UDC 316.6:[316.42:316:45]:303.446(477.8:477.6)"1994/2015

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CHANGING IDENTITIES IN UKRAINE? LVIV AND DONETSK: 1994–2015[1]

Ever since Ukraine gained independence in 1991, there have been reports as to whether its people have become more identified as Ukrainians. This only became more evident with the Orange Revolution in 2004 and again with the events following the Euromaidan in 2013, namely the war with Russia. Is Ukraine more Ukrainian than ever as one might expect from these seismic events? The answer depends on how you define identity and where and how you look for it. This research reveals identification levels in mostly Lviv and Donetsk from 1994 to 2015, years which cover the periods before and after both revolutions (Maidan in 2004 and Euromaidan in 2013) and the war with Russia. We find heightened identification over that period primarily in Lviv, but multiple identifications with Ukrainians and Russians in Donetsk. Including six major cities in 2015 indicates that Lviv is an anomaly in its strong Ukrainian identification and Donetsk likewise in its multiple identities. The other four cities (Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv and Dnipro) are much more moderate in their commitment to Ukraine and in some cases have stronger city identities. Social identity theory provides a framework for understanding these different responses as based in reactions to realistic and symbolic threat.

Keywords: *social identity theory, threat, Ukrainian identification, longitudinal research.*

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ЗМІНА ІДЕНТИЧНІСТЕЙ В УКРАЇНІ? ЛЬВІВ І ДОНЕЦЬК: 1994–2015

З того часу, як Україна здобула незалежність у 1991 р., з'явилися повідомлення про те, чи стали люди більше визначати себе українцями. Це стало більш очевидним внаслідок Помаранчевої Революції у 2004 р. і подій, що відбулися після Євромайдану 2013 р., переважно через війну з Росією. Чи є Україна більш українською, ніж будь-коли, як можна цього очікувати від зазначених сейсмічних подій? Відповідь залежить від того, як визначається

[1] This research is part of the Lviv/Donetsk Area Studies originally undertaken by the Lviv National University in Ukraine to understand differences between Lviv and Donetsk. In 2015 we added four more cities which allowed us to cover the major population centers in Ukraine. Co-principal investigators on this study include Professor of History Ya. Hrytsak of the Ukrainian Catholic University, Professor of Sociology N. Chernysh of the Lviv National University and Associate Professor of Sociology V. Susak of the Ukrainian Catholic University. Other researchers include Associate Professor of Sociology D. Sudyn of the Ukrainian Catholic University, Associate Professor of Sociology V. Sereda of the Ukrainian Catholic University, and Professor and Chair of Sociology O. Mikheieva of the Ukrainian Catholic University. This research was originally presented as part of Fulbright Panel No. 1: Roundtable: *National and Social Identities in Post-Soviet Ukraine: The Case of Lviv and Donetsk* at the MAG Conference at the Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv, Ukraine. June 28, 2018. We would like to thank our funders over the years: the Soros Renaissance Foundation, Lviv Branch (1994), the U.S. National Science Foundation subcontract (1999), the Petro Jacyk Educational Foundation, Canada, Lviv Branch (2004, 2010, 2015), the Weiser Foundation, University of Michigan (2010, 2015) and the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan (2010, 2015).

ідентичність, де та як ви її шукаєте. Це дослідження показує рівні ідентифікації у Львові та Донецьку у 1994–2015 рр., охоплює періоди до і після обох революцій (Майдан у 2004 р. та Євромайдан у 2013 р.) та війну з Росією. Ми виявили посилення ідентифікації за цей період переважно у Львові та численні ідентифікації як українців і росіян у Донецьку. Дослідження шести найбільших міст у 2015 р. свідчить про те, що Львів є аномалією в його сильній українській ідентифікації, а Донецьк – у багатьох ідентичностях. Інші чотири міста (Київ, Одеса, Харків і Дніпро) більш помірковані у своїй прихильності до України, а в деяких випадках мають сильніші міські ідентичності. Теорія соціальної ідентичності є основою для розуміння цих різних відповідей, які грунтуються в реакціях на реалістичні та символічні загрози.

Ключові слова: *теорія соціальної ідентичності, загроза, українська ідентифікація, лонгітюдні дослідження.*

What is Social Identity? Humans have a need for a sense of belonging [1], a sense of relatedness. They fulfil certain psychological needs. We belong to social groups for that purpose as they usually provide us with a sense of good feeling and a sense of self-esteem when our group does well [2]. A prominent social identity to which most people subscribe is a national identity but we can have as many social identities as groups we belong to, including occupational, political, and religious identities.

A social identity can be as basic as saying we belong to a particular group. For example, "I am Ukrainian because I live in Ukraine". But there can also be different levels of commitment to the group. For example, "I am proud to be Ukrainian" indicates a higher level of commitment than mere membership in the group.

Levels of strength of identification (commitment) are important because they can motivate us to act on behalf of the group [3]. Strong social identities can serve as meaningful guides to our lives and express our values, such as those related to religion, lifestyle, politics or nationality. They have political relevance because they channel feelings of willingness to allocate resources based on group membership [4]. They can direct the perceptual, affective and behavioral responses of the individual.

Social identities are more likely to influence behavior as they acquire emotional significance and thereby stronger commitment [5]. So what increases the strength of social identities then? The most prevalent force is when they are continually called upon and made salient to the individual or group, even when not initiated by the individual. Some identities may be so central to a person that they become chronically salient (e.g., gender, nationality). People of color are often categorized by others as belonging to a particular social identity whether or not they identify with it, and it soon becomes chronically salient for them as well. Minorities are often reminded of their social identity when asked what kind of name they have and where they come from [5].

Another source of strength of identities is when one has multiple identities that overlap and reinforce each other. One can be a female, Ukrainian, Greek Catholic – all of which are minority categories and when called upon frequently on their own bring along the other two, depending on the context.

An important property of social identities is that they can become threatened [3]. Examples would include Muslims in the current geopolitical climate or gays in a traditional society or a minority ethnic group. A threatened identity, again prevalent among minorities,

requires some coping response but that response is dependent on the type of threat and the status of the group.

The two types of intergroup threat can be 1) realistic threat: where another group is in a position to cause your group harm. And that can be physical harm, a loss of resources, of power, or of general welfare. Another type of intergroup threat is 2) symbolic threat: here the concern is about your group's meaning system. Under threat would be a group's religion, values, belief system, ideology, morality or worldview [6].

There are several ways to cope with identity threat. If you're a member of a high status group, you strengthen your group's identity and make it more engrained by stressing the positives [7]. Ukrainians in Lviv are in a position of power because they are in the majority and hold most of the government positions. It is in Lviv where you hear the praises of Ukrainian folk music and folk dancing and encounter discussions of the revelations of the great history of Ukraine which has been usurped by the Russians.

But if you're from a low status group, you may 1) exit the group (if possible); 2) deny your membership or identity (if possible); or 3) you make it more salient by turning it on it's head and focusing on its strengths [8], for example, as Blacks did during the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. where their slogan became "Black is Beautiful". Or more recently in eastern Ukraine where Khokhols (a derogatory term for Ukrainians) in Luhansk declared themselves proud to be Ukrainian and charged anyone to find a group with more brutal strength, more loyalty, or more endurance. Ukrainians in Donetsk are in the position of being a numerical majority but a political minority. They have in the past exited the group by declaring Russian nationality on their passports but more prevalently they have created a more inclusive, less stigmatized identity by identifying as part of the Slavic brotherhood to which both Ukrainians and Russians belong.

Monitoring Social Identity. In our longitudinal studies of social identities in Ukraine which took place in 1994, 1999, 2004, 2010, and 2015 and primarily in Lviv (West) and Donetsk (East)[2]– the two most distant cities in Ukraine, with 400 people in each city at each timepoint, we asked people about their social identities in three different ways. First, we had a checklist of 29 possible ways (plus an open option) that one might think of themselves[3]. Things like "man", "woman", "young", "old", "Ukrainian", "Russian", and so on. Second, we asked them how well (Ukrainian, Russian, Soviet) fit their description of themselves and

[2] The data for these surveys was originally collected by students from Lviv National University and Donetsk National University who were trained as interviewers and obtained at-home interviews with random stratified samples based on voter records. In later years, we had to revert to quota sampling because we were denied access to contemporary voter records. Professional survey centers then collected the data in all the cities except for Lviv where we continued student training. In 2015 the fighting in Donetsk was centered around the airport which is in mostly industrial territory and it was still possible for professional interviewers from the area to obtain their interviews in residential neighborhoods.

[3] The exact wording: *Here is a list of possible ways in which people can think about themselves. Please choose as many as describe the way in which you think about yourself.* (After choosing from the list): *Of all these, which would you say is the most important way in which you think about yourself?* The identification measure was coded 0 for no check; 1 for checking an item; and 2 for choosing it as their most important way of thinking about themselves.

which one described them the best[4]. Third, we showed people 14 social groups relevant to Ukraine which fell into political (communists, Ukrainian Nationalists, Reformers), ethnic (Ukrainian, Russian, Soviet people, Jews), class (business people, the rich, housewives, pensioners, workers), and religious categories (Greek Catholics, Orthodox)[5].

Finally, we had a measure at the end of the questionnaire where we asked people what their nationality was[6]. Looking at these latter results alone would indicate that over time, and especially since 2004, the number of identifying Ukrainians had risen not only in Lviv but especially in Donetsk, with a concomitant drop in Russian identity. But this is an indicator of civic identity which merely comments on the fact that people are more at ease with identifying themselves as Ukrainian citizens. It is not necessarily a reflection of their greater commitment or identification with Ukraine (See Figure 1). It is clear from these responses that Lviv has parallel but divided identities with most people identifying as Ukrainian and very few as Russians while in Donetsk where as many people identified as Ukrainian as did Russian in the early years, there was a split in 2004 when a Ukrainian identity became more prevalent and maintained that level through 2015.

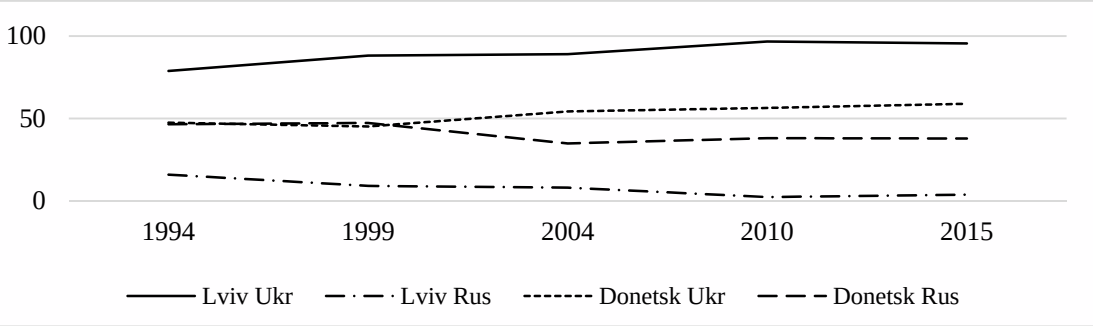

Figure 1. Percent Own Nationality by City: 1994–2015

Source: Lviv/Donetsk Area Studies.

Using our first measure of identification or commitment, the checklist, and focusing only on national identities, we again find Lviv with an unusually strong Ukrainian identification through all the five waves of reporting over twenty-one years and only getting stronger after 2004. In Donetsk, Ukrainian identification was barely stronger than Russian identification

[4] The exact wording: *People think of themselves in different ways depending on the situation they find themselves in. For each term I read to you, please tell me how well it fits your description of yourself: very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not at all.* (They were prompted with "*Ukrainian," "Russian,"* and "*Soviet*"). *Now which one describes you the best?* The identity measure scales from 1 for not at all to 5 for the best.

[5] The exact wording: *Our society is made up of different groups of people. An individual may have much in common with* (literally feel close to) *some of these groups and very little in common* (literally feel alien to) *with other* groups. *On this card is a list of various social groups. For each of these groups, I would like to find out how much you have in common with their ideas, interests, their outlook on different events: a great deal, some, very little or nothing in common with this group.* (After each group was rated): *Of these groups, please name the one with which you have the most in common. Now name the group with which you have the least in com*mon. The identity measure scales from 1 for least in common to 6 for most in common.

[6] The exact wording: *What is your nationality?*

and dropping off in 2010 and 2015 but both identifications were less strong than an identification with the city of Donetsk which is moderate in strength but still dwarfed by Lviv's Ukrainian identification (See Figures 2, 3).

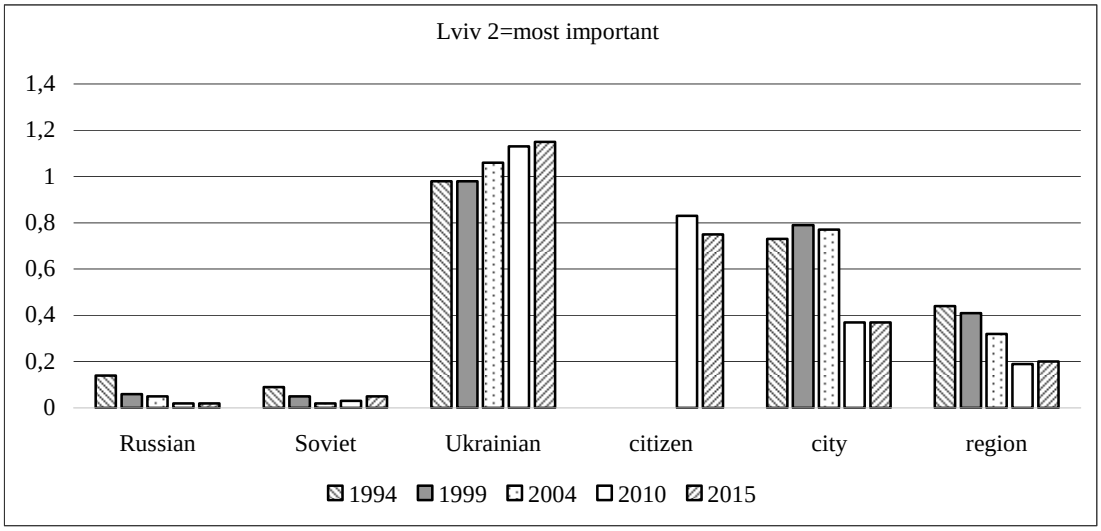

Figure 2. Mean National Identification in Lviv: 1994–2015

Source: Lviv/Donetsk Area Studies.

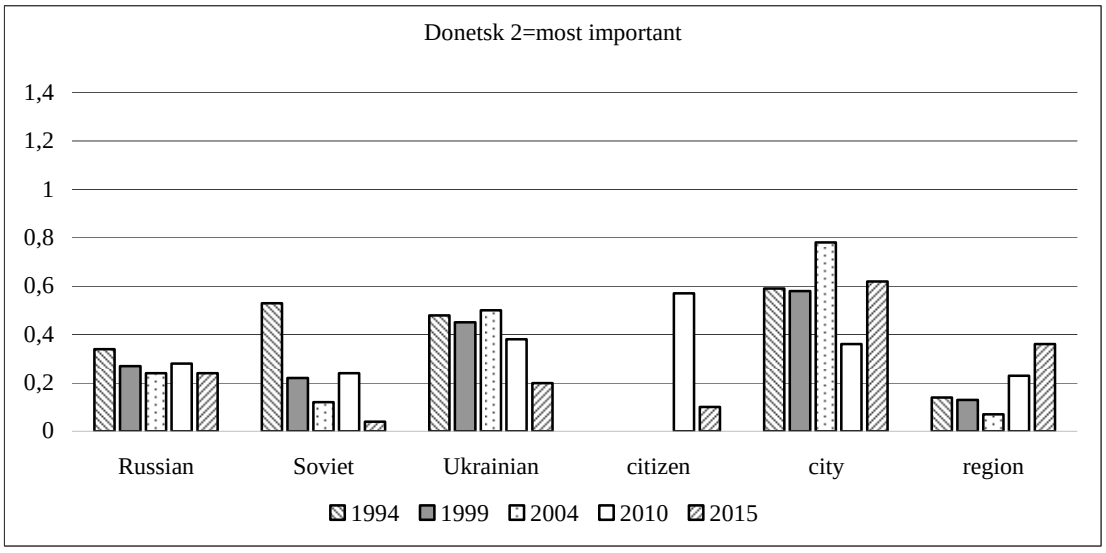

Figure 3. Mean National Identification in Donetsk: 1994–2015

Source: Lviv/Donetsk Area Studies.

So which is the anomaly? Is Lviv an outlier because of its immense commitment to Ukraine or is Donetsk unusual in its more relative indifference to its homeland and a

concomitant affinity for Russians? To sort this question, we turned to the 2015 surveys which covered all six major populated cities in Ukraine: Lviv, Kyiv, Odesa, Dnipro, Kharkiv, and Donetsk. It became clear that Lviv was the outlier in terms of its strong Ukrainian identification but Donetsk was as well, not only for its diminuitive level of Ukrainian identification but also for its somewhat greater level of Russian identification which is absent in all the other cities. All the other cities fall somewhere in the moderate range for Ukrainian identification. Interestingly, Odesa shows an even stronger city identification than does Donetsk (See Figure 4).

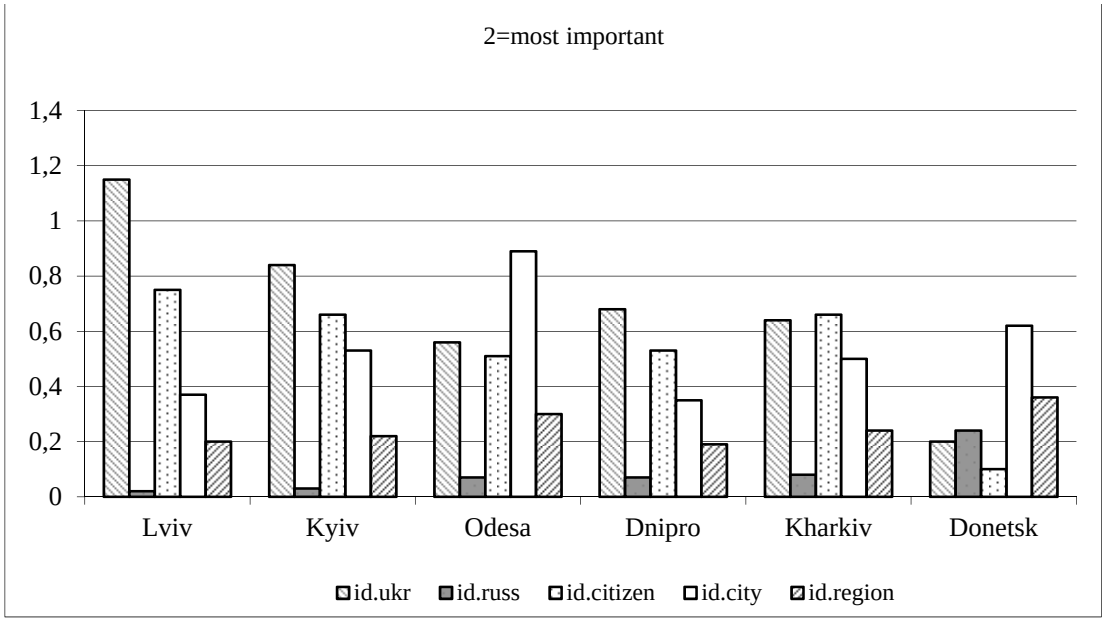

Figure 4. Means of Top National Identifications: Six Cities 2015

Source: Lviv/Donetsk Area Studies.

Using our second measures of identification asking about whether each of the nationality groups (Ukrainian, Russian, or Soviet) describes them and which describes them best, Lviv always answers that Ukrainian describes them best; Kyiv (which we covered in the last two years of the study) is very close behind; but Donetsk is more distant in their choice of Ukrainian as best. It does not make that claim as readily. Yet, when asked how much Russian described them, they were equally as distant from a "best" description while Lvivites, and Kyivites, were decidedly not describing themselves as Russians at all (See Figure 5, 6).

Finally, in our third measure of identification where we looked at closeness to various groups, we find parallel results. When you ask people in Lviv who they felt closest to in terms of the beliefs and feelings about things, Ukrainians were their closest group by far, followed by a moderate distance from other ethnic groups (Russians, Soviets and Jews). And this was true over time from 1994 to 2015. In Donetsk, however, Ukrainians, Russians and

Soviets were all pretty close – not the closest, but pretty close, and continuously over time, with Jews being a little more distant (See Figure 7, 8).

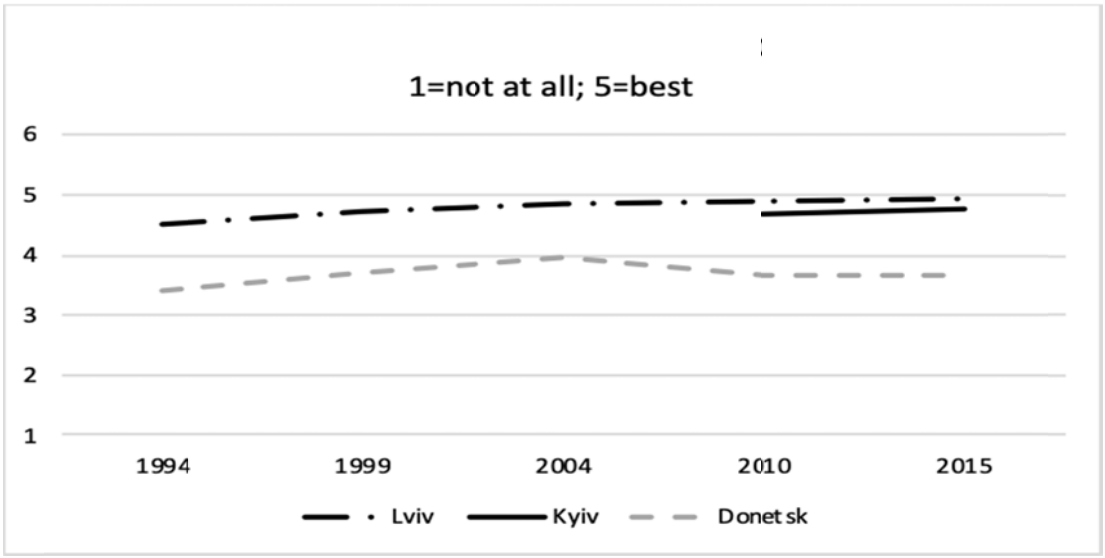

Figure 5. Means of Ukrainian Describes Me

Source: Lviv/Donetsk Area Studies.

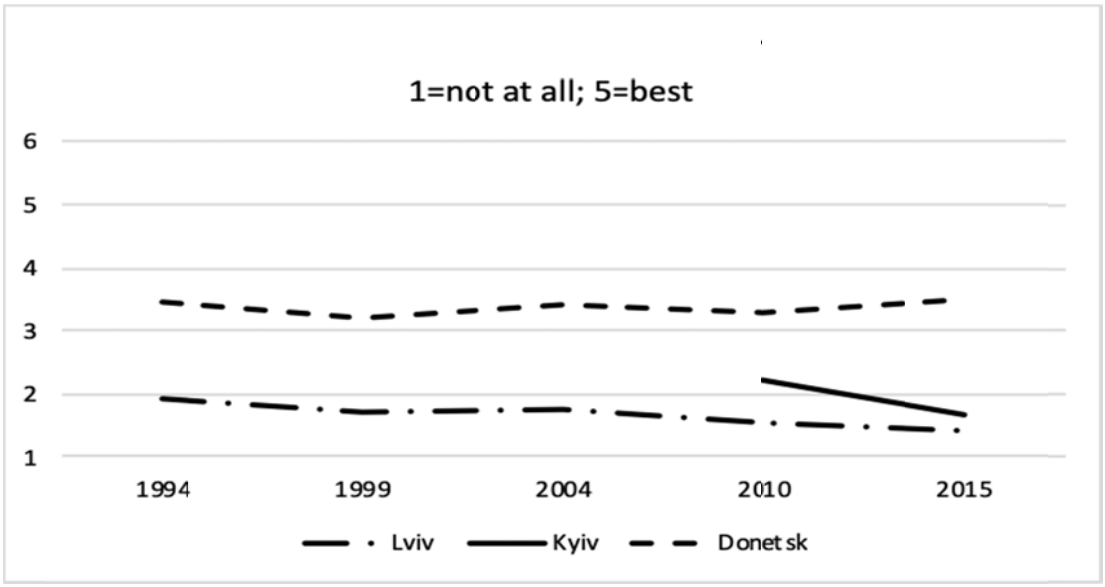

Figure 6. Means of Russian Describes Me

Source: Lviv/Donetsk Area Studies.

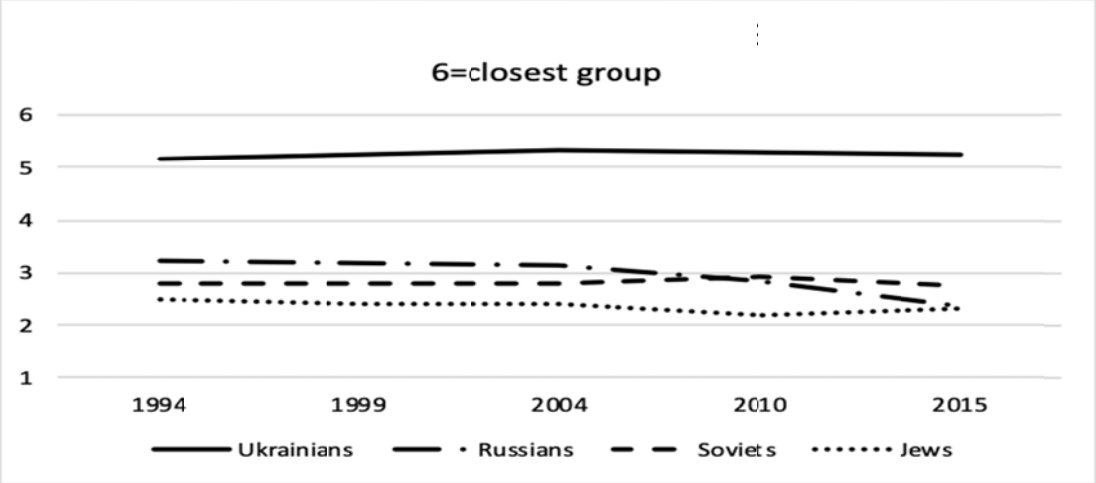

Figure 7. Means of Closeness to Ethnic Groups: Lviv

Source: Lviv/Donetsk Area Studies.

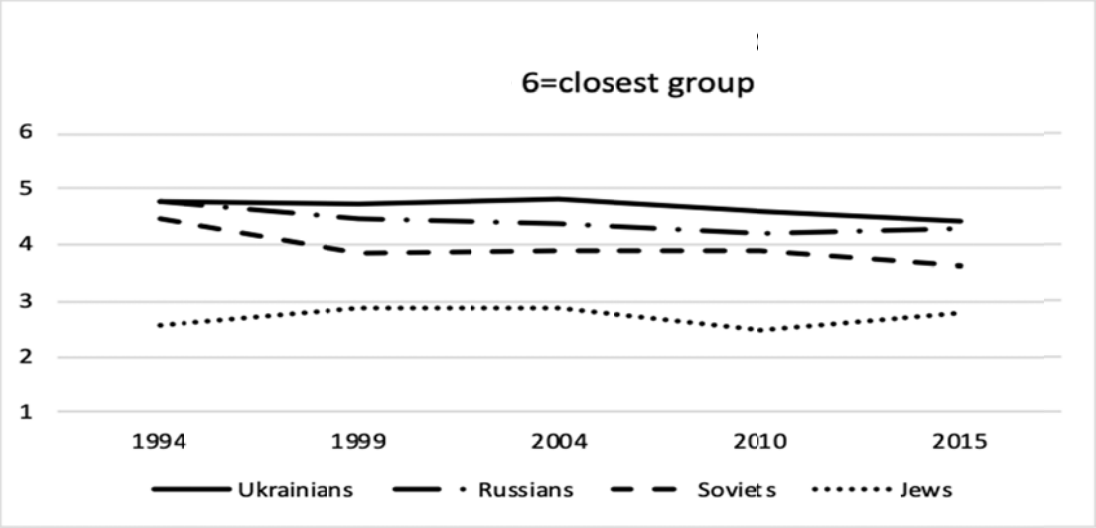

Figure 8. Means of Closeness to Ethnic Groups: Donetsk

Source: Lviv/Donetsk Area Studies.

Summary of Ukrainian Identification. The first thing we can note is that having a Ukrainian civic identity is not tantamount to having a Ukrainian identification. Nationality choice is not always indicative of commitment.

Was there an impact of the 2004 Maidan or the 2014 Euromaidan? We can say that Lviv which was always strongly identified as Ukrainian only became increasingly more so since 2004 and then even slightly stronger in 2010 and 2015. This continuously strong identity may be the result of previous years of symbolic and realistic threat against Ukrainian identity, enhanced even more by the very real threats of the Maidan revolutions.

Donetsk has multiple national identities and maintains a mosaic flavor from its early historical settlement by numerous ethnic peoples. The Ukrainians in Donetsk are moderately identified as Ukrainian and this peaked in 2004 but has gone slightly down since then. Most likely the more highly identified Ukrainians left Donetsk as internally displaced persons when the war started and are dispersed throughout Ukraine. Russian identity among Ukrainians was down in 2004 and in 2015 and remains at a moderate level. Russians in Donetsk have a moderate Ukrainian identity but their Russian identity only became stronger in 2004 and in 2015, as a reaction to the Maidans, which brought their ethnic identity to the fore.

Donetsk has a strong city identity which helps subsume the competing Ukrainian and Russian identities into a more neutral identity as one that is not under threat. It is also likely a result of the integration of the Ukrainians and Russians who have lived together and inter-married and become assimilated into a Slavic union. However, anecdotally, we have learned that before the war one did not have to make a choice between a Ukrainian and Russian nationality in Donbas; since then, one does. Whether this will show up as greater commitment to one or the other identities in the next few years, only time will tell.

Multiple Identities. We do not usually have just one identity but a combination of identities which rise to the forefront of our thoughts depending on the situation in which we find ourselves. Which one becomes salient depends on a combination of context and situation [5]. For example, if you have a Ukrainian name and live in the US, people often ask what nationality you are and the natural answer is Ukrainian. But if you have a Ukrainian name and were raised in the US but are visiting Ukraine and speak perfect English, people might ask what nationality you are, and the answer would be American.

Three clusters were most evident over time in Lviv and Donetsk in 1994–2015[7]: 1) Greek Catholics, Ukrainian Nationalists, Reformers, and Ukrainians; 2) No Preferred Group; and 3) Communists, Russians, and Soviets. Lvivites of course preferred the first group consistently and even more over time. Donetskites preferred the last group with a considerable decrease over time along with an increase to almost original levels in 2015. But there are substantial numbers of people who prefer neither sets of groups and either don't answer the questions or fall in the category of no preferred group, this being most prevalent among people from Donetsk. While these group affiliations are not surprising, given the history of Ukraine and what we know about pro-western and pro-Russian influences in their respective regions, their tenacity is.

Are there similar clusters of groups evident in all the large cities of Ukraine? Or are Lviv and Donetsk once more unique in their constellations of attitudes? We looked at all the major cities in Ukraine in 2015 and in our preliminary analysis found that there are considerable differences and each city seems unique although there are commonalities. Noteably, Ukrainians as a group appeared in each and every one of the six profiles and always as the first or most prominent cluster, if not it's most prevalent.

In summary, Lviv and Donetsk are once again unique in their attitudinal profiles compared to the other major cities of Ukraine. Lviv is unusual in its preference for Nationalists and Greek Catholics; Donetsk in its focus on Russians. But Communists crop

[7] The cluster analysis was conducted with hierarchical k-means clustering utilizing Ward's method.

up prominently in almost every city except Lviv and Kyiv, as do Soviets; this, even in 2015. It seems the coalitions of the Former Soviet Union have not lost their luster completely at least in eastern and southern Ukraine. Fortunately, the superordinate social identity, namely Ukrainians, is at least maintaining a foothold in the perceptions of most Ukrainians.

Multiple identities are clearly of interest in how people think about themselves and can form important coalitions which might influence political behavior especially during elections. But they are difficult to analyze and present in a meaningful way. However, they have become increasingly important over time in understanding, for example, people's attitudes toward relations with Russian or maintaining the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Nevertheless, social identities, whether alone or in clusters, are not the most significant predictors of intergroup relations and attitudes in Ukraine: region is.

Regionalism. What our research has found, time and time again, is that whatever the attitudes Ukrainians have about relations with Russia, maintaining unity in Ukraine, their future vision of Ukraine, joining the European Union or NATO, or relations with the Center, the main determinant of those attitudes appears to be what region one lives in. This is true regardless of age, gender, education, nationality, identification, or language preference.

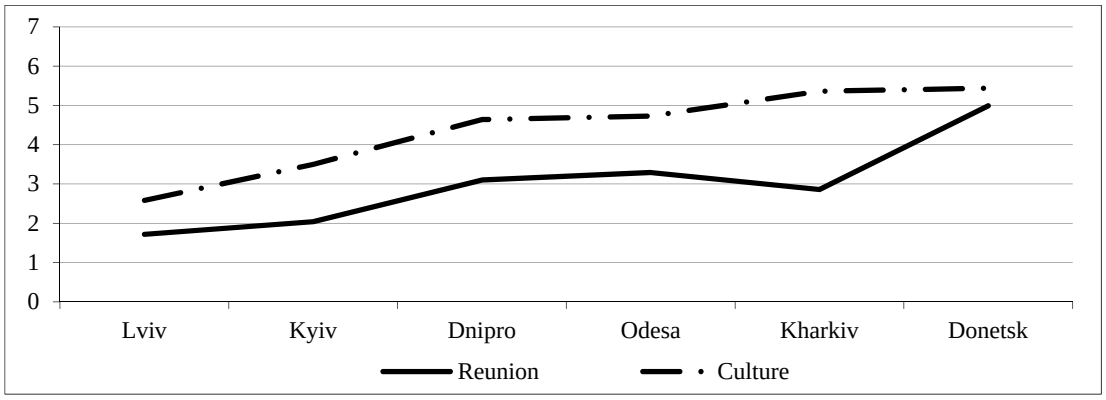

Figure 9. Means of Relations with Russia: 2015
(7=Reunion; Same Culture)

Source: Lviv/Donetsk Area Studies.

The full scale of these differences is beyond the scope of this article but it is evident in two examples of how each region responds to the questions of: 1) reunion with Russia; 2) defining both Ukrainian and Russian cultures[8]. First, we asked people to place themselves on

[8] Exact wording of the questions: For Same Culture, *People don't always agree about the historical and cultural traditions of Ukraine and Russia. Some people say that Ukrainians and Russians have a completely different history culture and language. They would be at position 1 on this scale. Others argue that Ukrainians and Russians have the same basic history culture and language and they would be at position 7 on this scale. Which position corresponds to your view or haven't you thought much about this?* For Reunion, *People also don't agree on the relationships Ukraine should have with Russia. Some argue that Ukraine and Russia should be completely separate countries. They would be at position 1 on this scale. Others think that Ukraine and Russia should be the same country and they would be at position 7. Which position corresponds to your view or haven't you thought much about this?*

a scale from one to seven where one indicates that Ukraine and Russia have a completely different history, culture and language and seven indicates that they are one and the same (same culture). Second, we asked them to use a similar scale where one indicates that Ukraine and Russia should be completely separate countries and seven indicates that they should be the same country (reunion). Their answers varied by city with people from Lviv most likely to place themselves closer to one on both questions, followed by people in Kyiv who were a little closer to 2 and 3 on the scale, followed by Dnipro and Odesa and Kharkiv and finally Donetsk, each progressing further toward 7 in that order (See Figure 9). While it's not a perfect march from western to eastern Ukraine, it does appear to be nearly so with only a slight digression evidenced by Dnipro.

Conclusions. While civic identification has increased in both Lviv and Donetsk over the past twenty-five years and ethnic identification has increased to unusually high levels in Lviv, it has not done so in Donetsk. Donetsk has multiple identifications. It is moderately identified with both Ukrainians and Russians, unlike the rest of Ukraine which has a moderate identification with Ukrainians alone. We have argued that this is a result of the intergroup identity threat that Ukrainians have had to endure repeatedly throughout their history. The form it takes in Lviv is to enhance and reinforce a strong Ukrainian identity as there is no more powerful group to dampen that endorsement; rather, a government system that encourages it.

Donetsk presents a more interesting scenario. Are they merely subsuming their greater Ukrainian identification under the rubric of Slavic brotherhood because of the threat of Russian majority rule or is it a true assimilation into a broader identity that includes both Russians and Ukrainians that has evolved in a city that shares its resources with both nationalities and is redolent with intermarriage between the two? That is, if we were to look beneath the responses of a Donetsk Ukrainian, would he turn out to be more like a Lviv Ukrainian? It may be plausible but seems unlikely given the level of Ukrainian identification in the other four cities we studied. None of them were as Ukrainian in feeling as Lviv, although Kyiv comes close. The three remaining cities, Dnipro, Odesa, and Kharkiv, we may recall, have very different clusters of multiple identities to Lviv and Kyiv and they tend to incorporate a closeness to Russians that is not found in Lviv and Kyiv. Thus while they don't have even a moderate amount of identification with Russians, they still retain a modicum of closeness to them.

It is not clear from our research whether Ukrainian identification has increased in most of Ukraine over the last few years. Other research indicates high levels of Ukrainian identity but it is unclear whether it is just civic identity or ethnic identity and the strength of commitment to Ukrainian identification. They also do not cover as long a period of time as our research does. So the end result is inconsistent documentation of the level and type of identification that is taking place in Ukraine today. It would certainly seem that the continuous threat that the war in the Donbas has created in the minds of Ukrainians throughout the country would certainly increase Ukrainian identification based on theory alone and our research does indicate growth of Ukrainian identification in Kyiv from 2010 to 2015 which covers the period of the war. Therefore, it appears plausible that this threat has

raised Ukrainian identity in the other cities as well, except for Donetsk whose case we've argued above.

Finally, the consistency of the multiple identities we identified in Lviv and Donetsk, namely Ukrainian Nationalists, Greek Catholics and Reformers in Lviv and Communists, Russians and Soviets in Donetsk, only highlight the polarized differences between eastern and western Ukraine. These flow from the vastly different historical backgrounds of these two regions which found western Ukraine incorporated into the Soviet Union much later than the rest of Ukraine and therefore with many fewer years of Russification from which to recover and which they didn't completely accept. Eastern Ukraine was permeated with other nationalities in its inception, mostly Russians, who were considered first among equals and dominated the top government positions. And central Ukraine was most severely decimated by the Holodomor, the starvation campaign undertaken under Stalin, leading to the weakening of any revolt against Russian imperialism.

Such historical events invariably led to regional differences in attitudes toward Russia and Russians which are now evident in how the various regions react toward a host of questions related to Russia. They also underlie the amount of commitment and the levels of identification with Ukraine that their populations dare voice. In the past twenty-seven years of Ukrainian independence, these events have played a major role in the way people have voted as well with western Ukraine and the center tending towards more western-style candidates and the east and south tending pro-Russian. If the current war in the Donbas has indeed increased Ukrainian identification throughout the country, we should see evidence of that in the upcoming March presidential election in 2019.

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