

Regional Political Regimes in Ukraine after the Euromaidan

Oleksiy Krysenko

Abstract: *This article examines the prospects for the formation of regional political regimes in Ukraine after the Euromaidan. The author argues that the current policy of decentralization of political governance in Ukraine against the background of weak state institutions, the Russian occupation of the Crimean peninsula and a significant part of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, and ongoing military operations, entails serious political and institutional risks in the future as it will lead to the consolidation of neo-patrimonial regional political regimes. The process of decentralization of political governance currently underway in Ukraine with the simultaneous concentration of power in the hands of regional elites threatens to lead not only to a decrease in the manageability of institutional and political infrastructure by the central government in the future, but also to a further consolidation of regional neo-patrimonial regimes which often effectively function as a counterweight to real liberal-democratic reform in Ukraine.*

The article argues that, in the current Ukrainian conditions, decentralization is not an instrument for further political democratization. It rather serves as an instrument for political liberation of destructive political subjects (such as ultra-radical paramilitary organizations, and regional clans). In addition, in the current context, decentralization facilitates actualization of pre-modern forms of political participation, now released from a rigid centralized state system of management and posing a threat to the political stability and territorial integrity of the state. The author concludes that the institutional architecture of the Ukrainian political system, built on the principle of dominance of the informal over the formal sphere, is in urgent need of modernization.