Nation-building in post-Soviet Ukraine: educational policy and the response of the Russian-speaking population

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2 STATES AND ETHNIC GROUPS

The two central questions introduced in the previous chapter focused on two interrelated issues: (1) the response of the state to ethnic pluralism within its boundaries, and (2) the response of ethnic groups to state action. As to the former, it has already been argued that despite a growing awareness that central state policy has a considerable impact on the political mobilization of ethnic groups (and even on their very survival), the construction of theories explaining the variety of central state approaches to ethnic pluralism has so far received little academic attention. In contrast, the latter phenomenon has attracted considerable academic attention, resulting in several theories on the political mobilization of ethnic groups. This chapter starts with a discussion on frequently used terminology and on the applicability of terms like nation, national/ethnic group and nationalism in the Ukrainian context. Then I concentrate on the ill-developed body of theory on state responses to multi-ethnicity, followed by a discussion on its relevance for post-Soviet Ukraine. Next, attention shifts to the specific linguistic response of the Russians and Russophone Ukrainians to the nation-building project. The chapter concludes by extracting a number of variables from the body of theory on ethnic mobilization that are thought to frame these responses. The last section also identifies the cities where the response of the groups will be examined, and explains why these cities were selected.

2.1 Concepts and Definitions: Their Applicability for Ukraine

2.1.1 Nations, ethnic groups and nationalities

The concept of nation has been the source of much academic debate. Bakker (1997) lists a number of scholars who have looked for objective cultural markers, such as a common language, religion, myth of ancestry, sense of homeland, and values and traditions, in their efforts to define a nation and distinguish one nation from another. Usually, these authors are associated with the primordialist perspective on ethnic phenomena. Authors who are labeled as primordialists point to the significance of tangible cultural characteristics as the foundations on which strong, essentially unchanging national identities and feelings of belonging rest (e.g. Shils, 1957; Geertz, 1963; Isaacs, 1975). Yet, this primordialist approach to the problem of defining a nation runs into considerable difficulties. There is, for instance, the question of why in one case a particular cultural trait distinguishes one nation from another, while in others it does not. Why is it that in Spain language is such a crucial factor in determining membership of a nation and in Switzerland it is not? Another problem is that some groups of people consider themselves to belong to different nations while they do not differ on any cultural markers. The Walloons are a case in point. They share their language and religion with their southern neighbours, but they do not think of themselves as being French. In this particular case, the modern phenomenon of state citizenship appears to have moulded national identity. Finally, proceeding from the assumption that a person is bound to a nation by the characteristics of the culture he grew up in, this approach cannot explain why individuals adopt new cultural traits and change national allegiances in the course of their lifetime.
In reaction, it has been argued that a nation is nothing more than an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991) consisting of members who share a sense of belonging to this nation and who are identified by others as being part of it. Scholars subscribing to this subjective notion of a nation are often categorized as mobilizationists. For scholars classified as such, nations are the products of elites who have mobilized heretofore amorphous masses on a national platform in accordance with their political and economic interests (e.g. Glazer and Moynihan; 1975; van den Berghe, 1976). It is argued that national identities are the outcome of rational decision-making processes and are subject to change if people are confronted with altered circumstances. Obviously, this line of thought is of special relevance to certain categories of immigrants, who in their endeavor to adapt as quickly as possible to the conditions of their new host society cast off any cultural traits and allegiances that hinder them in this.

Yet, the instrumentalist argument has again elicited the criticism that it ignores the relative longevity of nations and the strong emotional bonds among people based on a sense of common descent, culture and ethnic homeland. Acknowledging the imperfections of both approaches, some authors have sought to combine the two in definitions of nation that capture both objectively verifiable traits and the subjective sentiments of belonging (Smith, 1986; Scott, 1990). However, one particular aspect of nations that the instrumentalist argument points at should not be ignored: nations invariably have some political program aimed at enhancing or maintaining a system of individual and/or collective rights and privileges in a distinct territory. These political demands may range from calls for more cultural autonomy on an individual basis to claims for far-reaching kinds of territorial autonomy, including appeals for outright independence. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, mobilizationists would even argue that the very fact that group spokespeople start promulgating a political program gives rise to a national consciousness among a group of people hitherto unaware of ‘the ties that bind them together’ (e.g. Smith and Wilson, 1997). Hence, the perception of being a member of a nation and the promotion of a political program appear to be interrelated phenomena.

In summary, this study defines a nation as a group of people with one or more specific cultural traits whose members (1) think of themselves and are thought of by others as being part of it and (2) endorse a political program aimed at enhancing or maintaining a system of individual and/or collective rights and privileges.

The concepts of ethnic group, nationality and national minority can be treated as synonyms and are used in this study to denote a group living in a state dominated by a different group. This minority group may or may not be part of a larger nation. Hence, Hungarians in Slovakia constitute both a national minority and a part of the larger Hungarian nation, which, in addition to living in Slovakia, is also to be found in Hungary, Ukraine, Romania and Yugoslavia. Although ethnic groups share many of the characteristics of nations, such as specific cultural traits and a strong national consciousness, they usually have a political program of only moderate demands, proposing some form of cultural or (minimal) territorial autonomy instead of total independence. It is likely that these modest demands are in relation to the minority status of ethnic group. It is the fear among ethnic groups that the state, which is dominated by an ethnic other, might retaliate that keeps them from making more radical demands.
2.1.2 The Russians and Russian-speaking Ukrainians of Ukraine

At first sight it does not seem problematic to label Ukraine’s Russians as an ethnic group since they are indeed in a minority position, but if we look closely at their situation, the applicability of the concept can be called into question. First, as noted in the introduction, many of them are (descendants of) migrants who came from Russia. This is most notably the case in western Ukraine where a Russian presence was virtually non-existent before the war. This migrant status may have induced some Russians to give up their cultural traits and Russian identity in an effort to participate fully in Ukrainian(-speaking) society. Consequently, it would no longer be appropriate to speak of Ukraine’s Russians as an *ethnic group*. However, Russian migrants to Ukraine are different than, for instance, migrants to the United States. Whereas the latter realized they were going to another country, where they would have to learn English in order to find a place in American society, the former, who migrated to Ukraine when it was part of the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union, did not experience this as migrating to a foreign state. As members of the dominant nation speaking the language that dominated all aspects of Soviet life and that was fostered officially by the authorities, these Russians did not feel the need to learn Ukrainian. In addition, many Russians did not recognise Ukraine to be anything other than an integral part of Russia, their ethnic homeland, calling Ukraine “Little Russia” (Malorossiya) and considering Ukrainians to be a branch of the larger all-Russian nation (Solchanyk, 1994, p. 49). In conclusion, the migrant status of the Russians is not likely to have affected their cultural and national outlook to any great extent.

However, if migrant status did not contribute very much to ethnic reidentification, the intermingling of Russians with Ukrainians probably did. Pirie (1996) argues that the exceptionally high rate of mixed marriages found in Ukraine, especially in the south and east (e.g. 25% of all marriages for Ukraine as a whole, 41.7% for Donets’k oblast and 36.4% for The Crimea), has greatly contributed to mixed self-identification, blurring traditional Ukrainian and Russian national consciousness. Indeed, referring to an all-Ukrainian sociological survey conducted between 1993 and 1994, he shows that 25-26% of respondents considered themselves as being Russian and Ukrainian simultaneously, whereas only 11% regarded themselves to be exclusively Russian. Citing a 1991 sociological poll conducted in Donets’k he also finds that a plurality of 36.5% of respondents declared themselves to be both Russian and Ukrainian and only 27.5% exclusively Russian. It should be remembered that these figures contrast markedly with the census data, which register 22.1% of the population as Russians for Ukraine as a whole and 44% as Russians for Donets’k oblast. Surely, therefore, ethnic intermingling *has* had an impact on the national consciousness of Russians, refuting the assertion that these Russians constitute a clear-cut ethnic group.

If Ukraine’s Russians cannot easily be categorized as an ethnic group, then what about the Russian-speaking Ukrainians? At first sight this seems to be an inappropriate question since the Russophone Ukrainians are, as Ukrainians, part of the dominant nation. However, if the use of Russian has affected their national outlook, the question clearly is relevant. Have Russophone Ukrainians changed their national affiliation and adopted, for instance, a strong Russian identity or some distinct identity of their own, which would in either case qualify them as (part of) an ethnic group? The literature on this subject
indicates that very few Russophone Ukrainians actually dropped their Ukrainian identity in the post-war years. Consequently, with almost all Russian-speaking Ukrainians considering themselves as belonging to the dominant nation, it would indeed be inapt to label them as an ethnic group. Yet, Pirie (1996, p. 1083) argues that if they possess a Ukrainian identity at all it is likely to be weak as they find themselves in a situation similar to that of mixed couples: "In the case of southern and eastern Ukraine, for example, the dominance of the Russian language and other aspects of Russian culture may also lead to a state of ethnic marginality among individuals, including those who do not have mixed ethnic heritage. This is because the tension between Ukrainian heritage and Russian ethnic markers (i.e. language etc.) draws the individual's allegiances in different directions in the same way that mixed parentage does." Although Pirie does not support this argument with survey data showing that Russian-speaking Ukrainians are indeed in 'a state of ethnic marginality,' we know from the discussion in the introduction that in the lands formerly part of Czarist Russia (where almost all Russian-speaking Ukrainians live nowadays) national consciousness remains fledgling among Ukrainians. In the same vein, it has been argued that the inability of many Ukrainians to distinguish Russophone Ukrainians from Russians, precisely because of their continued use of Russian, has made it impossible to draw clear-cut nationality boundaries separating Russian-speaking Ukrainians from Russians.

The fact that neither the Russians nor the Russian-speaking Ukrainians make up sharply demarcated ethnic groups endowed with strong national identities is most interesting from the point of view of this study as that might have consequences for the political program of both groups. In other words, given our expectation that national consciousness and the promotion of a political program are interrelated phenomena, does a weak ethnic identity among (many) Russians and Russian-speaking Ukrainians also mean that they lack a political agenda? Does it mean that they will easily drop their cultural traits and adopt new ones and change national allegiances accordingly, if changed political circumstances (Ukraine obtaining independence) oblige them to do so? Section Three of this chapter, which is devoted to the specific linguistic response of the Russian-speaking population goes into this matter in further detail.

For now, suffice it to say that, weak as the national consciousness among many Russians and Russian-speaking Ukrainians may be, this has certainly had no effect on their political attitudes. Election results (as discussed in the introduction) and numerous opinion polls have consistently shown support for the idea of Russian as a second state language and for closer ties with Russia and/or some reinstitution of the Soviet Union in the east and south, where the two groups predominate. But voting and expressing one's views to interviewers is one thing, organizing interest groups and setting up one's own institutions, such as schools, churches and cultural societies, is quite another. The

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19 See Anderson and Silver (1990) who estimate that, between 1959 and 1970, less than three percent of Ukrainians in the USSR, including those living in republics other than Ukraine, ethnically reidentified to Russian. Ukrainian scholars, moreover, have noted that national consciousness among Ukrainians does not appear to depend on language use (Arel, 1994).

20 See Arel (1996, p. 86) where he notes that "Kyivans can easily identify the regional, but not the ethnic background of Eastern Slavs they meet, unless the region identifies the ethnicity".
question is thus whether Russians and Russian-speaking Ukrainians are prepared to actively pursue some cultural or political program of their own.

To come back to the identity markers separating the two groups, one could argue that it may not be very productive to employ the two categories of Russophone Ukrainians and Russians if it is not clear whether these groups identify themselves as distinct groups in reality. This argument must be qualified. First of all, using survey data, Barrington (1997) found that - other factors being equal - nationality was one of the three statistically significant factors (the others being religion and region, but not language!) shaping attitudes in Ukraine towards Ukraine’s independence and relations with Russia. Contrary to other research findings, therefore, Barrington’s study suggests that nationality forms an important social cleavage after all. Second, precisely by distinguishing the two groups and analyzing their individual linguistic reactions we can determine whether the distinction has any basis in reality.

2.1.3 Nationalism and state nationalism

Like Gellner (1983, p. 1), we define nationalism as “primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent.” As such, it is the most radical political program an ethnic group living in a state together with one or more ethnic groups can have, since its fulfilment would automatically entail the breakup of that state. Obviously, this *ethnic group* nationalism collides with the nationalism of a nation in control of the state. The latter, so-called *state* nationalism seeks to centralize decision-making and culturally homogenize the population in the state’s territory (Roessingh, 1996). Strong state nationalism relies heavily on strategies of control or dominance in their dealings with ethnic pluralism. Conversely, weak state nationalism expresses itself in strategies to accommodate ethnic demands.

Aimed at the eradication of ethnic differences within the state’s boundaries, the strategies of control or dominance vary from extreme policies, such as genocide and ethnic cleansing, to milder but still restrictive policies including the monopolization of the police and juridical systems by the titular nation, ethnic discrimination in the allocation of economic resources, the prohibition of ethnic parties and movements, and compulsory educational homogenization (including the prohibition of the use of the language of non-dominant ethnic groups in schools) (McGarry and O’Leary, 1993).

In contrast, the strategy of accommodation acknowledges and cultivates ethnic pluralism in an effort to enhance the legitimacy of the state among members of minority groups. A distinction can be made between non-territorial and territorial policies of accommodation. The former include policies like anti-discrimination laws, government subsidies for ethnic organizations and educational establishments, proportional political representation, veto rights for minorities, positive discrimination, and quotas for employment in the public sector (Bakker, 1997). Territorial policies involve the creation of a level of government controlled by an ethnic group with specific authority, mostly over cultural matters, over the residential area of that ethnic group (regional autonomy), or the establishment of a federation or even confederation.
2.1.4 State nationalism in Ukraine

It can be proposed that the intensity of state nationalism correlates positively with the depth of nationalist sentiment among the elite and masses of titular nation. In line with this argument, we can then hypothesize that the Ukrainian central state is unlikely to embark on a course of strong state nationalism. After all, in the introduction it was mentioned that for a variety of historical reasons strong nationalist feelings are only prevalent among western Ukrainians, reducing the prospect of a Ukrainian nationalist elite ever dominating the state apparatus and determining its policies. In fact, the introduction also showed that Ukrainian nationalist parties have not been very successful in mustering much support: the results of the 1994 and 1998 parliamentary elections revealed that only in the western oblasts and in Kyiv city did nationalist parties capture a large percentage of the votes. It is to this limited appeal of Ukrainian nationalism that Andrew Wilson refers in the title of his new book: “Ukrainian Nationalism: a Minority Faith” (Wilson, 1997).

Yet, the strength of nationalist sentiment among the members of the nation in control may not be the only factor shaping the response of the state to ethnic pluralism. The next section discusses two approaches predicting the likelihood of either an accommodating strategy or a strategy based on domination and control.

2.2 The Response of the Ukrainian State to Ethnic Pluralism

2.2.1 Consociational democracy

Consociational democracy is generally considered to be one of the accommodating strategies a state can follow in its dealings with ethnic groups. Introduced by Lijphart (1977, p. 25), this concept refers to a specific political way of coping with ethnic cleavages in society. Its basic elements are in Lijphart’s words:

1. A government by a grand coalition of the political leaders of all significant segments of the plural society;

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21 One could counter the assertion that strong nationalist feelings only prevail among western Ukrainians by arguing that the limited appeal of Ukrainian nationalism was apparently not limited enough to prevent Ukraine from attaining independence. Yet, it must be borne in mind that all former Soviet Union Republics became independent states whatever the strength of titular nationalism, and that pro-independence sentiments in the early 1990s were not always an expression of strong indigenous nationalism. It has been argued, for instance, that in the fall of 1991, Ukraine’s Russians supported independence because they believed an independent Ukraine would have better economic prospects than a Ukraine still subordinate to Moscow (opinion polls in October 1991 consistently showed that a majority of Russians backed independence; the December 1991 referendum on independence further showed that in the Russified oblasts of the east an overwhelming majority supported independence (Donets’k 83.9%; Dnipropetrovsk 90.3%; Kharkiv 86.3% and Luhansk 83.8%) (Chinn and Kaiser, 1996)). However, after three years of economic hardship, support for independence had sunk dramatically: an April 1994 poll indicated that 40 percent of respondents were willing to make concessions on sovereignty to improve living conditions, while only 32 percent were not.
2. The mutual veto or concurrent majority rule, which serves as an additional protection of vital minority interests;
3. Proportionality as the principal standard of political representation, civil service appointments, and allocation of public funds; and
4. A high degree of (non-)territorial autonomy for each segment to run its own internal affairs.

Lijphart can be credited for the fact that he put forward a number of conditions conducive to the development and sustainability of consociational democracy. Naturally, the first and foremost condition must be democracy itself. Because Ukraine has indeed been a democracy (at least formally) since its independence, we can now apply Lijphart’s model to Ukraine and see whether any of the conditions are prevalent there. Accordingly, we can assess the prospects of consociational democracy in this large successor state. Lijphart considers the following six conditions to be particularly important:

1. The balance of power
2. State size
3. The structure of cleavages (crosscutting or coinciding)
4. Overarching loyalties
5. Segmental isolation
6. Traditions of elite accommodation

The concept of a balance of power relates to a situation in which there are at least three (ethnic) groups in society of more or less equal size. It logically follows that each group will be in a minority position. The advantage of such a configuration is that no one group can win a majority of votes in a party system along ethnic lines, which excludes the possibility of one group dominating the others. Hence, a coalition of two or more groups becomes unavoidable, reducing the prospect that one or several groups feel neglected or oppressed by an indifferent or hostile government.

If one takes the Russian-speaking Ukrainians as a separate ethnic group, one could argue that the balance of power condition would indeed seem to apply for Ukraine: the introductory chapter mentioned a survey that showed that Ukraine’s population is composed of 47% Ukrainians who prefer to speak Ukrainian, 33% Ukrainians who prefer to speak Russian, and 20% Russians. However, as noted in the previous section, Russian-speaking Ukrainians cannot really be considered an ethnic group since there is evidence that they still possess a (weak) Ukrainian identity and have not developed a distinct identity of their own. Because of this, the ethno-linguistic map of Ukraine cannot be seen as a triangular configuration of clear-cut ethnic groups delineated by sharp cultural boundaries. Instead, it is the intermediate position of the Russophone Ukrainians with their blurred national identity that might give rise to a situation in which they either side with their Ukrainian-speaking co-nationals or Russian co-linguals. This dual with intermediary group pattern could produce dominant majority rule. Ukraine, therefore, does not really appear to meet the balance of power condition.

For three reasons a small country has increased prospects of consociational democracy. First, in small states “elites are more likely to know each other personally and
to meet often; this increases the probability that they will not regard politics as a zero-sum game and hence...that they will choose coalescent instead of adversarial styles of decision-making” (ibid. p. 65). Another internal effect of small states is that the number and variety of interest groups is much smaller than in large states. Consequently, small states can afford to have many elites participating in the decision-making process without it turning into an unmanageable political machine. In contrast, in large states, the participation of the many interest groups can overburden the policy-making process. The external effect of a state being small is that it enhances feelings of insecurity vis-à-vis other states. These feelings produce a strong drive to sustain internal solidarity. Large states, feeling relatively more secure, lack this incentive.

With its 52 million inhabitants and 600,000 square kilometres Ukraine clearly does not satisfy the small size criterion. One could argue, though, that the perceived external threat coming from Russia as Ukraine’s big and powerful neighbor provides a great impetus for elites to cooperate. Yet, for elites to unite there must be consensus among them about what constitutes a threat and in Ukraine one can seriously doubt whether ‘the Russian factor’ is really conceived of as a common danger by all elites. Indeed, as already stated in the introduction, the communists actually favor closer ties with Russia. For them Russia’s political fencing with Ukraine over issues such as the Black Sea Fleet and the status of Sevastopol (and that of the entire Crimean peninsula) may not constitute a threat at all, but rather a welcome sign of involvement. In conclusion, therefore, Ukraine’s size does not appear to be beneficial to consociational democracy.

Although Lijphart is inconclusive about the exact effect of the structure of cleavages (crosscutting or coinciding) on consociational democracy, he does argue that “the only unambiguously favorable types of crosscutting are the crosscutting of class cleavages with various kinds of segmental cleavages - producing segments with approximate economic equality” (ibid. p. 87). The logic of this argument is that if ethnic groups are all more or less equally represented in the classes of society, they tend to feel equally treated, which in turn moderates attitudes and policy stances.

In Ukraine, social cleavages can indeed be said to be crosscutting ethnic ones. Although before the Revolution Ukrainians were still over-represented in the peasantry and underrepresented in the urban-based middle and upper classes, seventy years of communist rule effectively removed this imbalance. Ukrainians are now almost as educated and urbanized as the Russians and have roughly the same occupational structure. Therefore, as Ukraine does not have the kind of class divisions exacerbating ethnic tensions, one would expect the structure of cleavages to favor consociational democracy.

Elite cooperation is further enhanced by overarching loyalties, particularly those that operate at the level of society as a whole and thus dampen inter-elite conflict in the central state institutions. Lijphart considers nationalism to potentially provide these loyalties, although he admits that instead of unifying a society it can also lead to more discord “by providing a loyalty to a nation that is not coterminous with the state” (ibid. p. 82).

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22 For a comparison of Soviet nationalities on indicators of social mobilization, see Kaiser (1994).
Obviously, in the case of Ukraine one cannot really speak of nationwide overarching loyalties. The fact that Ukraine has never before had a period of sustained independence means that many of its inhabitants, certainly the Russian-speaking population in the east and south, have little affinity with the concept of an independent Ukraine. In politics this is reflected in the continuing debate over issues of state and nation-building. Thus, whereas in other countries elites at least agree on state independence and the character of the main political institutions, in Ukraine there is nothing that binds the elites together. Moreover, for many Russian speakers Ukrainian nationalism, as a potential unifying force, is not only associated with attaining and strengthening Ukraine’s independence, but also with a relentless promotion of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian customs. As such it is more a dividing force than an ideology bringing people together.

According to Lijphart, *segmental isolation* increases the chances of consociational democracy in that “clear boundaries between the segments of a plural society have the advantage of limiting mutual contacts and consequently of limiting the chances of ever-present potential antagonisms to erupt into actual hostility” (ibid. p. 88). He interprets these boundaries not only in a territorial sense (segregation of cultural groups by area) but also in a personalistic or institutional way. Boundaries of the latter nature refer to groups who, though living together, are strongly endogamic and isolate themselves from other groups by maintaining their own institutions (schools, churches, unions, sports clubs, etc.).

Neither of the two conceptions of boundaries applies in contemporary Ukraine. In a geographical sense, Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians, Russian-speaking Ukrainians and Russians do not live in linguistically and nationally homogeneous territories. This makes a territorial arrangement of accommodating ethnic demands alongside impossible. It is hardly surprising therefore that the new constitution adopted in June 1996 formally institutes Ukraine as a unitary state, notwithstanding the autonomy it granted to The Crimea. In the personalistic/institutional sense, the boundaries between the three groups are hazy at best. As will be shown hereafter, intermarriage rates among Ukrainians and Russians were exceptionally high in Soviet Ukraine compared to exogamy degrees in other Soviet republics. In addition, institutions and organizations along ethnic lines are still a marginal phenomenon, which is not surprising given that a civil society has yet to emerge in post-Soviet Ukraine.

Incidentally, it can be questioned whether segmental isolation in a territorial sense is conducive to ethnic peace and harmony. One could argue that ethnically homogeneous territories actually encourage secession by providing the ethnic groups in question with useful tools (shelter, local power base and material resources) in their effort to reserve the territory’s assets for themselves. Conceived in this way, geographically concentrated groups are not conducive to consociational democracy, but rather to the opposite: ethnic conflict and civil war (one may safely assume that in a majority of cases attempts to secede result in violent conflict). Coakley (1993, p. 7) argues in this vein: “The extent to which an ethnic group makes territorial demands on the state is clearly related to the absolute size of the group and to the pattern of territorial distribution of the group itself. Other things being equal, a group’s territorial claims become stronger as (1) the group
increases as a proportion of the population of ‘its’ territory and (2) the proportion of the total membership of the group within this territory increases”.

As a last important factor, prior traditions of elite accommodation can be said to contribute significantly to consociational democracy. Thus, if countries have a pre-modern, pre-democratic history of decentralized rule, characterized by compromise-seeking elites at various levels of government, they are more likely to adopt the consociational model. Conversely, the longer the periods of centralized absolutist rule a country endured, the smaller the chances of consociational democracy.

Neither under the Russian czars nor under communist rule did Ukraine develop a tradition of elite accommodation for the simple reason that state power was in the hands of an elite, first the Czarist bureaucracy/Russian nobility and later the communist party elite, that did not allow others to participate in the political process. As in many countries with absolutist rule it was dangerous in Ukraine for an elite excluded from state power to interfere in the decision-making process as persons or groups criticizing the regime and seeking a change in the status quo were relentlessly persecuted. Needless to say, with such a history the prospects for consociational power-sharing are minimal in Ukraine.

Given that Ukraine has a negative score on four of the six conditions, we can safely assume that the chances are very small that Ukraine will develop consociational democracy as an accommodating strategy in its dealings with ethnic pluralism. Yet, does this automatically predispose Ukraine to adopt a policy of dominance or control? The next section gives a preliminary answer to this question.

2.2.2 Overt majority ethno-nationalism

We proceed, as Chinn and Kaiser (1996) did, from Hennayake’s model of overt/exclusionary majority ethnonationalism in assessing the likelihood of Ukraine developing strategies of dominance and control. Overt majority ethno-nationalism refers to a state of affairs in which the majority nation openly seeks to monopolize state power, so we can take overt majority ethno-nationalism and strategies of dominance and control as synonyms. According to Hennayake (1992, p. 529) overt majority ethno-nationalism is stimulated:

1. When the present majority nation has been subordinated previously under colonialism and/or imperialism - for example, the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka;
2. Where majority ethno-nationalism, especially its popular element, has been suppressed as was the case in Iran prior to the 1979 Revolution;
3. When the majority nation is threatened by external forces - for example, pre-Bangladesh East Pakistan - or by internal forces - for example, growing Hindu nationalism in India in the face of growing Islamic fundamentalism;
4. When the economic resources of a multiethnic nation-state are limited - for example, the situation of the Malays in Malaysia (this condition includes economic inequalities between ethnic groups);
5. To solicit support for the adventurist policies of a state - as in Nazi Germany;
6. To regain lost pride - as in post-war France; and
7. When the survival of the majority nation is threatened - as in Israel today.
Interestingly, Hennayake’s model and Lijphart’s *favorable conditions* seem to have only one factor in common: Lijphart’s crosscutting/coindiccing cleavages and Hennayake’s limited economic resources. However, even this coincidence is partial as Hennayake’s concept covers more than just economic imbalances between ethnic groups. The lack of overlap of the two models suggests that a country’s failure to satisfy the conditions for consociational democracy does not necessarily induce it to take an exclusionary nationalism course and *vice versa*. Thus, instead of making up a simple dichotomy, Lijphart’s consociational democracy and Hennayake’s overt nationalism seem to constitute the extremes of a continuum embracing a large grey area of all kinds of more or less accommodating or overt nationalist policies. Let us now turn to Ukraine and see whether it fits Hennayake’s model.

Ukraine obviously meets the first condition. The Ukrainians as the majority nation have over the past five centuries been subordinated to successively the Polish, Russian-Czarist and Soviet-communist Empires. Although one can doubt the applicability of the term *subordination* for the Soviet era (as many Ukrainians made great socio-economic progress then and actively participated in the communist regime), what matters is that Ukrainian nationalists label this period as such, as a time of *oppression* of the Ukrainian language and culture and thus of the Ukrainian national identity itself. It is this perceived subordination that Ukrainian nationalists used to legitimize Ukraine’s independence and the assertion of dominance or hegemony of the titular nation in “its national homeland”.

The second condition applies much less to Ukraine because, as was argued in the introduction, Ukrainian nationalism has only limited appeal among the majority of Ukrainians. Only in western Ukraine do we find the typical mass-based nationalist sentiment of a people feeling oppressed by a “foreign” regime. Many inhabitants of L’viv, for instance, take pride in the fact that L’viv was the first town in the Soviet Union to tear down its statue of Lenin. In contrast, in the rest of Ukraine there have been few similar expressions of popular discontent with the Soviet era: some statues of Soviet heroes still stand, street names have generally remained unchanged and nationalist uproars and demonstrations are rare.

The third condition - an external and internal threat to the majority nation - is clearly present in the Ukrainian case. For Ukrainian foreign-policy specialists Russia undoubtedly constitutes a major external threat to Ukrainian security. Of paramount concern to them is the rise of political movements in Russia such as Vladimir Zhirinovsky’s LDPR and, to a lesser extent, Gennadi Zyuganov’s Communist Party which seek to restore the Russian-Czarist Empire or the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Russians in The Crimea and in the eastern oblasts are seen as a serious *internal* threat to Ukraine’s stability, pleading as they do for more autonomy or even secession (especially The Crimean Russians). Many Ukrainian nationalists tend to see these Russians as a fifth column from Moscow.

Despite the depth of the economic crisis in Ukraine, one cannot say with certainty whether the fourth condition applies as the distribution of economic resources through Ukraine’s ethnic groups is not uneven. As the previous section showed, Ukrainians have quickly caught up with the Russians on a number of social mobility indicators. Consequently, an exclusionary nationalist policy of economic discrimination favoring the
titular majority, which is justified by referring to past inequalities, is unlikely to find much support.

Conditions number five and six are obviously missing in Ukraine. At present Ukraine does not have any charismatic political leaders who could incite people to support adventurist politics. Even if it did, these leaders (or leader) would have difficulty mobilizing the masses on the grounds of regaining lost pride. Ukraine has very few moments in its history from which it can derive a sense of lost pride. Ukrainian historians could argue that the medieval kingdom of Kyiv Rus constitutes such a moment, claiming as they do that it was an embryonic Ukrainian state inhabited by a proto-Ukrainian nation and that modern Ukraine is its sole successor. However, Russian historiography and popular image dispute this version of history, arguing that Kyiv Rus was the cradle of all three East Slav nations, Belorussians, Ukrainians and Russians. The Zaporizhzhyan Cossack era could constitute another source of pride in Ukraine’s history, but the Cossacks also raise controversy. For Ukrainian nationalists they symbolise the brave, democratic and freedom-loving soul of the Ukrainian nation, but others see them as simply a gang of undisciplined outlaws, murdering and pillaging the countryside.

In contrast, condition number seven is again of particular relevance to Ukraine in that Ukrainian nationalists considered the russification policies and spontaneous assimilation of many Ukrainians to Russian in the late Soviet times as major threats to the survival of the Ukrainian nation. This fear of the Ukrainian nation becoming extinct was clearly present in Rukh’s original program. It holds that the Rukh’s main goal was “to wage a relentless struggle against the policy of de-nationalization and demand the creation of all conditions for the unfettered development and self-preservation of the Ukrainian people on the territory which has been theirs from time immemorial” (cited in Kaiser 1996, p. 30). Similarly, during the parliamentary session debating the Ukrainian Language Law in October 1989, Dmytro Pavlychko, a renowned poet and chairman of the Shevchenko Ukrainian language society, proclaimed that “[i]f the Ukrainian language does not exist, in ten years... (the) nation (will) perish... (quoted from Arel 1994, Ch. 5, p. 6).

An overview of all seven conditions shows that three are indeed present, that three clearly do not apply, and that the presence of one is arguable in Ukraine. This indecisive outcome makes it impossible to hypothesize about the strategy the Ukrainian central state will follow in its relations with minority ethnic groups. Thus, although Ukraine is unlikely to adopt the accommodating strategy of consociational democracy, it cannot be said that this automatically induces Ukraine to opt for a strategy of domination. In fact, it is this ambiguity that makes Ukraine a particularly interesting case.

2.3 The Russian Response to Nation-Building

2.3.1 Three options

This research focuses on the cultural (or linguistic) responses of Russians and Russophone Ukrainians. It identifies three options - assimilation, language integration and language retention - and uses parental school choice (for either a Russian or Ukrainian school for their children), the language parents raise their children in, and the
linguistic conduct of children themselves as indicators for these choices (for a complete operationalization, see Chapter 7). These three options can be viewed as a scale that ranges from assimilation at one end to language retention at the other.

One could argue that the distinctions in linguistic responses that are introduced here obscure the dynamic nature of these responses. In this line of reasoning, language integration is simply a stage in the assimilation process that members of a minority group adapting to a host society pass through. Laitin (1998) takes up this position, arguing that it is more appropriate to talk about rates of assimilation than to distinguish various linguistic reactions. He sees the linguistic conformation of Russophones as a typical S-curve-like process with language retention as a stable initial phase and full assimilation as a stable final phase. In his view, once people “take off” from the initial phase of language retention (for example, Russians or Russophone Ukrainians sending their children to Ukrainian schools but continuing to raise them in Russian), they are inevitably on the road to full assimilation, if not in one generation then in the generations that follow. However, by considering language integration as something transitional, inexorably leading to assimilation, one implies that this process is somehow irreversible. This, of course, need not be the case. Changed (political) circumstances could give Russians and Russophone Ukrainians a reason to reconsider their choices and send their children to Russian-language education once more, no matter how far they have “progressed on the S-curve.”

Yet, even if Laitin’s “tipping game” or “cascade” model is valid, there is still the possibility of large segments of the minority group never entering the cascade, i.e. clinging to their language and culture. Moreover, among those who do enter, some may go for assimilation right away while others may first wait to see which way the cat jumps and then hesitatingly opt for language integration. Because of Ukraine’s considerable regional contrasts (giving rise to very different local circumstances), it is more than likely that all three responses occur simultaneously in contemporary Ukraine. This likelihood justifies the use of the aforementioned distinctions and the effort to explain the pattern of responses found. It is not denied, however, that language integration could indeed be a transitional phase towards full assimilation.

David Laitin can be credited for the fact that he is one of the few scholars (or perhaps the only one) who has investigated in depth the cultural side of the adaptation process. Analyzing the “openness to assimilation” of the Russians in post-Soviet Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, he notes that the diaspora Russians have generally come to accept the nationalizing projects of the titular regimes (his observations rest on survey data gathered in 1994). Thus, 93.4% of all Russian respondents in his survey fully or partially agreed to the statement that the titular language should be a compulsory subject in schools; 86.9% expressed support for street signs being only in the titular language or in both Russian and the titular language; and 91.7% were fully or partially convinced that it is useful to learn the titular language. On the openness to assimilation index (construed from answers to twelve questions), Ukraine’s Russians ranked third (with a mean of .51) behind Latvia (.72), Estonia (.63), but in front of Kazakhstan (.38). Laitin proposes the fledgling support for the nationalizing project among the Ukrainians themselves (and most certainly among the Russian-speaking Ukrainians) as a tentative explanation for this
reaction. Because of this, he argues, Ukraine’s Russians are in doubt as to whether the titular language will ever gain primacy and thus whether assimilation will pay off.

A drawback of Laitin’s research is that it ignores the regional dimension in Ukraine.\textsuperscript{23} Given the strength of this factor in explaining the political response of the Russians, one may assume that it leaves its mark on the cultural response as well. As Bremmer (1994) did take the regional factor into account (his survey was administered in the cities of L’viv, Kyïv and Simferopol) and he included some questions on language proficiency and attitudes in his 1992 survey, we can get a first glimpse at the regional variation in cultural reactions. His findings show that the aforementioned pattern (with Russians in Kyïv taking the lead in openness to assimilation) also applies to titular language attitudes. For instance, Kyïvan Russians are in first place in saying they preferred their children to study in Ukrainian schools (65% expressed full or partial agreement to this statement); the L’vivans are a close second (54%); and the Russians in Simferopol trail far behind (9%). The Kyïvan Russians also rank first in their use of the Ukrainian media (Ukrainian radio 70%; television 75% and newspapers 68%); they are followed by the Russians in L’viv (radio 64%; television 74% and newspaper 58%); and the Russians in Simferopol report the least interest in the Ukrainian media (radio 27%; television 33% and newspaper 17%). For reported language proficiency we see a perfect linear correlation with the demographic weight of Russians in the local population: in Simferopol, where Russians make up 71.6% of the population, just 16% claim to speak Ukrainian fluently; Russians in Kyïv (22.3% of the population) are second with 51% claiming fluency; and the Russians in L’viv (16.1% of the population) are clearly first with 77%. The same pattern emerges when Ukrainian reading and writing abilities are studied: reading - Simferopol 27%, Kyïv 75% and L’viv 87%; writing - Simferopol 11%, Kyïv 43% and L’viv 64%.

2.3.2 Independent variables

Bremmer, Kolstoe and Laitin list a multitude of factors that they consider influential in shaping the options open to the diaspora Russians. Of these many determinants, I consider the following to play an important role in influencing their particular linguistic response: (1) ethnic proportion; (2) ethnic schism; (3) ethnically mixed marriages; (4) national and local policy.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23} Laitin’s Ukrainian data are based on samples from the cities of Kyïv and Donets’k. Yet, instead of analyzing the data of these cities separately, he aggregates the data to the national level to reflect the group of Ukraine’s Russians as a whole (at least this is how the reader can interpret it).

\textsuperscript{24} Being school pupils, the respondents in this survey could only be asked simple and factual questions. Therefore, the more complicated factors put forward by Laitin, who also focused specifically on the linguistic response of the Russians, could not be addressed.
Ethnic proportion and selection of cases

By far the most important feature of Ukraine’s regional divisions is the uneven spread of the Russians and Russophone Ukrainians over Ukraine’s territory. As the introduction has amply demonstrated, the share of both groups in the local population varies from a tiny minority in the western region to a majority in the eastern and southern regions. It could be expected that the more numerous the Russians and Russophone Ukrainians are in a certain area relative to Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians, the greater the chance that they will opt for language retention. The logic behind this proposition is clear: the larger the share of both groups in the local population, the stronger the position of the Russian language vis-à-vis the Ukrainian language. This in turn will reduce the incentive to assimilate for both groups. To test this hypothesis I selected the cases (cities) for the survey study in a manner that provided for nearly maximum variance on the ethnic proportion agent (see Table 2.1). They are:

1. L’viv (west) - small Russian minority; very small Russophone Ukrainian minority; large Ukrainian-speaking majority;
2. Kyïv (center) - medium size Russian minority; small Russophone Ukrainian minority; small Ukrainian-speaking majority;
3. Odesa (south) - large Russian minority; medium size Russophone Ukrainian minority; large Ukrainian-speaking minority; several small groups of other nationalities;
4. Donets’k (east) - small Russian majority; medium size Russophone Ukrainian minority; medium size Ukrainian-speaking minority.

Table 2.1 Ethno-linguistic Composition of four Oblast Centers in 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of inhabitants (in thousands)</th>
<th>Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians* (percentage)</th>
<th>Russophone Ukrainians* (percentage)</th>
<th>Russians (percentage)</th>
<th>Other nationalities (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L’viv</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyïv</td>
<td>2,572</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odesa</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donets’k</td>
<td>1,133</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dominique Arel (1994)
*The data on language refer to census data on mother tongue

25 A selection of cases including a Crimean city would ensure a maximum variance, but since one of our research criteria - the availability of Ukrainian schools - was almost absent (there is only one Ukrainian school on the entire peninsula), none of The Crimean cities qualified.

The idea of a selection of cases that ensures a maximum variance on (one of) the independent variables was taken from Bremmer. His case selection included L’viv, Kyïv and Simferopol. The use of the term “cases” to refer to the selected cities is actually inappropriate since it is the respondents in the survey who are the real cases here. A selected city is no more than a collection of case properties in this research.
Each of these cities can be said to be typical of the region listed in parentheses. As such, the cities do not only vary in ethnic proportion, but also in the date of incorporation into the Russian/Soviet Empire (see Introduction) and in the other variables this section will discuss.

Following the rationale of the ethnic proportion hypothesis, we would expect the Russians and Russophone Ukrainians to (1) assimilate in L’viv; (2) opt for language integration in Kyïv; and (3) retain their language in Donets’k and Odesa, with those in Odesa showing rates slightly more favorable to language integration.

An important caveat that has to be made here is that the census data in Table 2.1, which refer to mother tongue, are a poor indicator of the actual use of Russian (or Ukrainian). As Arel (1995b) argues, one’s mother tongue could well have been conceived as the language that one first learned as a child, which is not necessarily the language one knows best. Indeed, measuring the linguistic conduct of respondents by means of an indicator called “language of preference,” which refers to the language a respondent actually preferred to use in a survey interview, the Kyïv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) found large differences with the census data (ibid. p. 169). Compared to the latter, the percentage of Russian speakers jumps from 57.9% to 85.4% in the east, from 59.2% to 88.7% in the south, from 42.5% to 76.4% in Kyïv, and from 16.6% to 50.4% in the center-east (which comprises the Left Bank oblasts of Chernihiv, Poltava and Sumy). In the western oblasts and in those of Right Bank central Ukraine, on the other hand, the KIIS language data almost match those of the census. Thus, in all but the latter two regions, the census data greatly underestimated the actual use of Russian.

This conclusion is corroborated by a casual observation of the language climate in the four cities of this research. As I noticed on my fieldwork trips, not a word of Ukrainian could be heard on the streets and in the shops and offices of Donets’k and Odesa. Although employees produced documents in Ukrainian and teachers gave lectures in Ukrainian in these cities, in conversations with colleagues and students they immediately switched to Russian. Even in Kyïv with its large Ukrainian majority, Russians had apparently left their mark on the language regime. Very rarely could the author hear Ukrainian being spoken in the center of town, and only in the suburban marketplaces did he observe it more often. L’viv turned out to be the only place where Ukrainian was found to dominate the public sphere, although even there the author regularly heard people conversing in Russian in the streets (especially in the center of town). Obviously, the pervasive use of Russian in Donets’k and Odesa (and to a large extent in Kyïv as well) provides the local Russians and Russophone Ukrainians with little incentive to adopt Ukrainian as their first language.

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26 Arel listed data on Ukrainian as mother tongue and Ukrainian as language of preference. For the sake of convenience, we simply took the inverse of these percentages to refer to Russian as mother tongue and language of preference. Our data thus have the small bias of overlooking those who reported a third language as mother tongue or had a third language as language of preference. The KIIS data were gathered in 1994.
Introduce by Bremmer (1994), the concept of ethnic schism refers to cultural differences between ethnic groups, as expressed by markers such as race, religion, language and history. One may assume that the more a minority group differs on these markers from the dominant group, the tighter it will cling to its language. Bremmer expects “a high tendency throughout Ukraine of Russian integration” as Russians and Ukrainians “are racially indistinguishable; their languages are distinct but mutually comprehensible; their cultures and histories are closely intertwined; and their religious affiliations, where applicable, are both Christian in orientation” (ibid, p. 264). Insofar as data on attitudes towards ethnic others can tell us something about the depth of cultural cleavages, Bremmer’s observation of a small cultural divide is supported by survey data. Golovakha et al. (1994), for instance, found that Russians and Ukrainians expressed high rates of acceptance towards each other on the Bogardus scale of national intolerance. Ukrainians ranked Russians highest of all nationalities in answer to the question of whether they would be prepared to marry a person of another nationality. Russians, in their turn, even placed Ukrainians in first place, ahead of fellow Russians.27

Although being correct for eastern, southern and central Ukraine, Bremmer’s claim of low ethnic schism does not adequately describe the cultural conditions in the western part of Ukraine. In this region, religious differences between Russians and Ukrainians - western Ukrainians tend to be Uniate Catholics, whereas Russians and all other Ukrainians are mostly Orthodox - are compounded by diverging histories.28 As explained in the introduction, western Ukraine was only incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1939, after having been part of Poland for centuries (until its partition at the end of the 18th century), the Austro Hungarian Empire (until the end of World War I), and again Poland (in the interwar period).29 By contrast, the rest of Ukraine has been part of the Russian Empire for 200 years or more. An important consequence of these diverging histories, it was argued, is that western Ukrainians, under relatively liberal Austrian rule, developed a much stronger national consciousness than their brethren in the rest of the country. Considering Russians as the nation imposing Soviet rule on other nations, the nationalism of western Ukrainians, like that of the Baltic nations, is distinctly anti-Russian in character.30 This lingering anti-Russian sentiment surfaces in ethnic stereotypes. Surprisingly, it is Bremmer (1994) himself who shows with his survey data that the Ukrainians in L’viv stand out in their disapproval ratings towards Russians, in comparison to Ukrainians in Kyiv and Simferopol (with a full 45.7% of L’viv Ukrainians attributing negative character traits to Russians). Interestingly, among the Russians in the

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27 Their survey data stem from a nationwide representative public opinion poll conducted by the Ukrainian Institute of Sociology in April 1992.
28 In a note, Bremmer acknowledges the religious difference but trivializes it. He does not go into the divergent histories.
29 From the end of the 18th century to the end of World War I, the western oblasts of Rivne and Volyn were part of Czarist Russia. In the interwar years, the Transcarpathian oblast belonged to Czechoslovakia, and the Chernivtsi oblast to Romania.
30 Thus, it is no coincidence that the Ukrainian nationalist guerrillas fighting the Soviet forces in and after World War II used western Ukraine as their home base.
three cities, the Russians in L'viv are also the most critical of Ukrainians (with a 31.1% other disapproval rating; the figure for Kyiv Russians being 24.9% and for Simferopol Russians 28.4%). Somehow, Bremmer failed to notice that the strong mutual ethnic stereotyping in L'viv reflects a possibly deeply felt cultural cleavage between Ukrainians and Russians. In any case, the anti-Russian sentiment (and concomitant stereotyping) will most likely make the Russians, who as post-war immigrants helped secure Soviet power, feel like unwelcome members of the local community, which in turn can be expected to negatively affect their willingness to assimilate.

To summarize, according to the logic of *ethnic schism*, we would expect the Russians in Donets'k, Odesa and Kyiv to assimilate, and the Russians in L'viv to either opt for linguistic integration or linguistic retention. Interestingly, this contradicts the prediction of the *ethnic proportion* thesis.

Naturally, it seems inappropriate to talk about ethnic schism between Russophone Ukrainians and Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians as members of both groups belong to the titular group. Yet, within the titular group people may still perceive large cultural differences. Arel (1995b, p. 159), for instance, submits that Ukrainian nationalists increasingly view Russophone Ukrainians as people “who like to defer to and be dominated by the ‘elder brother,’ the Great Russians,” and thus as people who constitute a threat to Ukrainian state security. The Russophone Ukrainians, in their turn, are likely to see Ukrainian nationalists as dangerous radicals fully supporting a forceful ukrainianization campaign. In fact, because of tensions within the titular group, Russophone Ukrainians may find themselves being grouped together with Russians. Describing various family histories, Arel (1996, p. 79) recounts how a Russophone Ukrainian family who was living temporarily in western Ukraine was stereotyped as “Moskaly,” a term of abuse for Russians meaning “occupiers.” The repeated calling of names by schoolmates, he goes on to say, even led to a change of school for the family’s children. Similarly, Kyivian Ukrainians, many of whom are Russian-speaking, tend to feel much closer to Ukrainian Russians than to western Ukrainians, he argues. Thus, ethnic schism may be as relevant for Russophone Ukrainians as for Russians, predicting the same pattern of responses for the former as for the latter.

*Ethnically mixed marriages*

It could be anticipated that Russians in mixed marriages would have a stronger propensity to assimilate than Russians in purely Russian couples. This variable is very relevant for Ukraine as the Russians in this successor state had one of the highest rates of mixed marriage in comparison to other former Union republics in late Soviet times: 57.2% of Russian men and 56.7% of Russian women married Ukrainians or other nationalities in 1988; only in Belarus and Moldova did Russians have a higher proportion of mixed

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31 Obviously, the variable of ethnically mixed marriages could also be conceived of as referring to marriages between members of different language groups. In this concept, a marriage between a Russian-speaking Ukrainian and a Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainian would constitute a ‘mixed marriage.’ This research will not examine linguistically defined mixed marriages as our survey data are not specific enough to distinguish this type of marriage.
marriages. Moreover, of all the titular nationalities in their own republics, Ukrainians had the highest relative number of mixed marriages: 20.9% for men and 22.4% for women in the Ukrainian SSR (Kaiser 1994).

In addition, Pirie (1996) found that within Ukraine the phenomenon of mixed families (i.e. the mother and father are of different nationalities) is much more prevalent in the east and south than in the west and center. Thus, the eastern oblast of Donets’k had the highest number of mixed families (41.7% of all marriages) in 1989, and the western oblast of Ivano Frankivs’k had one of the lowest (less than 8% of all marriages). Consequently, one is tempted to hypothesize that Russians in areas with the highest percentages of mixed families (i.e. the south and east) will show the strongest propensity to assimilate. However, this would be jumping to conclusions since it is precisely in these areas that Russians make up the largest segments of the population. In fact, if one takes the number of Russians in mixed families as a proportion of the total number of Russians in a given area, the west and central regions will show the highest rates of Russians in mixed families. This would then lead us to the opposite conclusion: following the mixed marriages hypothesis, the Russians in L’viv would be expected to assimilate the most and the Russians in Donets’k the least; those in Kyïv and in Odesa are assumed to take the middle positions with the former more likely to assimilate than the latter.

**National and local policy**

The previous chapter has already pointed out that many scholars have come to realise the independent role of state policy in framing the response of minority ethnic groups. This response has mostly been conceived in a political fashion, i.e. attention tends to focus on ethnic groups engaging in collective protest to secure certain group rights. The theory on the interrelationship between state policy and the political mobilization of ethnic minorities is instructive for the *cultural* response of ethnic groups as well, which is the focus of this study. The following four paragraphs therefore briefly discuss this body of theory.

In line with Hennayake’s argument, Chinn and Kaiser (1996, p. 28-33) contend that state policy is likely to elicit a *reactive* nationalism among non-dominant ethnic groups, expressing itself in Bremmer’s responses of *voice* or *exit* (see Section 1.3) if it is “overt” and “exclusionary” on behalf of the dominant ethnic group (i.e. if the dominant ethnic group openly seeks to monopolize state power). The logic behind this so-called “interactive nationalism” argument is that the more exclusionary state policy is, the more difficulties non-dominant ethnic groups will have in identifying with the state, perceiving it instead to display a *hostile* attitude to their own rights and interests. With state power perceived to be antipathetic, or at best indifferent, to the needs and demands of minority ethnic groups, these groups will seek alternative ways to protect and further their group interests. Attempts are made to set up ‘one’s own’ institutions (schools, unions, churches, cultural societies) and establish political parties on an ethnic basis. If the state in response embarks on a policy of repression, forbidding and dismantling ethnic institutions and

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32 *Ibid.* p. 1086. The figure on this page is not clear enough to discern the actual percentages.
parties, minority ethnic groups may feel forced to go underground and start a terrorist/guerrilla war.

Chinn and Kaiser argue that reactive nationalism is likely to be particularly strong among Russians in the Soviet successor states (and thus among the Russians of Ukraine) as these Russians have experienced a dramatic loss of status. Their argument is that, being the dominant nation during Soviet times in cultural, political and economic realms, Russians enjoyed a high status, which gave them high expectations and the concomitant capabilities to realise these expectations. Yet, after independence “Russian expectations have remained relatively high but their capabilities have been declining - in some places precipitously [due to discriminatory state policies favoring the dominant or titular ethnic group]” (ibid. p. 27). It is claimed that, as a consequence, Russians have developed a sense of relative deprivation, which in turn has stimulated Russian reactive nationalism. The faster the implementation of discriminatory (or exclusionary) state practices, the greater this feeling of relative deprivation is said to be, and thus the greater the potential for a strong reactive nationalism to erupt among Russians. In this way, the relative deprivation argument serves as an augmentation and refinement of the interactive nationalism approach, as it stipulates when and under exactly what conditions exclusionary state policy can be expected to spark reactive nationalism among ethnic groups.

However, many authors have pointed out that, paradoxically, accommodating strategies may also stimulate voice and exit as group responses. Rabushka and Shepsle (1972) for instance argue that a democratic polity, which itself can be considered an accommodating arrangement, stimulates the formation of political parties along ethnic lines, and in this way leads to a proliferation of ethnic demands. Similarly, Smith and Wilson (1997), who discuss the potential for political mobilization of Russians in eastern Ukraine and northeast Estonia, feel that collective action among non-dominant ethnic groups is greatly influenced by the opportunity structure of the state. If this structure is relatively open (i.e. if all the state’s inhabitants enjoy state citizenship and voting rights and if there are no restrictions on office-holding or party/institution formation by members of minority ethnic groups), collective action will be greatly facilitated. In addition, as stated in the introduction, a number of authors have argued that some of the accommodating aspects of the Soviet nationalities policy (such as the stimulation of minority languages and the formation of Union republics) unintentionally contributed to the political mobilization of non-dominant ethnic groups or nations in the late 1980s.

Differences of opinion on the effects of particular state policy are a reflection of the academic debate on grievance and opportunity as factors sparking group mobilization. Those who view grievance to be the prime cause argue that it is feelings of indignation, frustration and relative deprivation that incite people to collective action (e.g., Gurr, 1970; 1993). It is proposed that factors that influence the success of collective action, such as the opportunity structure provided by the state, are only of secondary importance since it is primarily on the grounds of strong emotions that people mobilize and not on the basis of rational calculation. In contrast, ‘opportunist’ claim that it is rational calculation that lies at the basis of collective action: before people organize in groups they assess the costs and benefits and the prospect of success of collective action. Only if prospects look good and benefits are seen to outweigh the costs do people mobilize in
groups. It logically follows that factors facilitating and obstructing collective action are accorded prime causal value (Smith and Wilson, 1997). Thus, whereas for grievance theorists repressive state policy forbidding minority ethnic groups from setting up schools, societies and political parties would constitute a major source of discontent encouraging people to engage in collective protest, for opportunity theorists it would mean an important obstacle for collective action since repressive policy dramatically increases the costs of group mobilization (people can end up in jail for being involved in what the authorities would label ‘illegal activities that threaten the security of the state’). On the other hand, accommodating state strategies are seen by grievance theorists as a way of dissolving feelings of indignation and thus as a way of removing incentives for group mobilization. For opportunity proponents, however, they constitute arrangements that facilitate collective action in that they increase its benefits and the chances of a successful outcome.

Intuitively, one would expect assimilation to strongly correlate with Bremmer’s political response of integration, and likewise presume language integration and language retention to be connected to voice and exit. Chapter Seven examines whether the political and cultural dimensions of the adjustment process of the Russian-speaking population are indeed closely related. If we for the moment assume this correlation to exist, then the aforementioned theoretical conjectures translate to our framework of linguistic responses in the following way. The grievance model would expect that the more exclusionary state policy becomes, the tighter Russians and Russophone Ukrainians would hold on to their language and culture. Conversely, the opportunity interpretation would predict both groups to increasingly see no other choice but to linguistically integrate or assimilate, the more restrictive state policy grows.

Since this research examines and compares the responses of the Russians and Russophone Ukrainians in four cities within one country, both national and local policy need to be analyzed. The relevance of the latter is underlined by the fact that a clear division of powers between central and local levels of government has not yet crystallized in a young state like Ukraine. Indeed, Nordberg (1998) noted that the adoption of the constitution in June 1996 did not bring clarity on this issue. Administrative uncertainties and obscurities in the immediate post-independence years have therefore possibly led to widely diverging local state practices. Chapter Six is dedicated to the impact of these practices on the nation-building process. The following three chapters discuss aspects of central policy.

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33 Smith and Wilson draw upon the works of Tarrow (1994) and other authors who have developed ideas and theories on the rise of ‘new social movements’ in the West in the 1960s (i.e. ethnic, regional, environmental and feminist groups).