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The Role of Language and Politics: A Look at National-Identity Formation in Eastern Ukraine

by

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Capstone Project

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After deciding on joining the Peace Corps, the potential future Volunteer is confronted with several nerve-wracking experiences. The first occurs during the lengthy and intensive application process. The second occurs if, and when, the applicant is accepted. This experience comes from the process of waiting to find out where one's future service will be. When I was first informed that I would be serving in Eastern Europe, I was unsure whether I should be happy, scared, or both. When I finally learned that I would be serving in Ukraine, I decided to seize the opportunity to use my research project in order to get to know the people of a relatively newly-independent nation-state a little better. By studying the way the people in Ukraine think about themselves politically, socially, and culturally, I would be able to better understand the different mindsets that Ukrainians have. By trying to figure out the role that factors such as language, politics, and ethnicity play in the attitude of the average Ukrainian, I would be able to contribute to research on national identities, as well as be in a better place to serve my community as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

I. Statement of Research Question

One of the most important questions a newly-independent country must answer concerns the essence of its people as a collective nation. The policies advocated for, the laws created, and the fundamentals of the legal and political system of the young nation-state will largely be determined by the values, beliefs, culture, and identity of the people within the state. As a result, the study of the present or emerging national identity in a young sovereign state can be important for understanding the policy decisions and political direction the state is moving in. In this paper I will analyze the emerging national identity in eastern Ukraine, with a special focus on the role of language and politics. I will argue that both language and politics are influential in affecting

national identity in eastern Ukraine, which will have important consequences for the state as a whole.

In order to gain a stronger understanding of how national identity in eastern Ukraine is related to the political values and language(s) used of individuals in this area, I ask several questions. The main guiding question for this research is: do individuals in eastern Ukraine tend to favor an ethnic or a civic conception of national identity, or both? More specifically, what influence does languages spoken, political parties and values have on an individual favoring one national identity complex over another? Thus, I am asking, how significant is the influence of these factors on national identity, in addition to the specific type of influence these factors have. To begin, I will look at the role that these factors have played on national identity in the dominant literature.

II. Review of Literature

The subject of Ukrainian national identity has been a focus of researchers since independence was proclaimed in 1991. The focus of this research has varied widely, from the importance of individual factors influencing national identity, to the history of national identity formation in the country, to the possibility of incorporation of transnational values in various national identity complexes. Some conclusions of these researchers have proven controversial, yet most will agree that the national identity of the state is still forming, and the consequences of its formation will have important repercussions for the political, economic, and social aspects of the country as a whole.

Historical Background

To get an accurate picture of the national identity of Ukrainians as it exists today, it is important to understand the historical factors that have influenced its formation. One such

example is the treaty of Pereyaslav, and its historical effect on Ukraine and Russia today (Morrison 1993, 679). In this treaty the Cossack Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky reluctantly swore allegiance to the Tsar of Muscovy. Khmelnytsky was the leader of the largely independent Cossacks during the seventeenth century, and sought to gain aid from the Tsar, not realizing that by signing the agreement he would put an end to the Cossack independence. Khmelnytsky thought that by signing the agreement, he would be signing a strategic military partnership with the Tsar, while the Tsar saw the agreement as the first step to occupying Cossack Ukraine. Seen through the eyes of Ukrainian history, this agreement led to a series of catastrophes including Hetman Mazepa's defeat in 1709, the elimination of independent Cossack institutions, and the end of the Cossack tradition (Morrison 1993, 679). The dealings of newly-independent Ukraine with Russia are now seen through the disasters of the Pereyaslav treaty; any accommodations with Moscow by Kyiv are often criticized because it is thought that Russia cannot be trusted. This deeply-ingrained suspicion of Moscow by many Ukrainians has led to thoughts that any dealings with Russia are necessarily a zero-sum game. Ukraine must therefore be on constant guard against being deceived, or even invaded, by Moscow (Morrison 1993, 680).

Historical accounts of the relationship between Ukraine and Russia from the Russian perspective have had quite a different effect. Many Russians see Ukraine not as a separate and independent country, but as a different part of their own country. This type of thinking is a sign of the general division in historical interpretation between different schools of thought in Ukraine and Russia. These schools of thought argue about the historical roots of Ukraine and Russia, from the founding of Kiev Rus around the tenth century A.D., the Treaty of Pereyaslav in 1654, and many things in between (Kuzio 2006, 409). Sometimes referred to as "little Russians" by the Russophile and Soviet schools of thought, Ukrainians are viewed as generally wanting to

stay tied with their big brother Russia, as the Pereyaslav agreement showed (Morrison 1993, 681). However, this prevailing view of the relationship between the two countries changed dramatically, as did the dealings between the two countries, after Ukraine gained independence in 1991.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia has had an inconsistent strategy when dealing with former soviet-bloc states. Russian nationalists called for a "Russian first" strategy to dealings with other states, and there were those who sought to appease the newly-independent states by recognizing their independence, autonomy, and need to create their own self-identity (Morrison 1993, 684). For its own part, Ukraine had questions on the political and economic benefits of independence in the early 1990s as well. Politicians in Ukraine framed the need for independence not around nationalistic principles, but on the principle that such a move would be the most prosperous in the long run. Specifically, the first President Leonid Kravchuk argued that in an independent Ukraine, ethnic Russians would be better off than in Russia, which succeeded in gaining a majority vote for independence, even in such areas as Crimea and the Donbas, which are home to the majority of Ukraine's ethnic Russians (Morrison 1993, 685). Since the importance of independence was framed in economic terms, specifically to ethnic Russians in the east and south, the strength of support for an independent and autonomous Ukraine will be tied to the strength of the economy. Thus, the economy will have a profound effect on the political climate in Ukraine in general, and on the relationship between Ukraine and Russia in specific (Morrison 1993, 686-7).

One area of crucial economic importance to both Ukraine and Russia now, and in the past, has been the eastern region of Ukraine, commonly referred to as the Donbas. This area is usually thought of as comprising three different *oblasts* (districts): Lugansk, Kharkiv, and

Donetsk. This area has been a leading industrial, and therefore economic, sector for the two countries in the past (Wilson 1995, 268). In addition, the regional history of the Donbas sector is hotly contested between Ukrainian nationalists, Ukrainian Russophiles and Russian nationalists. In creating historical myths to lay claim the region after the fact, these groups are fighting not only over a piece of land, but over the ability to mobilize the people in this region. Consequently, the outcome of this strategic battle over the Donbas region has the potential to tip the political and economic balance between Ukraine and Russia, which will have important regional consequences in the future (Wilson 1995, 269).

In arguing for the possession of the Donbas area, Ukrainian nationalists point to the establishment of Kiev Rus in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and to the Zaporizhzhian Cossack peoples in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Kiev Rus came into existence long before the Moscovite state did, and if Kiev Rus can legitimately be claimed to be a proto-Ukrainian state, then the Donbas area was originally under the control Ukrainian people. Moreover, the Cossacks came into power and created a semi-independent Cossack region in the sixteenth century which included Zaporizhzhian Cossacks, and Don Cossacks. The Don Cossacks primarily controlled the region in what is today considered Russia, and swore allegiance to Moscow. Yet, the Zaporizhzhian Cossacks were a separate group with separate traditions, which controlled what is today central and eastern Ukraine, and pledged allegiance to Kiev, not Moscow. Thus, Ukrainian nationalists lay claim to the area by pointing out the historical roots that the area of Ukraine, and its people, has in the Donbas area (Wilson 1995, 269-74).

However, Ukrainian Russophiles and Russian nationalists argue that the Donbas area should be thought of as fundamentally Russian. One important reason is due to the high levels of Russification that occurred largely after 1945. After this time, large numbers of native Russians

settled down in the east, and Ukrainian language schools and mass media were limited. As a result, the level of people who considered Russian language to be their native tongue in the Donbas area rose significantly. Moreover, Russian nationalists tend to argue that the loose kingdom of Kiev Rus didn't actually reach the Donbas area, and the Russians were actually the first to colonize the area. In addition, the Zaporizhzhian Cossacks had very little influence over the Donbas area and not as much control as the Don Cossacks during their era. Thus, the claim of Ukrainian nationalists for the inclusion of the Donbas region in Ukraine historiography is unfounded, and the area is closer to Russia in its roots (Wilson 1995, 276-80). As the conflict between the two camps stands now, the two historical myths cannot be reconciled. Yet, the result of victory can prove very important as the two sides are fighting for historical legitimacy with the Ukrainian people, an important factor in establishing the roots of a national identity.

Defining Group Identity within Ukraine

A large part of the importance of creating a legitimate historical myth is to define the boundaries of group identity, and to determine the "other". In the situation of Ukraine, the dichotomy between "us" and "them" is usually viewed as between Ukrainians and Russians, as Russians are the largest minority group in the state. This process of defining group boundaries and identity is very important because it significantly influences the nation-building process of any state. Among the important elements in the nation-building process, and the process of "othering", language can play a significant role. Particularly after Ukrainian independence did the question of language become salient in the formation of national identity. When ethnicities are similar in culture, history, and location as are Ukrainians and Russians, endorsing a separate language brings with it a clear message of distinction between "us" and "them" (Kuzio 2001, 350). The problem of language in Ukraine can be especially dangerous because of Russia's

historical defense of Russian-speakers in Ukraine, Belarus, and most recently, with the breakaway regions of Georgia. This problem is a significant temptation for countries such as Ukraine to try to nationalize further by claiming only one official language, Ukrainian (Kuzio 2001, 350).

The need to define the "other" in Ukraine manifests itself clearly in the political arena. In terms of internal divisions in political parties in Ukraine, the spectrum varies substantially from the radical left, to the middle, to the radical right. On the far left, the Communist Party of Ukraine is seen as the one of the only parties opposed to statehood in Ukraine, and which also wishes to see a resurrection of a new, egalitarian USSR. They also see ethnic Russians in Ukraine as a second major dominant group, not as a national minority, and wish to see two official languages in the country, Ukrainian and Russian. On the far right are such parties as the Organization of Ukrainian Nationals, and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationals is very hostile towards Russia, Russians living in Ukraine, and work towards a Ukrainian ethnocratic state. Groups in the center-right, such as Rukh, see Russia as the "other", but see ethnic Russians living within the borders of Ukraine as part of the civic state. They also tend to see Ukraine as a European state, while Russia occupies space outside of Europe (Kuzio 2001, 351-2).

In the center, the divisions between the centrist liberals and social democrats on questions of the "other" have been difficult to impossible to overcome. Parties such as the United Social Democrats, People's Democratic, Liberals and Regional Revival see Russia and Ukraine both as a part of Europe. Parties such as the Inter-Regional Bloc of Reforms (MRBR), which former President Kuchma led during the 1994 elections has a more pro-Russian orientation and sees Russia as an important "strategic partner" which Ukraine should ally with (Kuzio 2001, 354). Moreover, these differences on the place of Russia as the "other", and on questions of nation

building in general, have led to substantial deadlock in reform efforts in the parliamentary of Ukraine in its first decade of independence. Part of the reason for the deadlock in the political arena in general is due to the elite's lack of defining the "other" and reaching a consensus on the national identity of the state. One reason for their inability to concretely define the "other", and the inability of the Ukrainian public in general, is because of the similarity of the history, language, and culture of both Ukraine and Russia. Due to the similarity between the two states in these respects, one should expect more conflict over national identity, not less (Kuzio 2001, 361).

Consequently, when attempting to define the "other", the Ukrainian public has a difficult time defining the essential components of "us". The historically dominant theory among national identity researchers is that the people of Ukraine are divided among different regions. Classification of regions differs, but most identity theorists have accepted a general difference between Ukrainians living in the western region and those living in the eastern region. A large reason for this difference is the amount of ethnic Russians living in the east, and south, of Ukraine. For example, one historically influential explanation for this difference is that Russian minorities in sub-states have learned to think of themselves as part of an ethnic group, as opposed to citizens of a particular sub-state, and had enjoyed the privileges that such a designation brought in the former Soviet Union (Brubaker 1994, 68). Consequently, attempts to erode forms of citizenship that are based on nationality might lead to increased tensions because ethnic Russians will be weary of attempts at assimilation by the ethnically-dominant elites of the successor state. In addition, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, elites in Russia have largely considered the ethnic-Russian minorities in successor states as citizens of Russia, even if their assimilation into successor states has given them a different legal status (Brubaker 1994,

70). Although this last assertion has more credibility in today's Ukraine, this line of argument concerning the identifications of ethnic Russians within post-soviet bloc countries has met with some resistance from other researchers.

By analyzing survey data compiled more than ten years after Ukrainian independence, it is clear that there are trends in the way that Ukrainians are starting to identify themselves.

Contrary to dominant theories about national identity in Eastern Europe, a study completed in 2004 found that 71 percent of respondents placed priority on a civic national identity, and only 29 percent preferred an ethno-national identity (Shulman 2004, 43). Moreover, the preference for the civic national identity extended to a majority of people, despite the subgroup (based on age, place of residence, ethnicity, language spoken, etc.) Of those who favored an ethnic national identity, about 15 percent expressed support for the Eastern Slavic variant, and 15 percent for the Ethnic Ukrainian variant (Shulman 2004, 43).

In addition, when asked what conditions should designate a person to be a member of the Ukrainian nation, the top three highest rated conditions (respect laws and political institutions of Ukraine, be a citizen of Ukraine, and consider Ukraine one's homeland) all support a civic national identity. Within this section of the interview, a higher level of support was recorded for answers indicating an Ethnic Ukrainian over an Eastern Slavic conception of ethno-national identity (Shulman 2004, 45). Other questions concerning the similarities in history of Ukrainians and Russians, and in the cultures of the two nations, respondents' answers favored an Eastern Slavic national identity. Responses to questions about the role of Russian language in Ukraine largely came out negative and favored an Ethnic Ukrainian identity, while those to questions of the importance of Russian history being taught in Ukraine came out positive and favored an Eastern Slavic identity. Questions of foreign policy showed that a substantial majority of

respondents expressed a preference for increased ties with Russia over Western Europe, which is indicative of an Eastern Slavic identity complex (Shulman 2004, 53).

It is important to note that in this study, the civic national identity complex is much stronger in respondents, than the ethnic national identity complex. Yet, within the ethnic identity complex, a majority of respondents favored an Eastern Slavic identity, especially those respondents from the east and south of Ukraine. The major areas in which the Ethnic Ukrainian identity showed clear support was in the place of the Ukrainian language, especially among those people from the west and central of Ukraine. In addition, the biggest predictor of which ethnic identity complex a respondent would favor came from their regional position, while the weakest predictor is the age of the respondent. Thus, ten years after independence, Ukrainians across the country seem to favor a national identity complex based on civic as opposed to ethnic considerations (Shulman 2004, 53-4).

Factors Influencing National Identity Formation

While there are still some correlations between region of residence and level of adherence to national identity complexes, other factors may prove to be significant as well. Factors including personal ethnicity, languages spoken, age, gender, inter-ethnic marriage, and urbanization may affect trends in national identity of the people in Ukraine. Like many countries with multiple ethnicities, who through generations of intermixing through marriage and procreation, Ukraine is home to many people who feel themselves a part of more than one community and ethno-nationality. Individuals in southern and eastern Ukraine are typically exposed to multiple cultures and ethnicities, as the rates of Russian citizenry are higher here than in any other place in Ukraine, and Russian (as opposed to Ukrainian) is the most-spoken language (Pirie 1996, 1080). Thus, in addition to identifying as primarily with the Ethnic

Ukrainian, Eastern Slavic and civic identity complexes, Ukrainians might identify with more than one ethnic identity, incorporate all of their allegiances into one pan-identity, or feel marginalized and separate from all identities.

Another research study conducted on the identity complexes of ethnic Russians in the near-abroad counters the notion that ethnic Russians identify primarily with their ethnic heritage. The research compared data from five different former Soviet-bloc countries (Moldova, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus). This research found that the highest single percent of people from Ukraine self-identified themselves as belonging to the Republic (27 percent), with the second highest percentage coming from people who identified themselves as "primarily titular" (20 percent). In addition, the researchers found that people who didn't identify themselves as "primarily Russian", "Soviet", "Republican", "primarily titular", or who had divided loyalties (thus being labeled "marginals"), at the above average total of 18 percent. The researchers also found that the percentage of people who identified themselves as "Soviet" (18 percent), was significantly lower than the average across the five former-Soviet bloc countries (23 percent) (Poppe 2001, 62).

In several studies done in high schools in eastern and southern Ukraine, which taught in Russian language, the majority of students identified with the marginal and bi-ethnic paths (Pirie 1996, 1085). These results contradict theories as to the "Russification" of east and south Ukraine, as younger generations are noticeably identifying with parts of Ukrainian culture and also Russian culture. Added to this trend is the rate of inter-marriage between different ethnic groups. The rate of inter-marriage between Ukrainians and Russians has increased substantially in Ukraine in the last century, but has always been highest in eastern and southern Ukraine (Pirie 1996, 1086). As a result, there is evidence that generations of inter-mixing have produced a

populace that seems to identify with each culture and peoples, instead of only one. However, separate research conducted on ethnic Russians in the near-abroad suggests that the increased level of ethnic inter-marriage has contributed to increased levels of civic identification, especially among younger Russians (Poppe 2001, 63). In addition, in general, mixed Russian-titular marriages, parentage, and a longer duration in the republic have lead survey respondents in this study to more strongly identify with the republic itself, and with the titular nation (Poppe 2001, 63).

This study also showed that proficiency in the titular language increased from "primary Russians" to "primary titulars". Among "primary Russians", 31 percent answered that they had no command of the titular language, while only seven percent of the "primary titulars" replied in the same fashion. Thus, language proficiency is closely tied to self-identification with the republic, and the population of that republic (Poppe 2001, 64-5). In terms of attitudinal dispositions, "primary titulars" and "Republicans" were found to support further development of their republic as an independent state, or to develop a union with states similar in culture and religion (Poppe 2001, 66). It is important to note that in Ukraine, the high percentage of "primary titulars", and "Republicans", shows that these respondents favor a stronger independent Ukraine in general. In addition, the high level of those identified as "primary titulars" also favor a closer union with those of people of similar cultures and religions in nearby states, while "Republicans" prefer to focus on strengthening their own state. Also, the above-average level of "marginals" in Ukraine suggests that these people would favor a closer union with other former Soviet-bloc countries, as they don't necessarily identify strongly with either their own republic, or Russia (Poppe 2001, 68).

The data from this study showed that in Ukraine and Belarus, ethnic Russians tend to be more integrationist, while in Moldova, ethnic Russians tend to be more irredentist or Russian-oriented (Poppe 2001, 69). In general, the main factors that lead ethnic Russians in the near-abroad to a more integrationist disposition include mixed Russian-titular marriages and parentage, expertise in the titular language, birth in the republic of residence, and lower socioeconomic status (Poppe 2001, 69). Yet, despite the level of integration of ethnic Russians in Ukraine when compared to other post-Soviet bloc countries, there is still tension between ethnic minorities and titular nationals. For example, ethnic minorities in Ukraine often praise the nationality policies as one of the most liberal sets of policies in the former USSR. In general, the only complaints come from the Russian minority.

One possible explanation is that this phenomenon comes from the fact that ethnic Russians prefer to be defined not as a national minority, but as another titular nation, Ukrainians simply being a part of the larger Russian Society (Kuzio 2005, 230). During the existence of the USSR, countries such as Ukraine and Belarus were seen as an extension of the Russian people. Accordingly, "Russianness" and Russian culture was privileged over other ethnicities, as were all other aspects that accompanied Russian culture, including language. Thus, after independence in former soviet-bloc countries such as Ukraine, the transition into autonomy and the encouragement of other cultures to grow in place of Russian culture has not been fully accepted by all ethnic Russians who reside in these areas (Kuzio 2005, 231). This resistance can be seen in some members of ethnic minority groups when the question of official languages is presented in government policies.

Another factor influencing national identity formation has been the type and level of religious affiliation. For example, large percentages of people in eastern Ukraine still identified

themselves as atheist, possibly a mind-set leftover from the era of communist rule. Yet, in Crimea in southern Ukraine, a majority of the Russian population has maintained an attachment with the Russian Orthodox Church, which is a strong symbol of Russian national identity (Pirie 1996, 1089). Despite these differences, there is also an emerging pan-identity in these regions in which individuals tend to see themselves as part of a region, instead of only Ukrainian. These people generally come from a mixed-parentage, and hold views typically in between those people who view themselves as largely Ukrainian, or largely Russian (Pirie 1996, 1092).

Political Development and National Identity Formation

Lacking a strong sense of national identity can have important repercussions for developing as a nation in general. In the case of Ukraine, unifying the Ukrainian people was a state goal of the first two Presidents, Leonid Kravchuk (1991-1994) and Leonid Kuchma (1994-2004). Yet, divisions by region and language are still prevalent and pronounced. Part of the reason is that President Kuchma gave greater power to the regions of Ukraine to decide questions on language, and nationality, thus countering his proclaimed aim of national unification. Much of the division in regions can be seen between eastern Ukraine, and west and central Ukraine. While the east is more sympathetic to the communist past and where sentiments towards national identity are weaker, west and central Ukraine are often characterized as nationalistic (Kuzio 2002, 5).

The nationalism present in this region has led many people to support political and economic reform, which was largely responsible for bringing Viktor Yushchenko to the presidency in 2002. Moreover, a weak national identity in all regions of Ukraine didn't allow Yushchenko's reformist Our Ukraine bloc from sweeping to victory in the legislature as well, as similar movements had in other post-communist countries. Yet, the "administrative pressure"

put on voters during the 2002 elections was very strong throughout Ukraine, with the biggest impacts in eastern and southern Ukraine, as these areas were the strongest with support for pro-presidential parties (Kuzio 2002, 6). Political legacies of post-soviet states such as Ukraine, and the uniqueness of their nation-building process, have important consequences for modernization and democratization.

The importance of political legacies manifests themselves when comparing states, such as Russia and Ukraine. These states were very dissimilar in that the former is an example of revolutionary change, while the latter is an example of evolutionary change. When looking at Russia before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the important point to note is that the state was an empire as well as a totalitarian state. Thus, it controlled almost all aspects of its core processes, as well as those on the peripheries, including the appointing of elites, their budgets, the economy, and the society in general. As a result, when the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia inherited a centrally-planned economy, a communist ideology and culture that were failing, but retained its pride and feeling of superiority (Motyl 1997, 435). Other successor-states, such as Ukraine, retained elites, markets, emerging democracies, but did not inherit a clear sense of identity. Furthermore, Ukraine inherited an impoverished elite with an interest in gradual political and societal change, and a means to do so free of the bonds of the imperialist command-structure of the Soviet Union. Russia, however, inherited a revolutionary elite whose goal was to revitalize and improve on the structure largely inherited from Soviet Union. Consequently, it was hardly possible for the two states to facilitate change in the same manner and with the same endpoints (Motyl 1997, 436).

As a result of particular acquired statuses, different successor states had to operate in different ways. Like many successor states, Ukraine needed to embark on state-building first and

foremost in order to ensure territorial sovereignty, and political legitimacy, while nation-building was to come later (Motyl 1997, 438). When it was time to nation-build, the importance was on creating a population loyal to the new state and the new society, and not specifically based on ethnic, cultural, or linguistic ties. However, it has been argued that with the collapse of the central state, the sub-state elites had the opportunity to "nationalize" their own states in various ways, sometimes without special consideration given to all groups in the total population (Brubaker 1994, 66). Indeed, it can be seen as politically-profitable to do so in many cases. However, certain incentives may be provided by outside forces, such as Russia, which may help induce successor states to craft policies with all elements of the population in mind, not just the dominant national group. For instance, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, the two successor states with the largest ethnic Russian minorities, might be pushed by Russia to legislate favorably for their minority populations (Brubaker 1994, 67). However, questions of state-building and nation-building were fraught with difficulty from the beginning as the political arena was dominated by conflicts for power by political elites, especially those policies regulating wealth and power in the country. Throughout the power-grabbing of the elites, the economy went into a steep decline, paving the way for reform-minded policy makers to gain influence (Motyl 1997, 441).

Russia's progress after the dissolution of the Soviet Union took a different path, as the country was inundated with strong elites and a large bureaucracy, but with weak state agencies except for the secret police and the army (Motyl 1997, 442). Like Ukraine, Russia had many conflicts between elites about the level and breadth of power and wealth. Also like Ukraine, Russia became inundated with corruption and was infiltrated by mafia organizations. However, where these conditions led to steps toward a stronger democracy and market reform in Ukraine, the opposite set of events transpired in Russia. The conditions in Ukraine make it unlikely that

the civil society, a vigorous democracy, a full-scale market, and a sense of nationhood will develop very quickly. Yet, theorists have argued that this evolutionary progression is preferable to revolutionary progression because it will be more stable, and will have a better chance to reach its desired outcomes (Motyl 1997, 444).

Although evolutionary progression can be argued to be favorable to revolutionary progression, it must be asked whether or not Ukraine has even fulfilled this slow forward-progress. The political development of the state in terms of the power relationship between the cabinet and the president in the years after independence shows the instability of the early system. To begin, it must be stated that Ukraine has a semi-presidential regime in which the key actors are the president, prime minister, and the parliament. Cabinets in such a regime face two principles, the president and the legislature, who appoint them their positions, and who can dismiss them in general. Moreover, the distribution of powers of dismissal can be the single biggest factor in determining the behavior of the cabinet (Protsyk 2003, 1078). Due to the lack of strong political parties and factionalism within the legislature in the first decade after independence, the presidents in Ukraine during this period enjoyed greater power over the cabinet. This power translated into a succession of prime ministers that were favorable to the president's policies. Thus, in the early years after independence, the president retained great power, and the cabinet was beholden to his wishes.

However, throughout this period prime ministers would still openly challenge the president, even if their cabinet depended on the presidency for their survival. This tactic was adopted by several prime ministers who had presidential ambitions after leaving their post. Couple this fact with the ability of parliament to dismiss the cabinet if it had been working unsatisfactorily and the longevity of Ukrainian cabinets in the decade after independence is

lower than the presidential-parliamentary regimes in Russia and Kazakhstan (Protsyk 2003, 1084). This high turnover rate for cabinets has several important ramifications, including a generally unstable political environment.

Politics and National Identity

The high level of political instability in Ukraine, especially in the years following independence, has had important affects on Ukrainian society in general, and on the formation of national identity in specific. Recent studies of the level of political and economic reform in Ukraine have shed light on the progress the country has made in these two areas since independence. In 2003, Freedom House ranked Ukraine 17 out of 27 post-communist countries on its democratization scale, tied for 16 on its rule of law scale, while in the same year the Heritage Foundation ranked the country 131 out of 156 countries in terms of economic freedom (Shulman 2005, 59). As these rankings show, the political and economic models used in Ukraine have not resulted in overwhelming progress towards democratization and market freedom.

Yet, these rankings are important because of the potential link between the use of economic and political models and national identity. Recent research conducted across Ukraine has suggested that national identity and political and economic models may be related in three different ways: symbolism, cultural diffusion, and instrumentalism (Shulman 2005, 66). First, a specific national identity can be symbolically reinforced through the use of a particular economic or political model, especially if a particular ethnic, religious or cultural group in a nation-state is viewed as having a connection to a certain development model. Second, an economic or political development model that has a connection to the culture of a specific group, whether dominant in the country or largely existing outside of the country, will serve to spread the core values of the culture the general population through rewards and punishments of the

developmental institutions. Finally, people in a nation-state may prefer a specific political or economic development model because they see the national identity of their nation-state as inherently compatible with such a model. Thus, such models which conform to the national identity will have better success in the particular nation-state (Shulman 2005, 66-7).

This study showed that the group with the most numerous respondents could be classified as liberal democrats (which favored high levels of economic and political liberalism) with 32 percent of the sample. Market authoritarians (which favored a high level of economic liberalism and a low level of political liberalism) were a close second place with 31 percent, socialist authoritarians (low levels of economic and political liberalism) had 25 percent of the sample, while social democrats (low level of economic liberalism and high level of political liberalism) had 12 percent of the sample. About questions concerning communism and authoritarianism in Ukraine, a minority of respondents favored a communist regime instead of the current political system, while a majority favored an authoritarian system in place of the current system (Shulman 2005, 71).

When broken down by region, the findings conclude that the west, center, and south-east have approximately equal support for economic liberalism. The strongest support for political liberalism came from the center, then the west, then the south-east. Crimea had the lowest level of support for political liberalism, the highest for authoritarianism, and also for a return to communism. In terms of ethnic identification, there was very little difference between levels of support for economic and political liberalism, communism, and authoritarianism. Ethnic Russians scored slightly higher in support for authoritarianism when compared with ethnic Ukrainians, but they also scored slightly higher in terms of economic liberalism. In terms of languages spoken, the scores were very similar, yet Russian speakers scored lowest in support of

authoritarianism. These results counter the widely-held views that western Ukrainians, whether because of their ethnic identity, language, or national identity, are bigger supporters of liberalism and democracy when compared with other groups in Ukraine (Shulman 2005, 74-5).

When the data was analyzed in terms of two national ethnic identities, the Eastern Slavic and the Ethnic Ukrainian, it was found that the Eastern Slavic identity predicts anti-reformist attitudes, with the strongest correlation showing support for communist attitudes. When used to gauge economic and political freedom, Ethnic Ukrainians scored highest in favor of liberal democracy, and Eastern Slavic for social authoritarianism. It is important to note that of all the factors characteristic in a respondent, national identity was found to significantly correlate with political and economic liberalism; with a stronger Eastern Slavic national identity came a weaker support for liberal political and economic values. Other factors with strong correlations to political and economic liberalism were age, education, and settlement size; young, educated and urbanized respondents were more reform-minded. Other factors that didn't correlate strongly were religious affiliation, and language(s) spoken (Shulman 2005, 76-7).

As this study shows, specific national identity complexes based on ethnicity correlate with support for and against specific political and economic models. Consequently, politicians in Ukraine have the ability to mobilize their potential and actual constituencies in their support for, and against, certain development models. In addition, for those politicians who would like to promote democratization through further political and economic reforms, one important step is to promote nation-building. Yet, although this study has produced a relationship between national identity and development models, a discussion of the relationship with national identity complexes based on civic conceptions is omitted. That is, this study has only looked at national identity complexes based on ethnic conceptions, and has ignored a set of identity complexes that

many Ukrainians would self-identify themselves with. Thus, although the Ethnic Ukrainian national identity has been shown to strongly correlate to attitudes in favor of political and economic liberalism, while the Eastern Slavic national identity favors an authoritarian and communist structure, it would be worthwhile to note how a civic national identity relates to development models, if at all.

Regional Election Results

The last presidential elections held in Ukraine occurred in 2004, and the data that emerged from the election outlined strong regional differences within the nation-state. The presidential elections of 2004 were highly contested, and were primarily between two candidates. The first candidate was Viktor Yanukovich, the former prime minister of Ukraine who advocated closer ties with Russia. When campaigning for office, Yanukovich also promised to make Russian language the second official language of the country, while also allowing dual Ukrainian-Russian citizenship (Womack 2004). The second candidate was Viktor Yushchenko, also a former prime minister, a candidate who advocated for closer ties with the Europe and the United States. Additionally, Yushchenko campaigned on the platforms of membership in the European Union (EU), membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and increased independence from Russia (Bendersky 2004).

When analyzing the voting data from the third-round of the 2004 presidential elections in Ukraine, clear regional patterns emerge. Yushchenko gained the majority of votes in the central and western regions, while Yanukovich gained most of his votes from the southern and eastern regions. In the eastern region, composed of Kharkiv, Donetsk and Lugansk districts, 86.3 percent of voters cast their ballot for Yanukovich, 10.5 percent voted for Yushchenko, and 5.2 percent voted against both or cast invalid ballots (Oksamytna 2006). These percentages were

very similar to those received by Yushchenko in the western region, as he received support from 87.9 percent of the voting public in western Ukraine, while Yanukovich only received 9.6 percent (Oksamytna 2006). It is important to note that the difference between the margins of support for Yushchenko in the west and Yanukovich in the east is the biggest of any of the presidential elections in Ukraine since independence in 1991 (Oksamytna 2006). This finding hints at a strong regional division between the southern and eastern Ukraine, when compared to the central and western parts of the country.

Another important implication that emerged when analyzing the voting data was the relationship between the voters in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. In the south, 67.4 percent of voters cast their support for Yanukovich, while 27.1 percent voted for Yushchenko (Oksamytna 2006). When compared to the east, it is clear that voters in the east preferred Yanukovich by almost 19 percentage points more than those in the south. Thus, of any region in Ukraine, Yanukovich gained the most support from the eastern region. This finding is important because it suggests the views of the voting public in eastern Ukraine in terms of political values and on questions of language. That is, an overwhelming majority of voters in eastern Ukraine supported the candidacy of Yanukovich. Since Yanukovich ran on the platforms of making Russian a second official language, allowing dual citizenship between Ukraine and Russia, and increasing strategic ties with Russia, it follows that the majority of voters in eastern Ukraine support these platforms. Moreover, the voters in eastern Ukraine *didn't* support closer ties with the EU, future NATO membership, and the governmental reform that Yushchenko proposed. In these ways, it would seem that the voters of the eastern region of Ukraine voted on values consistent with those based on an Eastern Slavic national identity complex.

Thus, the literature on national identity formation in Ukraine suggests that the levels of identification with specific identity complexes are influenced by a number of factors. One important factor is the historical legacy of the territory of modern-day Ukraine, and the historical relationships with neighboring countries. This historical legacy has led to such things as political instability and slow political and economic development, factors that have been shown to correlate to the influence of specific identity complexes. Moreover, different regions of Ukraine have had different political histories, and have played different strategic roles. There is still controversy surrounding the history of eastern Ukraine and the Donbas region. However, the influence that Russia has in this region is undeniable. This region has the single largest amount of ethnic Russian residents in the country, a factor that contributes to the popularity of the Russian language, as well as the prevalence of certain Russian-leaning political parties. Yet, the increasing amount of inter-ethnic marriage, as well as the duration of time spent in Ukraine, positively correlate to levels of adherence with marginal, bi-ethnic, and pan-identity complexes. Consequently, emerging research into national identity formation in Ukraine is countering the notion that the country in general, and the east in specific, has been "Russified". However, debate persists concerning the level to which ethnicity, age, political viewpoint, language, and other factors influence national identity formation in Ukraine.

The data collected and analyzed in this research work is an effort to add to the prevailing literature by looking at how some of these factors influence national identity formation in eastern Ukraine. Specifically, this research will add to the amount of information on the role that language and politics has on national identity formation in this area of the country. Since the studies completed previously on national identity formation in Ukraine have not reached a consensus on the importance of different components of national identity complexes, further

research into the importance of specific factors will help the debate. In addition, by discussing the importance of language and politics in national identity formation, this research will indirectly assess the relevance of the alleged "Russification" of eastern Ukraine.

III. Methodology

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this study can be used to classify national identity complexes in general, but will be adapted to fit with emerging post-Communist identity complexes in Ukraine in specific. This framework was utilized by Stephan Shulman in order to help classify Ukrainian national identities based on interview data compiled by the Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies in 2001 (Shulman 2004). This framework initially separates national identity complexes in civic versus ethnic classifications. A civic national identity complex entails identification of the individual with citizenship in a state, and on common political principles (Shulman 2004, 35). Thus, if individuals were to identify their national identity primarily with the political and economic institutions, or with being a resident within a certain boundary, their national identity would be based on civic concerns.

In opposition to a civic national identity complex, ethnic national identity complexes are based on the traditions, culture, language, race, and ancestry of certain groups of people (Shulman 2004, 35). Thus, if individuals based their identity on the fact that they speak only Russian and because their grandparents emigrated from Russia, their national identity would be based on ethnic concerns. This framework subdivides ethnic national identities further in order to cover the major ethnic identity complexes specific to Ukraine. The major ethnic identity subdivision put forth by Shulman contrasts the complex Eastern Slavic versus the complex Ethnic Ukrainian, as he classifies it. The Ethnic Ukrainian national identity focuses solely on the

Ukrainian people, language, and culture as the legitimate dominant identity. It argues that the Russian minority, language, and culture is out of place in the territory of Ukraine, and the presence of these people can only be seen as a result of previous colonizing efforts by Russia and the USSR. In contrast to this identity complex is the Eastern Slavic national identity, which views the Ukrainian nation as founded on two different ethnicities and traditions – Ukrainian and Russian. Supporters of this complex argue that Russians have been a part of the territory, traditions, and culture for many years, and are intertwined with the history of ethnic Ukrainians. As a result, the nation of Ukraine should be viewed as fundamentally biethnic, bilingual, and bicultural (Shulman 2004, 38-9).

For this research work, it should be noted that the use of one language over another, or the political views of individuals alone will not necessarily determine their national identity. For instance, if individuals in eastern Ukraine speak only Russian language, but consider themselves to be citizens of Ukraine first and foremost, they will not be considered to have an Eastern Slavic national identity, but instead a civic national identity. Additionally, if an individual living in eastern Ukraine feels strongly that Ukrainian culture and history should be considered to be the legitimate dominant identity, and the culture and traditions of the ethnic Russian minority in Ukraine is fundamentally separate and should stay that way, she would be thought of as having an Ethnic Ukrainian national identity. Thus, it is possible for a person living in eastern Ukraine to have an Ethnic Ukrainian national identity.

It is probable that many people living in Ukraine will not fit neatly into one of these categories, but will have components of different national identity complexes. If these people do not identify with one national identity complex over another, but identify themselves as something else, they will be considered to fit in the "other" category of identity complexes. For

example, if individuals consider themselves to be first and foremost a "citizen of the world", they will be considered to have a cosmopolitan identity complex that necessarily goes further than having a national identity.

Delimitations

The main boundaries of this research study relate to the area in which the study has taken place, and the factors of national identity formation which have been studied. This study has focused on the eastern region of Ukraine usually referred to as the Donbas. The Donbas area consists primarily of the Lugansk and Donetsk *oblasts* (districts) in eastern Ukraine. This area has a large population of ethnic Russians which primarily speaks Russian, and is the largest region of Ukraine which borders Russia. Consequently, when attempting to study the relationship between language and national identity formation in Ukraine, this area becomes a logical choice. The area has also historically been an important economic producer for the country and former USSR, especially in the areas of mining and steel manufacturing. Thus, this area is important to politicians and political parties, making it a strong candidate for studying the relationship between national identity formation, language, and politics.

Another delimitation of this study concerns two factors of a national identity complex. The data collected and analyzed here primarily focuses on the potential relationship between the languages known, the political dispositions, and the national identities of the individuals under study in eastern Ukraine. This relationship is the primary focus of study because of its perceived importance in this area of Ukraine. That is not to say that other factors influencing national identity formation such as age, gender, location of home (urban or rural), and level of ethnic-intermixing are not important, they simply are not the object of attention in this research.

Collection of Data

To understand the current trend in national identity formation in eastern Ukraine, I have collected data from several different survey projects and news articles, conducted interviews with residents of eastern Ukraine, and have incorporated my experiences from a nine-month stay in the region. The survey projects studied have come from several different sources. The first source is a survey done in 2008 on the political relationships between Ukraine and Russia, which included 2,037 respondents from all *oblasts* in Ukraine, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Kyiv, and 1,600 respondents from across Russia. This survey was completed by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, in conjunction with the Levada-Center of Russia. The second survey analyzed the views of 1,349 graduates of secondary schools in Ukraine in 2008. This study was done by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation in conjunction with the Nova Doba History and Social Sciences Teachers Association, both organizations based in Kyiv.

The interviews which I have completed were done over a three-month period at the beginning of 2009.¹ There were a total of six interviews completed, all done with residents of eastern Ukraine. The participants were asked all interview questions, during one interview session each. In addition, the participants were selected according to their willingness to be interviewed, their availability, and the availability of a translator. Three participants were within the age range of 18-25, and three participants were within the 40-50 age range. Although only one out six interviewees was male, there was more diversity in educational background and family history. The interview questions were used to determine the demographics, family history, political views, and self-identification of the respondents. The demographic information collected of each interviewee included their age, their family ancestry, and how long they have resided within Ukraine, and where in Ukraine specifically. The second set of questions

¹ See Appendix A for a discussion on strategies taken to protect interviewees during the research process.

concerned the languages spoken, understood, and used regularly by each respondent. This section of the interview also asked value judgments of the respondents, as they were asked if they think Ukraine should have one official language, two, or more and why. Depending on their answer, they were also asked whether or not the official language should be used not only for official government documents, but should be mandated for entertainment programs such as television shows and movies.

The next set of questions focused on the political views of the respondents. I began this part of the interview by asking for the respondent's view of the current political situation in Ukraine. Depending on their answers, I would ask follow-up questions that would get a feel for their identification with a political party or politicians in Ukraine (if at all), whether or not they think Ukraine should work towards stronger economic and strategic alliances with Russia, Europe, the United States, some other state, or none. I also asked them if they would prefer Ukraine to stay an independent country, re-integrate with Russia, divide and partially unite with Russia, become a part of a collective with other independent states, or some other variant. Finally, I asked them if they could change anything about the current political situation in Ukraine, what it would be.

In the last part of the interview, I would ask them how they identified themselves. For example, "would you describe yourself as a Russian, Ukrainian, citizen of Ukraine, citizen of Russia, a Soviet, European, citizen of the world, or something else?" The idea was to determine what each respondent considered to be their own identity complex, then to look for the relationship between their identity complexes and their views about politics and language. It should be noted, that not all of the interviews followed this exact progression of questioning. I used specific follow-up questions when necessary in order to keep the conversation progressing.

In addition, I asked certain demographic information about each respondent's spouse, when applicable, in case a relationship emerged between their spouse's background and their own views.

Limitations

One limitation of this research work relates to the interviews used. In general, interviews can be a vital component of data collection and analysis in a qualitative research work because of the in-depth information that can be accrued. In this research work, interviews were utilized specifically because of this reason. However, the number of interviews completed for this project were few, and could only be used in conjunction with other research data gathered from other sources. Utilizing other research sources has allowed for a certain level of triangulation to occur among the data, and has allowed for explanations to emerge from the interview data that has been used to compliment other research data. Yet, an ideal approach to this research would have been to gather more data from more interviews conducted within the region of eastern Ukraine. Since this was not possible, the interview data used here is not intended to be generalized to the general public of eastern Ukraine; it is a limited sample and will be treated as such.

Unfortunately, the resources were not available to gather in-depth information from more interviewees around this region. One problem was that using interviews as a primary source of data collection would have been a very long process, and was too much for one researcher to complete. A second problem is that interpreters were used to moderate between the interviewer and interviewee. These interpreters were present at all interviews, and all interpreters could speak Russian, Ukrainian, and English. Since there were no financial resources used that came from organizations, grants, or other sources outside of the researcher's own budget, hiring

interpreters to travel long distances, and often, was not possible. Consequently, the interviews collected here were made possible on the schedules and good will of the interpreters and the participants used.

III. Analysis and Discussion

The Language Issue

The importance of language for the citizens of Ukraine, and the importance for political leaders, may be analyzed on two different levels. The issue of official state languages has been a flash point in the run-up to several elections in Ukraine, including the presidential elections of 1994 and 2004, and the parliamentary elections of 2006 (Kuzio, 2007; Korduban, 2007). This issue has been particularly useful for political parties who have influence in eastern Ukraine. The Party of Regions (PRU), led by former Prime Minister and former presidential candidate in 2004 Viktor Yanukovich, has its strongest following in eastern and southern Ukraine because of their advocacy of closer strategic and economic ties to Russia. In 2006, the PRU branch in the Donetsk district in eastern Ukraine called on the government of the district to "stop limiting the rights of Russian-speaking citizens" (Korduban, 2007). In the same year, the Donetsk City Council pledged to work towards elevating Russian to an official language. A string of court decisions in Donetsk and Kharkiv districts around the same time were made in order to protect the possibility of establishing multiple official languages (Korduban, 2007).

However, according to a recent survey done by the Ukrainian Democratic Circle on the order of the Institute of Politics, of the 1600 Ukrainian citizens polled only 44 percent stated that the language issue does not need any urgent decisions, and 38 percent stated that the issue is not pressing at all ("80% of Ukrainians", 2009). In addition, only 15 percent stated that the language issue should be solved immediately ("80% of Ukrainians", 2009). The language issue in

question is whether or not the government of Ukraine should amend the 1996 constitution to add the Russian language to Ukrainian language in the category of official state languages.

However, the issue of elevating Russian as a second official state language has more saliency in the areas of Ukraine where Russian is primarily spoken. A different survey done in 2006 found that while only eight percent of respondents felt the language issue was a pressing issue for Ukraine, two-thirds of that eight percent resided in southern and eastern Ukraine (Kuzio, 2007). Not only do these two areas of Ukraine primarily speak Russian, but they are strongholds of pro-Russian political parties such as the Party of Regions.

Yet, recent interview data suggests that the level of importance of official state languages in eastern Ukraine is not high for all individuals.² Natasha A., a 22-year-old teacher and resident of Lugansk in eastern Ukraine stated, "I think it will be great if all pupils in school will speak Ukrainian language because it is their language. But now, they speak and learn in Russian and it is not right" (Personal Interview, 2009). Another resident of eastern Ukraine, 23-year-old Tatiana O. stated that, "I believe in the future it will only be Ukrainian language", and moreover, "step by step we should transfer into Ukrainian language [in schools] because it will be easier for pupils" (Personal Interview, 2009). Both women have Russian ancestry within the last three generations, close family in Russia, were born in eastern Ukraine, primarily speak Russian and sometimes Ukrainian, and feel that there should only be one official language to be used official documents and in schools.

Conversely, Oksana P., a 41-year-old school Director stated that she hoped there would be two official languages in Ukraine because of the large amount of people who speak the language (Personal Interview, 2009). At the same time, she felt that "if there is only to be one official language [Ukrainian], it would be nothing tragic" (Oksana P., 2009). This admission is

² See Appendix B for a summary of interviewee demographic data and a summary of responses.

important because it was generally unexpected, as it came from a woman who had spent most of her life in Lugansk and Donetsk districts in eastern Ukraine, studied at a university in Russia, and is married to man who was born in Russia (Oksana P., 2009). Despite all of the Russian influences in her life, she still considers herself a citizen of Ukraine, and is not very concerned with the language issue in general.

Thus, the issue of the use of Ukrainian and Russian languages in an official capacity, in entertainment, and in the schools in Ukraine has different levels of importance in different realms. The issue of whether or not Russian language should be added as an official language has had historical importance for politicians in Ukraine as it has given them a tool to further mobilize their constituency. Furthermore, the lack of importance of the language issue in non-election years further attests to this fact. In addition, recent polling data suggest that in Ukraine in general, whether or not to add Russian as an official language is not high on the list of important issues. Yet, the issue has more saliency in eastern Ukraine, where a majority of people speak the language. Some people, such as Oksana P., would like to see the status of the Russian language on par with the Ukrainian language, but even she didn't seem too invested in the idea. One possible explanation for the apathy associated around the issue is that people are starting to realize that the issue is being used as a tool by politicians, and any change from the government in Kyiv is unlikely to occur. This was the sentiment echoed by Lena M., an 18-year-old student in the Lugansk district in eastern Ukraine, when asked about whether or not the language issue is important in Ukraine. She stated that, "I don't think so, it is a question that politicians use to manipulate people, so it isn't as important as they make it" (Lena M., 2009).

Another explanation is that the national identity complexes that are forming among people are generally moving towards a Ukrainian national identity, and away from outside

influences. All of the interview participants responded that they consider themselves to be citizens of Ukraine first. Yet, all respondents live in eastern Ukraine, primarily speak Russian, get their news from Russian-language sources, and have family that lives in Russia. These are the residents of Ukraine who are among the most likely to self-identify themselves as having an Eastern Slavic national identity complex. Yet, very few traces of a possible Eastern Slavic identity complex were evident in the respondents' answers, especially in the younger participants. Both Natasha A. and Tatiana O., 22 and 23 years old respectively, stated that they would like more people in Ukraine to learn about the national language, culture, and traditions (Personal Interviews, 2009). This points to another potentially important factor in national identity formation – age.

The Role of Youth

Although the prevailing research shows that place of residence is one of the most important factors in national identity formation, there are emerging trends among youth in Ukraine concerning their views about the future of politics in Ukraine. According to a recent study done by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and Nova Doba History and Social Sciences Teachers Association, many teens in Ukraine are patriotic, pragmatic, and concerned about their own future within the country (Pastukhova, 2008). This study surveyed 1,349 graduates from 43 secondary schools across Ukraine and found that 93 percent of respondents consider themselves to be citizens of Ukraine (Pastukhova, 2008).

Interview data collected from three young citizens in eastern Ukraine supports the notion that the newest generation of adults is patriotic, and have a civic conception of national identity. Lena M., Natasha A., and Tatiana O., 18, 22, and 23 years old respectively, all self-identified themselves as citizens of Ukraine first (Personal Interviews, 2009). In addition, all three

interviewees stated that there should only be one official language, Ukrainian. Older respondents such as Oksana P. (41 years old), Maxim V. (48 years old), and Ludmila B. (48 years old) all stated that there should be two official languages in Ukraine, Russian and Ukrainian. At the same time, all three respondents stated that the language issue was not a very big problem confronting the country. Moreover, all six respondents seemed to agree that there are more pressing issues confronting Ukraine, especially those related to the political arena.

Politics in Ukraine and Russia

In eastern Ukraine, the large presence of ethnic Russians, and the close proximity to Russia, significantly affects the way these individuals perceive their own state, Russia, and themselves. According to a survey completed in March of 2009 by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in conjunction with the Levada-Center, 91 percent of the 2,038 Ukrainians surveyed had a positive attitude towards Russia, while only five percent had a negative attitude (*Attitudes of Ukrainian and Russian Publics*, 2009). In addition, when asked "What relations would you like to see between Ukraine and Russia?", 67.6 percent of respondents responded, "Ukraine and Russia should be independent but friendly states with open borders and without visas and custom-houses", while 23.1 percent would like to see Ukraine and Russia merge into one state, and only 7.8 percent responded that "relations between Ukraine and Russia should be the same as with other countries, with closed borders, visas and custom-houses" (*Attitudes of Ukrainian and Russian Publics*, 2009).

Through the interviews collected in eastern Ukraine, all six respondents stated that they would like to see increased cooperation with other governments in general. Oksana P. stated that she would like to see increased cooperation between Ukraine and Russia, only along social and economic lines (Personal Interview, 2009). All other respondents felt similar in that they would

like to see better relationships between Ukraine, Russia, and other countries in general. Yet, there were conflicting opinions as to whether better relationships were even possible between these countries. For example, Ludmila B. stated that it is "not possible because there are too many different policies [in different countries]" (Personal Interview, 2009). Others, such as Maxim V., were more optimistic, stating that, "I think it is possible to have strong ties with everyone, but we have to be strong in order to have good relationships with other countries" (Personal Interview, 2009).

When asked to elaborate on their views of the current political situation in Ukraine, respondents were quick to assess the situation in the negative. The reasons for this negative perception range from selfishness of politicians and political parties, to corruption within the system. For example, Ludmila B. stated about the current political situation in Ukraine, "It's a mess. It's because all of the politicians have their own interests and the interests of the parties. They all say bad stuff about each other. I just got disappointed with everybody" (Personal Interview, 2009). Thus, when asked what they personally would change in the politics in Ukraine if given the power, two respondents (Oksana P. and Maxim V.) spoke of ending corruption in all sectors of government. These perspectives on the politics in Ukraine are symbolic of the level of disappointment and mistrust that many Ukrainians feel for politicians and political parties.

Conclusion

The survey and interview data gathered here suggest the emergence of several important trends. Firstly, many Ukrainians report that they take pride in being a citizen of the country. This trend is especially prevalent in younger people, and of those people interviewed in eastern Ukraine. All of the people interviewed considered themselves to be first and foremost citizens of

Ukraine. Respondents who have lived in eastern Ukraine all of their lives, those who have lived and studied in Russia, those who have Russian spouses, and those who have close family in Russia all based their national identity on a civic conception instead of an Eastern Slavic or Ethnic Ukrainian identity complex. Moreover, all respondents felt strongly that Ukraine should stay an independent country. All respondents would like to see increased cooperation with different countries in general, including Russia, neighboring states, those of Western Europe, and the United States. However, three out of six interviewees denied the possibility of increased cooperation at this time due to the negative political situation in Ukraine in general.

Secondly, there is a relationship between language and politics in Ukraine, although the relationship differs in level of importance for different people. The question of whether or not the Russian language should be added as an official state language, to be freely used in entertainment programs (such as television, periodicals, movies), as well as in the school system has historically been a tool used by politicians to mobilize potential voters. This tactic was used during the presidential elections in 1994, 2004, and the parliamentary elections of 2006, especially by politicians and political parties that operate heavily in the eastern and southern regions in Ukraine. Yet, survey and interview data reveals that this issue is becoming less salient for the people in these regions. One explanation is that the people in these regions are becoming hardened against such political ploys as they realize that such tactics are likely to create meaningful change in the central government in Kyiv. In addition, the younger generation of voters seems to possess a stronger nationalistic sentiment than older residents, and many do not want to see Russian elevated as a second national language. As a result, it seems unlikely that any meaningful change on the language issue will take place in the future.

Thirdly, the outlook of the general political situation in Ukraine is bleak. Many people feel that there are massive problems with different politicians and political parties, including general dishonesty, corruption, and lack of ability. Interviewees have all been critical of the current political climate, and have expressed general disappointment. Several respondents felt that certain political parties or individual politicians had promise for the future, but all of these politicians and political parties run on platforms of uniting Ukraine together. Conspicuously absent was praise for parties such as the Party of Regions, which advocates elevating Russian as an official state language, and increasing ties with Russia in general. Yet, despite the high level of disappointment with the current political system in Ukraine, all respondents felt proud to be a citizen of Ukraine. This civic conception of national identity in those interviewed in eastern Ukraine counters the prevalent view that this region is home to strong Eastern Slavic identity complexes, and that these residents are inescapably different from those in other parts of the country.

IV. Conclusions

The main contribution of this research work is the data collected and analyzed on national identity in eastern Ukraine. By focusing on one region of Ukraine, this study has been able to get more in-depth information about the prevalence of various national identity complexes. Due to the historical circumstances and the ethnic composition of individuals in this region, the national identity formation of these individuals has been thought of as developing differently from those individuals in other regions of the country. Part of the reason for this assumption has been the obvious differences in language and strength of pro-Russian political parties when compared to other regions. This project has allowed for more information to be gathered on the relationship between political values, language, and national identities in the east of Ukraine.

Consequently, this study has yielded some explanatory data on the influence of these factors of national identity formation in a region where they are thought to be highly influential.

The data collected here and the preliminary conclusions drawn within this research work have the potential to aid researchers of Ukrainian national identity, as well as those individuals with political motivations. Due to the relative youth of Ukraine as an independent country, the national identity of the Ukrainian public is still in flux. The political landscape of Ukraine has gone through significant changes in the 17 years of independence, and the public is still thinking about the best ways to govern the country. In the process of such an examination, the role and importance of ethnicity, culture, language, and traditions are called into question as well. By providing more information on the importance of the current relationship between the factors influencing national identity formation of individuals in eastern Ukraine, this study is providing information to politicians and political parties who are interested in the identities of their constituents. Moreover, this study is giving information on the importance of certain values that individuals in this region hold. This information has the potential to aid politicians by giving them a better idea of which values and platforms to pursue to gain the favor of the average individual in eastern Ukraine.

Future Research

The core questions, and the conceptual framework, of this research study have the potential to create future avenues of research. Attempting to determine the emerging national identity of citizens in eastern Ukraine, and the influence that language and politics has on its formation, are still important research topics that need to be explored further in the future. To further investigate these topics, more detailed and extensive data collection and analysis methods should be used. For example, conducting more interviews with more people in eastern Ukraine

would be a good start to such a study. In addition, the use of qualitative data collection methods may be utilized in order to get a broader view of the adherence to various national identity complexes in eastern Ukraine. For instance, the distribution of a high volume of surveys across the Donbas area would give a broader perspective on the current state of national identity formation in the east of Ukraine. By combining the use of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, the future research study would be able to get general statistics on the instance of adherence to specific national identity complexes, as well as possible explanations for the levels of adherence, which would emerge from interview data.

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Appendix A - Protection of Human Participants

The first strategy used to protect my interview subjects was to give them the full information about the research project. Thus, they were informed that their responses might be used as data in a research paper to be completed for a university in the United States. In addition, they were told that they do not have to answer any questions asked of them if they do not feel comfortable, or if they choose not to for any reason. The second method of protecting these participants was to protect their identity by not using their real names when citing their response data. Although I did not use the interviewees' real names, I did use their actual demographic data such as age, family ancestry, and type of work. Some of this data can partially identify the interviewee, but the demographic data used has not singled out one person's identity in specific. Moreover, the interviewees were told that some of their demographic data would be used in the study, and they did not need to participate if they chose not to.

Finally, the interview data was used only in one version of the final paper. This first version was used for the required Master's International graduate course at Illinois State University, and was only viewed in full by a few people. The paper that was made available for future Master's International students, and for the general public was a different version. This second version does not include the interview data contained within the original paper. Thus, the identity of the interviewees was further protected because the little identifiable demographic data contained here was only be viewed by three or four academic professionals.

Appendix B – Summary of Interviewee Data

| | Lena M. | Natasha I. | Tatiana B. | Oksana P. | Ludmila B. | Maxim V. |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Age | 18 | 22 | 23 | 41 | 48 | 48 |
| Date of Interview | 03/11/09 | 03/09/09 | 03/10/09 | 02/15/09 | 03/12/09 | 03/02/09 |
| Length of Residence in Area | Born and lives in eastern Ukraine. | Born and lives in eastern Ukraine. | Born and lives in eastern Ukraine. | Born and lives in eastern Ukraine. Attended university in Moscow. | Born and lives in eastern Ukraine. Attended university in Moscow. | Born and lives in eastern Ukraine. |
| Languages Spoken | Russian, English, Ukrainian, German, French. | Russian, Ukrainian, English. | Russian, Ukrainian, English and Arabic. | Russian, Ukrainian. | Russian. | Russian, German. |
| Ancestry | Russian, Ukrainian | Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarusian. | Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish. | Russian | Russian | Ukrainian |
| Should Ukraine have one official language or more? | Ukrainian only. | One official language, Ukrainian, but people may speak others. | One official language, Ukrainian, but people may speak others. | Russian and Ukrainian ideally, but not a big issue. | Ukrainian and Russian. | Ukrainian and Russian. |
| View of Current Political Situation in Ukraine? | It is bad. | It is bad. Much potential since 2004, but squandered. | It is bad. Nobody is doing anything good for the people. | Current government unprofessional and corrupt. | It is bad. Politicians are only interested in themselves. | It is bad. Too many laws conflict each other, lack of enforcement. |
| View of current relationship between Ukraine and Russia? | Bad, ever since Orange Rev-olution in 2004. | Not very good. | Not good between govern-ments, but the general publics are fine with each other. | Not good, she doesn't like the quarreling between the two governments. | Bad. Russia tries to be dominant country in all relationships. | Very bad. |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Who should Ukraine have stronger ties with? (If anybody) | Every-body, but not feasible. | Ukr. should connect with other countries in general. | Ukr. should ally with stronger countries in Europe, and the U.S. | Ukr. should integrate with Europe, and Russia, socially and economically. | Europe and U.S., but not possible now. | Every-body. |
| Should Ukraine stay independent and/or unite/form coalitions? | Ukr. should stay independent, no union with Russia. | Ukr. should stay independent, and join in NATO. | Ukr. should stay independent, join in NATO and the EU. | Ukr. should stay independent, as a country, and from military alliances. | Ukr. should stay independent, and join in NATO and the EU. | Ukr. should stay independent . |
| Identify with Political Party or Politicians ? | Yes, the Prime Minister. | No. | No. | No. | Yes, certain politicians from "Our Ukraine" party. | Yes, several politicians from several parties. |
| What would you change about current political situation, if anything? | I would choose another President that could unite the country. | Develop language, patriotism and unity as a country. | Join eastern and western Ukraine into a single nation. | Begin with fighting corruption, develop small businesses, agriculture, and energy efficiency. | I don't know. | I would increase enforcement of the laws. |
| How do you identify yourself? | Citizen of Ukraine, citizen of the world. | Citizen of Ukraine, and a citizen of the world. | Citizen of Ukraine. | Citizen of Ukraine, but proud to be ethnically Russian. | Citizen of Ukraine, a patriot. | Citizen of Ukraine, Russian, citizen of the world. |