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National Identities in Post-Soviet Ukraine: The Case of Lviv and Donetsk

YAROSLAV HRYTSAK

In the last three decades, the study of nationalism has yielded a number of new theories that have profoundly changed our ideas about what constitutes a nation and how national identities are formed. The theoretical breakthroughs have not been matched by an adequate increase in empirical research, however. As Miroslav Hroch has correctly observed, there is currently an overabundance of theories of nationalism and a dearth of concrete studies of the phenomenon.¹

While this is true for the field as a whole, contemporary studies of identity formation in post-Soviet Ukraine display the opposite tendency: much of what has been written on the subject is rich in empirical findings but lacking in appropriate theoretical perspective.² While most theories of nationalism emphasize the complex, multidimensional character of national identities that cannot be reduced to a single element,³ many researchers tend to determine national identities on the basis of ethnic and language criteria, the premise being that “the private use of language is closer to the issue of [national] identity” than any other group indicator.⁴ As a result, the common practice of late has been to distinguish three main national groups in Ukraine: Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians (40 percent), Russian-speaking Ukrainians (33–34 percent), and Russian-speaking Russians (20–21 percent).⁵ Moreover, some of the surveys conducted during the Ukrainian parliamentary and presidential elections in 1994 indicated that these language differences were highly correlated with political and regional differences between nationalist-minded western Ukraine and pro-communist eastern Ukraine.⁶ This finding of deep national cleavages seemingly corroborated alarmist scenarios of ethnic turmoil and possibly even the collapse of independent Ukraine.⁷

Other interpretations of the 1994 elections,⁸ as well as some surveys that were conducted at about the same time,⁹ have suggested that Ukraine is in fact a relatively stable political community, and that its real problems lie beyond ethnic and language cleavages. The purpose of the present study is to test these propositions on the basis of data from a 1994 survey conducted in Lviv and Donetsk, the biggest cities in western and eastern Ukraine,¹⁰ and from follow-up focus groups in 1994 and 1996.¹¹ The cases were constructed on the basis of the theoretical assumptions that seemed to offer a better explanation of nation-building processes in post-Soviet Ukraine.

Comparisons between Lviv and Donetsk are problematic.¹² Since, as some authors suggest,¹³ these two cities represent the opposite poles of political mobilization in Ukraine, such comparison necessarily corroborates the thesis of threatening ethnic and regional cleavages; that is, the very formulation of the problem implies a ready-made answer. While such caveats cannot be disregarded, there is at least one good reason to focus on these two cities in studies of post-Soviet Ukrainian nation building. A comparative analysis of Lviv and Donetsk is very important for exploring the possible limits of the nation's inner cohesion. The underlying hypothesis is that all other Ukrainian cities and regions would fall somewhere between these two extremes.¹⁴ Moreover, the date of the survey—spring 1994—makes the comparison even more dramatic. During this period, support for Ukrainian independence was minimal in eastern Ukraine, and anti-independence sentiment was highest in Donbas.¹⁵

At the root of these differences, some analysts would claim, are ethnic and language cleavages. It is true that Lviv is the most Ukrainian city in the country in terms of both language and urban culture. In 1989, Ukrainians made up 79.1 percent of the city's population, and 77.6 percent of the population regarded Ukrainian as their native language. Donetsk, on the other hand, is the urban center of Donbas, the most industrialized and russified region in eastern Ukraine. According to the 1989 census, Russians were in the majority here with 53.5 percent of the population, and Ukrainians, with 39.4 percent, were in the minority. If one adds the language criterion, then the Russian character of Donetsk becomes even more explicit: the percentage of Russian-speakers in the population as a whole is 80.5 percent.¹⁶

The correlation between language data and political attitudes may be significant—and our survey supports this finding—but it does not explain why these allegedly pro-Russian attitudes in Donetsk have not manifested themselves in sustained political action. While Lviv tends to be consistent in its political demands and preferences, Donetsk demonstrates a certain fluidity in this regard. The victory of the Left in Donetsk in 1994 proved to be short-lived, as it suffered losses in local elections that were held later in the year. Many of the votes went to Donbas neoliberals who displayed a pragmatic, pro-Ukrainian independence orientation.¹⁷

David J. Meyer recently put forward his own theory of why the Donbas Russians have not mobilized along ethnic lines as have the Crimean Russians. Part of the explanation has to do with the dominant presence of russified Ukrainians in the region:

Russified Ukrainians, who share many of the concerns and demands of the ethnic Russian minority, dominate the Donbass institutions. They have used their resources and institutional/infrastructural power to co-opt the Russian minority in an alliance which makes political and economic demands on Kiev. However, these demands are not particularistic nor parochially ethnic in nature. Rather, the Donbass Russians' demands are regional, economic, cultural, and political (but not ethno-political). Therefore, the Russians of the

Donbass find it not necessary to mobilize as Russians per se, but as part of a larger, multiethnic, political alliance. Indeed, it seems that the Russian minority has found it more effective to pursue their ends by mobilizing around *social* issues, rather than ethnicity.¹⁸

Meyer's institutional approach is very promising and deserves further elaboration, but our findings suggest that an approach positing a multilayered, dynamic, and constructed character of national identity may yield a different explanation of this phenomenon. This type of approach is most appropriate to the post-Soviet Ukrainian context where, as a result of the peculiar legacy of Soviet nation building and of Russian-Ukrainian encounters, identities have a highly ambiguous character and are in constant flux.

Looking for a Model: How Many National Identities?

In studies like these, it is essential to frame the questions carefully. One important question is how many national identities exist in contemporary Ukraine. The common assumption is that the issue of identity in Ukraine should be perceived as a Russian/Ukrainian dichotomy, but in fact neither group can be said to be homogeneous. Because of their linguistic and cultural proximity to each other, both groups are suffering from crises of identity. Most analysts focus on the Ukrainian part of this story—that is, on differences between Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking Ukrainians—largely ignoring the fact that Russians also face serious dilemmas of national self-identification. Russian society before the Revolution could not resolve the issue of national identity. The efforts required to maintain the Russian Empire entailed the subjection of virtually the whole population, but especially the Russians, to the demands of state service, and thus enfeebled the creation of the kinds of community associations that commonly provide the basis for the service sense of nationhood.¹⁹ After the collapse of the Russian Empire, the Bolsheviks did not create a Russian nation-state, but rather absorbed imperial Russian institutions into imperial Soviet ones, further postponing a resolution of the question: What is Russia? Is Russia a Russian ethnic core, a territory inhabited by Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians (or in other words, “Great Russians,” “Little Russians,” and “White Russians”), or the whole former Russian Empire/Soviet Union?²⁰

The Soviet version of Russian/Soviet identity was promulgated during the last decades of Soviet rule,²¹ and found many adherents among Russians—especially those living outside the Russian Federation. According to a December 1990 survey, 70–80 percent of the Russians living in the major cities of the non-Russian republics (including Ukraine) identified themselves as “citizens of the USSR” rather than as “Russians.”²² In addition to the Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians became the prime targets of the policy of molding a single “Soviet people.” The aim of the policy was to obliterate their national distinc-

tions from Russians.²³ In the absence of reliable data, it is difficult to determine how successful the policy was. Still, as Roman Szporluk has noted, by the end of the 1980s, in such heavily populated areas as Donbas, at least four identities were competing for popular support: Ukrainian, “Little Russian” (both Ukrainian and Russian), Russian, and Soviet.²⁴

Paul S. Pirie suggests that there are four main routes to self-identification: strong identification with one ethnic group only; strong, stable identification with two groups simultaneously (a bicultural, biethnic identification); weak or unstable identification with two or more ethnic groups (a marginal identification); and strong identification with a group which encompasses several ethnic groups (a “pan-ethnic” identification). His empirical findings have convincingly demonstrated the predominance of the “pan-ethnic” identification in post-Soviet southern and eastern Ukraine.²⁵

In keeping with this line of argument, in our 1994 study we assumed the existence of a separate pan-ethnic Soviet identity alongside the Ukrainian and Russian identities. Questions about respondents’ identities were formulated in two different ways. In both cases respondents were asked to choose the identity that described them best. In one case we presented a list of 28 possible answers, including Ukrainian, Russian, and Soviet. The interviewees were asked to choose as many identities as they wished to describe the way they thought about themselves. In the second case the range of possible answers was limited to only four identities: Ukrainian, Russian, Soviet, and Other. Regardless of the formulation of the question, the percentage choosing Soviet identity in Donetsk was unexpectedly high—in fact, the highest (see Table 1).

Table 1. National Identities in Lviv and Donetsk

	Multiple List*	List of Four
<i>Lviv</i>		
Ukrainian	73.1%	78.5%
Russian	13.6%	8.3%
Soviet	7.4%	4.9%
Other	(from 0.8 to 69.6%)	4.1%
<i>Donetsk</i>		
Ukrainian	39.3%	25.9%
Russian	30.0%	22.9%
Soviet	40.0%	45.4%
Other	(from 0.5 to 55.6%)	4.7%

* Since respondents were allowed to choose more than one identity in this case, the column will add up to more than 100%.

A high correlation between self-identification and primary language was found only in the case of the Ukrainian-speaking ethnic Ukrainians: 92 percent of this

group identified themselves as Ukrainians. Other groups were far from homogeneous. The Russian-speaking ethnic Ukrainians in both cities were split evenly into “Russian” and “Soviet” self-identification (44 in each case), with only 7 percent regarding themselves as Ukrainians. In the case of Russian-speaking ethnic Russians, the breakdown was similar, though here more self-identified as Russians (47 percent) than as Soviets (39 percent). In the smallest group, that of Ukrainian-speaking ethnic Russians, “Russian” and “Other” were the preferred identities (31 percent each), with “Ukrainian” and “Soviet” at 19 percent each.

The introduction of the regional factor creates the impression that the ethnic/language differences amount to a Russian/Ukrainian dichotomy only in Lviv, while in Donetsk the breakdown was softened by the presence of numerous “Soviets.” Table 2 reinforces the image of Lviv as a “nationality-minded” city. Within the range of multiple identities most people here consider Ukrainian the most important. That is not the case in Donetsk, where regional and gender identities take precedence (surprisingly enough, gender is the most important identity for women, but not for men). Particularly noteworthy is the relatively low ranking of the Russian identity, which helps us explain why it has not been possible to mobilize people here under Russian national slogans.

Table 2. Preferred Identities in Lviv and Donetsk

<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Lviv</i>	<i>Donetsk</i>
1	Ukrainian (73.3%)	Donetskite (55.6%)
2	Lvivite (69.6%)	Woman (48.8%)
3	Woman (46.0%)	Soviet (40.0%)
4	Uniate (38.4%)	Ukrainian (39.3%)
5	Westerner (38.1%)	Worker (36.6%)
6	Man (37.1%)	Man (33.0%)
7	Worker (36.1%)	Orthodox (31.2%)
8	Democrat (32.2%)	Pensioner (30.2%)
9	Orthodox (31.7%)	Russian (30.0%)
10	Young (27.9%)	Old (27.7%)

Still, it would be premature to draw such conclusions without taking into account the nature of each of these national identities. The preeminent Russian ethnographer Valerii Tishkov has noted that “post-Soviet scholarship and culture to this point have not yet been able to accept that there may exist such realities as Russian, Ukrainian, Kazakh, Latvian, and other nations as poly-cultural political communities.”²⁶ He goes on to say,

If a Russian was born and is living in Kharkiv [a city in eastern Ukraine], and if he has no other historical fatherland, then he is a Ukrainian in the civic sense of this term, because on the basis of the “zero variant” he has Ukrainian citizenship, he votes in Ukraine, he is loyal to this state, and feels at home

here; therefore, there is no need to burden him with the notion of a "Russian" identity.²⁷

Tishkov emphasizes that in regard to both Russia and Ukraine, as well as to other states of the world, one should not talk about a "multinational people," but rather about a "polyethnic nation." He refers here to the distinction between so-called "ethnic" and "political" nations. The former stresses the importance of ethnic distinctions and presumes that the individuals who constitute the nation share a common culture and ancestry. The latter is based on civic solidarity, and refers to groups that lack common culture and ancestry or any illusion thereof. The key issue in this case is the growth of solidarity among the people of a particular territory.²⁸

In general, the scholarly literature on nationalism has held that the political concept of nation is more widespread in the West (the classic examples are the British, American, and Swiss nations) and the ethnic concept in the East (German, Russian, and other East European nations). Equality of political rights constitutes the core of the Western model, while common language and traditions are at the core of the Eastern model.²⁹ There are many exceptions to this geographical division, however. The ethnic model applies to some West European nations that have lost their original languages, as in the cases of Ireland and Norway. Even in the case of the United States, which has been considered a classic embodiment of the civic concept, identity and culture are rooted in the Anglo-American Protestant traditions of the original settlements.³⁰ By the same token, some of the East European nationalisms—for example Czech and Hungarian—had a civic component. It is correct to assume, therefore, that these two concepts of nation rarely exist in pure form. As Anthony D. Smith has noted, there is

a profound dualism at the heart of every nationalism. In fact, every nationalism contains civic and ethnic elements in varying degrees and different forms. Sometimes civic and territorial elements predominate; at other times, ethnic and vernacular components are emphasized.³¹

In the history of Ukrainian and Russian identity formation, both concepts of nation have applied at different times. Ukrainian and Russian identities may take on different characters depending on historical circumstances and regional differences. Moreover, it is not quite clear that Soviet identity was purely a "political" one, since the authorities placed great emphasis on the alleged linguistic and historical proximity of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians.³²

To determine whether civic or ethnic elements are dominant in Lviv and Donetsk, it seems reasonable to analyze respondents' attitudes towards: (1) the language issue; (2) their history; (3) the issue of political independence; (4) the region in which they live; and (5) economic issues.³³ Issues of language and common historical ancestry are considered "ethnic" elements of identity, while the others are considered "civic."

To make an efficient comparison along these lines, it is necessary to define the limits of divergence on these issues. A regression analysis of the 1994 survey data on three main indicators—region (Lviv versus Donetsk), self-identification (Ukrainian, Russian, or Soviet), and the mixed identity of spoken language/objective nationality (Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians, Russian-speaking Ukrainians, and Russian-speaking Russians)—reveals that region is the most important determinant of respondents' attitudes towards the five issues.³⁴ Subjective (self-)identification is next in importance. In a finding that contradicts the assumptions of some analysts, the mixed language/nationality indicator is the least important (although still significant) determinant of mass attitudes. In other words, the answers one is most likely to hear from any individual will depend first of all on whether the interview is conducted in Lviv or Donetsk, secondly on the individual's self-identification (Ukrainian, Russian, or Soviet), and lastly, on the language in which he or she answers the questions (Ukrainian or Russian). It makes sense, therefore, to place the comparison of national identities within the larger framework of regional differences.

The Language Issue

One of the biggest differences between Lviv and Donetsk is revealed in respondents' attitudes toward the statement: "Those who live in Ukraine must learn to speak Ukrainian and use Ukrainian in public." Most of the respondents in Lviv agreed with the statement, but in Donetsk most disagreed. Our interviews with the focus groups in 1994 and 1996 confirmed this finding. Participants from Donetsk were concerned that the Russian-speaking majority would suffer if Ukrainian were to be introduced as the official state language. They refer to the example of western Ukraine and Lviv, where the Russian-speaking minority has become the target of discrimination on the basis of language. A negative attitude towards Russian speakers was confirmed by participants of the 1996 focus groups in Lviv.

An interesting finding is that when respondents in each of these two categories—those who are in favor of the policy of establishing Ukrainian as the official language and those who are against it—refer to outside models as examples worthy of following, they choose the classic models of ethnic or civic nationhood. Thus in Lviv respondents mentioned Poland and Germany, where virtually everyone speaks Polish or German, while in Donetsk one woman raised the example of the United States, where Spanish is used in official contexts in some states (she erroneously mentioned French). The general impression is that in terms of language, the ethnic concept dominates in Lviv, while the civic concept dominates in Donetsk. This may be too broad a generalization, however. At least two qualifications should be made: first, there is consensus in both cities that it does not matter what language people speak, as

long as they support Ukraine. Second, respondents did not seem to be expressing preferences for the ethnic or the civic concept *per se*. In both cases, it seemed that people were simply defending their right to speak publicly in the language they use at home. In these terms, the discrepancy is indicative of the different historical and political circumstances of the two regions rather than a conscious choice on the part of the population.

In fact, some of the people interviewed in Donetsk were ready to accept the establishment of Ukrainian as the official public language on two conditions: that they be given more time to prepare for the change, and that Ukrainian be the language of a “strong master” who will bring the situation in Ukraine under control. This supports Szporluk’s hypothesis that debates about the status of the Ukrainian language have more to do with the social status of Ukrainian versus Russian speakers than with nationalism.³⁵

Historical Memory

Historical myths—the way in which members of an existing or potential community imagine their past—play a particularly important role in the mobilization of national movements. Because of their powerful emotional appeal, they are extremely effective in forming collective identity, even where the potential members of a national group are politically passive. In post-Soviet Ukraine, the “Soviet” and the “Ukrainian national” versions of the Ukrainian past (simplifying, of necessity, the differences between historiographical schools within each version) are battling for supremacy. The “Soviet” paradigm, which presented Ukrainian history as a regional version of Russian history, was introduced through the Soviet educational system and was purported to have a powerful grip on the minds of millions of citizens. In contrast, traditional Ukrainian historiography emphasizes the distinctiveness and independence of the Ukrainian historical process and presents Ukraine as the victim of injustices committed by Russia. This version of Ukrainian history is not new, but it was introduced into Ukrainian schools only recently, after the proclamation of Ukrainian independence.³⁶

In our survey, we asked respondents in Lviv and Donetsk to evaluate the importance of certain events in the historical development of Ukraine. The events were selected so as to create two sets representing the two versions of Ukrainian history. In both cities, most of the respondents agreed that the starting point of Ukrainian history lay in Kyivan Rus’. However, there was clear disagreement between Lviv and Donetsk regarding the later periods, and the closer the event to the present, the more pronounced the difference (see Table 3).³⁷

Table 3. How important, in your opinion, are the following for understanding the origins of Ukraine?

<i>Very important</i>	<i>Lviv</i>	<i>Donetsk</i>
Kyivan Rus'	72.7%	77.2%
Cossackdom	74.1%	45.9%
Pereiaslav Treaty (1654)	33.4%	77.7%
Ukrainian National Republic	67.5%	23.3%
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic	19.8%	59.7%
Proclamation of Ukrainian Independence (1991)	90.4%	28.0%

In short, there is an evident preference for the traditional Ukrainian version of history in Lviv and for the Soviet version in Donetsk. The focus group discussions provided some additional examples of this tendency.

The extent to which the Soviet era is idealized in Donetsk is particularly noteworthy. The Soviet period is perceived as the “good old days” when the Communist Party provided for the needs of the people, the state bureaucracy was uncorrupted and kept its promises, medical care was free and efficient, refrigerators were full of food, and even husbands loved their wives more ardently. In Lviv, on the other hand, the majority of the respondents had a very negative experience of the Soviet period. They blame the backwardness of the Ukrainian economy on the Soviet legacy. Even so, some also miss the social protections they had enjoyed under the Soviet regime, and recognize that some things were better then than they are now.

The Issue of Ukrainian Independence

At first glance, the results of the 1994 survey seem to indicate that the disintegration of Ukraine is a real possibility. The most salient issue is, of course, Ukraine's relationship with Russia. In Lviv, 62 percent chose Ukrainian independence as the most desirable option, while unification with Russia was among the least popular options. In Donetsk, more than half (57 percent) favor a “new unification” with Russia. On a seven-point scale, where “1” meant “Ukraine and Russia should be completely separate” and “7” meant “Russia and Ukraine should be the same country,” respondents in Lviv averaged 2.2 as opposed to 5.74 in Donetsk.

Although it might seem that the desire to reunite with Russia could result from the sharp economic decline after Ukraine declared its independence in 1991, the data do not support this explanation. While respondents in both cities evaluated the economic changes in Ukraine since 1991 negatively or very negatively, Lviv respondents nevertheless supported the idea of Ukrainian independence. It should also be noted that the average monthly income is substantially greater in Donetsk than it is in Lviv (about 40 percent greater,

according to our survey), which further belies the relevance of the economic factor to the issue of Ukrainian independence.

The key difference between Lviv and Donetsk is of a political rather than an economic nature. While 74.4 percent of the inhabitants of Lviv evaluate the political changes that have taken place since 1991 positively or very positively, 88.2 percent in Donetsk view these changes as negative or very negative. Another telling finding is that in Lviv, the communists are the most disliked group, whereas in Donetsk it is the Ukrainian nationalists who are most disliked.

Cultural differences appear to be of lesser importance. When asked to place themselves on a seven-point scale where "1" meant "Ukraine and Russia are completely different" and "7" meant "Ukraine and Russia are basically the same," the average in Lviv was 3.96 while the average in Donetsk was 6.17. Although, Lviv and Donetsk differed greatly on this question, the averages were located on the same half of the spectrum.

These observations require further qualifications. The focus group discussions in 1994 and in 1996 indicated that many citizens of Donetsk are not categorically against the political independence of Ukraine. They would be willing to accept it on the condition that Ukraine becomes a viable and efficient state. Some even found the idea of Ukrainian independence attractive, although they believed that the potential for success was overestimated in 1991. A few went so far as to declare their wish that Ukraine would belong to the European community rather than to Russia. They believe that in reality, Ukraine will continue to waver between Europe and Russia, remaining closer to the latter.

Territory

This leads us to the finding that despite their great divergence, the inhabitants of Lviv and Donetsk have something in common: their attachment to the territorial unity of Ukraine. Only 1 percent in Lviv and 5 percent in Donetsk favored the division of Ukraine into several separate countries. The majority in both cities want their region to remain part of Ukraine. That is, while the populations of Lviv and Donetsk disagree profoundly in their desires for the future of Ukraine, they agree that their regions share a common destiny with the rest of Ukraine.

The way the two groups envision Ukraine is nevertheless quite different. In our 1996 focus group discussions, we found varying definitions of the territory with which people identify. Residents of Lviv view Ukraine as their homeland and feel an attachment towards it as their country. On the other hand, when residents of Donetsk refer to their homeland, they have in mind their own region, meaning Donbas, or the former Soviet Union or Russia—but rarely Ukraine. When people were asked about their country, some started to answer

about both Ukraine and Russia; only when the interviewer asked an additional question did they understand that they were being asked about Ukraine.

To be sure, territorial patriotism can be affected by political events. For example, the war in Chechnya has increased patriotic feelings towards Ukraine at a time when Ukraine appeared politically more stable than Russia. This tendency was especially pronounced among women in both Lviv and Donetsk, who were concerned about the prospect of sending their sons to war. In general, political stability is highly valued and is a top priority in both cities. Some respondents in Donetsk consider Crimea the most dangerous place to live in Ukraine because they believe a "second Chechnya" is ripening there. Ironically, they see western Ukraine as one of the best places to live in all of Ukraine.

The 1994 survey data indicate that residents of both Lviv and Donetsk tended to overemphasize their regional differences. In many cases, members of one group expected members of the other to hold more radical opinions than they actually held. The focus group discussions appear to support this finding. In general, respondents in Lviv and Donetsk dislike each other. Each group felt that their own region had been exploited for the economic benefit of the other. These negative attitudes were most prevalent among those who did not have direct personal contacts with members of the other group. In the few cases where respondents did have such contacts, their statements were much milder, and they even expressed some sympathy for the other group.

Economic Issues

The majority in both Lviv and Donetsk evaluated the economic changes that have taken place since Ukraine was declared independent negatively or very negatively. In both cities economic problems were perceived as the most serious facing Ukraine today. This is hardly surprising given the severe economic crisis that Ukraine has experienced since the breakup of the Soviet Union. The uniformity of opinion on this question cannot be interpreted as evidence of a single "national" identity; one may doubt whether Russian citizens would differ from Ukrainian citizens in this respect. Moreover, the salience of economic issues mutes the problem of nationality. In both Lviv and Donetsk, respondents considered the degradation of the environment, the increasing economic inequality among citizens, rising prices, and unemployment greater threats to the stability of Ukraine than either war with Russia or conflicts between nationalities.

In addition, there were indications of a certain consensus concerning economic interests and the unity of Ukraine. Specifically, the majority of respondents in both Lviv and Donetsk disagreed that their region would be better off if it were not part of Ukraine. The commonality of economic interests was also reflected in the fact that a majority in both cities agreed with the statements that

“Ukrainians expect too much from other countries” and “nobody will help us—we can rely only on ourselves.”

However, the conclusions drawn by each group were different. Respondents in Lviv were inclined to think that each person should look after himself, while in Donetsk they preferred to consider the government the guarantor of employment and a high standard of living for everyone. This difference, as our focus groups demonstrated, may have a national dimension. Respondents in Lviv blame the communist regime for suppressing the psychology of private ownership, particularly in central and eastern Ukraine. They view Poland, where this psychology was retained, as an example of what might have been possible in Ukraine. They see the opening of the former Soviet borders since the fall of communism as a very positive change, providing Ukrainians with the opportunity to travel, make comparisons, and develop ideas about improving their own economic situation. Some theorists suggest that this “catch up” mentality may serve as a breeding ground for national sentiment.³⁸

Similar attitudes were found in the Donetsk focus group, but the implications were quite different from those in Lviv. One interviewee had her own ideas about how to improve the situation:

No matter how often we change our government, our lives won't be better for it. It is necessary to understand that if you have chosen to become president, and to be responsible for the people, then you [really] have responsibility for those people. This is the first point. The second point is that for us to live better our government, our president, our deputies, must necessarily, unequivocally, open the enterprises that have been closed—our own enterprises. The third point is that we have to have our own production both in light and heavy industries. I'm not the only one with this opinion. Our own [production]. The fourth point is that the quality of production must be restored. The fifth point is to put an end to the importation of all of this foreign stuff. You need to close all the borders. [To ban all those] so-called *meshochniks*.³⁹ To restore our own enterprises. To return our own specialists, our own engineers, our own teachers—well, to return all those specialists to a toy factory or a textile factory and so on. To produce our own metals, to teach our own children, to have our own professors. All this has to be restored. If we don't restore it, it means we are worth nothing.

All this, in her opinion, would necessarily lead to the revival of culture—in this case, Russian culture.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I will examine the correlations between the responses to each of the five issues discussed above and the two different definitions of national identity. The assumption here is that criteria are considered efficient when they coincide with regional differences and provide a persuasive explanation of both political cleavages and the relative political stability of Ukraine. In regard to

the first criterion (primary language combined with objective nationality or "passport nationality"), it was the Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians who were significantly different from the other groups on most issues. Only on the question of the unity of Ukraine were they close to the Russian-speaking Ukrainians; both groups place the interests of Ukraine higher than the interests of the various regions.

In general, the Russian-speaking Ukrainians, Russian-speaking Russians, and Ukrainian-speaking Russians were all closer to each other than they were to Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians. There were some minor exceptions, though. Russian-speaking Ukrainians were slightly different from the two Russian groups on the question of the possible regionalization of Ukraine (and still, they were against it), and significantly different on the question of political independence (which is not to say, though, that they were pro-independence). Ukrainian-speaking Russians were different from Russian-speaking Russians on the language issue. This may sound paradoxical, but considering that they already speak Ukrainian, it seems natural to them to speak Ukrainian in public.

Self-identification appears to be the most efficient criterion. Those who identify themselves as Ukrainian believe that it is important for people living in Ukraine to use the Ukrainian language in public. They perceive Ukrainian history in traditional "national" terms, but they recognize that the Soviet historical legacy is somewhat important to understanding the origins of Ukraine. Ukrainians by self-identification are more likely to agree that Ukrainians and Russians should be separate and that Ukraine should be a completely independent country. They also believe that Ukraine should maintain its unity rather than break up along regional lines. Since the group of Ukrainians by self-identification largely coincides with the group of Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians, one may safely conclude that, at its core, Ukrainian identity consists mainly of ethnic elements. It also helps us to understand why language differences are so important to the study of national and political cleavages in Ukraine. The underlying difference is between Ukrainians (who are a linguistically homogenous group) and non-Ukrainians.

The opposite is true for Russians and Soviets. These groups were almost identical in their attitudes. The slight differences are that the Soviets expressed somewhat more opposition to speaking Ukrainian in public, were more supportive of the Soviet version of history, were more likely to believe that Ukraine and Russia should be the same country, and favored more government involvement in the economy. The numbers differ only slightly in all cases except on the question of attitudes toward the political future of Ukraine.

In a rather surprising finding, the Soviets tended to locate themselves towards one end of the attitudinal spectrum. That is, if we place the three groups on a spectrum according to their pro-Ukrainian/anti-Ukrainian attitudes, the sequence is Ukrainian-Russian-Soviet. It might have been reasonable to assume that "Soviet" identity generally would be located between Russian and Ukrainian, combining elements of both, but this is not the case. A correlation

analysis of the survey data reveals that the Soviets are more alienated from Ukrainians than are the Russians. A self-identified "Soviet" is much more likely to oppose the use of Ukrainian in public and the national version of history, and much less likely to place Ukrainian interests above regional ones. This leads to another conclusion, which is that the Soviet identity is not a purely "political" one, but in fact comprises some ethnic elements. If this is the case, then the prospects for the "ethnonationalization" of Ukraine are alarmingly real, because the Soviet identity may be transformed rather easily into Russian identity.

There are some silver linings to the Ukrainian situation, however. In most cases, the differences between Ukrainians, Soviets, and Russians are not as essential as they may seem at first glance. To be sure, the groups differ significantly, but for the most part they remain on the same side of the barricade. To put it simply, Ukrainians tend to occupy one end of the spectrum, with Russians and Soviets more towards the center. But the Russians and Soviets rarely cross the line to place themselves in out-and-out opposition to the Ukrainians. The explanation for this seems to be the strong territorial identification that serves as the glue keeping the parts of the whole together.

Another facet of the issue is that the Soviet identity appears to be more than simply a national attitude. People who prefer to call themselves "Soviets" seem to have bought into the whole package of Soviet ideology, including the unrealistically high expectations of government support and the lack of private initiative. Part of that package is an inability to organize continuous and efficient pressure on decision makers and power centers "from below." As our 1994 survey indicated, residents of Donetsk were much less politically mobilized than residents of Lviv. The number of people in Donetsk who have on more than one occasion contacted a national newspaper or a government representative, signed a petition, joined a social organization, or participated in a rally or demonstration is one-half to one-third the number in Lviv. The people of Donetsk may be willing to reunite Ukraine with Russia, but as the experience of the last few years has shown, it is unlikely that they can organize any significant national movement—as their compatriots in Lviv were able to do during the last years of Gorbachev's rule.

It must be remembered, of course, that Lviv was one of the least Sovietized cities of the Soviet Union, and that most of its population cherished memories of the national struggle and political traditions that derived from the Austrian, Polish, and early Soviet times.⁴⁰ But the fifty-year Soviet legacy has affected people there as well. They may be very anti-Soviet in the political sense, while sharing some Soviet economic values. The differences between Lviv and Donetsk can be significant, but they are more imagined than real. As our survey shows, people tend to overestimate the differences and to ascribe to their counterparts more extreme views than they actually have.

Our findings suggest that it is the "Sovietness" of the Ukrainian population that provides Ukrainian leaders with an opportunity to keep the country to-

gether. This conclusion must be considered very tentative, because one crucial factor—the time factor—is still missing from this general picture. It does not seem likely that Soviet identity will persist indefinitely after the breakup of the Soviet Union. In light of the examples of the Ottoman, Czechoslovak, and Yugoslav identities, it seems that Soviet identity is doomed to fade away in the long term. The crucial question is what new identity or identities will replace it as the Soviet legacy becomes history.

NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Harriman Institute of Columbia University in New York on 1 May 1997.

1. Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe," *New Left Review* 194 (1993): 304.
2. This point was made recently by Louise Jackson in "Identity, Language, and Transformation in Eastern Ukraine: A Case Study of Zaporizhzhia," in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (Armonk, NY, 1998), p. 102.
3. See Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno, NV, and London, 1991), p. 14.
4. Dominique Arel, "The Temptation of the Nationalizing State," in *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (Armonk, NY, and London, 1995), p. 169.
5. Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 22–23.
6. Valerii Khmel'ko, "Tretii god nezavisimosti: chto pokazali vtorye prezidentskie vybory," *Sovremennoe obshchestvo* 4 (1994): 17–18; Valeri Khmelko and Andrew Wilson, "Nationalism and Ethnic and Linguistic Cleavages in Ukraine," in *Contemporary Ukraine*, ed. Kuzio, pp. 60–80.
7. See "Ukraine: The Birth and Possible Death of a Country," *The Economist* 7 May 1994; D. Williams and R. J. Smith, "U.S. Intelligence Sees Economic Flight Leading to Breakup of Ukraine," *The Washington Post* 25 January 1994: 7.
8. Zenovia A. Sochor, "Political Culture and Foreign Policy: Elections in Ukraine in 1994," in *Political Culture and Civil Society*, ed. Tismaneanu, pp. 208–226; Roman Szporluk, "Reflections on Ukraine after 1994: The Dilemmas of Nationhood," *The Harriman Review* 7(7–9) March–May 1994: 1–9.
9. William Zimmerman, "Is Ukraine a Political Community?" *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31 (1998) 1: 43–55.
10. The project was supervised by Oksana Malanchuk (University of Michigan), Natalia Chernysh (Lviv Franko State University), and the author. The project was funded by the International Renaissance foundation (the Ukrainian branch of the Soros Foundation), and was modeled after the Detroit Area Studies. For earlier publications based on the survey data see: Yaroslav Hrytsak, Oksana Malanchuk, and Natalia Chernysh,

- “Skhid i zakhid Ukraïny: integratsiia chy dezintegratsiia?” *UNIAN-polityka: ohliady, komentari, prohnozy* 36(37) 1994: 7–9; Yaroslav Hrytsak, “Social and National Identities in Western and Eastern Ukraine,” in *Grappling with Democracy: Deliberations on Post-Communist Societies (1990–1995)*, ed. Elżbieta Matynia (Prague, 1996), pp. 266–69.
11. The focus group discussions were part of a larger project comparing new identities in Ukraine, Estonia, and Uzbekistan during the post-Soviet transformation. The project was carried out under the guidance of Professor Michael Kennedy of the University of Michigan, and with the participation of scholars from Estonia, Ukraine, the United States, and Uzbekistan. The project was funded by the Ford Foundation. The Ukrainian part of the project was carried out by, among others, Oksana Malanchuk (University of Michigan) and Yaroslav Hrytsak and Viktor Susak (Lviv Franko State University). Each discussion group consisted of two male and two female middle-aged workers. Audiotapes and transcribed materials from the focus group discussions are preserved in the Oral History Archive, Institute for Historical Research, Lviv State University, Project on “Identity Formation and Social Issues in Estonia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan,” Ukraine: Focus Group Discussions. Conducted, transcribed, and edited by Viktor Susak (Lviv, 1996–1998).
 12. Taras Kuzio made this point at a conference held at Yale University, 23–24 April 1999.
 13. Dominique Arel and Andrew Wilson, “The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections,” *RFE/RL Research Report* 1 July 1994: 7; Jackson, “Identity, Language, and Transformation,” pp. 100–101; Roman Solchanyk, “The Post-Soviet Transition in Ukraine: Prospects for Stability,” in *Contemporary Ukraine*, ed. Kuzio, pp. 17–40. Certainly, to make a more dramatic comparison one may focus on western Ukraine and Crimea; still, for many reasons, Crimea is a special case which cannot be discussed here.
 14. This hypothesis has been supported by some recent empirical findings. See Jackson, “Identity, Language, and Transformation,” pp. 99–103; Zimmerman, “Is Ukraine a Political Community?” *passim*.
 15. Solchanyk, “The Post-Soviet Transition in Ukraine,” pp. 30–31; Viktor Nebozhenko and Iryna Bekeshkina, “Politychnyi portret Ukraïny (skhid, pivden)” in *Politychnyi portret Ukraïny* 9 (1994): 44–45.
 16. Data of the Lviv and Donetsk city statistical departments compiled by Viktor Susak. According to our survey, the situation was not significantly different in 1994. In Lviv, 77.7 percent of the population claimed Ukrainian as their native language and in Donetsk 73.7 percent claimed Russian as theirs. The usage of Russian language in Lviv and Ukrainian in Donetsk is clearly declining from older to younger generations: 79.4

percent of parents in Lviv spoke Ukrainian with their children, while the figure for Russian-speakers in Donetsk is 89.6 percent.

17. Maryana Chorna, "Donbass: The Neo-Liberals are Beating the Communists on the Latter's Home Field," *Demos: An Analytical and Informational Journal* 1(1) 1994: 15–18.
18. David J. Meyer, "Why Have Donbass Russians Not Ethnically Mobilized Like Crimean Russians Have? An Institutional/Demographic Approach," in *State and Nation Building in East Central Europe: Contemporary Perspectives* (New York, 1996), p. 320.
19. This interpretation has recently been suggested by Geoffrey Hosking in his *Russia: People and Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), *passim*.
20. Roman Szporluk, "Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism," *Problems of Communism* 38(4) July–August 1989: 15–35.
21. Yaroslav Bilinsky, "The Concept of the Soviet People and Its Implications for Soviet Nationality Policy," *Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.* 14(37–38) 1978–1980: 87–133.
22. "Russkie," *Etno-sotsiologicheskie ocherki* (Moscow, 1992), p. 415.
23. Roman Solchanyk, "Molding 'The Soviet People': The Role of Ukraine and Belorussia," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 8(1) Summer 1983: 3–18.
24. Szporluk, "Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism," p. 35n86.
25. Paul S. Pirie, "National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies* 48(7) 1996: 1079–1104.
26. Valerii Tishkov, "Postsovetskii natsionalizm i russkaia antropologiya," in *Kuda idet Rossiia? Sotsial'naia transformatsiia postsovetskogo prostranstva* (Moscow, 1996) vol. 3 (Mezhdunarodnyi simpozium 12–14 ianvaria 1996 g.), pp. 212–13.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
28. Philip White, "What is a Nationality?" *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 12(1) Spring 1985: 1–24.
29. See Hans Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History* (Princeton, 1955); *idem*, *The Idea of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1967); Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA, and London 1991), pp. 12–14.
30. Smith, *National Identity*, pp. 12, 80, 149–50.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
32. Solchanyk, "Molding the 'Soviet People,'" *passim*.
33. This is a paraphrase of Anthony D. Smith's formulation of the key elements of national identity. Smith, *National Identity*, pp. 8–15.

34. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Oksana Malanchuk who carried out the analysis and explained its results to me. The results of our data were summarized in Yaroslav Hrytsak and Oksana Malanchuk, "National Identities in Post-Soviet Ukraine: the Case of Lviv and Donetsk," unpublished paper, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1997.
35. Szporluk, "Reflections on Ukraine after 1994," *passim*.
36. Zenon E. Kohut, "History as a Battleground: Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Historical Consciousness in Contemporary Ukraine," in *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia: The International Politics of Eurasia*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, NY, and London, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 123–46; Andrew Wilson, "The Donbass between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political Disputes," *Journal of Contemporary History* 30 (1995): 265–89.
37. For corroboration of this tendency see the results of the 1997 "Lviv and Donetsk" survey conducted by the Geneza Center for Political Science in Lviv: "Rezultaty mizhrehional'noho sotsiologichnoho opytuvannia (Lviv-Donetsk) 'Stan ukrains'koho sotsiumu naperedodni vyboriv 1998–1999 rr.'" *Stavropihion* 1997 [*sic*]: 181–82.
38. Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, pp. 14–17.
39. The term *meshochnik* refers to petty traders who cross borders to sell goods which they carry in their *meshki* (sacks).
40. Roman Szporluk, "West Ukraine and West Belorussia: Historical Tradition, Social Communication, and Linguistic Assimilation," *Soviet Studies* 31(1) January 1979: 76–98; *idem*, "The Soviet West—or Far Eastern Europe?" *East European Politics and Societies* 5(3) Fall 1991: 474–77.