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Democracy from the dust: ethnonationalism's role in the state-building of Eastern Europe

DEMOCRACY FROM THE DUST

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Ethnonationalism's Role in the Democratic State-Building of Eastern Europe

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ABSTRACT

In this study, I consider how ethnic nationalist sentiments complicate the state-building process, creating added considerations on the basis of perceived ethnic identity. Such considerations include the establishment of a bicameral legislature, and decentralization efforts. After the Soviet Union fell and the Iron Curtain lifted, hopes soared for democracy. But challenges, especially in Ukraine, have slowed representative state-building since the Cold War. "Democracy From The Dust" serves as my analysis of why. State-building is a multi-faceted process, one that requires substantial change in the economy, media, and the rule of law. These topics all constitute their exploration, but this report investigates the critical role ethnicity and identity play in constitutional design, as well as region-powersharing and decentralization processes.

The surge of nationalism in Eastern Europe is well-studied, yet the significance of social factors in state-building remains overlooked. Adding an ethnic dimension to this conversation does not negate previous research, but instead reaffirms the diversity of experience in post-Soviet states. Polish scholarship highlights Western investment, EU integration, and NATO accession in democratization. Conversely, Ukraine lacked similar support. Focus should shift to internal factors, like leadership, institutions and public confidence. Who leads and by what jurisdiction is a central task in democratic pursuits, influenced by nationalist sentiments.

A historical comparative analysis of Poland and Ukraine between 1985 and 2000 demonstrates how ethnic factors impact the socio-political fabric of nations. I argue that a country’s sense of identity significantly influences the state-building process. Contrasting Ukraine’s fragmented

identity with Poland's more cohesive one underscores this point. In Ukraine, the struggle for identity isn't merely ethnic Ukrainians versus ethnic Russians; rather, it's a clash between a Ukrainian identity and a Soviet one. This dichotomy serves as a barrier to effective state-building as ethnicity can intersect with broader forces including class struggle and external powers. The Soviet identity, rooted in the Russian language and culture, downplayed ethnic differences, presenting a facade of unity while suppressing independent expressions of ethnicity. This controlled narrative of peaceful coexistence under Russian cultural hegemony persisted even after the Soviet Union's collapse. Fears of secession and separatism in this era debilitated state-building.

I have employed John Stuart Mill's Joint Method of Agreement and Difference (JMAD) to investigate competing historical narratives. The study identifies causal relationships while leaving room for points of divergence by working within JMAD's framework which accounts for extraneous factors. Comparative studies operate best when constructed to juxtapose multiple causes within each case. By triangulating public survey sources, theories, and expert perspectives, I will argue that in addition to ethnicity's role in the collapse of the Iron Curtain and Soviet Union, such sentiments carried over to the state-building that followed. Given the scope of the project and the time considered, "process tracing" has allowed for the examination of a period, rather than a moment, tracing the causes of particular social phenomena to their development.

I aim to illustrate Russia's significant influence on the regional dynamics, given its unavoidable proximity. Historically, Ukraine has grappled with a dual identity, with a considerable portion

still identifying with its Soviet past. This complex interplay of identities can fuel tensions, despite the country's diverse demographics. My research incorporates these nuances and the pivotal role of identity and ethnicity, alongside economic and international factors, in shaping outcomes. Debates surrounding language, borders, and representation underscore the significance of ethnicity in defining each nation's identity. The war in Ukraine is a stark reminder that ethnic complexities are intertwined with political decisions, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of the region.

INTRODUCTION

As winter thawed in the early months of 1989, so too did the "zealous idealism" of the Communist experiment. As irony would have it, that year marked the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, a mutiny similarly aimed against the financial crises, food shortages, and inequalities of the *Ancien Régime.*[1] Both revolutions led to the eventual abolition of their respective failing economic systems. Feudalism withered in France, and communists were ousted across the Iron Curtain. The self-perpetuating joke within many Communist-controlled capitals became that, "[Communism] was the longest and most painful route from Capitalism to Capitalism."[2] The notion that Government could base its legitimacy on an economic ideology over a national identity was falling out of fashion, and falling fast.

Up to this point, Communism was the dominant framework, and according to Stanford University's Hoover Institution, an ideology of nearly 88.6 million adherents.[3] The precepts of this doctrine held precedence over creed, ethnicity, and nationhood. "Leninist ideology had made the issue of ethnonationalism either superfluous or anachronistic."[4] Much like the French Revolution revived a nationalist vigor, so too would the oppositions across Eastern Europe. By Spring, Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev was openly admitting the "profound 'mistakes' of virtually all his predecessors… abandoning the dream of Communism… and

[1] Gaddis, John Lewis. 2005. *The Cold War – A New History.* New York. *The Penguin House Press.* 237.
[2] Gwertzman, Bernard. 1990. *The Collapse of Communism – By the Correspondents of The New York Times.* New York: *Random House*. 4.
[3] Schmeman, Serge. 1989. "In Hope and Dismay, Lenin's Heirs Speak. New York City: *The New York Times.*
[4] Connor, Walker. 1994. *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding.* New Jersey: *Princeton University Press.* 66.

acknowledging the legitimacy of other social systems."[5] Gorbachev acknowledged that the artificial boundaries that had stifled independent identities for seventy years could not continue, and countries would find ways to create new governments.

Hindsight allows us to view the "stunning metamorphosis in 1989" as rather inevitable, but the world was "shaken by the rapidity of the unfolding changes [in Eastern Europe]."[6] Contrary to the analogous relationship above, the revolutions that year were uniquely peaceful.[7] The Malta Summit in Birżebbuġa would inadvertently open the doors for the dissolution of the empire, as Moscow could no longer subdue the recurrent perennialism each of its subordinate states held.[8] Many scholars presumed that the dormant national identities of this region would quickly yield fruitful democracies. Ukraine was anticipated to return to its pre-1922 parliamentary republic, while Poland was expected to draw insights from the Second Polish Republic that preceded the USSR. Internal social dynamics in certain Soviet satellites complicated smooth transitions.

[5] Gwertzman, Bernard. 1990. *The Collapse of Communism – By the Correspondents of The New York Times.* New York: *Random House*. 5.
[6] Rosenthal, Andrew. 1989. "The Malta Summit; Bush and Gorbachev Proclaim A New Era For U.S.-Soviet Ties; Agree on Arms and Trade Aims." *The New York Times.*
[7] Gwertzman, Bernard. 1990. *The Collapse of Communism – By the Correspondents of The New York Times.* New York: *Random House*. VII.
[8] King, Charles. 2010. *Extreme Politics: Nationalism, Violence, and the End of Eastern Europe."* New York: *Oxford University Press*. 27.

For a variety of reasons, state-building was not a uniformly smooth process. Russian antagonism is an obvious deterrent to sovereignty today, but the 1990s saw a less formidable government in Moscow, one with little technical influence in other states' affairs and was addressing its internal democratic struggles. While the newly formed Russian Federation was not absent, this paper seeks to analyze the effects of ethnic and identity tensions from within the development of post-Soviet era Europe. More specifically, this study will delve into the paths of Poland and Ukraine. The post-Cold War decade in Eastern European history is heavily studied, but social identities and their importance have not been adequately accounted for beyond the dissolution of the empire and the creation of boundaries. The Center for Global Development defines state-building as, "creating and strengthening the institutions necessary to support long-term economic, social, and political development."[9] This paper concentrates on the constitutional design of these states, the prescribed establishment of representative political institutions, and the

[9] "Rich World, Poor World: State Building and Global Development." Washington: Center for Global Development. 2005.

delegation of authority through different levels of government. Aided by a national spirit and identity, powerful movements can both help and hinder this process and the formation of a strong, sustainable government.

These transitions have largely been understood in an economic, and political frame and for sound reasoning. Historian Gale Stokes asserts a basic ingredient in understanding East European politics is the realization that these countries "operate in an interdependent world in which decisions made elsewhere have an impact on them."[10] Concerning Ukraine's transition, author Serhii Plokhy notes "Ukraine needed new owners and a new class of managers to revive its economy."[11] Key prescriptions for Eastern Bloc reconstruction, especially within the broader Transatlantic community, highlight the necessity of economic reforms and external aid. Yet, it's crucial to acknowledge that sustainable development and effective governance stem primarily from internal processes, rather than external influences alone. This perspective underscores the independence of satellite states' opposition movements and the collapse of the USSR, demonstrating the significance of internal dynamics.

In consideration of these internal dynamics, Walker Connor's *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, denotes that "few indeed are the scholars who can claim either to have anticipated this global upsurge in ethnonationalism or to have recognized its early manifestations."[12] Furthermore, Pål Kolstø finds that "the Soviet state had taught that nationalism of any kind was reactionary and harmful (this was also the general verdict of Western

[10] Stokes, Gale. 1993. *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe.* New York: *Oxford University Press.* 254.
[11] Plokhy, Serhii. 2021. *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine.* New York: *Basic Books.* 334.
[12] Connor, Walker. 1994. *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding.* New Jersey: *Princeton University Press.* 66.

scholarship), and, more importantly, any focus on ethnic issues would be detrimental to their interests since it would serve to legitimize… ethnic rights."[13] However, Ron Suny, Terry Martin, Krista Goff, and others observe that *korenizatsiia* fostered nationalist identities, acknowledging that while the regime punished excessive nationalism, it also celebrated and promoted some expressions. This recognition sheds light on the complexity of ethnic dynamics, and how they are understood in through Soviet history. Under this categorization, there reflects a strong respect for the influence that ethnic identity exerts on human perception and behavior.[14] Ethnic dynamics manifested themselves beyond glasnost and perestroika, and in different magnitudes were present in the state-building of each context.

Poland exhibits a more homogenous ethnic composition, with a predominant Polish population, whereas Ukraine boasts a more diverse ethnic makeup, encompassing significant populations of Ukrainians, Russians, and various other minority groups. Ukraine emerges as a nation characterized not only by a heightened consciousness and acknowledgment of ethnic disparities, but also diverging views of national identity and interests. Within its social fabric, there exists a prevalent awareness of these differences, contributing to the country's cultural and political landscape. Poland stands in stark contrast, presenting a predominantly homogenous population, where confrontational ethnic issues are sparse and seldom manifest. The diversity of Ukraine finds its roots in a rich tapestry of historical and geographical contexts. The territory now recognized as Ukraine has served as the nexus for diverse civilizations, with Slavic, Mongol, and Byzantine influences. Most relevantly, its geographic situation lends itself to a high margin of individuals who strongly identify with a Russian and Soviet heritage.

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[13] Kolstø, Pål. 1995. *Russians in the Former Soviet Union.* Hurst & Co. Indiana University Press. Pg. 112.
[14] Smith, Anthony D. 2009. *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach.* London and New York: *Routledge.* 134.

Poland's geographical complexity is distinct, shaped over a century by the forceful influence of its neighbors. While Ukraine has maintained diversity, Poland has seen its own diversity erased when crippled during WWII. The nature of Poland's existence can best be described by historian Timothy Snyder as the "Bloodlands" of Europe, where vindictive World Wars and the Age of Extremes have eradicated centuries of diversity.[15] Poland evolved into a homogenous population through the genocide and forced migrations carried out by Nazi Germany, the Soviet Uion, and Polish communist regimes. While ethnic minorities do exist, census data reveals that 98 percent of citizens identify as ethnically Polish.[16] These distinctions extend to the state-building process, where identity assumes a central role in shaping governmental structures and systems of representation.

Project Intervention

The collapse of communism and its far-reaching consequences mark the culmination of what Eric Hobsbawm identifies as the Age of Extremes. For this reason, the field of post-Soviet studies is ripe for intellectual discourse. "What had once been a distinct piece of real estate, defined by a common ideology, political structure, and foreign policy, became nearly unrecognizable by the turn of the twenty-first century."[17] Both Russia and Eastern Europe are widely studied across disciplines, and from this, Identity trends materialize in conversations about nationalism and nation-building but do not receive coverage in this tertiary process. Poland

[15] Snyder, Timothy. 2010. *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin.* New York: Basic Books.
[16] 2008. "Wyniki Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2002 w zakresie deklarowanej narodowości oraz języka używanego w domu." Warsaw*: Główny Urząd Statystyczny*
[17] King, Charles. 2010. *Extreme Politics: Nationalism, Violence, and the End of Eastern Europe."* New York: *Oxford University Press*. 6.

succeeded in establishing a robust democratic government and market-based economy at remarkable speed.

In Poland and Ukraine, social identity has been overlooked in favor of external, more tangible forces. In "Nationalism and Its Explanations," authors Henk Dekker, Darina Malova, and Sander Hoogendoorn assert the crucial role of social identity in maintaining political stability.[18] Their findings lend the theory that social identity can create a sense of unity and groupthink, but when paired against a differing ethnic group or social movement, can cause intense conflict along these lines. In their work, they view ethnicity, identity, and nationalism as tangentially related, omnipresent in creating a "nation," but varying in degrees of success, depending on the conflict between such groups. SomeIts proximity to European neighbors, rapid integration into Western institutions, and reduced influence from Russia deserve recognition for its success. Conversely, Ukraine encountered significant challenges, marked by political and economic instability, endemic corruption, cyclical political setbacks, and issues of self-determination not limited to Russian influence.

Poland's advantageous position with established borders before 1989 contrasts with Ukraine's inherited territory from the former Ukrainian SSR, where borders were administratively defined but not delimited or demarcated. These traditional views accurately show how these countries differed in their democratic visions early on. They help the discussion but only touch on the complex historical and cultural influences that shaped them. Some view the absence of civil war in Ukraine as evidence of successful nation-building, and the establishment of a constitution,

[18] Dekker, Henk. Malova, Darina. Hoogendoorn, Sander. 2003. "Nationalism and Its Explanations." *Political Psychology.* Vol. 24, No. 2, Special Issue: National Identity in Europe. 345-376.

proof of a unified, civic state. However, the absence of a formal conflict does not erase the evident divide, nor has it expedited the democratic process.

The objective of this thesis is to situate the role of identity and ethnic diversity in the process of state-building in post-Soviet era nations like Ukraine, and uniformity in Poland. This research aims to illuminate the consequences within these identities, movements, and perceived threats of "the other." Moreover, what aspects of ethnicity are most central within these movements, most consequential in their struggle, and most successful in their history? The analysis of ethnicity is complicated by the emergence of demographic features that have considerable scholarly overlap: linguistics, culture, religion, and geography, all play into the narratives of state-building within existing literature. As Lowell W. Barrington suggests, “These cleavages are so complementary that they leave the researcher no way to examine the independent effects of each.”[19] But, with this said, I argue that ethnicity played a role in the collapse of the Iron Curtain, in the state-building that followed.The establishment of an independent Ukrainian state potentially fueled animosity between those adhering to a Soviet identity and those advocating for an independent Ukrainian identity, as it represented a fundamental shift in political allegiance and cultural identity. To substantiate this argument, I examine the internal dynamics of each nation, including its leadership and the level of confidence its constituents have in the government and the overall system. Deciding who leads and by what jurisdiction is a central theme in all democratic pursuits and one where nationalist sentiments can be particularly influential.

[19] Barrington, Lowell W. 2002. “Examining Rival Theories of Demographic Influences on Political Support: The Power of Regional, Ethnic, and Linguistic Divisions in Ukraine.” *European Journal of Political Research.* Vol. 41. 455.

I employ a Comparative Historical Analysis of Poland and Ukraine between 1985 and 2000, utilizing John Stuart Mill's Joint Method of Agreement and Difference to investigate the competing historical narratives. For the intention of identifying divergences, this framework can also be applied to help establish factors as having a sufficient, certain effect. JMAD will "compare situations in which a putative causal factor is present to ones in which it isn't. The more similar these situations are in other respects, the better."[20] Poland's homogenous populace contrasts greatly with Ukraine's multi-ethnic makeup, and the study identifies causal relationships while leaving room for points of divergence. Optimal comparative studies thrive on the juxtaposition of various causal factors within individual cases. In light of the project's breadth and timeframe, employing "process tracing" enables the thorough examination of a continuum rather than a singular moment, unraveling the evolutionary roots of specific social phenomena. Through a synthesis of public survey data, theoretical frameworks, and expert insights, a comprehensive assessment will be achieved.

[20] Beisecker, David. "Mill's Methods." University of Nevada, Las Vegas. https://beisecker.faculty.unlv.edu/Courses/Phi-102/Mills_Methods.htm

SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES AND FRAMEWORKS

Defining Ethnicity and Identity Interactions

There are notable intricacies between the ethnic groups in Europe's "Last Frontier." Volatile geographic bounds naturally complicate these subtleties, but the post-Soviet scholarship offers a rich linguistic and cultural understanding of these groups. This research focuses on the three largest cohorts of Slavic communities: Russians, Poles, and Ukrainians. (The Russian landmass is home to 185 recognized ethnic groups where ethnic Russians and Eastern Slavs make up the largest portion of citizens). Scholars define these ethnic groups as a complex interplay of shared cultural traditions, languages, religions, and historical experiences. Siniša Malešević observes the "slippery nature of ethnic relations and the inherent ambiguity of the concept of ethnicity."[21] The region's remarkable fluidity and ambiguity in ethnic identity stand out vividly. Here, ethnicity flows and culture shifts dynamically. As Bernhard Stern attributes, "Soviet minority policy was not a product of expediency, a matter of arbitrary tactics of maintaining power and extending control."[22] He asserts it is instead grounded in the Soviet doctrine of historical materialism, which rejects racial elements as a decisive influence in history. While this was the theoretical underpinning of Soviet minority policy, it did not represent the reality of how minorities were treated within the USSR over time. Despite the professed commitment to equality, there are notable instances of repression.

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[21] Maleševic, Siniša. 2004. *The Sociology of Ethnicity.* London, Thousand Oaks, California. Sage Publications. Pg. 160.
[22] Stern, Bernhard J. 1944. "Soviet Policy on National Minorities." *American Sociological Review.* Vol. 9, No. 3. Recent Social Trends in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet identity, predominantly rooted in the Russian language and culture, attempted to downplay ethnic differences, only expressing them in controlled settings and measured degrees. Although it celebrated the familial nature of Slavic ethnicities, it also suppressed independent expressions that would provide a challenge and competition to the dominant narrative of peaceful coexistence. A brief history of how each leader approached national minorities:

Leader	**Minority Policies**	**Specific Examples**
Vladimir Lenin (1917-1924)	Officially Supported Self-Determination	● Creation of autonomous republics and regions based on ethnicity ● Encouragement of minority languages and cultures in education and government ● Commissariat for Nationalities Affairs
Joseph Stalin (1924-1953)	Shift from Self-Determination to Russification	● Collectivization: Disruption of traditional lifestyles, famines affecting minorities ● Great Purges: Targeting minority leaders and intellectuals ● Increased emphasis on Russian language and culture
Nikita Khrushchev (1953-1964)	Limited Relaxation of Russification	● Denunciation of Stalin's cult of personality ● Some rehabilitation of purged minority leaders ● Continued emphasis on Russification
Leonid Brezhnev (1964-1982)	Stagnation and Growing Resentment	● Policy of assimilation: Encouraging minorities to move to Russian cities ● Neglect of minority languages and cultures ● Rise of nationalism among some minorities
Yuri Andropov Konstantin Chernenko (1982-1985)	No Major Changes	● Continued Brezhnev-era policies
Mikhail Gorbachev (1985-1991)	Glasnost and Perestroika Unintended Consequences: Rise of Nationalism	● Glasnost (openness) led to discussions of minority grievances ● Increased ethnic tensions and calls for independence

USSR *korenizatsiia* primed the people of the Soviet Union to have identities. While the table makes evident the degree to which identities were expressed, the most notable outlier is the Stalin's rule, where from 1933 to 1939 *korenizatsiia* fell out of practice. While not abolished, its implementation ceased, simultaneously with the purge of leaders and non-russians accused of inciting ethnic tensions and suppressing Russians across the republic. While Khrushchev and Brezhnev attempted to reverse Stalin's policies, the core issues of Russification and lack of autonomy were not addressed. These issues were amplified in places like Ukraine and Belarus due to their proximity. Russification tended to be stronger and more long-lasting than in more distant Soviet republics. Regardless of interpretation of each leader's policies, the Russian identity was "first among equals"[23] After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Soviet tradition remained, and its primary caretaker became Russia, and by extension the diaspora.

The way Soviet policies interacted with these concepts is directly related to the maintenance of their strength, and how people continued to identify themselves as Soviet, even in the post-Cold War decade. In Poland, a Latin alphabetic language, a strong Catholic Church, and geographical separation from Moscow created a distance from the Soviet identity that is more strongly espoused in parts of Ukraine. Conversely, in Ukraine, a larger proportion of individuals identified with the Soviet legacy due to proximity and Russian influence. These individuals identify independently of ethnic Ukrainian identity, aligning more closely with Russian culture and language. Although the Ukrainian ethnic identity retained its strength in certain regions, the 1990s saw the emergence of complex interactions between the Soviet and independent Ukrainian identity, creating a palpable rift in the state-building process.

[23] Martin, Terry Dean. 2001. *The affirmative action empire: nations and nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939.* Cornell University Press.

Polish Ethnicity

Polish ethnicity stands distinct within the broader spectrum of Slavic cultures, notably differing from Ukrainian and Russian ethnicities as it belongs to the Western Slavic family. A defining characteristic of the identity is the Polish language, the predominant tongue among the people, using the Latin alphabet as opposed to the Cyrillic. Religiously, the vast majority of Poles adhere to Roman Catholicism, which serves as a significant cultural and social force within the Polish community, holding tremendous influence and convening power.[24] This strong affiliation with the Catholic church not only shapes the individual Polish identity but also fosters a shared connection. In a similar way to the Catholic community in Western Ukraine, the church successfully preserved an ethnic and cultural identity independent of Russia and the Soviets.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth played an integral role in solidifying the Polish ethnicity. It was during this era (1596-1795) that Poles emerged as the predominant ethnic group, and with it, Roman Catholicism became deeply intertwined with the national identity.[25] Despite periods of external pressures and influences, including the invasions of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, Poland has maintained a distinct character. While subjected to various forms of external control, there remains an enduring strength to the Polish identity that holds its roots in the PLC. For the last five centuries, Polish identity has remained rather unchanged.

[24] Burns, Kathryn. 2013. "'More Catholic than the Pope': An Analysis of Polish Devotion to the Catholic Church Under Communism." Union College. Pg. 34.
[25] Benabdeljalil, Ilyas. 2022. "What Was the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth?" *The Collector.* https://www.thecollector.com/what-was-the-polish-lithuanian-commonwealth/

In the Anglo-American sense, ethnicity is assigned to minority groups that tend to be differentiable based on racial characteristics. However, the European tradition views ethnicity, not only as synonymous with minority groups or races but with nationhood and peoplehood.[26] As Stephen R. Bowers notes, "In this sense, ethnicity retains a contemporary utility for an Eastern Europe entering a post-communist era."[27] Ethnicity possesses a congregating power that extends beyond strict categorization. This power serves as a reinforcement of identities and can be a mechanism for political change.

Russian Ethnicity

The deep-rooted history of Russian ethnicity is distinguished by its emergence as a distinct political entity, with the formation of the Russian state marking a significant milestone. Unlike other ethnic groups, Russians have, with few exceptions, maintained control over their land since the time of the Mongols in 1480. The only two noteworthy instances have been the contested occupation of Moscow from 1610 to 1612, and the Central Powers holding temporary control during the first World War. These possessions were temporary and had no effect on the Russian identity. The most widely spoken language in Europe, Russian plays an incredible unifying role in shaping ethnic identity. The language persists in non-ethnic Russian communities as well, particularly in the Baltics and Eastern Ukraine, further proving its mobilizing force, and the suppression of other languages during periods of Russification.[28] Religiously, the Russian Orthodox Church remains predominant in both practice and cultural influence. Even for those

[26] Yinger, J. Milton. *Ethnicity: Source of Strength? Source of Conflict?* State University of New York Press. Pg. 5
[27] Bowers, Stephen R. 1997. "Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe." *Liberty University: Faculty Publications and Presentations.* Pg. 5. https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs/199
[28] Armstrong, John A. 1976. "Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas." *The American Political Science Review.* Vol. 70, No. 2. Pg. 408.

who do not actively practice (ranging from 20% to 60%), there is an adherence to orthodox cultural norms.

Due to Russia's historical territorial ambitions, the diaspora is dispersed throughout Europe, and while some have assimilated into the cultures of the nation they reside, there is a great deal of ethnic resilience. Russians are the most populous in Ukraine, as evidenced by the 2001 Ukrainian Census finding 8,334,141 ethnic Russians within the borders.[29] The Russian ethnicity has retained a semblance of its present-day form since around the 10th or 11th century. Significant linguistic and cultural advancements characterized the medieval period, particularly with Moscow's rise as a political hub.[30] The Soviet era further solidified Russian identity, as government initiatives aimed to unify the diverse ethnic groups within the USSR. These policies also imposed the promotion of the Russian language and culture, alongside the cultivation of a shared Soviet identity.

The Communist Party Central Committee implemented a Russian language requirement in all schools across the Soviet republics. Khrushchev replaced the Stalinist policy of "national in form, socialist in content" with an emphasis on Russian as "the language of international communication and cooperation." This emphasis highlights Russian as the binding force of the empire. It's notable that these language policies would have been enforced in Ukraine but not in Poland, as Poland was a Bloc state rather than a Soviet Republic.[31]

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[29] "2001 : English Version : Results : General Results of the Census : National Composition of Population:" *2001 | English Version | Results | General Results of the Census | National Composition of Population:*, web.archive.org/web/20111217151026/2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/.
[30] Moss, Walter G. 2003. *A History of Russia – Volume 1, To 1917.* Anthem Press. Pg. 88.
[31] Chevalier, Joan F. 2006. "Russian as the National Language: An Overview of Language Planning in the Russian Federation." *Russian Language Journal.* Vol. 56, Issue 1.

Ukrainian Ethnicity

Ukrainians share a complex historical relationship with their Eastern neighbor. Despite this association, Ukrainian culture has long maintained its distinct identity, anchored by the Ukrainian language.[32] There have been efforts throughout history to erase the language, and push it out of the cultural and educational mainstream. Some notable examples from the Soviet era include, Stalin's 1933 telegram aimed to halt Ukrainization as well as the Ministry of Education's 1970 order mandating the use of Russian in higher education theses. While more symbolic, *On the Languages of the Peoples of the USSR* law granted official status to the Russian language, illustrating a trend in linguistic and cultural prominence over the maiden languages of the republics.[33] The efforts were strongest in the East and South Ukraine, but also had prevalence in Kyiv, a hub for academia and industry. Even amidst centuries of influence from bordering powers, Ukrainians have preserved their unique phonology, witnessing concerted efforts in the 19th century to standardize and promote the language in what is now Ukraine.

This group identifies with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which differs from the Russian Orthodox on ethnic lines but contains similar religious doctrine. Differences are apparent in where one chooses to worship more than their theological beliefs. Notably, there are also Ukrainian Catholics, predominantly in the Western part of Ukraine, where the Ukrainian identity and language have been best preserved. Throughout history, the Ukrainian ethnicity has rarely been the dominant one in the region it inhabits. Under various occupying powers, such as the

[32] Bellezza, Simone A. 2008. "The Discourse Over the Nationality Question in Nazi-Occupied Ukraine: The Generalbexirk Dnjepropetrowsk, 1941-3." *Journal of Contemporary History.* Vol. 43, No. 4. Pg 573.
[33] Chevalier, Joan F. 2006. "Russian as the National Language: An Overview of Language Planning in the Russian Federation." *Russian Language Journal.* Vol. 56, Issue 1.

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Habsburg Dynasty, the Russian Empire, and eventually the Soviet Union, Ukrainians were often referred to as "little Russians."[34] Today, Ukrainians consider the term derogatory, and antithetical to their unique cultural tradition. Despite centuries of attempts at Polonization and Russification, a cohesive Ukrainian culture and identity has endured.

Despite facing external political pressures, Ukrainians have preserved their ethnic and cultural identity, albeit not uniformly. Significant suppression occurred particularly in the South, East, and North. The Ukrainian identity has endured in pockets, bolstered by intentional acts of preservation. One such pivotal moment was the Ukrainian National Revival during the late 18th century, amidst Poland's partitions. Ethnic Ukrainians, scattered among the Austrian and Russian Empires and the Kingdom of Hungary, clandestinely nurtured their culture, defying suppression. The fall of the Russian Empire in 1917 heralded the Executed Renaissance, a literary movement in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, amplifying Ukrainian cultural visibility.[35] Yet, this resurgence was short-lived, as Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin quashed it once again. Thus, the resilience of the Ukrainian identity lies not in unbroken strength but in the deliberate efforts of preservation amid suppression, spanning epochs like the Ukrainian National Revival. For this reason, the identity has not been uniformly protected or espoused.

Unlike Russia or Poland, Ukrainians have never held a clear ethnic majority in the state that they live in. While Ukrainians were the ethnic majority within the Ukrainian SSR, they were not

[34] Kravčenko, Volodymyr Vasyl′ovyč. 2022. *The Ukrainian-Russian Borderland: History Versus Geography.* Montreal & Kingston London Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press. Pg. 27.
[35] "Executed Renaissance: The Erasure of Ukrainian Cultural Heritage in the Times of the Soviet Union." *Retrospect Journal.*

within the larger Soviet apparatus. Outnumbered in the general population of the USSR, they were underrepresented at the federal decision-making level. Ukrainians have been the primary residents of the region between the Carpathian Mountains and the Pontic-Caspian steppe, but they didn't have full control of the land until 1991.

Soviet Identity

Ukrainian culture (and a sense of ethnic identity) suffered considerable erasure (in the East and South and serious competition in the West) as a result of the pressures of the Soviet identity, which was largely built onto the Russian culture. One survey in 1999 by the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies of the University College found that 30% of Ukrainians identified themselves as Soviets.[36] Nelly Bekus observes a general feature of the Soviet identity: a shift from ethnic or tribal identities towards a common civic national identity. With this, we see the dispersion of Russian culture and the Russian language in the 20th century. "The Russian-dominated center established an inequitable relationship with ethnic groups."[37]

From a different angle, Andrew Wilson suggests that "'Soviet Identity'" may function as shorthand for other sorts of identities, such as Eurasianism or pan- (East) Slavism. Eurasianism sees Ukraine as historically part of the Eurasian economic and cultural space. Pan-Slavism goes further, focusing on Ukraine's contribution to Russian culture and disregarding the Western Ukrainian experience." Eurasianism emphasizes unity and cooperation among Eurasian nations, viewing Ukraine as an integral part of this broader space. Pan-(East) Slavism advocates for the

[36] Popson, Nancy. "Ukrainian National Identity: The 'Other Ukraine.'" *Kennan Institute: Meeting Reports.*
[37] Bekus, Nelly. 2010. "Struggle Over Identity: Belarysianness?" Central European University Press. 41.

cultural and political unity of Eastern Slavic nations, often prioritizing historical ties and downplaying Western Ukrainian identity. Through Wilson's lens, these ideologies interpret Ukraine's historical and cultural connections within broader frameworks.

In the post-Soviet era, Ukraine has grappled with the legacy of Soviet identity, as well as its own path toward nation-building and independence. The resurgence of Ukrainian nationalism since the dissolution of the Soviet Union reflects a desire to reclaim and assert a distinct Ukrainian identity, free from the constraints of Soviet ideology. In the 1990s, Ukrainian identity had not been prevalent or universal in certain regions of Ukraine since the late 19th to early 20th century. For nearly three generations, inhabitants of the Donbas region had experienced a predominant Russian or Soviet influence. This lack of a strong Ukrainian identity in certain regions, coupled with generations of Russian or Soviet influence in the Donbas, contributed to the limited assimilation between East and West Ukraine during the state-building process. Many people were nostalgic of the Soviet era, especially in the 1970s and 1980's, which further attributed to their lack of identity with the current system.

Ethnic and Civic Nationalism as Fields of Study

Deeply intertwined with the formation of Europe, ethnonationalism has become a field grounded in theory and rich with historical manifestations. The study of ethnic nationalism emerged as a discipline in the interwar period of the 20th century. The European political map was figuratively, and literally, being redrawn, as the Ottoman, German, and Austro-Hungarian

empires unraveled. The power vacuum that ensued gave way to Nazism in Germany, and Turkish nationalism led by President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

In this period, historian Hans Kohn's seminal work, *The Idea of Nationalism – A Study in its Origins and Background* served as a foundational text for the discipline, wherein he prescribed the differences between ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism. He draws this distinction further, asserting that Western (civic) nationalism relies on political phenomena, while Eastern (ethnic) nationalism exists in the cultural domain, dwelling on the historical past.[38] For him, the United States represented a clear example of civic nationalism, as penned by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, it decries, "civic virtue and moral happiness."[39] Another is that of the Italian *Risorgimento*, a 19th-century attempt at the unification of Italy under idealistic terms. Foreign Minister Pasquale Stanislao Mancini would proclaim the importance of resurrecting ancient greatness, imbued with modern nationalism.[40] The city-states of Ancient Greece (Athens and Sparta) represent ethnic examples.

However, elevating this "magnum opus" to an unassailable height would be erroneous, and alternative understandings yield a better appreciation of the post-Soviet era. Common criticisms forms scholars like Taras Kuzio and David McCrone portray Kohn as highly sociologically generalized, and scrutinize his apparent idealized view of nationalism in the West, but not the rest.[41] His analysis offers a broad understanding of nationalism, and remains abstract. Polish

[38] Kuzio, Taras. 2002. "The Myth of the Civic State: A Critical Survey of Hans Kohn's Framework for Understanding Nationalism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol. 25. Issue 1, Pg. 20-39.
[39] Kohn, Hans. 2005. *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background.* (2nd Edition) New York. Routledge. 315.
[40] Ibid 583.
[41] Jaskułowski, Krzysztof. 2010. "Western (Civic) 'versus' Eastern (Ethnic) Nationalism – The Origins and Critique of the Dichotomy." *Polish Sociological Review.* Vol. 3. No. 171. Pg. 289-303.

sociologist Krzysztof Jaskułowski includes that Kohn's dichotomy on this point also represents, "a sustained attempt at dispassionate analysis" despite its moral distinctions between good and bad nationalism. Kohn's argument also fails to consider the transition from ethnic to civic. While Kohn's insights into the incentives of groups are valuable, they are rigid and don't reflect changing perspectives or motivations.

Sociologist Rogers Brubaker rightly claims that *Kohn Dichotomy*'s distinctiveness between the two forms of nationalism is its greatest weakness. Given the scarcity of truly ethnocratic regimes, a more likely explanation is that civic nations are built around an ethnic core. Brubaker finds, "the correct question is not 'civic or ethnic nation,' but 'What is the core around which a civic nation is built'?"[42] This interplay is incredibly helpful in understanding both Poland and Ukraine. A reliance on the strict dichotomy in the Polish example is problematic because historian Andrzej Walicki holds that, "Polish nationalism emerged as a political nationalism of the Western type, although according to Kohn, Poland unmistakably belongs to the non-Western world."[43] This confusion is avoidable in Brubaker's interpretation. In his interpretation, ethnic considerations are not nullified for civic aspirations. Brubaker's analysis underscores that, while civic nationalism may emphasize inclusive citizenship and shared civic values, it does not erase ethnic identities. Rather, ethnic considerations persist as a significant force within civic nations, shaping societal dynamics in profound ways. This perspective highlights the complexity of national identities, suggesting that even in ostensibly civic nations, ethnic affiliations remain influential and can be mobilized for various purposes, whether political or cultural.

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[42] Brubaker Rogers. 1998. "Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism." In *The State of the Nation. Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 306.
[43] Walicki, Andrzej. 1982. *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism. The Case of Poland.* Oxford: Clarendon Press. Pg. 68.

While Kohn's is a seminal work in this space, his understanding of ethnic intricacies relies wholly on the makeup of 1946 Europe that does not exist anymore. Poland today would be unrecognizable. In 1931, in a presumably diverse country, only 68% of residents declared themselves ethnically Polish. The population plummeted from 35 million in 1939 to 24 million in 1946, a number that could only be formally realized many years later because no census data could be collected. These were the realities of Kohn's Poland, one that in 1989 would identify as nearly 90% ethnically homogenous. Kohn's work does however foreshadow the rise and fall of empires. Perhaps, it is because, as Eurasia Group President Ian Bremmer suggests, the fall of the USSR is not unlike that of the Austro-Hungarian or Ottoman Empires that Kohn studies.[44] Once dominant ethnic groups become part of a vanished order, at times unwelcomed in hostile territories. While Kohn's pitting of civic and ethnic nationalism at odds with one another won't be taken at face value in this comparative analysis, his definitions coincide with Brubaker's logic.

State-Building versus Nation-Building

While nation-building and state-building are informally synonymous, their technical distinction is important in understanding and expanding upon existing literature.

[44] Bremmer, Ian. 1994. "The Politics of Ethnicity: Russians in the New Ukraine." *Europe-Asia Studies.* Vol. 46, No. 2. Pg. 263.

Nation-Building

> Conventionally, this concept refers to the population, encompassing shared values, cultures, languages, and histories. The intention is to foster a national identity, cohesive along some common participation.[45] The breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s represents an ethnically-based nation-building effort in the Balkans, whereas French nation-building has historically emphasized principles of citizenship, equality, and republican values.

State-Building

> Secondary to the establishment of a nation, is the state-building process, focusing on the creation, or strengthening of governmental institutions, and administrative capacities.[46] The omnipresent goals of this process are the functionality and legitimacy of the polity.

Regarding the prescribed social factors in this case study, scholars traditionally address ethnic concerns with regard to their role in nation-building. This emphasis is understandable, given the primary objective of such ethnic movements or grievances is to reaffirm cultural identities within specific territorial boundaries. Jerry Z. Muller, finds that ethnonationalism draws its "emotive power" from ties of blood. He asserts that there is a subjective belief in the "we," a marker that can distinguish the boundaries of a nation.[47] These feelings are not rescinded once a nation is born, and this study endeavors to work into the tertiary aspects of these ethnic sentiments and recognize the institutional dynamics that they influence. This is not an arbitrary leap and has

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[45] Mylonas, Harris. 2013. *The Politics of Nation-Building – Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities.* Cambridge University Press.
[46] Grotenhuis, René. 2016. *Nation-Building and State-Building and the Challenge of Fragility.* Amsterdam University Press. Pg. 73.
[47] Muller, Jerry Z. 2008. "Us and Them: The Enduring Power of Ethnic Nationalism." *Foreign Affairs.* Vol. 87, No. 2. Pg. 20.

been demonstrated in contemporary examples including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Even within the scope of this project, scholars have alluded to ethnic elements in the state-building of this region. Ethnologist Valery Tishkov served as Russia's Minister of Nationalities during the Yeltsin administration. A primary witness to his motherland's democratic ambitions, and that of Eastern Europe, Tishkov viewed the suppression of ethnic identities and their revival. Tishkov placed great emphasis on "ethnic entrepreneurs," political leaders who mobilized grievances, exacerbated internal conflicts, and legitimized political power along these lines.[48] Furthermore, Henk Dekker, Darina Malová, and Sander Hoogendoorn, authors of "Nationalism and Its Explanations," make inferences about the interdependence of social identity and political stability.[49] National attitudes, emotions, values, and beliefs are transferable via political systems to the masses. These scholars indirectly argue for a causal relationship between identity and politics that could impact not only nationalist sentiments but also the nature of the states formed. While often used interchangeably, it's crucial to delineate between nation-building and state-building for a deeper understanding of existing literature. Identity goes farther beyond the establishment of political boundaries into the realm of administrative functions.

[48] Tishkov, Valery. 1997. *The Mind Aflame: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Conflict In and After the Soviet Union.* London: Sage Publications. Pg. 7.
[49] Dekker, Henk. Malová, Darina. Hoogendoorn, Sander. 2003. "Nationalism and Its Explanations." *Political Psychology.* Vol. 24, No. 2, Special Issue: National Identity in Europe. Pg. 345-376.

What Constitutes a Good State?

Even with a nation defined, what constitutes a 'good' state? Irrespective of ethnicity, what were the intended goals of the democratic state-building efforts in Eastern Europe at this time? To grasp the concept of democratization, we need to understand how each country tries to capitalize on the successes and learn from the failures of those who came before them. Democratization is often characterized by three historical waves, each building off the perceived successes of the last.

Political Scientist Samuel Huntington identifies several pivotal moments in historical waves of change. In the first wave, we see the fragility of new democracies in the 19th century, highlighting the need for robust institutions and a democratic culture for long-term survival. The second wave's emergence post-World War II underscores the significance of external factors, such as defeating authoritarian regimes, in fostering democratization, stressing the potential of international cooperation. The third wave beginning with the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal, and eventually, *Demokratizatsiya,* demonstrates democracy's need to be adaptable across cultural contexts.[50] These moments underscore the complex interplay of political, social, and international dynamics shaping global trajectories of democracy and governance. Based on the successes of prior nations, post-Soviet states and satellites understood their primary focus to be the establishment of faithfulness in the new democratic system. In supporting this goal, three important objectives emerged:

[50] Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century. University of Oklahoma Press. Pg. 15.

1. The Creation and Sustainability of National Identity

   States aimed to foster a unified identity through the reclamation of historical narratives, the promotion of cultural heritage, or the affirmation of nationalist fervor.

2. The Decentralization of Power and Development

   Successful states sought to empower local governance, enhance democratic participation, and drive socio-economic progress through decentralization initiatives.

3. Economic and Political Reforms

   States implemented liberalization measures in their economies and established democratic institutions to break away from Soviet-era centralized control and stimulate growth.

It is worth noting that these goals were achieved and aspired to in unique ways, dependent on the historical context they inherited. While theorists like Samuel Huntington, Francis Fukuyama and John Rawls write convincing reasons for liberalism as a trademark, but thinkers in Poland and Ukraine did not have an identical understanding of democracy (not only with the West, but in regards to each other). Liberalism is not universally applicable, thus the divergence of interpretation between Ukraine and Poland isn't as significant of an issue as the success in meeting their aspirations.

The Creation and Sustainability of National Identity

National identity inspires good governance. Poland solidified its national identity well before the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989. Despite years of communist rule, Poland maintained a strong sense of national consciousness, preserved through cultural institutions, religious traditions, and a collective memory of historical struggles for independence. This solidification provided a certain degree of direction and unity as Poland transitioned to democracy in the 1990s. Poland's self-perception as the "Christ of nations" underscores its deep-rooted sense of historical importance and moral obligation. Historian Norman Davies emphasizes that despite enduring periods of political subjugation, "Poland was a prisoner, but its soul was unbound."[51] Throughout history, Russia wielded diverse forms of dominion over Poland, ranging from direct occupation to subtle influence. This resilience, coupled with the depiction of Russia (and subsequently, the Soviets and communism) as the "other," delineated a clear trajectory for Poland's historical evolution.

National identity permeates the state-building process in areas as minute as language policy, and as grandiose as foreign policy. Ukraine inherits a complex situation where competing identities view many governance differently. Ukraine struggles to reconcile a Soviet past and a Russian neighbor with the establishment of an independent Ukrainian identity. Naturally, this contributes to political divisions evident in the party system.

The Party of Regions (PoR) and the Popular Movement of Ukraine (Rukh) were at significant odds with each other in the 1990s. Their differences reflected the core identity struggles within

[51] Klajn, Maryla. 2016. "Polskość: The Legacy of Polish Past in its Present Identity Struggles." *European Border Communities.*

Ukraine at that time. Rukh played a central role in advocating Ukrainian independence, championing a unique national identity separate from Soviet influence. The Party of Regions prioritized fostering strong economic and cultural bonds with Russia, reflecting their alignment with the eastern and southern regions, where Russian populations were more prominent.[52] Rukh's influence waned later in the decade, but it played a crucial role in shaping Ukrainian independence and promoting a pro-Western, Ukrainian nationalist agenda that directly challenged the views of the Party of Regions. The differences in the solidity and direction of national identity between Poland and Ukraine had profound implications for their respective state-building processes. In Poland, a relatively coherent national identity provided a foundation upon which democratic institutions could be built and governance structures could develop. This sense of identity helped foster a shared vision for the nation's future, facilitating political stability and effective governance.

The Decentralization of Power and Development

While a tenet of liberalism would prescribe decentralization as a key feature of the state-building process, Poland and Ukraine took diverging paths on this function. Poland was far more experimental in decentralization (both politically and fiscally), while Ukraine did not depart as distinctly from the type of centralization witness in the Soviet Union. The Soviet logic reified, "All nationalities are organized according to a consistent Soviet standard and subsequently united with the ultimate aim of consolidating and strengthening the Soviet Union as a single

[52] Solchanyk, Roman. 2001. *Ukraine and Russia: The Post-Soviet Transition.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Pg. 127.

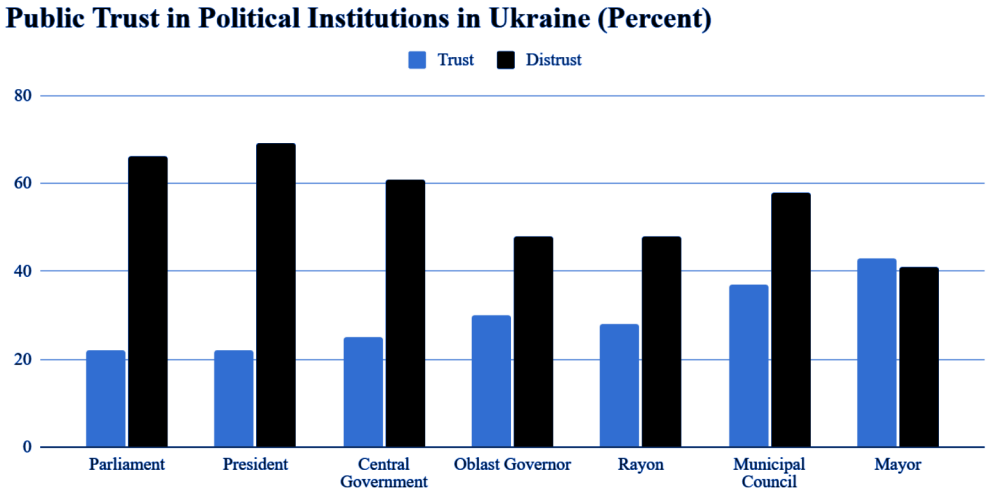
State."[53] Premier Joseph Stalin went as far as to say, "Autonomy can only exist which is supported by the Soviets of workers deputies." By this, empowerment was only supported under the same ideological boundaries that were established by the central authority.[54] Stalin's successors, Khrushchev and Gorbachev, both attempted to instill decentralization within the USSR. Khrushchev advocated for decentralized territorial-industrial management, granting regional authorities greater economic control to enhance efficiency, yet faced challenges due to coordination issues and a lack of skilled personnel. Gorbachev pursued broader decentralization through Glasnost and Perestroika, aiming for political transparency, economic restructuring, and market-oriented reforms, which inadvertently accelerated the dissolution of the Soviet Union. A strong decentralized democratic system would therefore allow for pluralist thought and the delegation of both economic and civil autonomy.

Some do not take as absolute an interpretation of democratization. Urban sociologist Chris Pickvance suggests that the relationship between decentralization and democracy is not deterministic. He identifies the association as an "empirically variable one, rather than a necessary one."[55] However, he places a great deal of faith in the ability of fledging democracies to operate effectively and exclusively under central control. The West traditionally sees "decentralization as a tool of democratization that the country badly needs to reverse attempts… to appropriate power."[56] Agreeing with this, the results of *Demokratizatsiya* proved the relevance of decentralized authority. The case studies presented in *Demokratizatsiya* underscored the

[53] Guins, George C. 1954. *Soviet Law and Soviet Society: Ethical Foundations of the Soviet Structure…* Germany: Springer Dordrecht. Pg. 218.
[54] Guins, George. 1950. "Soviet Centralism." *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*. Vol. 9, No. 3. Pg. 337
[55] Pickvance, Chris G. 1997. "Decentralization and Democracy in Eastern Europe: A Skeptical Approach. *Environment and Planning: Government and Policy.* Vol. 15, Issue 2. Pg. 129.
[56] Jarábik, Balázs. Yesmukhanova, Yulia. 2017. "Ukraine's Slow Struggle for Decentralization." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. *Reforming Ukraine.*

effectiveness of decentralized authority in fostering local governance and community engagement. Moreover, the data overwhelmingly suggests that citizens tend to hold local governments in higher esteem and view them as more legitimate compared to federal authorities. This trend highlights the enduring importance of decentralization in promoting democratic values and citizen participation at the grassroots level. Proof can be found in the International Foundation for Election System's public opinion data from Ukraine in 2002.

While Ukraine may not have inherited a liberal model, decentralization was an intended goal once public trust could be gained at a more central level, and national unity could be affirmed.



[57]

Economic and Political Reforms

The success of the liberalism model is up for debate today, but in the context of 1991, and the situation in which Poland found itself, liberal democracy presented an incredibly powerful economic tool, whose structures represented the possibility of sustainable growth.

[57] Sharma, R. 2003. "Public Opinion in Ukraine, 2002." Washington: International Foundation for Election Systems.

Coincidentally, its Western realignment would be aided by a transition in this direction. From an economic perspective, Ukraine creates a more semi-consolidated democracy. This can be attributed to ease of transition in the early years, and the ability to utilize existing institutions in new forms.

The final obstacle in the transition to democracy is the perceptions of external powers and foreign involvement. Scholars of the period recognized this additional trend that could help or hinder democratization. It was a feature absent in the first two waves of Huntington's analysis but remained incredibly influential in determining the outcomes of the former republics. Societies in the post-Soviet era tended to sort themselves into distinct categories. The first category encompassed the former republics situated along the Baltic coast: Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. In these three newly re-established Baltic states, nationalist movements enjoyed significant authority and upheld fundamental objectives largely unopposed throughout the 1990s. Their advocacy for a political-economic shift towards Europe, apprehension of Russia as a security threat, and portrayal of Russia as the primary 'other' influenced their governments' policies.[58] Remarkably, even the Communist successor parties in these states embraced the rhetoric and objectives of the nationalists. This defied expectations of the Communist parties, who historically opposed strong nationalist movements and would've likely not aligned with nationalist objectives. The second group comprised countries such as Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova, where nationalists found themselves in at odds with former Communists, with their respective support bases primarily divided along regional lines.

[58] Abdelal, Rawi. 2002. "Memories of Nations and States: Institutional History and National Identity in Post-Soviet Eurasia." *Nationalities Papers.* Vol. 30, No. 3. Pg. 459.

The Western perception of success in Eastern Europe hinged on the promotion of democracy, a goal that the former Soviet satellites had for themselves as well. Central to this vision and identity was the establishment of a transparent society, where pluralism, both in the political and cultural spheres would be protected and accessible. In parallel, economic and political reforms would have become deeply intertwined with the formation of identity, as the transition from socialist structures necessitated a redefinition of societal norms and values. A greater emphasis would also be placed on individual rights. As Simon Bein finds, "democracy…cannot create a common identity from sources of itself, is only a means to the end of fulfilling individual identity and autonomy needs."[59] The avoidance of anomie seems to be the central characteristic, and with it, the intended goal of legitimacy.

Legitimacy

The intended goal of any functioning state, democratic or not, is a sustainable level of legitimacy. The crucial requirement is a justification of the government's position of power. A regime's legitimacy hinges upon the populace's perception of it providing satisfactory order and believing that no other available alternative would significantly surpass it.[60] Samuel Huntington, alongside political scientists Myron Weiner, and Joseph LaPalombara, find "a critical test of legitimacy" in democracies to be the "...peaceful transfer of power from one party to another under democratic conditions."[61] Fair and free elections are a cornerstone of a healthy democracy and can be a sufficient ingredient for a polity to be considered legitimate.[62] But legitimacy does not

[59] Bein, Simon. 2022. "The Dysfunctional Paradox of Identity Politics in Liberal Democracies." *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft (German Journal of Comparative Politics.* Vol. 16. Pg. 221.
[60] Sil, Rudra. Chen, Cheng. 2004. "State Legitimacy and the (In)Significance of Democracy in Post-Communist Russia." Europe-Asia Studies. Vol. 56, No. 3. Pg. 347.
[61] Weiner, M. LaPalombara, J. 1966. Political Parties and Political Development. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pg. 401-415.
[62] D'Anieri, Paul. 2023. "Elections, Succession, and Legitimacy in Ukraine: Lessons from Six Presidential Transitions. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies.*

necessitate participation. Poland and Hungary, some of the first to consider reforms, and often heralded as early success stories, received some of the lowest voter turnouts in the 1990s.

National Election Turnout (Percent)[63]

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999/2000*
Czech Republic	97		85				76		74	
Hungary	63				69				57	
Poland	61	43		52		68		48		
Slovakia	95		84		76				84	
Slovenia	80		75				74			
Estonia			67			69				57
Latvia				90		72			73	
Lithuania			75				53			
Albania		99	90				80			
Bosnia									78	
Bulgaria	90	80	75		74		63	58		
Croatia	85		75			69				78
Macedonia	85				78					
Montenegro	75						67			
Romania	86		75				70			
Serbia	72		69		62			62		
Moldova									67	
Ukraine									70	74
Belarus						65		85		

However, as Dr. Paul G. Lewis corroborates, "Democratization in this context also means the right not to participate."[64] As mentioned, the legitimacy coefficient depends instead on several other factors, notably the capacity of a nascent state to foster a sense of belonging among its constituency. Where states fail to do so, state-building is delayed. As with nationalism, this can occur along ethnic lines, like Brubaker finds, or within civic differences.[65] A vacuum of identity politics created from the USSR's collapse. For seventy years prior, there was a theoretical construction of a unified state between Ukraine and Russia. The extent to which nations adhered to this construct remains a contentious issue; historian Thomas Winderl characterized the union

[63] West European average: 76.4. Cf. Governing the New Europe, ed. J. Hayward and E. C. Page (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).
[64] Lewis, Paul G. 2001."The 'Third Wave' of Democracy in Eastern Europe: Comparative Perspectives on Party Roles and Political Development." Party Politics. Vol. 7, No. 5. London: Thousand Oaks Press. Pg. 558.
[65] Lubomyr, Hajda. Beissiner, Mark. 2019. The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society. New York: Routledge Press. Pg. 95.

as a “prison of nations,” while others asserted the existence of a supranational community predicated on a socialist context.[66] Understanding how ethnic identities were treated during the Soviet era is important because it influences how new identities are formed. Even when ethnic identities were acknowledged and celebrated more freely under Khrushchev and Gorbachev in the later years of the Soviet Union, they were still tempered. If ethnic identities were suppressed or replaced by a Soviet identity during that time, it would have a lasting impact on how people in those regions view their identities today in their pursuit of democracy.

[66] O'Connor, Kevin. 2006. *Intellectuals and Apparatchiks: Russian Nationalism and the Gorbachev Revolution.* Lexington Books. Pg. 35.

METHODOLOGY

Historical Comparative Analysis

This methodological approach features a longitudinal analysis of two competing examples. While interdisciplinary, the Historical Comparative Analysis here employs and discusses sociological trends. In the study of transitioning societies, an HCA can discern factors of influence that shape historical, political, and social outcomes. Drawing these causal relations relies on pinning competing narratives against one another and identifying points of variation. Such divergence between Poland and Ukraine has been discussed above, and the HCA is an important technique in recognizing these patterns.

Comparative Analysis holds an established efficacy within the study of democratization. Its wide utilization in this space makes it a suitable choice for the project at hand. Scholars have extensively deliberated on this framework to compare various geopolitical scenarios. Notably, the work of famed political sociologist Barrington Moore Jr. provides significant validity to this approach. Dr. Moore's scholarship on politics and society was evident in his influential work *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, of which Jørgen Møller credits it as the revitalization of comparative analysis.[67] Moore's work is so revered because it acknowledges the complexity of historical processes. Much like this HCA attempts to demonstrate, Moore rejected simplistic determinism or monocausal explanations. Given that there are natural factors that can't be controlled in this study, Moore is proof that a comparative exploration of social identity is not nullified by differences in economic or geographic factors.

[67] Møller, Jørgen. 2017. *State Formation, Regime Change, and Economic Development.* London. Routledge Press. Pg. 77.

Employing Mill's Methods

Social theorist John Stuart Mill prescribes five methods to correlate observations with causality.[68]

Method of Agreement	Looks for common factors present in cases with the same outcome.
Method of Difference	Identifies unique factors present in cases with and without the phenomenon of interest.
Joint Method of Agreement and Difference	Analyzes cases where the phenomenon occurs and where it does not find common and unique factors.
Method of Residues	Isolates the influence of remaining factors after removing known causes from a complex event.
Method of Concomitant Variations	Examines how variations in one factor correspond with variations in another (indicating a causal relationship).

Given that this project's intended goal is to compare ethnicity's influence on state-building, the Joint Method of Agreement and Difference (JMAD) would provide the

[68] Mill, John Stuart. 1843. *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive, Being A Connected View of The Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation.* London. Vol. 1, No. 1. Edited: 2008 (John Parker).

most suitable approach among Mill's designs. Of course, Poland and Ukraine are not identical outside of their ethnic makeup either, and the joint methodology allows for nuance in appreciating both shared and distinct elements. On this merit, the coinciding economic, and political concerns that occur irrespective of ethnicity can be understood. For its recognition of non-ethnic factors, JMAD proves essential considering the alternative factors at play.

Time Frame – 1985 to 2000

Seeking to understand the importance of time in political and social change, Paul Pearson suggests that historical analysis can help scholars move away from a static view of institutional progress. To do this, restraints need to be employed. In his own words, "Attentiveness to issues of temporality highlights aspects of social life that are essentially invisible from an ahistorical vantage point."[69] 1985 to 2000 provides room to analyze four pivotal characteristics of this period: the end of Soviet domination, nation-building challenges, the transition to democracy, and potential complications and successes along the way. Within these categories are intense debates on the nature of identity, language politics, minority policies, and governing tactics. These processes take time to ruminate and the selected period allows for that.

Historian Ferdinand Braudel asserts the necessity for Annules school, a French approach to history that argues social and political processes take an incredibly long time to

[69] Pierson, Paul. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis.* Princeton University Press. Pg. 2.

manifest and form.[70] Pearson echoes this, encouraging, "...there is a considerable separation in time between the onset of a cause and the emergence of the main effect."[71] With credit to Braudel and Pearson, there is certainly relevance in the new millennium that is not covered. The Orange Revolution, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and of course the invasion of mainland Ukraine all justify the extension of the timeframe further. With this in mind, the period can not be extended indefinitely, and 2000 represents a critical cut-off before the EU welcomed a mirage of former Soviet states in 2004. Moreover, moving the time frame out would undeniably change the focus from state-building to state-maintenance.

Data Collection

This report relies heavily on existing historical monographs that make up the bulk of the data collected. Three main categories arise. The first is the use of primary source documents, pre-translated to English from their original language. Some examples include the Ukrainian Independence Referendum of 1991, as well as the Polish, Ukrainian, and Crimean constitutions. Outside of the normative qualitative nature of this project, census data has been utilized as well.

The majority of the data I collected comes from scholarly secondary sources. Within this, a healthy mix of perspectives has been collected, some reaffirming the project goals, and others interpreting state-building in more civic terms. Secondary sources have also been collected in the

[70] Kitschelt, Herman. 1992. "The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe." *Politics and Society* Vol. 7, No. 50. Pg. 20.
[71] Pierson, Paul. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis.* Princeton University Press. Pg. 93.

form of political commentary and newspaper editorials. These tertiary sources are primarily used to supplement the understanding of the pre-1985 Soviet timeline.

FINDINGS

The shared historical objective of Central-Eastern European nations was to cultivate democracy in both institutions and consciousness, and while both aimed to establish market economies, achieve democratic stability, and ensure long-term viability, their paths diverged. This caveat can partially be explained by their opposing experiences within the Soviet sphere of influence. But, additionally and more pressing to the question of this study, Paul Lewis finds, "...the ethnically homogenous nature of [some] east-central European states facilitated rapid democratization," while those countries with a diversity of identity perspectives proceeded at a lesser pace.[72] Given that constitution-building is an integral part of the democratization process, it stands to reason that identity factors are likely to be involved.

As these countries began drafting new constitutions, the potential for separatism was greater in Ukraine. By 1992, the Crimean parliament was already declaring itself the "Republic of Crimea," attempting to gain more self-governance from Ukraine. Crimea sought to assert greater control over its own affairs, including language, culture, and economic development. Whether threats to Ukraine's territorial integrity were well-founded, they were on the minds of policymakers and drafters of the constitution. While Crimea's relationship with the rest of the Ukrainian landmass is different then other oblasts, concerns over identity remained central.

[72] Lewis, Paul G. "The 'Third Wave' of Democracy in Eastern Europe: Comparative Perspectives on Party Roles and Political Development." Party Politics. Vol. 7, No. 5. London: Thousand Oaks Press. Pg. 558.

Constitutional Designs and Referendums

The creation of a constitution should not be seen solely as a technical task carried out by constitutional lawyers but instead as a significant political and social endeavor. Documents like these provide the legal basis for a country's aspirations, ideally perched upon a solid democratic foundation.[73] These aspirations are not limited to power and control. As Hungarian historian Antal Visegrády experienced, "It is well known that the realization of the constitutional rule of law depends not only on legal regulation but on social, political, and cultural elements as well."[74] They provide an opportunity for comparison, reflecting individual historical context and considerations.

For both countries, however, the state-building operation began before the ratification of any formal constitution, and in their place were two temporary ones meant to aid the transition. As much as the documents themselves provide information, so too does the timeline before their construction. Both countries needed similar transitions from the Soviet-era policies that upheld a centrally concentrated government and socialist economic ideals. In Poland, the *Mała Konstytucja,* or the "Little Constitution of 1992," was the necessary bridge between the past and present. It updated the existing constitution (Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, 1952) while dismantling the one-party system. Though temporary and limited, it remained functional through its short lifetime. Ukraine followed a similar path, and after gaining its independence, heavily amended the 1978 Constitution of the UkrSSR, but retained more elements of a strong central government in comparison to its Western counterpart.

[73] Wallis, Joanne. 2016. *Constitution Making During State Building.* Cambridge University Press. Pg 5.
[74] Visegrády, Antal. "Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe: Experiences of a Model Country - Hungary." *William & Mary Bill of Rights Journal.* Vol. 2, Issue 2, "Winds of Chance Symposium. Pg. 255.

The central concerns of these newly independent states are reflected below:

	Poland	**Ukraine**
Political Systems	The transition from a one-party communist system to a multi-party democracy	Building a democratic system of government with effective checks and balances and the establishment of a multi-party system.
Economic Systems	Shifting from a socialist planned economy to a free market economy	Shifting from a socialist planned economy to a free market economy
National Identity	Balancing pluralism with the strong influence of the Roman Catholic Church	Safeguarding the territorial integrity of the nation in the face of potential separatist movements
Governance	Devolving power from the central government to regional authorities and establishment of strong, independent rule of law	Establishing a strong and independent rule of law.

Of these concerns, ethnic elements are most present in political systems, national identity, and governance. While economic systems play a relevant role in a state's success, certainly hold little bearing on feelings of identity. The success of each of these categories will be discussed in a moment, but it is worth recognizing that at the very least, both countries were able to form a

constitution with a semblance of democratic institutions successfully, albeit some weaker than others. In 1997, a referendum marked "The Constitution of the Republic of Poland" as the new supreme law, replacing the *Mała Konstytucja.* During the 5th session of the independent Verkhovna Rada, "The Constitution of Ukraine of 1996" was ratified, making it the last of the SSRs to do so.

Poland at a Glance

The Polish constitution is regarded as an arduous collection of compromises. No participants left fully satisfied, but, "The process of constitution drafting was quite open and inclusive, reflecting the various interests of a diverse society."[75] While Poland may not have been as culturally diverse as some other countries, it was diverse in terms of political ideologies, socioeconomic backgrounds, and stakeholders' considerations. Clergy, laymen, politicians, lawyers, and economists all had their hand in the drafting process. Given the compromising nature, if the decided constitution were truly unsatisfactory, more pushback would have been expected from either the conservative or former communist fronts.

A significant political transformation occurred with the successful transition to a multi-party system, marking a departure from the monolithic rule of the Communist Party. Despite Communists still retaining a presence, the newfound freedom of choice allowed for a more diverse political landscape, one that ten years prior would have been unimaginable.[76] The Third

[75] Lewis, Paul G. "The 'Third Wave' of Democracy in Eastern Europe: Comparative Perspectives on Party Roles and Political Development." Party Politics. Vol. 7, No. 5. London: Thousand Oaks Press. Pg 454.
[76] Wyrzykiwski, Mirosław. 2001. "Legitimacy: The Price of a Delayed Constitution in Poland." *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe*. Vol. 1, Institutional Engineering. Pg. 436.

Republic of Poland would implement a system of social justice where power was vested in the nation and people, abolishing the political monopoly that vested power in the state. The freedom of choice was reflected in the identity debate.

The matter of national identity, while complicated, seemed to have been resolved in 1997. One of the major concerns was that a devotion to pluralism would be a rejection of a strong Roman Catholic identity. Poles have long held a belief in themselves as a Christian outpost.[77] A proposal from *Solidarność* and the Catholic church was issued to the Standing Committee of the Episcopate and the drafters of the constitution. It stipulated that a constitutional reference to God was needed to ensure Polish national identity. Scholars agree that the most sensitive issue in this area was "the secular basis of the political order, and relations between citizenship and religious faith."[78] There is even evidence to suggest that Polish Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) was preparing himself to provide a shepherding role in his homeland's pursuit of liberal democracy.[79] Pope John Paul II's ardent criticism of communism helped bring down the party in Poland and reinvigorate a sense of national pride. The Church's institutional opposition to communism, support of a Polish identity, and strong rhetoric, undoubtedly had an impact on constituents and leaders. The final draft preamble found an equilibrium, referencing a "culture rooted in the Christian heritage of the Nation and in universal human value"[80] While Catholicism is not an ethnic group, its ethnic importance to a vast majority of Poles (94%[81]), made this addition

[77] Klajn, M. 2018. "Polskość: The Legacy of Polish Past in its Present Identity Struggles." University of Oxford Center for Criminology.
[78] Lewis, Paul G. "The 'Third Wave' of Democracy in Eastern Europe: Comparative Perspectives on Party Roles and Political Development." Party Politics. Vol. 7, No. 5. London: Thousand Oaks Press. Pg 560.
[79] Ornatowski, Cezar M. 2001. "'Let Thy Spirit Renew This Earth:' The Rhetoric of Pope John Paul II And The Political Transformation in Poland, 1979-1989." *Journal for the Study of Religion.* Vol. 14, No. 1. Pg. 86.
[80] "Constitution of the Republic of Poland (1997)." *Constitution Project*. www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Poland_1997.
[81] Tilles, Daniel. 2023. "Proportion of Catholics in Poland Falls to 71%, New Census Data Show." *Notes From Poland*.

publicly favorable, and compatible with the pluralism needed for European integration. Beyond this, Polish identity was quite solidified internally given its homogeneity. Pluralism was not a threat to ethnic Poles in the same way that Soviet nationalist policies were.

Ukraine at a Glance

If the Polish constitution is one of compromise, Ukraine's is a "people-pleaser" that doesn't seem to please people. Even though its adoption was a significant step forward in Ukraine's state-building process, the influence of Soviet-era policies was still clearly evident. Moreover, the Constitution attempted to cover every imaginable legal contingency, containing 161 articles.[82] Embedded within the Constitution were vestiges of Soviet-era policies, remnants of a centralized power structure that prioritized the authority of the presidency and upheld a unitary form of government. These echoes of the past clashed with the emerging pluralistic goals of the fledgling Ukrainian democracy, which sought to enshrine individual rights, promote the separation of powers, and ensure the integrity of free and fair elections.

The 1996 constitution is often criticized for its inability to effectively and sustainably address the complex ethnic and regional dynamics within the country. Continuous political strife and a tendency in Kyiv to uphold centralized authority hindered the necessary political decentralization for local authorities to oversee their own expenditures and social well-being. Examples include Crimea's designation as an autonomous republic, while oblasts like Donetsk and Luhansk remain under more centralized control. Paradoxically, the centralized power structure both perpetuates dominance over regional authorities, or grants overly generalized autonomy for appeasement.

[82] Mefford, Brian. 2024. "The Case for a New Ukrainian Constitution." Atlantic Council. *UkraineAlert.*

Bicameralism

Poland and Ukraine are also legislatively distinct from one another. Poland boasts a bicameral parliament with the Senate as the upper house and the Sejm as the lower. Ukrainians are represented by a single, unicameral parliament known as the Verkhovna Rada. While bicameralism is not a prerequisite for successful state-building, the prevailing view among contemporary constitutional scholars is that a unicameral parliament and the fusion of the presidency with executive authority in a centrally governed nation pose a serious challenge to democratic governance.[83] These were the exact problems Ukrainians were attempting to solve, and one of the reasons bicameral referendums were so widely agreed upon in the general populace. The bicameral system in Poland has, by comparison, facilitated a more balanced representation of diverse interests and perspectives within the legislative process. The Sejm offers a direct, proportional representation of the population, whereas the Senate provides a platform for regional representation, thereby safeguarding the interests of minority groups and the economic priorities of certain regions. This balanced approach fosters consensus-building and ensures adequate checks and balances on the country's executive authority.

By contrast, the Verkhovna Rada has faced challenges that have hindered its effective governance. The absence of a second chamber has led to a lack of adequate representation for regional interests within the legislative process. Ethnic and regional tensions, exacerbated by historical divisions and competing interests, have often impeded the ability of the Verkhovna Rada to effectively address the diverse needs of Ukraine's population. The unicameral structure

[83] Tsebelis, G. & Rash, B. E. 1995. "Patterns of bicameralism," *Parliaments in Western Europe: Majority Rule and Minority Rights*, New York: St. Martin Press, Pg. 367.

has also been susceptible to political polarization and gridlock, limiting the legislature's capacity to enact meaningful reforms and policies. Since the early 1990s, the public has expressed interest in a bicameral parliament. In an All-Ukrainian referendum in 2000, the following question was posed:

> "Do you support the need to form a bicameral parliament in Ukraine, where one of the chambers would represent the interests of the regions of Ukraine and facilitate their implementation, and the introduction of appropriate amendments in the Constitution of Ukraine and electoral legislation?"

In total, 24,244,220 (81.68%) of total respondents answered favorably.[84] The Ukrainian constituents were not the only ones interested in a two-house system. From public records, at least three constitutional drafts between 1992 and 1996 explicitly called for an upper and lower chamber to be established.[85] If supporters of bicameralism tout it as the "guarantor of better legislation,"[86] and there is interest in an inquiry, why has it not been implemented?

Opponents contend that Ukraine's unitary structure does not allow for bicameralism. This assertion is unfounded as Poland, a similarly unitary state, successfully operates a two-house legislature. Unitary states hold precedent over regional substructures, but have the power to delegate the localized entities. The notable difference between these two countries in the mid-decade was the potential for separatism. A central question for Ukrainians was whether the

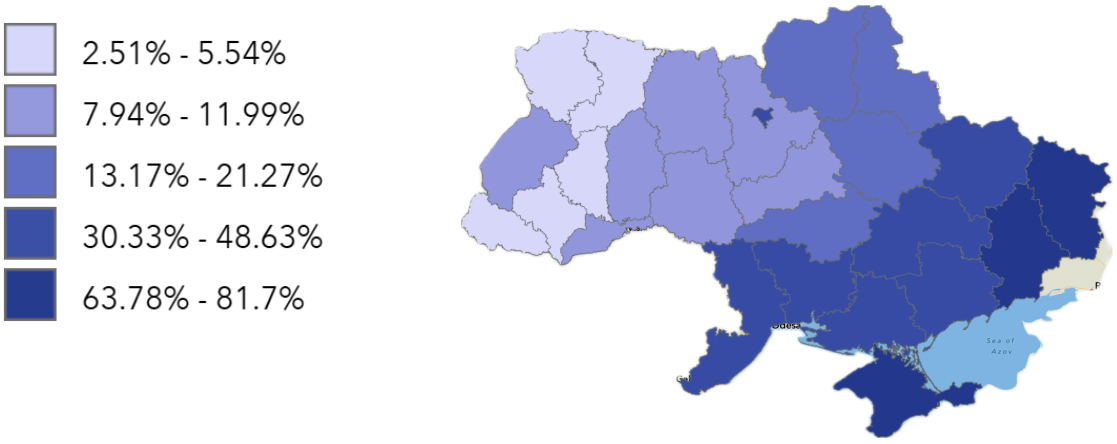
[84] Tasty, Vasyl. Serohina, Svitlana. 2018. "Bicameralism: European Tendencies and Perspectives for Ukraine." *Baltic Journal of European Studies. Tallinn University of Technology.* Vol. 8, No.1. Pg. 103.
[85] Hickey, R. 2013. "Bicameral bargaining and federation formation," Public Choice, Vol. 154, Nos. 3–4, pp. 217–241.
[86] Mastlas, J. & Grange, L., eds. 1987. "Les secondes chambres du parlement en Europe occidentale." Paris: *Economica*.

battle for a national identity could coincide with a transition to bicameralism. The architects of the newly independent Ukraine were preoccupied instead with maintaining unity rather than expanding the central legislature, finding the two goals incompatible. While Vasyl Tatsiy suggests bicameralism could solve these separatist concerns, he is granted a retrospective view of a country that in 1993, even the American Central Intelligence Agency believed was heading towards a civil war.[87] One counterargument to Ukraine's inability to reach bicameralism was the Russian Federation, who despite a myriad of ethnic, cultural and political considerations, were able to esatblish a two-house legislature in 1993. No where were separatist concerns more real than in Russia, so it is notable that the Russian Federation faced a similar challenge of state-building, managing a diverse population of nearly 185 different ethnic groups, and still was able to create this. However, the crucial difference lies in how Russia accommodated these groups, even those lacking significant coalition power. In contrast, in Ukraine, the duality of power dynamics simplifies the potential for addressing issues.

While bicameralism would accommodate more diverse regional interests, it would further entrench the country in federalization, any reference to which is met with strong apprehension and protest in today's Ukraine.[88] Reflected below are the language differences in the various *oblasts* of Ukraine, with the predominantly Ukrainian-speaking West and Russian-speaking East demarcated. The results of the presidential election of 1994 seem to mirror this linguistic divide, or at the very least the regional differences in ethnicity. With such contrast evident to constitution drafters, it is understandable why bicameralism was a political non-starter.

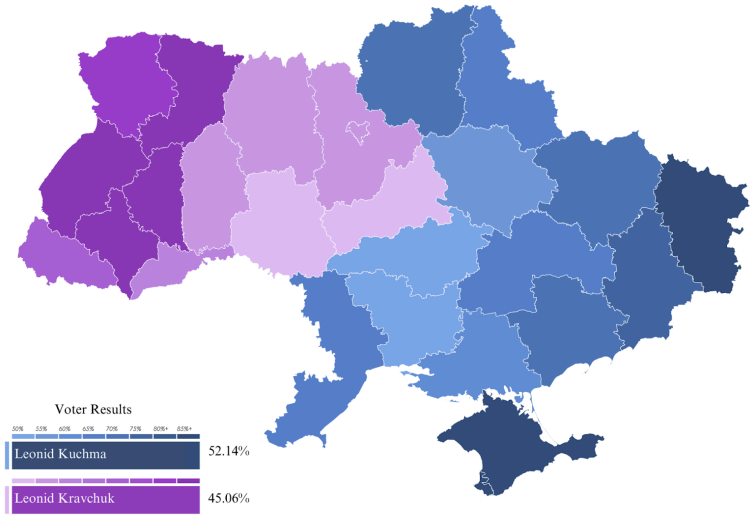
[87] Barrington, Lowell W. Herron, Erik S. 2004. "One Ukraine or many? Regionalism in Ukraine and Its Political Consequences." *Nationalities Papers.* Vol. 32. No. 1. Pg. 55.
[88] Gélard, P. 2006. 'Parliamentary complexity or democratic necessity?' Council of Europe. European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission) Report.

Ukraine 1989 Census – Russian Language as Percent of Oblast[89]



Ukraine: Revolution of Dignity, MAPA Project

Ukraine Presidential Election 1994 (Kuchma vs. Kravchuk)[90]

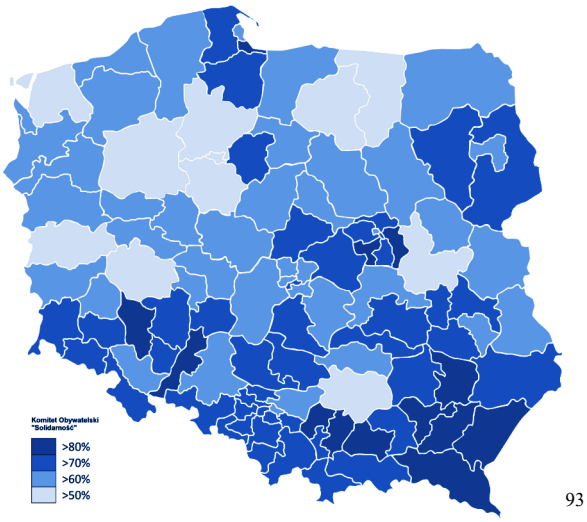


Dieter, Nohlen. 2010. *Elections in Europe: A Data Handbook.* New York: Nomos Publishing. Pg. 1976.

[89] Ukraine: Revolution of Dignity, MAPA Project
[90] Dieter, Nohlen. 2010. *Elections in Europe: A Data Handbook.* New York: Nomos Publishing. Pg. 1976.

These issues that plagued Ukraine did not apply to Poland. Luckily for the constitution builders, the Senate had already been reestablished in 1989 after roundtable discussions between the Communists and the *Solidarność* opposition, mediated by representatives of the Catholic church.[91] The intended goal of its establishment was primarily to establish secession from the Communist's central control, not from Poland itself. Ideally, the Senate could provide checks and balances on the Communist-mandated 65% majority in the Sejm.

Polish Election of 1989 – Votes for Solidarity as Percent of Voivodeship[92]



93

That same year, there was a palpable surprise when *Solidarność* secured 99 of the 100 possible seats in the Senate. At least on a basic level, *Solidarność's* sweeping victory represented a uniform national identity that was independent of Communism, religious suppression, and

[91] Kamm, Henry. 1989. "Solidarity Takes Its Elected Place in Parliament." *The New York Times.*
[92] Sanford, George. 2002. *Democratic Government in Poland – Constitutional Politics Since 1989.* London: Palgrave Macmillan. Pg. 55.
[93] Note: Prior to the 1999 reforms, Poland was broken up into 49 voivodeships

central authority. Solidarność's brief tenure in government further underscores the strength of Polish national identity over the communist regime. While the decisive role was played by the anti-communist movement, its ability to choral ethnic poles against “the other” proved useful. Despite no cleavages with the policies of the Solidarność labor union, the broader goal of asserting a Polish identity prevailed. Early membership in the union was almost exclusively working-class shipyard workers, but, once the labor union turned into a viable political power, membership rose to 9.4 million, representing about twenty-five percent of Poland’s population in 1989. The movement symbolized a collective resistance against the oppressive communist regime, embodying the shared values and aspirations of the Polish people that extended beyond occupation. The fact that it held government control for a mere two years does not diminish its significance; rather, it highlights the resilience of the national identity in the face of divergent political and ideological views. Ethnic identity differences played a pronounced role in understanding why Ukraine did not transition to a system similar to Poland. The lack of consensus on the structure and powers of a second chamber reflects broader societal divisions and underscores the formidable obstacles to democratic consolidation in Ukraine. A pivotal aspect of constitution design, decentralization also encountered significant regional obstacles, oftentimes along ethnic lines.

Decentralization

In all senses of the phrase, both Ukraine and Poland were political construction sites. The rise of new countries in Europe raised questions about aligning political state boundaries with the fluid and sometimes inherited cultural borders of nations. As Charles King finds, “newly independent

states have been engaged in tortuous processes of defending statehood and defining nationhood."[94] Democracy advertises itself as a uniquely qualified system to answer these pressing questions and bring a healthy balance to central and localized powers. No democratic process speaks more to a country's unity and political stability than the ability to decentralize. This process is important in both Ukraine and Polands because it forces the central authority to distribute both political and economic responsibilities, in other words, granting a level of autonomy. Additionally, there are added expectations that the representation of individual or local interests is met. By 2000, these requisites were hailed as a success in Poland, and considered still in the early stages in Ukraine.

Defenders of Ukraine's slow pace like to point to EU funding and accession aspirations as the key drivers of decentralization in Poland. This interpretation is flawed as the EU's role is secondary to the primary domestic dynamics in Poland. Article XV of Poland's constitution clearly states their internal intentions:

I. "The territorial system of the Republic of Poland shall ensure the decentralization of public power.
II. The basic territorial division of the State shall be determined by statute, allowing for the social, economic, and cultural ties that ensure the territorial units the capacity to perform their public duties."[95]

[94] King, Charles. 2009. *Extreme Politics: Nationalism, Violence, and the End of Eastern Europe.* Oxford University Press. Pg. 135.
[95] "Constitution of the Republic of Poland (1997)." *Constitution Project (Translated)*.

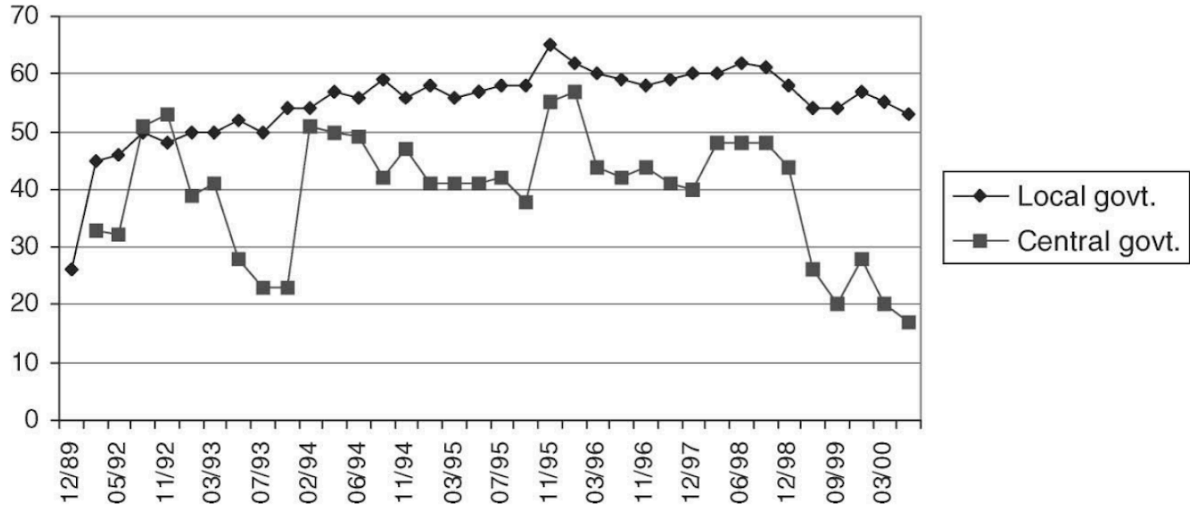
The internal discussion in Poland revolved around solving three central issues. One issue was to address the Poles' deep-seated fears of hyper-centralized powers reminiscent of Communism. Another consideration was that local governments consistently receives higher approval ratings. Additionally, it was suggested that strong decentralization could potentially lead to greater economic competitiveness at the supranational level. Regarding the phobia of hyper-centralization, who swiftly devised a new structural framework. The structure is broken down below and comparable elements in Ukraine are shown as well:

Sub-National Government Institutions in Poland and Ukraine[96]		
	Poland	**Ukraine**
Municipal	*Gmina* (Community) Council and mayor elected by popular elections	*Hromada* (Territorial community) Council and mayor elected by popular elections
District	*Powiat* (County) No state administration, elected council appoints its executive board	*Rayon* (District) Elected council, but administration was vertically subordinated to the center. Head of administration appointed by the President
Regional	*Województwo* (Voivodeship) Separation of the state administration (with *Wojewoda* appointed by the Prime Minister) from elected self-government council with its executive board (headed by the *Marshall*)	*Oblast* (Province) Elected council, but administration was vertically subordinated to the center. Head of administration appointed by the President.

This new framework in Poland yielded notably higher approval ratings among the populace compared to central authority. By distributing powers and decision-making authority to regional and local levels, the government seemed to work more effectively, with more support.

[96] Ukraine: Yatsuba, 2002; Poland: Statistical Yearbooks of the Main Statistical Office and Molenda, 1996.

Trust in Central and Local Governments in Poland[97]



The graph finds that many of the country's decentralization reforms began with the *Mała Konstytucja.* Levels of trust increased sharply particularly in 1990 when amendments began.[98] The final constitution further affirmed and bolstered the self-governing status of municipalities and rural areas. Poland's territorial organization is designed to ensure the dispersal of public authority alongside a self-governing structure. This system can be viewed as successful through two key lenses. First, a central trust exists in the *voivodeships* to remain a part of the unitary state and not secede. This is made possible by the *voivodeships'* belief that the national identity upheld by the central authority aligns with local priorities. This offers another instance where, despite reservations about granting greater autonomy, minimal worries arose due to the limited territorial risks involved. Greater economic improvements were made possible in part because there was trust in the central government. Voivodeships were allowed to enter bilateral or multilateral cooperation agreements with foreign partners, something that would have been unfathomable in

[97] Swianiewicz, P. 2001. *Public Perception of Local Governments* Budapest: Open Society Institute.
[98] Swianiewicz, P. 2001. *Public Perception of Local Governments.* Budapest: Open Society Institute.

Ukraine.[99] There are external EU aspirations in this realm, though they remain secondary factors to domestic fiscal success.

The reason decentralization seems to work so well ideologically is that Poland does not have distinct regional or sub-regional identities. In other words, the dissection of Poland into 16 voivodeships and over 300 urban gminas has not created any clear divisions in identity. Since the 18th century, Polish nationhood has been continuously under threat. During fights for freedom and the restoration of national statehood, there remains little room for regional allegiances or interests.[100] For this reason, "Polishness" not regionalism, had been in the foreground for centuries. World War II deeply scarred the collective psyche of the nation, with national affiliation or ethnicity becoming a matter of life or death.[101] The war significantly altered Poland's borders, resulting in the annexation of eastern territories by the Soviet Union in 1939, and the acquisition of former German territories. This experience left a lasting impact on subsequent generations, fostering a heightened sense of group identity and nationalism, particularly in the face of perceived threats, such as the fear of German invasion perpetuated by the Communist Party until the 1970s. For this reason, post-Soviet Polish nationalism, while palpable, is often directed outward rather than inward. This is manifested through historical grievances with neighboring countries or an emphasis on a Polish identity independent of other European nations. After World War II, Polish ethnic nationalism tends to focus on perceived encroachments from external powers, rather than issues arising from decentralization.

[99] Yoder, Jennifer A. 2003. "Decentralization and Regionalization after Communism: Administrative and Territorial Reform in Poland and the Czech Republic." *Europe-Asia Studies.* Vol. 55. No. 2. 263-286.
[100] Kersten, K. 1993. "Między wyzwoleniem a zniewoleniem. Polska 1944-1956." London, Annex.
[101] Opiłowska, Elżbieta. 2016. "Regionalism in a Unitary State. Regional Identity in the Polish Western Border Regions." *Centre International De Formation Europeene.* No. 379. Pg. 26.

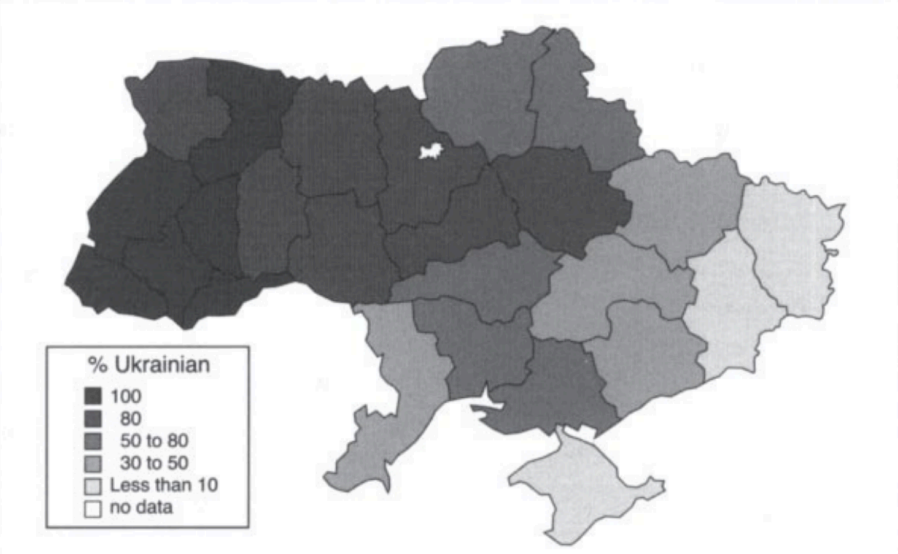
Finish geographer Anssi Paasi rightly notes that the decentralization of governance structures will not necessitate regional identification. She notes that regional identity becomes, "established when it is identified in social practices and regional consciousness, both inside and outside the region."[102] This establishment has not and is not likely to occur in Poland. 88% of Poles consider themselves patriots, reaffirming a belief in the existing national identity over a regional one.[103] To assume nine out of ten poles have the same political identity would be a gross misrepresentation, and this is where regional differences occur and decentralization has helped. Cleavages are more pronounced along ideological and economic lines than purely regional ones. Solidarity, a prominent labor union and political movement found strong support in the East, as evidenced by high voter turnout and electoral success in the 1989 partially free elections. The East of Poland is often perceived as more conservative than the West, a sentiment reflected in responses to events like the Constitutional Referendum, where the East showed slightly less enthusiasm for the proposed Constitution. These differences are still encouraged and do not threaten the state's legitimacy. The decentralization process in Poland was also facilitated by the presence of a strong civil society and active engagement of local communities in the decision-making process. This bottom-up approach ensured that decentralization was not merely a top-down imposition but rather a participatory endeavor that reflected the needs and aspirations of local populations.

In most countries, diversity, rather than uniformity, is the prevailing characteristic. Poland's strong, invariable identity is a bit of an anomaly, and Ukraine represents a contrarian example of

[102] Paasi, Ascii. 1991. "Deconstructing Regions. Notes on the Scales of Spatial Life." *Environment and Planning.* Vol. 23, No. 2. 239-254.
[103] Zielińska, Maria. 2015. "Toward Openness and Trust? Polish-German Relations After Polish Accession to the European Union." *A Microcosm of the European Integration? The German-Polish Border Regions in Transformation Process.* Nomos: Baden-Baden. Pg 49.

ethnic diversity, and its impact on decentralization and regional dynamics. Two-thirds identify as Ukrainians, while thirty percent maintained a lingering Soviet identity in 1999. As former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma notes in his book, *Ukraine is not Russia,* "the Soviet people are no more, but Soviet people remain."[104] Using language as one indicator of the influence of heritage, there appears great regional differences in the use and teaching of Ukrainian.

Proportion of School Pupils Studying in the Ukrainian Language (1997)[105]



Za Vilnu Ukraiinu, 8 April 1997

In certain oblasts, approximately 30% of respondents report not receiving instruction in the administrative language, Ukrainian. As indicated by the map, in three particularly notable instances—Donetsk, Luhansk, and Crimea—over 90% of individuals are being educated in Russian. Additionally, in four other regions, such as Kharkiv, over 50% of the population is receiving education in Russian. There are two ways to interpret this. One, people are actively

[104] Kuchma, Leonid D. Kantziou, Tania. 2013. *Ukraine is Not Russia.* Athens. Livanis Publishing Organization.
[105] Za Vilnu Ukraiinu, 8 April 1997

choosing not to identify with the Ukrainian identity, or two, a lack of regional "need" makes language assimilation less of a priority. This limits access to administrative resources and shows clear resistance to a cohesive mandate.

Contrary to Poland, 44% of Ukraine's citizenry identified with the region they are from, more than the Ukrainian nation. Of this number, half still believed they were Soviets in 1997.[106] Multiple identities are not inherently negative, but a negative aspect is the difficulty of establishing a civil society. Pluralism and multiculturalism emphasize the recognition and acceptance of diverse identities within a society. However, the difficulty in establishing a civil society when dealing with multiple identities can stem from challenges such as communication barriers, conflicting values or beliefs, and struggles for power. Fears of secession become increasingly high when bygone orders like the Soviet Union, or neighboring countries like Russia take predominance over the newly established identity. Ukraine's case is also not strengthened by the fact national identity remains up for debate even within the constitution. The constitution grants extensive rights to national minorities under the condition of loyalty to the state, or, for their integration within the Ukrainian political nation. While this is not uncommon treatment in the constituions of post-Soviet republics, it is an admission of the influence that Soviet (or other identities) can have on national identity and unity.

Several Ukrainian governments between 1991 and 2000 have attempted to decentralize, with little success. Regions remain dependent on the central government for resources, policy

[106] Kravchenko, Volodymyr. 2015. "Fighting Soviet Myths: The Ukrainian Experience." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies.* Vol. 34, No. 1-4.

priorities, political accountability, and electoral confirmation.[107] Interestingly, the president has the constitutional power to disband any local government deemed in violation of law, or the constitution, or that threatens Ukraine's territorial integrity. No such power is granted in Poland, and it sets a potentially dangerous precedent in Ukraine if abused.[108] These discretionary powers and their subjective political use pose a real threat to democratic stability. Ukraine's legacy of centralism, despite local elections, forces municipal and regional authorities to be accountable to the center, rather than the electorate. Ukraine retained the Soviet arrangement of vertical leadership with a top-down model. Poland utilized a bottom-up model by which local governments were able to self-reform. This model is more efficient and promotes local innovation.

Ukraine has not been able to indulge in this model in part due to fears of secession. Decentralization has been a key demand for leaders of Eastern Ukrainian oblasts who feel greater autonomy from Kyiv would allow them to preserve their linguistic and cultural traditions. Feelings in the West are that special federalist protections for regional leaders in the East would be disastrous. Ingrained in the minds of political leaders is the case of Crimea, an autonomous republic that holds Ukraine's largest concentration of ethnic Russians.

> "Ethnic attachment for Russians, however, differs markedly throughout Ukraine. In some areas, Russians perceive themselves as being on 'their own land', while in others they clearly consider themselves to be outsiders. To a great degree, these feelings and

[107] Jarábik, Balázs. Yesmukhanova, Yulia. 2017. "Ukraine's Slow Struggle for Decentralization." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. *Reforming Ukraine.*
[108] Partlett, William. 2015. "Agendas of Constitutional Decentralization in Ukraine." Constitution.Net: Supporting Constitution Builders Globally.

consequent socio-political behavior are based on the standards fixed in the public consciousness, which gauges Russia's 'historical right' to possess certain territories"[109]

Since the USSR's dissolution, Crimea's status within Ukraine has been a matter of political contention. The Crimean Tatars, a significant ethnic group in Crimea, sought greater autonomy and recognition of their rights. The collapse of the Soviet Union threw the status of Crimea into disarray. Crimean Tatars, a substantial ethnic population within Crimea, weren't content with the way things were. They actively demanded greater autonomy – self-governance to a certain extent – and strong recognition of their rights as a distinct cultural group within Ukraine. According to the 1987 census, nearly 67% of Crimea's residents were ethnic Russians, who also held political influence throughout the decade. These groups envisioned an oblast independent of what they felt was harsh "ukrainization."[110] After threats of civil war, Crimea was granted special autonomous status within Ukraine in 1992, giving it a degree of self-governance. In 1993, it elected separatist President Yury Meshkov, further solidifying its divergence from the Ukrainian state. Meshkov won by advocating for the region's independence from Ukraine, and closer ties with Russia. He used his platform to champion policies on the Russian language, culture, and identity. Further complicating the Crimea situation is Russia's encroachment and unwillingness to recognize the borders and sovereignty of the region until 1997's Russia-Ukrainian Friendship Treaty.

[109] Carter, Francis W. Turnock, David. 2000. "Ethnicity in Eastern Europe: Historical Legacies and Prospects for Cohesion. *Geojournal.* Vol. 50, No. 2-3

[110] Armstrong, John A. 1976. "Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas." *The American Political Science Review.* Vol. 70, No. 2. Pg. 408.

Crimea's style of self-governing is something Ukrainian centralists would prefer not to expand into some of the country's other Eastern oblasts. Not only does it have its special economic status, but boasts its own Council of Ministers, chairman, and legislative body, effectively giving it its miniature government within Ukraine. In 1996, all these concessions were met through the constitution in an attempt to avoid civil war, or potentially, though more unlikely, a conflict with Russia. With the consent of the Ukrainian presidents, Crimea was able to operate almost entirely independently of the central government. "Virtually all states have been profoundly affected by pressures from ethnic minorities seeking … enhanced political rights including regional autonomy."[111] While Russia exterted influence in Crimea, serving as the impetus for concessions, the concerns behind the decision to reach for autonomy were still based on an internal fervor. The only notable exception was the region's inability to replicate the Verkhovna Rada. The legislating powers represent grievances to the central government but have no official voting power. Ukraine's lack of decentralization cannot be blamed on Crimea, but in the 1990s, when questions of territorial integrity were paramount, having another Crimea would be politically and socially impossible.

Crimea wasn't the sole region grappling with separatist inclinations. In Donetsk and Luhansk, the 1990s saw several incidents, notably the Miners Strike of 1993, which was organized along identity divisions. Participating miners were advocating for increased regional autonomy, possibly to foster closer affiliations with the Russian Federation. At its height, about 1.5 million miners were involved in the protests. Disputes have arisen over the political nature of the strikes, particularly regarding calls for autonomy. Some view the main rallying cry of the protests,

[111] Carter, Francis W. Turnock, David. 2000. "Ethnicity in Eastern Europe: Historical Legacies and Prospects for Cohesion. *Geojournal.* Vol. 50, No. 2-3

stating that Donbas residents "can feed themselves," as either opposing Ukrainian independence and promoting Russophilia or advocating for broader decentralization across Ukraine.[112] The calls from protestors were economic, but in many ways the rhetoric both for and against the miners, was ideologic.

This fervor reflected a broader desire for federalization within Ukraine, indicative of deep-seated desires for greater regional self-governance. This desire was matched with concern from the central authority that too many concessions would drive the region economically and ideologically closer to Russia. The social fabric of the Donbas region, shaped by several generations under Soviet rule, has instilled a collective consciousness tethered to Soviet identity. Moreover, the structural dynamics of employment and the economy, bear more resemblance to the Soviet era further underscoring the complexities of regional identity and the potential for separatist aspirations. Notable political examples include the International Movement of the Donbas, which directly opposed the People's Movement of Ukraine. Originating in 1992, it gained traction among miners and local elites dissatisfied with perceived central government mismanagement and alleged efforts at Ukrainization. Many within this faction harbored nostalgia for the Soviet era. In 1997, following the adoption of the constitution, Movement Chairman Dmitriy Kornilov unequivocally declared Donetsk as unquestionably Russian. Although their objectives were not achieved, their rhetoric effectively conveyed a message. Similar movements emerged in Crimea, where Crimean President Yuri Meshkov advocated for independence from Ukraine. In western Ukraine, a majority favored bicameralism, yet the fundamental question remained unanswered: could sustainable change coexist with the struggle for national identity?

[112] Makarenko, Olena. 2016. "The Donbas Protests You Haven't Heard Of." *Euromaidan Press.*

PROJECT LIMITATIONS

Of a Historical Comparative Analysis

While historical comparative analyses are uniquely qualified to dissect political processes, the researcher deals with abundant subjectivity which is inherent to this methodology. Therefore, the researcher must not suggest causal relationships where they do not exist. The timeline investigated naturally holds a temporal constraint on the HCA, potentially negating past trends and future outcomes.[113] The period of 1985 to 2000 is relevant to contain the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the emergence of nation-states, and enough time to consider the establishment of constitutions, and the consequences of such. The trade-off becomes the disregard of trends post-2000, or influences from the earlier 20th Century.

Another obstacle is finding a way to address the tension between structure and agency.[114] While comparative analyses are broad, Political Sociologist Dr. Barrington Moore Jr. rightly asserts, "there remains a strong tension between the demands of doing justice to the explanation of a particular case and the search for generalizations… it is impossible to know just how important a particular problem may be until one has finished examining all of them."[115] A sacrifice of this study may be the role of actors in favor of more structural trends. Recognize that not all theorists and countries interpret democracy uniformly. My thesis treats this as a relatively uncomplicated

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[113] Griffin, Larry J. 1993. "Narrative, Event-Structure Analysis, and Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology:* Vol. 98, No. 5, pg. 1100.
[114] Ferragina, Emanuele. "Comparative Historical Analysis – Policy Evaluations, Methods and Approaches." *Policy Evaluation Methods and Approaches*, Quebec City: Éditions Science et Bien Commun.
[115] Moore, Barrington, Jr. 1966. *Social Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon Press. XVI.

category, but it shouldn't be a one-size-fits-all approach. Therefore, it's not particularly troublesome that their definitions and manifestations of democracy vary.

Of Studying Ukraine

Another area of limitation is the design of prior research. When inspecting regionalism and Ukrainian identity, Western sociological and political science research tends to group Ukraine's 16 *oblasts* (administrative units) into four or five macro-regions. Such areas are defined as East, West, South, Central, and Donbas.[116] *Oblasts* of different historical and social-demographic contexts are therefore inadvertently grouped, ignoring the complexities of each province for generalizable trends about each geographic region.

Since most studies from this period are conducted using this design, my research at times will be limited in differentiating between specific *oblasts*. The scholarly logic in grouping Ukraine this way is understandable and unavoidable. It would be impossible to conceptualize 24 unique *oblasts*, particularly in a comparative study with another country. Within the framework of a comparative study, this design becomes essential. Conceptualizing 24 unique *oblasts,* and 16 *województwa's* (provinces in Poland) would yield complications.

Complications can also arise if regional differences in Ukraine are oversimplified. While there are clear differences between Eastern and Western Ukraine, the ethnic narrative of the country is not divergent on these lines. According to Harvard's Ukrainian Research Institute (HURI),

[116] "History and Identity – MAPA Digital Atlas of Ukraine, Revolution of Dignity Project." Cambridge: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University.

"Ukraine's public space was often presented as a battleground for two versions of the past linked to different identities: the Ukrainian nationalist versus the Soviet identity."[117] Dissecting this can not be done on fixed geographical boundaries.

To avoid both generalizations and excessive detail I utilize the University of St. Gallen's project, "Region, Nation, and Beyond: An Interdisciplinary and Transcultural Reconsideration of Ukraine."[118] In conjunction with the Razumkov Center in Kyiv and Harvard University's Digital Atlas of Ukraine, St. Gallen has created a spatial data analysis that reconsiders the above macro-regional definitions, centralizing electoral, census, and survey information from Ukraine's *oblasts.* When possible, these sources are consulted to more accurately define certain trends. Another limitation of secondary literature on Ukraine promotes the largely colonial view of history that has been put forth by Russian historians, oftentimes within Western academic centers.

Limitations of the Comparison

A direct comparison of Poland and Ukraine's development has limitations due to their divergent experiences even within the Soviet sphere. Before the collapse, Poland held a semi-autonomous position as the Polish People's Republic, whereas Ukraine was tightly integrated into the Soviet system, directly under the thumb of Moscow. Additionally, the length of influence was different. Poland did not become a communist Soviet satellite until after the second World War. Poland's

[117] "History and Identity – MAPA Digital Atlas of Ukraine, Revolution of Dignity Project." Cambridge: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University.
[118] "Region, Nation, and Beyond: An Interdisciplinary and Transcultural Reconsideration of Ukraine." St. Gallen: University of St. Gallen.

status allowed for a more pluralistic society and a distinct persistence of the Polish identity. The deliberate crackdown on the Ukrainian language and its use in education began in the early 18th century under Peter the Great's rule and reemerged into the 20th century. The ease of political change is noteworthy outside of ethnic factors. It can be argued that there is not enough in common between Poland and Ukraine to justify a comparative analysis. But, despite their different experiences in the 20th century, the 1990's can still prove to be a time in which their state-building was optimistic, and similarly aimed.

CONCLUSION

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, newly independent states have been engaged in tortuous processes of redefining who they are. What had once been a distinct piece of real estate with a common ideology was now fragmented. While discussions on ethnicity and identity often stop at the nation-building phase, my research delves deeper to explore their critical role in shaping sustainable governance structures. Through a comparative analysis of Poland and Ukraine, I argue that a lack of coherent national identity hampers the establishment of democracy, leading to threats of separatism, and exploitation by external actors. The differences in ethnic homogeneity between Poland and Ukraine, and the diversity of identity, underscore the significance of these factors in the state-building process. Fear emerges as a transcendent force, with trust in fellow citizens pivotal to maintaining collective unity. While Poland's homogeneous identity fosters resilience against external threats, Ukraine's fragmented identity poses challenges to decentralization, efforts to enact bicameralism, and mend the division between Ukrainian and Soviet identities. Thus, understanding the interplay of ethnicity, identity, and constitutional design is crucial for navigating the complex terrain of post-Soviet state-building.

Poland and Ukraine diverged in their paths of constitution building, with Poland witnessing rapid democratization while Ukraine faced challenges due to its ethnic diversity and Soviet legacy. Poland successfully transitioned to permanent constitution through inclusive processes, exemplified by its effective bicameral parliament balancing regional interests. In contrast, Ukraine struggled with unicameral governance, hindering legislative efficiency and exacerbating ethnic tensions. Poland's decentralization model, driven by national identity and bottom-up

engagement, proved successful, while Ukraine faced obstacles stemming from centralism, secession fears, and ethnic influences, thwarting effective decentralization despite government efforts to introduce such reform.

Delving into the intricate relationship between ethnicity, identity, and constitutional design in Ukraine offers valuable insights into the current conflict with Russia. By understanding the challenges Ukraine faces due to its fragmented identity and the historical influence of the Soviet Union, we can better grasp the internal political divisions Russia might exploit to further its agenda. Furthermore, analyzing the success of Poland's model of decentralization, built on a strong national identity, can inform potential solutions for Ukraine to address regional grievances and foster a more unified national character, ultimately strengthening its ability to resist external pressures. In essence, this project's exploration of identity and state-building can shed light on potential pathways for Ukraine to achieve greater internal stability and resilience, crucial factors in deterring Russian aggression and securing a sustainable future.

This project will hopefully spark inquiries into how research could investigate the potential role of historical memory and reconciliation efforts in bridging ethnic divides and fostering trust amongst Ukrainian citizens.

ENDNOTES

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