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Regional Polarisation in Ukraine: Public Opinion, Voting and Legislative Behaviour

PAUL KUBICEK

MANY POST-COMMUNIST STATES are still faced with the challenge of a 'triple transition':¹ consolidation of democratic institutions, creation of market structures and imperatives of state building. The last constitutes a logical prerequisite for the other two, as an established and agreed political community with functioning institutions is necessary to carry out the other tasks.² Some states, such as Russia, suffer from a dearth of authoritative, central institutions, thereby complicating any reform efforts. Others, particularly new states, have had difficulties in forging a sense of political community among their citizens, who may be divided by cultural, linguistic, religious or regional differences.

One such state is Ukraine, in which regional and ethnic divisions and the uncertain loyalties of a substantial body of citizens have been the source of numerous troubles and worries since independence was achieved in 1991. Monitoring the progress of national consolidation in Ukraine since 1991 has attracted the attention of several scholars.³ Generally, analysts draw a line along the Dniepr river, dividing the country into a Russified and heavily industrialised East, and a more ethnically Ukrainian, Western-oriented West. The former harbours conservative communists who are ardently against market reforms and desire closer links with Moscow. The latter is the home to Ukrainian nationalists and assorted national-democrats who seek more rapid political and economic reforms and integration of their country with the West. This division, many fear, will make it difficult to form a singular, tolerant political community within Ukraine's borders and will complicate Ukrainian elites' domestic and foreign policy agendas. More recently, however, two studies which assess developments over time have argued that regionalism in Ukraine is either greatly exaggerated or is waning. One set of authors, for example, argues that 'national integration is occurring in the sense that the Ukrainian electorate is becoming less polarised over time, despite the existence of deep historically-based cleavages in the society'.⁴

This article, however, argues for the persistence of regional divisions in Ukraine. It bases its claim upon time-series data on public opinion, electoral results and voting by parliamentarians. While there is little evidence to suggest that regionalism is becoming more acute, it is clear that, in respect of concerns central to the Ukrainian polity, it is not subsiding. This should remain a cause for concern, as the post-

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communist period has already witnessed what can happen to ethnically and regionally divided states lacking a coherent ideology or identity. One could argue that the stability if not survival of Ukraine, along with the ability of the state's leaders to carry out needed reforms, depend in part upon advancing processes of integration and reducing the regional polarisation that has become evident in the post-Soviet period.⁵ This article seeks to explain why regionalism has been persistent and how these divisions might eventually be overcome or ameliorated.

Regions in Ukraine

Ukrainians are wont to say that there is no single Ukraine, although they may disagree on precisely how many 'Ukraines' there are. Although East/West comparisons are most frequently made, one can divide the country into a number of distinct regions based upon historical experience, economic structure, ethnic composition, ties to bordering states and language. Treating each of these regions separately will refine one's analysis of regional divisions in the country. Differences across regions and selected *oblasti* on a variety of dimensions are presented in Table 1.⁶

The far eastern region is the most heavily industrialised and urbanised area of the country. Next to Crimea, it also has the highest percentage of ethnic Russians, particularly in Donetsk and Luhansk, and Russian is the primary language spoken in large cities. This region has extensive cross-border links with Russia, and maintaining ties with Russia as well as protecting the rights of Russians and Russian speakers have been top priorities of people here. A notable, residual 'Soviet' identity has been found by some who have studied this region, a phenomenon that may confound Ukrainian state-building efforts. These *oblasti* also have a number of large, smoke-stack industries and mining operations, enterprises which account for the region's higher than average GDP/capita but are not likely to be profitable without maintenance of state subsidies. From Table 1 we can see that it has been hit harder than average by the decline in industrial production. For this reason, it is claimed, eastern Ukrainians are typically more cautious on movement to the market and favour preserving much of the Soviet-era support system.

The western area of the country has a completely different history, ethnic composition and economic structure. This part of Ukraine was only incorporated into the USSR in 1939, meaning it escaped the worst of Stalinist repression. Earlier it had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was then divided among East European states. It is overwhelmingly ethnically Ukrainian and Ukrainian-speaking. Many of its residents harbour memories of pre-Soviet rule and affiliate with the Uniate (Greek Catholic) Church, and some fought against Soviet occupation into the early 1950s. Anti-Moscow feelings run deep here, and few Russians live in the region. Ukrainian nationalist feelings are very strong, especially in the three *oblasti* of Galicia, L'viv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil. Economically, agriculture and light industry predominate, and the region sees the West as the most likely and promising economic partner.

The large central area is mostly Ukrainian-speaking, although in the city of Kyiv Russian is the more frequently heard language. It largely lacks traditions of Ukrainian nationalism as found in the west of the country, however, due in large part to famine

TABLE 1
REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN UKRAINE

Region/Oblast'	% of total population 1996	% urban, 1996	% ethnic Russians, 1989	% of total agricultural output, 1989	% of total industrial output, 1989	Index of industrial production, 1996 (1990 = 100)	Real GDP per capita, in \$, 1995
West	22.1	49.8	5	22.0	16.5	41	2087
L'vivs'ka	5.4	60.9	7	3.9	5.1	31	1856
Terнопілі's'ka	2.3	43.7	2	3.3	1.5	48	2135
Ivano-Frankivs'ka	2.9	43.3	4	2.1	2.2	49	2177
Central	26.7	64.4	10	34.1	23.9	49	2730
East	35.7	82.7	34	26.4	48.2	45	3157
Donets'ka	10.1	90.3	44	4.9	13.7	46	3659
Luhans'ka	5.4	86.4	45	3.3	7.4	34	2829
South	10.1	65.2	24	12.8	8.3	63	2426
Crimea	5.1	70.5	67	4.7	3.1	46	1950
Total	100.0	67.8	22	100.0	100.0	50	2620

Sources: Martian Dolishnii. 'Regional Aspects of Ukraine's Economic Development', in I. S. Korpcekyj (ed.), *The Ukrainian Economy* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1992); Chauncy Harris. 'The New Russian Minorities: A Statistical Overview', *Post-Soviet Geography*, 34, 1, January 1993, pp. 1-28; *Ukraine in Figures 1996* (Kyiv, Naukova Dumka, 1997); and United Nations, *Human Development Report 1997* (New York, United Nations, 1997).

and repression in the Stalinist era which crushed any incipient formation of Ukrainian national identity. Since independence, it has followed a relatively moderate political course, partially receptive to Westerners' call for national rebirth but also responsive to the leftist reaction emanating from the east of the country. Its economy is mixed between industry (largely in Kyiv) and agriculture, and it has generally fared better than the eastern region since 1990.

The southern region falls in-between the central and eastern regions in terms of ethnic composition and economic structure. There is a sizeable Russian minority, again particularly in the cities. There was for a time a Novorossiia pseudo-separatist movement in Odessa, but it failed to attract public support. Ukrainian national consciousness has been low in this region. The region is also more urbanised than average and contains some large enterprises like those in the east, although the overall presence of industry is smaller. Issues of economic autonomy have been high on regional elites' agendas, although in general the area has been politically rather quiescent.

Crimea deserves a category all to itself.⁷ Unlike all other regions of Ukraine, it has an ethnic Russian majority. Given the fact that it was transferred to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic from formally Russian jurisdiction in 1954 by a whim of Khrushchev, it is hardly surprising that residents of this peninsula continue to identify strongly with Russia or the Soviet Union. Broken ties with Russia have hurt the economy, which had a sizeable tourist industry catering for visitors from Russia. Small-scale separatist movements exist, Russian politicians have claimed Crimea as a part of Russia, and local politicians have pushed hard for more autonomy. Determining Crimea's status was a major question for Kyiv, but it, along with ownership of the Black Sea Fleet stationed in Sevastopol, appear to have been finally resolved. The region now has limited autonomy, intransigent local politicians have been brought to heel by Kyiv, and fears of separatist violence have receded. Nonetheless, important issues, such as re-settling exiled Tatars, cloud relations with Kyiv, and Crimea remains the most problematic, from Kyiv's point of view, of all the regions.

Dynamics of regionalism—hypotheses

Regionalism has been one of many problems Ukraine faced upon declaring independence in 1991, as it was clear political activists in different regions had varying senses of priorities for the country. At the same time, however, an effort has been made since independence to create a new state, one based upon territorial citizenship, not ethnic identity, so that all within its borders can belong to and identify with it. In addition, leaders such as Presidents Kravchuk and Kuchma have made an effort to balance the demands of various regions, and point to their success in managing inter-ethnic and inter-regional peace. Ukrainian elites have also attempted to build institutions to give Kyiv the capacity to act nationally and to instil a sense of togetherness among Ukrainians. In other words, there has been sensitivity to region as a polarising factor and various efforts have been made to lessen its effects. Thinking about the interplay of regional differences and state construction gives rise to three hypotheses about what might happen over time.

The first hypothesis is the optimistic one for would-be Ukrainian state builders. It is rooted in the notion of the 'nationalisation of politics' or the idea that 'states make nations'⁸. This posits that regional or geographical cleavages can be eradicated by the efforts of centralising states and/or political parties. That is, over time, allegiances will become focused at the national level and geographical location will not be a major predictor of political attitudes and behaviour.⁹ Furthering national integration is an important goal in new states such as Ukraine, where people never thought of themselves as members of a Kyiv-centred polity. During Soviet times, 'Ukrainian' had largely an ethnic or cultural connotation; it did not serve as a marker for citizenship or political loyalty. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic had little meaning in everyday life, no unifying symbols, little real autonomous authority. Now, however, under a single state, a new community can be forged that will erase or at least reduce regional differences. People will discover that they have a common fate, they will gradually change the horizons of their political thinking, and political parties will establish themselves on a national basis. The hope here is that the Ukrainian state will be able to make a new, civil Ukrainian nation, one in which regional affinities or particularities will gradually assume less and less significance and a distinct Ukrainian way of thinking and patterns of values will emerge.

The second hypothesis would downplay or deny any ability of the state or other structures to mitigate essential differences in historical experience, ethnic composition and/or economic structure. It would take very seriously the notion of region, and claim that existing divisions based upon regional differences will not simply wither away owing to the actions of the central authorities. It would point to research such as Robert Putnam's with respect to Italy, which finds that Italian state builders have not been able to overcome pre-existing regional differences that have very deep roots in history.¹⁰ At best, states have to work for decades, if not centuries, to wear down the various differences defined by region. Thus, one would not expect Ukrainian state builders to have made much if any progress in their endeavours to create a unified community. In particular, one might say that the Ukrainian state, new and strapped for resources as it is, will have little to offer its citizens in order to win their loyalty and forge a unified community. Political changes alone will thus not magically alter the underlying factors that account for regional differences.

The final hypothesis goes a step further. It would agree with the first hypothesis that living in a single community can help reformulate peoples' identities and political values. However, it would note that it is not necessarily a uni-directional proposition leading to an integrated national community. It would argue that disparate groups living in a new political community may reject the overtures of the state and instead over time regional divisions may become magnified. Parties will form on the basis of region and the politics of identity, culture and symbolism will become more important than politics based upon socioeconomic interests that can more easily cut across regions. This notion could easily apply to Ukraine, a state in which many are disappointed with independence, most do not view their state as democratic, and almost all citizens declare that their lives have become worse since 1991.¹¹ In other words, to the extent that state and nation building in Ukraine have been a failure, one would expect regionalism to become worse.

All of these hypotheses can be examined with the time-series data presented in this

article. Rather than focus exclusively on public opinion data, which is the most common approach to the question of regional schisms in Ukraine, we shall also look at voting patterns among the populace and among members of parliament. This will allow us to look at attitudinal data as well as behaviour among the general population and political elites.

The evidence over time

Public opinion

Most of the studies of regionalism in Ukraine have relied, to varying degrees, on public opinion data to support their claims about the salience of regionalism in contemporary Ukraine. These studies typically compare sentiments on the most basic and relevant political questions in Ukraine today: relations with Russia, feelings about the state of the country, orientation toward political and economic reform, and support for more local autonomy or centralisation. Typically, notable differences among respondents by place of residence are evident, and these have been reported in many of the previously published works on Ukrainian regionalism.

However, rather than presenting a single picture of a regionally divided Ukrainian public, our task is to uncover whether and how regionalism changes over time. In order to do this, we need to rely upon survey questions and methods that have been replicated several times. The best such evidence comes from various Central and Eastern Eurobarometer surveys that have been conducted throughout post-communist Europe under the aegis of the European Commission. While these do not ask an extensive battery of standard questions in each survey, they do cover basic political orientations and assessments that allow us to track developments since 1992.

Among the standard questions that are asked, five are most useful for our analysis.¹² The first two concern orientations to economic reform: is the respondent for the creation of a free market and what does s/he believe about the current course of reforms. These can be considered questions of policy preference. Another two questions ask about assessments of the overall state of the country and satisfaction with the level of democracy. These are important to include because higher levels of dissatisfaction with actual performance can point to alienation, a factor that would certainly inhibit construction of a political community. A final question asks about which country or countries are important for the country's future. In the case of Ukraine, this is important in terms of defining the Ukrainian state, and comparing responses that value Russia on the one hand and the United States and the EU on the other would tap possible east/west divisions on questions of foreign policy and political orientation.

The results, broken down by region and based upon five surveys from 1992 to 1996, are displayed in Table 2. The means for the country from 1992 to 1996 are presented in the top row, and underneath are the absolute differences in means by region. This allows us to assess regional differences and whether they are diminishing or growing over time. Several items are worth noting. First, these data reflect a sweeping negative assessment of current economic and political conditions and contradictory notions about what should be done. Ukrainians in all regions tend to

TABLE 2
DYNAMICS OF PUBLIC OPINION 1992–1996

Region	Satisfied with direction of country (1–2, 2 = dissatisfied)	Satisfaction with democracy (4 = maximum dissatisfaction)	In favour of free market (1–2, 1 = for)	Are reforms too fast? (1–4, 1 = too fast)	Future most tied up with USA or EU (by %)	Future most tied up with Russia (by %)
Mean	1.64	3.09	1.53	2.69	32.4	37.4
1993	1.86	3.31	1.62	3.12	33.6	45.0
1994	1.82	3.26	1.61	3.02	21.5	49.2
1995	1.82	3.31	1.70	3.10	25.5	59.1
1996	1.77	3.17	1.68	n/a	28.3	51.5
West	-0.01	-0.14**	0.00	+0.03	+14.8	-21.5
1992	-0.16**	-0.24**	-0.15**	-0.01	+14.8	-29.8
1993	-0.07**	-0.07	+0.01	+0.01	+4.3	-13.6
1994	-0.07**	-0.16**	-0.05	+0.06	+12.5	-31.6
1995	-0.13**	-0.16**	-0.03	n/a	+17.8	-30.0
1996	-0.14**	-0.18**	-0.03	-0.06	+0.2	+1.8
Central	-0.01	-0.05	-0.03	-0.06	+1.8	+1.8
1992	+0.01	+0.08	+0.03	0.00	+6.1	-5.6
1993	+0.05*	+0.10*	-0.02	+0.10	-1.0	+2.0
1994	+0.03	+0.04	-0.04	+0.08	+5.8	+5.3
1995	-0.06**	-0.12**	-0.08**	n/a	+4.1	-15.3
1996	-0.06	+0.30**	+0.15**	-0.06	-13.5	+4.5
South	0.00	-0.06	+0.04	-0.28**	-2.5	+1.2
1992	+0.04	-0.13	-0.14*	+0.12	-1.5	-1.2
1993	+0.08*	+0.19*	+0.09*	-0.03	+1.2	+1.7
1994	+0.04	-0.02	+0.08	n/a	-10.8	+6.0
1995	+0.05**	+0.10**	0.00	+0.07	-9.4	+14.6
1996	+0.10**	+0.13**	+0.08**	+0.11**	-13.7	+22.2
East	0.00	-0.07	+0.01	-0.14**	-7.9	+12.3
1992	+0.04**	+0.03	+0.03	-0.07	-11.2	+13.2
1993	+0.10**	+0.16**	+0.01	n/a	-9.0	+14.9
1994	+0.04**	+0.09	+0.01	-0.08	+2.9	-3.6
1995	-0.21**	+0.09	-0.06	-0.08	+4.4	+1.0
1996	+0.10**	+0.16**	-0.05	-0.12	+4.4	+1.0
Crimea	+0.06	-0.11	+0.17*	+0.46**	-5.2	+20.2
1992	+0.06	-0.03	-0.02	-0.15	+3.8	+16.5
1993	+0.16**	+0.21*	+0.20**	n/a	-12.2	+30.6
1994	+0.09	+0.21*	+0.20**	n/a	-12.2	+30.6

* significant at 0.05 level;

** significant at 0.01 level.

feel that the country is moving in the wrong direction and are far from satisfied with 'democracy' as it currently exists in the country. 'Alienation', one might say, is rather high. At the same time, they tend to be sceptical about the appropriateness of a free market system, while also thinking that current economic reforms are moving too slowly. This overall pattern holds, with some variation, across all regions—that is, those in the west, like those in the east, do, on balance, express negative assessments of performance and are not fully convinced of the appropriateness of market-oriented reforms.

There are, however, important regional differences worth noting. The most conspicuous one is on foreign relations: which country or countries respondents see as most important for Ukraine's future. While there have been some changes over time, the pattern is that those in the west see Ukraine's future as associated with western countries, whereas those in the east, south and Crimea view Russia as the most likely partner. Over time, one sees that the division has become more acute, and that for the country as a whole there has been an increase in pro-Russia attitudes since 1992. This issue, of course, has been one of the major cleavages in the Ukrainian state, and various domestic manifestations of the 'Russian question', e.g. language, also are a prominent source of political cleavages.¹³ On domestic issues, one consistently finds those in the west relatively more satisfied with the current state of affairs, although there is no evidence that westerners are unequivocally more pro-market. Those living in central regions have views that do not greatly diverge from the mean, although in the last survey they were far closer to westerners than in previous ones. Meanwhile, those in the east and the south have more pronounced negative assessments and are in general less supportive of a free market. Over time, one sees regional means fluctuate, and it is hard to ascertain a general pattern. Perhaps the most one can say is that over time those in the east have grown more sceptical of market reforms and are more likely to believe reforms are moving too fast—no doubt expressing fears about what marketisation could mean for industry in the area. But in terms of general assessments about conditions, one can see that easterners started off less satisfied and generally have remained so. The largest shifts in opinion have occurred in Crimea, the region of Ukraine that has had the most unstable situation since 1991. Over time the general situation in the country is viewed more negatively, more pro-Russian views are expressed, and in 1996 dissatisfaction with democracy went up, even as Kyiv was 'solving' its relations with the region. In general, the evidence suggests that region is an important variable in public opinion, but there is no overarching, clear trend in any direction.

Of course, we also need to check whether region, as opposed to other assortments of socioeconomic or cultural variables, actually matters. That is, apparent regional differences could be masking ethnic, socioeconomic or urban/rural divisions. In order to test the independent effect of region, independent variables were re-coded category into categorical variables and a logistical regression analysis was performed. Factors that have been important in other surveys of post-communist publics, including age, education, change in household finances over the past year, gender and ethnicity were entered into the equation.¹⁴

The results are rather mixed and are displayed in Table 3. To conserve space, results from the two bookend years, 1992 and 1996, are presented. The general

TABLE 3
LOGISTICAL REGRESSION ESTIMATES FROM SURVEY YEARS 1992 AND 1996

Variable	GENDIR		SATISDEMO		FREETMARK		PROWEST		PRORUSS	
	1992	1996	1992	1996	1992	1996	1992	1996	1992	1996
West	-0.00	0.13	0.25**	0.18	-0.08	-0.18	0.27***	0.27**	-0.60*	-0.59***
East	-0.08	-0.49***	-0.34**	-0.34**	-0.01	-0.19*	-0.22**	-0.31***	0.24*	0.35***
South	0.16	-0.17	-1.13**	-0.11	-0.41**	-0.24	-0.41*	-0.34**	0.08	0.18
Crimea	0.47**	-0.35	-0.19	-0.09	-0.00	-0.73**	0.04	-0.27	-0.11	0.66***
Household finances	0.48***	0.60***	0.39***	0.49***	0.44***	0.39***	0.12*	0.16**	-0.05	-0.18**
Age	-0.00	-0.00	0.0	-0.02**	-0.03***	-0.02***	-0.02***	-0.02***	0.02**	0.02***
Education	0.19*	0.34**	0.05	0.02	0.29**	0.38***	0.02	0.17	-0.11	-0.10
Male	0.11	0.20*	0.12	0.01	0.15*	0.09	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.08
Russian	-0.23**	-0.00	-0.05	-0.12	-0.01	-0.00	-0.09	-0.36***	0.06	0.34***
N	1400	1200	1400	1200	1400	1200	1400	1200	1400	1200
Constant	-1.04	0.325	1.06	-0.88	-1.58	0.55	0.35	-1.06	-2.05	-0.78
% correctly estimated	68.21	78.67	79.90	79.94	68.03	69.44	68.65	73.63	64.63	67.40

Significance test come from Wald Statistic.

* $p < 0.05$;

** $p < 0.01$;

*** $p < 0.001$.

pattern established here holds across the other years as well. Region stands out as the most important factor for foreign policy orientation, but on questions of satisfaction socioeconomic variables, especially change in household finances, tend to be more important than region. The significance of region for foreign policy orientation, of course, would be predicted for geographic, ethnographic and historical reasons. However, what is notable is that in 1992 region—as opposed to ethnicity—was the primary factor. Ethnicity, when other variables are controlled, has, surprisingly, little independent effect. By 1996 one sees that ethnicity compares with region as an explanatory variable. Education does not matter as much, but age (older individuals tending to be more pro-Russia) and household finances (improving finances linked to pro-Western attitudes) do achieve statistical significance. The general pattern, and a potentially disturbing one for Ukrainian state builders wary of close ties to Russia, is that the ‘losers’ in post-communist Ukraine (Russians, easterners, the elderly, those growing poorer) exhibit more pro-Russia attitudes, and they are a constituency ready to back parties and politicians willing to pursue closer ties with Russia, perhaps even compromising Ukrainian sovereignty.¹⁵ Indeed, even optimists about the Ukrainian nation-building project concede that if the ‘Russian question’ comes to dominate the political agenda, then the stability of the country will be severely threatened.¹⁶ The correlations between PRORUSS and GENDIR and SATISDEM are also negative (-0.234 and -0.190 , respectively) and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Although irredentism does not seem likely at the moment, the fact that domestic failures help reinforce crucial foreign policy divisions does not bode well in terms of stable politics and creation of a national community.

For evaluative questions, region is not as important as other factors, especially change in household finances. To put it simply, pocketbook concerns appear to be paramount, although it is not income per se but change in income that matters most. Regional variance, however, can be seen in the data in a manner consistent with Table 2, and ‘east’ stands out as being consistently a very significant variable, even when factors such as ethnicity are controlled. The results in Table 3 show more of an ‘eastern effect’ than the data in Table 2. Here we see that easterners are on balance considerably more likely to be dissatisfied with the political and economic performance of the country. Given prior work that reports lower degrees of trust in institutions, faith in the benefits of reforms, and support for Ukrainian independence among easterners,¹⁷ there is good reason to worry about the presence of a large, alienated population that has a weak identification with the state and is not satisfied with current developments. The fact that voters here turn to the anti-system Communist Party is therefore hardly surprising.

What is perhaps most surprising, however, is the fact that region virtually drops out as an important factor (Crimea in 1996 excepted) to explain variance in free market preferences. The much-discussed east–west dichotomy is not present here at a noticeable level. This obviously can be considered a positive sign, since it does not appear that socioeconomic cleavages reinforce regional cleavages, at least at the level of public opinion. However, one then cannot simply account for the correlation between region and voting behaviour, which will be established below, by referring to different socioeconomic interests by region. Obviously, other factors, such as culture, affection and regime assessments must be taken into account.

The data presented above largely do confirm persistent regional divisions in Ukrainian public opinion on some important issues. There is no sign that they have diminished over time. It is worrying that easterners, who from the beginning have felt the system was not improving or serving their interests, remain more dissatisfied than those in western or central regions. Respondents in Crimea, who, judging from this survey, were initially positive in 1992, have also become more displeased and more disposed toward Russia. Now we shall see to what extent this is manifested in party allegiances and voting behaviour.

Voting

Regional differences in Ukraine are not only a matter of underlying attitudes on various issues or assessments of the political system's performance. They have also been clearly manifested in voting patterns. Ukrainians have gone to the polls to express their preferences for national independence (1991), president (1991, 1994) and the legislature (1994, 1998),¹⁸ as well as for a host of regionally specific issues. All reports of Ukrainian elections draw attention to regional differences, and it is clearly a phenomenon that has not diminished with time.¹⁹

The first big questions Ukrainians were asked to decide were whether to become an independent state and who should be the leader of the country. Voters went to the polls on 1 December 1991 to give answers to both. The results showed some regional variance, although not as much as in later elections. Independence was supported by a majority in all *oblasti*, even Crimea (52%), although much more so in the west (over 95%) than in the east (on average over 80%). The presidential election results, however, were more polarised between the two leading candidates, who between them garnered almost 85% of the vote. Vyacheslav Chornovil was the candidate for Rukh, which spearheaded the independence movement, was based primarily in western Ukraine and put heavy emphasis on developing Ukrainian culture and making a rapid break with the communist past. He managed to win a plurality only in Galicia. Leonid Kravchuk, although originally from Volyn in western Ukraine, was, until August 1991, a leading figure in the Ukrainian Communist Party, and, although (belatedly) championing Ukrainian independence, clearly positioned himself as the status quo candidate, an experienced leader able to steer the new ship of state. He was the overwhelming choice in all areas outside the three *oblasti* of Galicia, winning over 70% of the vote in the eastern, southern and central regions.

There would be no national elections again until March 1994, when the first fully-free parliamentary elections were held in the new Ukrainian state. In between these elections, of course, the Ukrainian state found itself beset by a variety of problems and difficult questions: economic collapse and possible remedies; relations with Russia; relations between Kyiv and the regions; relations between the president and parliament; and state language policy and other efforts to Ukrainianise the country. Many felt betrayed by politicians, as the expectations of independence were not fulfilled. Trust in all state institutions dropped.²⁰

The 1994 parliamentary elections were held after a wave of strikes and conducted under a flawed majoritarian electoral law that discouraged party candidates, encouraged independents to run on local issues, and stipulated that turnout of over 50%

would be necessary to validate elections in each district. As a consequence of the first item, only 11% of candidates were nominated by parties,²¹ and as a consequence of the last, over 30 seats remained unfilled, even after repeat elections. In general, four blocs of candidates could be identified:²² a communist/socialist left endorsing maintenance of the old system and close ties with Russia; a liberal-centrist coalition for reforms and ties with Russia; a national-democratic bloc for reforms and severing many ties with Russia; and a far-right nationalist fringe that combined protectionism with militant calls to fight 'enemy' Russians at home and abroad. Each group counted on a regional base for its primary source of support: the communist/socialists in Donetsk and Luhansk, the centrists (primarily the nebulous Inter-Regional Reform Group) in Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk, the national-democrats in the west and in Kyiv, and the far-right in the west.

The results of the parliamentary elections, displayed in Table 4,²³ confirmed expectations of growing regionalism. Whereas in 1991 there had been, at a minimum, general agreement on the desirability of independence, 1994 saw a Ukrainian electorate split down the middle. The national-democrats, endorsing more reform, withdrawal from the CIS and various aspects of Ukrainisation, were favoured in the west and in Kyiv, and communists and their allies backing less reform and closer ties with Russia won elsewhere. Owing to the large number of votes for independent candidates (63.2%), tabulating votes by party is problematic. Nonetheless, the regional division is evident: leftist parties fare well in the east and south, and national-democrats are the leading parties in the west. The split became even more evident once blocs were formed and MPs declared an affiliation. Over half of the deputies from the east and south joined leftist blocs, two-thirds of those from the west affiliated with national-democrats, and no single tendency dominated in the central region.

In June 1994 Ukrainians returned to the polls to elect a new president. Although seven candidates ran, the contest boiled down to a battle of Leonids: Kravchuk and Kuchma, a former prime minister (1992–93) and director of a missile factory in Dnipropetrovsk. Notably, Rukh did not nominate a candidate, and no candidate hailed from the national-democratic camp. By the time of this election, however, Kravchuk had won the support of most of his erstwhile nationalist rivals, as he had positioned himself as the guarantor of Ukrainian sovereignty and ran on a platform of *derzhavnist* (statehood). Kuchma made an effort to appeal to voters in the east, emphasising 'More Bridges, Fewer Walls' with Russia, protection of the Russian language, and economic programmes that would serve heavy industry in the east. The two were the top vote-getters in the first round, and advanced to a run-off in July. Faced with an apparently stark choice, voters responded in an overwhelmingly regional pattern. Kravchuk won in every *oblast'* west of and including Kyiv, and Kuchma won in all but one of the rest. The results, 73.0% for Kravchuk on the right bank of the Dniepr and 75.2% for Kuchma on the left, practically mirrored each other, and in some regions (Crimea and Luhansk for Kuchma, Ivano-Frankiv, L'viv and Ternopil' for Kravchuk) the winning candidate garnered near or over 90% of the vote, unheard of in a two-candidate race and leading some to question the results. On balance, the greater population in the east was more significant than the higher turnout in the west, and Kuchma emerged the victor with 52.15% of the total.

TABLE 4
RESULTS OF 1994-1995 PARLIAMENTARY VOTES BY REGION

Region/ Oblast	% vote for Communist/ Socialist parties	% vote for national- democratic parties	% vote for centrist parties	% vote for others	MPs from Communist bloc	MPs from national- democratic bloc	MPs from centrist bloc	Unaffiliated MPs
West	7.3	23.8	1.5	67.4	8	62	9	14
L'vivs'ka	2.9	27.3	2.4	67.4	0	18	0	4
Terнопілі's'ka	1.0	43.4	0.1	55.5	0	6	0	7
Ivano- Frankivs'ka	1.2	16.7	0.1	82.1	0	11	1	0
Central	19.6	11.3	2.9	66.2	26	33	16	25
East	34.0	4.2	4.7	57.2	80	9	55	14
Donets'ka	39.9	2.6	4.5	53.0	29	1	13	4
Luhans'ka	43.4	1.7	3.6	51.3	18	1	5	1
South	26.5	5.7	4.3	63.5	23	5	4	8
Crimea	19.3	5.5	1.5	73.8	7	1	6	3
Total	22.3	11.2	3.3	63.2	143	110	90	64

Source: Central Election Commission data.

Kuchma, however, bucked the expectations of both his supporters and his opponents. Rather than falling into Russia's lap and forgoing economic reform, he made efforts to mend fences with the west and announced a series of 'radical' reform programmes that would qualify Ukraine for IMF assistance. His programmes, however, became watered down over time owing to the necessity to make compromises with a centrist bloc dominated by state directors that held the balance of power in parliament.²⁴ Moreover, politics in Ukraine became dominated by a dispute between Kuchma and the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) on a new constitution and presidential powers. This debate brought the work of the government to a standstill and furthered polarisation in the country, as Kuchma (now supported by national-democrats) found backing in the west and his largely leftist opponents were based in the east and south. Eventually, Kuchma did prevail without sending in the tanks as El'tsin had, but little was done to further development of a civic discourse or adopt policies that would improve living standards and give people confidence in the future.

Amid continuing crisis, shake-ups in the government and growing public frustration with politics, new parliamentary elections were held in March 1998 under a new mixed majoritarian/party list law that mirrored Russia's in most respects except that the threshold for winning seats by party list is 4%, not 5%. One of the motivations behind this change was to encourage parties to think and act nationally so they could garner as many votes (and representatives) as possible.²⁵ New centrist parties were formed by prominent politicians, including former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko (Hromada), a former Kuchma protégé under investigation for corruption, and former Prime Minister Evhen Marchuk and Kravchuk (United Social Democrats). Kuchma himself encouraged the formation of the Popular Democratic Party, nominally headed by Prime Minister Valeri Pustovoitenko. In total, 26 parties registered for the elections. In short, institutionally one would have expected region to exert a weaker role than in the elections four years earlier. Moreover, given Kuchma's change of direction during 1994–98, the diminishing polarisation based upon economic concerns,²⁶ and the resolution of various disputes with Russia, one might have expected less regional polarisation. However, during the campaign the divide between east and west was still abundantly clear, and many parties concentrated their efforts on specific regions in lieu of spreading resources across the country.

The results, markedly similar to those in 1994, show quite clearly that regionalism has not waned in Ukraine. National-democrats,²⁷ led by Rukh, fared well, as usual, in the western regions (31.4% of the vote there, 48.4% in L'viv) and in the city of Kyiv (24.8%), but only received 15.6% of the national total. They were essentially shut out in the east (6.7%) and in Crimea (7.8%). Communists and their allies fared much better, winning a plurality in all but one non-western *oblast'* and garnering 37.2% of the national total. Their totals across the non-western regions, notably, do not vary substantially (44.4% in the east, 43.4% in the south, 43% in the central region, 45.7% in Crimea, compared with 15.5% in the west and 6% in Galicia), although in rural areas the Agrarians were favoured over the Communists, whose base remained in industrial areas. A few centrist parties fared well in various areas (Hromada captured 35.3% of the vote in Dnieprpetrovsk, the United Social Democrats got 31.1% in Zakarpattia), but none managed to establish itself as a truly national party.

Making systematic comparisons with the 1994 elections is very difficult, given the changes in the electoral law and the emergence of new parties with strong support in certain areas. In terms of overall results, the national-democrats ranked as the loser, falling from 27% of seats to 13.5% the left roughly maintained its position, with about 37% of the seats, still short of a majority; and the centre, now better organised, gained but was still split by personal rivalries. 'Independents' still make up the swing votes in parliament. Clearly, however, the parliament is deeply divided and decision making difficult, as witnessed by the over twenty votes required to select a new speaker.

Unfortunately, making a regional comparison by number of deputies elected cannot be done because half the deputies elected in 1998 come from a national party list. If one compares only party vote—understanding that in 1994 this is vote for party-affiliated candidates—one sees little movement. Over 80% of those *oblasti* that were half a standard deviation away from the mean left and nationalist vote in 1994 were also more than half a standard deviation away in 1998. What the overall results do show, however, is that the left—Communists, Socialists and Agrarians²⁸—is in no sense a regional party. They dominate in all but the far western *oblasti*, where they remain a relatively minor political force. By 1998 the west began to look like the outlier on the electoral map. Regional divisions were still sharply defined.

As in our discussion of public opinion, we also need to see whether region is truly a 'cause' of the observed electoral results. In order to test the relevance of region, a multiple regression analysis by *oblast'* was performed that took into account region, ethnic composition (often assumed to be the primary factor) and a few selected socio-economic variables also shown by others²⁹ to be important: percentage of urban population, industrial performance since 1990 and 1995 per capita GDP (see data in Table 1). The results show that 'west' remains statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) for votes for the left and national-democrats. No other regions, nor ethnic composition, achieve statistical significance of 0.05 once other variables are controlled. This is an important finding, and reflects the fact that western regions, in terms of voting results, are in fact unique, given leftist dominance in all other regions. This may reflect what one set of authors, based upon survey results, referred to as definitions of social identity, since ethnic identification and the politics of ethnicity remain important in the western regions, whereas elsewhere class-based identities are predominant.³⁰ In order to overcome possible problems of multi-collinearity in the independent variables, I also conducted bi-variate regressions on the 1998 votes. What was notable here were strong negative relationships between Russian population ($p < 0.001$, $r^2 = 0.26$) and urban population ($p < 0.05$, $r^2 = 0.18$) and nationalist votes. This confirms a tie between the ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics of the west—where many rural residents do not know Russian—and its electoral distinctiveness. Bi-variate regressions on the left vote find only GDP in 1995 to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$, $r^2 = 0.20$), perhaps showing an inclination of voters in better off areas to turn to the left to protect their often subsidised standard of living. Russian population and urban population are, however, important and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) for Communist votes.³¹ For votes for centrist parties, no regional variable was significant, reflecting how region acts as a polarising factor between the left and right. Again, however, the most important finding from the 1998 data concerns the

fact that a statistically identifiable unique voting pattern by region is present only in the west.

As a conclusion to this section, it is appropriate to consider what is reflected by the strong correlation between region and party. It cannot simply be explained primarily by orientation toward the market or reforms.³² As we saw above in the review of public opinion data, there are no substantial regional differences on these dimensions. True, the communists and the national-democrats do present differing economic programmes. However, given the fact that majorities of westerners in the surveys above do not claim to support a primarily free market economy, it would be hard to argue that vote for the national-democrats is based upon socioeconomic interests. Instead, one would have to consider the importance of politics of symbols, culture, identity and affection, as the Communists clearly represent a pro-Russia orientation and strive to appeal to those frustrated with the current state of post-Soviet Ukraine. Those who have a rosier assessment of current conditions and have greater hopes for the future of Ukraine are more likely to be persuaded by the appeals of the national-democrats.³³ Thus, support for parties in Ukraine runs along the ethnic/territorial/cultural cleavages that are less negotiable and more 'primordial'. Arguably, this type of outcome makes national consolidation and the functioning of democracy more difficult, as it becomes very hard to find a consensus on basic issues.

Legislative behaviour

Knowing about regional divisions within the general populace on issues such as political culture, policy preferences and voting tells part of the story of Ukrainian regionalism, but not all of it. We would also want to look at elite behaviour to see whether regional divisions in society are mirrored in how political elites act and whether they prevent adoption of sound and coherent policies. One dataset that allows us to capture regional patterns in elite behaviour was compiled by the F-4 Laboratory for Prospective Developments in Kyiv. This organisation tracks votes of individual members of parliament and compiles an index for each MP on key issues of parliamentary sessions. These indices are constructed by classifying each vote and weighting it depending upon its relevance for the given topic. Data for the first four sessions of the parliament elected in 1994 are presented in Table 5. While we know that the voting for parliament in 1994 (and 1998) had a regional colour, it is also important to see how significant region is in the actual performance of the legislature.

For votes through the first four sessions of the past parliament (1994–95), the F-4 Centre compiled an index of votes along a left-right continuum and for support for economic reform. Table 5 shows the results by region. The data are striking and largely consistent with what we observed in analysis of public opinion and voting behaviour. The divisions between the deputies from the west, on the one hand, and those from the east, south and Crimea, on the other, are acute and statistically significant. In fact, one finds more polarisation between the west and the south and Crimea than with the east. The movement over time on questions of economic reform is also quite notable. The west tends to become more pro-market, but at the same time representatives from the east, south and Crimea also became more pro-market and less leftist, as measured by these indices.³⁴ In other words, the absolute divergence

TABLE 5
VOTING PATTERNS IN THE VERKHOVNA RADA BY REGION

Region	Support for economic reform (0–100) by session				Left/right orientation (0–100) by session		
	1	2	3	4	2	3	4
West	60.3***	69.1***	73.6***	74.1***	70.4***	77.9***	59.5***
Central	36.8	56.7*	61.0*	59.2*	45.4	67.3**	48.7
East	26.9***	43.9***	49.8***	45.5***	31.3***	52.0***	39.6***
South	23.9*	37.8**	39.7***	42.0**	26.5**	43.8**	36.4*
Crimea	28.2	26.5**	38.7**	38.1**	21.6*	44.6*	32.1*
National average	35.2	50.7	56.3	54.1	41.8	60.4	45.2

Source: F-4 Laboratory of Prospective Developments; *Ukrainskyi parlament, 13-ho sklikannia*; F-4 Laboratory, 1995–1996.

* $p < 0.05$;

** $p < 0.01$;

*** $p < 0.001$.

between regions remains about the same while the voting itself shifted to the ‘right’. This reflects, no doubt, Kuchma’s ability to cajole members of the centrist factions (primarily from the east, and often directors of state enterprises) to support his reform programmes.³⁵ This development is also interesting given the apparent shift in popular voting for the parliament between 1994 and 1998, in which more people tended to vote for the left. The fact that parliamentarians moved in the opposite direction to popular sentiment shows an interesting disjuncture between mass and elite politics (perhaps reflecting the ability of various officials to enrich themselves through economic ‘reform’, while at the same time regional differences hold in a similar pattern.

The data from the F-4 Centre also allow us to examine individual votes on central issues spanning economic, cultural and foreign policy questions. Not surprisingly, regional disparities are manifest on all of these cleavages. Regional breakdowns on a series of key votes are presented in Table 6, which shows that the regional abyss is most pronounced on cultural and foreign policy questions and is less present (although still discernible) on economic questions. The most divisive issue, the constitution, did manage to win final approval (after many long debates and Kuchma’s threat to hold a referendum), but again one sees a regional division, showing that these schisms do colour the most fundamental questions in Ukrainian politics. Given the fact that some see this document as ‘imposed’ from above by Kuchma and his allies west of the Dniepr, it is clear that a well-integrated political community has yet to be formed in Ukraine.

Conclusion: assessments and prospects

Regional divisions, as measured by public opinion, voting and legislative behaviour, are alive and well in Ukraine. The evidence presented above, in contrast to other earlier cited studies, in general does not show polarisation diminishing over time. The optimistic hypothesis—that living in a single state would help erode pre-existing

TABLE 6
LEGISLATIVE VOTES ON SELECT ISSUES BY REGION

Vote	Percentage voting in favour				
	West	Central	East	South	Crimea
Restrictions on privatisation (1994)	21.3	52.6	64.2	58.3	36.3
Law on privatisation of small enterprises (1995)	48.8	65.7	61.0	47.6	46.7
Law on foreign investment (1996)	52.7	54.1	61.3	65.9	34.8
Approval of privatisation projects (1997)	51.2	30.5	33.3	28.9	84.2
Ukrainian as official language (1996)	93.5	65.1	41.3	48.8	13.0
Let localities determine language (1996)	7.5	22.9	35.6	46.3	8.7
Text of constitution (1996)	96.8	83.5	63.8	65.8	47.8
Agreement with World Bank (1997)	72.6	34.9	24.5	22.5	28.6
Treaty of Friendship with Russia (1997)	52.4	69.7	86.1	90.0	91.3

Source: F-4 Centre, Kyiv. Votes are (session: vote number) 1:40; 4:356; 5:264; 8:133; 5:622; 5:633; 5:1388; 8:13 and 8:212.

regional differences—can be, for the moment at any rate, rejected. At the same time, there has not been a marked increase in regionalism either. However, this should not be cause for great rejoicing, given the sharp regional divisions in the polity (manifested most clearly in voting behaviour) and the fact that the inherited regional divisions (as measured from 1992 data) were so acute that more polarisation would be difficult to imagine. Additionally, one might note that achieving consensus on any important issue today (as was done with independence in 1991) is nigh on impossible. Debates over major and minor issues rage, decisions are delayed or not taken, political atrophy is endemic, and compromises are rare and difficult to achieve. While several factors account for these problems, regionalism stands among the most important because it is the primary cleavage on a number of basic issues and deeply divides both voters and political elites.

Why is this the case? What best accounts for regionalism's persistence? Can existing divisions eventually be overcome? These are obviously the relevant questions, and ones that cannot be answered conclusively with the evidence at hand. One could answer these questions simply by referring to the fixed conditions of the regions, including history, ethnic composition and geography. The east/west dichotomy, for example, exists because of differing lengths of time under Russian/Soviet control, differences in ethnic composition and simple geography. Westerners will feel more at home in a Ukrainian state, and owing to history and culture they are more apt to look to the West for ties and inspiration. Easterners are more Russified (if not actually Russian) and/or Sovietised, and do not—and probably will not for the

foreseeable future—share the same enthusiasm and faith in Ukraine as do those in the west. These factors, if not immutable, are none the less essentially fixed and can only change after a long period of time.

While this explanation undoubtedly captures part of the story, what can we say of more dynamic theories of nation building which would emphasise experience as a variable that can restructure identities and loyalties? On this front, part of the answer may have been suggested (at least on the mass level) by survey data. Remember that assessments of the overall direction of the country and democracy were heavily conditioned by changes in respondents' own socioeconomic status. To the extent that changes in household finances and region are correlated, one could argue that regionalism persists, in part at least due to differing economic experiences since Ukraine gained independence. In fact, one does find such a correlation for the years 1993–96 in the manner one would expect; that is, west is positively correlated with positive changes in status and east, south and Crimea (for most years) are negatively correlated. These correlations reach the level of statistical significance in 1993 and in 1996, and remain present at $p < 0.05$ levels if a regression analysis is performed that includes gender and socioeconomic variables. However, when one factors regional differentials in changes in household finances into a probabilistic logit model, one does not see a great increase in probability scores for satisfaction. For example, the regional difference in financial assessment increases the probability of overall satisfaction for a 40-year-old, ethnically Ukrainian female with average education in the west from 22.5% to 25% and decreases the probability for a similar individual in the east from 12.3% to 11.7%. Moreover, one finds that, even if our hypothetical individual noted a significant improvement in her household finances, the probability of satisfaction with democracy would only be 15.8% (east) and 26.3% (west). According to these data, simply solving pocketbook problems will not make regional differences vanish or produce high levels of satisfaction with the political arrangements—although it would be one step in a positive direction.

Another way of addressing causes and possible solutions might revolve around broader questions of procedural legitimacy, including a general notion of 'fairness'. This is hard to capture, but the surveys do ask a question about the respondent's assessment of whether human rights are respected in the country. For all surveys, it is not surprising that there is a positive correlation between west and respect for human rights and a negative one for east and Russians ($p < 0.05$), given the fact that many living in the east and in particular ethnic Russians do not feel that their rights and concerns are respected by state authorities. The differences in means are, notably, more substantial than changes in household finances. One also finds a very high degree of correlation between respect for human rights and both foreign policy and satisfaction variables ($p < 0.001$). Those less satisfied with the respect for human rights are, as one would suspect, far less likely to be satisfied with democracy (correlation coefficient of 0.45) or the general condition of the country (0.33) and are more likely to be pro-Russia (0.14). This variable has an even greater effect than changes in household income. The implication is that the best way to boost confidence in the system and diminish polarisation among regions is to improve the overall functioning of the system, including notions of fairness and respect for rights. Thus, if one were to suggest a strategy for resolving regional schisms, the answers

would have to lie in improved regime performance in a broad sense—not only fattening the pocketbooks of Ukrainians.

This is no easy task. The brief period of ‘extraordinary politics’ is over in Ukraine, and citizens are not likely to extend ‘credit’ to the regime in terms of loyalty and support. The government must begin to deliver the goods and deal effectively with problems of paramount concern to people. At this point, many Ukrainians, particularly those in the east and Crimea, are losing their faith in the existing institutions, and as long as this continues the appeal to anti-system parties and the risk of civic strife will be high. Some issues, of course, will be more divisive and more difficult to manage, such as cultural concerns and decentralisation of decision making. Rather than favour one group or region over another, policies must try to respect the heterodox character of the people of Ukraine. Everyone must be given some stake in the system, some belief that the existing arrangements can in fact work for them. This is a tall order, obviously, and one that might present state elites with a Catch-22: we need effective policies to build a community, but we cannot have effective policies until we have a sense of community. And, obviously, the continuing crisis may make extreme solutions more tempting and preclude those based upon moderation, compromise and inclusiveness.

In lieu of concluding on such a pessimistic note, let me present some reasons for hope. The worst, in terms of inflation and negative economic growth, may be behind Ukraine. It is no longer an international pariah, it has mended relations with Russia, and its sovereignty seems more secure than at any time since 1991. The ‘exit’ option of giving up sovereignty is not as open to politicians and publics as it was before. Democratic procedures are in place, and the current structure of parliament means that any policy will have to gain the support of several parties in order to pass. Compromises will be required. True, it will not be easy, but by working together elites, parties and eventually publics may contribute to civic discourse and norms that will help ameliorate the problems of regionalism.

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¹ Claus Offe, ‘Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East Central Europe’, *Social Research*, 58, 4, Winter 1991, pp. 865–902.

² Juan Linz & Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

³ See Roman Solchanyk, ‘The Politics of State-Building: Centre-Periphery Relations in Post-Soviet Ukraine’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46, 1, January 1994, pp. 47–68; Sven Holdar, ‘Torn Between East and West: The Regional Factor in Ukrainian Politics’, *Post-Soviet Geography*, 36, 2, February 1995, pp. 112–132; Dominique Arel & Valeri Khmelko, ‘The Russian Factor and Territorial Polarization in Ukraine’, *The Harriman Review*, 9, 1–2, Spring 1996, pp. 81–91; Paul Pirie, ‘National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48, 7, November 1996, pp. 1079–1104; Lowell Barrington, ‘The Geographic Component of Mass Attitudes in Ukraine’, *Post-Soviet Geography*, 38, 10, December 1997, pp. 601–614; William Zimmerman, ‘Is Ukraine a Political Community?’, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 31, 1, March 1998, pp. 43–55; and Peter Craumer & James Clem, ‘Ukraine’s Emerging Electoral Geography: A Regional Analysis of the 1998 Parliamentary Elections’, *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, 40, 1, January 1999, pp. 1–26.

⁴ Vicki Hesli, William Reisinger & Arthur Miller, ‘Political Party Development in Divided Societies: The Case of Ukraine’, *Electoral Studies*, 17, 2, June 1998, pp. 235–256, at p. 237. See also Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (London, Routledge, 1998).

⁵ One disturbing finding was that, in 1995, less than half (48.3%) of Ukrainians identified primarily with the Ukrainian state. Other answers were region (14.6%), the whole of the USSR (20.5%) and the CIS (6.7%). See Democratic Initiatives, *Ukrainian Society 1994–1995* (Kyiv, 1995).

⁶ Regions are defined as follows: west includes the *oblasti* of L'viv, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Ternopil, Volyn, Rivne and Khmelnytsky; central is Kyiv City and *oblast'*, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, Chernihiv and Poltava; east is Sumy, Kharkiv, Luhansk, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia; south is Odesa, Mykolaiv and Kherson. I should note that my inclusion of certain *oblasti* in some regions may differ from the judgement of other analysts, but this is done as a reflection of the Eastern Eurobarometer surveys, which I use below, and I want the classifications to be consistent.

⁷ Jane Dawson, 'Ethnicity, Ideology and Geopolitics in Crimea', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 30, 4, December 1997, pp. 427–444.

⁸ Seminal sources would include Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975), and Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (London, Basil Blackwell, 1983).

⁹ For studies of nationalisation of politics, see Robert Jackman, 'Political Parties, Voting, and National Integration: The Canadian Case', *Comparative Politics*, 4, 4, July 1972, pp. 511–536, and Sadafumi Kawato, 'Nationalization and Partisan Realignment in Congressional Elections', *American Political Science Review*, 81, 4, December 1987, pp. 1235–1250.

¹⁰ Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993). Jackman, cited above, also found little nationalisation in the Canadian case.

¹¹ For example, in a survey of 1201 Ukrainians conducted in December 1994, only 6.3% reported that they were satisfied with current conditions. An overwhelming majority, 66.3%, reported they were strongly dissatisfied. When asked whether Ukraine was a democracy, 55.9% said no, and only 17.8% said yes. See International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), *Ukrainian Mass Survey, December 1994* (Washington, IFES, 1995).

¹² Unfortunately, as the Eastern Eurobarometers are conducted in numerous countries, there were no questions specific to regional issues in Ukraine.

¹³ See in particular Arel & Khmelko and Hesli *et al.*

¹⁴ Religion has been found by some (Hesli *et al.*) to be very important, even when region is controlled. Unfortunately, the Eastern Eurobarometers did not consistently ask about religious affiliation. Income and city residence were not included to mitigate problems of multi-collinearity with education. Nonetheless, there is still substantial correlation ($p < 0.01$) among variables in this equation, especially for education, age, male and change in household finances. I have kept all in the equation, however, as each taps a different concept worth exploring.

¹⁵ It remains to be seen whether the August 1998 crisis in Russia, in addition to all the other problems there, will diminish the appeal of Russia to disaffected Ukrainians.

¹⁶ Hesli *et al.*

¹⁷ Barrington, and Paul Kubicek, 'Post-Soviet Ukraine: In Search of a Constituency for Reform', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 13, 3, September 1997, pp. 103–126.

¹⁸ In 1990 elections were held for the then republic-level Supreme Soviet, whose members served until 1994. These elections witnessed a profound regional division in the country. Nonetheless, they were not entirely free as they operated under Soviet law. Therefore no analysis is made of them in this article.

¹⁹ In addition to previously cited works, see Taras Kuzio & Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence* (London, Macmillan, 1994); Dominique Arel & Andrew Wilson, 'The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 3, 26, 1994, pp. 6–17; David Marples, 'Ukraine after the Presidential Election', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 3, 3, 1994, pp. 7–10; Marko Bojunc, 'The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections in March–April 1994', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 47, 2, February 1995, pp. 229–249; and Sarah Birch, 'Electoral Systems, Campaign Strategies, and Vote Choice in the Ukrainian Parliamentary and Presidential Elections of 1994', *Political Studies*, 46, 1, 1998, pp. 96–114.

²⁰ For example, December 1993 surveys conducted by Democratic Initiative showed that over half the population had absolutely no trust in the President, the Verkhovna Rada, the Cabinet of Ministers or local councils (*Ukrainsk'yi ohliadach*, 1994, 2).

²¹ Bojunc, p. 233.

²² From Arel & Wilson.

²³ Votes here are from March 1994, not subsequent run-offs, which were held in most constituencies. The left is defined as the Communist, Socialist and Agrarian Parties; national-democrats include Rukh, the Republican Party, the Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Party; centrists include New Ukraine, the Inter-Regional Bloc for Reforms (IRBR) and the Liberal Party. The left bloc is made up of the same three parties, the national democratic bloc includes Rukh, Statehood and Reforms and the centrists bloc includes IRBR, Unity and Centre.

²⁴ Paul Kubicek, *Unbroken Ties: The State, Interest Associations, and Corporatism in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2000).

²⁵ Hesli *et al.*, however, argue that such a system would encourage extremist positions, whereas the 1994 system that encouraged independents forced candidates to position themselves with the 'median voter'.

²⁶ Hesli *et al.*

²⁷ In these elections I define the national-democrats as Rukh, Reforms and Order, the bloc Forward Ukraine! and the Christian-Democratic Party. The left includes the Communist Party, the Progressive Socialist Party and the Socialist-Agrarian bloc.

²⁸ I refer to the Agrarian Party which allied itself with the Socialist Party in a single bloc, not the largely pro-presidential Agrarian Party, which should be classified as centrist.

²⁹ See Craumer & Clem.

³⁰ Arthur Miller, Thomas Klobucar, William Reisinger & Vicki Hesli, 'Social Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Lithuania', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 14, 3, July–September 1998, pp. 248–286.

³¹ These effects are absent in left votes because of the inclusion of the Socialist-Agrarians, who did well among rural, ethnic Ukrainian voters, particularly in the central regions.

³² Craumer & Clem find unemployment to be important, as it is positively associated with nationalist vote and negatively with leftist vote.

³³ For more on this point, see Kubicek, 'What Happened to the Nationalists in Ukraine', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 5, 2, Summer 1999, pp. 29–45.

³⁴ Unfortunately, no indices were compiled for votes after the fourth session, although the F-4 Centre continues its work of monitoring the Verkhovna Rada.

³⁵ See Kubicek, *Unbroken Ties*.