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**SOME ASPECTS OF IDENTITY POLITICS OF KHARKIV  
LOCAL AUTHORITIES AFTER 2013**

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**ORCID** 0000-0002-9839-4292**e-mail:** denyskutsenko1989@gmail.com**Abstract**

The paper analyzes the transformation of identity politics of Kharkiv local authorities after the Euromaidan, or Revolution of Dignity, the annexation of Crimea, and the War in Donbass. Being the second largest city in Ukraine and becoming the frontline city in 2014, Kharkiv is an interesting case for research on how former pro-Russian local elites treat new policies of the central government in Kyiv, on whether earlier they tried to mobilize their electorate or to provoke political opponents with using soviet symbols, soviet memory, and copying Russian initiatives in the sphere of identity.

To answer the research question of this article, an analysis of Kharkiv city and oblast programs and strategies and of communal media were made. Decommunisation, as one of the most important identity projects of Ukrainian central authorities after 2014, was analyzed through publications in Kharkiv's city-owned media as well as reports from other scholars. Some conclusions are made from the analysis of these documents: Kharkiv development strategy until 2020, Complex program of cultural development in Kharkiv in 2011–2016 (and the same for 2017–2021), The regional program of military and patriotic training and participation of people in measures of defense work in 2015–2017, Program of supporting civil society in 2016–2020 in Kharkiv region and the city mayor's orders about the celebration of Victory Day (9 May), the Day of the National Flag (23 August), the Day of the City (23 August) and Independence Day (24 August) in 2010–2015.

**Keywords:** Kharkiv, identity, Ukraine**Introduction**

The war in Eastern Ukraine confirmed popular theories of two Ukraines and underlined identity-related approaches to define the origins of the conflict. Both Ukrainian and western scientists, publicists, and journalists wrote about Eastern Ukraine as a pro-Russian, Russian-speaking and soviet-nostalgic territory (Zhurzhenko, 2014, p. 249), where the revolt against central power was the only issue of the time. The identity of the individual in the post-soviet reality is influenced by many actors and it can be easily changed

throughout time depending on the circumstances this individual could face. As Ronald G. Suny (1999, 144) wrote, “national identities are formed in actual historical time and space, in evolving economies, politics, and cultures, as a continuous search for solidity in a constantly shifting world”. The Euromaidan, the annexation of Crimea, and the War in Donbass have “provoked fundamental shifts in collective identities, especially in the east, and are likely to have an impact on the political conceptualization of Ukraine’s national identity” (Zhurzhenko 2014, 251). In this article, I will try to show how Kharkiv local authorities, which rule now the frontline city and very close to the Russian border and Donbass, reacted to the change in Ukraine and the whole post-soviet space and what impact that can have on the future of the region. Kharkiv is an interesting example of how regional elites in Eastern and Southern Ukraine lost their identity markers in political struggle with Kyiv.

The tasks of the research are:

1. To analyze how the regional programs of Kharkiv city authorities, which had aims to impact the identity of city dwellers (national and local), changed in 2013–2017.
2. To analyze how decommunisation, which was held in Ukraine after decommunisation laws were issued by the Ukrainian Parliament in 2015, was provided by the local elites in Kharkiv.
3. To analyze aspects of memory politics of Kharkiv city authorities connected with local and national holidays in 2013–2017.

## Methodology

The first of three methods used for this research was document analysis. Some programs of the Kharkiv City Council as well as programs of the Oblast Council were analyzed. The biggest attention was paid to the documents concerning the humanist sphere, national memory, and the national and local holidays sphere. Instructions, programs, and regulations, connected with Kharkiv’s city budget, were considered for a better understanding of how the aims from these documents can impact residents of the city.

In the case of decommunisation, discourse analysis (second method) of city-owned mass media (the newspaper and the TV-program “Kharkovskie Izvestiya”) for additional research was provided by the author. In this article, results of that research are also presented because they show the local authorities’ treatment of central government’s projects. The research has shown how Kharkiv’s mass media, controlled by the regional elites, reflected national problems for their viewers and readers.

The third method, quantitative analysis, was made for “5 Kharkiv City mayor’s orders”. Results were compiled in a table, allowing for identification of trends in the character of the events planned by the city mayor to celebrate national or local holidays.

## Remarks on Kharkiv city authorities

Kharkiv is the second largest city in Ukraine and it is one of the most important cities in the eastern region of the country. It has a strong tradition and a myth of being the first Ukrainian capital because it played an important role in 1919–1934, when the Ukrainian Socialistic Soviet Republic existed. Being a border city lying only 30 km from the Russian-Ukrainian border, Kharkiv also has a strong connection with Russia. In 2014 some

attempts were made to proclaim “Kharkiv People Republic”, but “efficient countermeasures by the Ukrainian institutions of force quickly calmed the situation in the region” (Piechał 2015).

Kharkiv local authorities, especially city mayor Hennadiy Kernes, are often considered to be pro-Russian or pro-Soviet, mainly because they were strongly connected with the Party of Regions and former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich and because of their stand during the Euromaidan. On the regional leader’s meeting in Kharkiv on 22 February, 2014, as some journalists assumed (Butusov 2017), autonomy of South and East Ukraine could be proclaimed, but organizers of that meeting rejected that idea (Maloveryan 2014). Many people connected the position of Kernes with the future of the Kharkiv region, but he agreed that Kharkiv must be in Ukraine (KhCC 2014). Like some other representatives of Ukrainian elites, in 1990s Kernes was jailed for fraud, but that hasn’t prevented him from being the most popular mayor in Ukraine (IRI 2017, p. 127). Unlike the current mayor of Kharkiv, the president, prime minister, and parliament don’t have a high approval rates among Kharkivites (IRI 2017, p 161, 163).

The most important identity project in post-Euromaidan Ukraine was decommunisation, which had to be realised by the regional authorities after approval by Parliament and signing by the President (Marples 2016). The author of these decommunisation laws was the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory. Local authorities, according to these laws, had to rename streets and remove communist monuments from city streets and squares. It’s interesting to investigate how municipal administration in such cities as Kharkiv had to realise the project they disputed and how local identity policies met with central government’s identity politics. Local authorities also have a huge impact on identity policies because they often have their own media and control city and oblast cultural and educational programs. In this article, I will to show how Kharkiv local authorities treated decommunisation laws, what identity markers there were in the new regional programs, and what program of state and local holidays they offered to Kharkivites.

Identity policies in Ukraine were analyzed by Tatyana Zhurzhenko (2014). Language politics in Kharkiv were analyzed in Magrite Sovic’s (2007) research. The identity of Kharkiv military academy colonels was researched by Michael Westrate (2016). Oleksiy Musiezov (2007) analyzed Kharkiv’s city identity and the treatment of the city and city space by local citizens. Maryna Takhtaulova (2017) analyzed some aspects of decommunisation in Kharkiv.

## **Decommunisation**

Kharkiv city authorities accepted decommunisation and confirmed its realization, but mayor Hennadiy Kernes and vice mayor Ihor Terekhov often called this process opportunistic and specified more important things to do in Kharkiv (KhCC 2015a). Kharkivites didn’t support decommunisation (Kharkovskiye Izvestiya 2016a), so on one hand local authorities agreed with the majority of city dwellers and on the other hand they could create public opinion by controlling most influential local media (such as city-owned newspaper and the TV program “Kharkovskiye Izvestiya”). Communal media are rarely popular in Ukrainian cities, but popular in Kharkiv (IMI 2016) and this is one of paradoxes of this city. In these media, pro-Ukrainian activists couldn’t share their point of view and were often manipulated (Kharkovskiye Izvestiya 2016b). “Karkovskiye Izvestiya” used a lot of

misrepresentation, used markers of Russian propaganda and told incomplete and unclear information about decommunisation and the laws of decommunisation (Detektor Media 2016).

In spite of that, 221 toponyms changed their names by the decision of the city council and by the instruction of the city mayor (KhCC 2015b). By the decision of the Oblast Administration, 52 toponyms, 7 administrative areas, and 6 subway stations also changed their names (KhOSA 2016a). Analyzing these toponym renamings, Maryna Takhataulova (2017) said that “city authorities inclined to preserve existing names, and where it was impossible to avoid renaming, gave preference to neutral names, whether in oblast administration staked on national-patriotic discourse, adding to the city toponymic space names of heroes of ATO (anti-terrorist operation in Eastern Ukraine), the Heavenly Hundred, fighters for Ukrainian independence in 20<sup>th</sup> century, symbolic names and that, as far as possible, harmonized toponymical city space.”

According to the decommunisation laws, communist-era monuments had to be removed from public spaces. Some monuments, such as the spectacular Lenin at the Svobody Square, were destroyed by city activists (Husain 2014). Some soviet monuments, bas-reliefs, and mosaics remained in Kharkiv as they're often inseparable parts of architectural ensembles. This happened because of the attempts of some artists, art critics, and activists to protect the best pieces of soviet art from being destroyed and because of the lack of enthusiasm from city authorities to provide decommunisation (Tacconi 2016). Other city activists tried to direct the attention of city dwellers on uncompleted (in their opinion) decommunisation in Kharkiv and by organizing press-conferences, but these were not popular among Kharkivites (Shulga 2017). There were no major protests against realization of decommunisation laws neither in city council's nor in oblast administration's version. Kharkivites, as like most Ukrainians, have many problems because of the war and the economic crisis, so decommunisation isn't very important for them. As Zhurzhenko wrote, “formally complying with the official political line, the regional political elites, particularly in Eastern Ukraine, often refuse to accept the official interpretation of history, and frequently sabotage orders coming from Kyiv” (Zhurzhenko 2011, 597), but in 2015 orders coming from Kyiv were not sabotaged by local authorities. That doesn't mean that former practices of non-acceptance of central authorities initiatives will not return in future.

### **Kharkiv 2020 strategy – identity markers**

“The Kharkiv development strategy until 2020” was issued by the Kharkiv City Council on 21 December, 2016 (KhCC 2016a). There were several meetings devoted to this strategy and many scientists took part in creating it. Kharkiv mayor Kernes said that, in 2030, Kharkiv has to enter the top 100 world cities list (KhCC 2012).

In the “Kharkiv development strategy until 2020”, the authors, writing about its history, say nothing about the development of Ukrainian culture in the 1920s, and name only two artists – Lyudmila Gurchenko (soviet actress) and Klaudia Shulzhenko (soviet singer). Both of them were more Russian than Ukrainian, as they made their careers in Moscow and are buried there. Speaking about Kharkiv's past, authors haven't named any Ukrainian writers, artists, or directors whose lives were connected with Kharkiv. The authors did not mention anyone from the “executed renaissance”, which happened in 1920s in

Kharkiv. But everywhere in this development strategy, Kharkiv is presented as a Ukrainian city and it's compared with other Ukrainian and European cities, but no Russian cities. Authors of the development strategy say that Kharkiv will be a creative city of European standard, and that Kharkiv will be a smart city, an IT centre, and a touristic centre of Eastern Europe.

Regarding to the development strategy, the "mission of the city is to be a point of innovative and creative growth of national economy, with comfortable accommodation for an educated and healthy population" (KhCC 2016a, 30). The vision of the city, in the authors' opinion, is for a "big, European green city with unique architecture, with comfortable and safe accommodation for an educated population, which works in innovative and creative sectors of the economy" (KhCC 2016a, 30).

Despite the fact that Kharkiv is predominantly a Russian-speaking city, the development strategy was written only in Ukrainian. The authors say nothing about how Ukrainian this city is and nothing about Kharkiv's Ukrainian culture in the past, present, and future. This document shows that Kharkiv as city in Ukraine can be a modernizing agent (as it was in 1919–1934 when it played role of the capital of Ukraine) and projects of cultural and economical innovations can born here with the usage of the city's intellectual and industrial potential. The authors of the development strategy could pay more attention on national culture in the future and, to present Kharkiv's identity, mention other artists and not only soviet artists.

## City and oblast programs

### *Cultural programs for 2011–2016 and 2017–2021*

The main aim of the „Complex program of cultural development in Kharkiv from 2011–2016”, issued by the Kharkiv city council on 29 December, 2010 (KhCC 2010), was “to develop patriotism in Ukraine and Kharkiv among Kharkivites, to organize their rest during holidays, and to support talented people.” The main aim of cultural development in Kharkiv in 2014, according to the “Program of economic and social development of Kharkiv in 2014”, issued on 22 January, 2014 (Reyestr 2014) is for “preserving national cultural heritage” and “development of traditional Ukrainian culture, supporting and developing traditional cultures of nations and ethnic groups in Kharkiv, supporting of a cultural infrastructure, supporting talented persons, the creation of facilities for concurrent national culture in internal and external levels, and cultural contacts with other Ukrainian cities and foreign countries<sup>1</sup>”. In 2014, Kharkiv city authorities spent 264 million Ukrainian Hryvnia (UAH) on culture (KhCC 2014b); in 2015 – 138,9 million UAH (Reyestr2015); in 2016 -255 million (Reyestr 2016a); and in 2017 – 373,8 million UAH (Reyestr 2016b). In these years, the most of the spending went to Gorky Park and the Zoo, huge public relations projects of the city mayor.

The “Complex program of cultural development in Kharkiv in 2011–2016”(KhCC 2010) and the similar program for 2017–2021 (Reyestr 2016c) are almost identical. The Euromaidan and the war in Eastern Ukraine did not have a huge effect on the programs. The main aims of the programs for 2011–2016 and 2017–2021 is “to preserve and to in-

<sup>1</sup> The same aims were described in 2015, 2016, and 2017.



crease Kharkiv's position as a cultural centre of Slobozhanshchyna (or Sloboda Ukraine, the region where Kharkiv is situated and which exceeds the borders of Kharkiv oblast) (Zhurzhenko 2010, 191) and Ukraine, and to become a real European cultural centre." Authors of the programs agree and underline that Kharkiv in future has to be a Ukrainian city and one of cultural centers of the country.

The first target of the programs in 2011–2016 and in 2017–2021 is for "the cultivation among Kharkivites; patriotic sentiments to their native country and to Kharkiv, the organization of rest during holidays, supporting talented people by the organization of different cultural projects, and festivals." There are also some differences between these programs – in 2010 (when the program for 2011–2016 was approved), writing about the Mechanism of realization of the program, authors say that the second mechanism of realization of the program is "organization and providing of military parades", but there is no such thing in 2017–2021 program. In 2017–2021 program there is no term "Great Patriotic War" but instead "Second World War". There is also the "development of material and technical basis of communal institutions and renovation of Kharkiv Zoo" in the 2017–2021 program. In the Program for 2011–2016, we can find the mechanism for "lowering the crime rate and incidents of disorderly conducts". In the mechanism that is in both the 2011–2016 and 2017–2021 versions, the "training of tolerance to people of different nations." In 2011–2016, the term "internationalism" is used. In "expected results" of the 2011–2016 program, the authors say that they expect to train among Kharkivites the "necessity to communicate the sense of humanity and friendly treatment of each other", and also to lower the criminal rate. However, in the 2016 version, there are no such paragraphs.

The first measure for 2017–2021 program realization is "guaranteeing of cultural institutions functioning", but for program 2011–2016 – "refreshing and development of Kharkiv cultural heritage". For 2017–2021 program this measure is the second, but all paragraphs were copied from previous program despite providing of UEFA Euro Championships 2012 and supporting Gorky Park. In the 2017–2021 program there are no words about Russian aggression, the Euromaidan, the "Heaven Hundred", and closest of the Donbass region to Kharkiv oblast is not the problem for realization of the cultural program regarding to the opinion of authors. As it was shown, the Euromaidan and the war in Ukraine have not had a huge affect on the city's cultural programs. Kharkiv city authorities continue the realization of large projects, such as Gorky Park and Zoo, that made them popular, but they don't have aim to realize in Kharkiv the detailed cultural programs and develop other cultural institutions in the city.

### *Oblast programs*

On the 15 January, 2015, "The regional program of military and patriotic training and participation of people in measures of defense work in 2015–2017" was issued by the Kharkiv Oblast Council (KhOC 2015). Earlier, in 2004–2005, the "Program of pre-conscription training, military and patriotic training of youth and conscription of the Ukrainian citizens to the troop duty in Kharkiv oblast in 2004–2005" existed (KhOC 2003). Both programs common aims, but in 2015 there is also the aim "to train youth regarding to the patriotic, historical and military traditions of Ukrainian Nation". The program of 2015 is more militaristic, broader and more detailed than the program of 2004. This program

probably changed in such way because of Russian aggression and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Those kinds of programs reflect a trend of militarization in Ukrainian society and its authors even use such words as “propaganda” and “propagandize”. The 2004 program was devoted to pre-conscription and the preparation of its youth, but in 2015 it was about the military and patriotic trainings for all people.

The 2015 Program says that “at the present point of time of development of Ukrainian society the issue of creating modern, combat-ready, professionally trained armed forces of Ukraine becomes the most important”. One of the goals of the program is “forming among youth high patriotic awareness, national dignity, preparation to completing of civic, and a constitutional duty to defense of Ukrainian national interests”. Among the tasks of the program there are “thorough, effective actions for propaganda and advertising of positive perception of military service”. With its pro-Ukrainian character, this program uses such terms as “Great Patriotic War”, despite the recommendations of Ukrainian Institute of National Memory. Among measures of the 2015 Program there are organization of military and patriotic training in educational establishments, which include organization of events devoted to the “Great Patriotic War”, excursions to war memorials, naming schools after the heroes of Ukraine and USSR, and graduates who died for Ukrainian independence, organization of events devoted to the memory of those who died in military operations in ATO in Eastern Ukraine, organization of three-day assemblies in school, and more (all these events are gathered in group 1 – “Creating of methodology for military training” and group 2 – “Organization of military training in educational establishments”). The third group of events is “military, psychological and medical preparation of youth for military service”. The fourth group is “popularization of the military service in the society and creating a positive image of Ukrainian Army in the media”.

The first event here is “to organize media coverage of events, aimed at military and patriotic training of the youth and forming among them real spiritual values, a national consciousness. Creating by the Kharkiv oblast public television and radio cycle of programs, aimed to thorough supporting and development of Ukrainian identity, explanation (!) of historical truth, forming the patriotic sentiment and sense of belonging to the national society, accepting its norms and values”. In other groups there are events such as “meeting with veterans, military games, boxing tournaments, meetings of pupils and students youth with Ukrainian servicemen with aim of propaganda of military service”. The total cost of the program for 2015–2017 is 1,492,000 UAH.

As we can see, such program, if it will be implemented, will militarize society in the Kharkiv oblast, and it says nothing about future demilitarization of Ukraine and if it will be essential. It speaks a lot about Ukrainian national identity, Ukrainian values, and historical truth. With its character and some markers, it can be treated as an authoritarian program, or a program with soviet form and Ukrainian content. This program is more comprehensive than city programs, it has more identity markers and aims. However, regarding its modest financing, the main aims of the program cannot be achieved. This program also said nothing about the sociological portrait of Kharkiv’s city and oblast dwellers, the border-related character of their identity, and how these people treat the Ukrainian army and Ukraine now. The program also says nothing about the 2014 events in Kharkiv, when the People’s Republic tried to be proclaimed as well as participation of Kharkiv military structures (such as Oplot) in the destabilizing situation in Ukraine (Kuzio 2015, 112). The programs created by Kharkiv public television for explanation of

the historical truth (as a measure of Program 2015–2017) can be misunderstood by the oblast dwellers who have a strong connection with the soviet history of Ukraine and who are proud of Kharkiv's soviet past and its role played in the Soviet Union (Musiezdov 2009, 23).

Another program that can affect identity is the “Program of supporting civil society in 2016–2020”, issued by the Kharkiv Oblast Council on 14 April, 2016 (KhOC 2016), especially paragraph 6 in its activities with the name “Creating favorable conditions for spiritual unity on the grounds of national traditions of the Ukrainian People”. This activity has 5 sub-activities, among which there are financing of film-making and making TV programs about community progress in spiritual unity, and the organization of camps and meetings devoted to the same issues. These activities will receive financing at the rate of 5,925,000 UAH. The seventh activity of this program is “the support of NGO initiatives in providing holidays for increasing the national tolerance level” (1,700,000 UAH). The eighth activity is to “Create favorable conditions for nationalities and their NGOs functioning”, among which there is the support of festivals, organizing forums and conferences, and supporting book publishing in national minorities' languages” (3,950,000 UAH).

It's hard to say how the 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph of this program will be realized, but the fact of the presence in the oblast programs the mentioning of national minorities and their NGOs can have a wholesome effect on the national composure in the region.

### *National and city holidays*

The fifth thing to be analyzed in this article is the difference in the celebrations of some holidays in Kharkiv from 2014–2017, especially Victory Day (9<sup>th</sup> of May), the Day of the City (23<sup>d</sup> of August), the Day of the National Flag (23<sup>d</sup> of August) and Independence Day (24<sup>th</sup> of August). Victory Day is one of the most important holidays in soviet history and soviet canon. Attitude to Victory Day and Second World War is one of the identity markers in post-soviet space.

In 2013 and 2014 Kharkiv celebrated the 68<sup>th</sup> and 69<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945. Starting in 2015, after the events of the Euromaidan and the continuation of the war in Ukraine, the name of the celebration changed to “Victory over Nazism in Europe” (in 2015) and “Victory over Nazism in the Second World War” (2016, 2017). (Reyestr 2013a, Reyestr2014b, 2015b, 2016d, 2017a). As we can see, because of Euromaidan and war in Ukraine, the naming of holidays celebrated in city changed after 2014–2015.

In these years the ways of celebrating changed. In 2013, there was a military parade at the main city square in Kharkiv (Svobody Square), in 2014–2017 there was no such parades. In 2013 there was a concert of pop-music at 10pm with a firework show following. In 2014, Kharkiv city dwellers had only an orchestra concerts with fireworks. From 2015–2017 there were no pop music concerts and fireworks. Kharkiv city authorities agreed with the humanity policies of central Ukrainian authorities and accepted a way of Victory Day celebration. The same thing happened to the “Day of Kharkiv” (the Day of Liberation from German Fascist Aggressors, 23 August). “This day is very important holiday for Kharkivites. In the absence of a national consensus on the interpretation of the Second World War in Ukrainian history, this day represents the “second birth” of the city, a cen-



tral event in Kharkiv's modern history, and is thus used by local politicians as a consolidating symbol" (Zhurzhenko 2011, 608).

In 2013, Kharkiv city dwellers celebrated the Day of Liberation from German Fascist aggressors (Reyestr 2013b) and could watch fireworks. In 2014, they celebrated the Day of Liberation from Fascists Aggressors without fireworks (Reyestr 2014c). In 2015, Kharkiv celebrated the Day of Liberation from Nazi Aggressors (Reyestr 2015c), and this repeated in 2016 (Reyestr 2016c) and 2017 (Reyestr 2017b). After 2014 there were no fireworks in Kharkiv because they were forbidden by the decision of city council because of the ATO in Donbass (KhCC 2014c). In 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 there was the placement of flowers to the Marshal Zhukov monument, but in 2017 there was such paragraph with the address of the monument but without name of Zhukov (Reyestr 2017b).

The number of events planned for these days by the City Council have not changed much. In 2013 – 68 events; 2014 – 58 events; 2015 – 59 events; 2016 – 64 events; 2017 – 57 events. On the 23 August Ukraine also has the Day of the National Flag and Independence Day on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Because of closeness of these holidays, the city mayor's orders instructions included events connected with all these holidays.

In Table 1 events from the Kharkiv city mayor's orders about the celebrations are classified by character.

**Table 1.** Number of events, planned by the City Authorities by the Instruction about celebrating Day of the City, Independence Day, Day of the National Flag.

	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
Local	48	71 %	31	53 %	27	46 %	29	45 %	26	45 %
National	9	13 %	10	17 %	12	20 %	13	20 %	11	19 %
Sport	4	6 %	11	19 %	11	19 %	8	13 %	10	18 %
Other	6	9%	6	11 %	8	14 %	14	22 %	11	19 %
religious	1	1 %	0		1	1 %	0		0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>		<b>58</b>		<b>59</b>		<b>64</b>		<b>58</b>	

Source: author's compilation based on Reyestr 2013b, Reyestr 2014c, Reyestr 2015c, Reyestr 2016c, Reyestr 2017b.

Using this table, we can notice the tendency of a decreasing number of event connected with the city and increasing number of events connected with national holidays. Many events can be regarded as both local (city) and national, and all of these events were taken from the city mayor's orders. For composing the table only events from city mayor's orders were taken, but each year there are also events organized by the Kharkiv Oblast Administration, other state institutions, and NGOs. There are also content differences between all these instructions.

## Conclusions

Kharkiv city and oblast authorities after the Euromaidan have changed their approach to identity politics. Because of the war they almost did not contest the decisions of central authorities and did not use those decisions for mobilization of their electorate now (like it

was earlier). As we see, all important power state institutions in the Kharkiv region tried to realize their policies aimed to support or change some kind of identity. Both oblast and city institutions' programs have mentions of patriotism, national and region traditions, and Ukrainian history. Oblast programs, such as the "Program of patriotic training" is more detailed than others and they have more Ukrainian military markers. However, compared with other documents it has less financing. Oblast programs don't include such projects as Gorky Park and Zoo, and they emphasize on the functioning of cultural institutions, and with it have some irrational concepts about "spiritual unity", where funds are spent but the effect can't be verified. Texts of Kharkiv's city programs weren't changed significantly, but there are some trends of an increasing number of events devoted to national history and the substitution of soviet markers with Ukrainian or European ones.

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