

Nationalism in Ukraine: towards a new theoretical and comparative framework

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ABSTRACT *The misuse of the term ‘nationalism’ is common within contemporary Ukrainian studies, where it has a negative connotation and is defined in a very narrow manner. The roots of this misuse of ‘nationalism’ lie in three areas. First, Hans Kohn’s division of ‘nationalism’ into a ‘good, liberal, Western’ and a ‘bad, illiberal, Eastern’ type is still highly influential. Ukraine allegedly falls into the latter category. Secondly, the assumption that a civic state requires no ethno-cultural attributes has led to criticism of ‘nationalizing’ policies in post-communist states such as Ukraine. Thirdly, the legacy of Soviet studies has led to a narrow definition of ‘nationalism’ in the non-Russian regions of the former USSR. Discussions of ‘nationalism’ within Ukraine have been largely undertaken within an area studies framework and not integrated into the theoretical literature on nation-building, identity and nationalism. This article seeks to engage critically with earlier discussions of ‘nationalism’ in Ukraine, and widen its definition by presenting a new framework for understanding the role of nationalism in Ukraine’s nation- and state-building policies.*

Nationalism is a phenomenon that has been with us since at least the late eighteenth century; some scholars would argue that it pre-dates the modern era of industrialization and urbanization. Nevertheless, nationalism (and ‘nation’) continue to be misused or used in a loose manner by scholars. Barrington defines the misuse of these terms as ‘used in a way that is completely outside how the term is used by nationalism scholars’. A loose use, on the other hand, ‘is one in which the author has captured only part of the concept or has stretched the meaning of the term to an extreme degree’.¹ As Motyl points out, ‘The answer to the question “what is nationalism?” depends on the definition and, more substantially, on the definer’.² How it is used and defined is therefore often more a reflection of the ideological and subjective preferences of the scholars themselves than any commonly understood definition of ‘nationalism’. The misuse and loose use of these terms is commonplace in both a narrow and a negative

manner within contemporary Ukrainian studies. Studies of nationalism in Ukraine are usually area studies accounts and the discussion of ‘nationalism’ is therefore not placed within a theoretical or comparative perspective.³

The assumption that the West is devoid of nationalism while nationalism is common in the East, where it has to be by definition ‘bad’, still has tremendous influence among scholars.⁴ This view has its roots in the work of Hans Kohn, who contrasted ‘good’ Western civic with ‘bad’ Eastern ethnic nationalisms. Since the 1930s–40s and the rise and fall of Nazism in Germany, nationalism has often been defined—as it was by Soviet ideology and still is today in most writing on Ukraine—as extreme, right-wing and ethnic. Nationalism in the West, in contrast, either is assumed not to exist or is described by the more acceptable form, patriotism.

This traditional approach fails to deal adequately with two questions. First, ‘because the nation-state is the forum for electoral politics, the left too aspires to represent the nation’.⁵ Nationalism also ‘frames the practice of political democracy’.⁶ Billig’s ‘banal nationalism’ is an everyday nationalism promoted by the state and independent institutions (such as the media) in Western nation-states. Nationalism therefore exists in a Western mature democracy (as in a young nation-state such as Ukraine) through discourse of the ‘national interest’, defence of ‘sovereignty’, territorial integrity, and factors unique to the population that make them different to outsiders. Secondly, it assumes that a ‘civic’ nation-state has no ethno-cultural defining attributes. No nation-state exists which does not in some shape or form appeal to ‘emotional, historical or cultural links’.⁷ This problem stems from the lack of attention paid to nation-building processes by political theorists and scholars of democratization in their study of transition in former authoritarian states.⁸

This article seeks to survey critically the narrow use of ‘nationalism’ within contemporary Ukrainian studies and to develop a new framework for understanding this concept within the Ukrainian context by broadening its understanding. The article is divided into three sections. The first discusses nationalism, and nationalism within Ukraine, within a theoretical and comparative perspective. The second critically surveys the misuse and loose use of ‘nationalism’ within contemporary Ukrainian studies. The third section outlines a new framework for understanding nationalism within post-Soviet Ukraine.

1. Nationalism within theory and comparative politics

Nationalism requires a host

What is nationalism and who are nationalists? Nationalism is a thin ideology when it stands alone; it therefore needs a host.⁹ This host can be any of a number of ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism, socialism, communism or fascism. Clearly then, ‘ethnic nationalism’ is only one of many types of nationalism.¹⁰ We therefore find numerous nationalist movements from the Scots, Welsh, Irish and former Western colonial countries that are *both* socialist

and nationalist. *Both* Chinese communists *and* Chinese nationalists oppose the independence of Tibet and Taiwan.¹¹ The nationalism that operates through liberalism, conservatism or social-democracy can co-exist within Western civic states. Civic nationalism (sometimes also called state nationalism or patriotism) is also often defined as that which encompasses all three of these ideological trends.

A recent study of nationalism in the post-Franco era in Spain shows how nationalism within a nation-state cannot be narrowly defined in the manner in which it is treated in Ukrainian studies. Nationalism in Spain is discussed on three levels.¹² First, it is discussed as a state, ‘banal’, everyday nationalism that all non-separatist political parties support at a minimum because they uphold Spain as an independent, inclusive, liberal democratic nation-state within its current boundaries. This state (or banal) nationalism permeates discourse in the mass media, books, pamphlets and in state institutions. Spanish state nationalism holds a general consensus on the need for Castille to be the dominant ethno-cultural core of the Spanish state. State nationalism may include diverse attitudes to the national idea but political parties can nevertheless be united in defence of territorial integrity, culture, language, sovereignty, and other elements of the nation-state:

... very different political and social actors are to be found, as well as diverse world views and ideological programmes. There are Spanish ethnocultural, civic nationalists, cultural nationalists, etc., just as there are Catalan, Basque or Galician ethnic, civic and cultural nationalists, all of them in complex and intricate mixtures—as happens everywhere.¹³

As in Spain, there is agreement on the fundamental outline of the nation-state among Ukrainian élites.¹⁴ This does not preclude disagreement, as in many other nation-states, over issues such as language policy and national symbols. One million Greeks demonstrated against Macedonia’s national symbols. Separatists in the Trans-Dniester region of Eastern Moldova do not like Moldova’s national symbols because they are the same as Romanian symbols. In Spain the change in national symbols since the death of Franco has been insufficient for the left who contested them until 1978, and they are still rarely used in public events or by the left. The national anthem continues to have no lyrics. As Nunez points out, ‘in democratic Spain it remains still difficult to find common symbols with an emotive force able to overcome the conflict of national identity, with the possible exception of the monarchy’.¹⁵

In Ukraine national symbols are only contested by the representatives of the *ancien régime*, the Communists. Nation-building of a civic nation is supported by all non-Communist élites, although how the nation will be defined is, of course, dependent upon which part of the political spectrum these élites hail from. President Leonid Kuchma, a centrist by conviction, defines a Ukrainian civic nation as consisting of universalist and particularist elements which he does not see in conflict with one another. A cosmopolitan, purely civic nation is rejected out of hand by Kuchma, as it is by the entire spectrum of Spanish state

nationalists, because Kuchma believes that a Ukrainian civic nation needs an ethnocultural core.¹⁶ This view is supported by all non-Communist political parties in Ukraine.

The entire political spectrum in Ukraine outside the extreme right and left can agree on the universalist aspect of the civic nation, such as the need for inclusivity and a liberal democracy. Where they do differ is over how the ethno-cultural core is to be defined. Within this civic political spectrum the centre-right are the most radical in their views and argue in favour of the complete reversal of the Tsarist and Soviet colonial and totalitarian past. Forced Russification is to be exchanged for radical Ukrainianization. They accuse centrists, such as Kuchma, of paying lip service to the revival of Ukrainian language and culture because centrists argue from a 'pragmatic' viewpoint that a complete reversal of Russification is impossible. In arguing 'pragmatically' they are only willing to reform some elements of the inherited status quo from the USSR. The centre-right accuse the centrists of not supporting the revival of the Ukrainian ethnic nation, so that 'the state independence of its territory has not become the state of the Ukrainian people'. The Ukrainian state is not seen as 'theirs' by the centre-right because Ukrainian language and culture has not become hegemonic in it. Ukraine is therefore still awaiting its 'liberation' from Russia's 'occupation' and the 'decolonization' of the country.¹⁷ The centrist answer to these demands is that progress is being made in reversing some elements of Russification (for example, in education) but that this will never totally reverse the past, and that to attempt the latter would be unrealistic and destabilizing. A compromise therefore needs to be found that will include acceptance of some of the inherited past as unchangeable. Such an acceptance is not something that centre-right liberal nationalists are willing to accept quickly, as we have seen in countries such as Ireland where the Irish state also initially believed that it would remove Anglicization and return Ireland to its Gaelic language and culture.

A second type of nationalism in Spain depends on one's political ideology. Nationalism and the national idea are defined differently by Spanish political parties through their attitudes towards the role of religion, historiography, national symbols, regional devolution and the past (i.e. the Franco era). The nationalism of political parties is internally diverse ranging from the left who prefer to use 'patriotism' (as in Ukraine), through cultural to liberal nationalists on the right. Centre-right liberal nationalists have been forced to evolve from ethnic to civic nationalism in the post-Franco era. In Ukraine the centre-right does not have a background in ethnic nationalism, unlike the Spanish centre-right.

Finally, the third type of nationalism in Spain is that of the 'historic' regions of Galicia and Catalonia, which do not seek separation and are comfortable with dual identities. The Basques are divided into those who accept autonomy and dual Basque-Spanish identities with those who seek to use violence to achieve an independent state. In Ukraine, Russian nationalism in the Crimea supports the separation of the peninsula from Ukraine. Meanwhile, Sovietophiles (such as the

Communists) are content with autonomy within Ukraine but argue that Ukraine (together with the Crimea) should become part of a revived USSR.

Western liberal democracies are defined as 'civic' and also 'nation-states', reflecting the uneasy co-existence of civic and ethnic-cultural factors within them. Kedourie defines nationalism as neither of the left or the right, but lying between patriotism (allegiance to the state, institutions and the constitution) and xenophobia (extreme exclusive nationalism incompatible with a liberal democracy). Yet, the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism is blurred and confusing, as all nations stake out historical claims and boundaries and all are therefore exclusionary. Liberal democracies promote national identity as the demos derives its legitimacy from the 'people'.¹⁸ Civic (or state) nationalism is sometimes defined as patriotism because of the negative connotations that 'nationalism' has taken on since the 1930s. Freedon prefers to use the term 'patriotism' because it moderates the national idea, 'and is located adjacent to core, universal liberal concepts such as liberty, limited government, and participatory self government'.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the difference between 'civic nationalism' and patriotism is difficult to locate.

'Good' and 'bad' nationalism?

The framework developed by Kohn²⁰ of a Western civic nationalism being different in origin, essence and form to Eastern ethnic nationalism was the standard framework through which to understand nationalism until recently. Kohn's static framework argued that Western states were civic from their inception in the late eighteenth century. Kohn believed that Western nationalism was inherently different because it evolved in conjunction with civic rights and was therefore civic (i.e., democratic). This civic nationalism therefore owed more to territorial factors than ethno-cultural ones and was inclusive in the sense of allowing anybody within the given territory of a nation-state to become a citizen, regardless of ethnicity, race or gender. The civic nationalism that developed in Kohn's West was individualistic, liberal, rational and cosmopolitan. The rise of nationalism within Kohn's West 'was preceded by the formation of the future national state, or ... coincided with it'.²¹ In the East, in contrast, nationalism was not tied to liberty and developed prior to the formation of a state.

Kohn's study of nationalism has been used as a framework by many scholars in the field and has only been questioned in recent years.²² Eastern nationalism is defined by the Kohn school as backward-looking, prone to conflict, tribal, irrational and primitive because it focuses its energy on building a new national identity and is tied to religion, language and nationality. It lacks a 'high culture' and therefore focuses upon ethno-cultural issues.²³

The distinction between 'cultural' or 'ethnic' and 'civic' nationalism is difficult to locate because the boundary dividing them is blurred. Both types of nationalism look forward and backwards to seek to build a common destiny and

obtain historical legitimacy. Both use ‘the language of motherland and homeland’. Civic nationalism can become authoritarian (e.g., Jacobin France and Suharto’s Indonesia) while cultural nationalism can often be defensive and moderate (e.g., Plaid Cymru in Wales). Most nationalisms therefore contain elements of both types. These are unlikely to be static but, as with identity, are always in a process of evolution. Nationalism can be illiberal or liberal but this has little to do with whether it is cultural/ethnic or civic.²⁴

‘Good’ may be differentiated from ‘bad’ nationalism by dividing nationalism into *Risorgimento* and integral nationalisms respectively. *Risorgimento* nationalism is that of the oppressed seeking to create their own nation-state by separating from an empire or by uniting separate branches of the same nation (e.g., Italy in 1860). Integral nationalism, on the other hand, is most commonly associated with fascism or Nazism since the 1930s and is defensive, xenophobic, and aggressive towards both national minorities and foreigners within an existing nation-state and its neighbours. *Risorgimento* nationalism can be perfectly compatible with an inclusive, liberal democracy and sustains civil society (unlike its integral variant). At the same time, *Risorgimento* nationalism can be intolerant towards regional cultures and minorities in the drive towards building a nation-state. The struggle to define the nature of the nation-state through language, policies towards ethnic minorities, religion, historiography and centre-periphery relations was a drawn-out process of nation-building. The violence that went into this nation-building and illiberal past are routinely forgotten as a ‘collective amnesia’.²⁵

Nationalist movements against France in Europe, against Spanish or Portuguese rule in Latin America in the nineteenth century, movements for self determination in the Tsarist, Austrian-Hungarian and Ottoman empires in the early twentieth century, and anti-colonial movements in the post-war developing world all qualify as *Risorgimento* nationalisms.²⁶ The national democratic movements in the late Soviet era united democratic reformist with *Risorgimento* nationalist demands in the three Baltic states and Ukraine. Such nationalism was reminiscent of that commonly associated with the pre-1930s when nationality and popular sovereignty (i.e., national democracy) ‘were natural bed fellows’.²⁷ Nationalism along these lines can be highly positive, defending minority rights, rescuing lost histories and treasures, providing inspiration for cultural revivals, resolving identity crises, resisting tyranny, providing the base for popular sovereignty and promoting self sustaining economic growth.²⁸ As Plamenatz argues, there is nothing intrinsically ‘illiberal’ about cultural nationalism and a human being becomes ‘a rational and a moral person capable of thinking and acting for himself in the process of acquiring the language and culture of his people’.²⁹

If an identity is threatened, nationalism is a perfectly normal response. Nationalism can strive to preserve, enhance, transform or create a cultural identity.³⁰ If affirmative action along these lines is justified in post-colonial states then it can also be justified in the former USSR. National identity is a valid source of personal identity. It is not therefore ‘irrational’, ‘to want to have that

identity protected against outside forces that are threatening to destroy or erode it'.³¹

Banal nationalism

Billig coined the term 'banal nationalism' to define the civic nationalism that pervades and permeates Western liberal democracies but is generally ignored or assumed not to exist. During times of crisis, such as the Falklands War, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the recent terrorist attacks in the USA, nationalism can quickly come to the surface and citizens can be patriotically mobilized to 'spend for America'. 'The slightest breeze of anger, and they begin to rustle, wave and agitate.'³² The national interest, homeland, morality, duty, honour and patriotism are all phrases used to describe everyday descriptions of how the state (e.g., the USA) advises its citizens to act. If they dissent, their activities are defined as 'unAmerican' and frowned upon. For Americans, though, at the time when Billig wrote his study and in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, nationalism is elsewhere an 'exotic force' that is peripheral to America where only patriotism is to be found. American 'patriotism' is contrasted to 'their' nationalism.³³

Ignoring banal nationalism side-steps the daily reproduction of nations and citizens as nationals. These are reflected in attitudes about how individuals should react, their habits, beliefs, values and attitudes to the outside world which are reproduced in a 'banally mundane way'.³⁴ Daily flagging and a wider, ideological discourse remind citizens that they are citizens of the nation-state. This banal nationalism is accepted as a normal way of thinking and is 'deeply imbedded in continuous ways of thinking'.³⁵ Habits and beliefs combine to produce an ideology, 'to make any social world appear to those, who inhabit it, as the natural world'.³⁶ To carry, wave and hang a flag in the window of one's home or car is seen as a natural course of affairs for Americans to undertake after the terrorist attacks, as is saluting the flag every day in American schools since the 1880s.

Billig's study has relevance for the study of nationalism in Ukraine because nationalism in Eastern Europe is traditionally defined in a thin manner as an evil, ethnic ideology. 'Nationalism as a condition is projected on to "others"; ours is overlooked, forgotten, even theoretically denied.'³⁷ In the same manner as Billig attempts to broaden the understanding of nationalism to incorporate it as an ideology that sustains Western nation-states and their way of thinking, this article seeks to broaden the study of nationalism within Ukraine. 'Nationalism' cannot be defined solely and negatively as ethnic, as it has traditionally been in Ukraine, because nationalism everywhere comes in many forms and is central to any nation-state.

Nationalism and nationality sustain civil society and the two are co-terminous. Shils believes that membership in one leads to automatic membership in the other. To be a member of civil society also means to be a member of the civic

nation and political community. Nevertheless, during the nation-building process, when civil society and the nation are still in the throes of construction, membership in both is not automatic. This requires time, Eriksen believes, because:

Where the nation-state is ideologically successful, its inhabitants become nationalists; that is, their identity and ways of life gradually grow compatible with the democracy of the nation-state and support its growth It is tautologically true that if the nation-state and its agencies can satisfy perceived needs in ways acknowledged by the citizens, then its inhabitants become nationalists.³⁸

This is because nationalism ‘is an affair of the state’.³⁹ Western civic states are also defined as ‘nation-states’. Some authors prefer the terms ‘national states’ or ‘state-nations’ to denote that they are not homogenous.⁴⁰ Linz’s ‘state-nation’ is similar to Tilly’s ‘national-state’ and Connor’s ‘*staatvolk*’.⁴¹ States and nations have therefore gone hand in hand since the advent of the industrial revolution. Modernization inevitably breeds nationalism, Gellner believed. When we talk of nationalism and nationalists we are also therefore talking of the relationship between society, the state and nation.

Nevertheless, nationalism in Western liberal democracies was not always civic. Prior to the twentieth century it was as much ethnic, xenophobic and racist when dealing with national minorities within its borders, indigenous peoples, or foreign colonies as what it currently criticizes in post-communist Europe. It is only during the twentieth century that the nationalism found within liberal democracies has evolved into a more inclusive and therefore civic variant.⁴² This has occurred through a gradual process of the granting of universal suffrage to women and the working classes, allowing cultural pluralism within the private domain to co-exist alongside the majoritarian public culture, abandoning overseas colonies, atoning for the wrongs inflicted upon indigenous peoples, as well as spreading the benefits of modernity (education and social welfare) to the masses. In the nineteenth century John Stuart Mill, for example, thought it perfectly normal to divide ethnic groups into those he defined as ‘civilized’ or ‘barbaric’. The latter—Highland Scots, Bretons, Basques, Welsh (presumably, Mill would have included Ukrainians within this group)—could be assimilated within a state which Mill would still define as liberal.⁴³

Many post-Soviet states, to varying degrees, are beginning their four-fold transitions of marketization, democratization, state-institution and civic nation-building in conditions reminiscent of earlier periods of Western history.⁴⁴ In both cases, Western and Eastern Europe began the drive to modernity when civil society was weak. There are few moderating influences over nationalism to transform it along civic lines which would be conducive to it playing a positive role in the emerging national states. Greenfeld therefore believes it imperative that the transformation of national identity ‘is a necessary condition for the democratization of post-Soviet society’.⁴⁵ Nationalism therefore needs to be transformed into a civic variant that sustains civil society and an inclusive liberal democracy.

Consequently, this article argues that we should not throw out the baby with the bathwater. If banal nationalism exists in nation-states then pure civic states do not exist. Consequently, it is not nationalism *per se* that is necessarily a problem in post-Soviet states but the weakness of civil society and the slow process of democratization, factors that slow the evolution of nationalism from an ethnic to a civic variety. Nationalism operates at the state level, through different ideologies via political parties, independent institutions and at the regional level in demands for autonomy or separatism.

Who are the nationalists in Ukraine?

Nationalists can be defined prior to the creation of a nation-state as those who desire 'political autonomy' within a 'definable area'.⁴⁶ In the case of Ukraine, those who voted positively in the 1 December 1991 referendum on independence were all therefore 'nationalists' for they sought to cut ties with the USSR. Consequently, it is perfectly accurate to describe the December 1991 referendum as a 'nationalist vote' for independence while accepting that, individually, regionally and politically, people voted in the affirmative for different reasons.⁴⁷

Although the tendency among Western scholars has been to define 'nationalism' in Ukraine as one continuous process from the second half of the 1980s until the present, this approach has serious flaws. Nationalism prior to independence seeks to establish a newly independent state (e.g., Ukraine from the former USSR). Nationalist movements for self-determination can be defined as either civic and inclusive (e.g., the Ukrainian Popular Movement for Restructuring, known as Rukh) or ethnic and exclusive (e.g., Croats in the former Yugoslavia or the Inter-Party Assembly in Ukraine).

Not all political parties agreed with the evolutionary and civic approach of Rukh. Radical ethnic nationalist parties and movements emerged in Western and Central Ukraine from 1989 and immediately championed self-determination and a maximalist opposition to the Soviet regime and all Soviet institutions.⁴⁸ These groups united in the Ukrainian Inter-Party Assembly (UIPA) and criticized as 'collaboration' with an occupying regime Rukh's participation in elections to the 1989 Congress of Peoples Deputies and the 1990 Ukrainian parliamentary and local elections. The UIPA remained a minority movement and changed into a radical ethnic nationalist party (the Ukrainian National Assembly) after December 1991 in independent Ukraine.

The Ukrainian nationalist movement for self-determination prior to independence was divided into three groups. The first group evolved into ethnic, radical right nationalists in independent Ukraine, Rukh became a centre-right party, while sovereign/national communists began to create centrist, 'pragmatic' parties from the mid-1990s: 1. Ethnic nationalists adopted a platform of immediate independence and espoused an ethnic, exclusive programme of 'Ukraine for Ukrainians!'; 2. Rukh adopted a platform of state independence in October 1990 based on a civic, inclusive programme that linked national and universalist

rights; 3. 'Sovereign (national) communists' championed a confederation of sovereign Republics until the August 1991 putsch. On 24 August 1991 the 'sovereign communists', led by parliamentary speaker Leonid Kravchuk, moved into the Rukh camp and supported the parliamentary declaration of independence by a constitutional majority vote. Between October 1990 and August 1991 the Ukrainian nationalist movement for self-determination became a mass movement. The banning of the Communist Party of Ukraine in August 1991 removed the last obstacle to taking Ukraine out of the USSR and led to a united nationalist movement for self-determination from August to December 1991, which produced a 91 per cent endorsement in the 1 December 1991 referendum.

If we define nationalists in the broad sense as those who sought to establish an independent state, then ethnic nationalists, civic Rukh and civic 'sovereign communists' all joined the nationalist movement at different times during 1989–1991. Of these three groups only the radical nationalists had an ethnic, exclusive programme while the other two (Rukh and the 'sovereign communists') always backed a civic, inclusive definition of the nation. The Ukrainian example therefore shows how a nationalist movement for self-determination can be either civic or ethnic and that it can simultaneously encompass both ideologies.

What then of nationalism in an independent state? As Billig points out, scholars often ignore how nationalism is maintained within the nation-state and consequently nationalism seems to disappear from the state. It is from then on only found in other states, such as in Eastern Europe or Africa. Liberal *Risorgimento* nationalism within its own nation-state can evolve towards integral nationalism (e.g., Italy under Benito Mussolini's fascism). Such a state could be fairly easily defined as ethnic nationalist, because it would no longer be a civic, liberal democracy. In Ukraine radical right groups, such as the National Assembly or the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists are clearly of this type. Thankfully, their popularity is low.

But, what of those political forces that accept that the state should be defined in civic and inclusive terms? Here we have greater difficulty in defining our terms as this refers to a wide spectrum of political opinion ranging from socialists, social democrats and liberals to conservatives, republicans and Christian Democrats. These political forces accept how the state should be constituted (e.g., inclusive citizenship, the rule of law, parliamentary-presidential democracy, limited regional devolution which balances between unitarianism and federalism, etc.) but differ over how the national idea should be defined.⁴⁹ After a country achieves independence the nationalist movement has achieved its goal. In other words, as Ukrainian scholars and political party activists are fond of pointing out, 'the national idea has been fulfilled'. What next? How should the national idea in an independent state be defined? Who are the 'we' and who are the 'others'?

Defining who are 'nationalists' in the independent state is more complicated than defining nationalism for self-determination prior to independence. Civic (or

state) nationalists are those who support a civic, inclusive definition of the nation and range throughout the political spectrum from the pro-statehood left (Socialists and Peasant parties) to the centre-right (national democrats such as Rukh). This spectrum is by far the largest and incorporates former ‘sovereign communists’ and ‘democratic platform communists’ who have congregated in the centre, as well as centre-right national democrats and offshoots from the Communists, such as the Socialists.

Such a wide definition of civic nationalism is consistent with Kasianov’s study of Ukrainian nationalism, which defines it as incorporating all political parties from the centre left through centrist parties to the centre right.⁵⁰ This author agrees with Kasianov’s framework that defines Ukrainian nationalism in a broader manner than that of integral nationalism, which was the most common way of defining ‘nationalism’ in Ukraine in the Soviet era and remains common among Western scholars. Civic nationalists in Ukraine differ—as they would in any nation-state—on how to define the national idea while agreeing on the basic attributes of state nationalism, such as territorial integrity, Ukrainians as the ethno-cultural core, and the defence of sovereignty.

Civic nationalism in Ukraine is also in the process of re-definition after attaining its objective of an independent state. In an independent state Ukrainian nationalism is still in the process of developing a broader definition of itself, Kasianov believes, that is both a ‘doctrine of modernization’ and an ‘ideology of national solidarity’. This is linked to the process of state- and nation-building and the development of a consolidated Ukrainian civic nation.

Ethnic Ukrainian nationalists are the same as those who were defined as such in the pre-independence era. They include a range of political parties on the extreme right such as the Ukrainian National Assembly and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists. Ethnic nationalism in Ukraine also includes Russian and Soviet nationalism, ideologies usually ignored by Western scholars but surveyed in a recent study by Majboroda.⁵¹ Russian nationalists in Ukraine have difficulty in accepting Ukraine’s right to exist as an independent state. They believe that the three eastern Slavs are merely regional branches of one Russian nation. In arguing for the unity of the three eastern Slavs they are as much pan-Russianists as German nationalists in the 1930s were pan-Germanists in seeking to unite all German speakers within one state. Russian nationalists in Ukraine see the three eastern Slavs as ‘Russians’ (*Russkii*). In both the German and eastern Slavic cases, nationalism is ethnic and primordial, not civic.

As Majboroda points out, Russian and Soviet nationalism in Ukraine has other defining attributes which have been pursued by President Alyaksandr Lukashenka in Belarus since 1994. These include hostility to liberal values which are traditionally denounced as ‘unRussian’, anti-Westernism, and anti-semitism. They see Russia as the natural leader of the eastern Slavs, defend the inherited post-colonial status quo, and denounce as ‘nationalist’ any attempts at affirmative action for Ukrainian culture and language. They fear a decline in the hegemony of Russian culture and language in Ukraine and accuse the authorities

of ‘discrimination’ in policies aimed at upgrading Ukrainian culture and language.

Anti-semitism flourishes under the pan-Slavic/Russian nationalist Lukashenka regime. Belarusian Popular Front leader Vintsuk Vyachirka argued that, ‘The Lukashenka regime has revived the institution of state ideology, which is a mixture of communism, xenophobia, and pan-Slavic chauvinism. The practice of anti-semitism has been restored in Belarus; the branches of the Russian National Unity, which were expelled from Russia, feel themselves at ease under the patronage of the regime’.⁵² The World Association of Belarusian Jewry and the Belarusian Human Rights Centre ‘Vyasna’ appealed to the Israeli government to refuse to have any dealings with Lukashenka, whom they accused of being anti-semitic. They alleged that Lukashenka had refused to set up Jewish schools, help maintain Jewish cemeteries and monuments, or create memorials to holocaust victims.⁵³

A leader of the Jewish community in Belarus sued the Minsk publishing house Orthodox Initiative ‘for fomenting ethnic hatred’. In 2000 a Belarusian publishing house issued *The War According to the Laws of Meanness* which collected together anti-semitic articles from the pre-1917 and 1990s Belarusian press. The introduction to the book calls upon Belarusians to reject both the West and the ‘Jew-Masons who have occupied Russia’.⁵⁴ A Minsk district court rejected a libel suit filed by Jewish organizations against the Orthodox Initiative, the publisher of a volume that included anti-semitic tracts, such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, published in Tsarist Russia. ‘There is nothing surprising in this court’s decision given the fact that (the Belarusian) president has publicly eulogized Hitler’, the president of the World Organisation of Belarusian Jews, Yakov Gutman, said.⁵⁵

After independence was achieved the unity of the nationalist movement came under stress because different groups had alternative approaches to dealing with key questions for the state and how to define the national idea. These two questions led to different policies, programmes and frames of reference.

All civic nationalists in Ukraine support its territorial integrity. The centre right, as in most liberal democratic states, oppose federalism and territorial autonomy for minorities. Their support for a unitary state is premised upon a vision of the French nation-state that recognizes only individual, not collective, rights. Centrists and the left are more willing to countenance territorial autonomy as a quid pro quo, to take the heat out of the separatist movement, but remain divided over federalism. Civic nationalists remain divided over how to deal with external threats. Although they remain committed to defending in the last resort Ukraine’s territorial integrity by any means (the president is, after all, the guarantor of the state’s integrity), national democrats adopt a tougher line against these threats than centrists and the centre left, particularly if they emanate from Russia.

The civic definition of the nation has dominated state policy in Ukraine since independence, with Russian, Soviet and Ukrainian ethnic nationalists marginal-

ized from the policy process. Civic nationalists do not disagree on key elements in the nation-building process. Few support the definition of Ukraine as a state that should have two titular nations (Russians and Ukrainians), as this would transform Ukraine into an eastern Slavic state. The inculcation of common values, myths and customs also proved to be un-problematical for civic nationalists in Ukraine. The only alternative to a Ukrainian national historiography that stresses Ukraine's distinctiveness from Russia and its Europeanness was that espoused by ethnic Russian and Soviet nationalists from the nineteenth century to the 1980s, with a brief interlude in the 1920s. A Russian or Soviet nationalist historiography and myths rejects the very idea of a Ukrainian ethnic group or an independent existence from Russia and therefore cannot be used by Ukrainian nation-builders.

Language has proven to be the most complicated issue for nation-builders in Ukraine. A consensus was reached by Ukrainian civic nationalist élites that an independent state needed its own language, something that Kolsto and Janmaat have pointed out.⁵⁶ The loss of a national language is widely held to lead to the loss of national identity and independence, as seen most starkly in Belarus. The three alternatives for Ukraine's nation-builders and civic nationalists are as follows:

1. *Ukrainian as the sole state language*: Russian would be squeezed out completely in favour of Ukrainian by removing the colonial legacy of Russification. Such a policy, similar to that adopted in the three Baltic states, was never seriously contemplated and was only applied in Western Ukraine. It was only ever really supported by ethnic Ukrainian nationalists and the centre-right. Because some national democrats backed this French nation-state model for Ukraine they were criticized as 'nationalists'. In reality, as in France and the USA, such an assimilationist policy can be also undertaken in a civic state.

2. *Ukrainian as the sole state language applied differently by region*: This policy was adopted in the 1989 Soviet Ukrainian law 'On Languages' and re-affirmed in the June 1996 constitution. Such a policy foresaw the continued use of Russian but at the same time allowed for the continued expansion of Ukrainian. Although some of the post-colonial legacy would be tackled through affirmative action the legacy would never be completely removed except in Western Ukraine. This policy, a compromise between positions 1 and 3, is closest to that of the former sovereign communists, turned centrists. They believe that affirmative action cannot completely eradicate the past and Russian cannot therefore be defined as a 'foreign' language in Ukraine because it is used by a large proportion of people.

3. *Ukrainian and Russian as two state languages*: Such a policy was only ever backed by ethnic Russian and Soviet nationalists. As Majboroda points out, Russian and Soviet nationalists saw it as an attempt to 'maintain the hegemonic status of the (Russian) minority in the linguistic-cultural sphere'. Precisely for this reason Ukrainian civic nationalists opposed the introduction of two state languages because they understood that such a fictional equality, as in Belarus, would maintain the domination of Russian. Wilson, Arel and Lieven defined a

policy of introducing only one state language in a country with a large number of Russophones as ‘ethnic’ and tantamount to Ukraine pursuing a ‘nationalizing state’, thereby deviating from its proclaimed aim of building a civic state.⁵⁷ A civic state, if it has an inclusive citizenship and electoral franchise, can be based on a Ukrainian or Ukrainian-Russian ethno-cultural core. Either national framework could be defined as civic.

2. Nationalism in Ukraine: a critical survey

The misuse of ‘nationalism’ in contemporary Ukrainian studies

‘Nationalism’ is the most abused term in contemporary Ukrainian studies. When discussing the nationality question in Ukraine scholars are apt to use the terms ‘nationalist’ and ‘nationalism’ loosely, without defining their concepts. Some studies of Ukrainian nationalism, such as those by Kuzio,⁵⁸ have followed in the tradition established by Armstrong and Motyl⁵⁹ and have only focused upon the radical (i.e., extreme) right. But these remain in a minority. The commonly held framework for analysing ‘nationalism’ in Ukraine departs from the Armstrong/Motyl/Kuzio framework and equates it solely with Ukrainophones, Western Ukraine and centre-right national democrats.⁶⁰ These ‘nationalist feelings’ are allegedly especially strong in Western Ukraine,⁶¹ the ‘home to Ukrainian nationalists’⁶² because Western Ukraine is a ‘bastion of nationalism’.⁶³

This narrow definition of nationalism in Ukraine equates the higher national consciousness among Western Ukrainians with ‘nationalism’. Although Western Ukrainians do not traditionally vote for the extreme right this problem in the framework is overcome by arguing that the centre right, who are popular in Western Ukraine, are also ‘nationalists’. The 1994 Ukrainian presidential elections were a defeat for Ukrainian ‘nationalism’ (as allegedly represented by the incumbent President Kravchuk from Western Ukraine). During the 1994 presidential elections Kuchma, Kravchuk’s main opponent, allegedly backed a de-centralized, federal state, two state languages and a strategic partnership with Russia.⁶⁴ These planks of his election programme were backed by Russophones against the more ‘nationalistic’, pro-European manifesto of Kravchuk. In 1994 Kravchuk ‘stood revealed as an unabashed nationalist’ and offered a ‘narrow nationalising approach’.⁶⁵ As Barrington points out, this is a common problem among scholars who fail to define terms such as nationalism and nation, ‘assuming instead that others think about them in a similar way’. Often, therefore, the manner in which nationalism is defined depends on the definition used by the scholar,⁶⁶ ‘and, ‘As we would expect, the meanings and assignments to nationalism in much scholarly and most political discourse reveal more about the users of the term than about the phenomenon’.⁶⁷

Ironically, the practice of defining ‘Ukrainian nationalism’ in a negative manner by equating it with extremism and Western Ukraine continues the Soviet-era tradition, the Kyiv historian Grigorii Kas’ianov writes, where ‘Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism’ was defined as

any kind of show of national consciousness, cultural, ideological or political tendencies which didn't coincide with state ideology on the nationality question and could (or believed they could) threaten its rule or become the basis for separatist tendencies.⁶⁸

Kas'ianov points out that although 'Ukrainian nationalism' was traditionally only identified with the radical right by the Soviet regime it has a long historical tradition in Ukraine among all ideological currents. At the beginning of the twentieth century nearly all Ukrainian political parties were 'nationalist', Kas'ianov argues. The Cyril-Methodius Society of the mid-nineteenth century agitated for a sovereign Ukraine within a Slavic federation and included elements of 'nationalism'. The Ukrainian People's Republic of 1917–1918 was socialist and nationalist. Ukrainian nationalism also influenced most of the Ukrainian left in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶⁹ Ukrainian nationalism only evolved into an integral nationalist, ethnic variant in the inter-war years, a process common to many other European states. This variant of nationalism remains influential within the Ukrainian diaspora but not in Ukraine.

Civic (state) nationalism

In a major study of the domestic sources of Russian security policy, four authors defined Russian élites after 1993 as 'pragmatic nationalists' (i.e., state or civic nationalists). As Light has pointed out, 'Pragmatic nationalists represent the standard view one might expect the foreign policy élite to hold in any country'.⁷⁰ 'Pragmatic nationalism' is similar to what we would understand to be civic nationalism in liberal democracies.

In other words, civic nationalists are 'nationalist' because they prioritize sovereignty and seek to defend by all means state and national interests (regardless of what language they speak, Ukrainian, Russian—or both). By defining only Ukrainophones as 'nationalists' such a framework ignores the banal nationalism that exists in all nation-states and is promoted at the state level as well as by independent institutions and political parties.

The label 'nationalist' is usually not attached to Kuchma because Wilson believes no 'nationalist' could ever win the presidential elections in Ukraine.⁷¹ This is only true if by 'nationalist' we understand the extreme right and ethnic nationalists. But what about state nationalists common to the ruling élites of all nation-states? Kravchuk (allied to national democrats between 1991 and 1994) and Kuchma (linked to centrist liberals and social democrats) merely represented different visions of a more broadly defined 'civic nationalism' in the second round of the Summer 1994 presidential elections.⁷² Both candidates supported an independent state and the state's promotion of banal nationalism, although their policies, proposed speed of implementation and approach differed.

Kuchma's victory over Petro Symonenko, the communist leader, in the second round of the October–November 1999 presidential elections also represented a contest between civic/state nationalism (Kuchma) and Soviet Ukrainian national-

ism (Piotr Symonenko). Not surprisingly, voters who supported Ukraine's continued state independence backed the incumbent and civic nationalist, Kuchma, who obtained support *throughout* Russophone and Ukrainophone Ukraine. Not all of those who voted for Symonenko were necessarily against Ukrainian statehood, as this also included a sizeable protest vote. Similarly, a large proportion of those who voted for Kuchma voted against the return of the Communists to power and did not indicate approval for five years of Kuchma's misrule.

What role then does civic/state nationalism play within post-Soviet states such as Ukraine? Within independent nation-states civic nationalists defend national interests, although attitudes as to how these interests are achieved may differ. D'Anieri sees the underlying consensus within Ukraine's élites since 1992 as the defence and prioritization of sovereignty: 'Compared to most other states in the world and in the region, Ukraine's politics is still a very nationalist one'.⁷³ Ukrainian civic nationalism is therefore surely a 'majority faith'. In November 1995 the *Rada* voted overwhelmingly by 263–5 against the privatization of the oil and gas industry in Ukraine. D'Anieri believes that this was because Western Ukrainian 'nationalists' were as much concerned as 'eastern communists' with 'foreign economic penetration of Ukraine and the potential for neocolonialism'.⁷⁴

By confusingly defining 'nationalists' as sometimes in the 'West' and at other times in the 'East', D'Anieri is unable to equate *derzhavnyky* (state-builders) with the pervasiveness of civic nationalists in different ideological platforms throughout Ukraine. As he himself admits, 'The coalition of forces that sees sovereignty as the pre-eminent goal is strong in particular because it cuts across Ukraine's other major political schisms'.⁷⁵ The majority of the programmes of the presidential candidates in the October 1999 elections called for greater reliance upon one's own forces, itself a civic nationalist slogan.⁷⁶

It is also not the case that only 'nationalists' are opposed to integration within the Russian-led Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).⁷⁷ During the June–July 1994 presidential campaign Kuchma never promoted political or military union with the CIS or Russia and said that, 'I am categorically against what Belarus is doing because it is not partnership but subordination'.⁷⁸ Kuchma did criticize Kravchuk's alleged 'isolationism' from Russia and the CIS which, he believes, led to a deterioration in relations between Russia and Ukraine. But Kuchma cautions against too strong a criticism of his predecessor's foreign policies. 'These were often a response to, let's say, unfriendly moves by the other side'.⁷⁹ Even with Kuchma in power it took three years to sign a treaty with Russia that accepted the former Soviet borders, and two more for the Russian parliament to ratify it. Because Russian nationalism finds it difficult to accept Ukrainians (and Belarusians) as separate ethnic groups, Russia is still unable to agree to the demarcation of the Ukrainian-Russian border.⁸⁰

As President of an independent nation-state, Kuchma, like his predecessor, has also continued to maintain Ukraine at a distance from the CIS, while

adopting a more pragmatic approach to economic integration and co-operation. Nevertheless, Ukraine remains only an Associate Member of the CIS Economic Union, in the same capacity as when it joined when Kuchma was Prime Minister in 1993. Kuchma has also refused to join the CIS Customs and Payments Unions or the Tripartite Economic Union of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kirgizhia, created in March 1996. Ukraine also remains only a participant (*not* a member) of the CIS because it continues to refuse to sign the CIS Charter. Ukraine has also continued to oppose CIS military integration and refused to join the Tashkent Collective Security Treaty. Kuchma is opposed to Ukraine joining the Russian-Belarusian union, a position supported by all non-left-wing political forces in Ukraine, because it would damage Ukraine's sovereignty as an independent nation-state.

President Kuchma has therefore pursued a policy towards the CIS that is closer to that of state 'nationalists' than that of the Russophiles⁸¹ he is usually associated with and Ukraine has 'maintained its unwillingness to compromise on the sovereignty issue'. D'Anieri therefore concludes that, 'In this respect there has been a fundamental continuity in Ukrainian policy towards the CIS from Kravchuk in 1991 through Kuchma in 1998'.⁸² Kuchma has maintained Ukraine's prioritization of sovereignty and continued a consistent foreign policy towards the CIS outlined in the Kravchuk era. Ukraine's primary concern within the CIS has remained an unwillingness to tolerate any loss of sovereignty, even at the expense of the benefits of economic integration.

Recent developments in Ukraine have further thrown into doubt discussions of 'Ukrainian nationalism' as a negative, illiberal phenomenon. Although the 'ethnic' Kravchuk was contrasted to the 'civic' Kuchma in the 1994 presidential elections, the Kuchma era has *not* been conducive to democratization in Ukraine.⁸³ The 'civic' Kuchma is closely linked to former communist, turned centrist, oligarchic groups who are often cosmopolitan, sometimes Russophile, but usually with a penchant for an authoritarian, corporatist state.⁸⁴ Kuchma's two terms as president since 1994 have therefore seen Ukraine slide towards authoritarianism. A more 'civic' centrist Kuchma, in contrast to the 'ethnic' Kravchuk who was allied to the national democrats, has not therefore been more conducive to democratization.

Developments in post-Soviet Ukraine therefore defy the standard link between (centrist) cosmopolitanism and support for liberal democracy because Ukraine's 'civic' cosmopolitans favour a corporatist over a liberal democratic state.⁸⁵ In November 2000 the 'Kuchmagate' scandal broke in Ukraine when parliamentary deputies revealed 300 hours of taped conversations made illicitly by a Security Service officer in Kuchma's office which showed widespread illegal activities by the President.⁸⁶ The resultant rise of a democratic opposition against Kuchma is led by national democrats, the political parties long defined as illiberal 'nationalists' and traditionally contrasted to the more 'civic' Kuchma. As Arel shrewdly points out, 'In an intriguing way, democracy, economic reforms, and national identity in Ukraine are symbiotically linked'.⁸⁷ Maybe national democrats are the good guys after all?

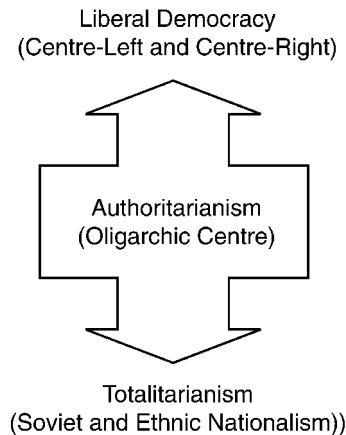


Figure 1. Attitudes to liberal democracy in Ukraine.

Regional divisions

Ukraine's regional divisions are often defined by scholars into a two-fold simplistic division of the country: 'catholic, nationalist, West' versus a 'Russian-speaking, Orthodox, pro-Russian East'. Wise and Brown take this one step further, believing that while eleven million Russians inhabit the East a previously unknown ethnic group, 'Ukrainian nationalists', populate the West.⁸⁸ D'Anieri divides Ukraine into a 'Russophone East' and a 'more Ukrainian West', as well as a population divided into 'nationalists' and those 'with other primary values'. Meanwhile, the parliament (*Verkhovna Rada*) pits 'nationalists' (i.e., Ukrainophones and national democrats) against 'Russophiles'.⁸⁹ Shulman argues that Ukraine is therefore divided into a 'bipolar society', which reflects 'real geographic, ethnic, economic, cultural and historical differences'.⁹⁰

The division of Ukraine into two halves along these lines is too simplistic and ignores a large group of people, maybe the majority of the population, who use Russian and Ukrainian interchangeably (such as President Kuchma) and whose identity is very much in flux. In the March 1998 parliamentary elections the radical right nationalist National Front obtained fewer votes in L'viv *oblast* (province) than either Rukh or the Reforms and Order Party, both on the centre right, and only slightly more than left-wing or pro-Russian parties.⁹¹ This also does not fit in with a depiction of Western Ukraine as 'nationalist'.⁹²

The image portrayed by the majority of scholars of a 'rabid, intolerant, ethnic nationalism' prevalent in Western Ukraine is *not* borne out by polls. A major opinion poll conducted by the Sotsis-Gallup firm found that Western Ukrainians harboured the greatest degree of national tolerance towards minorities and that the region with the highest degree of ethnic intolerance was the Crimea. Ukrainians and Tatars have difficulties in opening schools⁹³ or launching newspapers and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox and Catholic churches are denied premises and registration in the Crimea.⁹⁴ The respondents with the greatest degree of

Table 1. Levels of xenophobia in Ukraine, 1994–2001

Rates of xenophobia	Region of Ukraine	Oblast
Lowest xenophobia	Western	Lutsk
	Crimea	N/A
Medium low xenophobia	Eastern	Zaporizhzhia
	Southern	Kherson Odesa
	West Central	Vynnytsia
Medium xenophobia	Western	Chernivtsi
	Eastern	Donets'k Luhans'k Dnipropetrovs'k
	Southern	Mykolaiv
	West Central	Kyiv
	Western	Trans-Carpathia
	Eastern	Kharkiv
Medium high xenophobia	West Central	Cherkasy Zhitomir
	Western	Rivne L'viv
	East Central	Chernihiv Sumy Poltava
	West Central	Kirovohrad
Highest xenophobia	West Central	Khmel'nyts'kyi
	Western	Ternopil
		Ivano-Frankivsk

Source: Volodymyr Paniotto, 'Dynamics of social distance between ethnic and linguistic-ethnic groups in Ukraine, 1994–2001', paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities, New York, 5–7 April 2001.

ethnic intolerance were those who used Russian (*not* Ukrainian) in the private sphere and who were atheist.⁹⁵ This poll contradicts the majority of the commonly perceived scholarly analyses of Western Ukraine that continue to confuse high national consciousness with alleged support for ethnic, integral nationalism. A better way of looking at Western Ukraine would be to look at the strength of its civil society; a factor that helps to define its nationalism in civic terms. This is clearly seen in the massive support Western Ukraine gave to the 'Our Ukraine' reformist bloc in the March 2002 elections.

3. Nationalism in Ukraine: towards a new theoretical and comparative framework

Nationalism in Ukraine is far broader than its traditional narrow depiction as Western Ukrainian, national democratic and Ukrainophone. Such a framework ignores banal nationalism promoted by the state and the existence of ethnic Russian and Soviet nationalism, and perpetuates the myth that nationalism in

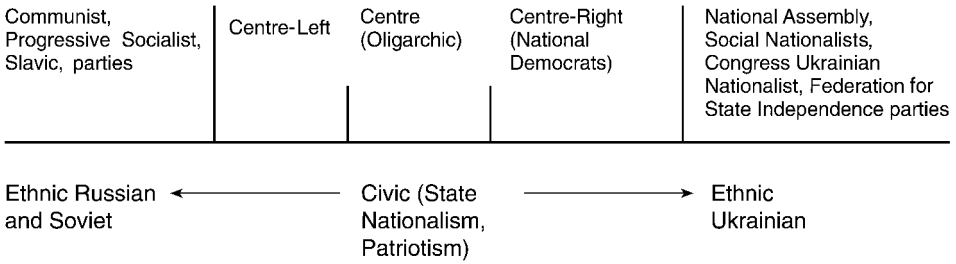


Figure 2. Ethnic and civic nationalism in Ukraine.

Ukraine is linguistically, regionally and politically confined to a ‘minority faith’.⁹⁶

Below I outline an alternative three-fold framework that broadens our understanding of nationalism in Ukraine.

Soviet era

National democrats

The Ukrainian Popular Movement for Restructuring (better known as Rukh) supported state independence and therefore a nationalist agenda of state independence for Ukraine from October 1990 until December 1991 when the USSR disintegrated. Prior to its October 1990 congress, Rukh should therefore not be described as a nationalist movement because it did not advocate Ukrainian independence. Rukh has always championed support for universalist and particularist themes grounded in radical reform from the Soviet past to establish an inclusive liberal democracy with a dominant, but tolerant, Ukrainian ethno-cultural core.

In the independent Ukrainian state, centre-right parties, such as Rukh, should not be defined as ‘nationalists’ but as centre-right conservatives or republicans. Their nationality policies are far more liberal than those commonly found among centre-right parties in liberal democracies (which makes their definition as ‘nationalists’ difficult to square). The centre-right differ on their attitudes towards how the national idea is to be defined (see Table 4); as in all civic states, the attitude of political parties towards the ethno-cultural context of the nation-state varies. As Tamir points out, centre-right parties of the conservative or anti-liberal persuasion are more supportive to giving greater prominence to ethno-cultural features within the state.⁹⁷ In Ukraine this is compounded primarily by regional differences in attitudes towards the national idea. The fact that centre-right parties in *all* civic states place greater stress upon the ethno-cultural definition of the state does not make them ‘ethnic nationalists’.

National communists

National (or sovereign) communists supported state independence only from 24 August 1991 when a greater than constitutionally necessary two-thirds of parliament voted to declare independence from the USSR. Prior to this they backed the transformation of the USSR into a confederation of sovereign states (a second question to this effect was placed on the Soviet referendum ballot 'on a renewed federation' in March 1991 by Kravchuk). National communists, such as Kravchuk, can therefore only be defined as 'nationalists' after the 24 August 1991 declaration of independence when they moved from being supporters of confederation to being supporters of independence. The former sovereign/national communists began creating centrist political parties from the mid-1990s as a means of transforming their economic into political power. These centrist parties are devoid of ideological fixity, even though they may contain familiar names such as Greens, Social Democrats and Liberals. This ideological amorphousness has been defined by them as 'pragmatic centrism' and contrasted to the 'romantics' on their centre-right and those on the left, both of whom have clear ideological profiles.⁹⁸

The post-Soviet era*Ethnic nationalists*

As in Western liberal democracies, nationalists are usually narrowly defined and refer only to the extreme right (e.g., the National Front in France and the British National Party in the UK). In the Ukrainian case, these can refer to *both* ethnic Ukrainian *and* Russian nationalists. Ethnic Ukrainian nationalists are those who define Ukraine as an exclusive state in narrow, ethnic terms. These include the Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA), the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Social National Party, and the Federation for Ukrainian State Independence (DSU).

Russian ethnic nationalism *per se* remains weak in Ukraine because the Tsarist and Soviet empires never encouraged Russian nation-building but subverted its identity within an imperial-state one.⁹⁹ Hence, Russian ethnic nationalists either from Russia or within Ukraine have always fared badly in elections. Russian nationalist parties received less than two per cent of the vote in the March 2002 parliamentary elections. The liberal reformist bloc SLON, Wilson believes, 'made the mistake of defending Russian ethnicity rather than the Russian language'.¹⁰⁰ Soviet nationalism (i.e., group three below) has greater appeal than a narrower ethnic Russian nationalism as the bulk of Communist Party of Ukraine supporters are Russified Ukrainians who shy away from ethnic Russian nationalism.¹⁰¹

Russian nationalists in Ukraine and Russia maintain the pre-Soviet view that Ukrainians are an ethnographic, regional 'Russian' group (Little Russians) who should be united with other Russian (*Rus'kii*) peoples (the White and Great

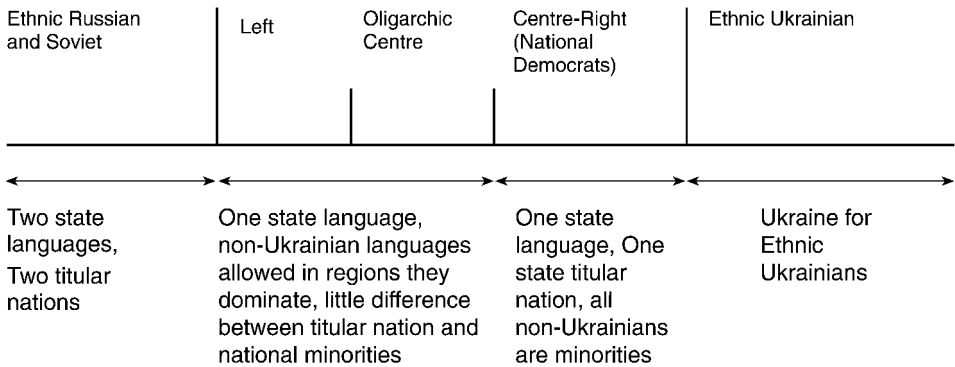


Figure 3. Attitudes to the National Idea in Ukraine.

Russians).¹⁰² Political parties which support such views are based solely in the Eastern Ukrainian Donbas region (e.g., Civic Congress,¹⁰³ Party of Slavic Unity¹⁰⁴) or the Crimea (e.g., Union [formerly the Russia Bloc]).

President Kuchma, when asked if Ukraine would join the Belarusian-Russian union, replied that to do so would ignore the multi-national composition of Ukraine’s population (not all of whom are Slavs) and promote ‘ethnic superiority’.¹⁰⁵ In other words, Kuchma defined pan-eastern Slavism as ‘ethnic nationalism’ because it promoted ethnic superiority, was anti-semitic, anti-Polish, and anti-Muslim. Russian ethnic nationalism is a supra-nationalist ideology that encompasses all three eastern Slavic peoples, therefore overlapping with the Soviet Ukrainian nationalism, found in group three, that is more Eurasian in scope.

Civic nationalists

Using our broader definition, nationalism in Ukraine can be defined as civic nationalism because it recognizes that liberal democracies are composed of civic *and* ethno-cultural components. Civic nationalists within the élites and population at large can refer to the ruling élite, the entire population and those political parties who support state independence and seek to defend Ukraine’s national and state interests. This includes all of Ukraine’s political forces ranging from the Socialist and Peasant parties on the left to the centre right. Civic nationalism is an ideology common to the ruling élites of all independent states. Ukrainian civic nationalism has dominated both the legislature and the executive since 1992 (including all parliamentary chairmen, the majority of deputies, and Presidents Kravchuk and Kuchma), and has produced a foreign policy consensus that prioritizes sovereignty.¹⁰⁶

*Soviet Ukrainian nationalists*¹⁰⁷

Political forces, such as the Communists and Progressive Socialists on the extreme left, who seek to subvert Ukrainian independence either through Ukraine joining the Russian-Belarusian union or a revived Soviet Union are Soviet Ukrainian nationalists. From the 1930s Soviet nationalism built upon Russian great power nationalism.¹⁰⁸ The ideology of Soviet Ukrainian nationalism is different from that of ethnic Russian nationalists because it does not deny the existence of a Ukrainian nation.¹⁰⁹ Soviet nationalism reflects a world view formed during the context of seven decades of Soviet rule which believes that Ukraine's 'sovereignty' is best secured within a union with Russia.

The quintessential Soviet nationalist is Belarusian President Lukashenka who supports his country's 'sovereignty' within a revived union of 'equal' states (and not as a *gubernia* [province] within the Russian Federation, which is what he would support if he were a Russian ethnic nationalist). Wilson defines the Communist Party of Ukraine as espousing 'Soviet national-socialism' that he predicts will evolve into 'a form of pan (East)-Slavic nationalism that may have more long term appeal than nostalgia-heavy Soviet nationalism'.¹¹⁰ The Communist Party of Ukraine would then combine elements of Lukashenka's pan-eastern Slavic ideology and overlap with the ethnic nationalists found in group one.

Conclusion

This article has sought to survey critically the use and misuse of nationalism within contemporary Ukrainian studies. It is incumbent upon scholars to use nationalism within a theoretical and comparative framework in the same manner as when it is applied to other countries, both liberal democracies and former communist states. Contemporary Ukrainian politics cannot be correctly understood unless nationalism is defined in a broad manner, as in other nation-states, and it is recognized that the Ukrainian nation-state will exhibit a mixture of universalist and particularist elements. Studies of nationalism in Ukraine should therefore not limit their focus only to ethnic nationalists.

Nationalism in Ukraine, as in other nation-states, can come in a variety of ways. All nation-states are permeated by state nationalism, which Billig describes as banal nationalism. In defending the sovereignty, 'national interests', territorial integrity, titular language and culture of the nation-state, the ruling élites are state nationalists. State nationalists in Ukraine promote a banal nationalism that advises, cajoles and informs citizens how they should think and behave, what actions are acceptable, and which are beyond the pale (for example, liquidating independence or changing borders). They have at their fingertips large state resources (education, state institutions, media, armed forces, etc.) which can be used to promote a loyal banal nationalism. Aside from the Communists, Ukrainian élites have reached a consensus on the basic outlines of Ukraine's banal nationalism.

Beyond a state's banal nationalism, political parties, civic groups and other

non-state actors will differ in their attitudes towards the national idea. In many areas there may be either no alternatives (national symbols, historiography), common agreement (state-building and borders) or a compromise has been reached between two rival federalist and unitary projects (a devolved, unitary state combining one autonomous republic with a unitary state). Where disagreement remains it is over language policy and the extent of affirmative action to overcome the Soviet past.

The Ukrainian political system is ideologically divided into four camps for the purposes of our study of nationalism. The extreme right espouse exclusive, chauvinistic ideologies no different to those found elsewhere. The extreme left are the hard-line remnants of the Soviet-era Communist Party who desire to see Ukraine re-defined as an eastern Slavic, Ukrainian-Russian state. The Communists should be defined as Soviet nationalists.

The democratic spectrum ranging from the centre-right to centre left supports an inclusive, civic state. The 'pragmatic centre' grew out of the ruling élites of the Soviet-era Communist Party of Ukraine who defected in 1991–92 to the independence cause. Their political power was gradually converted into economic clout through asset stripping, capital flight and insider privatization, allowing them to become oligarchs. By the mid-1990s they had become sufficiently powerful to convert this new economic influence into political power through the creation of centrist, phantom, top-down parties. These parties have always remained ideologically amorphous and attempt to act as a 'buffer' between the centre-right and the left.

The growing consolidation of an authoritarian, corporatist state under President Kuchma has been backed by centrist oligarchs. Evidence of this authoritarianism is to be found in the Kuchmagate scandal and threats to suspend Ukraine's membership in the Council of Europe in 2001, as well as criticism by international NGOs, such as Amnesty International. The centrist political spectrum positively defined as 'civic' by Western scholars in the mid-1990s, when Kuchma came to power, is more comfortable with corporatism and a controlled society than a liberal democracy and market economy. In contrast, the centre right, traditionally defined in a negative manner by the same scholars as 'ethnic nationalists', are the main opposition to corporatist authoritarianism and the strongest backers for radical political-economic reform. Ukraine's greatest hopes for reform and escape from a further slide into corporatist authoritarianism rest upon its national democrats who are best represented by former Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko, a popular leader of the 'Our Ukraine' election bloc in the March 2002 parliamentary elections, which secured the most votes of any of the 33 parties and blocs standing.

This article has outlined a three-fold division of how the term nationalism should be used within Ukrainian studies by broadening its definition beyond the narrow confines commonly used by scholars. Prior to independence nationalism in Ukraine was represented by the national democrats, national communists and extreme right. Of these only the latter can be defined as ethnic and exclusive.

In post-Soviet Ukraine the three-fold classification includes ethnic Ukrainian and Russia nationalists, who incorporate Ukrainian ethnic nationalists in the late

Soviet era; civic (state) nationalists who encompass the entire democratic ideological spectrum, support Ukrainian independence and an inclusive, civic state; and finally, Soviet nationalists who reject the very idea of an independent Ukrainian state. This framework does not equate 'nationalists' in a narrow sense only with Ukrainophones, national democrats or Western Ukrainians. Civic (state) nationalism in Ukraine is supported by a cross-section of society—Russo-phones, bilingual Ukrainians, the moderate left and Ukrainophones.

Civic nationalists are also different from ethnic Ukrainian and Soviet nationalists in that they do not seek to change Ukraine's borders either through the incorporation of 'ethnic Ukrainian lands' lying outside the state, as do ethnic nationalists, or by supporting Ukraine's Anschluss into a larger union, as do Soviet nationalists. The framework outlined here does not focus solely upon language as the main criterion in deciding who should, or should not, be defined as nationalist in Ukraine. Rather, it broadens the study of how nationalism operates in a multi-faceted manner in any nation-state, as in Ukraine.

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 57. A. Wilson, *op. cit.*, Ref. 3; D. Arel, ‘Ukraine—the temptation of the nationalising state’, in V.

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58. See T. Kuzio, ‘Ukrainian nationalism’, *Journal of Area Studies*, 4 (1994), pp. 79–95, and *op. cit.*, Ref. 49.
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60. Fifteen political parties defined as ‘ethnic nationalist’, that competed in the 1994 Ukrainian parliamentary elections, are centre-right national democrats: see Wilson, *op. cit.*, Ref. 3, p. 137.
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62. P. Kubicek, ‘Regional polarisation in Ukraine: public opinion, voting and legislative behaviour’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 42 (2000), pp. 273–274. The same phrase is used by J. O’Loughlin and J. E. Bell, ‘The political geography of civic engagement in Ukraine’, *Post-Soviet Geography*, 40 (1999), p. 239.
63. S. Birch, *Elections and Democratization in Ukraine* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 29.
64. Wilson, *op. cit.*, Ref. 3, p. 143.
65. A. Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 182, 203. Wilson also argues that Kravchuk ‘never plunged into nationalism wholesale, and tacked and trimmed where necessary ...’. These policies led to ‘half-hearted nationalising policies’ (pp. 163, 184).
66. Motyl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 2, p. 308.
67. Motyl, *ibid.*, p. 309.
68. G. V. Kas’ianov, ‘Ukrains’kyi natsionalizm: Problema naukovoho pereomyslennia’, *Ukrains’kyi Istorichnyi Zhurnal*, 2 (1998), p. 40.
69. Kas’ianov, *op. cit.*, Ref. 50, pp. 309–310, 326.
70. M. Light, ‘Foreign policy thinking’, in N. Malcolm, A. Pravda, R. Allison and M. Light (Eds), *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 87.
71. A. Wilson, ‘Ukraine: two presidents and their powers’, in R. Taras (Ed.), *Postcommunist Presidents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 83.
72. Wilson disagrees with the definition of national democrats as civic nationalists: see Wilson, *op. cit.*, ref. 66, p. 179. Snyder, on the other hand, defines nationalism in post-Soviet Ukraine as a ‘civic-territorial form of national loyalty’. Snyder believes that President Kravchuk promoted a ‘moderate civic nationalism’: see J. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), pp. 25, 258.
73. P. J. D’Anieri, *Economic Interdependence in Ukrainian-Russian Relations* (Albany, NY: State University Press of New York, 1999), p. 201.
74. D’Anieri, *ibid.*, p. 176.
75. D’Anieri, *ibid.*, p. 203.
76. O. Dergachov, ‘Presidential elections and foreign policy of Ukraine’ (Kyiv: Centre for Peace, Conversion and Foreign Policy of Ukraine, October 1999).
77. Wilson, *op. cit.*, Ref. 3, p. 176.
78. *Reuters*, 3 June 1994.
79. *Radio Ukraine World Service*, 14 December 1996.
80. T. Kuzio, ‘Russia continues to hold up border demarcation with Ukraine’, *RFERL Newline*, 30 October 2001.
81. D’Anieri, *op. cit.*, Ref. 73, p. 142.
82. D’Anieri, *ibid.*, p. 143.
83. See the introductory comparative chapters and the chapter on Ukraine in *Nations in Transit 2001*, available at www.freedomhouse.org.
84. See P. Kubicek, *Unbroken Ties: The State, Interest Associations and Corporatism in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000).
85. Molchanov argues that ‘selective nationalism’ has been used in Ukraine and that ‘Nationalist rhetoric lessened when real policies demanded a more accommodating approach’: see M. Molchanov, ‘Post-communist nationalism as a power resource: a Russian-Ukrainian comparison’, *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (2000), p. 283.
86. T. Kuzio, ‘Kuchma cornered’, *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief*, 6 February 2001.

87. D. Arel, 'Kuchmagate and the demise of Ukraine's "geopolitical bluff"', *East European Constitutional Review*, 10 (2001), p. 59.
88. C. R. Wise and T. L. Brown, 'The consolidation of democracy in Ukraine', *Democratization*, 5 (1998), p. 122.
89. D'Anieri, *op. cit.*, Ref. 74, pp. 40 and 82.
90. S. Shulman, 'Asymmetrical international integration and Ukrainian national disunity', *Political Geography*, 18 (1999), pp. 913–939.
91. V. Kulyk, *Ukrains'kyi Natsionalizm, u Nezalezhnyi Ukraïni* (Kyiv: Kyiv Mohyla Academy University, 1999), p. 58. Janmaat believes that Western Ukrainians 'tend to be more nationalist than Ukrainians in the rest of Ukraine', and they 'consistently vote for nationalist candidates': J. G. Janmaat, *op. cit.*, Ref. 56, pp. 13, 20.
92. Support for this observation can be found from none other than Petro Symonenko, leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine, who argues that radical, ethnic nationalism does not have public support even in Western Ukraine: *Tserkalo Tyzhnia*, 16 September 2000.
93. Bishop Lyment of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarch (UOC-KP), whose jurisdiction is the Crimea and Sevastopol, has complained that the only Ukrainian secondary school on the peninsula has not been given a proper building despite a four-year campaign by Ukrainian civic and religious groups: *Ukraina moloda*, 15 February 2001. Is this not a sign of ethnic Russian nationalism in the Crimea?
94. The local Crimean authorities and the Crimean State Committee for Religion openly favour the UOC-MP and refuse to grant buildings to the two Ukrainian autocephalous Churches. This is despite the fact that ethnic Ukrainians in the Crimea would welcome parishes of the UOC-KP: *Ukraina moloda*, 15 February 2001.
95. 'Natsional'na neterpymist' zakhidnykh ukraïntsiv—mif', *Den'*, 4 October 1997.
96. J. O. Loughlin and J. Bell, *op. cit.*, Ref. 62, p. 257. Janmaat contrasts the 'nationalist west to the Russophone east' (not nationalist east). This again assumes that ethnic Russian or Soviet nationalism does not exist in Russophone areas (Janmaat, *op. cit.*, Ref. 56, p. 166). The only notable exception to this common misconception is Shulman's observation that in Eastern Ukraine there exists 'a modified version of Russian nationalism' that 'promotes the autonomy, identity, and unity of people bearing a regionally based, mixed Russian-Ukrainian identity grounded heavily in Russian language and culture': S. Shulman, 'Nationalist sources of international economic integration', *International Studies Quarterly*, 44 (2000), p. 382. Birch also discusses the influence of Russian ethnicity upon voting behaviour which is stronger than that of Ukrainian ethnicity: Birch, *op. cit.*, Ref. 63, p. 28.
97. Y. Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).
98. See D. Arel, 'Ukraine: the muddle way', *Current History*, 97 (1998), pp. 342–346, and T. Kuzio, "'Muddling along": the first decade of Ukrainian independence', *The Harriman Review*, 14 (2001).
99. See Anatol Lieven, 'The weakness of Russian nationalism', *Survival*, 41 (1999), pp. 53–70.
100. A. Wilson, 'Competing models of Ukrainian national identity', in *Ukraine: Challenges of the Continued Transition, Conference Report, 30 June 1999* (Washington, DC: National Intelligence Council and Department of State, August 1999), pp. 7–10.
101. P. Kolsto, 'Ethnicity and subregional relations: the rise of the Russian diaspora', in R. Dwan and O. Pavliuk (Eds), *Building Security in the New States of Eurasia: Subregional Cooperation in the Former Soviet Space* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), p. 212.
102. The Ukrainian sociologist, Yevhen Holovakha, discusses the existence of chauvinistic, Russian nationalist groups in an interview in *Den'*, 24 October 2000.
103. Aleksandr Bazyluk, chairman of the Slavic Unity Party, said that 'Russian and Ukrainian culture, despite language and local difficulties, represents a single whole': cited in Shulman, *op. cit.*, Ref. 96, pp. 365–390.
104. The chairman of the Slavic Unity Party, Bazyluk, said in his election address on *Ukrainian Television-1* (4 October 1999) that his party promoted 'Slavic patriotism' and that they wished to unite 'patriots of the Slavic World'.
105. Interviewed in *Izvestiya*, 11 November 1999. The head of the Press Centre of the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ihor Hrushko, also stated, 'The creation of any unions between Slavic peoples will be a kind of showing off of some ethnic groups in front of others' (*Intelnews*, 17 November 1999). Bugajski writes that 'Separatists and Russian nationalists have endeavoured to push the Ukrainian authorities into defining the state along ethnic grounds, thus provocatively alienating the large segment of Russian speakers': see J. Bugajski, 'Ethnic relations and regional problems', in S. L. Wolchik and V. Zviglyanich (Eds), *Ukraine: The Search for a National Identity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), p. 173.
106. See V. Chudowsky, 'Ukrainian foreign policy in the Kuchma era: domestic and international determinants', Ph.D. thesis, University of Connecticut, 1998.
107. Soviet identity in the Donbas is not just political, but also ethnic: see Y. Hrytsak, 'National identity in

- post-Soviet Ukraine: the case of Lviv and Donetsk', in Z. Gitelman, L. Hajda, J-P. Himka and R. Solchanyk (Eds), *Culture and Nations of Central and Eastern Europe: Essays in Honor of Roman Szporluk* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 2000), p. 276.
108. Kas'ianov, *op. cit.*, Ref. 50, p. 312. See also O. Haran and O. Majboroda, *Ukrains'ki Livi: Mizh Leninizmom I Sotsial-Demokratieiu* (Kyiv: Kyiv Mohyla Academia, 2000), p. 27.
109. See J. Urban, 'The communist parties of Russia and Ukraine on the eve of the 1999 elections: similarities, contrasts, and interaction', *Demokratyzatsiia*, 7 (1998), pp. 111–134.
110. Wilson has also defined the Communist Party of Ukraine as Soviet nationalist: see A. Wilson, 'The long march of the Ukrainian left: backwards towards communism, sideways to social-democracy, or forwards to socialism?', *The Masaryk Journal*, 3 (2000), pp. 123, 130, 133.