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# Hungary's and Romania's exogenous influence on separatism processes in Ukraine

## Introduction

The contemporary world is characterized by the processes of globalization, but nowadays we can observe the situation when some countries that belong to regional organizations or some regions try to preserve their political, economic, institutional, religious and cultural independence. As for institutional independence, we can provide an example of Great Britain, partially the Netherlands and France, citizens of which did not support European constitution in 2005. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, we could see an increase of globalization processes on the one hand, and the rise of regionalism processes on the other hand, that stimulated the rise of separatism processes. It can be explained by the fact that the vast majority of the countries do not want to get lost on the political map of the world, the same is happening with regions that want to have more political power or are keen on preserving their cultural identity. So, we can say that somehow regionalism is a final stage before separatism. But it is necessary to be correct as to definitions, because in the majority of cases average people consider separatism as a desire of a region to gain independence, though it could be about only gaining more rights or autonomy. Secessionism in this case is a desire of a region to leave the country and create an independent state or become a part of a neighbouring country and that is about irredentism.

French sociologist, Bernard Posh , emphasizes that the notion region started to be frequently used in the 18th century as opposition to national state the role of which was rising so it was in the process of becoming an absolutely hegemonic. Later region became the subject, not only the object of central power fulfillment. German researcher, Rudolf Hrbeck, points out that region could be considered as a particular territorial unit that besides geographical peculiarities should have the following features: ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious similarities that define regional identity of the population of this

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region; common historical past; political peculiarities that arise sense of unity and differ this region from the rest of the regions (Калитчак, 2007:10).

It is necessary to emphasize that regionalism is a very complicated phenomenon that is why there are a lot of various definitions. In the author's opinion, regionalism is a process of striving of a particular region for preserving its cultural, linguistic, religious peculiarities, protecting economic rights and political position in terms of foreign policy of a country. There are a lot of regionalism cases due to the fact that after World War I and World War II the countries that had won started to model political map according to their interests. In the result, several countries were formed the population of which belong to different culture patterns, religions or even civilizations.

Ukraine is not an exception. During the whole period of independence, Ukraine has been divided into two parts: Western Ukraine and Eastern Ukraine. They differ greatly due to several factors. The first one is the attitude towards the World War II – the population of the Western regions praise soldiers of Ukrainian insurgency army, whereas the Eastern part consider the Soviet army to be real liberators; the second factor is language – Ukrainian language is spoken in the West, Russian is spoken in the East and in the South; religion – here we observe clash between Orthodox church of Ukraine and Ukrainian orthodox church that is subordinate to Moscow patriarchy; political preferences – the Western regions were always willing to join EU and NATO, whereas the Easterners always supported pro-Russian foreign policy. Nothing has changed now after revolution in 2014, so Ukraine is bipolar to some degree.

Here we can see two examples of major regions contradictions that provoke political and cultural regionalism. In each of these two regions, there are minor regions that can cause huge problems to the central government of Ukraine. Besides Russian federation, Ukraine has problems in relations with Hungary and Romania due to the fact that there are regions in Ukraine with Romanian and Hungarian population. Trying to protect these national minorities, Romania and especially Hungary support them financially and diplomatically and make Ukraine follow the national minorities rights policy. So in order to understand the current situation with above mentioned minorities and make a kind of forecast, the author of this article sets an aim to consider the problems Ukraine has in these regions in terms of potential separatism processes in Western Ukraine.

## Separatism in terms of exogenous influence

Nowadays, some states, especially European ones, face activization of separatism processes. During September and October 2017, the world community could observe separatism referendums in Iraqi Kurdistan, Spanish Catalonia and Italian Veneto. As for the first two regions, they voted for complete independence and Italian region wanted to gain special conditions of autonomy. It was also possible to observe people marching

in July and October 2017 in Polish Silesian Province for autonomy. This movement is not as strong as in the abovementioned regions, but nevertheless if there is such a precedent, in some period of time it could become a catalyst for some internal problems. So, we can see that after a number of separatism movements in 1980s and 90s that transferred into hostilities, today we again observe the rise of separatism processes in Europe.

In the majority of cases the start of separatism movement can develop under the condition of the discrimination of ethnic minority. In Ted Gurr's opinion, deliberate discrimination by dominant groups is much more important source of minorities' disadvantages and grievances than are the cultural differences that divide minorities from majorities (Gurr, 1993: 5). In Ukraine, there are several ethnic minorities, i.e. Hungarians, Romanians, Russians and Rusyns. The representatives of the latter two groups are under strong pressure nowadays. As for Rusyns, they are not even recognized as an ethnic group and considered to be Ukrainians; as for Russians they are suppressed now in all aspects of humanitarian life because of political conflict between Russia and Ukraine (there are no schools with Russian language of teaching, books are not published in Russian, Orthodox churches get damaged and even burned down). The Hungarian and Romanian minorities are not under pressure because Ukrainian political leaders are afraid of the fact that Hungary and Romania would block its Euro-Atlantic integration policy. And if the state cannot protect the interests of all ethnic groups, then each group will seek to control the state or secede so that they can control their own state, decreasing other groups' security and decreasing the state's ability to provide security for any group (Saideman, 1998: 128).

Katharine Boyle and Pierre Englebert in their book *The Primacy of Politics in Separatist Dynamics* think that the younger the country is the more active the separatism movements could be (Boyle, Englebert, 2006). It can be seen on the example of post-Soviet countries where we could observe a lot of separatism movements due to the weakness of the central government, its impossibility to provide efficient economic policy, its orientation on nationalism as tool of uniting the country.

Also, it is necessary to emphasize that the bigger the country is geographically the more separatism movements it can have (Boyle, Englebert, 2006). Besides the experts also single out such reasons as political regime, process of democratization and economic transformation and international atmosphere or the geopolitical situation in the region (Boyle, Englebert, 2006).

Samuel Huntington emphasizes that in the world after the Cold War culture and realizing that you belong to different identity determines the model of uniting, disintegration and conflict (Huntington, 1993: 56). And taking into account that Ukraine was formed artificially during Soviet period, now its government faces the problem of uniting people on the basis of the same values which have not been offered to people yet.

There is an opinion that separatism is a phenomenon that could develop from within. There are several internal factors that work as a catalyst for the strengthening of sep-

aratist processes in this or that region. But besides internal factors, it is necessary to single out external factors, too. An important role is played by the neighbouring states or great powers which are interested in weakening or even collapse of the country in order to improve their position in the region or to increase its territory if it has common borders with the state-object.

External processes have an important influence on the domestic development of the country. So, the reasons and character of conflicts are connected with the peculiarities of the geopolitical and geosocial system and its dynamics.

If separatist movement in Europe is developing due to the internal factors (Spain, Italy, Belgium), in the Third World or on the post-Soviet space states, we could observe the influence of the external factors. The brightest examples are observed in former Yugoslavia (Kosovo) and Ukraine (Donbass).

In author's opinion, the external factor can show itself in different ways – hard and soft. Hard has one expression – military intervention. Soft support is divided into soft active and soft passive. Soft passive support is manifested in the existence of a state close to the population of a related ethnic group of a neighbouring state and wishing to unite into a single state, as well as in the presence of a diaspora that can financially and politically support the separatist region. Soft active support can be manifested as follows: economic (funding the struggle, funding various types of NGOs), technical (arms supply), humanitarian (establishing ties with ethnically related people in the field of culture, science and education, funding educational programmes, scientific projects, internships) support in the international arena; condemnation of the central government in the world organizations (e.g. UN, OSCE); construction of objects of a single religion (Orthodox/Catholic churches, Muslim mosques); information (demonization of the central government). Such support can be provided during both the latent and active phases of the conflict (Рябінін, 2015: 265).

Ukraine has common borders with Belarus, Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, and Russia. And only Belarus and Moldova do not have territorial demands for Ukraine. The most active in this sphere are Hungary and Romania, so, as it was mentioned above, it is necessary to do a deep research as for Hungarian and Romanian exogenous influence on the Ukrainian regions that have high level of secession potential.

## Hungarian exogenous influence

If not to take into account the events in Donbass region, the situation in Transcarpathia looks definitely radical. This region is most affected by neighbouring states such as Hungary and Romania. There are 163,100 Hungarians, or 0.3% of the total population, in Ukraine, and 151,500 only in the Transcarpathian region, 103 schools function where Hungarian language is taught. In 2004, Hungarian-language gymnasium was opened in Uzhgorod (Евчак, 2007: 36).

There are also 87 libraries in the region with 408 thousand copies of books in Hungarian, 76 clubs, 395 amateur groups, and the Hungarian Drama Theater named after Dyly Iies in Beregove. The region has over 60 monuments and memorials to Hungarian political and cultural activists. Some deputies of regional and local councils are Hungarian by nationality, 13 periodicals are issued in Hungarian, 13 Hungarian public associations operate regionally, and the Democratic Union of Hungarians of Ukraine operates at the national level (Евчак, 2007: 37). In Beregove, at Pedagogical Institute, Uzhgorod National University and the Mukachevo Pedagogical Institute you can even get higher education in Hungarian. National Hungarian organizations are also actively working, and some of them also openly put forward political demands for the establishment of Hungarian autonomy (Семенов, 2013).

Ukrainian Hungarians today live compactly in four districts: Transcarpathian (67% of Transcarpathian Hungarians), Uzhgorod (35%), Vinogradave (25%) and Mukachevo (12%).

In addition to issuing passports, Hungary pursues a policy that is aimed at supporting the loyalty of its compatriots. For example, every year every Ukrainian Hungarian receives a minimum of 100 Euros and for this purpose Hungary allocates 11.8 million euros.

Other organizations and funds also work in Transcarpathia. For example, the charitable fund of Gabor Betlen. It allocates money for material aid, schools with Hungarian language of teaching, repairs churches and his activities are financed from the budget of Hungary. For example, in 2015, 66 million euros were allocated for this activity. Thus, Hungary leads a creeping soft occupation of Transcarpathia. Here we can observe cultural and educational influence of Hungary and this policy is supported in a legislative way. Besides, Hungary tries to unite Hungarian communities in Ukraine so they could feel more Hungarian that Ukrainian.

In 2010, Hungarian parliament adopted amendments to the law on citizenship, according to which Hungarians from all over the world have the right to apply for Hungarian citizenship under simplified conditions. Hungary issues its passports to citizens of Ukraine, despite the prohibition of dual citizenship, using gaps in Ukrainian legislation.

The official position of Budapest is restrained, but it feels like there is a desire to put a debate on the Transcarpathian membership on the agenda (*Венгрия выдает паспорта из-за пробелов в законах Украины*, 2012). So, here we can observe legislative instrument of exogenous influence.

The Friends of Hungary Fund operates under the auspices of the government and sets goals to strengthen the national identity of the diaspora. There are settlements in Transcarpathia, where almost 100% of people are ethnic Hungarians. There is only one language, and it is Hungarian. And Hungarian government considers it very important to strengthen the culture of the nation that way (Денисенко, 2013).

The Hungarian authorities are quite active in using the soft factor to influence Transcarpathia.

The Hungarian leader, Victor Orban, paid one-day informal visit to the city of Berehove in the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine in 2013. During the trip, Orban signed an agreement with the leadership of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute named after Ferenc Rakocsi in Beregove, providing the University with 1.7 million euros from the budget of Hungary.

The decision of the Hungarian authorities to finance this institution in Beregove is considered in Budapest a part of the system to support the activities of ethnic Hungarians in other countries in the field of education and culture. The government of Hungary intends to turn the Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute into a entity of higher education, open new departments there and expand the scope of research work. Budapest provides money for the development of university infrastructure and for maintaining ties with institutes and universities in Hungary itself (*Премьер Венгрии привез деньги венгерскому институту в Украине и пообещал поддержку аналогичным вузам*, 2013).

Hungary's policy as for the Transcarpathian region has intensified during the events in Ukraine in 2014. Budapest has declared the need for autonomy and dual citizenship for Hungarian people living in neighbouring countries, especially in Ukraine, claiming that Hungarians in Ukraine do not feel safe.

The crucial and the most difficult moment in relations between Hungary and Ukraine took place in September 2017 when the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament) adopted the reform of education, according to which since September 1, 2018, children will be able to study in an elementary school in the language of national minorities, but only to the fifth grade. This point provoked a flurry of criticism from neighbouring states, according to which the law violates the constitutional rights of national minorities. Hungary reacted most painfully to the reform. Hungarian Foreign Minister, Peter Siyarto, reported on Budapest's plans to block Ukraine in the international arena and, if possible, block important decisions and initiatives for Kiev and to revise Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU (*Заклятый сосед*, 2017).

Besides, the demonstration against Ukraine took place in Budapest in October 2017. The organizers of the action supported the "self-determination of Transcarpathia and for the freedom of the Rusyns, Polish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Armenian national communities living on the territory of the present Ukraine" (Тужанский, 2017).

But Hungary managed to get what they wanted from Ukraine. In June 2020, a meeting of ministers of foreign affairs of two countries took place concerning this issue, and Kiev had to agree to create a Hungarian region in Transcarpathian region where local people will be able to study and speak in Hungarian. Ukraine had to agree with Hungarian demands because the latter blocked summits NATO-Ukraine and it was impossible for Ukraine to fulfill its pro-Euro-Atlantic integration process. In terms of this case, we can see double standards of official Kyiv. When Hungarian minority will have

an opportunity to preserve their customs, traditions and opportunity to study in their mother tongue is denied the Russian minority the number of which is much bigger; their rights are violated (*Киев нашел способ разрешить конфликт с Венгрией*, 2020).

## Romanian national favouritism in relations with Ukraine

There is another region in Ukraine where potential separatism processes are taking place, namely in Northern Bukovyna, Chernovtsy region. Separatism processes in this region are in a latent state, but under specific conditions can transform into an active phase. The main problem is the exogenous influence of Romania, some political and social forces of which do not abandon their goal of building Romania mare – Greater Romania.

As for Northern Bukovyna, almost 80% of all Romanians in Ukraine live there compactly next to Ukrainians. Romania has always fueled separatism sentiment among a certain part of the politicized Romanian minority. Ukraine was pressured to condemn the Soviet-German treaty of 1939 on Northern Bukovyna and Southern Bessarabia, as a result of which these territories, once annexed by Romania, were annexed to Ukraine, which was then part of the Soviet Union (Круглашов, 2004: 177).

As former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Anatoliy Zlenko notes that at the political level Romania tried to develop partnership relations with Ukraine, but the authorities were pressured by radical politicians. On September 27, 1992, the presidential elections were to take place in Romania, and some candidates officially included in their programmes a point to put pressure on Ukraine to accelerate the return of "originally Romanian territory" (Заборин, 2014).

In 1993, the Romanian Foreign Ministry sent a note to Kyiv declaring the 1967 Treaty on the Soviet-Romanian State Border Regime illegal, and then, in 1994, Bucharest denounced the treaty altogether. Since then, *de facto* Romania has not recognized the post-war division of Europe, including Ukrainian territories. But in 1997, Romania and Ukraine signed treaty according to which Romania recognizes Ukrainian borders, but nevertheless, there are some political movement in the country that demand reconsidering the issue to Romania's benefit.

The situation in the region was further complicated by the fact that such radical demands from neighbouring Romania were not only made by individual NGOs, including the Association of Emigrants from Bukovyna and Bessarabia, but also supported by influential political parties and the hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Finally, they found outright political support at the level of the Romanian government and parliament. Under such conditions, some leaders and activists of the Romanian community of the region launched propagandistic activities aimed at substantiating the possibility and expediency of separating Chernovtsy region from Ukraine with further annexation of this territory to Romania or at least asserting the 'illegality' of its membership in Ukraine. Such activities posed a threat to Ukraine's national sovereignty and territo-

rial integrity, and caused growing tensions between the region's main ethnic communities, primarily Ukrainians and Romanians. Only with the signing of a basic political agreement between Ukraine and Romania in 1997, which the Romanian side signed only under the pressure of fulfilling the conditions of NATO membership, the threatening development of bilateral relations began to give way to more positive trends in relations between the countries. The threat of separatism has begun to lose its political relevance, which, however, does not mean its complete elimination as a potential threat to regional stability. After all, in modern Romania, some political groups consider the current borders of Romania as temporary (Кривицька, 2015: 16).

Officially Bucharest, despite repeated changes of presidents and political coalitions, did not ignore the issue. Such a policy pursues several goals. First, for a number of Romanian political parties, the topic of the Bukovyna-Bessarabian territories is an important component of the arsenal of means to fight for the votes of the electorate. Second, the persistent creation and propaganda of the image of historically 'offended' Romania to some extent allows the diplomacy of the neighbouring state to put pressure on public opinion and the political position of its European allies, using this pressure on relations with Ukraine and Moldova. Third, using the Romanian diaspora factor in the context of the policy of caring for the national and cultural life of compatriots abroad, the Romanian establishment is able to use this leverage to lobby its interests not only at regional level, but also to some extent at the national level in relations with neighbouring countries. In this context, in 2016, the Assembly of Romanians of Bukovyna appealed to Ukrainian president to demand territorial autonomy of Chernovtsy region. The Assembly motivated its demand by the abovementioned statement of the Ukrainian president, which referred to the territorial autonomy of the Crimean Tatars. That is why, following the events of 2014, various fora of Romanian communities were organized in the region, calling for rapprochement with Romania. At the same time, the Romanian Church joined the process of Romanization of Bessarabia (Pavlovets, 2016).

But the impact on Ukraine's Romanian community is still being felt. If we consider the areas that Romania uses to influence Bukovyna, we can identify the following: educational and cultural; political and diplomatic; informative; the impact of cross-border cooperation.

Let us analyze the above components of the exogenous influence of Romania. Romania's priority directly related to the Chernovtsy region remains the policy of comprehensive support for the national and cultural development of the Romanian community in order to preserve its national and cultural identity. An important task of Romanian policy is the further support of the Romanian national community, its institutions of self-organization, national and cultural societies. From time to time, Ukrainian MPs of Romanian nationality lobby the issue of autonomy, if not for the entire region, then at least for individual subregions. The main channels of support for the Romanian com-

munity and its ties with Romania will continue to be educational and cultural activities (Кривицька, 2015: 18).

In the field of cultural influence, the Romanian side has made and keeps on emphasizing the increase of institutions and forms of cultural representation of the Romanian community in the region. We are talking about the creation of the Romanian theater, the musical group of Romanian folk instruments, the opening of the Romanian regional library, the founding of the museum of the Romanian classic Mihai Eminescu (Кривицька, 2015: 19).

As we can see, Romania is very active in using the educational and cultural level of influence to make the Romanian community feel more related to Romania than to Ukraine. On the other hand, if we talk about European practice and the world as a whole, every ethnic minority has the right to preserve its language, culture, customs, rituals, history of its people and so on. But this should not be used to incite separatism conflicts. The main provisions of this issue are set out in the Framework Convention on the Rights of National Minorities in Strasbourg (1995) and in the UN Convention on Human Rights.

Within the political-diplomatic component, the issue of issuing passports to citizens of Ukraine should be noted. It is problematic to talk about the specific results of this process: no one will indicate the number of Romanian passports issued on Ukrainian territory. The Romanian side in 2010 acknowledged the distribution of no more than 4 thousand passports, whereas Security Service of Ukraine claimed that more than 50 thousand passports have been issued (Тимчук, 2014). Thus, conditions are created for the potential invasion of Romanian troops on 'their' territory (inhabited by an unknown number of Romanian citizens) and for the protection of Romanian citizens.

Article 10, introduced into the law on Romanian Citizenship 21/1991 by Urgent Government Order № 43/2003 (President of Romania, 1991), clearly regulates the procedure for re-acquiring Romanian citizenship. In fact, it is said that all residents of the Chernovtsy region (up to the Dniester river), whose parents or ancestors had a passport until June 28, 1940, have the right to become Romanians.

To some extent, the religious factor is used. The religious context of Romania's relationship with the Romanian Orthodox minority in Ukraine is interesting. The Romanian Orthodox Church uses tactics to establish its vicariates in Chernovtsy, Odessa and Transcarpathian region. According to their plans, the vicar bishop should be subordinated to the patriarchate of the Romanian Orthodox Church (Зленко, 2004: 20).

In the context of the policy of Greater Romania, in 2018, there was a scandal with the Romanian Cultural Centre Eudoxiu Gurmuzaki, in which Security Service of Ukraine officers searched and found maps showing the Chernovtsy region as part of Romania. The centre turned to the presidents of Ukraine and Romania for help, sending an open letter regarding the violation of the rights of national minorities.

Romania uses the informational factor of its influence. Many newspapers are published in the region, financed both by the Romanian side and from local budgets. 230

hours are allocated for radio programmes, 426 hours for television broadcast. On Ukrainian territory, you can receive a signal from such TV companies as International, TV Romania (TVR1), Ethno, promoting the creation of Greater Romania (*Етнічний чинник та добросусідство*, 2003).

Christian Negri's novels *Blood on the Dniester* and *When Weapons Speak* are very popular in Romania nowadays. These novels describe a possible military conflict between the Romanian army on the one hand and the Transnistrian and Ukrainian armies on the other. Such novels form the point of view of certain foreign policy issues of the local population.

There is a cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Romania within the Euroregions Verchniy Prut, Carpathians, Bug, and Lower Danube. But the level of this cross-border cooperation shows a significant mismatch between the interests and expectations of the countries. For the Ukrainian side, economic and environmental aspects of cross-border cooperation are of paramount importance. For the Romanian side, the creation of this Euroregion was due to the desire to obtain an additional influence on the situation in the border of Ukraine, inhabited by Romanians, citizens of Ukraine (Kypac, 2004: 20). The main result of the functioning of cross-border cooperation is the resolution of interethnic conflicts and stimulating cooperation of different ethnic groups of multinational border areas.

Ukrainian scientist, Olena Kryvytska, in her work *Demarcation Lines in the Ethno-Political Space of Ukraine* expresses her opinion on the negative consequences of cross-border cooperation. Analyzing cross-border cooperation between the regions of Ukraine and Romania, the author believes that cross-border cooperation can be assessed as a kind of mechanism of Romanian control over the observance of ethnocultural rights of the Romanian minority (Кривицька, 2015: 133).

Thus, it should be concluded that during almost 30 years of Ukraine's independence, Romania has invested in the development of Romanian irredentism. It should be noted that the use of soft power by Romania can be a factor influencing the formation of cultural and ethnic identity of Ukrainian Romanians, which can lead to catastrophic consequences for Ukraine, such as the situation with the Crimea. Therefore, the state leadership should, on the one hand, minimize cultural exogenous influence on Ukrainian citizens without violating their civil rights, and on the other hand, provide such conditions that representatives of ethnic minorities consider living in Ukraine to be comfortable and safe.

## Conclusions

So, we can see that having started with cultural and exogenous support, Hungary has created some political, social, and cultural organizations that has been influencing Transcarpathian region. Now the level of Hungarian support has reached such a high level that it can use political and diplomatic influence in the European Union and NATO. It

is understandable that Hungary is not a great power but it can use its rights and tools to block Ukraine's pro-European movement. So, we can come to the conclusion that Ukraine must conduct domestic policy that could be beneficial in all aspects and for all ethnic minorities. Besides, it should also use all possible tools to prevent neighbouring states from exercising their exogenous influence on the representatives of their ethnic groups. Otherwise it could lead to large scale destabilization and domestic confrontation between various ethnic communities of Ukraine.

As for Romania, it does not use such tools and approaches as Hungary does, e.g. diplomatic pressure, but it uses more powerful to some degree tool that is cultural influence and issuing passports that can be attractive for Ukrainian population.

Nowadays, Ukraine is in the state of permanent crisis, continuing war in Donbass region, trying to protect its territory from the countries that have some territorial demands. European community lost its interest in Ukraine because European countries are interested in gas cooperation with Russia on the one hand, and they are disappointed in corrupted political system of Ukraine on the other hand. COVID-19 became the third reason, forcing European governments to deal with this ongoing problem. The USA, being a supporter of Ukraine, is currently trying to cope with riots that left Ukraine alone face to face with its problems. Unstable political and miserable economic situation in Ukraine stimulate separatism processes that can be used by the countries that have territorial demands to Ukraine.

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**Abstract:** The author, on the basis of a preliminary analysis of the problem of the exogenous influence of the countries on the strengthening of separatism processes in Ukraine, expresses the view that separatism conflicts have not only internal causes for escalation, but also the external influence exerted by the main actors of international relations, solving their geopolitical task or countries bordering Ukraine. The author classifies the exogenous factors of influence, which are most often used by the main and influential actors of international relations to strengthen their positions in the region or in any state.

The aim of the article is to analyze such components of the Hungarian and Romanian exogenous influence on Ukraine as cultural, educational, political, and diplomatic ones. These two countries consistently and persistently try to protect the rights and interests of Hungarian and Romanian national minorities in Ukraine, but every year they do so contrary to the interests and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Relations between the countries have worsened due to statements by political and public figures in Hungary and Romania after the adoption of the Law on Education by Ukraine in September 2017. The author comes to the conclusion that the cultural component of exogenous influence increases the factor of identity and can serve as an element of soft power and catalyze the ethnic/separatism conflict in the country.

**Keywords:** Transcarpathia, separatism, exogenous factors, Ukraine, Hungary, Romania