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Identity and nation-building in Ukraine

Defining the 'Other'

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ABSTRACT National identity is forged and defined through a dual process of stressing the similarities of the in-group (the 'Self') and its differences with those outside the political community (the 'Others'). The need to define the in-group as different becomes more compelling when the 'significant Other' denies the authenticity of the in-group and seeks to subvert its separate existence, as in the Ukrainian–Russian case. This article places the Ukrainian–Russian relationship within discussions of national identity, culture and 'Otherness' by examining how Ukraine's ruling elites hold no consensus over how to relate to the 'significant Other' (Russia). The ruling elites hail from the centrist and centre-right camps and are attempting to create a new national identity outside Eurasia. But, they remain divided over whether Russia is part of Europe and how to return to Europe. The left, meanwhile, see Europe as the 'Other' and Russia as the successor state to the former USSR. Therefore, no dominant view of Russia as the 'Other' exists in Ukraine and the article discusses the attitudes of the four main political groups (nationalists, the centre-right, centrists and the left) towards Russia and Russians as 'Others' within domestic and foreign policy discourse. How Ukraine relates to the Russian 'Other' will both affect the domestic nation-building project in Ukraine by helping or hindering the integration of its Russian minority, as well as having repercussions upon how Russia redefines its identity in the post-Soviet era.

KEYWORDS former Soviet Union nation-building ● historiography ● national identity ● Otherness ● Russia ● Ukraine

This article argues that the construction of a national identity requires the existence of contrasting 'Others' because the creation of bounded in-groups requires there to be a perceived sense of difference to other out-groups (Hall, 1996b: 345; Young, 1997: 161). Civic states are composed of both civic and ethnocultural elements, and the particularism of the latter sustains the

division of liberal universalism into bounded nation-states which are defined differently from one another by traits, stereotypes and national characteristics through 'Otherness'. National identity is created in relation to 'Others' and 'Nations achieve their identity by means of demarcation from other national groups' (Bruckmuller, 1993: 200; Duara, 1996: 163).

The sense of 'Otherness' becomes more urgent when two sides are both ethnically close and where one nationality refuses to recognize the separate existence of the 'Other'. In such situations, the need for national identity to be defined in terms of its difference to 'Others' becomes more compelling for the nationality denied any right to exist, except as a sub-group of another larger unit. Russian views of Ukrainians and Belarusians closely follow such a pattern because the majority of ethnic Russians do not perceive their two eastern Slavic neighbours as 'foreign' but as regional branches of the all-Russian (i.e. east Slavic) ethnocultural group (Kuzio, 1998b). These views are not only shared by Russian nationalists and communists but also by a large number of democrats.

National identity is never fixed but always in the process of changing and evolving. Its construction differs over time, requires difference, and is never a finished process or complete. Debates about identity occur in every country and not only in newly independent states, such as Ukraine. The revival and evolution of identity among Ukrainians after the disintegration of the former USSR is helping to make this identity more self-confident vis-a-vis the outside world. Ukraine is likely to forge its new national identity in the short term through reintegration with Europe by emphasizing itself as part of central-eastern Europe. This is being undertaken by contrasting itself to the Russian, former Soviet and Eurasian 'Other'. Competing political groups in the Ukrainian elites relate to 'Europe' and Russia in different ways because no consensus exists.

This article focuses upon the role of Ukrainian elites in nation- and state-building because they are playing the key role in the construction of national identity in post-Soviet states via a top-down process. It therefore does not discuss the views of the population at large, which have been dealt with elsewhere (see Arel and Khmelko, 1996). The theoretical framework is therefore consistent with a constructivist view of elite manipulation of public opinion during the nation-building process. The formation of a Ukrainian collective identity different to Russia's is still in the process of formation but this article agrees with William Zimmerman (1998) that a 'process of differentiation' is already taking place. Nevertheless, this process of differentiation 'constitutes a core element in state and political-community formation' (p. 45).

The article is divided into three sections. The first section discusses 'Otherness' from a theoretical perspective in three areas – whether nation-building requires 'Others', the role of 'Others' when countries are neighbours and culturally close, and how identity is influenced when there are

'significant Others'. The second section surveys the construction of post-Soviet national identity with reference to the role of 'Others' and the attitude of different Ukrainian political parties to constituting Russia as an 'Other'. The final section discusses how Russia is portrayed as Ukraine's 'Other', domestically and through foreign policy.

'OTHERNESS' AND IDENTITY: A THREE-POINT THEORETICAL SURVEY

The first area this article investigates is whether the construction of a national identity requires the use of a constituting 'Other' to create external difference. Often though, this tells us more about ourselves than about the 'Other' against whom we are constituting ourselves. As Iver Neumann (1993) points out, 'Identity is inconceivable without difference' and in constructing new identities nationalists and new ruling elites are forced 'to contrast that identity to something different' (p. 350). John A. Armstrong (1982) also argues that 'groups tend to define themselves not by reference to their own characteristics but by exclusion, that is, by comparison to "strangers"' (p. 5). Therefore, when discussing 'our culture' a distinction has to be made between 'us' (the 'Self') which is contrasted to the 'Other' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992). The relationship between the 'Self' and 'Other' is fluid, particularly in postcolonial settings such as the former USSR (Penrose, 1995: 402).

Otherness and national identity are closely related as they define who the 'We' and 'They' are (Connor, 1993: 386; Eriksen, 1993: 11–18, 35, 62, 111; Parekh, 1994: 503, Pieterse, 1997: 371; Schopflin, 1991: 193; Taras, 1998: 84). 'They' are the 'Others' who are not regarded as a part of the political community, nation, or as citizens of the state. Civic nation-building therefore involves two processes – exclusion of 'Others' and inclusion of citizens as the 'We' (Nieguth, 1999). Identity cannot be understood except in relation to 'Others' because without 'Otherness' a bounded in-group will be difficult to construct.

Nation- and state-building projects generate the self and 'Others' in the course of the formation of the polity (Alonso, 1994). Jan Penrose (1995) believes that 'as individuals liken themselves to some people and distinguish themselves from others, bonds are formed between people who see themselves as similar' (p. 402). It is the task of state and nation-builders to ensure that inclusion and exclusion are codified and maintained (James, 1996: 33). Without such markers a new national identity will not be created because it is through confrontation with the 'Other' that the community sees what it is not, and what it lacks by recognizing its 'constitutive outside' (Hall, 1996a: 4–5).

In the early years of independence, postcolonial states, such as Ukraine, have to assert their identity and sovereignty vis-a-vis the former metropolis, now defined as the 'Other'. Where identities are threatened, as in the Ukrainian case, the codification of borders becomes doubly important (Eriksen, 1993: 68; Smith, 1998: 182).

Sometimes these differences are based upon stereotypes which exist in all societies and define the boundaries of groups (Eriksen, 1993: 23). Alan Finlayson (1998) believes that 'to be itself the nation must always produce that antagonistic other which prevents it from being itself' (p. 116).

'Moscow' is perceived as having stunted and harmed the development of the national organism by the ruling elites of the majority of the post-Soviet states. But how are 'Russia' and 'Moscow' defined when there is no elite consensus? After all, 'Moscow' can be defined in different ways – in ethnic terms as 'Russian', in territorial terms as the capital city of the former USSR (often used synonymously with 'Russia') and in ideological terms as the centre of Soviet communism.

A second point to note is that 'Otherness' can occur even between societies with no great cultural and ethnic differences. These societies could be territorially close and the 'Other' could thus be perceived as threatening to the core identity. These 'significant Others' can blur the distinctiveness of the group and therefore pose a threat to the very identity of the group. They are therefore more of a direct threat to the group's survival. The public enemy:

... does not have to be morally evil, he [sic] does not have to be aesthetically ugly, he does not have to appear as an economic competition, and it can ... even be advantageous to have business dealings with him. He is nevertheless the other, the stranger. (Neumann and Welsh, 1991: 332)

Research into group behaviour has shown how there can be strong competition between two groups where in reality there is very little to differentiate them. In the initial phase of nation-building, identity is shaped in the struggle with the former metropolis, now the 'Other'. According to Triandafyllidou (1998), this can be particularly severe, as in the Ukrainian–Russian case, when rival nations contest territory, history and cultural heritage 'by asserting that specific myths, symbols and/or ancestry are part of their national past'. This is a direct threat to the viability of the former dependency (i.e. Ukraine) because 'They thus threaten the ingroup's sense of uniqueness and authenticity. The ingroup may therefore be led to redefine its identity in order to assert that the contested symbols or myths are its own cultural property' (p. 602).

This has occurred in the Ukrainian–Russian case through the contest over history because historiography, myths and legends – which are structured by culture – in order to establish who is in and who is out (Schopflin, 1997: 20). Wilson (1997), Wanner (1998) and Kuzio (1998a) have all stressed

the centrality of historiography, myths and symbols to Ukraine's redefinition of itself and the creation of a new national identity different to the ethnic or territorial Russian and former Soviet 'Other'. Ukraine had little choice but to reject Tsarist or Soviet historiography that denied the very existence of a Ukrainian ethnic group or defined it as a temporary historical aberration (Janmaat, 2000).

If there is no consensus on the 'Other', the choice of historical myths and how the past is portrayed will be inconsistent. In the Ukrainian–Russian case four examples will suffice to show this. Is the medieval Kyiv Rus' state an embryo Ukrainian state (as Ukrainian historiography claims), the first 'Russian' state (as traditional Western and Tsarist historiography claims) or the joint property of all three eastern Slavs (Kuzio, 2001b)? In the Soviet era, historical study of Kyiv Rus was only allowed to be undertaken in Russia, even though Moscow was founded 600 years later than Kyiv [Kiev], because Ukrainian history was deemed to have only begun in the 14th century. Is the 1654 Periaslav Treaty the 'reunification' of two 'Russian peoples' (as Tsarist and Soviet historiography claimed), the annexation of one country by another, or the creation of a temporary confederal alliance (as Ukrainian historiography argues)? Were the Bolshevik invasions of Ukraine in 1917–21 from communist Russia or an ideological group; in other words, should Russians as an ethnic group or a communist ideology be blamed for the loss of Ukrainian independence in 1920? Finally, should the Soviet regime be depicted as the enemy and the misfortunes suffered by Ukraine be blamed on 'Russia' or communist ideology from which Russians also suffered? Did 'Russia' gain or lose from its leadership of the USSR?

If the ruling elites accept the central tenets of Tsarist and Soviet nationality policies that there are few, if any, differences between the three eastern Slavic groups then nation-building is abandoned in favour of reintegration with the metropolis, as it has been in the case of Belarus (Eke and Kuzio, 2000; Kuzio and Nordberg, 1999). Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka largely accepts that Belarusians are a regional branch of Russians. Lukashenka does not therefore perceive Russia as a former 'imperialist' power because his views are similar to those of the Ukrainian left. This definition of past Soviet policies by the metropolis as either 'imperialist' (i.e. the view of those who are creating a nation-state or those who mourn the loss of national statehood or identity) or as 'nation-building' (i.e. the view of Lukashenka and the Ukrainian left) is as applicable to the eastern Slavic case as it is to France. French nation-builders will have allies in the non-French periphery, just as Russia has allies in Belarus. But, the non-Russian and French peripheries also have those who describe Russian and French policies as 'imperialist' and 'colonial', rather than as 'nation-building'.

If the central tenets of Tsarist and Soviet nationalities policies are not accepted, as in the Ukrainian case, the ruling elites feel compelled to prove that a Ukrainian nationality exists and that Ukrainians are indeed different

to Russians. The Ukrainian independent state is mythologizing itself as the culmination of a 1000-year desire to exist that was thwarted by the 'Other'. How this 'Other' is defined in Ukraine influences debates on a wide variety of domestic and foreign policy issues. Both Janmaat (2000) and Kolsto (2000) conclude that Ukraine under the more Russophile Kuchma since 1994 has still continued the main tenets of the nation-building project outlined in the Leonid Kravchuk era (1991–4). Both scholars argue that this was because Ukraine's elites believe that if Ukraine wishes to maintain itself as an independent state it has no choice but to continue nation-building policies that seek to mould a national identity different to its neighbours (principally Russia), with its own 'unique' history that helps to create a sense of difference. Elites committed to maintaining an independent state will continue to forge a 'Self' different to 'Others'.

An important aspect of creating difference for the 'Self' in relation to the 'Other' is language. Yet, this is not always the case. Germany and Austria speak the same language and post-war Austrian nation-building nevertheless created a separate identity. In some cases, such as Eire (the Republic of Ireland), which is now largely English-speaking, different elements are used in producing difference from its closest neighbour, Britain (Triandafyllidou, 1998: 598). The elevation of the Ukrainian and the downgrading of the Russian languages have bedevilled relations between Ukraine and Russia (Kuzio, 2001c). Russians are accustomed to the view that their language is 'superior', spoken by 'cultured' peoples and the medium through which Ukrainians and Belarusians should access the outside world. Belarusian President Lukashenka believes there are only two worthwhile languages – Russian and English (not Belarusian) – and has continued Soviet-era 'Russification' policies. To many Russians the Ukrainian and Belarusian languages are therefore 'provincial', 'peasant' languages unfit for state elites, culture or the technical sciences. A similar view exists among the French towards provincial cultures in Brittany, Corsica and elsewhere.

'Otherness' can still play a role in defining identity even where the same language is spoken (e.g. English in Eire and Scotland, Russian in eastern Ukraine). In these examples, other factors – history, political culture, foreign policy – play the role of defining 'Otherness'. This is because individuals may find it difficult to define their national characteristics, 'and yet may have an intuitive sense, when confronted with foreigners, of where the differences lie' (Miller, 1995: 27). Such a process is accelerated by the creation of a bounded in-group in nation-states (Kuzio, 1998a: 100–18).

The third area of theoretical significance discusses 'significant Others', such as Russians in the Ukrainian case, which serve to 'strengthen the sense of belonging of the group and demarcation of its territory, ethnic or cultural boundaries' (Triandafyllidou, 1998: 603; see also Motyl, 1998: 30–1). The *perception* that Russia seeks to subvert Ukrainian independence forces Ukraine's elites to be on guard as defenders of Ukrainian sovereignty

(D'Anieri, 1999), arguing for the delimitation and demarcation of borders and not agreeing to Russian proposals for transparent CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) internal frontiers (Kuzio, 1998a).

The construction of the 'Other' is therefore tied to both domestic *and* foreign politics. National integration is pursued by nation-building elites by stressing the domestic similarities of the in-group (e.g. Ukrainians) in contrast to foreign 'Others' (e.g. Russians). 'Thus, for the nation to exist there must be some out-group against which the unity and homogeneity of the in-group is tested' (Triandafyllidou, 1998: 598). This 'Other' can be defined in ideological, ethnical or territorial terms (or a combination of them). In the case of many newly independent states still debating the contours of their national identity, what the 'Other' did, and who the 'Other' is, this is still not uniformly agreed even at the elite level (Shulman, 1999).

The continued promotion of nation- and state-building by Ukrainian elites is confusing to Russia as it conflicts with their traditional perception of the outside world, where Ukraine should follow Belarus's example. As Ukraine continues to build a nation-state, the impact upon Russian identity will therefore be significant, both detrimentally (Shils, 1995: 107) and positively. By rejecting any 'reunion' with Russia, the Ukrainian elites are encouraging Russia also to reject empire-forging in favour of civic nation-building within the borders of the Russian Federation. The Russian sense of 'Self' is forced to change and evolve in such an environment.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF UKRAINIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

The role of the 'Other'

National collective self-consciousness requires, at the very least, a minimum perception of 'Others' beyond one's recognized borders. Foreign policy plays an important role in nation- and state-building by defining the state internationally and domestically as different to other states. For any country of the former USSR committed to nation- and state-building, the definition of its sovereignty is a central question that would inevitably bring it into dispute with a Russia that, due to its size and power, is likely to be, or strives to become, a regional hegemon (Barner-Barry and Hody, 1995: 344). Since 2000, Russia under President Vladimir Putin has returned to many of these ideological tenets, as seen by the re-institution of the Soviet national anthem with new lyrics. The new Russian anthem was supported by a cross-party consensus, including the majority of Russian democratic parties.

Ukraine's growing national self-identification is closely tied to differentiating itself from 'Others'. Russia is the closest in historical, cultural, linguistic and ethnic terms and therefore there is a need to distance Ukraine even more from it than is the case for central Europeans. Volodymyr

Hryn'iov, former presidential adviser on regional questions, a proponent of two state languages (Russian and Ukrainian) and a 'Strategic Partnership' with Russia, believes that, 'the main domination of Ukrainian policies for a long period of time (under former President Leonid Kravchuk) were demonstrations of tendencies to as much as possible and as far as possible separate from Russia' (Hryn'iov, 1995: 81).

Language plays a crucial role in self-identification as it is potentially a symbol of one's distinctiveness, and language is often (although, as we have seen, not always) an important factor in differentiating ethnic communities. 'The different function of language becomes particularly relevant when, as in the case of the Ukrainians who are culturally and religiously relatively close to the Russians, there are few other unambiguous symbols of differences available' (Farmer, 1980: 123, 211).

The fact that an independent Eire largely speaks English made little difference because Eire was predominantly Gaelic in culture and separated by sea from Anglo-Saxon England. Language becomes more important when cultures are in conflict, as in Northern Ireland. Sinn Fein insisted on the use of Gaelic in the Northern Irish Assembly to prove its commitment to Irish culture and to show its authenticity as an Irish nationalist movement.

The debate within Ireland after it achieved home rule after 1922 was strikingly similar to that in Ukraine after 1992. In both countries, knowledge of the Gaelic and Ukrainian languages was perceived as a test of patriotism. This led to fears on the part of the English-speaking Irish and Russian-speaking Ukrainians of forced assimilation. Both countries debated to what extent the negative aspects of the colonial past should be discarded, particularly in the language sphere. Should Russification and Anglicization be completely or partially reversed? Indeed, is it feasible to completely turn back the clock to a mythical precolonial era?

Russian-speaking Ukrainians pose a particular problem. Their language preference can sometimes suggest a foreign orientation which is Eurasian and they are the object of territorial designs from a Russia which is attempting to speak, and threatening to militarily intervene on behalf of, Russian-speakers (not only ethnic Russians). Russia's defence of Russian-speakers ('compatriots') in the former USSR, especially in Belarus and Ukraine, who are not recognized as permanent independent states, therefore poses a serious security problem for these states. It also provides a temptation for these new nation-states to reverse the process of Russification that occurred over centuries through affirmative action policies and Ukrainianization. This has been negatively criticized by some Western scholars as introducing a 'nationalising state' (see Arel, 1995; Kuzio, 2001a).

The need to develop and exaggerate Ukrainian differences with Russia as the 'Other' has also played a role in Ukrainian politics because not only Russia – but also the West – was initially highly sceptical about Ukraine's

chances of survival as an independent state. Former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing argued in February 1993 that, 'the independence of Ukraine is about as ridiculous as the separation of the Rhones-Alpes region from France' (Van Ham, 1994: 44). During 1992–4, when the West pursued a 'Russia-first' policy towards the CIS, Western governments, scholars and journalists were still working under the influence of a Russocentricism that had largely dominated historiography and Sovietology in the West (see Motyl, 1989; Subtelny, 1994). Ukraine's regional and linguistic divisions led to predictions in 1993–4 by Western intelligence agencies and journalists that the country was on the verge of disintegration. This view was premised on a weak and divided national identity, the large number of Russians, Russian-speakers and their conflict with Ukrainian-speaking 'nationalists' (Rumer, 1994).

D'Anieri has led the way in analysing the failure to normalize Ukrainian–Russian relations by pointing to unresolved national identities on both sides as the culprit. These unresolved national identity questions have prevented the 'normalization' of relations that Kuchma claimed he was uniquely suited to promote when he was elected as the second (and still current) Ukrainian president in July 1994. In reality he was little better than his 'nationalist' predecessor in developing a 'strategic partnership' with Russia. This is reflected in their inter-state trade which has declined by half since 1996, a growing gap in their geopolitical orientations, the lack of implementation of the 1997 political and 1998 economic treaties, Russia's continual opposition to Ukraine's plans for a CIS free-trade zone, and Russia and Ukraine's failure to develop normal energy trade. According to a February 2000 poll of Russian elites, 84 percent continue to assess Ukrainian policies negatively (*Zerkalo Nedeli*, 15 April 2000).

Domestic divisions in the use of Russia as the 'Other'

Those on the radical left (communists and progressive socialists) in Ukraine remain committed to a 'Russia' and Eurasia that they perceive as the stepping stone to the revival of the former USSR. The radical left, who commanded 30 percent of the popular vote in the 1990s, see *both* the West and the new post-Soviet and anti-communist Russia as the 'Other'. To the left, the West represents many of the old Soviet negative stereotypes of NATO, the IMF and World Bank that are reducing Ukraine to a 'colonial' state. The leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Petro Symonenko, argues: 'It is no longer possible for Ukraine to resolve any type of big question of its internal and external policies without agreement with its overseas lords.' Government programmes and presidential decrees are therefore allegedly Ukrainian-language translations of documents produced by institutions such as the IMF. 'The main outcome of all of this is that the colonization of Ukraine continues' (*Holos Ukrainy*, 21 November 1997).

The new anti-communist Russia of former President Borys Yeltsin, its oligarchs, privatization, social deprivation and post-communism is also an 'Other' for the Ukrainian left. The Ukrainian left, together with their Russian colleagues, seek to completely reverse post-Soviet developments in both countries, however unreal this is, and blame the West and 'domestic puppets' in both Ukraine and Russia for unravelling the domestic and foreign 'achievements' of the Soviet era. They therefore seek to resurrect the USSR as an alternative to both Ukraine's integration into the West (i.e. 'return to Europe') and to integration with a Russian Federation ruled by clans and oligarchs.

Ukraine's communists ardently believe that when Ukraine was part of the former USSR it had far greater sovereignty than that which it enjoys today. Because Ukraine's communists are also pan-eastern Slavic in their ideology they do not see wide differences between Russians and Ukrainians (a view similar to Belarusian President Lukashenka). Hence, they support Russian as a second state language and Russians, constitutionally defined, as a second titular nation (and not, as in the June 1996 constitution, as a 'national minority').

The radical left face a difficult challenge domestically and abroad (Haran and Majboroda, 2000). Unless they are allied to the moderate left Socialist and Peasant Parties the radical left will never be able to command enough votes to obtain a large presence in parliament or in presidential elections. Although the socioeconomic crisis has made large numbers of people understandably nostalgic for the Soviet past, they also remember the negative political and human rights record of the Soviet regime. A party calling for the revival of the USSR, such as the communists, will never therefore succeed in gaining either a majority in parliament or the presidency, a factor reflected in the defeat of the Ukrainian communist leader in the second round of the 1999 presidential elections.

The Soviet past therefore conjures up mixed feelings for the Ukrainian population – it is a positive 'Other' socioeconomically and a negative 'Other' politically. The latter aspect is likely to grow as more people will become socialized into the new Ukrainian historiography that discusses negative aspects of the Soviet regime, such as the 1933 artificial famine that claimed seven million lives. The year 2000 was also the first year of Ukrainian economic growth and, if the economy continues to improve, nostalgia for the Soviet past will narrow to hard-core communist supporters.

The communist desire to revive the former USSR places it virtually alone on the anti-statehood side of the political spectrum and in disagreement with the moderate left, such as the Socialists, who would align themselves with the centre and centre-right in support of Ukrainian statehood. The communist desire to revive the former USSR also places them on a collision course with the Russian Communist Party. The Communist Party of Ukraine is to the left of its Russian colleagues, is hard-line communist

and hostile to Ukrainian nationalism and statehood. It would probably only accept a new USSR built as a new equal confederation (not as the former federation). In contrast, the Russian Communist Party is more nationalistic and imperialistic than communist and seeks to build a new union under Russian leadership – not in an equal confederation. For Gennadiy Zyuganov, the Russian Communist leader, the ‘national idea’ and Russia as a ‘great power’ are more important than communism (Urban, 1998).

The radical right, of course, reflects the opposite extreme (Kuzio, 1997). Slogans such as ‘Kyiv versus Moscow’ of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, clearly reflect their view of Russia as the ‘Other’ *in extremis*. Dmytro Dontsov, the most influential Ukrainian integral nationalist ideologist, portrayed Ukraine as the front-line defence of European civilization against the ‘Asian, Muscovite hordes of the East’ (Motyl, 1980: 61–85).

This ethnic view of Russia as the ‘Other’ is equally hostile to Russians in Ukraine (as ethnic nationalists they do not support a civic, inclusive state) *and* in the Russian Federation. Russians living in Ukraine are seen as a ‘fifth column’ and are to be harshly dealt with through special restrictions or by being expelled (Shved, 1994: 81). As opponents of liberal democracy their programme for an ‘ethnocratic’ state places Ukrainians at the top of a pyramid of ethnic groups who would rule over others. An integral nationalist ideology of ‘Kyiv versus Moscow’ sees Ukraine as the easternmost bastion of Europe, and Russia as lying within Asia.

The centre-right are more conscious in their effort to differentiate between ‘our Russians’ (i.e. those living within Ukraine) and ‘those Russians’ (i.e. living in the Russian Federation) who constitute the ‘Other’. They do not therefore deny that Russians living in Ukraine constitute a part of the civic nation. The Russian ‘Other’ is defined in ethnoterritorial terms as both the Russian Federation *and* as its Russians who refuse to accept Ukrainians as a separate ethnic group and Ukrainian independence as a permanent entity. Centre-right political parties, such as Rukh, unequivocally see Ukraine as a European state and, like their nationalist colleagues, see Russia as largely lying outside Europe. Table 1 summarizes these attitudes.

The main division over the question of whether Russia should be perceived as the ‘Other’, and where Ukraine’s future orientation lies (Europe or Eurasia), divides the centrist liberals and social democrats perhaps more than any other political parties in Ukraine. Pro-Kuchma centrist political parties, such as the People’s Democratic, United Social Democrats, Liberals and Regional Revival, see *both* Ukraine and Russia as lying within Europe and do not see any contradiction in Ukraine rejoining Europe with Russia (see Table 2). The main party organ of the Liberal party is entitled *Ukraina – Evropa – Svit (Ukraine – Europe – The World)*. The Inter-Regional Bloc

Table 1 Ukrainian political parties and their attitudes towards Russia

<i>Political tendency</i>	<i>Russia as the 'Other'</i>	<i>Russian minority</i>
Ex-national communists	Ethnoterritorial and ideological (post-communist Russia)	Inclusive
Nationalists	Ethnic	Fifth column
Centre-right	Ethnoterritorial and ideological (former Soviet Union)	Inclusive
Centrists	Territorial and ideological (former Soviet Union)	Inclusive
Left	Ideological (post-communist Russia)	Inclusive

Table 2 Ukrainian political parties and their attitudes towards Ukrainian and Russian membership of Europe and Eurasia

<i>Political tendency</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Eurasia</i>
Nationalists	Ukraine	Russia
Centre-right	Ukraine	Russia
Centrists	Ukraine and Russia	Russia
Left	Ukraine and Russia are not in Europe	Ukraine and Russia

of Reforms (MRBR), on the other hand, which the current Ukrainian President, Kuchma, jointly led during the 1994 parliamentary and presidential elections but with whom he has since distanced himself, has a more pro-Russian orientation. They see Russia as a 'strategic partner', feel that Ukraine will not be allowed to 'rejoin Europe' and therefore argue that Ukraine should find a place for itself within Eurasia.

Centrists agree with their centre-right colleagues that the former USSR is largely an 'Other', except in certain areas such as the Soviet war effort in World War II. But, whereas the centre-right denounce the entire Soviet past in negative terms, they instead take a middle path and argue that the Soviet era had *both* positive and negative moments in its history. For example, while the centre-right, whose popularity is primarily in western Ukraine, sees the Soviet army in World War II as an occupying force, in a manner similar to the predominant views among titular nationalities in the three Baltic states, eastern-southern Ukrainians, where centrists and the left are more popular, view it in a more balanced manner (i.e. not so clear-cut). Their inability to decide who the 'Other' is, and their tendency to take a middle of the road approach in dealing with difficult issues in domestic and foreign

policies, have led to accusations against them by both the left and right that they are de-ideologized and cosmopolitan, and thereby unable to develop a unifying 'national idea' (see Ukrainian Communist leader Symonenko in *Tserkalo Tyzhnia*, 16 September 2000).

This division within the centre-right and centrist camps in Ukraine explains why the domestic lobby for reform was unable to unite and remained weak throughout the 1990s (Kubicek, 1997). Both of these camps are committed to reform to varying degrees but hold different views on nation- and state-building and foreign policy questions. These divisions influence their perceptions of Russia as an 'Other' from an ethnoterritorial, territorial or ideological viewpoint. When statehood is threatened by the communists, as during the second round of the 1999 presidential elections, the centre-right and centre will ally themselves in support of statehood.

The centrists and centre-right remained divided until early 2000 when the non-left majority, composed of centrists and the centre-right, took control of the parliamentary leadership. The parliamentary majority is united only by its hostility towards the left – not with regard to policies on nation- and state-building, domestic reform and foreign policy. A central factor that divides them inside and outside parliament remains how to define Ukrainian national identity and the 'Other'. The fragility of this alliance could be seen when a scandal involving President Kuchma's alleged authorization of the murder of a critical journalist unfolded in November 2000. For the first time in independent Ukraine the left and centre-right united against the centre, which continued to back Kuchma, the patron of oligarchic centrist parties.

RUSSIA AS UKRAINE'S CONSTITUTING 'OTHER'

The national consensus achieved during the declaration of independence by Ukraine on 24 August 1991, and its subsequent endorsement by 92 percent of the population in a referendum on 1 December 1991, cannot be understood without reference to the role of the 'Party of Power' (i.e. de-ideologized former national communists). They jumped the Soviet ship, refused to sign Mikhail Gorbachev's Union Treaty, and went into alliance with the pro-independence Rukh. While some motive may be ascribed to territorial patriotism (Ukraine has a tradition of national communism going back to 1917–1921) a pre-eminent factor must have also been a negation of developments then taking place in Russia. Russia, under President Boris Yeltsin, was then riding a victorious anti-communist, pro-free market philosophy that felt threatening to these former national communists in Ukraine.

Consequently, between 1991–4 Kravchuk (Ukraine's first president) prioritized nation- and state-building, ignored reform and co-opted the

centre-right view of Russia as an ethnoterritorial 'Other' (Szporluk, 1992: 105). When the three eastern Slav leaders met on 7–8 December 1991 to dissolve the USSR they were only united in their dislike of Gorbachev (see D'Anieri et al., 1999: 10–44). Whether the CIS should be a Russian-led confederation, which has cross-party support, or move to a 'civilized divorce' (the Ukrainian view) that would allow nation- and state-building, have divided the CIS into two camps since its foundation.

That this negation of Russia by the Ukrainian 'Party of Power' was not devoid of territorial (but, not necessarily ethnocultural) nationalism could be seen by its continued support for Ukrainian independence and the commitment of Kravchuk's successor, Kuchma, to continue his policies of nation- and state-building.

After President Kuchma's election in July 1994, Russia was no longer perceived as an ideological (in contrast to a military or subversive) threat, as it was under his predecessor, Kravchuk. Kuchma introduced economic reforms in October 1994 and therefore did not see reform in Russia as a threat to the ruling elites' interests, as had the former national communists under Kravchuk. The perception of Russia as Ukraine's 'Other' changed from ethnoterritorial to territorial. Support for reintegration with Russia remains the preserve of only the left, and both reformist camps (centrists and the centre-right) look negatively at Belarusian moves towards union with Russia undertaken by the anti-reformist and neo-Soviet Lukashenka.

Nevertheless, the centre-right and centrists continue to hold ethnoterritorial and territorial views respectively as to how the national project and the 'Other' should be defined. This can bring charges from the centre-right that the centrists are content with the inherited status quo because they are less enthusiastic about upgrading the Ukrainian language and downgrading Russian. Nevertheless, in other less contentious areas such as symbols, anniversaries, historiography and threats to statehood, both groups have similar views (Birch, 2000).

Former President Kravchuk's identification of Russia as the 'Other' against whom Ukraine could forge a new national identity, 'provided an ideal opportunity for such nation building'. The Black Sea Fleet, the Crimea, former Soviet assets and recognition of existing Russian–Ukrainian borders all proved to be useful tools to constitute Russia as the 'Other'. But when constituting this 'Other' the Ukrainian elites had to tread carefully when differentiating between 'our Russians' and 'those Russians' living in the neighbouring Russian Federation, a dangerous tightrope along which to walk (see Motyl, 1995). A Ukrainian scholar describes Russian–Ukrainian attitudes towards one another as follows:

... Russians tend to view Ukraine as part of an Orthodox Slavic civilisation created in large measure by the union of the three East Slavic nations under

Russian leadership; Ukrainians harbour a strong sense of themselves as a separate nation, with Russia playing only the role of the 'Other'. (Polokhalo, 1995: 336–7)

As Parliamentary Speaker on a visit to Germany in 1991 Kravchuk demanded the right to a Ukrainian interpreter. The Russian media corps ridiculed this demand, claiming it was as ludicrous as Bavarians coming to Moscow and demanding an interpreter to translate a Bavarian dialect (Laba, 1996: 12). Ukrainians were – and continue to be – constituted within Russian identity as a regional branch of 'Russians'. Russian behaviour towards Ukraine centres on the belief that its independence is a 'temporary aberration'. The Russian media has depicted Ukrainians as a people desiring to 'reunite' with Russia but prevented from doing so by corrupt, former national communists, turned 'nationalists' (Miller, 1996; Velychenko, 1993, 1994). Two thirds of Russians do not consider Ukrainians to be a separate nation (Subtelny, 1995: 190; see also Lester, 1994).

President Yeltsin's military bombardment of his parliament in Autumn 1993, military intervention in Chechnya and preference for integration within a Russian-led CIS all fit the stereotype of Russia as the historically, imperialistic, authoritarian 'Other'. This feeds into a negative ethnocultural and territorial 'Other' stereotype for the centre-right and centrist political camps respectively. Chechnya is not perceived either within Ukraine, or many other former Soviet states such as the three Baltic republics, as an integral part of 'Russia' but as a territory that was forcibly incorporated within the Tsarist empire and the USSR. There is also sympathy with the 'ethnic cleansing' of Chechens and Crimean Tatars in 1944. Ultimately, it is feared that Russia's brutal interventions in Chechnya may be followed by intervention elsewhere in the former USSR. Although Ukrainian officials have therefore been steadfast in their support for Russia's (and Serbia's) territorial integrity, this has been tempered by criticism of the methods used in Chechnya and Kosovo.

During the Chechnya conflicts of the 1990s, support for union with Russia declined from approximately one third to a quarter in Ukraine. A major factor in reducing this support to the hard core communist electorate is the fear that Ukraine would be dragged into conflict in other regions of the former USSR if it joined the CIS Collective Security Treaty (CIS CST). The Ukrainian elites have stated that they would only agree to the use of Ukrainian forces in peacekeeping operations in the CIS under UN or OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) – not CIS – mandates. Even in the case of Belarus, Russia's most enthusiastic ally, it has an opt out clause of its membership of the CIS CST that does not allow its president to send Belarusian troops to 'hot spots' in the CIS. Ukraine has never joined the CIS CST.

An authoritative opinion poll conducted by the SOTSIS-Gallup sociological service throughout Ukraine in Spring 1995 found 74 percent of those

polled had negative views about Russia's military intervention in Chechnya. Only 9 percent agreed with Russia's action. The most opposed to the military intervention were respondents in western and central Ukraine. Even in the Crimea those who supported Russia's intervention still only amounted to 16 percent (nearly double the national average but, nevertheless, still a small number). Only 6 percent of those polled believed the state had the right to support its territorial integrity at any cost (*Demokratychna Ukraina*, 2 March 1995).

The views of the Ukrainian population towards the current Chechen conflict from 1999 have only slightly altered. In principle, the Ukrainian leadership supports Russia's defence of its territorial integrity but is critical towards the methods used by its security forces. This view is backed by 30 percent of Ukrainians. The majority of those polled (61 percent) either opposed any type of military actions such as those that led to bloodshed, or else completely opposed Russian policies in Chechnya (*Den*, 7 December 1999; 19% gave no answer). Approximately two thirds to three quarters of Ukrainians have therefore opposed – and continue to oppose – Russia's conduct of the Chechen conflict since 1995.

Ukraine did not inherit a uniform national identity. Its post-Soviet nation- and state-building project is therefore bound up with a debate over how this identity will be constituted and in what manner its neighbours will be 'Others'. Tension with neighbours shapes this national identity because all identities require 'Others' that are constantly evolving over time (Prizel, 1998: 18). This is particularly the case in newly independent countries (such as Ukraine) which harbour a cultural and political resentment against the former imperial power that manifests itself in feelings of political and social injustice, culture defensiveness, a fascination with the past, and resentment at being marginalized in European integration and internationally (Prizel, 1998: 23–4).

William Zimmerman (1998) believes that Ukrainian and Russian identities are diverging and that this is most evident in how they perceive the outside world. As he argues: 'it seems clear that Ukrainians across all three regions operate with cognitions of their political world that are different in important ways from those of respondents in the three regions of European Russia' (p. 52). Russians were far more likely to uphold an assertive foreign policy towards the outside world (e.g. on NATO enlargement). Therefore, the Russian and Ukrainian foreign policy dialogues are different and 'Ukrainians tend to define their answers in ways which imply underlying parameters that set the terms of the foreign policy dialogue in ways that Russians do not' (Zimmerman, 1998: 53). This was clearly seen in 1999 when both the Ukrainian ruling elites and population reacted in a far more constrained manner to NATO's bombing of Kosovo and Serbia. Ukraine never, for example, halted its cooperation with NATO, unlike Russia. The NATO Information Centre was only closed in Moscow, not Kyiv.

Europe or Eurasia?

Within Ukraine the debate as to whether Ukraine should strive to 'rejoin' Europe or commit itself to remain within Eurasia was especially fierce in the mid-1990s after Kuchma was elected. This was because the centre-right were afraid that he would accept the post-Soviet status quo, halt the nation-building project, and reintegrate with Russia (*Holos Ukrainy*, 12 December 1995; *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 25 February 1996). Which should be Ukraine's 'strategic choice' – Europe or Eurasia? (*Chas*, 22 December 1995; *Holos Ukrainy*, 4 November, 18 November 1995; *Molod Ukrainy*, 18 January 1996). This choice of 'Europe' or 'Eurasia' is also defined as Ukraine taking either the 'Belarusian' or 'Polish' roads (i.e. Eurasian or European roads respectively). 'The choice of the "Belarus" option would signify, in our opinion, national catastrophe for Ukraine', a Ukrainian author argues. In contrast, he backs the 'Polish' road as, 'an aspiration to integration in the economic, political-military structures of Western Europe' (*Kyivski vidomosti*, 20 December 1995). Another author adds that, 'The scenario for Ukraine's partnership with the United States and Europe is perceived with the greatest enthusiasm in Ukraine, but it evokes a certain leeriness on the part of Russia and the West' (*Most*, 1 October 1995).

After the disintegration of the former USSR, then Ukrainian President Kravchuk held a pro-European orientation. To him and then Foreign Minister Anatoly Zlenko 'rejoining Europe' and distancing Ukraine as far as possible from the Russian 'Other' was Ukraine's strategic priority. The CIS was therefore viewed as purely a temporary phenomenon which helped bring about a 'civilized divorce', thereby preventing the carnage of the former Yugoslavia. Hence, Ukraine restricted its activities within the CIS to economic questions while participating to the fullest extent it was permitted in integration with the West, central Europe and the Black Sea region. Ukraine only opposes the construction of supranational structures and symbols for the CIS; hence its consistent refusal to ratify the CIS Charter. Ukraine drew up the draft Charter for the Black Sea Economic Agreement, a body it does not see as a threat to its sovereignty, unlike a reanimated CIS which it would view as the former USSR in all but name.

As a centrist, Kuchma attempted to square the circle by acknowledging closer relations with Russia and the CIS, while preserving Ukrainian independence by moving closer to Europe. Kuchma faced a dilemma because, 'the circle cannot be squared: the Kuchma administration's intentions, its policies, goals and rhetoric threaten to undermine Ukraine's separate identity vis-à-vis Russia' (Burant, 1995: 1137). By stressing Ukraine's 'ancient' relations to Russia this, in turn, plays down its central European links, 'the source of a Ukrainian identity distinct from Russia'. Burant (1995) has argued that, 'Such remarks in turn provide grist for the mill of

those in Russia who cannot imagine Ukraine's existence apart from it' (p. 1139).

Centrist parties and leaders around Kuchma attempt to strike a balance by acknowledging Ukraine's desire to 'return to Europe' *together* with Russia (i.e. not denying that Russia is also a part of Europe as the centre-right largely do). It also removes ethnicity as a form of 'Otherness' between both states. This attempt to square the circle has led to a vague 'multi-vector' foreign policy that defines both the USA and Russia as 'strategic partners', and Ukraine as 'non-bloc' and neutral between an expanding NATO and the CIS military bloc.

Under Kuchma, Ukraine was no longer described as a 'buffer' holding back on behalf of Europe an imperialistic Russia – but as a 'bridge' linking Europe to Russia. Ukraine as a 'bridge', in contrast to a 'buffer' under Kravchuk, downplays Russia as a negative 'Other' in ethnoterritorial terms. Ukraine is still distrustful of Russian intentions, a factor that has grown as the union of Russia and Belarus became more substantial in the late 1990s. Belarus's union with Russia is perceived by all the remaining CIS states as its subservience to Russia and the loss of its sovereignty. No other state has therefore agreed to join the union, even Russophile states such as Kazakhstan or Armenia. From late 1997 Ukraine promoted the creation of a pro-Western regional counterweight to Russian designs for the CIS through the creation of the regional pro-Western, anti-CIS integration GUUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova) group in the CIS (Kuzio, 2000).

Russia's inability to accept Ukrainian independence as permanent and relations between both states as equal will persist for the immediate future. This will mean that Russia will continue to remain an ethnoterritorial 'Other' for the Ukrainian centre-right and a territorial 'Other' for centrist political parties and leaders. For the Ukrainian left, on the other hand, 'Russia' is defined, as it was in the former USSR, as synonymous with the USSR and the 'positive achievements' of the Soviet era.

As Russia gradually builds a civic nation its acceptance of Ukraine as an independent state will grow, a factor that may reduce the requirement of Ukraine's elites to portray Russia as a negative 'Other'. Although the threat to Ukrainian independence will therefore decline in proportion to the growth of a more self-confident civic Russian nation how the 'Other' is defined could also change. Nation-building in Ukraine will continue to sharpen differences with Russia, particularly within the realm of education, historiography and myths. As more Ukrainians become self-conscious of what has been described to them by their leaders as a tragic history, a greater proportion of them may move into the centre-right camp, as in the Baltic states, thereby increasing the number of those who see Russia as an ethnocultural 'Other'.

Clearly, the relationship between the 'Self' and 'Other' in the Ukrainian-Russian context is far more complex than at first meets the eye.

CONCLUSION

This article has reached two conclusions. First, after states become independent from territorially based empires and embark upon nation- and state-building, the forging of a new national identity will inevitably force its ruling elites to debate who is the 'Other'? In the Ukrainian case this article has pointed to how it is impossible in newly independent states such as Ukraine for the ruling elites (and, even more so, for the population at large) to reach a consensus as to who the actual 'Other' is.

The article defined four groups in Ukrainian politics by their definition of the 'Other'. The nationalist right see all Russians, domestic and foreign, as the 'Other' while the extreme left look to the West as their 'Other'. The centre-right support an inclusive civic state from which they do not exclude Russians in Ukraine. Their view of the Russian 'Other' is still nevertheless ethnoterritorial (i.e. all of Russia) and they agree with the nationalist right that all of the Tsarist and Soviet past is negative.

The centrists are the most confused in their attitudes because many of them are Russian-speaking themselves and are former Soviet high-ranking functionaries. They therefore opt for a middle of the road view that only defines Russia as an 'Other' in territorial, not ethnic or cultural, terms. They do though agree with the centre-right about communism as an 'Other', which unites them against the left. Nevertheless, the centre are more willing to describe certain periods of the Soviet past as mixed and do not therefore agree with either the communists, who see the Soviet past as all positive, or the centre right/nationalists who see it as all negative.

The second conclusion of this article is that attempts to forge national identities are more likely to be conflictual and difficult when these identities are closely interwoven and one side is reluctant to accept the validity of the other side as a separate, independent partner. Russia's inability to come to terms with Ukrainian and Belarusian separateness means the choice given to them is either to be in a close dependent relationship, such as Belarus, or as a distant, unfriendly state, as Ukraine is perceived now to be by Russian elites. Russia perceives Ukraine's refusal to follow Belarus's path as unusual and due to Western intrigue. This article therefore argues that even when states are close in language and culture this can often produce *more* – not less – conflict over national identity.

As the Ukrainian 'Self' is increasingly created as a bounded in-group, this influences the manner in which Russia defines its own national identity. It also influences its relationship to the outside world because an independent Ukrainian state forces it to accept that it is no longer a 'great power'. This, in turn, will force Russian elites to focus on civic nation building rather than empire-forging.

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