

Social and Humanitarian Reintegration of Donbass: Mission (Im)possible?

Geraskov, Sergii[†]

1. Introduction

Currently, restoring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, and de-occupation of the temporarily occupied territories is a key strategic mission for Ukraine. Therefore, the priority direction of countering separatist practices in Donbass is reintegration of the occupied territories into the Ukrainian society. Obviously, it should come to the post war times. The main task on the agenda is “a battle for hearts and minds”, i.e. radical breakthrough in the consciousness of people of those territories, overcoming predominantly negative attitude towards the Ukrainian state, disclosure of ideas, values, stereotypes, and ideals of “the Russian world”, breaking the mentality of “the Soviet man”, etc.

After Ukraine had proclaimed its independence, there was lack of any purpose-oriented Ukrainian ethnic policy, and they preserved the whole regional enclaves (Donbass and Crimea) with citizens who kept distance from the Ukrainian identity and had their own mental components: Russian language and culture, symbols,

[†] Ph.D., Associate Professor, Head of Center for Social and Humanitarian Research, National Academy for Public Administration under the President of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine

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myths, heroes and anti-heroes, value orientations, customs, traditions, etc. (Metafizyka 2012).

While analyzing the problem of social and humanitarian reintegration of the occupied territories, we should proceed from the fact that four years of occupation had greatly impressed people's minds; the so-called "DPR", "LPR" and the Russian Crimea have already become a reality for many local residents. People in these areas already live in their own information space with its main message that Ukrainians are the enemies. According to Hrytsak (as cited in Socportal, 2016), most residents of Donbass are tired of war and do not trust local authorities, as they know that Russia had left them. At the same time, the return to Ukraine is regarded as the worst possible option.

The formation of regional socio-cultural enclaves, alternative to the Ukrainian national identity, was promoted by the ambiguous and often populist ethno-national policy of the state, especially regarding to the language issue, flirting of some Ukrainian politics with the pro-Russian electorate of the East of Ukraine in the process of numerous elections, lack of the united national humanitarian space, and so forth.

Here we keep distant from the point of view that reintegrating the occupied territories to the Ukrainian humanitarian and cultural space would be possible only by force. We need the discussions of targeted information and cultural policy that would stimulate active process of social, political, mental integration of the population of these territories back into the Ukrainian society.

This paper touches upon some aspects of a sensitive and complex issue of possible social and humanitarian reintegration of Donbass. The research methodology is mainly summarized to the appropriate methods and techniques used for collecting and processing empirical data and information, respectively to observing, sorting, correlating, categorizing, comparing and analyzing data so that it may be founded

the addressed theoretical elements. It means, methods of observation, document analysis, content analysis, had been used to obtain the results. At first, the problem background related to some uncertainties of Donbass identity need particular explanations. Then, we will observe some challenges and prospects for social and humanitarian reintegration of Donbass; a “Small Steps Mechanism” proposed by Arsen Avakov would also be considered. A brief result of analysis of the issue of Donbass reintegration in pre-election programs of the Ukrainian parties in 2019 will be done.

2. Donbass Identity: Myths and Contradictions

Nowadays, in the light of risks and challenges to the territorial unity, sovereignty and national security of Ukraine caused by transformations on regional and all-Ukrainian levels, the regional identity issues strike back at full strength. Another possible problem that, under certain circumstances, may be fueled by regional identity is the clash of identities. Regionalization of the political space puts territorial identity as one of the points of reference in contemplating contemporary political development and the agenda for social and cultural modernization. Clash of identities may happen at different levels, for example, as a confrontation between local and global, self-identification and globalization. In the Ukrainian realities, disintegrating processes are mainly associated with the political differentiation of regions by the two key factors: 1) linguistic and cultural markers; and 2) geopolitical orientations. Typically, by 2014, it was manifested in electoral preferences of the Ukrainians in the presidential and parliamentary elections. The data of sociological surveys (Presidential Elections 1999; Susak 2007; Bevz 2015) testify to the clearly defined regional character of the Ukrainian electorate. In this regard, the Donbass region was of particular interest, especially when it turned into the epicenter of the conflict as known as “the hybrid war”, “the Russian intervention”, “the

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Russian aggression”.

Interest in the study of Donbass is frequently shown by researchers. In particular, Kuromiya (2003) touches upon the problem of searching Donbass identity and regional identity. Zimmer (2006) focuses on values, analyzes interviews with politicians and businessmen in Donbass. Wilson (1995) examines some myths and mythologems of Donbass, raising the question of using historical facts and ideas of the past in the current political struggle. The work by Siegelbaum and Walkowitz (1995) is a story told by “the voice of ordinary miners”. They refer to “The Ukrainian Donbass” by Studenna-Skruckva (2014) as an ABC book of “talk about identity”. When it comes to the studies by Ukrainian scholars, a monograph (Donbas 2014) by research team from I. F. Kuras Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies of the NAS of Ukraine is worthy of special attention. They investigate history and dynamics of ethnopolitical processes in the territory of Donbass, analyze regional identity and peculiarities of behavior of the population of Donbass region.

In view of the specifics of the region, we will try to look through the identity contradictions have been affecting the formation of civic identity of the population of Donbass. When identifying Donbass, they assert: “Donbass is Donetsk coal basin, where coal is mined, and enterprises of the coal industry and coal processing are located” (Dziuba); “Donbass is a real Ukrainian region, but in the 20th century it was widely populated by Russians” (Hasydzhak); “Donbass has a European industrial tradition, a Ukrainian cultural and humanitarian tradition” (Deiak); “Donbass is a special territory not only within Ukraine, but throughout the former USSR” (Hrabovskiyi); “Donbass is a kind of piece of the Soviet Union” (Bondarev); “Throughout its history, the Donbass has been the embodiment of freedom, and that was the reason determined the extremely brutal and cruel political history of Donbass...” (Kuromiya); “Donbass is an anti-Ukrainian space and belongs to another type of civilization” (Drozdov); “Donbass is, of course, not the “Ukrainian

Gaza Strip”, but rather “Ukrainian Chechnya” (Vyshniakov), and so forth.

In addition, we should keep in mind another important detail, namely that the boundary between Ukraine and Russia cuts through the Donbass. Boundaries are places different ideas, cultures and views come together, intertwine and enrich each other. Boundary entanglements play crucial role in the articulation of identities as well. In this regard, we should address, first, to certain historical factors of the formation of Donbass region: 1) Donbass is a borderland (a large and mobile border, where the influence of state power and religions on both sides was felt very weakly (Hrytsak 2007), source of instability and field of struggle of ideas; 2) the idea of “a Wild Field”⁽¹⁾, targeted “zeroing” of the rights of indigenous population to those lands; 3) the development of the territory was partly through coercion, artificiality, temporality (Karmazina 2014); 4) the Novorossiia myth formed by Catherine II – the assimilation of a territory alien to the Russian Empire; 5) decrease in the proportion of the Ukrainians who have preserved their native language for centuries; 6) active migration processes in Donbass throughout history; 7) industrial modernization: incarnation of the idea of “the Wild Field” with the start of industrialization, attracting of English, German and Belgian capital (development of coal and metallurgical industries); 8) the city’s founding date and, in fact, its name Yuzovka are attached to the arrival of engineer John Hughes in the region (contrary to academic papers), another “zeroing” of the history of the region, the relative young age of the region (industrialization has little to do with urbanization); 9) the evolution of name of the capital city of the region contained an ideological basis and was always detached from the Ukrainian roots (Ibid); 10) intoxication with a myth of the Donbass Land: “Donbass has never been Ukrainian,

(1) Wild Field (ukr. Dyke Pole) – historical and cultural name of the undemarcated and low-density Black and Azov Sea steppes between the Dniester river in the west and the Don river in the east.

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but it has always fed Ukraine”.

On the other hand, it is also important to outline the following characteristic features of the Donbass region at times after Ukraine had gained its independence:

- Donbass is a Soviet-communist, pro-Russian, anti-Western and paternalistic region (“a strategic buffer” that separates the rest of Ukraine from the regions of political instability and ethnic conflicts in Russia);

- Donbass is not a monolithic region, neither in political, nor in cultural, nor in historical, nor, in fact, in economic aspects;

- lack of true *Ukrainization* of the region after 1991, and especially after 2004 (that is, involving the population in a common identity within a single political nation), not to mention de-Sovietization, left intact the majority of phobias on both sides;

- the phrase “we are from the Donbass” has always meant more to the locals than “we are Ukrainians” or even “we are Russians”;

- Donbass areas are Soviet-style unanimous when vote during election campaigns;

- confidence in the viability and adequacy of “Donetsk traditional values” to the new economic and political conditions (propaganda of “miner’s and worker’s glory” as a value basis of Donbass);

- the locals did not appreciate their own city (until the mid-2000s they had answered: “nothing interesting” in the question “What to see in Donetsk?”); lack of humanitarian intellectuals, “tech guys” had little interest in culture; depressive cities and towns outside Donetsk were dying, people were moving out of their houses (home loss had been relevant for the Donbass residents even before people began to run away from war);

- strengthening of regional identity in the 1990s was due to a compensatory function – regional identification filled lack of the state identification;

— Donbass — Ukraine relations are considered by the paradigm “us — them”, “friend-or-foe”. The Ukrainians (not ethnic Ukrainians, but natives and residents of other regions of Ukraine) are perceived by many Donetsk people as foreigners, representatives of somewhat other civilization than the local one.

Thus, there is reason to claim that Donbass region has been formed as multi-ethnic one, with domination of spatial and territorial (rather than religious or ethnic) and social and status (first of all, socio-economic) identification of the population. Regional affiliation is determined not primarily geographically, but as a homogeneous space, with a certain specific of industrial and socio-economic relations.

The myth that the region is considered *primus inter pares* is not evidence-based. We agree with Zimmer (2007) that constantly emphasized uniqueness, capacity and privileged position of the region in Soviet times are used as a proof that Donbass keeps the same positions today and will keep it in the future. Throughout the years of Ukraine’s independence, there has been a trend towards Kyiv’s inability to reintegrate Donbass. At the same time, representatives of Donbass elites advocated for strengthening the status of the region within Ukraine and made attempts to “integrate” the whole of Ukraine with it. This had been repeatedly observed, starting with Zviahilskyi who acted as Prime Minister of Ukraine (September 1993 — July 1994). Initially, Donbass nomenclature, elite, or, more likely, the ruling class sought to not autonomy, but all-Ukrainian power, which was, in fact, confirmed during Yanukovich presidency. On the other hand, the idea of obtaining the central power within the framework of the so-called “Donetsk identity” envisaged transformation of Ukraine into a part of Donbass and was considered by many Donbass people as quite a desirable state of affairs.

The marker of belonging to a regional community contributes to the success of regional leaders. However, in Donetsk region, regional leaders, primarily, the most

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influential oligarchs, made almost all staff appointments in the region, held party offices, controlled the activities of local governments, financed election campaigns, and had a strong impact on the situation in the country. Former Donetsk governor and famous businessman Taruta, identifying himself as a Russian-speaking citizen of Ukraine and a resident of Donbass, called everyone “to consolidate efforts to preserve the integrity of the country” (Dzerkalo tyzhnia 2014). Entrepreneur Akhmetov called on all citizens “to unite for the sake of a coherent and indivisible Ukraine” (Sehodnia 2014). In fact, both oligarchs had and still have a huge impact on the society, first, through the media.

The conceptualization of identity contradictions made it possible to understand the essence of the problem of conflicts on the basis of polarized identities. Identity problems in Donbass have always been, they were passed down throughout the region from generation to generation. The depressive nature of the region and pendency of many crucial problems have been remaining a dominant feature for decades. The following challenges should be outlined: regional peculiarities, regional polarization, cultural metamorphoses, pro-Russian propaganda, “the Russian world”, territorial divisions, contradictions not only in the different vision of everyday life, but also in the vision of the past, present and future, regional bipolarity in value priorities. To reload Donbass mentally, one must first reload it economically. The contradictions inherent in Donetsk regional identity had resulted in an unexpectedly destructive way.

3. Reintegration of Donbass: Social and Humanitarian Dimensions

The decisive priority of social and humanitarian reintegration of Donbass seems to run through its linguistic, cultural and value *Ukrainization*, given that, unlike, for example, from Georgia, the separatist movement here has not ethnic, but rather political grounds. It is significant that 80% of the population of Donetsk and

Luhansk regions in the referendum of 1991 voted for Ukraine's independence. In 2014, only 30% decided to join Russia (Herbst 2016).

The certain optimal proportions in scope and time, as well as the limits for which *Ukrainization* does not have to go, in order not to become total and compulsory, are extremely important. In particular, there should be certain guarantees of cultural self-determination for the Russian-speaking population. The lack of such guarantees and clear mechanisms of *Ukrainization* would not help overcome the fear of loss of identity by those citizens who often consider the smallest fact of real or imagined expansion of the use of the Ukrainian language as an encroachment on their identity, or even as a personal insult and humiliation. Although, according to the results of recent polls, only 7% of respondents said about violation of their right to communicate fluently in Russian, and only 1% considered a status of Russian language as a problem for Ukraine (Glavcom 2016).

The primary task of *Ukrainization* of the occupied territories is to limit the influence of Russian and separatist media here. In the occupied territories—both in Crimea and Donbass—the Ukrainian channels were immediately cut off. There was completely blocked access even to some Internet resources. Even now separatist or Russian content is dominated through the occupied areas. And in the liberated cities of Kramatorsk or Severodonetsk, the Russian and separatist channels can be practically unobstructed.

One of the main problems of humanitarian reintegration of the occupied territories of Donbass may be the lack of intellectuals as its subject. Unlike the Crimea, where the role of such a subject could be performed by the Crimean Tatars. Currently, the majority of Donbass intellectuals have left its territory. Some of them moved to Russia, but the most came to Ukraine. The world experience shows that if those people do not get a chance to come back in a year or two, during this period they are already working, find new contacts and friends, and have no

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desire to return to their former residences. As a result, Ukraine may face to a serious humanitarian problem, i.e., even after the liberation of Donbass region, they will receive a territory inhabited mainly by lumped-off citizens addicted to the value anomie.

Based on the public trust, the government should become an important actor of *Ukrainization* of the occupied territories. Any effort should be made to overcome the fear of local inhabitants of Ukraine and its security forces, which is deliberately spurred by the Russian and local media. One can assume that the biased attitude towards Ukraine and central government is formed among the population of Donbass, solely because of the inaccessibility of the Ukrainian television and the Ukrainian mass media. Therefore, the main thing is to establish a two-way communication with the inhabitants of those territories, focusing on their needs and interests. Although Donbass lives in its own mythological information space, concerning to the distributed media content, one should proceed from the fact that gaining people's trust can not only be based on using the trend of the current needs and interests of the population. At the same time, it is necessary to dispel myths about the punishment of all citizens of the occupied territories for their cooperation with separatists.

A specific contribution to solving the problems above-mentioned should be made by the profile ministry for the issues on de-occupation and reintegration of Donbass and Crimea. It should duly address to the economic, social and humanitarian restoration of those territories on the basis of joint cooperative measures with other ministries and local authorities.

After the liberation of the occupied territories, it is important to restore justice there: to punish the perpetrators of crimes, impose restrictions on separatists for official posts (or provide the lustration), and at the same time to amnest those who did not commit crimes against people and the Ukrainian state. Only simultaneous

punishment and forgiveness are the basis of consent, the complete return of not only territories, but also of people; as a consequence it is a guarantee of the conflict resolution (ZN, UA, 2016).

The establishing of the Ukrainian identity in Donbass will also decisively depend on holding of local elections under the Ukrainian law. The problem here is that in Ukraine, self-government has always been weak, and regional enclaves were headed by not state administrations or heads of local self-government, but largely by the financial and industrial groups. It is also necessary to take into account the power of the institute of fellowship that is common for Donbass region. For local residents, the professional and moral qualities of a candidate for a particular position should be supplemented by the algorithm of “he/she is good” and understandable features to the industrial community. It is also possible to solve the problem of elections by using the potential of volunteering. Volunteers need to be involved in local self-government as much as possible, because they are personally known here, they are trusted, but at the same time almost absent in the information space of the region.

In January 2018, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the Law “On the peculiarities of public policy on ensuring Ukraine’s state sovereignty over the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts”⁽²⁾ (On the peculiarities 2018).

Among its milestones there were as following:

- temporary occupation of parts of the territory of Ukraine became the result of the armed aggression;
- Ukraine intends to liberate these territories, restore the constitutional order to them and protect the rights of citizens;
- people and legal entities retain ownership of the property and land on uncon-

(2) “Oblast” is the Ukrainian name for “Region”.

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trolled territory purchased in accordance with the law of Ukraine;

— the leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the National Police relies on the Joint Operational Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Ukraine; previously the “Anti-Terrorist Operation” had been taken care of by the Security Service of Ukraine.

The analysis and main remarks regarding the Law above-mentioned let us note the following challenges and risks:

1. Selective general approach to the observance and fulfillment of obligations in the field of international humanitarian law.

2. Lack of minimum responsibilities for the protection of civilians under dangerous conditions in accordance with international obligations.

3. Lack of general rules for the protection of “the protected persons” in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.

4. Lack of a clear procedure for defining the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

5. Inappropriate inclusion of certain norms that do not relate to the conflict resolution.

6. Inadmissibility of the procedure for recognition of documents issued in the so-called “DPR”/“LPR” (Ukrainian Helsinki 2017).

It is also should be discussed the Strategy of restoration of the integrity of Ukraine and de-occupation of the Donbass, as known as “Small Steps Mechanism”, offered by the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Arsen Avakov. According to the Strategy, at preparatory phase Ukraine should create the legal framework for the settlement of the conflict. It means adoption of a package of legislative acts that will contribute to the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Among them there are two most important laws: the Amnesty Law and the Law on Collaborators (Strategy 2018). After that, the phase of de-occupation and reintegration starts with following activities:

— a separate area (district) of the occupied territories of Donbass is chosen and agreed upon, and the opposing military formations at this area are withdrawn behind the agreed line; thus, a demilitarized security zone is created;

— a special international peacekeeping mission and the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine take control of the specified area of the territory and its borders;

— within the liberated territory, the Ukrainian judicial authorities prepare the necessary elements of the electoral process for subsequent local elections by Ukrainian legislation;

— on the territory of the reintegrated area, the work of all state institutions and law enforcement bodies of Ukraine is being restored;

— the process of reintegration is beginning;

— the procedure of humanitarian demining of the previously occupied territory is being carried out;

— immediate work is being carried out to eliminate technogenic and environmental threats;

— an urgent program is launched to check and restore Ukrainian documents for all people who had lived during these years in the occupied territory;

— the process of restoring social and economic infrastructure is beginning: roads, bridges, institutions, enterprises.

According to various estimations, it will take at least ten years and \$ 20 to 30 billion to restore the region's social and economic stability (Ibid). The participation of citizens residing in the occupied territories in elections to the central authorities of Ukraine is resumed, but not earlier than in three-five years. The document says a lot about what should be done to de-occupy Donbass. But there is no answer to another fundamental question: why the other side of the conflict must agree to do it? Indeed, the amnesty, moving of troops, and holding of elections are already in

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the Minsk agreements. Withdrawal of troops and the ceasefire are the first points both in Avakov plan and in the Minsk agreements, but that is the point where all peace agreements both begin and end. It makes the document effective just theoretically, without any practical consequences.

Thus, the process of humanitarian reintegration of Donbass lies through not only demining the territories, but rather through “demining of consciousness” of its people. It should be confirmed with the document presenting the Strategy of Ukrainian humanitarian policy, consolidating the Ukrainian society under the circumstances of information and ideological aggression, and determining a unified approach of state authorities and their advisory institutions.

4. Donbass Factor in the Light of the Ukrainian Parliamentary Election Campaign

Most political parties considered the solution to “the Donbass problem” as a set of diplomatic and humanitarian initiatives (see Table 1). In fact, only “Samopomich” proposed to let it go, dissociating itself from the region (but they also admitted it was necessary to compete for the hearts and minds of Donbass inhabitants). Almost all parties recognized the Minsk Agreements as the foundation to build new negotiation positions on. However, there happened to be some discrepancies in the group of negotiators on Donbass. Batkivshchyna and the Radical Party of Oleh Liashko, for example, proposed to reanimate the Budapest format (in fact, in “Sluha Narodu” they said as same) with the involvement of the USA, UK and other guarantor countries as diplomats. The opposition forces offered to negotiate directly with representatives of unrecognized republics. Almost all of the parties agreed it would be necessary to introduce UN peacekeeping forces into the region (some emphasized the peacekeepers should not include countries loyal to the Russian Federation).

Table 1

The issue of Donbass reintegration in pre-election programs of parties

Name	Donbas reintegration issues
“Sluha Narodu”	We will provide legislative support for presidential initiatives aimed at restoring the territorial integrity and state sovereignty of Ukraine
Opposition Platform - “Za Zhyttia”	<p>Priority steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cessation of the economic blockade of Donbass; - granting Donbass autonomous status as an integral part of Ukraine by amending the Constitution and laws of Ukraine; - adoption of the law on amnesty, the law on elections, and the law on free economic zone in Donbass.
“Batkivshchyna”	<p>We consider the restoration of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty a top priority.</p> <p>The path to peace should begin with Russia’s unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience, captives and hostages.</p> <p>We insist on considering the issues of occupied Donbass and annexed Crimea in a single package.</p>
“Yevropeiska Solidarnist”	<p>We will work to ensure that the world attention is drawn to Crimea and Donbass, and that Russia will bear responsibility for its crimes.</p> <p>This will facilitate the release of all Ukrainian citizens held hostage by Russia in its own and in the occupied territories.</p> <p>Those who have forcibly left the occupied territories should be supported by the state.</p> <p>The introduction of UN peacekeepers throughout Donbass territory occupied by Russia will hasten the liberation and return of these territories under the sovereignty of Ukraine.</p>
“Holos”	<p>We will do everything necessary for the bloodless de-occupation of the occupied territories and safe reintegration of the people whom Russia has taken hostage, their return to a normal life. It is crucially important for us to stop the murders of Ukrainian citizens.</p> <p>Internally displaced persons are our people, our potential for the development of the country and the return of the occupied territories. Internally displaced persons, as well as citizens of Ukraine who are forced to reside in the occupied territories will receive due attention.</p>
Radical Party of Oleh Liashko	We are ready to do everything for peace. But not at the cost of surrender. Our goal is to win and return all occupied territories of Crimea and Donbass. And we can win the war only if we have a strong economy, a strong army.
“Syla i chest”	<p><i>In domestic policy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - providing the state support to the displaced persons from the annexed Crimea and the occupied territories of Donbass, concessional

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Name	Donbas reintegration issues
	<p>loans and regulation of property relations between financial institutions and those citizens;</p> <p><i>In foreign policy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing a new concept of relations with the Russian Federation aimed at cease-fire in the East of Ukraine, returning the occupied territories, activating effective mechanisms of international assistance to Ukraine in countering Russian aggression; - developing the international program of ecological restoration of the territories of Donbass, Crimea and the Azov Sea.
Opposition Block	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lifting of the food and economic blockade of Donbass and Crimea; - restoration of the passenger railway connection with Donetsk, Luhansk and Simferopol; - election of deputies of Donetsk and Luhansk regional councils simultaneously with local elections in Ukraine.
Hroisman's Ukrainian Strategy	-
Sharii's Party	Renewal of social benefits to residents of non-controlled territories of Ukraine. The state has no right to discriminate against its own citizens, especially those who are in a quandary against their will.
"Svoboda"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - save a unitary state. Prohibit the granting of any autonomy, "special status" or "special order of local self-government"; - establish a total economic blockade of the temporarily occupied territories of Crimea and Donbass; - hold any elections in the temporarily occupied territories only after complete de-occupation and re-certification of the population; - prosecute and deprive citizens of all who betrayed Ukraine, worked for the occupying administration, fought against Ukraine and committed other crimes.
"Hromadianska pozytsiia"	We will create a strong economy - this is the key to Ukrainian security. Undoubted economic advantage over the Russian aggressor will help to return Crimea and Donbass on our terms.
Party of Greens of Ukraine	The Greens are for the legislative consolidation of the obligation of state medical and environmental control of the environmental impact of enterprises located in the temporarily occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.
"Samopomich"	<p>We will introduce a unified policy in relation to occupied Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions - Crimea and Donbass are different for Russia, but for us they are occupied as same.</p> <p>We will develop a clear policy regarding the people who had stayed</p>

Name	Donbas reintegration issues
	in the occupied territories, including the Crimean Tatars. We will approve the state program to ensure decent living conditions for temporarily displaced persons.
Agrarian party	-
M. Saakashvili's Rukh Novykh Syl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legislative recognition of the separate areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions as the occupied territories and the prohibiting of any trade with them; - the Law on the restoration of Donbass infrastructure.
“Syla Liudei”	<p>It is possible to regain control of the occupied territories through thoughtful diplomatic, information, power and economic policies.</p> <p>Only economically successful Ukraine can return people who were trapped in information and physical captivity or became economic hostages of the Kremlin. We should return territories without any special status. Need not a federalization, but a country of communities and local self-government.</p>
“Syla Prava”	<p>The authorities have shown their indifference to the fate of the Ukrainian citizens living in the occupied and frontier territories, to problems of internally displaced persons. The state does not take any action to establish the damage caused by military aggression and occupation to the Ukrainian citizens, Ukrainian business and the Ukrainian state, and as a result, the process of forced compensation by the aggressor state is hampered.</p>
“Sotsialna Spravedlyvist”	<p>We stand for the strong state that has a professional army and takes steps to return the occupied territories in a pragmatic way. If we get people back - we'll get back territories as well! The national security, business security and personal security are the key priorities of the government and the criteria for its effectiveness.</p>
“Patriot”	-
“Nezalezhnist”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gradual demilitarization and gradual integration of non-controlled territories into Ukraine exclusively through diplomatic channels; - return of all Ukrainian prisoners of war and persons in captivity; - cessation of the activities of illegal military groups, the return to law enforcement agencies of an exclusive role in ensuring public order.
“Fakel”	<p>We aim to launch an outreach campaign by creating an information platform to convey truthful information to the Russian people that it is not ordinary people, but both Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs who are interested in today's war.</p>

Source: Central Election Commission Data (2019)

In their program, “Sluha Narodu” tried to circumvent the issue of reintegration

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of Donbass to the maximum, apparently fearing that the details framed in a special document would lead to a downgrade. As a result, they left imprecise some important issues: whether to act within the framework of the Minsk agreements, how to relate to the residents of uncontrolled territories and those who came to the territory controlled by Ukraine. The question of Donbass in the party's program was placed to the general block "Security and Defense" and marked with just one point. The President's public statements, as well as ideas of his team, were contradictory and reduced to: expansion of status of the Russian language for the region; special status for the region, as well as full and unconditional amnesty for the militants, are unacceptable; carrying out restoration activities at expense of investors in parallel to the cease-fire; lifting the blockade after the return of "captured and nationalized" enterprises, etc. They tried to correct the "blur" of ideological premises by gathering a round table with the party leaders. As a result, the following theses had been announced: promotion activities will be intensified, including uncontrolled territories (they will create an information platform based on the Netflix principle with news and entertainment content); payment of pensions and other social benefits for residents of uncontrolled territories should also be expected; and last but not least, they promised to radically change the attitude towards those people.

The program of the former president's party referred not only to goals, but also to achievements of the previous government in the issue of peacekeeping. They highlighted "a powerful international coalition that has applied a wide range of sanctions against the Russian aggressor. This unity must be maintained and the sanction pressure strengthened". The return of the territories was envisaged through political and diplomatic steps. Also, the former president Poroshenko mentioned some initiatives: to achieve criminal responsibility for non-recognition of the Ukrainian affiliation of Crimea and Donbass, to deprive of licenses a number of mass media promoting Russian propaganda, etc.

It is noteworthy that the program of “Batkivshchyna” does not say a word about the Minsk agreements; Tymoshenko was famous as its critic, she called them a “trap for Ukraine” and also opposed the law “On the special status of Donbass” adopted by the Verkhovna Rada in 2014. In addition to the Minsk process and the Normandy format, they proposed to start negotiations on the Budapest+ formula by involving the United States and the United Kingdom in the settlement process. Before the presidential elections, Tymoshenko had promised to develop a program for reintegration of the region (this point was omitted in the parliamentary program) – it came to restoring housing through the creation of a special fund, recognizing all IDPs as victims of the conflict, returning seized property, and compensations. She also opposed direct negotiations with the so-called “L-DPR”.

In “Holos” program, it was significant that they divided the questions of Donbass and Crimea into different blocks: “We will bring the return of Crimea closer” and “We will ensure the inevitability of our victory.” The return of territories was declared as an ultimate goal. There was no compromise: “We strongly oppose any plans that involve representatives of the Kremlin-led terrorist groups in government or local self-government bodies. Peace, bought at the cost of at least partial loss of sovereignty in favor of the Russian aggressor, will never be permanent, it can lead to an even greater war in Ukraine”. The proposals by “Holos” concerned:

- civilian population: we will do everything necessary for bloodless de-occupation of the invaded territories and safe reintegration of people whom Russia has made hostage;

- diplomatic efforts: intensification of international sanction pressure on the Russian Federation followed-up its isolation in the world, and military policy (enhancement of military capability);

- infrastructure: development of the controlled part of Donbass and part of

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Kherson region bordering with Crimea as a “showcase” for the non-controlled territories (actually, we can also trace the “showcase” vision built on Ukraine’s strong economy as a mechanism shifting the attitude of Donbass and Crimea people in programs of the Radical Party of Oleh Liashko, “Hromadianska pozytsiia” and “Syla Liudei”).

In view of the Opposition Platform – “Za Zhyttia” (as well as the Opposition Block) to have been considered the South-East to be its “basic” region, the issue of peace and elimination of contradictions in the society was passed by the red line in the program. First of all, they would “stop the policy of discrimination, xenophobia and radicalism by introducing a moratorium on the creation and development of problems splitting the country”; secondly, hold “a policy of reconciliation and consent that would unite Ukrainians”. The hostilities were proposed to be ceased diplomatically and politically; that activities were scheduled step by step starting from direct negotiation in “Kyiv – Donetsk – Luhansk – Moscow” format. At the same time, party leaders advocated preservation of negotiation process in the Normandy format, and agreed to build the logic of negotiations on the basis of the Minsk agreements.

Other popular parties’ vision of Donbass reintegration issue varied from populist calls by the Radical Party of Oleh Liashko to the complete absence of Donbass issue as such (Hroisman’s Ukrainian Strategy). Some parties (Party of Greens of Ukraine, “Syla i chest”) advocated for the legislative consolidation of the obligation of state medical and environmental control of the environmental impact of enterprises located in the temporarily occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions; developing the international program of ecological restoration of the territories of Donbass, Crimea and the Azov Sea. In whole, only a few political parties outlined further steps for the reintegration of Donbass: establishment of funds to finance restoration of infrastructure, damaged houses and personal property; creation of

living conditions in Donetsk and Luhansk, etc.

5. Conclusion

The experts (Dnews 2019) highlight the following topics that concern residents of Donbass not controlled by the Ukrainian authorities: ceasefire issue; language, religion, interpretation of history; relations between Ukraine and Russia; “imposing” values and ideas that are “unusual” for Donbass (nationalist ideology, European values); revision of history and heroes (World War II, the Soviet period, etc.). Among the issues irritating the pro-Russian population in the occupied territories, the following ones are highlighted: issues of modernization of the Ukrainian army (in the context of its use against residents of the uncontrolled territory of Donbass); success and development of Ukraine (in the context of Russian and local propaganda narratives, they say that Ukraine does not have long to exist).

It looks obvious that Ukraine’s social and humanitarian policy regarding the reintegration of Donbass should be developed according to those peculiarities of public opinion. Besides, Ukraine’s current information policy is inefficient for the reintegration of Donbass and needs to be changed. It is necessary to develop an effective model of communication with local residents as an important part of Donbass reintegration process.

The current law (On the peculiarities 2018) is not a law on reintegration, but rather a certain set of norms that do not answer most challenges on the agenda. It does not duly disclose social and humanitarian components of a complex process of Donbass reintegration. Therefore, its processing and further finalization should become one of the key priorities and primary tasks for the new authorities’ agenda.

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