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# Ethnic Tensions and State Strategies: Understanding the Survival of the Ukrainian State

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PAUL D'ANIERI

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Ukraine is divided by linguistic and regional cleavages, which manifest themselves in regional polarization in national elections. These divisions have led to constant questioning of the viability of the Ukrainian state, and predictions of violence and civil war. Yet secessionist movements have made few inroads, and violence has been non-existent. The state has survived, and this may hold lessons for other cases. Because the 'minority' group in Ukraine is actually quite large, it has immense influence in the state without resort to regional autonomy or secession. In keeping with classical liberal theory, the balance of power between Ukraine's regions and ethnic groups has ensured that neither side dominates. This does not make for rapid reform, but it has created a stable state.

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At the height of the 2004 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine, politicians in several eastern oblasts rekindled the threat that parts of eastern Ukraine would move toward secession. The Kharkiv regional administration took steps towards 'autonomy', while a meeting in Donetsk attended by Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych, the Russian ambassador Viktor Chernomyrdin, and the Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov discussed outright secession.<sup>1</sup> The election returns that year – in the fair as well as in the rigged iterations of the vote – confirmed that Ukraine remained profoundly divided regionally.<sup>2</sup> In only one oblast (Kherson) did the winner in the region garner less than 60 per cent of the vote. The general pattern was one of polarization. The division was evident again in the 2006 parliamentary elections. Following those elections, language policy again became an issue, in coalition negotiations between

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the 'Our Ukraine' bloc, based in the west, and the Party of Regions based the east.

Fears of secessionism and ethnic conflict are not new in Ukraine. In early 1994, the Central Intelligence Agency leaked a report asserting that the fragmentation of Ukraine was a likely result of a mixture of ethnic conflicts and economic collapse.<sup>3</sup> Attempts in the mid-1990s by leaders in Crimea to move that region towards sovereignty, on top of an earlier movement in the Donbas, led many to fear that Ukraine might collapse into civil war on the Yugoslav model.<sup>4</sup> In a thorough analysis of nationality issues in post-Soviet Ukraine, Andrew Wilson concluded that confrontation between Ukrainians and Russians in Ukraine is 'more or less guaranteed', though he did not argue that secession or violence is inevitable.<sup>5</sup>

But serious conflict has not occurred, and despite the renewed claims in 2004, it looks unlikely. Indeed, the speed with which the effort to stir up secessionism collapsed in 2004, when grievance in eastern Ukraine was high and people were already on the streets in Kyiv, shows that such efforts face important barriers. This constitutes a puzzle: why does Ukraine, which is divided regionally, ethnically and linguistically, and has elites willing to make secessionist claims, not see more ethno-political conflict? This article aims to develop a theoretically informed understanding of Ukraine's survival as a state, and to ask what lessons this case might provide for others.<sup>6</sup> The point is not to criticize those who predicted Ukraine's collapse: indeed, the author believes that the threat of ethno-political conflict was indeed significant. The danger was real, but Ukraine avoided it. The puzzle of how this was managed is magnified by the fact that in almost every other realm, the Ukrainian state has appeared both weak and inept.<sup>7</sup>

While it is customary to explain cases where something happened rather than those where something did not happen, much can be learned from this 'non-event'. Ukraine is a country that seemed headed for a large-scale calamity and yet avoided it. Since an increasing number of states are confronting ethno-political issues, and since others have not been so fortunate, we might ask whether there was something about the Ukrainian case that can be applied to others. Looking for new solutions to ethno-political disputes is particularly significant when one of the most widely recommended solutions – consociational democracy – has ended in calamity in Yugoslavia and has failed to ameliorate ethnic and regional divisions in Canada and Belgium. While peace in Ukraine may have been maintained by factors that cannot be replicated in other situations, it may also be that some policies of the government or other actors actually helped steer the situation away from violence. If such policies can be identified, we might learn something about how to ameliorate other situations where ethno-political violence seems

inevitable. Our goals are first to explain why conflict was avoided in Ukraine, and second to identify the lessons of the experience.

A short examination of theories of ethno-political violence outlined by Ted Robert Gurr<sup>8</sup> helps us to apply broader research on ethno-political conflict to the case of Ukraine. By showing that most of the major causes of ethno-political conflict were present in Ukraine, it becomes clear that predictions of violence were *not* overblown, and that there is something to be learned from Ukraine's avoidance of conflict. The argument is that Ukraine was able to take its biggest vulnerabilities – the large size of the Russian minority and the Russophone Ukrainian population and its geographic concentration – and turn them to its advantage. Because of these factors, these groups could have a good deal of political influence without basing the political system on group, rather than individual, rights. While these factors increased the opportunity to make such claims, they also reduced the incentive. How deliberate those practices were is debatable, and Ukraine also had some good luck. None the less, Ukraine succeeded with a policy of liberalization and representation that provides a distinct alternative to the more common model of consociationalism. A brief analysis of voting outcomes in Ukraine's parliamentary and presidential elections demonstrates that the ethnic Russian and Russophone Ukrainians have had no lack of empowerment in Ukraine. The conclusion focuses upon the lessons of this case, both for theories of ethno-political conflict and for practical efforts to contain ethno-political conflict.

### **Were Expectations of Ethnic Strife in Ukraine Well Founded?**

This essay is based on the assumption that Ukraine's ability to avoid ethnic violence and secession was not inevitable. In order to assess the potential for ethno-political conflict in Ukraine, we turn to the literature on ethnic conflict and secession. To what extent were conditions in Ukraine consistent with those that have led to ethno-political conflict elsewhere? In a major work Ted Robert Gurr sought to develop a coherent picture from a huge number of cases. This may not be the last word on the subject, nor would I infer that his work is mistaken if his hypotheses imply that conflict is likely but it did not occur in this case, since this case does not constitute a thorough test of his hypotheses. I seek only to establish whether Ukraine's ability to overcome ethno-political tension is in fact an outcome worthy of explanation.

Attempts to explain mass protest and revolution are largely divided between those that focus on the level of grievance and those that focus on the ability to pursue such change in the face of opposition from the state. Approaches such as Gurr's relative deprivation theory and work by Tilly and Tarrow on resource mobilization fall into the former group. In the latter

group lie explanations based on 'political opportunity structure' and the state's capacity for repression. In his most recent work Gurr recognizes that these two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but simply emphasize different aspects of the problem. Therefore he addresses the prospects for both factors increasing or decreasing the chances for ethnic differences to turn conflictual. Gurr elaborates factors that in a wide variety of cases tend to correlate with ethnic violence (or tend to prevent it). Applied to Ukraine, most of these factors lead to the conclusion that Ukraine was indeed ripe for ethno-political conflict.

### *The Effects of Geography*

Among the most significant factors in making a group likely to seek autonomy or secession is the regional concentration of the minority. When a group is regionally concentrated, group cohesion tends to be higher.<sup>9</sup> This clearly is the case in Ukraine, where even if ethnic Russians are in a minority, they are heavily concentrated in the two areas where secession was most seriously discussed: the Donbas and Crimea. If one considers language, rather than officially defined ethnicity, the populations of the Donbas and Crimea are over 90 per cent Russian-speaking. Moreover, the presence of compatriots in a nearby country increases a minority's ability to mobilize, 'by providing material, political and moral support'.<sup>10</sup> Those raising the question of secession were supported not only by compatriots within Russia, but in many cases by important elements of the Russian government itself. Throughout the early 1990s, Russian officials, including Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, stressed that prior Russian commitments to the existing Ukrainian–Russian border were premised upon Ukraine remaining in the Soviet Union (and later the Commonwealth of Independent States).<sup>11</sup> The importance of geography in Ukraine's politics is emphasized by studies showing that regional cleavages, partly coinciding with linguistic and ethnic cleavages, explain attitudes among Ukrainian citizens better than either of those two factors.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Effects of State Building*

Gurr argues (and others concur) that new states are most likely to repress minorities, and hence are prime grounds for ethnic conflict. State building, he argues, requires 'assimilating minority groups and restricting their historical autonomy':

Virtually all new and post-revolutionary states in the world system have been committed to consolidating and expanding their power, following the precedents established by the successful states of the industrial North. This objective dictates, among other things, that states subordinate

the special interests and relative autonomy of hundreds of ethnic groups to their own conception of national identity and interest.<sup>13</sup>

Alexander Motyl applies this argument specifically to the post-communist states, as does Rogers Brubaker, who contends that 'the question is not therefore *whether* the new states will be nationalizing but *how* they will be nationalizing, and *how nationalizing* they will be'.<sup>14</sup> Ukraine has undertaken nationalizing policies, but the moderation of these policies, as described below, may be one key to its success.<sup>15</sup>

### *State Strength*

Gurr finds that while 'strong' states are more likely to face protest, 'weak' states are more likely to face actual violence. In a manner similar to Samuel Huntington, Gurr theorizes that, while strong states may engender more protest, they are able to contain dissatisfaction at that level.<sup>16</sup> Weak states, in contrast, can neither satisfy minorities' demands nor crush them; therefore, ethnic conflicts are more likely to endure and to turn violent.<sup>17</sup> Gurr provides statistics to support these propositions, finding that state building tended to shift communal action away from protest towards open rebellion. Ukraine is a new state, and made state building a primary focus of policy in the first six years of its existence. In this way, Gurr's findings on state building support the notion that Ukraine was vulnerable to violence.

### *The Effects of Democratization*

Gurr finds that, while 'institutionalized democracies' tend to resolve ethno-political conflicts through implementation of universalistic norms of rights and accommodation of minorities' desires for 'separate collective status', newly democratizing states have a much less rosy outlook. Again recalling Huntington, Gurr states that 'the Soviet and Eastern European regimes relaxed coercive restraints on nationalism and inter-group hostilities at a time when the institutionalized means for their expression and accommodation did not yet exist, or were fragile and distrusted'.<sup>18</sup> He concludes that, in democratizing autocracies, 'democratization is likely to facilitate both protest and communal rebellion. The serious risk is that the rejection of accommodation by one or all contenders will lead to civil war and the reimposition of coercive rule'. This description too seems to fit Ukraine well. The collapse of Soviet rule gave voice to both Ukrainian and Russian nationalism, and Ukraine's new institutions seem too weak to satisfy either group, or to foil an attempt at secession should one be made. It is fortunate for the state that separatist claims have generally received minimal support, because the state has never appeared strong enough to fend off a serious separatist movement.

Only one of Gurr's factors would lead one not to expect ethno-political violence in Ukraine: international support for Ukraine's government and for Ukraine's territorial integrity. The US and the West more broadly have put a high priority on Ukraine's continued stability and independence. However, during the key period 1993–95, Western support for Ukraine was still materializing, and while Russian Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin have supported the maintenance of Ukraine's borders, many other Russian politicians have continually questioned them (focusing in particular on the status of Crimea).<sup>19</sup> Russian encouragement of ethnic and regional tension in Ukraine was especially noticeable in advance of the 2004 presidential election.<sup>20</sup> Clearly this factor cannot have been decisive. Of the other factors Gurr discusses, none leads to clear predictions in the Ukrainian case.

Theory aside, there was much specific to this case to make ethno-political conflict a genuine fear. Historically, the connection of both Crimea and eastern Ukraine to Russia created a feeling among many that the borders of post-1991 Ukraine were arbitrary and illegitimate, while others see these as the only legitimate borders.

The erection of trade barriers between Ukraine and Russia in the early post-Soviet years had particularly harsh effects in the regions of Ukraine geographically closest to Russia, which hence had the highest concentration of ethnic Russians, namely the Donbas.<sup>21</sup> Thus there was an economic dimension of deprivation that overlapped the ethnic dimension. The prominence in early post-Soviet Ukraine of Ukrainian nationalists, most notably Viacheslav Chornovil's *Rukh* movement, seemed to foreshadow an adoption of ethnic exclusion policies in the areas of citizenship and language. While Chornovil and *Rukh* never espoused exclusive citizenship policies, some, especially in eastern Ukraine, perceived that this was their agenda. At the time of the greatest danger of ethno-political conflict, key issues of language rights were unresolved. As predicted, the government embarked on a nationalizing agenda.<sup>22</sup> Moves by the government of Leonid Kravchuk to 'Ukrainianize' the government, the military, the media and education picked up pace in 1992 with the support of Ukrainian nationalists, but caused widespread resentment in eastern and southern Ukraine.<sup>23</sup> Again following the Orange Revolution, when the west Ukraine-based and pro-Western government of Viktor Yushchenko came to power, many perceived that a renewed programme of nationalizing would take place.

In 1993–94 and again in 2004–6, the response of ethnic Russians and Russophone Ukrainians in both Crimea and the Donbas was strong, well organized, and supported by many local politicians. In other words, resource mobilization did not seem to be a problem. By early 1994, when the CIA issued its report, Crimea was actively seeking the right to secede and leaders in the Donbas talked openly of that option. A referendum on tightening

integration between Ukraine and Russia was put on the ballot in the Donbas during the 1994 parliamentary elections over the strong protest of the government in Kyiv, and a majority supported the measure. While the election of Leonid Kuchma, from eastern Ukraine, helped stem some opposition in the Donbas, Crimean separatism and the accompanying threat of civil war waned only after a tense showdown in 1995. Strangely, that danger continued to recede, reasserting itself only during and shortly after the Orange Revolution.

A conclusion, therefore, is that fears of ethnic violence and secession in Ukraine were not exaggerated. Even if violence and secession did not occur, the threat of them was real, in terms both of the case itself and of the lessons learned from other comparable cases.

### Variables and Competing Models

In order to make the argument as clear as possible, I attempt here to define and clarify the variables involved in the analysis and the hypothesized relationships between them. I will consider three models: first, a simplified standard model of ethnic conflict is derived from Gurr; second, an intervening variable is added to illustrate the contention of consociational democracy theory that the organization of the regime can intervene between causes of ethnic conflict and their consequences; third, a model is presented that illustrates the argument made in this analysis, that a different intervening variable (or perhaps a different value of the intervening variable 'regime type') can also lead to ethnic peace, but without some of the dangers of consociational democracy.

In all three cases, the *independent* variables are those highlighted by Gurr in his analysis:

1. the geographic concentration of the minority;
2. the degree to which the state adopts 'nationalizing' policies;
3. state strength relative to society;
4. democratization, meaning the state is in the process of democratizing, and has the weaknesses that accompany that process.

A simplified version of Gurr's model indicates that the levels of these factors determine the likelihood of the dependent variable, ethnic conflict.

The three models also share the same *dependent* variable, the level of ethnic conflict. A standard measure of ethnic conflict rates this variable according to a seven-point Guttman scale, ranging from political banditry through terrorism, rebellion and civil war. Interestingly, Ukraine has had none of these, and the value of this variable would be close to zero in this case. Obviously an examination of the case reveals a good deal of political

conflict, and some protest as well, but little actual violence. Therefore, I extend the dependent variable from physical conflict to political conflict in terms of *demands for increased regional autonomy or secession*. The level of this variable in Ukraine, by all accounts, increased during 1992–94, and then declined until 2004. After spiking in 2004 with explicit talk of secession in the Donbas, which quickly evaporated, the potential for conflict has since receded again.

The interesting issue is the *intervening* variable. If the independent variable does not cause the predicted result in the dependent variable, what has intervened? The most widely discussed answer in the case of ethnic politics (and one advocated by many for Ukraine) is a group of arrangements known as consociational democracy. In this model, the consociational arrangements intervene to cause a different outcome from what we would normally expect in societies prone to ethno-political violence.

The hypothesis advanced in this article is that in some conditions a different mechanism can intervene between the causes of ethno-political conflict and the result. More specifically, where an ethnic minority is large and geographically concentrated, tolerant citizenship policies and a focus on individual rather than group rights can achieve ethnic peace by assuring the minority of a prominent role in politics, while shifting the focus of politics away from ethnic groups. The significance of this argument is that this intervening variable specifies remedies that are nearly opposite to those of consociational democracy.

### **An Explanation of the Absence of Ethno-political Conflict in Ukraine**

Given that expectations of ethno-political conflict in Ukraine were realistic, how did Ukraine overcome the danger? The reasons can be separated into two analytical categories: structures and choices. In the first group are structural factors in the Ukrainian system, including the features of the political and social situation in Ukraine that were beyond the control of the actors involved, and induced compromise. As the discussion above indicates, most structural factors did not mitigate the conflict, but none the less this category is important. Second, we can study the policies of the government. What specific measures did the government take, and how did they work? A third group of causes may be categorized as fortuitous – as events that helped mitigate the situation, but have little relevance to other cases. These are given less emphasis here.

The second category is the most interesting for the political scientist and the policy-maker. The first category, circumstances, considers those attributes likely to lead to conflict or away from it. This issue has been widely studied, by Gurr and many others, and examination of one more case does not necessarily

add to the findings, even if these factors lead to an unexpected outcome. Similarly, fortuitous factors are interesting historically, but since these factors are unique to this case, they reveal little about how other cases might be resolved. To the extent that these factors are prominent, however, we must be careful in attempting to derive general lessons from the case.

The policy factors are most significant for two reasons: first, they will help resolve the puzzle of why the structural factors did not lead to the expected outcome; second, by showing how Ukraine avoided the danger of ethno-political conflict, they have the potential to provide very important lessons for future policy, as well as providing insight into the nature of ethno-political conflict.

What follows then is an interpretation of the Ukrainian case focusing on how institutional and policy choices by the government turned structural problems into advantages. It should be emphasized what is *not* attempted here: no attempt is made to chronicle ethnic politics in post-Soviet Ukraine; numerous other studies have accomplished that. Nor is there an attempt to conduct a scientific test of the explanation proffered. Rather the goal is to advance an interpretation as a basis for further work.

### **Structural Factors: The Paradox of Power**

The discussion above concluded that, according to widely held theories of ethno-political conflict, Ukraine was predisposed to conflict by 1993. None the less, it cannot be said that the structure of the situation left no other alternative: the fascination of this case lies in how factors that should have led towards secession instead led to inclusion. In brief, the large number of ethnic Russians and Russophones, and their geographic concentration, made their mobilization easy and secession plausible (hence the danger in both 1993–94 and 2004–6).

This factor gave the Ukrainian nationalist movement substantial incentive to compromise with ethnic Russians and Russophones rather than to pursue their ideal language and citizenship policies. As a result of such compromise, ethnic Russians had fewer reasons to secede. In 1994, the election of the candidate widely supported in eastern Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, showed that the region was being empowered, not excluded from politics. After the Orange Revolution apparently tipped the balance of power decisively against eastern Ukraine, the 2006 parliamentary elections again reassured eastern Ukrainians, as the Party of Regions, based there, captured a plurality of seats (with 32 per cent of the vote), and eventually claimed the post of prime minister and formed a government.

If some Ukrainian nationalists hoped to attain the maximum nationalist aspiration – a territorially whole Ukraine with an ethnically Ukrainianized

population – the size and geographic concentration of the Russian minority made it abundantly obvious that this could not occur. These factors, which made it easy for ethnic Russians to mobilize and plausibly threaten secession, induced compromise in the Ukrainian nationalist position, which in turn undermined separatist sentiment. Herein lies the primary paradox of this case, and the most significant lesson to be learned: by making mobilization and secession more possible, the large size and geographic concentration of the Russian minority also made those actions less necessary, because they made it clear to Ukrainian nationalists that suppression was not a viable option (as the 2006 election results made clear). All that was necessary was an institutional setup to allow this large minority representation in the political system.

Had the Russian minority been smaller, Ukrainian nationalists might have found it easier to ignore its wishes and threats, and to adopt more exclusory language, citizenship, and voting rules. In such a case, secession might have been the only option left. In Albert Hirschman's terms, because the Russian minority possessed considerable 'voice', as well as a viable threat of 'exit', the Ukrainian state found it necessary to compromise to prevent that exit.<sup>24</sup> Because voice was substantial, it provided a viable, and much less dangerous, alternative to exit. Had that 'voice' been less substantial, 'exit' would have been the only available strategy.

The same logic obtained with reference to the Ukrainian state. Gurr (and other authors) argue that new states, still trying to build effective rule, invariably seek to suppress minorities or at least to bend them to the purposes of state building. But when faced with a strong minority, a weak state (if rational) must recognize that it cannot win the struggle. Hence for Ukraine in 1993–95, and again following the Orange Revolution, to try to enforce Ukrainianization on its Russian minority clearly would have weakened the state rather than strengthening it. The power of the Russian minority, combined with the state's priorities (above all, survival), leads to a counter-intuitive result. Instead of coercion, the state resorted to compromise, and the incentive to secede was eroded. Thus Arel, and also Kaiser and Chinn, show that the Ukrainian state did indeed try to nationalize (especially in the arena of language) but that those policies were not pressed when they met resistance, and eventually were dropped after Kuchma came to power.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Viktor Yushchenko had to retreat from his nationalizing agenda, signing a 'Universal of National Unity' (*Universal Natsional'noi Yednosti*) with the Party of Regions that contained items protecting both Ukrainian and Russian languages.<sup>26</sup> In sum, the power of the eastern and southern Ukrainian population and elites led to moderate policies on the part of nationalists and the state. How these policies led to the satisfaction of Russian minorities and why, given their strength, those minorities did not complete the push to secession, will be addressed below.

### Political Policies

If the structural factors addressed above could lead either to a mitigation of ethno-political conflict or to its intensification, more explanation is needed to show why the former occurred. In a variety of areas, Ukrainian policy accepted the political power of the Russian minority. The state and its laws did not merely accept that power, but actively channelled it into the political process. The Russian-speaking east thus attained at least as much influence as the Ukrainian-speaking west. At the same time, the Ukrainian state undermined the institutional basis for secession by insisting on a unitary rather than a federal state structure. Government policy made a virtue of necessity: it took the reason for Russians to believe they could secede and turned it into a reason not to secede; making the weakness of the Ukrainian state a reason for Russians to stay, rather than an opportunity for them to secede. While it was not possible to take ethnicity out of Ukrainian politics completely, government policy removed the most glaring reasons to complain. While social scientists are still documenting ethnic and regional divisions in Ukraine on a wide range of issues, clearly ethnic persecution as such is not high on the list of problems that the government is currently grappling with.

The government's policy, and the moderation of Ukrainian nationalists, had important effects on the ability of minority groups to mobilize opposition to the government and support for secession. Here political opportunity structure and resource mobilization become two sides of the same coin. When the government decides not to oppress a minority group, and indeed to accede to the group's wishes, there is no doubt that the opportunity structure for the group improves – it is much easier to operate when publications and demonstrations are not banned, and so on. But if the group's primary complaint was of such repression, then its absence can diminish the group's ability to mobilize resources and members. Not only are rank-and-file members less likely to protest as repression decreases, but elites find opportunities for advancement within the established political arena. As the government makes concessions, dissatisfaction is reduced, and protest diminishes. Far from being contradictory or even independent explanations, political opportunity and resource mobilization in this case are related variables that at times vary together (though inversely).

Recognizing its limited options, the Ukrainian government adopted measures intended both to reassure minorities that their rights would be respected and to reduce their incentive to leave the country. Over time, these measures succeeded in defusing demands for regional autonomy and drives for secession, not only in eastern Ukraine, but even in Crimea, where the problem was (and remains) much more intense. Two types of measures served to undermine regional separatism: the de-emphasis of ethnicity and

the organization of election laws. Combined with a much less compromising stance on the acceptability of actual separation, these policies apparently convinced most Russians that more could be gained from voice than from exit. As a result, while explicitly pro-Russian and separatist parties have continuously sought to compete in Ukrainian politics, they have never gained even a single seat in the parliament (in 2006, the 'pro-Union' party won only 0.2 per cent of the vote).<sup>27</sup>

### *The De-emphasis of Ethnicity*

Ukraine de-emphasized ethnicity in two stages, the first covering citizenship and the second language policy. The question of citizenship was dealt with moderately, decisively, and effectively at the time of independence; it ceased to be a major issue almost even before it arose. Language policy has taken much longer to resolve, and moderation has been extracted from Ukrainian nationalists, who favoured a less moderate policy on language than on citizenship. On both issues, however, the results have been tolerant to the point where minorities have little to complain about. Indeed, in Ukraine citizenship is defined more openly and more in civic terms than in Germany or Switzerland.

#### Citizenship laws

When Ukraine declared independence in August 1991, it declared that everything on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR became part of independent Ukraine. All territory, property and armed forces were declared to be Ukrainian, notwithstanding certain problems. Similarly, citizenship was defined on the basis of residence at independence. This was the essence of civic nationalism: the state defines the nation rather than vice versa. No appeals were made to ancestry, language or length of residence – factors that became the focus in Latvia and Estonia. Thus the problem that plagued these two states, that ethnic Russians feel disenfranchised, was nipped in the bud in Ukraine. Because no one has been disenfranchised, one reason to leave Ukraine, either individually through migration or collectively through secession, never existed. Moreover, a reason to view the Ukrainian government as discriminatory or oppressive was also eliminated at the outset. Judging by the continuing protests caused by relatively small numbers of Russians in the Baltic States (let alone in trans-Dniestr Moldova), a significant mobilizing factor was evidently denied to potential leaders of protest and secession movements.

#### Language laws

The story of Ukraine's language laws is considerably more complicated than those on citizenship,<sup>28</sup> but a few key points appear to demonstrate that, even

when Ukrainian nationalists and the state have sought to be intolerant, the size and power of the Russian minority has been enough to convince the state to compromise, thereby heading off further protest or secession. The issue is particularly significant because many Western writers have identified this as a primary cause of secessionist sentiment among Ukraine's ethnic Russians.

In contrast to citizenship, Ukraine's language laws took several years to resolve, and are periodically put back on the agenda (as in the 2006 election campaign and the subsequent *Universal*). The primary issue concerned the legal status of Russian relative to Ukrainian. In general, Ukrainian nationalists have been less tolerant on this issue than on citizenship. Most have sought to have only Ukrainian declared the state language of Ukraine, despite the widespread use of Russian. This was primarily a symbolic issue. Much more concrete to ethnic Russian citizens of Ukraine was the question of education: would independent Ukraine try to reverse centuries of Russification with Ukrainianization policies, or would the status quo be embraced in some way?<sup>29</sup> On the symbolic issue, Ukrainian nationalists triumphed, but on all the practical issues, compromise has again undermined any ability to use discrimination as a means to mobilize protest or secession movements.

After several years of debating the 'official', 'state', and 'government' language of Ukraine, a practical compromise has seemed, if not to satisfy anyone, at least to be acceptable. Ukrainian remains the state language, according to the language law of 1989. Russian has not been given that status. In the 1994 presidential elections President Kuchma advocated giving Russian, as a consolation, the status of a second 'official language', but it is unclear what this actually meant, and the idea was dropped. More significantly, denying Russian the status of 'official language' has not led to any limits on its use in practice. Much business – both official and private – in Kyiv is still conducted in Russian, many deputies use Russian on the floor of the *Verkhovna Rada* (national parliament), thereby infuriating nationalists, and the parliamentary newspaper *Holos Ukrainy* is printed in both Ukrainian- and Russian-language editions.

Language in education was the more explosive issue: few decisions have more potential to mobilize protest than those concerning children's education. The issue hits close to home for a wide stratum of society otherwise often apathetic about politics. The original nationalist goal to Ukrainianize Russophone Ukraine by requiring Ukrainian-language education aroused widespread resentment in eastern Ukraine and in Crimea. Recent reports indicate that 93 per cent of the schools in Crimea use Russian as the language of instruction.<sup>30</sup> Russophone demands to maintain the status quo induced fears among Ukrainian nationalists who subscribed to linguistic theories of ethnicity and nationality that the basis for the Ukrainian nation and state was being deliberately undermined. For both sides, the stakes were seen as high.

Again however, the issue was resolved in favour of the Russian minority. Ukrainian was reduced from the mandatory language of instruction to a mandatory subject in schools with other languages of instruction, in effect recognizing that for many it is a foreign language. The decision of whether the language of instruction in a given school should be Russian or Ukrainian was left to local authorities and parents to decide. This reversed the provision of the law, which held that Russian could continue to be used in education only in oblasts with Russian majorities. At that level of aggregation, only Crimea would qualify, and elsewhere large numbers of Russian speakers would have to switch.<sup>31</sup> While more and more Ukrainians are apparently choosing to learn and speak Ukrainian, especially in Kyiv, there remains little coercion in that regard, and given the proximity of Russia and the continuity of Russian as the *lingua franca* in the former Soviet Union, Ukraine looks set to become a bilingual society, in fact if not in policy, for many years to come. This matter appears to be a favourite for politicians in eastern Ukraine at election time, but has not retained much salience between elections, perhaps implying that the issue resonates with voters more than with the elite.

Why did Ukrainian nationalists, and the Ukrainian state, compromise on this apparently crucial issue?<sup>32</sup> Again, the policy seems the result of a strategic choice to accept a minor defeat in order to keep the country together. On the symbolic issue of the state language, which had less potential to mobilize popular opposition, the nationalist position held, at least in law. On the practical issue of education, the state was faced with an immediate threat much more dangerous than the amorphous and longer-term problems of a dual-language society. If a dual-language Ukraine might face separatism some time in the future, the effort to reverse Ukraine's dual-language status promised to provoke separatism immediately. Moderation was not a popular policy among many Ukrainian nationalists, but it did reduce the threat of separatism, a pre-eminent goal.

On the question of citizenship, the role of choice was the key: before any major opposition could materialize, the Ukrainian government embraced a tolerant citizenship law. On language, the state and nationalists were much less inclined towards tolerance – but recognized that tolerance would serve their goals much better than intolerance. That compromise cannot be understood except as a combination of two factors: the substantial power of the Russian minority, and the discretion of Ukrainian leaders. The choice of a moderate policy was by no means predetermined. The presidency of Kravchuk must be given some credit for recognizing that compromise was necessary to avoid greater dangers. While Kravchuk's vacillation on key issues earned him scorn both at home and abroad, his unwillingness to push a decisive language policy was instrumental in undercutting support for separatism.

Not only the size of the Russian minority – 20 per cent of Ukraine's population by the final Soviet census in 1989 – but its geographic concentration worked paradoxically to empower ethnic Russians and hence to undermine the impetus to secede. The same concentration that engenders mobilization and secession also guarantees representation in a system of territorially based electoral districts. If a problem in general for democratic societies is how to ensure minority representation in majority voting systems, territorial concentration of minorities presents a built-in remedy. Rather than resorting to elaborate ethnic gerrymandering, as in some US congressional districts, or to consociational bargains in place of majority voting, concentration of minorities allows an electoral system that maintains the legitimacy of majority voting while guaranteeing minority access. While this solution is widely overlooked in literature on ethnically plural societies, it has worked as much as any other factor to preserve and domestic peace in Ukraine.

### **Evidence from Ukraine's Elections**

Ukraine's four parliamentary elections (1994, 1998, 2002, 2006) and four presidential elections (1991, 1994, 1999, 2004) have all had a strong regional character to the campaign and to the vote. In all parliamentary elections, voters in eastern Ukraine and Crimea have voted for one set of parties (generally leftist and sympathetic to Russian language rights and close relations with Russia). Voters in western Ukraine have voted for a separate set of parties (generally more sympathetic to a nationalizing agenda, and sceptical of close ties with Russia). No party managed to elect candidates across Ukraine.

Presidential elections have been equally divided. In each case, one candidate has won huge majorities in the region west of the Dnipro (Dnieper) river, while the other has won equally large majorities in the east and south. In three of four cases this has meant that the 'eastern' candidate has won (Leonid Kravchuk in 1991 and Leonid Kuchma in 1994 and 1999). In the rerun of the second round of the 2004 presidential election, the 'western' candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, won by crossing the Dnipro to win majorities in a few east-central oblasts. Even after the 'eastern' candidate, Viktor Yanukovich, had his efforts at fraud exposed, he gained a huge share of the vote in eastern and southern Ukraine, and made a credible showing (42 per cent) overall.<sup>33</sup>

The stark regional differences in voting have led many to assert that Ukraine is polarized, but this has not been the practical effect on politics. The political results of the elections show that, rather than guaranteeing the division of the country, the result of the elections may well have guaranteed the preservation of the Ukrainian state, even if it also guaranteed a stalemated government. Given Ukraine's societal cleavages, its election laws are

sufficient to ensure that east Ukrainian (necessarily meaning ethnic Russian and Russophone Ukrainian) interests are not only well represented, but dominate the country politically. Moreover, while two completely distinct sets of parties compete in different regions, the parliament itself has not been dominated by regional cleavages but by a more traditional left–right cleavage (see Table 1).<sup>34</sup>

Whenever separatist sentiment has started to swell, the power of eastern Ukraine *within* Ukraine has been demonstrated. If many ethnic Russians from eastern Ukraine began 1994 convinced that they needed to leave Ukraine to gain political representation, by July they saw that, if anyone controlled Ukraine, they did. The largest single bloc of deputies (by far) in the Ukrainian parliament was that consisting of the communists and their allies – a group elected almost entirely in eastern Ukraine and Crimea. Oleksandr Moroz, a socialist from Kyiv oblast, was elected chairman. Following the parliamentary elections, Kuchma defeated Kravchuk in the presidential election in July, completing the east Ukrainian takeover of the Ukrainian state. A huge majority of residents of the Donbas and Crimea voted for Kuchma in July 1994, and consequently felt that ‘their man’ had been elected. It was the Ukrainian nationalists, most notably in the western region of Galicia, who felt disempowered, with 90 per cent voting for the loser, but they would not secede. The combination of the number of ethnic Russians and Russophone Ukrainians, their concentration, and the electoral law, guaranteed that there would be no legislative basis for repression of ethnic Russians. Hence when debates over language laws continued, there was no question of adopting the more exclusive nationalist policies.

Following the March 1998 parliamentary elections, the empowerment of eastern Ukraine was even clearer: the largest bloc in the parliament was

TABLE 1  
VOTE IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, 2004: SELECTED OBLASTS

Region	Oblast	Percentage for Yanukovych	Percentage for Yushchenko
East Ukraine	Donets'k	93.5	4.2
	Luhans'k	91.2	6.2
	Kharkiv	68.1	26.4
Crimea	Crimean Republic	81.3	15.4
	Sevastopol City	88.8	8.0
Galicia	L'viv	4.7	93.7
	Ternopil	2.7	96.0
	Ivano Frankivs'k	2.9	95.7

Source: Data are from the Ukrainian Central Election Commission, at <<http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vp2004/wp0011>> and <<http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vp2004/wp0011>>.

again the Communist Party, elected almost exclusively in the east and in Crimea. Moreover, the fragile parliamentary majority that elected a speaker was based on parties whose support was concentrated primarily in eastern Ukraine. The main contributors to the 237 votes that elected Oleksandr Tkachenko parliamentary chairman were the Communist Party (121 votes), the Socialists (35) and the Progressive Socialists (16) plus the Peasants' Party, all of them based outside western Ukraine. Parties with a base outside eastern and southern Ukraine contributed slightly, and those representing the west were largely excluded;<sup>35</sup> the same pattern recurred in 2004–6. After the Orange Revolution, many in the east feared (and many in the west hoped) that the government of Viktor Yushchenko would embark on a clearly pro-Western policy, including a foreign policy oriented westwards, away from Russia, and a domestic policy that reasserted the country's *Ukrainian* identity, in particular promoting wider use of the Ukrainian language. However, less than a year after gaining the presidency, Yushchenko found that he could confirm a new prime minister only with the votes of the Party of Regions, based in eastern Ukraine. Then, in 2006, the same party came first in parliamentary elections, and Yushchenko had to rely on it even more heavily to govern. In short, even at the nadir of their political power, eastern Ukrainian interests have been impossible to exclude from power in Kyiv.

### **The Resistance to Regional Autonomy**

Because control of the Ukrainian government has been open to the east Ukrainian elite, when in power these have had a stake in preserving the state's integrity. It made no sense for eastern Ukraine to split off when it might control the whole country. Hence, the eastern elites in power in Kyiv have not supported regional autonomy arrangements. For example, Leonid Kuchma, who came from eastern Ukraine and was heavily supported in the east and south, was as responsible as anyone for quashing Crimea's quest for greater autonomy. Under Kuchma, the Kyiv government gave in on every issue except those that implied the right to secession.<sup>36</sup> Thus Crimea was allowed a separate constitution and prime minister, and a level of administrative autonomy allowed to no other component of Ukraine. When the Crimean government pushed for more, however, Kyiv (first Kravchuk, then Kuchma) was quite firm, and attempts to include the right of secession in the Crimean constitution, to declare the Crimean parliament's laws superior to those of the Ukrainian parliament, and to allow Crimea to conduct a foreign policy, were resisted almost to the point of conflict.

Here, the policies discussed above became crucial. Before Crimean citizens and politicians could court military conflict with the state in Kyiv, they had to ask what they would gain. Since the government had already

given them most of what they wanted, and they were guaranteed both representation in Kyiv and wide autonomy, there became less to gain from secession. Rivalries split the Crimean elite at the key stage of the process, helping stem the move towards secession; but including Crimean politicians in Kyiv helped fuel that split.

In the case of the Donbas, regional autonomy was not the status quo, and was successfully resisted. In considering a new Ukrainian constitution, many from eastern Ukraine sought a federal system that would leave greater local autonomy and allow them to diverge where desired from the Kyiv government's policies. Ukrainian nationalists strongly emphasized the importance of a unified state, and statist in Kyiv resisted devolving their authority to local governments (exactly as predicted by Gurr). A political system that guaranteed representation of all regions undermined support for federalism in two ways. Until 2006, parliamentary elections were conducted partly in single-member districts. Therefore, it could not be argued that only federalism would give residents of a particular oblast a voice in politics. Because elections to parliament were based on geographically small districts, everyone had local representation in parliament. Here the advantage of single-member districts over proportional representation (PR) was manifest: PR would guarantee that ethnic Russians were represented in Kyiv thanks to their numbers, but it would not provide for local representation. An additional measure, such as federalism, which might provide the institutional basis for secession, would be needed to provide for local representation under PR.

Moreover, elections from single-member districts meant that the most ambitious politicians in areas dominated by ethnic Russians would probably run for parliament, and that the most popular would win. Thus the elite in eastern Ukraine was effectively co-opted into the national parliament in Kyiv. For those with seats in the national parliament, secession of the Donbas or Crimea (whether a deputy represents one of those regions or not) takes on a very different colour. So Crimean secession was opposed by the entire Ukrainian parliament, including Russophone members. The shift to PR seems to have had little effect on this factor: the most prominent politicians in Ukraine seek (and win) seats in parliament, ensuring that they have some interest in preserving the authority of the central government.

In both Crimea and the Donbas (and in other regions) local representation was guaranteed, while simultaneously the territorial basis of secession was undermined. Local representation was achieved not at the level of the oblast or of the republic of Crimea – where it might get to form the institutional basis for secession – but rather at the level of local electoral districts, which were not intrinsically part of any larger unit except Ukraine itself. By making electoral districts fragment the larger political units that might aspire to secession, the impetus to conflict was undermined, while the

impetus to participation was augmented. It remains to be seen whether the shift in 2006 to full PR will eventually strengthen the argument for regional autonomy.

### Summary

The Ukrainian government turned an ominous combination of situational factors into one that provided little incentive for ethno-political protest or secession by Ukraine's Russian minority. Tolerant citizenship and language laws reduced much of the source of grievance for Ukraine's minorities. The combination of territorially based electoral districts and maintenance of a unified state structure provided for local assertion of democratic rights, but channelled that assertion into a single national entity: the *Verkhovna Rada*. Not only was ethnicity played down as a political issue but, to the extent that it featured, the debate was channelled into a unified central government, rather than supporting additional local autonomy bids. The one place that already had regional autonomy, Crimea, was not suppressed, and the fact that Crimea came much closer to seceding than did the Donbas implies that regional autonomy fed secession as much as stemming it.

The key structural disadvantage that Ukraine made work in its favour was the large size and geographical concentration of the Russian minority. If that minority were much smaller, Ukraine's solution would not have worked for two reasons. First, with a smaller Russian population, Ukrainian nationalists, the Ukrainian state, or both, might have found less reason to meet the minority's demands. With no need to contemplate disenfranchising 12 million people, restrictive citizenship laws might have seemed practical; without needing to face the votes and potential protest of those 12 million, politicians might be more willing simply to outvote them over language policy.

Second, with a smaller Russian population, it would be much harder to make democracy work in a way that would make Russians confident of their future. Given a smaller Russian population, parliamentarians favouring Russian minority rights would not have the single largest bloc in parliament. Nor would a Russophone Ukrainian promising closer ties with Russia have been elected president of Ukraine. In short, it would have been much more difficult to build a system where the Russian minority had enough clout to block any significant attempt at suppressing its ethnic, linguistic or political interests.

### Conclusions and Lessons

The explanation outlined above is essentially one of liberalism: Ukraine, despite little progress in some of the more important institutional aspects of

'democratization', has evidently achieved a quintessential liberal (in the Continental sense of that word) solution to the problems of minority representation. Ukraine faced the most basic problem of democratic society: preventing the tyranny of the majority. The solution advocated by liberal theorists, from Locke through Hume to the American Federalists and Kant, focused on building a political system in which the majority could not persecute the minority even if it tried. Institutions that inhibit majority factions are prized. For this reason, the large size and geographical concentration of the Russian minority proved to be Ukraine's solution rather than its Achilles' heel, rendering it easier for a relatively unsophisticated polity to ensure the rights of the minority. Hence, the minority found it more advantageous to remain in the polity than to exit.

This interpretation of Ukraine's avoidance of ethno-political conflict raises several broader observations and prompts additional questions. In this conclusion, I attempt to address two sets of issues. First, and most narrowly, what does this interpretation say about Ukrainian politics, given prevailing views of that country? Second, what are the implications for theories of ethno-political conflict?

### *Liberal Ukraine?*

One strength of this 'liberal' interpretation is that it makes sense of the most striking anomalies of Ukraine's case: how a state universally regarded (both within and outside Ukraine) as weak and inept managed to negotiate such a hazard-strewn course. Two insights are relevant. First, as discussed above, from the liberal perspective, state weakness becomes a strength. Second, if we reverse the causality, we can see the state's ineptitude and weakness not as a cause of turmoil, but the result of the compromises necessary to maintain peace.

The paradox is that the main vulnerabilities in Ukraine, according to Gurr's theory, in fact became means of avoiding ethno-political conflict. The liberal interpretation dissolves this paradox without asserting implausibly that the Ukrainian government was both strategically brilliant and highly agile in its policy. The weakness of the state (and the strength of the Russian minority) promoted a peaceful outcome by making repression of the Russian minority politically costly, thereby making secession unnecessary. To some extent, these incentives operate without the explicit design of the state or the benevolence of the majority. To understand the outcome we do not need to argue that the Ukrainian state was clever, or that the majority was incredibly tolerant (it was tolerant on citizenship, less tolerant on language). We need to know only that both the state and Ukrainian nationalists put a high value on avoiding secession, and that they recognized that the large size of the Russian minority made compromise the only reliable path to that goal. Nor need we argue that the

Russian minority was more quiescent than originally estimated. Russians in the Donbas and Crimea may well have been intent on secession if their demands were not met, but since most of their more significant demands were met (most notably the right to maintain Russian-language education), and since they became as powerful as any other region or ethnic group in Ukraine, the incentives for secession were removed.

Thus, the Ukrainian state survived not *despite* its weakness, but because of it. The fragmentation and stalemate in the Ukrainian parliament are lamentable in view of the decisive reform measures advocated by most Western social scientists (and politicians), but it may well be the necessary result of democracy in a fragmented society. Since any decisive action by that parliament would be opposed by one major group or another, little can be done. This in turn ensures that no significant bloc of deputies (or the societal groups they represent) feels so alienated or oppressed by the system that rebellion is preferable to continued participation. In retrospect, some credence must be given to Kravchuk's protestations that his vacillation as president was necessary for peacefully preserving the state's integrity.

In a divided society, such as Ukraine, gridlock may reflect the democratic process, and may work to preserve peace. The key difference between Ukraine and the US is not the degree of gridlock, but the fact that the US has gridlock in a system that is essentially functioning, while Ukraine has gridlock in a country in dire need of fundamental reform. None the less, it remains unclear how that decisive reform can be pursued when opposed by a significant portion of the population.

This view also may help us to see Ukraine's experience as consistent with Gurr's models of ethno-political conflict. Our assumption has been that Gurr's major factors implied Ukraine to be ripe for ethno-political conflict. One of his major assertions is that, while democratizing autocracies are prone to ethno-political conflict, institutionalized democracies tend to resolve such issues peacefully through inclusive norms and institutions. Perhaps, despite conventional appraisals, Ukraine's democracy is more thoroughly institutionalized than some of the chaos implies (bad government is not necessary incompatible with liberal democracy).<sup>37</sup> Many Ukrainians have claimed that their country has internalized the norms of 'Europe' and of liberal democracy, and there is evidence to support it. The ability of Viktor Yanukovich to return to power after the 2006 parliamentary elections, while frustrating to some, is seen by many as a sign that Ukraine has internalized democratic norms of political competition.

This proposition is clearly ripe for further study, especially since many discussions of 'democracy' in the former communist states are notoriously vague about the meaning of democracy. The converse of Gurr's findings on institutionalized democracy implies that, if a country successfully overcomes a high

propensity for ethno-political conflict, it must be an institutionalized democracy. If so, perhaps Ukraine is indeed in better shape institutionally than we typically think (Gurr himself implies this when he asserts that, despite the potential for ethno-political conflict in the former Soviet Union, he expects that the Slavic republics will resolve such problems democratically).<sup>38</sup>

### *Implications for Theories of Ethno-political Conflict*

The most provocative aspect of this case for theories of ethno-political conflict is not the fact that Ukraine avoided ethno-political conflict despite its apparently high propensity for it, but *how* it did so. As stated above, Gurr's hypotheses are sufficiently indeterminate that for one case to turn out differently from what is expected is not particularly damaging to the theory. What is more interesting, however, is that Ukraine seems to have achieved the desired result by ignoring many standard lessons of considerable theoretical and empirical research on ethno-political conflict.

Much conventional wisdom on dealing with ethnic conflicts still stems from seminal work by Lijphart and others on 'consociationalism'.<sup>39</sup> Built on the basic idea that ethnic peace and territorial integrity can be preserved by assuring minorities that they will not be oppressed, consociational solutions rely on institutionalizing ethnic and regional differences so that minority groups are guaranteed representation and a large degree of self-rule. While the details differ from case to case, such solutions often involve the following: federalism allows regional autonomy within the state, so concentrated minorities actually become a majority at a level of government that possesses substantial authority. Corporatism provides for coherent leadership in fragmented societies through elite brokering of the demands of different groups. A variety of measures to guarantee minority participation in government are used. In some cases, minority groups have a number of reserved seats in parliament or the cabinet. In other cases, linguistic equality is achieved through bilingualism, as in Canada, where every federal bureaucrat is required to know both English and French. Essentially, all these mechanisms aim at augmenting 'voice' and heading off 'exit' by reproducing the society's ethnic divisions in the political system. Prominent cases are Switzerland, Belgium, Canada and – alas – Yugoslavia.

Ukraine took a fundamentally different path, rejecting a federal system and tolerating regional autonomy only in Crimea. Corporatism has been absent both formally and informally. And no special arrangements have been made to guarantee representation to minorities, in either parliament or the cabinet. These measures were eschewed in large part because nationalists and the leaders of the state saw them as building the basis for secession or at least for the fragmentation of society (a problem admitted by Lijphart, which has become quite visible in recent years, with secession along federal

lines in Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, and the threat of it in Canada). The debate was starkest in writing a post-Soviet constitution in 1995–96. Many in eastern Ukraine sought to build a federal system that maintained the Ukrainian state while making the oblast a major centre of political activity. Nationalists and Kuchma's government objected, favouring a unitary state, on both symbolic grounds (they sought the image of a unified society and a strong unified state) and practical grounds (building up regional institutions would build the institutional basis for secession, as both Ukraine's secession from the USSR and Crimea's continuing recalcitrance demonstrated).

Preserving the state proved possible through liberalism rather than consociationalism in large part thanks to the factor highlighted in this study: the political power of the ethnic Russian minority. Given its size and concentration, a straightforward democratic electoral system would ensure substantial minority representation in the *Verkhovna Rada*, and a crucial voice in choosing the country's president. Consociationalism was simply unnecessary to ensure ethnic Russian representation, and was seen to contribute to the problem by focusing political attention on the regional level rather than on Kyiv. Ukraine's liberal approach guaranteed minority representation, but in a way that ignored rather than institutionalized ethnic differences, and that channelled that representation into a unified Ukrainian parliament. Rather than becoming the institutional foundation for Ukrainian politics, ethnic and regional issues became simply one in a series of cross-cutting cleavages. In the 1998 parliament, the left–right cleavage appears just as salient as regional or ethnic cleavages – or more so. The liberal approach underscored Ukrainian unity symbolically, while giving leading ethnic Russian politicians in Ukraine an incentive to support preserving the Ukrainian state rather than establishing a new state in which they might have little role, or joining Russia, where the Donbas or Crimea would become one of nearly 90 regions. How widely relevant is this 'solution'? Theoretically, this model should be relevant to other cases, because states where consociational solutions are possible are also those where a liberal approach is most likely to work. They are cases with large, territorially compact minorities, demanding guarantees of their rights and of a voice in politics. An additional mechanism for representation is clearly necessary only where the minority is so small that normal majoritarian practices leave it no significant voice in politics. But in those very cases such arrangements are least likely to be granted. One remaining rationale for consociationalism is separation as a goal for its own sake. For a large and concentrated minority like Ukraine's Russians, liberal solutions provided for representation just effectively as consociationalism, and with less threat of future secession. However, without further research, the relevance of Ukraine's experience to other cases remains unclear.

To draw general conclusions from this case would be unwise. Further scrutiny may reveal that the Ukrainian experience was in some key way unique, leaving no lessons for other cases. Theoretically, however, a more fundamental point emerges: there is more than one solution to the problem of ethno-political grievance. While it is too early to establish empirically the circumstances in which a 'liberal' solution may work, this case indicates that such a solution *can* work. If this analysis is correct, the need for further research on this type of solution is clear.

## NOTES

1. *Financial Times*, 29 Nov. 2004; Radio Mayak, Moscow, 29 Nov. 2004, translated in BBC Monitoring Service, 29 Nov. 2004.
2. Dominique Arel, 'The "Orange Revolution": Analysis and Implication of the 2004 Presidential Elections in Ukraine', Stasiuk-Cambridge Lecture on Contemporary Ukraine, Cambridge University, 25 Feb. 2005; and Lowell Barrington, 'Are "Interaction Effects" More Important Than the "Regional Effect"?' Reexamining Region, Ethnicity, and Language in Ukraine', paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities, Columbia University, New York, 23-25 March 2006.
3. *Washington Post*, 25 Jan. 1994.
4. For predictions of Ukraine's collapse, see among others 'Ukraine: The Birth and Possible Death of a Country', *The Economist*, 7 May 1994; Eugene B. Rumer, 'Letter from Eurasia: Will Ukraine Return to Russia', *Foreign Policy*, No.96 (Fall 1994), pp.129-44; P. Klebnikov, 'Tinderbox', *Forbes*, 9 Sept. 1996; and F. Stephen Larabee, 'Ukraine: Europe's Next Crises?', *Arms Control Today*, Vol.24, No.6 (1994), pp.14-19.
5. Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.196.
6. For other efforts to answer this question, see Alfred Stepan, 'Ukraine: Improbable Democratic "Nation-State" but Possible Democratic "State-Nation"', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol.24, No.4 (2005), pp.279-308; and Craig Weller, 'Mass Attitudes and Ethnic Conflict in Ukraine', in Taras Kuzio and Paul D'Anieri (eds.), *Dilemmas of State-Led Nation Building in Ukraine* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), pp.71-102.
7. On the development (and underdevelopment) of the Ukrainian state, see Taras Kuzio, Robert Kravchuk and Paul D'Anieri (eds.), *State and Institution Building in Ukraine* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999).
8. Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, 1993), especially Ch. 5.
9. *Ibid.*, p.127.
10. *Ibid.*, p.128.
11. See Roman Solchanyk, *Ukraine and Russia: The Post-Soviet Transition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), pp.163-4.
12. Lowell Barrington and Erik Herron, 'One Ukraine Or Many? Regionalism in Ukraine and its Political Consequences', *Nationalities Papers*, Vol.32, No.1 (2004), pp.53-86; Lowell W. Barrington, 'Region, Language, and Nationality: Rethinking Support in Ukraine for Maintaining Distance From Russia', in Kuzio and D'Anieri (eds.), *Dilemmas of State-Led Nation Building*, pp.131-46.
13. Gurr, *Minorities at Risk*, p.131; see also pp.135-6. See Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and The National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Chaps. 1-3; Juan J. Linz, 'State and Nation-building', *European Review*, Vol.1, No.4 (1993), p.356; and Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.41.

14. Alexander J. Motyl, 'After Empire: Competing Discourses and Interstate Conflict in Post-Imperial Eastern Europe', in Barnett R. Rubin and Jack Snyder (eds.), *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.19; Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p.106 (original emphasis).
15. For a detailed analysis and evaluation of Ukraine's nationalizing policies, see the various chapters in Kuzio and D'Anieri (eds.), *Dilemmas of State-Led Nation Building*. For an alternative view see also T. Kuzio, 'Nationalising States or Nation Building: A Review of the Theoretical Literature and Empirical Evidence', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol.7, Part 2 (April 2001), pp.135–54.
16. Jack Snyder makes the connection between ethnic politics and Huntington's hypothesis explicit in his 'Reconstructing Politics amidst the Wreckage of Empire', in B.R. Rubin and J. Snyder (eds.), *Post-Soviet Political Order*, pp.1–13; see also Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968).
17. Gurr, *Minorities at Risk*, p.136.
18. *Ibid.*, p.137.
19. Solchanyk, *Ukraine and Russia*, Ch.8.
20. See Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine's Orange Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).
21. See Paul D'Anieri, *Economic Interdependence in Ukrainian–Russian Relations* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), Ch.5. The economic dimension of the issue is also discussed in Janusz Bugajski, 'Ethnic Relations and Regional Problems in Independent Ukraine', in Sharon L. Wolchik and Voldoymyr Zvighyanich (eds.), *Ukraine: The Search for a National Identity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), pp.165–82.
22. For a discussion of the concept of 'nationalizing' policies, see Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, Ch.3. These policies and the reactions to them are chronicled in Andrew Wilson, 'The Growing Challenge to Kyiv from the Donbas', *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol.2, No.33 (20 Aug. 1993); Dominique Arel, 'Language Politics in Ukraine: Towards One or Two State Languages', *Nationalities Papers*, Vol.23, No.3 (1995), pp.597–622; and Jeff Chinn and Robert Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), Chs.1 and 6, pp.3–16 and 129–62.
23. See Andrew Fesiak, 'Nation Building in the Ukrainian Military', and Jan G. Jaanmat, 'Identity Construction and Education: The History of Ukraine in Soviet and Post-Soviet Textbooks', in Kuzio and D'Anieri (eds.), *Dilemmas of State-Led Nation Building*, pp.147–70 and 171–90, respectively.
24. Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).
25. Arel, 'Language Politics in Ukraine'; and Chinn and Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority*, Ch.6, pp.129–62.
26. 'Universal National'noi Yednosti', website of the president of Ukraine, <[http://www.president.gov.ua/done\\_img/files/universal0308.html](http://www.president.gov.ua/done_img/files/universal0308.html)>, accessed 15 Aug. 2006. The 'Universal', as it is widely known, was essentially a joint statement by leaders of various political parties agreeing on an agenda for the parliament elected in 2006 and the government subsequently chosen. It overcame a three-month deadlock in efforts to form a coalition, but did not appear to bind the parties in any meaningful way. The term 'universal' refers back to the use of Universals in the independent Ukrainian state in 1917–18. Four out of five parliamentary factions signed the Universal; the Tymoshenko bloc refused to sign it.
27. Ukrainian Central Election Commission, at <<http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vnd2006/W6P001>>.
28. See Wilson, 'The Growing Challenge'; Arel, 'Language Politics in Ukraine'; and Chinn and Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority*, pp.129–62.
29. On this question, see Paul D'Anieri, 'Introduction: Debating the Assumptions of State-Led Nation Building in Ukraine', in Kuzio and D'Anieri (eds.), *Dilemmas of State-Led Nation Building*, pp.1–8.
30. Press Office of the President of Ukraine, 'President Yushchenko Accepts Crimea Challenge', 20 Sept. 2006 at [http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/data/1\\_10440.html](http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/data/1_10440.html); accessed 8 Feb. 2007.

31. Chinn and Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority*, p.155.
32. The case that the development of the Ukrainian language and national consciousness is indeed important for the future of the Ukrainian state is made in Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (London: Routledge, 1998).
33. Yanukovych and his supporter engaged in a wide array of fraudulent practices, such as coercion and bribery of voters, and multiple voting, as well as falsification of the actual vote count. These are discussed in considerable detail in Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine's Orange Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).
34. This point is developed at length in Paul D'Anieri, *Understanding Ukrainian Politics: Power, Politics, and Institutional Design* (Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 2006), Ch.5.
35. These data are from 'Members of Parliament Surprised Each Other and Voters', Ukrainian Centre for Independent Political Research, 15 July 1998.
36. See Solchanyk, *Ukraine and Russia*, Chs.8–9.
37. See Jose Casanova, 'Ethno-Linguistic and Religious Pluralism and Democratic Construction in Ukraine', in Rubin and Snyder (eds.), *Post-Soviet Political Order*, pp.81–103.
38. Gurr, *Minorities at Risk*, p.322.
39. The key work in an enormous literature is Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977).