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**ON SAILS AND GALES, AND SHIPS  
SAILING IN VARIOUS DIRECTIONS:  
POST-SOVIET UKRAINE\***

“One ship drives east and another drives west  
With the selfsame winds that blow  
‘Tis the set of sails and not the gales  
Which tells us the way to go.”

*Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919)*

***Beyond a Revolving Door***

Since the collapse of communism, historians of Eastern Europe have been increasingly involved in the search for new paradigms for writing history. There are at least two sources of pressure for a paradigm shift. The first is political. The break-up of the Soviet Union undermined the vision of Eastern Europe as a solid block. It led to a reemergence of the alternative

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concepts of *East Central Europe* (as a territory covering former *Rzecz Pospolita* [the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth]) and *Central Europe* (the realms of the former Habsburg monarchy). Now, with EU enlargement in 2004, both concepts seem to be losing their salience; new political borders will divide countries that claimed common historical and cultural legacies (such as Ukraine and Belarus, on the one hand, and Poland, Lithuania, or Hungary on the other).

The second reason for a paradigm shift is of an academic nature. It is related to the emergence of post-modernist and post-colonial interpretations. Combined with political changes, these have led to a loss of prestige of the old paradigms, organized around a class, an empire or a nation as the main research unit. The same goes for the West/East dichotomy that has been widely used in non-communist historiography of the region, and which is now very much discredited as a part of an orientalist discourse.<sup>1</sup>

Several strategies have been proposed for moving beyond a restricted research agenda. Some of them essentially stick to the old field of inquiry – that is a nation or an empire – even though they try to modify it by writing multiethnic/multicultural history,<sup>2</sup> combining national and social history,<sup>3</sup> introducing recent theories of nationalism,<sup>4</sup> moving to an increasingly fashionable cultural history,<sup>5</sup> or using a comparative ap-

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Todorova. *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford, 1997; Iver B. Neumann. *Uses of the Other. "The East" in European Identity Formation*. Minneapolis, 1997; Larry Wolff. *Inventing Eastern Europe, The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford, CA, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Andreas Kappeler. *Russland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung. Geschichte. Zerfall*. München, 1993; Mark von Hagen. *Does Ukraine Have a History? // Slavic Review*. 1995. Vol. 54. No. 3. Pp. 658-673; Paul Robert Magocsi. *A History of Ukraine*. Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny. *The Revenge of the Past. Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. Stanford, CA, 1993; Boris Mironov. *The Social History of Imperial Russia, 1700-1917*. Vol. 1-2. Boulder, CO, Cunnor Hill, Oxford, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g.: Yaroslav Hrytsak. *Narys istoriji Ukrajinj. Formuvannia modernoji ukrainkoji natsiji*. Kyiv, 1996 [=in Ukrainian: *Outline of the History of Ukraine. The Making of The Modern Ukrainain Nation*]; Aleksei Miller. "Ukrainskii vopros" v politike vlasteii i russkom obschestvennom mnenii (vtoraia polovina XIX v.). St. Petersburg, 2000 [=in Russian: *The "Ukrainian Question" in the Politics of Powers and Russian Public Opinion (Second Half of the XIX century)*]; Tomasz Kizwalter. *O nowoczesności narodu. Przypadek Polski*. Warsaw, 1999 [=in Polish: *On the Modernity of a Nation: The Case of Poland*].

<sup>5</sup> Orlando Figes. *Natasha's Dance. A Cultural History of Russia*. London, New York, 2003.

proach.<sup>6</sup> Others suggest shifting to a broader “Eurasian”<sup>7</sup> and even “global”<sup>8</sup> context, or practicing so-called “entangled history”.<sup>9</sup> Without denying the legitimacy of these strategies, the following paper suggests a new one: it seeks to confront the new and old mega-narratives in historical writing with recent empirical research on different aspects of post-communist transformation in Eastern Europe.

The suggested approach reflects a growing belief in the crucial role that diverse historical legacies play in shaping different patterns of post-communist economic, political, and cultural developments in Eastern Europe. As a Polish scholar has observed,

It was history that ‘carved’ the regions, in the same way as it made states and nations. A historical factor was also very important for creating an ethnic situation, as well as cultural, linguistic, religious and economic ones. For this reason, the historical dimension [deserves] special attention.<sup>10</sup>

This approach is not intended to replace the old teleological vision of history with a new one. Rather, it reflects an understanding that even during periods of radical change historical continuity has to be given its due. Or, to put it in terms of “path-dependence” theory, “where you can get to depends on where you’re coming from”.<sup>11</sup> While tracing the structural constraints and advantages that the historical legacy imposes on the present, historians are at the same time enriching their understanding of the past. Such an

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<sup>6</sup> Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen. *After Empire. Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building. The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*. Boudler, CO, Oxford, Britain, 1997. See also two recent international projects that are underway in Moscow (*Empires. Comparative History. Development of Education in Russia* Mega-project; website address: <http://www.empires.ru>) and in Budapest (*Empires Unlimited* University Seminar at the Central European University; website address: <http://www.ceu.hu/pasts>).

<sup>7</sup> See the article by Mark von Hagen in this issue of *Ab Imperio*.

<sup>8</sup> E. Thomas Ewing. *Russian History in Global Perspective* // *NewsNet. News of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies*. 2002. Vol. 42. No. 4. Pp. 1-4.

<sup>9</sup> Philipp Ther. *Beyond the Nation: The Relational Basis of a Comparative History of Germany and Europe* // *Central European History*. 2003. Vol. 36. S. 45-74.

<sup>10</sup> Roman Szul. *Perspektywy regionalizmu Galicyjskiego w Polsce na tle tendencji międzynarodowych* // Jerzy Chłopiecki, Helena Madurowicz-Urbańska (Eds.). *Galicja i jej dziedzictwo. T. 2. Społeczeństwo i Gospodarka*. Rzeszów, 1995. S. 78 [=in Polish: *Perspectives of Galician Regionalism in Poland in a Context of International Tendencies*].

<sup>11</sup> Robert D. Putnam. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, 1993. P. 179.

approach helps us to move beyond the “revolving door” of dominant discourses,<sup>12</sup> following the line of an argument that “the boundaries of the field can only be determined by empirical investigation”.<sup>13</sup>

As a case in point, I have chosen post-communist Ukraine. Until 1991, Ukraine was largely absent from dominant discourses in both “East” and “West”,<sup>14</sup> and by the same token it has a strong “revisionist” potential to challenge them.<sup>15</sup> Ukraine *per se* is an assemblage of different regions, each with a distinctive past; to some extent, that regionalism is held to be a key factor in modern Ukrainian history.<sup>16</sup> Because of its large size and internal regional diversity, Ukraine makes a perfect case for the issue under a discussion; it can simultaneously be inscribed in different historical and geographical contexts and thus serve as a test for several mega-narratives.

This opportunity has not been largely squandered by the post-Soviet Ukrainian historiography, mostly due to the Soviet legacy with its long record of artificial isolation and intellectual provincialization.<sup>17</sup> The first decade of post-Communist transformation proved to be too short a period to overcome this legacy. As a result, Western trends have not shattered traditional historiographic discourses in Ukraine. The only significant change has been a decline of the class paradigm in its vulgar Marxist (Soviet) form, and, more generally (and more regrettably), of social history. Most indigenous historians have merely shifted from using class to national paradigms. In the Ukrainian case, the latter was designed by Mykhailo Hrushevs’kyi (1866-1934), the dean of modern Ukrainian historiography.<sup>18</sup> The only major

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<sup>12</sup> I borrowed this image from Nancy F. Partner, who defined “linguistic turn” in contemporary Western historiography as “a revolving door” in which “everyone went around and around and got out exactly where they got in” (Nancy F. Partner. *Historicity in an Age of Reality-Fictions* // Frank Ankersmith and Hans Kellner (Eds.). *A New Philosophy of History*. London, 1995. P. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago, London, 1992. P. 100.

<sup>14</sup> For a general discussion see: Mark von Hagen. *Does Ukraine Have a History?*

<sup>15</sup> I tried to develop this point in my article: *Wie soll man nach 1991 die Geschichte der Ukraine unterrichten?* // *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*. 2001. Bd. 23. S. 1-25.

<sup>16</sup> David Saunders. *Modern Ukrainian History* // *European History Quarterly*. 1991. Vol. 21. No. 1. P. 85.

<sup>17</sup> See: Orest Subtelny. *The Current State of Ukrainian Historiography* // *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*. 1993. Vol. 18. No. 1-2. P. 36.

<sup>18</sup> See: Mykhajlo Hrushevsky. *The Traditional Scheme of “Russian” History and the Problem of a Rational Organization of the History of the Eastern Slavs* // *Idem*. *From Kievan Rus’ to Modern Ukraine: Formation of the Ukrainian Nation*. Cambridge, Ma., 1984. Pp. 355-364.

addendum to “Hrushevs’kyi’s scheme” in the post-Soviet Ukraine is the interpretation of Ukraine as a “civilizational” borderland. While removing Ukraine from Russian-dominated cultural and political space and placing it “between West and East,” this interpretation modifies Hrushevs’kyi’s thesis of the Ukrainian history as a separate and legitimate field of study. Apart from that, Ukrainian historians essentially show little interest in the newest theories and approaches. The search for a new paradigm reflects the delicate position of a much smaller group of scholars trying to bring their research agenda in line with recent developments in the Western academic world and thus “normalize” their own field.<sup>19</sup>

By the same token, post-Soviet Ukrainian historiography is very much the historiography of Ukrainian nation-building. The paradox is, however, that in order to get an adequate understanding of the make-up of Ukrainian identity, one has no choice but to move “beyond [the] national”. In other words, to put national identity in a broader ranges of social identification and to place it within various political and social contexts. This is exactly what recent studies of Ukrainian identity in the post-Soviet Ukraine have made so evident.<sup>20</sup>

To be sure, the suggested approach has its own limitations. They are, however, reduced to a minimum by the two following considerations. First, it limits itself to a test of old divisions and does not seek to introduce a new one. Second, unlike a national paradigm, it does not treat Ukraine as something exceptional or as a pre-determined fact. In my view, for the purpose of the suggested analyses, Ukraine could be replaced by any other country or region of Eastern Europe.<sup>21</sup> The choice of Ukraine is dictated by consid-

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<sup>19</sup> For a general overview of the post-Soviet Ukrainian historiography, see my: *Ukraine Historiography, 1991-2001: Decade of Transformation* // Alojz Ivanišević, Andreas Kappeler, Walter Lukan and Arnold Suppan (Hrsg.). *Klio ohne Fesseln? Historiographie im östlichen Europa nach dem Zusammenbruch des Kommunismus*. (= published simultaneously as a special issue of *Oesterreichischen Osthefte*. 2002. Bd. 1-2. S. 107-126). Russian translation see in: *Ab Imperio*. 2003. No. 2. Pp. 427-454.

<sup>20</sup> I tried to elaborate this point in my recent paper: “On Relevance and Irrelevance of Nationalism in Ukraine,” *The Second Annual Cambridge-Stasiuk Lecture on Ukraine*, Cambridge, UK, February 20, 2004. Available in PDF format at [http://www.ualberta.ca/CIUS/stasiuk/st-articles/2004-02-20\\_Cambridge%20Lecture%202004.pdf](http://www.ualberta.ca/CIUS/stasiuk/st-articles/2004-02-20_Cambridge%20Lecture%202004.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> So far I have found only one case of denial of “path-dependency theory” when it comes to former communist countries. Walter C. Clemens writes that “Balts, however, were not “path dependent”, as were Aalborg, Denmark, and Italy – north and south – according to major scholars. Their lives were shaped but not paralyzed by history – not straitjacketed by the long durée.” (Walter C. Clemens. *Why Study the Baltics? How?* //

erations of efficiency and – last but not least – of my personal convenience, since this is the case that I know best.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Does Geography Matter?***

The recent turn in identity studies is characterized by the “return of geography”, the latter understood in the sense both of “real” (the impact of physical environment) and “symbolic” (constructed/imagined/invented) geography.<sup>23</sup> The importance of the geographic factor in the Ukrainian case can be discerned from the very name of the country: Ukraine, like Baluchistan, Nagaland, Scotland, Zululand and others, is a country whose name reflects a people’s claim upon special territory.<sup>24</sup> Since its very emergence, Ukrainian national historiography has seen the history of Ukraine as a function of its geography.<sup>25</sup>

While there seems to be a general agreement on this point, historians cannot agree on how geography affected identity formation. One school of thought sees Ukraine as a rather compact territory. Ukrainian historians who belong to that school emphasize the relative isolation of Ukrainian lands by forest belts in the west and the northeast, and by marshes in the northwest and mountains in the west and south. This isolation supposedly

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NewsNet. News of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. 2002. Vol. 42. No. 5. P. 2.) The quoted statement seems to be untenable, and it is based on an inadequate understanding of the theory; history “matters” in both success and failure of transformation, so even the Baltic success requires a “path-dependent” explanation.

<sup>22</sup> Since 1994, as a director of Institute for Historical Research, L’viv National University, I have been involved in several interdisciplinary and international projects that dealt with regionalism in Ukraine, with a special focus on two cities, L’viv in the Western and Dnietser in Eastern Ukraine. The results of these projects have been published in several articles (see footnotes no 80 and 84 below) and will be presented and summarized in a separate collection of essays that will be published simultaneously as volume 10 of the Institute’s Annual *Ukraina moderna* (L’viv, 2004, forthcoming).

<sup>23</sup> See: David Hooson. *Afterwood: Identity Resurgent – Geography Revived* // Idem. (Ed.). *Geography and National Identity*. Oxford, UK, Cambridge, MA, 1994. P. 369.

<sup>24</sup> Walker Connor. *Ethnonationalism. The Quest for Understanding*. Princeton, 1994. P. 77.

<sup>25</sup> Mykhailo Hrushevsky. *History of Ukraine-Rus’*. Vol. 1. From Prehistory to the Eleventh Century. Edmonton, Toronto, 1997. Pp. 7-12; Orest Subtelny. *A History*. 3rd ed. Toronto, Buffalo, London, 2000. Pp. 3-5. For a brief overview see: Natalia Iakovenko. *Paralel’nyi svit. Doslidzhennia z istorii uiaвлен’ ta idei v Ukraini 16-17 st.* Kyiv, 2002. Pp. 334-336.

limited contacts on the Ukrainian-Russian, Ukrainian-Polish, Ukrainian-Belarusian and Ukrainian-Hungarian borderlands. Ethnic borders to a large extent coincided with later political and administrative divisions in Kyivan Rus' and Rzecz Pospolita, as is confirmed, among other things, by onomastic and toponomic data.<sup>26</sup> It is not hard to place this school in the context of current discourses on nationalism; it shares the general assumptions of a premordialist trend that, among other things, is based on a Herderian equation between language and *Volk*, and reifies ethnic groups as *a thing*. Its weak point lies in ignoring the transactional character of ethnic identity,<sup>27</sup> for any external definition of *what is* and *what is not* a separate ethnic group is no more important (to say the least) than the self-identification of the given group itself.

Adherents of the other school of thought claim that it is precisely the absence of clear-cut geographic borders that has constituted an essential feature of Ukrainian history<sup>28</sup> and, by implication, affected identity formation. The modern Ukrainian ethnic territory is part of the vast East European plain that runs from west to east as far as the Ural Mountains and is bounded on the North and South by the Baltic and Black Seas. In contrast, say, to the French "isthmus", the plain never formed a single and coherent territory.<sup>29</sup> It has often been called "a paradise for generals", since this part of European continent displays no major geographic barriers that would hinder the planning of large-scale military operations.<sup>30</sup> The only exception is the Prypiat marshes in Polissia – now part of the border region between Belarus and Ukraine. They were hard to cross and hindered the progress of large armies, as was the case with Charles XII's campaign in

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<sup>26</sup> For a recent example of such views see: Yaroslav Isayevych. *Ukraina davnia i nova: Narod, relihii, kul'tura* [=in Ukrainian: *Ukraine Ancient and Modern: People, Religion, Culture*]. Lviv, 1996. Pp. 63-74.

<sup>27</sup> For a recent critique of the premordial approach (which, paradoxically, affected both national non-communist and Soviet historiographies of the region) see: Florin Curta. *The Making of the Slavs. History and Archeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500-700*. Cambridge, UK, New York, 2001. Pp. 6-35.

<sup>28</sup> See, e.g.: Omelian Terletskyi. *Vplyv pryrody na istorii Ukrainy* [=in Ukrainian: *Impact of Nature on the History of Ukraine*]. Lviv, 1930. P. 30; Paul Robert Magocsi. *A History*. P. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Fernand Braudel. *The Identity of France. Vol. I. History and Environment* / Transl. from the French by Sian Reynolds. New York, 1988.

<sup>30</sup> Norman Davies. *Orzeł Biały, Czerwona Gwiazda. Wojna polsko-bolszewicka 1919-1920* / Przekł. z ang. Andrzej Pawelec. Kraków, 1997. S. 29 [=in Polish: *White Eagle, Red Star. The Polish-Bolshevik War 1919-1920*].

1706 and with the Nazi offensive in summer 1941.<sup>31</sup> But even the Prypiat problem was of a relative character; the marshes could not stop the progress of the Russian troops during so called “Brusilov offensive” in 1916 or of the Red Army during the Polish-Soviet war in 1920 and the Second World War in 1943. In any case, the geographic isolation of Polissia never led to the emergence of a separate East Slavic *Polishchuk* nation (even though attempts at such belated nation-building were made by local intellectuals during the Gorbachov era).<sup>32</sup>

Whether geography matters for the making of Ukrainian ethnic borders with Russia, Poland, Belarus and Hungary remains a matter of dispute. There is, however, agreement between the two schools when they discuss the role of a large steppe zone in the southeast. The Ukrainian steppe forms the western part of a long Eurasian belt that starts in Mongolia and extends through Southern Siberia, Central Asia, the Southern Ural and Lower Volga regions, and the Don area up to the Black Sea coast, ending in Romania. Rich in natural resources, with warm, dry climate, it was an ideal environment for cattle breeding and served as a broad corridor where nomadic people roamed unhampered by any geographical barriers.

The presence of a great steppe zone, underpopulated due to continuous military invasions – first by nomads and then (in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) by Crimean Tartars – is considered to be one of the most characteristic features of Ukrainian history. It is responsible, among other things, for the multiethnic character of the population.<sup>33</sup> Uncontrolled by any political body, the steppe attracted thousands and thousands of refugees, colonizers, and adventurers, who found shelter and constructed military settlements there, like the Zaporozhian Host.

The situation changed by the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Ukrainian steppes were incorporated into the Russian empire and both the Crimean Tartar Khanate and the Zaporozhian Host were abolished. The multiethnic

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<sup>31</sup> A. Filippi. Pripiatskaia problema. Ocherk operativnogo znachenii Pripiatskoi oblasti dlia voiennoi kampanii 1941 goda. Moscow, 1959 [=in Russian: Pripiat Problem. Outline of Operative Importance of Pripiat Region for Military Campaign in 1941]; Andrej Kotliarchuk. Shvedy v historyi j kul'tury belarusav. Mensk, 2002. P. 184 [=in Belarusian: Swedes in Belarusian History and Culture].

<sup>32</sup> To my limited knowledge, this phenomenon has not been studied. I have in my possession several issues of the newspaper “Prabudzhennia” (Awakening) published by Polishchuk “national-awakeners” in the late 1980s.

<sup>33</sup> Alfred Rieber. *Struggle Over the Borderlands // S. Frederick Starr (Ed.). The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia.* New York, London, 1994. Pp. 61-90.



character, however, persisted. Under the Russian empire (1785-1917) and in the Soviet Union (1917-1991), the steppe zone was a booming agriculture center and witnessed the development of modern industry and rapid urbanization. It gave a rise to a huge economic migration from adjacent Ukrainian and Russian cores, as well from the Black Sea coast and the Balkans.

As a land allegedly awash with “milk and honey” and inhabited by savage, untamed people, the Black Sea steppe was a powerful figure in imaginary geography. This image can already be found in Herodotus and Ovid. During the Enlightenment, the Ukrainian steppe played a very important role in shaping the term “Eastern Europe”.<sup>34</sup> It is strongly rooted in modern Russian, Polish and Ukrainian intellectual traditions as a symbol of a free and glorious past. From the early Romantics onwards, it acted on people’s minds like a powerful leaven. In the specific context of Ukrainian intellectual history, the Zaporozhian Host and Cossack Ukraine were sacralized by many authors, Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) above all. It became a major historical and geographical symbol around which the image of Ukraine as the national homeland revolved.<sup>35</sup> In terms of political geography, the steppe remained a territory that was hard for any political regime to control, the Soviet included; in 1919 and then again in 1930 it was a zone of mass peasant uprisings and wars, and by the end of the Soviet rule there had emerged a mass workers’ movement that strongly contributed to the fall of Communist power.

The geographic division between the settled forest and unsettled steppe zones persists in contemporary Ukraine. It works as a disintegrating factor. According to the last (1989) Soviet census, the region west and north of the steppe frontier had a population that is 84.8% Ukrainophone, while in the territory east and south only 18.7% used the Ukrainian language.<sup>36</sup> In the first years of Ukrainian independence, the ethnolinguistic and geographical cleavage acquired a dangerous political dimension. During the 1994 presi-

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<sup>34</sup> Larry Wolff. *Inventing Eastern Europe*.

<sup>35</sup> George Grabowicz. *Between History and Myth: Perceptions of the Cossack Past in Polish, Russian and Ukrainian History and Myth: Perception of the Cossack Past in Polish, Russian and Ukrainian Literature // American Contribution to the Ninth International Congress of Slavists*. Kyiv, 1983. Pp. 173-188; Idem. *The Poet as Mythmaker. A Study of Symbolic Meaning in Taras Šhevčenko*. Cambridge, MA, 1982.

<sup>36</sup> Dominique Arel. *Ukraine. The Temptation of the Nationalizing State // Vladimir Tismaneanu (Ed.). Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. Armonk, NY, 1995. P. 169.

dential elections, the rivalry between the two main candidates developed into a political antagonism between the two large regions; the Ukrainian-speaking west and north voted for Kravchuk while the Russian-speaking east and south opted for Kuchma. These developments gave a rise to alarmist scenarios about forthcoming civil war and the possible death of the young national state.<sup>37</sup>

These fears, fortunately, proved to be groundless in the longer term. The next presidential and parliament elections in 1998, 1999, and 2002 revealed that regional differences in Ukraine are in fact subsiding. Despite this objective tendency, the image of “two Ukraines”, or of Ukraine as “a cleft country”,<sup>38</sup> continues to be very persistent in political writings. Such an “imaginary political geography” remains a source of concern for both the presidential party and the opposition in their struggle for power.

To conclude this part, one has to say that geography firmly places the Ukrainian case in a Eurasian context. The geographical peculiarities of Eurasia – a large expanse of space without interior geographical divisions – led to wholesale confusion and to contests over the definition of territorial and ethnic boundaries. It has been said, “There is probably no other region of the world in which empire building and state-building have been subject to such ambivalence.”<sup>39</sup>

### *The Legacy of Rus’*

Among other long-term factors in the Ukrainian case, the legacy of *Rus’* is second in importance only to geography. It is a legacy of Eastern Christianity that traces its beginning from the conversion of the Kyivan prince-

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<sup>37</sup> Ukraine – The Birth and Possible Death of a Country // *The Economist*. 1994. 7 May.

<sup>38</sup> Mykola Riabchuk. Vid Malorosii do Ukraïny: paradoksy zapizniloho natsiietvorennia. Kyïv, 2000 [=in Ukrainian: From Malorosia to Ukraine: Paradoxes of a Belated Nation Building]; Idem. Dvi Ukraïny: Realni Mezhi, Virtualni Vijny. Kyïv, 2003 [=in Ukrainian: Two Ukraines: Real Limits, Virtual Wars]; Samuel P. Huntington. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York, 1996. Pp. 165-168. For a critique see: Yaroslav Hrytsak. Dylemy ukrajins’koho naciotvorennia, abo shche raz pro stare vyno u novykh mikhakh // *Ukraïns’kyj humanitarnyj ohliad*. 2000. No. 4. Pp. 11-33 [=in Ukrainian: Dilemmas of Ukrainian Nation-building or an Old Vine in New Bags]; Paul Globe. Russia: Analysis From Washington – The Specter of Disintegration // *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (<http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2001/03/22032001112304.asp>) (last visited on March 26, 2001).

<sup>39</sup> Mark R. Bessinger. The Persisting Ambiguity of Empire // *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 1995. Vol. 11. No. 2. P. 180.

dom with the baptism of its ruler, Volodymyr (Vladimir in Russian), in 988. In current Ukrainian historical discourses, Rus' is considered as the first Ukrainian state embodied in the history of either Kyivan Rus' or/and the Galician Volhynian Principality.<sup>40</sup> But there is more to Rus' than its medieval political history: it came to designate various phenomena over a long period of time, from its obscure beginnings in the 9<sup>th</sup> century until at least the World War I.

With the final division of Christianity (1054) into western and eastern branches, Rus' came to represent the church unity of East Slavs as reflected in the ecclesiastical title of the metropolitanate "of Kiev and of all Rus'". This was the sole unity that Rus' possessed. The political concept of a single complete Rus' state did not emerge in the Kyivan period (10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries) or later. There was no single ruler in the Rus' territory, there was only a single spiritual authority.

The origins of the term Rus' are far from being clear. It has numerous etymologies, which would place it in different cultural and political traditions.<sup>41</sup> Originally, the term was used in Eastern Europe for a small region on the right bank of the Dnieper near Kyiv; later, it evolved a broader meaning as a term for the whole East Slavic territory. Its derivatives were also used to describe certain territories (Red Rus' for Galicia; White Rus' for contemporary Belarus', but, at one period, also for the Ukrainian lands of Kiev and Volyn' [Volhynia],<sup>42</sup> Black Rus', Little Rus', and Great Rus', Southern and Northern Rus', and, finally, all Rus'). More often than not, the terms were not the proper names but described the fluctuating legal status of the East Slavic lands and people.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> For a general overview see: Andrew Wilson. *Myths of National History in Belarus and Ukraine* // Geoffrey Hosking, George Schöpflin (Eds.). *Myths and Nationhood*. London, 1997. Pp. 182-197; Wilfried Jilge. *Natsional'na istoriia na prykladi zobrazhenia doby Kyivs'koï Rusi v ukraïns'kykh pidruchnykakh z istoriï* // *Ukraïn'ska istorychna dydaktyka. Mizhnarodnyi dialoh. Fakhivtsi riznykh kraïn pro suchasni ukraïns'ki pidruchnyky z istoriï*. Kyïv, 2000. Pp.82-90 [=In Ukrainian: *National History as Reflected in Image of Kyiv Rus' in Ukrainian Textbooks in History*].

<sup>41</sup> Jewhen Nakonechnyj. *Ukradene imja. Chomu rusyny staly ukrajinciamy*. L'viv, 2001. Pp. 33-70 [=in Ukrainian: *A Stolen Name. Why Ruthenians became Ukrainians*].

<sup>42</sup> Nicholas Vakar. *Belorussia. The Making of a Nation*. Cambridge, MA, 1956. Pp. 2-3.

<sup>43</sup> Borys Floria. *Evolutsija znachennia terminu "Rus" i pokhidnykh vid nioho u skhidnoslovians'kykh dzherelakh XII-XIV stolittia* // Yaroslav Hrytsak, Yaroslav Isayevech (Eds.). *Druhij mizhnarodnyj kongres ukrajinstiv*. L'viv, 22-28 serpnia 1993. *Dopovidi i povidomlennia. Istorija*. 1. L'viv, 1994. P. 3 [=in Ukrainian: *Evolution of the Meaning of term "Rus' and its Deriatives in East Slavic Sources of XII-XIV Centuries*];

Based on the extent of the use of the Church Slavonic language, historians and linguists define this vast region as Slavia Orthodoxa or *Byzance après Byzance*. Together with the East Slavs, this area included the Romanians and Balkan Slavs as well. Within that space, there emerged some common features of high culture, such as sacral architecture, paintings, and music,<sup>44</sup> as well as a popular culture shared by Eastern Christian peasants until the First World War.<sup>45</sup> There were also some important intellectual patterns. Eastern Christianity, transplanted from the Byzantine Empire to the Eastern Slavic territory, limited itself to emulating Byzantine (Greek) cultural achievements, never seeking to supersede them. It was marked by an extreme dogmatism and conservatism, and a poverty of intellectual production. Suffice it to say that the range of reading of an Orthodox believer in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries was basically the same; it was limited to 200-300 titles, with no book of secular, historical, or scientific content.<sup>46</sup> If book-printing was a major tool of modern identity formation, then in Slavia Orthodoxa a transformation of secular community into modern nation was seriously hampered by the scarcity of printed books; while 200 million volumes were published in the Western Christian territories by the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, in *Rus'* no more than 40,000-60,000 were printed.<sup>47</sup>

The Rus' legacy is held to be responsible for the persistence of a certain set of political traditions. While the "Western pattern" of politics lies in the separation of religious and secular spheres, Eastern Europe was character-

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Omeljan Pritsak, John S. Reshetar. *Ukraine and the Dialectics of Nation-Building // From Kievan Rus' to Modern Ukraine: Formation of the Ukrainian Nation*. Cambridge, MA, 1984. Pp. 24-25 (second pagination).

<sup>44</sup> Isayevych. Op. cit.

<sup>45</sup> Leonid Heretz. *Russian Apocalypse, 1891-1917: Popular Perceptions of Events from the Year of Famine and Cholera to the Fall of the Tsar* / Ph.D. Dissertation; Harvard University, 1993.

<sup>46</sup> George Fedotov. *The Russian Religious Mind*. Belmont, MA, 1975. Vol. 1. Pp. 21-60, 365-412; Vol. 2. Pp. 32-33; Ihor Ševčenko. *Ukraine between East and West*. Edmonton, 1996.

<sup>47</sup> Markus Osterrieder. *Von der Sakralgemeinschaft zur Modernen Nation. Die Entstehung eines Nationalbewußtseins unter Russen, Ukrainern und Weißruthenen im Lichte der Thesen Benedict Andersons // Eva Schmidt-Hartmann (Hg.). Formen der nationalen Bewußtsein im Lichte zeitgenössischer Nationalismustheorien*. München, 1994. S. 207. Osterrieder, mistakenly gives 20 numbers of copies for the Eastern Christian Slavic region, where it must be 20 books. Provided that maximum number of copies of books was 3-4,000, then we get 40,000-60,000 copies.

ized by a blurring of the religious and secular powers. The rivalry between the ruler and the Church in the West made it possible for the third parties to emerge with their own sources of power. It formed the historical basis for what was later called civil society. In contrast, the subordination of the Eastern church to the state led to the absence of a second political actor, and so, by definition, of any other actors.<sup>48</sup>

Since major nation-building projects in Eastern Europe were basically anti-imperial, they had to rely on the resources of civil institutions. But given local political traditions, the latter were very feeble and lacked continuity. Therefore local nationalisms were seriously handicapped in their development, much to despair of local nation-builders (the same holds true, as Geoffrey Hosking suggests,<sup>49</sup> even for Russian nationalism). As a Ukrainian socialist from the Russian empire wrote in 1870s, “[b]esides three groups, Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians, there exists a fourth one: *all-Rus'*, something hopeless, a dense stratum of [different] ethnic groups and nationalities covering *Rus'*.”<sup>50</sup>

By this token, the making of modern Ukraine (as well as Russia and Belarus') was bound to be the unmaking of old Rus'. This project largely remained unfinished. Mass sources allow us to trace the persistence of the Rus' identity, as distinct from modern Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Russian identities, well into the 1930s.<sup>51</sup> In the post-communist Ukraine, it is reflected in a phenomenon that sociologists call “Eastern Slavic proximity”; within a range of various Eurasian and North American nations, Ukraini-

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<sup>48</sup> In words of a contemporary political analyst, “[t]he symbolic drama of Canossa illustrated this vividly. In no other historical tradition was it conceivable that a powerful secular ruler like Emperor Henry IV would undertake a penitent's pilgrimage, in a hair shirt with a rope around his neck, to expiate his politico-religious sins or, in power terms, to recognize the religious authority of Pope Gregory VII, whom he had unsuccessfully challenged. The idea of the tsar of Muscovy or the Byzantine emperor or the Ottoman sultan performing an analogous penance is an inherent absurdity.” George Shöpflin. *The Political Traditions of Eastern Europe // Daedalus*. 1990. Vol. 119. No. 1 “Eastern Europe... Central Europe... Europe”. P. 57.

<sup>49</sup> Geoffrey Hosking. *Russia. People and Empire, 1552-1917*. Cambridge, 1997.

<sup>50</sup> Cited in: Mykhailo Hrushevskyyi. *Z pochyniv ukraïnskoho sochialistychnoho rukhu*. Mykh. Drahomanov i zhenevskyyi socialistychnyyi hurtok. Vienna, 1922. P. 64 [=in Ukrainian: *On the Origins of the Ukrainian Socialist Movement*. Mykh. Drahomanov and Geneva Socialist Group].

<sup>51</sup> *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni. Kollektivizaciia i raskulachivanie. Dokumenty i materialy*: in 5 vols. Vol.1-2. Mosow, 1999; 2000 [=in Russian: *Tragedy of Soviet Village. Collectivization and Deculakization. Documents and Materials*].

ans tend to identify their interests with Russians and Belarusians, while feeling increasingly alienated from others.<sup>52</sup>

The persistence of the Rus' legacy predetermines (if not in rigid terms) identification with East Slavic Europe. And that identification is here to stay for a long time.<sup>53</sup> It clearly undermines, to a large extent, the viability of both European and Eurasian projects. A large part of the Ukrainian population does not look optimistically toward either European integration (even if it involved close cooperation with the Poles, who in general terms have a very positive image in Ukraine) or the Eurasian option (feeling rather cold toward Central Asia and fear of involvement in the Chechnya conflict).

### ***Polishing Rus': The Role of the Polish Legacy***

In medieval and early modern times, what was referred to as Rus' was under different political regimes and was never homogenous in ethnic terms. Its population shared common Eastern Church rituals (either Orthodox or Greek-Catholic, with Sloveno-Ruthenian as the sacral language), spoke mutually comprehensible vernaculars, and had a diffuse memory of their common descent from Kyivan Rus'. Only gradually, under the centrifugal influences of such cultural productive centers as L'viv, Kyiv, Vil'no (Vilnius), Krakow, Moscow and others, did distinctive national identities emerge.<sup>54</sup>

Until recently, the Eastern European past has stood in the shadow of the Russian and Soviet empires. But both are relatively recent phenomena. Modern Ukraine, like Belarus and the Baltic states, was incorporated into the Russian empire rather late; most of this territory became Russian after the partition of Rzecz Pospolita in 1772-1795. The newly incorporated territories were little affected by Russian cultural and political influences. Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Polish cultural influences were dominant

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<sup>52</sup> Natalia Panina. *Nepodolana Dystancija* // Krytyka. 2003. Vol. VII. No. 7-9. P.18 [=in Ukrainian: A Distance Not Crossed].

<sup>53</sup> In the words of a historian, "[t]he Byzantine heritage of... Ukrainian populations and more recent long-range developments – the latest of which is the Russian cultural impact upon a large part of Ukrainian lands – can recede into the background in the heady atmosphere of change, but their effects will not disappear overnight". Ševčenko. *Op. cit.* P. 10.

<sup>54</sup> John A. Armstrong. *Myth and History in the Evolution of Ukrainian Consciousness* // Peter J. Potichnyj, Marc Raeff, Jaroslaw Pelenski, and Gleb N. Žekulin (Eds.). *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*. Edmonton, 1992. Pp. 129-130.

in Kyiv<sup>55</sup> and they extended as far as Kharkiv University on the Russian-Ukrainian borderland.<sup>56</sup>

The role of the Polish legacy for the shaping of identities in this region cannot and should not be ignored. The problem is, however, that “Polish legacy” is rather an awkward term. It covers diverse and loosely connected phenomena that are hard to reduce to a single common denominator. Among other things, some of them were not Polish *per se*. They included, for example, German urban law<sup>57</sup> and the “Jewish question”. To simplify, but not to distort the picture, one may say that Polish influences were responsible for channeling Western (i.e. Western Christian) political and cultural phenomena into western and southern Rus’. They polished it, in a Western style.

This influence can be discerned in the origins of such basic elements of Ukrainian identity as language and historical memory. Due to numerous borrowings from Polish, German, Czech, and Latin, early modern Ukrainian (so-called *prosta mova*) was closer to the Western Slavic languages than to Church Slavonic or Russian in its vocabulary. Polish linguistic influences persisted through the harshest Polish-Ukrainian conflicts until the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>58</sup> Polish historical treatises served as a main source for Ukrainian history-writing in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries – to such an extent that early modern authors even studied the period of Kyivan Rus’ through the lens of Polish chronicles; the authentic ancient Rus’ chronicles could not satisfy their refined tastes.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Michael F. Hamm. *Kiev. A Portrait, 1800-1917*. Princeton, 1993 (see especially Chapter III “Polish city”).

<sup>56</sup> Stefan Kozak. *Ukraińscy spiskowcy i mesjaniści: Bractwo Cyryla i Metodego*. Warszawa 1990 [=in Polish: *Ukrainian Conspirators and Messiahists of St. Cyril and Methodij Brotherhood*].

<sup>57</sup> On the spread of German urban law see: Tetiana Hoshko. *Narysy z istoriji Magdeburz’koho prava v Ukrajinii XIV-poch. XVII st.* L’viv, 2002 [=in Ukrainian: *An Outline of the History of Magdeburg Law in Ukraine, XIV – beginning of XVII century*]. The reminiscences of Magdeburg law could be traced in historical memory of Ukrainian peasants on the verge of the Soviet collectivization. See: William Noll. *Transformatsija hromadians’koho suspil’stva . Usna istorija ukrajins’koho selians’koho kul’tury 1920-1930 rokiv*. Kyiv, 1999 [=in Ukrainian: *Transformation of Civil Society. Oral History of Ukrainian Peasant Culture of 1920-1930s.*].

<sup>58</sup> G. Y. Shevelov. *Language // Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. Vol. III. P. 44.

<sup>59</sup> Frank E. Sysyn. *The Cultural, Social and Political Context of Ukrainian History-Writing: 1620-1690 // Europa Orientalis*. 1986. Vol. 5. Pp. 285-310; Oleskii Tolochko. “Rus” ochyma “Ukrajiny”: v poshukax samoidentyfikatsiji ta kontynujitetu // Yaroslav Hrytsak, Yaroslav Isayevych (Eds.). *Druhij mizhnarodnyj kongres ukrajinstiv*. Pp. 68-75 [=in Ukrainian: “Rus’ in Eyes of ‘Ukraine’: In a Search for Self-Identification and Continuity”].

Polish annexation of a significant part of Eastern Slavic territory – under the Polish crown in the XIV century, and later, in 1569, under Rzecz Pospolita – served as a long-term integrating factor for both Ukrainian and Belarusian ethnic territories. It led to the possibility of a common Rus' identity for both Ukrainian and Belarusians as an alternative to both Polish and Russian nation-building (this concept was still being discussed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). The separate concept of a Ukrainian Cossack state and Ukrainian fatherland emerged in a confrontation with Catholicism and Rzecz Pospolita in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It proved to be viable in the context of Cossack autonomy within the Russian empire – but then again, it was largely based on the Polish concept of patria (*ojczyzna*).<sup>60</sup>

Following the partitions of the Rzecz Pospolita in 1772-1795 and until the Second World War, the most persistent Polish influence in Eastern Europe was nationalism. Polish nationalism did for the East European people what the French nationalism did for the Western Europeans: it nationalized them, i.e. made them accept the logic and practices of nationalism. Suffice it to say that both the Ukrainian and the Jewish national anthems begin with a line that is a paraphrase of the Polish anthem “Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła” (Poland has not yet died).<sup>61</sup> If one were to draw on a contemporary Ukrainian map the historical zones of the Polish *Drang nach Osten*, they would coincide to a large extent with the intensity of Ukrainian identity and spread of the Ukrainian language.<sup>62</sup> Recent surveys on post-Soviet Eastern Europe reveal that ethnicity and ethnic differentiation are losing their salience among ordinary people, while social identification (such as with “workers” or “business(wo)men”) is becoming increasingly important for the way people perceive both themselves and ongoing political and economic changes. This tendency is believed to herald the emergence of a society in which citizens compete for rewards and opportunities on the basis of merit rather than ethnic heritage. It is not the case, however, in Lithuania and Western Ukraine – the two most “Polish” zones – where national identification axes remain the most salient.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Zenon Kohut. *Derzhavnotvorchi derzhavnoshukannia* // Krytyka. 2000. July. P. 5 [=in Ukrainian: “State-Creative Searches for a State”]; Frank Sysyn. *Fatherland in Early Eighteenth-Century Ukrainian Political Culture* (forthcoming).

<sup>61</sup> Shlomo Avineri. *The Presence of Eastern and Central Europe in the Culture and Politics of Contemporary Israel* // *Eastern European Politics and Societies*. 1996. Vol. 10. No. 2. P. 166.

<sup>62</sup> Ihor Ševčenko. *Ukraine between East and West*; Roman Szul. *Op. cit.* P. 80.

<sup>63</sup> Arthur H. Miller, Thomas F. Klobucar, William M. Reisinger, and Vicki L. Hesli. *Social Identities in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania* // *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 1998. Vol. 14. No. 3. Pp. 248-286.



*Western Ukraine as a Case of the Habsburg Legacy*

The Western Ukraine deserve special treatment. In comparison to other historical regions of Ukraine, it has a very elaborate and sophisticated historiography. This is due to the fact that a large number of West Ukrainian historians – either in the Habsburg empire, the interwar Polish state, and the post-war West – have been integrated into the Western academic establishment. By this token, they did not suffer from the restrictions in research agenda as was the case with their East Ukrainian colleagues. Since the fall of communism, Western Ukraine has increasingly featured in public discourse: the inefficient and authoritative politics of central government in Kyiv caused some Western Ukrainian intellectuals, mostly of a younger generation, to raise demands for Western Ukrainian political autonomy based on the region's distinctive history.<sup>64</sup>

There is little reason, however, to treat the Western Ukraine as a single historical unit prior to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It can be viewed as a unity only *ex negativo* – as Ukrainian lands that were not under Russian/Soviet rule until the Second World War.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, it is rather hard to think about them as only Ukrainian only. These are lands that were on the periphery of Ukrainian nation building until the 1860s and, as a matter of fact, Ukrainian identity had very little chance to prevail here. The dominant local elites were Polish, Austrian-German, or Hungarian and Jews predominated numerically in the urban population. The local East Slavic population traditionally identified themselves as Rusyny/Rus'ki/Rusnaky, i.e. those belonging to Rus'. To this very day, Ruthenian identity prevails in the Ukrainian-Hungarian, Ukrainian-Polish, and Ukrainian-Slovak borderlands. It provides a basis for several nationalistic intellectuals to attempt to con-

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<sup>64</sup> See: Yaroslav Hrytsak. The Importance of Being Galician: the Issue of Identities in Borderlands // International Cultural Centre-Kracow Yearbook 11. Krakow, 2003. Pp.11-18; Vasyl' Rasevych. Avstriis'ki Ukraïntsi mizh natsional'noiu ideyeyu ta impers'koyu loyl'nistiu // Postup. 2000. May 30; Andriy Zayarnyuk. On the Frontiers of Central Europe: Ukrainian Galicia at the Turn of the Millennium // Spaces of Identity. 2000. No. 1 (<http://www.univie.ac.at/spacesofidentity/Vol.1>, last visited on May 2001). On a similar reinterpretation of the Habsburg past in post-communist Polish Galicia, see: Jadwiga Kowalikowa. Słowo – Galicja – dawniej i dziś, czyli habent sua fata verba // Halina Kurek, Franciszka Teleszkiewicz (Eds.). Inteligencja południowo-wschodnich ziem polskich. Kraków, 1998. S. 211-219.

<sup>65</sup> John-Paul Himka. Western Ukraine between the Wars // Canadian Slavonic Papers. 1992. Vol. XXXIV. No. 4. Pp. 391-412.

struct a separate Rusyn' nation – a fourth East Slavic nation alongside the Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians.<sup>66</sup>

Until the very beginning of the First World War (and in Transcarpathia, until the Second World War), the local Eastern Slavic elites were occupied with a discussion of their national identity. The majority opted for a Rus'-based solution. Their Rus' was neither Russia nor Ukraine, but a kind of mystical union of both; it represented a conservative Utopia, a *Gemeinschaft* rather than a *Gesellschaft*, the Holy Rus' of Moscow and Kyiv rather than the then modern Russia of St. Petersburg.<sup>67</sup> But there is no other Ukrainian region that denied its Rus' legacy so drastically in order to embark on a modern Ukrainian project. Ukrainian identity won out before the Second World War and the Soviet integration that followed did little to change it; until the very end of the Soviet Union, Western Ukraine was among the least Russified and Sovietized regions. Western Ukrainians reveal conservative and nationalist attitudes, strongly marked with religious influences; they proved to be very resistant, both politically and military, to the Communist regime. They are also very actively engaged in building what is called a civil society; recent statistics reveal that Galicia and Transcarpathia – the lands of former Habsburg empire – are not matched by any other Ukrainian regions in terms of number of NGOs *per capita*.<sup>68</sup>

Western Ukrainians share these attitudes with their neighbors across the borders. This is especially evident in the case of former Austrian Galicia, which between 1772 and 1918 comprised the major part of Western Ukraine together with the southwestern borderlands of contemporary Poland. Warsaw-based Polish political scientist Tomasz Zarycki has studied post-communist electoral behavior in 5 countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine. He came to the conclusion that Galicia is exceptional. In his words, “[t]his is one of the few places in the present study where one would like to extend the map beyond the present-day political boundaries and present differentiation of the Polish-Ukrainian polit-

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<sup>66</sup> See: Chris Hahn, Timothy Garton Ash. Hail Ruthenia // *New York Review of Books*. 1999. Vol. XLVI. No. 7. April 22. Pp. 54-55; Chris Hann. Intellectuals, Ethnic Groups and Nations: Two Late-Twentieth-Century Cases // Sukumara Periwai (Ed.). *Notions of Nationalism*. Budapest, London, New York, 1995. Pp. 106-128.

<sup>67</sup> Anna Vernonika Wendland. *Die Russophilen in Galizien. Ukrainische Konservative zwischen Österreich und Rußland 1848-1915*. Wien, 2001. S. 89, 151, 180-181.

<sup>68</sup> Counterpart data on Ukrainian NGOs (2000): [http://www.viaduk.net/cp/cpk\\_e.nsf/](http://www.viaduk.net/cp/cpk_e.nsf/) (last visited in June 2001).

ical space in order to show the persistence of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Galician borders".<sup>69</sup>

There was, however, very little in either the local geography or its pre-Austrian history that could have made Austrian (i.e., Polish-Ukrainian) Galicia a separate historical region. The Habsburgs denied its existence as such in order to legitimize the annexation of new lands in East. But this decision was met by many angry voices among local intellectuals, both Poles and Ruthenians (Ukrainians), who were rather unhappy about the shape of their new homeland.<sup>70</sup> And yet in the long run, the former Austrian Galicia proved to be a region with a very distinctive set of attitudes and loyalties.

A comparison with western Belarus – a region that was also outside the Soviet Union until 1939, but still succumbed to Russification and Sovietization<sup>71</sup> – underlines once again the role of the Habsburg legacy in shaping Western Ukrainian peculiarity. The Habsburg heritage had a very ambiguous character. On the one hand, each ethnic group within the empire inherited constitutional and liberal practices whose long-term impact is still apparent in their political organizations. On the other hand, most of the civic institutions and arenas for public discussion were staffed and attended according to the national identities of their members. As a result, instead of a single unified civil society, several competing civil societies developed along national lines.<sup>72</sup> This links Western Ukraine to Central Europe, with its long and mixed historical record of multiethnic diversity and interethnic conflicts.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Tomasz Zarycki. *The New Electoral Geography of Central Europe. Comparative Study of Regional Political Cleavages in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine*. Lund-Warszawa, 1998. P. 58.

<sup>70</sup> Zbigniew Fris. *Galicja*. Wrocław, 2000. S. 58; Iakov Golovatskii. *Karpataskaia Rus' . Geograficheskoe-statisticheskoe i istoriko-statisticheskoe ocherki Galichiny, Severo-Vostochnoi Ugrii i Bukoviny // Slavianskii Sbornik*. Vol. 2. St. Petersburg, 1878. P. 55 [=in Russian: *Carpathian Rus' , Geographical, Statistical and Historical Outline of Galicia, North-Western Hungary and Bukovyna*].

<sup>71</sup> Szporluk Roman. *West Ukraine and West Belorussia. Historical Tradition, Social Communication, and Linguistic Assimilation // Soviet Studies*. 1979. Vol. 31. No. 1. Pp. 76-98.

<sup>72</sup> Walentyna Najdus. *Kształtowanie się nowoczesnych więzów społeczno-organizacyjnych ludności ukraińskiej Galicji Wschodniej w dobie konstytucyjnej // Henryk W. Żaliński, Kazimierz Karolczak (Eds.). Lwów: Miasto-społeczeństwo-kultura, T. 2. Kraków, 1998. S. 166-167 [=in Polish: "Making of Modern Social and Organizational Networks among the Ukrainian Population of Eastern Galicia during the Constitutional Era"]*.

<sup>73</sup> Timothy Garton Ash. *The Puzzle of Central Europe // New York Review of Books*. 1999. Vol. 66. No. 5. March 18. P. 22.

### *The Soviet Legacy*

Ukraine in its contemporary political borders is clearly a relict of the Soviet Union. But there is certainly more to the Soviet legacy than political geography. Ukraine falls into the category of post-Soviet societies (the majority of them) where this legacy is so strong that for many years – probably generations – an authoritarian system, disguised as democracy, will prevail and national economies will continue to decline before getting any better. Post-Soviet Ukrainian historiography lacks any serious discussion of the role of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic in Ukrainian history, i.e., whether the Communist regime could be seen as a continuation of organic historical process(es) and why the Soviet legacy has proved to be so persistent in contemporary Ukraine. The general impression is that Ukrainian historians are either not prepared or not willing to raise these issues, yet one more proof of the Soviet legacy's deep impact on Ukrainian society.<sup>74</sup>

The Soviet legacy strongly affected identity formation. On the one hand, basic elements of the Ukrainian identity were not just preserved, but their role increased (as in the case of territorial identification) under Soviet rule.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, key elements of modern Ukrainian identity – such as a literary language and national history – were drastically revised in an effort to minimize differences between Russians and Ukrainians. Soviet rule led to an increase in the Russian factor in Ukraine, first of all through a mass migration of Russians into the Ukrainian SSR – to the extent that some demographers consider the scale of this migration unprecedented in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe<sup>76</sup> – and then through the linguistic Russification of Ukrainians.

It remains, however, a matter of dispute whether linguistic Russification was tantamount to national assimilation.<sup>77</sup> There are good reasons to be-

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<sup>74</sup> See my article: *Die kommunistische Vergangenheit in der Gegenwart // Gerhard Simon (Hg.). Die neue Ukraine. Gesellschaft-Wirtschaft-Politik (1991-2001). Köln, Weimer, Wien, 2002. S. 29-49.*

<sup>75</sup> Bohdan Krawchenko. *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine.* Edmonton, 1987. Pp. 219-250; Taras Kuzio, Andrew Wilson. *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence.* Edmonton, 1994. Pp. 152-170; P. T. Shelest. *...Da ne sudimy budete. Dnevnikovyie zapisi, vospominania chlena Politbiuro TsK KPSS.* Moscow, 1995 [=in Russian: ... And you are Not to be Judged. *Diary Notes, Memoirs of a CPSU Central Committee's Politburo Member*].

<sup>76</sup> Piotr Ebelhardt. *Przemiany narodościowe na Ukrainie XX wieku.* Warszawa, 1994. S. 244 [=in Polish: *Changes in National Structure of Ukraine in XX century*].

<sup>77</sup> See: Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytskyi. *Istorychni ese.* Vol. 2. Kyiv, 1994. Pp. 471-476 [=in Ukrainian: *Historical Essays*].

lieve that in many cases it was not. The Soviet regime promoted not so much a Russian as a Soviet identity in a Russian make-up.<sup>78</sup> One of the greatest surprises to be revealed after the demise of the Soviet Union was that a Soviet people had actually developed, especially among Russians living in non-Russian states. The Soviet identity proved to be very popular in Southern and Eastern Ukraine.<sup>79</sup>

Ukrainian identity is the most salient of all group identities throughout Ukraine, with the exception of the south. Regional differences become more pronounced if one considers the hierarchy of the most popular social identities in Ukraine. Say, in L'viv, the symbolic capital of Western Ukraine, the assertion of Ukrainian identity in 1994 was associated with the popularity of identities that had been repressed by the Soviet regime (notably "Greek-Catholic" and "Westerner"). In a contrast, Ukrainian identity in Donetsk, the largest industrial center in the East, was linked with the sense of being "Soviet" and a "worker", identities that were promoted by the Soviet regime<sup>80</sup>.

There are good reasons to believe that people who regarded themselves as "Soviets" are not necessarily those who vote for Communists and feel a nostalgia for the Soviet Union. They bought the whole package of the Soviet legacy beyond Communist 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". People in the East of Ukraine are on average much less politically mobilized than their compatriots in the Western Ukraine. The former may be willing to reunite Ukraine with Russia or to restore the Soviet Union. Still, as the experience of the last few years has proven, it is unlikely that they can organize any political movement to promote their goals.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Yaroslav Bilinsky. *The Concept of the Soviet People and its Implication for Soviet Nationality Policy // The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States. 1978-1980. Vol. 14. No. 37-38. Pp. 87-133; Roman Solchanyk. Molding "the Soviet People": The Role of Ukraine and Belorussia // Journal of Ukrainian Studies. 1983. Vol. 1. Pp. 3-18.*

<sup>79</sup> Paul S. Pirie. *National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine // Europe-Asia Studies. 1996. Vol. 48. No. 7. Pp. 1079-1104.*

<sup>80</sup> Yaroslav Hrytsak. *National Identities in Post-Soviet Ukraine: The Case of Lviv and Donetsk // Zvi Gitelman, Lubomyr Hajda, John-Paul Himka, Roman Solchanyk (Eds.). Cultures and Nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Essays in Honor of Roman Szporluk (=published simultaneously as Vol. 22 (1998) of Harvard Ukrainian Studies). P. 267.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* P. 276.

As strange as it may sound, it is this mixture of “Ukrainianness” with “Sovietness” that provides post-Communist Ukrainian leaders with the means to keep the country together. The ruling elites are doing their best to preserve a balance between two alternative versions (Soviet and non-Soviet) of modern Ukrainian identity.<sup>82</sup> This line proved to be quite effective; at the end of a decade of Ukrainian independence, regional differences within Ukraine seem to be losing their political salience.<sup>83</sup> Soviet identity also seems to be fading in even the most Sovietized region.<sup>84</sup>

While the project of the Soviet nation is doomed to disappear with the demise of the Soviet Union, its corollaries may be here to stay for a long period of time. It is reflected, among other things, in a specific social attitude that is shared by most of the Ukrainian population, regardless of regional differences, that can be described as a *lack of social trust*. In the post-Communist Ukraine, people tend not to trust each other if they are not members of the same family, relatives, or close friends. Or, to put it in a more sophisticated way, they have non-communitarian social capital, which, if we are to believe Robert Putnam, constitutes a serious impediment to successful democratization. This might be regarded as a psychological legacy of Soviet rule; as long as state socialist institutions did not efficiently provide good and services, people had to rely on personal contacts and networks.<sup>85</sup> Even though Western Ukraine is more distinctive from other parts of the country in voter turnout and in electoral terms, it would be too bold to claim that a uniquely Western Ukrainian/Galician civic culture exists within Ukraine today. Even here in the least Sovietized L’viv, non-communitarian social capital continues to permeate the experience of daily life.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Catherine Wanner. *Burden of Dreams. History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine*. Pennsylvania, 1998.

<sup>83</sup> Peter R. Craumer and James I. Clem. *Ukraine’s Emerging Electoral Geography: A Regional Analysis of the 1998 Parliamentary Elections // Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*. 1999. Vol. 40. No. 1. Pp. 1-26.

<sup>84</sup> Yaroslav Hrytsak. *Ukrainian Nationalism, 1991-2001: Myths and Misconceptions // CEU History Department Annual*. Budapest, 2002.

<sup>85</sup> This point was elaborated by: Catherine Wanner. *Burden of Dreams*. (See especially chapter 3 “On Being Soviet”, Pp. 49-75).

<sup>86</sup> Martin Åberg. *Putnam’s Social Capital Theory Goes East: A Case Study of Western Ukraine and L’viv // Europe-Asia Studies*. 2000. Vol. 52. No. 2. Pp. 303-313; John O’Loughlin and James E. Bell. *The Political Geography of Civic Engagement in Ukraine // Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*. 1999. Vol. 40. No. 4. Pp. 233-266 (see esp. Pp. 253, 255).

If this were so, then the fading of the Soviet legacy does not automatically mean better prospects for the Ukrainian state. To a large extent this legacy is responsible for providing a minimum of political stability and of internal cohesion. But on the other hand, it creates serious impediments for successful political and economic reforms. The crucial issue is whether any other internal cohesion will develop in Ukrainian society besides the one that has a clear Soviet pedigree. For if the Communist past has some lessons to teach us, one of the most important would be that social solidarity imposed “from above” is not to be the best way to build a stable society in the long run.

### *A Post-Soviet Tendency, if Not a New Legacy*

During the last decade, Ukraine has experienced developments that may be characterized as, if not a post-Soviet legacy, then rather stable post-Soviet tendencies. On the one hand, Ukraine falls into the category of countries that are “losers” in post-Communist transformation. It shares this fate with most of the former Soviet republics (the Baltic States excluded) and the countries of Eastern Christianity (Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Macedonia). On the other hand, Ukraine proved to be distinctively different in at least two major aspects. First, it was the only country in the post-Soviet region (again, the Baltic States excluded) that managed to transfer presidential power from one group of ruling elites to another peacefully and without manipulation.<sup>87</sup> This happened in 1994, but Ukraine failed to repeat such a transfer in the 1999 presidential elections. Secondly, despite this failure in 1999, Ukraine remains one of two countries in the post-Soviet region (the second being Georgia) where a political opposition is still a major factor in local politics.

The viability of those two tendencies will be tested during the 2004 presidential elections. It makes these elections crucial for determining Ukraine’s place in the post-communist region for the foreseeable future. So far, Ukraine’s place is shrouded in ambivalence. Such ambivalence reflects a current popular mood. In the words of a leading Ukrainian social scientist,

[a] person in an ambivalent state of mind, while mentally sound, may simultaneously go for a multi-party system and against all “new-

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<sup>87</sup> Dmitrii Furman. *Ukraina i my. Natsionalnoe samosoznanie i politicheskoe razvitie // Svobodnaia mysl'*. 1995. No. 1. P. 70 [=in Russian: “Ukraine and Us. National Consciousness and Political Development”].

baked” parties, for both freedom of movement and restrictions in border control, for an increase of market economy and state regulation of prices, [...], for the independence of his or her state and the restoration of the Soviet Union.<sup>88</sup>

This ambivalence is reflected, among other things, in a choice of external orientation; a 2002 survey demonstrated that the same share of population (69%) would go simultaneously for integration with both the European Union and Russia.<sup>89</sup> Seen from another perspective, this ambivalence may provide Ukraine with a unique opportunity; it opens a window for creative politicians to embark on and to strengthen that part of ambivalent public opinion that corresponds to interests of long-term and sustained Ukrainian development without antagonizing the other part, thus avoiding a risk of a social confrontation.<sup>90</sup>

### ***By Way of Conclusions: The World Is Not Enough***

The Ukrainian case belies any clear-cut and distinctive division in post-communist Eastern Europe. It could be compared with the famous Russian *matrioshky* dolls: it has several regional, national, international, and supra-national contexts. The comparison fails, however, in one respect: Ukraine belongs not to one, but to several nested geographies. Their number is not unlimited and they can be counted on the fingers of two hands: Eastern Europe, East Slavic Europe, Central Europe, Eastern Central Europe, the former Soviet space, and former Slavia Orthodoxa, not to mention the obvious mega-geographies of Europe and Eurasia. And yet you cannot disentangle Ukraine from any of them without risking the destruction of a facet of the multi-layered Ukrainian identity.

In the general balance of “sails” and “gales” that drives Ukraine in various directions, politics is much more important than geography and culture supersedes both. Among the cultural factors, a civilization divide – a division between Western and Eastern Christianity – seems to have had

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<sup>88</sup> E. I. Golovakha. Postkommunisticheskoe razvitiie Ukrainy i Rossii (sravnitel'nyi analiz sotsial'no-politicheskikh protsessov) // T. I. Zaslavskaja (Ed.). Kuda idet Rossiia?... Sotsial'naja transformatsiia postsovet'skogo prostranstva. Vol. III. Moscow, 1996. P. 51 [=in Russian: “Post-Communist Developments of Ukraine and Russia (A Comparative Analysis of Social and Political Processes)”].

<sup>89</sup> Lilia Utkina. “Back to the USSR” // Ukrainska Pravda. 2003. January 14; Ivan Smishko. Ukrainets – tse zvuchyt zahadkovo // Postup. 2003. January 16-22.

<sup>90</sup> E. I. Golovakha. Op. cit. P. 51.



a major long-term effect, although not along Huntington's lines. It explains some peculiarities of Ukrainian nation-building, as well as patterns of post-communist transformation (the firm placement of Ukraine among the "losers") – which corresponds to historical area of *Slavia Orthodoxa*.<sup>91</sup>

One thing is, however, for sure: the recent experience of post-communist transformation is too short a time to make sound judgments as to the future placement and identity of Ukraine. To paraphrase the path-dependency theory, the record of the last decade helps to understand better "where you come from" than "where you get to". After all, history *matters* in various ways. In the case under consideration, the variety is both reflected and superimposed by the great amount of ambivalence of local institutional identification – only time will tell whether this ambivalence will fade in the long run.

As I suggested at the very beginning, the Ukrainian case does not seem to be either unique or exceptional. For the sake of our discussion, it can be relatively easily replaced by any other case – say, even by the case of present Israel, which has its own strong roots in East and Central European history and politics.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, I believe that the suggested conclusions have a general application. They do not deny the validity of drawing mega-regional borders as a valuable academic exercise. They just remind us that the choice of scope and scale is not "objectively" predetermined and that much depends on the questions that we ask ourselves. To this extent, the analyst is as much a factor of any analysis as any other "objective" factor. While indulging in this kind of academic exercise, one has no choice but to practice a certain modesty and even self-irony.

## SUMMARY

Ярослав Грыцак в своей статье проверяет возможности новых парадигм осмысления постсоветского пространства, пытаясь с их помощью объяснить выявленные в результате эмпирических исследований тенденции посткоммунистической трансформации в Украине. Грыцак

<sup>91</sup> See, e.g., the table provided in Walter C. Clemens. *Op.cit.* P. 2: the division between "winners" and "losers" in the post-communist transformation, as based on a comparison of various data of economic, social and political performance, coincides strictly with a division between countries with the West Christian tradition, on the one hand, and with East Christian tradition, on the other.

<sup>92</sup> Shlomo Avineri. *Op. cit.* Pp. 163-172.

исходит из огромной значимости исторического наследия, которое, по его мнению, продолжает формировать современные экономические, политические и культурные процессы. Он вписывает интересующие его политические и социальные явления одновременно в различные исторические и географические контексты. Так, именно география помещает Украину в евразийский контекст. Другим важнейшим “историческим контекстом” он считает наследие Руси, которое определяет идентификацию Украины с “восточной славянской Европой” и подбивает как европейский, так и евразийский проекты, не пользующиеся популярностью у значительной части современного украинского населения. Польское наследие, по мнению Грыцака, объединяет разнообразие феномены, от германского городского законодательства до “еврейского вопроса”. Этот контекст интерпретируется как прошедшая через польский фильтр вестернизация западной и южной Руси. Подвергшиеся этой вестернизации территории современной Украины характеризуются самой высокой интенсивностью украинской идентичности и наибольшим распространением украинского языка. Именно в исторически наиболее “польских” зонах – на западной Украине и в Литве – опросы населения дают максимальную ориентацию на национальную принадлежность. Западная Украина в статье рассматривается как особый случай, определяемый габсбургским наследием. Политическое поведение роднит современных западных украинцев с их соседями за границей, что позволяет говорить о своеобразной политической культуре галицийской зоны, где сложилось одновременно несколько параллельных “национальных” гражданских обществ. Именно габсбургское наследие роднит западную Украину с Центральной Европой. Наконец, в статье разбираются советский контекст и советское наследие. Грыцак разделяет русификацию и советизацию, анализируя советскую идентичность, преобладающую в южной и восточной Украине, не как национальный, но как специфический комплекс ценностных ориентаций и тип политической культуры. Грыцак подчеркивает, что Украина принадлежит сразу нескольким географическим пространствам (Восточная Европа, Восточная славянская Европа, Центральная Европа, Европа, Евразия...) Ни одна из возможных “географий” и исторических традиций не исчерпывает своеобразие украинского варианта и не дана изначально. Выбор зависит от исследовательской оптики.