

Geografia - skromný príspevok na poznanie kraja i človeka zaujímavého a mnohotvárneho

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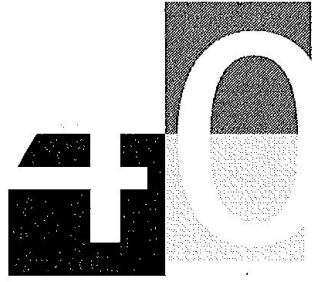
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**Katedry regionálnej geografie
ochrany a plánovania krajiny**

GEOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF THE UKRAINIAN-RUSSIAN CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

Károly Kocsis

The dichotomic socio-economic framework of Ukraine reflects not only ethnic and religious differences but also such factors as urbanisation, economic development, and even natural elements. The resulting political divide of the country may be traced to the dichotomy of its national identity. The dividing line is between east and west, urban and rural, and Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking Ukraine. Politically, it is between “Maidan-Ukraine” and “Anti-Maidan-Ukraine”. The divide runs along the line between the forest zone and the former steppe. In the 18th century, the steppe became a frontier territory for the Ukrainians and then for Tsarist Russia. The Russian ties of cities in the region were further strengthened by industrialisation in the 19th and 20th centuries and by Russification in the Soviet era. Since independence, Ukraine’s political elite has failed to address the problem in an adequate manner. The recent escalation of the conflict is due to a lack of political cohesion in the young state and the gravitational effect of the major powers rather than primarily to some kind of civilizational difference. By accentuating Ukraine’s economic and financial difficulties, the crisis has made the country even more vulnerable.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russian minority, ethnicity, conflict.