is hard to assess the real prospects for democratization.

In other words, geopolitical and economic linkage (preferably combined) makes the strongest linkage to external power and leads to regime change in favor of external powers preferences. It is interesting to underline, that in the context of the contestation between liberal and illiberal external powers, exactly economic and geostrategic interests are the major points of confrontation.

Thus, it is possible to assume, that geopolitical linkage is able to have an impact on other linkages. For example, visa liberalization processes between EU and Ukraine which do facilitate social linkages between the actors, in fact is the result of geopolitical relationships between them. Currently, when Ukraine has deteriorated relations with Russian Federation, authorities often propose to validate a visa-regime between Ukraine and its Eastern neighbor which would consequently reduce social linkages.

Also, it is important to indicate, that as shown in the Table 1.1, any of the periods has shown the result in which all the five linkages to one side would be strong, while all five weak to another side. However, as it comes from the general outcomes, if all five linkages to one external actor are strong while weak to another, it would surely result in regime change in favor of that particular external actor to which all the linkages are strong.

It should also be mentioned that there were certain difficulties with the measurement of the levels of linkage degrees, as while, for instance, it is relatively easy to compare trade volumes between Ukraine and Russia to Ukraine and Western states, or define geopolitical

orientation of the country, it was much harder to evaluate, for example, transnational civil society linkage degrees.

The second tested hypothesis was the following: if the state is being *influenced by two (or more) external powers with contradictory interests, or if it is difficult to define to which side the state has more linkage/leverage, it results in hybrid regime* (in our particular case – competitive authoritarianism). The given study has shown that in the first period, Ukraine was trying to pursue both pro-Western and pro-Eastern direction of foreign policy, which as a result ended up with close relationships with the Russian Federation, however, particularly to the fact that the country was switching between two directions during the whole period – it did not result in neither democracy or fully-scaled autocracy – it, in fact, was a competitive authoritarian regime, moving, however, towards authoritarian direction.

The period between 2010 – 2013 is also commonly perceived as the time when Yanukovich has managed to consolidate his autocracy with Russian assistance. However, as the given study has shown, it was not the case, while in reality pro-Russian president was trying to play a double card by benefitting both from Russia and EU relationships, and the type of the regime which emerged under Yanukovich was both far from democracy or fully scale autocracy as, for instance, the regime in Russia. Geopolitically, he was pro-Eastern oriented, however, economically, his administration was supporting strong commercial relations with both sides (while strong economic ties with EU contradict Russian interest). Unlike in the previous periods, all the five linkages were high to the West and East except of geopolitical one. What is important in the given point is the fact that when Yanukovich was aiming to sign the Association Agreement with EU, which would legalize geopolitical and also economic relationships with EU, and consequently, strengthen two main linkages necessary for democratic change – Russia started its pressure on all fronts including trade

wars, and later, when the government of Ukraine changed and signed all these agreements – Russia even used military force to destabilize Ukraine’s aspirations to turn westwards. Yanukovych’s regime was trying to balance between East and West, and was far from democratic or full-scale authoritarian rule.

The presented study has also shown the reactions of Russia to Ukraine’s turn westwards, which generally were very aggressive. In the earlier periods this reaction was trade wars, cuts of gas supply, and raising gas prices. After 2013, reaction of Russia is manifested in the same factors, however, also includes annexation of Crimean peninsula – a territory of utmost geostrategic importance, hybrid war in Eastern Ukraine, and even diplomatic contestation with the West. The difference between the period of 2004 – 2010 and 2014 – nowadays, is the fact that unlike under Yuschenko’s rule, Ukraine has chosen its economic and geostrategic orientation by signing Association Agreement with the EU despite Russian opposition.

Also, despite the fact that social, communication and transnational civil society linkages might play a secondary role, in combination they were much lower in the earlier periods than after 2013, when traveling with the Western states became easier, internet connection is much more common, and the number of Western-related NGOs is significant enough to shape public preferences. As it was mentioned before in the presented research, when thousands of Ukrainians joined the pro-European protests at the end of 2013, they in fact had little understanding of the possible benefits or pitfalls of the Association Agreement with EU, however, they were showing their support of the European values and ideas, including the rule of law, human rights and democratization.³²² Such a strong show of public preferences, in turn, was possible exactly due to the growth in social, communication, and transnational

³²² Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.466

civil society linkages. Since the beginning of Ukraine's independent history, "through systematic funding efforts and multiple programs, Western donors helped to inspire, encourage, and instill values, qualities, and attributes of the independent media," and NGOs.³²³

One of the findings of the presented study is that while Western influence is mostly manifested in the tools of soft power, Eastern approach of spreading Russian impact has always been strict and punitive, which made certain aspects of the comparison of the present research much complicated (as, for instance, with gas issue which Russia is able to use as both linkage and leverage). This finding allows us to understand the reason why Euromaidan protesters ended up choosing Western path of development – because West has mostly worked through soft power means.

The intensity of economic and geopolitical linkages, in turn, might have an impact on the density of social, communication, and transnational civil society linkages. It is also interesting that while after the break of the USSR, there were no Western linkages at all, while all five linkages have been especially strong to the Russian Federation. However, over time, while economic and geopolitical linkages were constantly shifting, other three linkages were developing in parallel, and have shown their strong role during Euromaidan revolution. Thus, the link between external actors' actions and public preferences within the targeted states cannot be underestimated.

The last essential point to be made is that the theory did not account for the conflicts which may arise from the promotion of democratization. While Russian approach towards Ukraine has always been considered tough, Delcour and Wolczuk argue that in reality this might be the factor pushing target states towards democratization, and thus, illiberal regional

³²³ Tsetsura, Katerina, *Ukrainian NGOs as Opinion Makers: How Media Organizations Communicate about Progress in New Democracy with Western Donors*, University of Oklahoma, Tripodos No:37, 2015, p.91

actor might become actually a facilitator of democratization rather than spoiler.³²⁴ The most essential issue is that Russian attempts to undermine Ukrainian statehood “actually weaken linkages and reduce the regional power’s leverage over domestic elites and societies.”³²⁵ In fact, authors argue, Russia’s punitive reactions contribute to the strengthening of elites and population of Ukraine and facilitated the will for democratic rule and pro-Western integration.³²⁶ By pushing the targeted state to the West, however, it also has made the process of democratization more difficult.³²⁷

³²⁴ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.470

³²⁵ Ibid, p.470

³²⁶ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.470

³²⁷ Delcour, Laure, Wolczuk, Kataryna, Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia’s Role in Georgia and Ukraine, Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers, 2015, p.472

Table 1.1: The Density of Linkages to the West and East and the Regime Outcomes

year		Economic Linkage	Geopolitical Linkage	Social Linkage	Communication Linkage	Transnational Civil Society Linkage	Regime Outcome
1991 – 2003	West	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Hybrid (pro-authoritarian)
	East	High	High	High	High	High	
2004 – 2010	West	High	High	Medium	High	High	Democracy
	East	Medium	Low	High	High	High	
2010 – 2013	West	High	Medium	High	High	High	Hybrid (pro-authoritarian)
	East	High	High	High	High	High	
2014 – present	West	High	High	High	High	High	Hybrid (pro-democratic)
	East	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	

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