Nation-building in post-Soviet Ukraine: educational policy and the response of the Russian-speaking population
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3 NATION-BUILDING IN EDUCATION

The central theme of this chapter is nation-building policy in education. Both Soviet and contemporary policy is discussed, and both linguistic and structural aspects are highlighted. The chapter opens with a review of educational policy in the Czarian and Soviet times to familiarize ourselves with Ukraine's point of departure at the onset of Glasnost. To compare Ukraine to other Soviet republics, attention is paid to the history of education in the Baltic provinces and in Central Asia. The next section offers a detailed account of educational policy in Ukraine since 1989, when the Ukrainian central leadership began to follow its own course independent from Moscow. This account, which focuses on language regulations, makes small excursions into other policy areas as well in order to arrive at an appreciation of the state's overall nation-building (i.e. not only that in the sphere of education). The third section briefly discusses the possible motives of the architects of contemporary language policy. The fourth section is dedicated to the changes in the structure of the educational system, and is followed by a section on the possibilities for private education. Section 3.6 determines the character of the overall nation-building project (accommodating or exclusionary) and evaluates the applicability of the explanatory models of the previous chapter. The chapter ends with a concise evaluation of the changes in educational policy.

3.1 Education in Ukraine during Czarist and Soviet Rule

As noted in the introduction, Czarian policy was meant to deny the existence of Ukrainian as a separate language and the Ukrainian people as a distinct nation. This policy found its inception in Alexander I's educational reform law of 1804, which permitted the teaching of the non-Russian languages of the Empire but did not mention Ukrainian as one of them (Krawchenko, 1985). As a consequence, Ukrainian was banned from schools both as a language of instruction and as a subject. However, primary schools functioning in local languages were allowed and established in the Baltic provinces, the Caucasuses and Central Asia (Arel, 1994). In the 1890s, fearing that the Baltic Germans would use local language instruction as a covert means of germanizing the local peasant population, the Russian authorities imposed Russian in the Baltics as the sole language in all state spheres, including schools. Yet, in contrast to Ukraine, this decision was lifted after the 1905 Revolution. Of the eight universities, four functioned in Russian (Kazan, Kharkov, Moscow and St. Petersburg), two in Polish (Vilnius and Warsaw; the former was transferred to Kyiv in 1834 where it was russified), one in German (Tartu, in Estonia) and one in Swedish (Helsinki) (Thaden, 1981).

In addition to the generally held view among Russian elites that Ukrainians as Malo-Russians were truly part of the Russian nation, another reason why Czarian policy was so insistent in its rejection of anything Ukrainian was that Russian rulers feared a possible polonizing effect by yielding to Ukrainian cultural demands. In fact, the Polish insurrection of 1863, in which the Poles voiced claims to the Ukrainian lands formerly under the Polish crown, clearly triggered the 'Valuev Circular', which outlawed the use of educational materials in Ukrainian (Arel, 1994; Solchanyk, 1985). This instruction was
followed several years later in 1876 by the Ems Ukaz, which reiterated the ban on teaching school subjects in Ukrainian. Both decrees not only left their mark on education, but also forbade Ukrainian books and newspapers, and public cultural events performed in Ukrainian.

Arel (1994, Ch. 2, p. 5) points out that the ethnic mobilization of Ukrainians was greatly hampered by discriminatory Czarist policies, in comparison to the situation of the Baltic peoples:

The absence of Ukrainian schools most often meant simply no school at all for the Ukrainian peasantry, and the result generally was that Ukrainians had lower literacy rates than Russians. This impeded the development of a national intelligensia, and taxed the capacity of this incipient intelligentsia to reach out through the printed word to the largely illiterate peasantry. Ukrainian historians are thus prone to accusing the Czarist state of deliberately preventing a renaissance of Ukrainian ethnic consciousness, at a time when nationalism, as a tool of collective identity, was on the rise throughout central Europe, the Balkans and the Russian borderlands.

Nonetheless, coming from across the border in Galicia, where the Austrian authorities allowed the use of minority languages in schools, newspapers and churches, the Ukrainian national idea did manage to penetrate certain small sectors of the population in Russian-held Ukraine on the eve of World War I.

Having emerged from the devastating civil war as the ultimate victors, the Bolsheviks radically broke with the russification of the Czarist era and introduced a general nationality policy which intended to make the non-Russian languages and peoples equal in status to Russian and the Russians. There were three reasons for this dramatic shift in the treatment of non-Russians. First, still feeling uncertain about the strength and stability of their recently established state, the Bolsheviks were eager to secure the loyalty of the non-Russian peoples, who having gone through World War I, the October Revolution and the civil war and being encouraged by the successful independence struggle of the Baltic peoples had increasingly become infected with the nationalist ideology. Second, by showing the colonial peoples how the Soviet Union treated its national minorities, the Bolsheviks hoped to incite these peoples to rise up against their colonial masters and spread the Proletarian Revolution (Shevelov, 1989). Lastly, to socially mobilize the non-Russian peasant masses and implant the Bolshevik ideology it was deemed imperative to approach them in their native language (Arel, 1994).

The nationality policy had three dimensions. In the political sphere the Bolsheviks granted the larger groups of non-Russian peoples living in the border areas their own so-called ‘Union Republics’. Although this made the Soviet Union officially a federal state, in practice real power was still in the hands of the centralized Communist Party, which significantly constrained the actual policy freedom of the republics. Socially nationality policy meant staffing the republican party and state organs, which had previously been dominated by Russians, with titulars, whereby the Bolsheviks sought to create loyal non-Russian cadres. The cultural element of nationality policy, called Korenizatsiia (going to national roots), aimed to stimulate the use of non-Russian languages by providing education and media in the titular language, making its use compulsory in republic
administration and setting language requirements for jobs in the state and party apparatus (ibid.).

Although Korenizatsiia was officially introduced in 1923, the policy only began to be implemented in Ukraine (where it was called Ukrainizatsiia) in 1925 following personnel changes at the top of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU). The Education Laws of 1923 and 1924 were the embodiment of this policy. They stipulated that (1) where Ukrainians predominated, school pupils were to be instructed in Ukrainian (only where national minorities formed a compact group were they guaranteed education in their native tongue), and that (2) both Ukrainian and Russian be made compulsory subjects in all schools, regardless of the language of instruction.

Aided by these laws, the ukrainianization of elementary education was a great success (Krawchenko, 1985). Thus, despite dire shortages of Ukrainian language teachers and Ukrainian textbooks, by 1927 already 94% of Ukrainian schoolchildren and 76% of all pupils were enrolled in Ukrainian language schools. In the Russian-dominated cities the latter figure stood at 42% (this figure does not include the pupils instructed in Ukrainian in mixed schools). Particularly telling is the example of the heavily Russophone Donbass region where in 1923 there was only one Ukrainian-language school in the urban areas, and where by 1929 already half of all children were receiving Ukrainian-language instruction (ibid.). In 1927 a quarter of Russian and Jewish children were enrolled in Ukrainian classes by their parents, pressed as these parents were by language requirements for state employment and the 1927 decree that established Ukrainian-language entrance exams for admission to higher education. According to Krawchenko, the large-scale introduction of Ukrainian-language schools greatly reduced illiteracy among the Ukrainian peasant masses: in just 6 years, from 1920 to 1926, literacy rates of Ukrainians jumped from 24 to 42 percent (ibid.).

In higher education ukrainianization proceeded more slowly due to firm resistance from the almost completely Russian or russified body of university lecturers. Yet, by the end of the decade, 27.4% of students were already following lectures in Ukrainian institutions, 53.6% in bilingual ones (with some courses in Ukrainian and some in Russian), 8.4% in Russian institutions and 10.6% in institutions teaching in other minority languages. Still, because it inherited a well-entrenched system of Russian-language higher education from the Czarist era, Soviet Ukraine compared unfavorably in terms of titular language instruction to Armenia, Georgia and Tatarstan, where institutions of higher education (vuzy) were established that functioned in the titular language (Arel, 1994).

Although ukrainianization proved to be highly successful in the media (90% of all newspapers sold were Ukrainian in 1933, up from virtually zero in 1922), it failed to achieve its goals in the party and state organs, where Ukrainian never held the same status as Russian. Thus, despite numerous language decrees and the use of Ukrainian as a language of documents in two-thirds of state institutions as early as 1926, and in close to half of industrial enterprises in 1929, state employees rarely used to talk to each other in the language, especially in the cities of the south and east. Moreover, only a third of the Communist Party members stated that Ukrainian was their mother language in the late 1920s, even though a majority of party members were Ukrainian (ibid.). Most telling is a comment by Shevelov (1989, p. 126): “The stigma attached to the use of Ukrainian in
large cities did not dissipate; instead it acquired new dimensions. Well-educated people were to speak Ukrainian in public when prescribed, but not spontaneously. Those who wanted to succeed were expected to pass examinations in Ukrainian, but not to use it any more than required.” Yet, despite its failure in administration (the Russian-dominated party and state bureaucracy saw ukrainianization as something being forced upon them), ukrainianization was a blessing for the Ukrainian language as it standardized the language’s grammar, spelling and vocabulary (an orthographic commission was set up to do so in the mid-1920s) and greatly stimulated its use.

Stalin’s rise to absolute power at the beginning of the 1930s signaled the end of the Bolsheviks’ relatively liberal nationality policy. Subordinating the aim of safeguarding the loyalty of non-Russian citizens to that of modernizing the state (Arel 1994), he launched an anti-Korenizatsia campaign which culminated in the relentless persecution of all those who had promoted it in the non-Russian republics. In Ukraine this led to massive purges of Ukrainian state and party officials, one of the first victims being Skrypnnyk who, as head of the Commissariat of Education, had been the architect of ukrainianization from 1925 to 1933.

In school education a renewed emphasis on Russian was clearly embodied in a 1938 decree which made Russian a compulsory subject from the second class onwards, greatly increased the number of hours for this subject, and introduced courses in Russian culture and literature in all schools (Krawchenko, 1985). At the same time the content of Ukrainian literature and history courses was thoroughly revised and in secondary schools the latter ceased to be taught at all. The proportion of pupils enrolled in Ukrainian schools fell from 88.5% in 1933 to 79% in 1940.

The change in central policy was particularly felt in higher education because in 1936 the control over institutions of higher learning was taken away from the Commissariats of Education in the various republics and given to the newly created Committee for Higher Education in Moscow, which was transformed in the Ministry of Higher Education in 1946 (ibid.). In Ukraine many vuzy were rerussified. According to Krawchenko (1985, p. 138), no specific order was needed to persuade university teachers to switch to Russian: “Given the prevailing hysteria against ‘nationalist counter-revolution’ and ‘linguistic wrecking’, many lecturers undoubtedly followed the example of the Luhansk pedagogical staff, who interpreted the new policies introduced in 1933-4 to mean that Russian was to be used as the medium of instruction.”

Unlike the Bolsheviks in Soviet Ukraine, the Poles, who had been granted most of former Austro-Hungarian Ukraine after World War I, sought to discourage expressions of a separate Ukrainian nationhood from the onset. Due to bureaucratic obstacles to opening and maintaining Ukrainian schools and hostile local administrations, which were entirely in Polish hands, the number of Ukrainian elementary schools declined from 2,510 (or 41% of all elementary schools) in Galicia alone to 804 for Poland as a whole (Shevelov, 1989). In addition to the 10 state and 35 private Ukrainian high schools (himnaziji and liceji), only one institution of higher education was allowed to function in Ukrainian, the Greek Catholic Theological Academy in L’viv, founded in 1928. However, Shevelov concedes that the Polish state did grant its Ukrainian subjects a rudimentary level of rights and liberties: Ukrainian political parties were permitted (and were in fact elected in various legislative bodies) and the Ukrainian press was not subject to preliminary
censorship. In fact, he argues that “The peculiar combination of suppression with certain liberties, of legal regulations with total arbitrariness of some officials, had an impact on the status of the Ukrainian language and on the psychology of its speakers in Polish Ukraine. Not only was the Ukrainian language a vehicle of communication among farmers, clergy, and intellectuals; it was also a means of national self-assertion and defiance against the existing political regime (ibid. p. 183).” Instead of assimilating the Galician Ukrainians to the Polish language and culture, the Polish regime thus, unintentionally, only radicalized Ukrainian national sentiment, which had already permeated the Galicians at the beginning of Polish rule.

After World War II when the western Ukrainian lands were finally united with Soviet Ukraine, centralization and russification policies continued, despite the temporary relaxation of central control during the Khrushchev era. In fact, in 1959 it was Khrushchev himself who accelerated russification by introducing a controversial law that granted parents the right to choose the language of instruction for their offspring. As a result, the Bolsheviks’ policy of having the language of instruction in schools determined by the national composition of the local population was abandoned (Arel, 1994). Given that in Ukraine many vuz functioned exclusively in Russian, the law had the intended effect of encouraging Ukrainian parents to send their children to Russian-language schools. As Chapter Five will discuss in more detail, the proportion of Ukrainian-instructed pupils declined from 74% in 1956 to 47.5% in 1988 (and the percentage of Russian-instructed pupils increased, accordingly). It was this creeping russification of the school network that would anger many nationally conscious Ukrainians in the Glasnost years. In the Caucasuses and the Baltic republics, in contrast, where titular-language higher education was retained, the law could not change the tendency of titulars to enroll their children in native-language schools (ibid).

Another much-criticized political act of the late 1950s was the Kremlin’s move to pressurize individual republics into making the titular language an optional subject in Russian schools, whilst retaining the compulsory status of Russian language and literature for titular schools (Krawchenko, 1985; Solchanyk, 1985; Bakalo, Plushch and Struminsky, 1984). In addition to seeing this as a prime example of russification, for many it also signaled creeping centralization, a process which in the mid-1960s was formalized with the creation of a ministry of education at the Union level. This ministry took over many of the powers of the republican ministries, turning them de facto into branch offices, and standardized the curricula of elementary and secondary schools throughout the Soviet Union (Bilinsky, 1968). In the 1970s it took further steps to expand and improve the teaching of Russian in titular schools, among other things by paying teachers of Russian fifteen percent more than the salary earned by titular language teachers (Arel, 1994).

In higher education the trend that was set in the late 1930s was continued after the war, notwithstanding the restoration of the republican Ministry of Education in Kyiv in 1955. Russian language and literature, for instance, became compulsory vuz entrance exams. Furthermore, the entrance exams for special subjects, such as physics, were also held in Russian. For many, the 1954 measure which dropped Ukrainian as a compulsory

34 Vuz is singular and vuez is plural for institutions of higher education.
entrance requirement but kept up Russian signaled a further degrading of the Ukrainian language (Krawchenko 1985). Moreover, as in the school system, centralization set in when, in 1966, the USSR Council of Ministers decreed that a large number of vuzy in the republics should be brought under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Higher Education in Moscow (Bilinsky, 1968). In Ukraine this reduced the number of vuzy subordinated to the republican ministry in Kyiv to a mere 50 out of 132 vuzy in total. Centralization was even more pronounced in post-graduate education: only with Moscow’s permission could post-graduate programs be set up and as of 1975 all dissertations, including those discussing non-Russian languages or cultures, had to be written in Russian (Krawchenko, 1985; Arel, 1994).

In the post-war years, instead of catching up with the proportion of Ukrainians in the republic’s population (1959 census data show that Ukrainians make up 76.8%, Russians 16.9% and Jews 2% of Ukraine’s population), the percentage of Ukrainians in the student population actually declined from 63.8% in the 1955-6 academic year to 59.9% in 1970-1. According to Krawchenko (1985), this was a direct consequence of the russification policies which put Ukrainians at a natural disadvantage vis-à-vis Russians in the struggle for vuз-entrance. Yet, he admits that the increased competition for vuз-places was another important factor as it left the Ukrainians, because of their low social origins (most of them had a working class or collective farm background), with insufficient means and skills to vie with the Russians and Jews, who disproportionately came from an intelligentsia or middle-class milieu.

3.2 Education in Ukraine since Glasnost

3.2.1 The Glasnost years

In the 1980s, Gorbachev’s Glasnost and Perestroika gave ordinary citizens and opposition groups previously in hiding an unprecedented opportunity to openly criticize the Communist Party. The people of the Baltic republics were among the first to take advantage of the changing political climate in the center by founding civic forums, which quickly turned into mass nationalist movements seeking to restore state independence for the Baltic republic in question. The communist leadership in these countries felt compelled to meet the demands of these groups and to listen to popular sentiment, fearing otherwise being totally wiped out in the March 1990 elections, in which, for the first time, non-party candidates were allowed to stand for office. In Ukraine, the opposition movement, Rukh, found it much more difficult to mobilize the titular population on the national issue as a large part of its potential following had been assimilated into the Russian language. As Furtado and Hechter (1992, p. 185) argue: “The more ...[Rukh] sought to exalt the Ukrainian language, culture and identity, the more it risked alienating a significant element of its own national constituency.” Moreover, the ruling officials of the CPU (Communist Party of Ukraine) were unwilling to compromise with Rukh as that would have harmed their prospects of being promoted to positions within the central party apparatus. The indigenous party elite of the Baltic republics, on the other hand, lacked
this incentive to ignore local nationalist demands because the central party organs only rarely allowed non-Slavs to join their ranks (ibid).

In Ukraine the political landscape also started changing after the retirement of the conservative First Secretary of the CPU Volodymyr Shcherbyts'kyi in September 1989. In fact, no sooner than a month later the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet passed the “Law on Languages in the Ukrainian SSR,” which made Ukrainian the sole state language. Apparently, the vested political elite felt threatened to some extent by the opposition movement, as the law, according to Arel (1995a, p. 599), “was a defensive reaction of the communist old guard, which could no longer justify the status quo, since eight Soviet republics had enacted Language Laws earlier in that fateful year.” The Language Law introduced a whole series of provisions intending to curb russification and make Ukrainian the dominant language in all spheres of public life. As such, it meant a clear break with the past. Yet, the lawmakers were careful not to alarm the Russian speakers of the south and east by issuing strict language regulations, judging from the great number of exceptions granting Russian a continued, albeit reduced, role in public life. As an important basic law, the law on languages has remained in force to the present day without amendments.

For education the law established the following regulations (VVRURSR, 1989, No. 48, pp. 64, 65):

1. The free choice of the language of instruction is an inalienable right of the citizens of the Ukrainian SSR;
2. The Ukrainian SSR guarantees each child the right to be brought up and to receive education in its national language;
3. In the schools of the Ukrainian SSR, teaching will be done in Ukrainian. In places of compact settlements of civilians of other nationalities, schools can be established in which the language of teaching will be their national language or another language;
4. In schools, separate classes can be created in which the language of teaching is Ukrainian or the language of people of a different nationality;
5. In all schools, the study of the Ukrainian language and the Russian language is compulsory;
6. In institutions of special secondary, professional technical, and higher education of the Ukrainian SSR, Ukrainian is the language of teaching. In places of settlement of a majority of citizens of other nationalities, the language of teaching is in their national language, alongside Ukrainian;
7. In the above-mentioned institutions, groups can also be created with the Russian language of instruction in cases determined by the appropriate organs of state administration;

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35 Before independence, laws, decrees and all other official decisions of the legislature and the executive were listed in the state weekly Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrains'koi Sotsialistychnoi Respubliki, here abbreviated as VVRURSR. After independence, the name of this weekly changed to Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy, here abbreviated as VVRU.

36 The law did not specify what was meant by “compact settlement”.
8. In all groups with the Russian language of instruction and in non-Ukrainian institutions, irrespective of their departmental subordination, the study of the Ukrainian language is guaranteed;

9. Students wishing admission to an institution of higher or specialized secondary education have to take a Ukrainian-language entrance exam on a competitive basis. The manner in which entrance exams are taken by persons not having been attested in Ukrainian is determined by the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education of the Ukrainian SSR.

Reading these measures, one can immediately spot the friction between the first regulation, on the one hand, and stipulations nos 2, 3 and 4 on the other. The first is a reiteration of Krushchev’s decree and implies that the amount of Ukrainian- and Russian-language instruction is actually determined by parental need. In contrast, the three other principles state that it is nationality and not parental need which should be the guiding principle. If rules nos 2, 3 and 4 are followed, it is possible that, in places of almost purely Ukrainian settlement, parental demands for Russian-language education may be denied, rendering the first regulation void. If the first regulation is adhered to, one could imagine situations in which the share of Russian-language education in the total education of a certain place far exceeds the share of Russians in the local population, which runs counter to the other rules. According to Arel (1995), the first regulation was not in the draft version of the law, and was added only during parliamentary debates preceding its adoption. For the nationally conscious activists of the Rukh movement this was a great disappointment, since they specifically held the freedom-of-choice clause responsible for the fact that over the last thirty years so many Ukrainians sent their children to Russian-language schools in the south and east.

Interestingly, the way the first stipulation is formulated makes one believe that it could be applied to higher education as well. Yet, it is doubtful whether the authors of the law truly intended to give students the right to choose the language of instruction as that would sharply contradict rule six. This rule, which states that the language of instruction in institutions of higher education (or vuzy) is Ukrainian, made the exception rule allowing for continued Russian-language instruction very strict: only in “places of settlement of a majority of citizens of other nationalities” was a language other than Ukrainian permitted to function as the language of instruction, and then only “alongside Ukrainian.” Since residents Russian by nationality are only in a majority in Donets’k city (53.6%), Luhans’k city (54.2%) and The Crimean peninsula (63%), it is only there that Russian-language instruction in vuzy would still be allowed to continue, according to stipulation no. 6. Given that an overwhelming majority of the vuzy taught in Russian, the law, if implemented, would truly have drastic consequences. However, since a majority of the Ukrainian vuzy were directly subordinated to the all-Union Ministry of Higher Education in Moscow, the implementation of republican language regulations was never likely to occur.

37 In the second paragraph of Article 3, “places” are defined as districts, cities and administrative-territorial units smaller than that.
The emphasis on the ukrainianization of higher education does not come as a surprise if one realizes the impact the language of higher education can have on the school choice of parents. Clearly, with the recent Soviet experience in mind of Russian-language higher education inducing many Ukrainian parents to send their children to Russian schools, the authors of the law must have been aware of the value of Ukrainian-language vuzy in raising the numbers of pupils enrolled in Ukrainian schools. One can doubt whether the Ukrainian lawmakers were really determined to push ukrainianization through, since stipulation no. 7 gives the “appropriate organs of state administration” the right to decide on the creation of groups instructed in Russian in vuzy. Undoubtedly, this was a concession to the many Russian-language vuzy, for whom switching to Ukrainian would pose great difficulties.

The law further sought to end the practice of allowing pupils on Russian schools and vuzy to be exempted from Ukrainian language and literature teaching by making the Ukrainian language a compulsory subject at all schools and vuzy (see principles 5 and 8). In addition, it established a Ukrainian-language entrance exam on a competitive basis for students wanting admission to an institution of higher or specialized secondary education. Obviously, this measure was also intended to attract children to Ukrainian schools. However, the measure lost some of its power due to an exception rule exempting those pupils who had been excused from learning Ukrainian in the Soviet era (rule no. 9).

The ukrainianization drive was not just confined to education. The Law on Languages sought to curb russification in other public spheres as well. The provisions made by Articles 11 and 18 on the language of work, administration, documentation and the administration of justice, for instance, mirrored those in the language of higher education. Only in places where a majority of the inhabitants were members of another nationality was the language of that nationality allowed to be used along with Ukrainian. In all other places Ukrainian was meant to function as the sole language. The language of legal acts was regulated by Article 10. Acts issued by the highest organs of state power were to be adopted in Ukrainian and published in Ukrainian and Russian. All other acts, i.e., acts of republican ministries and local organs of state power, were to be passed and published in Ukrainian, and in the case of necessity also published in another national language.

Obviously, for employees to work in Ukrainian, they would have to know the language. Article 6 of the Language Law requires them “to master the Ukrainian and Russian languages...to the extent that is necessary for the fulfillment of their duties.” Yet, the Article continues by saying that not knowing one of the two languages cannot be a reason to reject someone applying for a job, and that after accepting a job the applicant has to learn the language of his work so that he can work efficiently. Clearly, these provisions were meant to reassure the many Russian speakers not speaking Ukrainian that they would not find themselves in a disadvantaged position vis-à-vis those that did know Ukrainian and the Ukrainian speakers, who for the most part had an excellent command of Russian.

The Language Law left the mass media largely untouched. Article 33 only states that “in the Ukrainian SSR Ukrainian is the language of the official mass media. One of the languages of other nationalities can be the language of the official mass media as well.” This is surprising given the extent to which the Ukrainian mass media were
russified in the late 1980s. For instance, on the one republican TV channel Ukraine had at its disposal, the great majority of movies were in Russian, apparently because cultural bureaucrats believed that given the linguistic closeness of Ukrainian to Russian, Ukrainians would be able to understand Russian without dubbing or subtitles. As for newspapers, by the 1980s the circulation of Russian provincial (oblast) dailies was much higher than that of their Ukrainian counterparts (Arel, 1995). Possibly, the authors of the law did not want to intervene in a sensitive sphere of public life like the mass media, fearing a sharp confrontation with Moscow.

Passing a law is one thing, implementing its regulations is quite another. According to Arel (1995, p. 600), not much changed in the two years after its adoption owing to the inactivity of leading state and party officials, who not only feared public protest but also considered the strict implementation of the law in a country where “a critical mass among the population - Russians and ethnic Ukrainians alike - were not fluent in Ukrainian” an impossible task anyway. The law itself was also partly to blame for its slow execution as it failed to list penalties for those who ignored its stipulations. Moreover, simultaneously with the law, a decree was issued which gave employees three to five years to master Ukrainian and start using it as the sole language of work and documents. Schools and vuzy were granted a period of 10 years to switch to Ukrainian. Naturally, these delays did not stimulate people to start complying with the rules of the law. The lack of change can most clearly be seen in school education. In the school year following the adoption of the law, the number of pupils instructed in Ukrainian had only increased by 0.4 percent nationwide, as compared to the year before (47.5% in 1989-90 and 47.9% in 1990-91). Only in Kyïv did this number grow significantly in the same period, from 21.7% to 25.1% (Janmaat, 1998).

From January 1990, when Rukh managed to organize a human chain stretching from Kyïv to L’viv in commemoration of the seventy-first anniversary of the unification of Ukraine, the ruling CPU was increasingly willing to let Rukh have a say in policy matters. It was the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet elections of March 1990 that really triggered this change. Although the elections did not provide the Democratic Bloc - the group of candidates allied to Rukh - with a substantial number of seats (only 111 out of 450), they did make the CPU aware that there were “unmistakable political costs for failing to address issues of national sovereignty (Furtado and Hechter, 1992, p. 192).” Another event that boosted the nationalist movement was the death of Shcherbytskyi in early 1990. It permitted the hitherto monolithic party elite to split up into a reformist wing, led by Leonid Kravchuk, who was elected chairman of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet in mid-1990, and a conservative faction under the leadership of Stanislav Hurenko (Motyl, 1993). The power struggle that evolved between the two made Kravchuk side with the non-Communist opposition and adopt an increasingly nationalist stance. The legal repercussion of these events was the adoption of the Declaration of Sovereignty on July 16 1990, which announced the primacy of Ukrainian laws over Soviet laws. Ukraine had caught up with the Baltic republics, who had already declared sovereignty in 1988-1989 (ibid). Later, the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet took even more radical steps, by passing

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38 In addition to their own republican channel, Ukrainians could watch two all-Union channels which originated from Moscow and which were of course in Russian.
resolutions affirming its supreme control over natural resources and the economic apparatus of the republic, stating its intention to become a neutral and non-nuclear power, forbidding the use of its forces outside the republic without its permission, and establishing its own currency (in the form of coupons) available only to republican residents (Furtado and Hechter, 1992).

In the cultural domain, the increasingly nationalist position of the Ukrainian lawmakers was embodied in the State Program on the Development of the Ukrainian Language of February 1991. Although this document only served to specify the terms of implementation of the Articles of the Language Law, it actually changed some regulations and added some new. For instance, instead of repeating the freedom of choice principle, the program urged state organs to “create conditions to ensure the constitutional right of citizens to educate their children in their *native* language [my italics]” (Article 21). Clearly, *native* was meant to be interpreted here as *national*, because the next sentence called for the introduction of a “network of educational institutions in accordance with the *national* composition and the *needs* of the population [my italics]” (Article 22). In other words, this measure foresaw that the amount of Ukrainian-language and Russian-language school education should correspond to the number of Ukrainians and Russians in the local population, i.e. in places where, for example, 60% of the population was Ukrainian, 60% of the pupils should be taught in Ukrainian. The program laid down a detailed timetable, which specified when the optimal network of Ukrainian-language kindergartens and schools had to be reached in each oblast. Not surprisingly, the oblasts of the east and south were given the most time to do this - ten years.

Evidently, the measure stated above was based on the idea that pupils should receive instruction in the language of their parents’ nationality in order to preserve their own national identity. Statements in the introduction of the program leave no doubt about this: “Language shapes national consciousness, it is the basis of a nation’s spirituality.” These statements also reflect the general preoccupation of Ukrainian nationalists with language and their fear that the Ukrainian nation will cease to exist if it no longer uses Ukrainian. Taking this into account, one can safely argue that the real intention of this measure was to make the large group of Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the east and south send their children to Ukrainian schools. Naturally, the freedom of choice principle (which possibly was repeated in the above-mentioned measure by the word “needs”) worked against this intention. To neutralize its possible undesirable effects, i.e. Ukrainians sending their children to Russian schools, the Ministry of Education sought to make Ukrainian-language education more attractive. Shortly after the adoption of the state program, it announced that Russian schools were to open Ukrainian classes if they

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39 The full title of the document is *Derzhavna prohrama rozvytku Ukrains'koi movy ta inshykh natsional'nykh mov v Ukrains'kii RSR na period do 2000 roku.* It was put into force by the Cabinet of Ministers’ Decree No. 41 of 12 February 1991 (*VVRURSR*, 1991, No. 4).

40 Intending to quell concerns of radical titular nationalism among the small minorities, the State Program exhausted itself in listing measures designed to create schools and academic groups with the language of smaller national minorities (Romanians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Poles, Jews, Crimean Tatars) as the language of instruction.
received 8-10 requests from parents to have their child instructed in Ukrainian. Given that the average size of classes was about 30 pupils, the ministry clearly speculated that small classes would persuade parents to enroll their children in Ukrainian classes. Interestingly but also understandably, the reverse case did not hold: Ukrainian schools were not obliged to open Russian classes.

At the same time as the measure requiring the opening of Ukrainian classes in Russian schools, the ministry ordered all Russian schools formerly Ukrainian by status to only open Ukrainian first-grade classes as of the next school year. If implemented, this measure would truly have drastic consequences as many of the Russian schools in the larger cities, especially in those of the east and south, were indeed erstwhile Ukrainian schools. Although the measure is seemingly strongly at odds with the freedom of choice principle, education officials could rightly point out that it does not in any way forbid parents to choose the language of instruction for their child. The only effect it could have is that for those parents wishing to send their child to Russian-language education the nearest Russian school might be further away from home than before. And yet it is this increased distance that could have acted as a powerful incentive for parents to reconsider their choice and enroll their child in the nearest (Ukrainian) school, as for many of them proximity is the main determinant of school choice.

Lastly, by omitting any reference to freedom of choice in higher education, the State Program made it more than clear that the right to choose the language of instruction would not be reserved for students at institutes of higher education. For vuzy, the program announced the elaboration of a timetable specifying when a particular vuzy would have to switch to Ukrainian as the language of instruction. In an effort to increase Kyiv’s hold over the vuzy on Ukrainian territory, the program also proposed bringing back some vuzy, notably the state universities of Dnepropetrovsk and Kharkiv, from an all-Union to a republican subordination.

3.2.2 The Kravchuk years

After the failed coup in Moscow in August 1991, Kravchuk and the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet quickly cast off their communist allegiance, and declared Ukraine an independent state. However, their newly found patriotism did not turn into an exclusionary nationalism favoring the titular nation, as Kravchuk and his allies were careful not to alienate the Russians and other minorities. Legislation bore witness to this attitude. In October 1991 the national parliament, renamed the Supreme Rada, adopted the Law on Ukrainian Citizenship, which made all persons resident in Ukraine state citizens and removed the nationality line in the internal passport (VVRU, 1991, No. 50). By embracing a territorial principle instead of an ethnic one, the law drew praise from European human

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41 This measure was part of a Ministry of Education plan intended to implement the provisions of the State Program. It can be found in the 1991, no. 14 (July) edition of Informatsiinyi zbirnyk Ministerstva narodnoi osvity URSR: a bi-weekly magazine of the Ministry of Education which is distributed to all schools and which lists orders, recommendations, curricula and more general comments. After independence it changed to Informatsiinyi zbirnyk Ministerstva Osvity Ukrainy (hereafter abbreviated as Zbirnyk Minosvity). The measure was repeatedly issued after independence, see Minosvity Ukrainy nakaz (Order of the Ministry of Education of Ukraine) Nos 132 of 7-9-1993 and 415 of 7-10-1996.
rights watchdogs, such as the CSCE and the Council of Europe (Deychakiwsky, 1994). Another legislative act designed to convince the national minorities that the Ukrainian lawmakers had an inclusive and not a narrowly ethnic conception of nationhood in mind was the November 1991 Declaration of the Rights of Nationalities of Ukraine. It guaranteed all nations and national groups the right to use their mother tongue in all spheres of public life, including education, administration and the reception and dispersal of information (VVRU, 1991, No. 53, pp. 1554, 1555). In addition, it softened the Articles of the Language Law on higher education, work and administration by stating that instead of a majority of citizens of another nationality only their compact settlement was needed in order for their language to be permitted to function on a par with Ukrainian in these domains. Although the declaration, like the Language Law, failed to specify what was meant by ‘compact settlement’, one may assume that this concept also provided for cases where 20 or 30% of the population, i.e. less than a majority, belonged to a different nationality.42

The careful approach of the authorities towards the national question paid off: an unexpectedly high percentage of voters (90.3%) supported Ukraine’s independence in the December 1991 referendum with a turnout of 84.1%. All oblasts delivered overwhelming majorities, and even thoroughly Russian Crimea produced a 54% pro-independence vote (Holdar, 1995). Moreover, Kravchuk was rewarded for his policy of combining the consolidation of Ukraine’s independence with a multinational vision of its population in the presidential elections held at the same time as the referendum. He emerged victorious, capturing a comfortable 61.6% of the total vote. His main contender, Chornovil, who was supported by Rukh, managed to defeat him only in the three western oblasts of L’viv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil (ibid.).

The next year, the legislation on national minorities was further elaborated. The announcements of the Declaration of the Rights of Nationalities were refined and given legal force in the June 1992 Law on National Minorities (VVRU, 1992, No. 36), which was widely praised for its liberal provisions. In this law, the state committed itself to giving national minorities financial support and educating a national staff (Articles 7 and 17). The law further permitted national minorities and their organizations to establish ties with and receive help from co-nationals and their associations abroad (Article 15). In addition, it stated that the stipulations of international treaties would have priority over those of the Ukrainian legislation (Article 19). Most importantly, however, the law established the principle of the subjective definition of national belonging (Article 3; see also Scheu, 1997). In other words, it was left to the individual citizen to decide whether he/she considered him/herself a Ukrainian, Russian or any of the other nationalities inhabiting Ukraine. Hereby, the law broke with the rigid communist practice of using the nationality of a person’s parents to assign his/her nationality (only persons from mixed families were permitted to choose their nationality in Soviet days).

42 Liberal as this declaration may seem, it also made the nationality of a person and not his first language the criterion for the use of a language other than Ukrainian in public spheres. It, thus, only recognized minorities on national grounds and not on linguistic ones. As such, it implicitly approved the intention of the state program to ukrainianize Russian-speaking Ukrainians.
However, some measures also curtailed the scope of minority language use and the freedom of movement of national-cultural associations. For instance, the very same law on national minorities turned the declaration’s *compact settlement* criterion for the official use of minority languages in the domains of work and administration back into a *majority* condition (Article 8; see also Arel, 1995a). Second, the 1993 Electoral Law forbade representatives of minority organizations to stand for parliamentary election; only individual citizens, political parties, political alliances and labor collectives were allowed to do so (Stewart, 1994). In addition, the June 1992 Law on the Association of Citizens prohibited political parties from receiving any financial support from abroad, whether from state or private foreign organizations or individuals (*VVRU*, 1992, No. 34). It also declared illegal those political parties whose goals were to “undermine state security with activities that foreign states could exploit” or to “stir up national and religious tensions *(ibid, Article 4, pp. 1158, 1159)*.” Although these measures did not explicitly forbid ethnically-based political parties, they did, of course, greatly handicap the political mobilization of national minorities. In particular, the unspecified regulations of Article 4 could be used by the state to accuse political parties of threatening state security, which would give the state a pretext to prosecute and disband them. Lastly, many Russians resented the fact that dual Ukrainian/Russian citizenship was not possible.43

Another element of post-independence policy-making perceived as threatening by many non-Ukrainians - and certainly Russians - was the regime’s serious efforts to ukrainianize the public domain. The role of Russian was meant to be sharply reduced as it was considered to be merely one of the minority languages of Ukraine, on equal footing with Hungarian, Bulgarian or Tatar. The appointment by Kravchuk of nationally-conscious Ukrainians, many of whom were *Rukh* members, in key positions set this policy in motion. In the sphere of defense, the newly appointed minister Mozorov pursued a strict ukrainianization of the army, in an effort to secure the loyalty of the predominantly Russian officer corps. He also founded a psychological service to instill a Ukrainian nationalist spirit into the servicemen. Markus (1995, p. 28) reports that “its allegedly bizarre methods led to complaints and finally to Mulyava’s dismissal” [Hetman Colonel General Volodymyr Mulyava was the head of the service]. In the mass media, Zivonii Kulik, the new director of the state-owned Ukrainian television company, decided to give half of the air time of the second all-Union (now called *Rossiia*) channel to the second studio of Ukrainian TV (UT-2) (Arel, 1995). As a result, a number of popular programs from Russian television were replaced by televised sessions of the Supreme Rada and broadcasts of Ukrainian folk music. Later, after Ukraine’s failure to sign a CIS agreement designating the first all-Union channel (called *Ostankino*) as a CIS-wide television station, Ukraine stopped receiving most of the *Ostankino*-broadcast programs as well, changing its name *Ostankino* into *Inter* (Dunlop, 1993). The ukrainianization drive in the mass media was clearly reflected in the Law on Television and Radio Broadcasting of December 1993, which stated that Ukrainian be the language of radio and TV and allowed a certain minority language to function in the mass media

43 The law on citizenship stated that dual citizenship could only be granted to citizens of a state with which Ukraine had signed a bilateral treaty (*VVRU*, 1991, No. 50). Ukraine has until the present day refused to enter into such an agreement with Russia.
only in those places where the corresponding nationality "lives compactly" (VVRU, 1994, No. 10, p. 249). As such, this law clearly contradicted the Language Law, which did not impose any restrictions on the use of minority languages in the mass media.

However, by far the most drastic measures were taken in the realm of education after the appointments of Minister Talanchuk and his radical deputy Anatolii Pohribnyi (Arel, 1995). Unsatisfied with the slow growth rate of Ukrainian-language instruction - the percentage of Ukrainian-instructed pupils only increased from 47.9% in 1990-91 to 49.3% in 1991-92 - and accusing the heads of vuzy and schools of ignoring the stipulations of the State Program, these officials tried to find new ways to reach the goals laid down in existing legislation. They decreed that the network of first graders should be brought in line with the national composition of the population in each region by 1 September 1993 (Zbirnyk Minovstvy, 1992, No. 19; Arel, 1995). By focusing on first-grade pupils instead of all pupils, this order informed local authorities that those children already enrolled in Russian classes would be allowed to continue their Russian-language education, i.e., they need not change their language of instruction. Using this gradual - and therefore less radical - approach, the two educational officials clearly hoped to persuade local educational authorities to comply with the order. At the same time, they suggested giving teachers who switch to Ukrainian "moral and material encouragement," and ordered the financial department of the ministry to come up with a concrete proposal. Evidently, this measure was inspired by the Soviet practice of the late 1970s of giving Russian language teachers a 15% higher wage than titular language teachers (Zbirnyk Minovstvy, 1992, No. 19, pp. 6, 8). In addition, by ordering his deputy ministers to prepare "necessary additions and changes" to the Language Law, Talanchuk expressed his dissatisfaction with some of the law's regulations, most probably with the freedom of choice clause (ibid. p. 8).

Yet, despite these measures, the Ministry of Education remained deeply unsatisfied with the achievements of ukrainianization. In July 1993 Talanchuk wrote a letter to schools in which he complained that local educational authorities in the south and east obstructed ukrainianization by allowing too many Russian schools to obtain prestigious titles of lyceum, gymnasium or college (Zbirnyk Minovstvy, 1993, No. 19). To stop this practice, the minister proposed that these new types of schools should as a rule be opened with Ukrainian as the language of instruction. The significance of this measure lies in the fact that the new school types are very popular because they prepare their students for a certain vuz for which the students do not have to sit entrance exams. By permitting local authorities to open only Ukrainian lycceums and gymnasiuems, the Ministry of Education surely hoped to encourage Russian schools to switch to Ukrainian, before applying for a higher status (Arel, 1995). Another administrative incentive for Russian schools to open only Ukrainian classes was Talanchuk's order to give schools transferring to Ukrainian priority in receiving textbooks. Given the omnipresent shortage of textbooks, this measure could truly act as a strong stimulus.

The minister further denounced the fact that many schools presented bureaucratic obstacles for parents wishing to send their children to Ukrainian classes or schools. He forbade schools from demanding official written requests from these parents. In his opinion, only parents wanting to put their children in schools with other languages of instruction could be asked to write a special letter of application. With these measures he
clearly wanted to indicate that Ukrainian schools and schools with other languages of instruction were not to be treated as equals: the former were to be the norm, the latter the exception. For admittance to the former, there would be no obstacles whatsoever, i.e. if parents have not applied for a specific language of instruction, their child should automatically be assigned to a Ukrainian school, for admittance to the latter a special application would be required. Obviously, the Ministry hoped that parental passivity would result in many children being enrolled in Ukrainian schools.

The changes in schools were not just restricted to the language of instruction, but also had an impact on Russian language and literature teaching. In January 1993, deputy minister Pohribnyi informed educational authorities that as of the beginning of the 1993-94 school year Russian literature would cease to exist as a separate subject in Ukrainian schools (Zbirnyk Minosvity, 1993, No. 5). It would become part of the “world literature” course, taking up no more than one-fourth of the course’s total time. Ukrainian schools were further allowed to cease Russian language teaching altogether. This in fact strongly contradicted the Language Law, which holds that Russian is a compulsory subject in all schools in addition to Ukrainian.

Higher education did not escape the attention of the authorities either. Determined to implement pre-independence legislation, Talanchuk repeated the clause in the Language Law calling for the institution of a Ukrainian language exam for vuz entrance. Only students not having had five years of Ukrainian language as a subject were allowed to do a Russian language entrance exam. Together with the order on entrance exams, a measure was announced declaring that “As from 1 September 1993 teachers in vuzy should teach all the basic subjects in Ukrainian in the first year, but taking into account the language situation in the south and east parallel groups can be organized in Russian [my italics] for first-year students in these regions” (Zbirnyk Minosvity, 1992, No 19, p. 7). Surprisingly, here the exception rule for Russian language instruction is much more lenient than in the Language Law: instead of only in places with a majority Russian population, now, in the whole of the south and east, Russian teaching could be continued. The authorities in Kyïv probably realized that a quick ukrainianization of higher education in the south and east would have catastrophic consequences for the quality of teaching, not to mention the protests it would evoke. Still, the ministry made it more than clear that vuzy or students were not to decide on the language of instruction themselves: condemning cases of vuzy who had determined the language of education by doing a survey among students, Talanchuk explicitly prohibited solving this issue by voting (Zbirnyk Minosvity, 1993, No 19).

3.2.3 The Kuchma years

In the 1994 presidential elections Kravchuk was punished for three years of sharp economic decline and drastically falling living standards. Leonid Kuchma, a Russian-speaking Ukrainian from Dnipropetrivs'k, who advocated closer ties with Russia and favored granting Russian an official status,44 defeated Kravchuk with a seven percent

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44 Kuchma did, however, favor the retention of Ukrainian as the only state language. Even before the presidential elections he had begun learning Ukrainian (Kuzio, 1997a).
margin, after having captured a majority of votes in all the oblasts of the populous east and south and in three Left Bank center oblasts. Earlier that year, voters had elected a parliament that, though containing many independent members, was clearly left-wing with a pro-Russian communist-socialist bloc of 115 seats and a group of nationalist parties holding only 59. With both a pro-Russian president and a pro-Russian, left-wing parliament, many political observers expected the central authorities to soon give up ukrainianization. However, after being elected president, Kuchma failed to keep his promise to lift the status of Russian. The officials appointed by him, such as the new education minister Zgurovs’kyi, neither revoked strict language regulations, nor issued new orders, whereby they basically consolidated the ukrainianization policy of the Kravchuk years.

Language politics under Kuchma found a legal foundation in the Constitution of Ukraine, which was adopted in June 1996. Although out of necessity a compromise document, it nevertheless confirmed the status of Ukrainian as the sole state language (Markus, 1996). The constitution further guaranteed “the free development, use and protection of Russian, and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine” (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996, art. 10, p. 9). As before, Russian was thus only granted the status of a national minority language. In addition to the constitution, the government has tried several times to get a new and much harsher Language Law adopted by parliament, but so far these efforts have proved futile. Furthermore, a cabinet of ministers’ decree of September 1997 did little to make language legislation stricter as a constriction of the language regime would have inevitably led to contradictions with the old Language Law which was still in force. Although the decree complained about the lack of social prestige of Ukrainian and the mismatch of the use of Ukrainian with the Ukrainian element in the population, it contained only one demanding provision: state bodies were told to ensure that knowledge and fluency of the state language be necessary conditions for the attestation of state employees, servicemen and teachers in schools and higher education (if a person cannot be attested, he or she will lose qualifications and receive a lower salary) (Verkhovna Rada website, Post. Kab. Min. No. 998, 1997).

3.3 The Motives of the Architects of Ukrainian Nation-Building

Now that an overview has been given of post-independence language politics, it is necessary to ask why the promotion of the titular language was and is so important for the ruling elite. Because this elite’s true motive for its language policy may not be explicitly articulated, it is not surprising to find diverging opinions among scholars addressing this

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45 In additional elections in almost 120 districts where participation had been below 50 percent in the second round of the parliamentary elections (which had invalidated the result), independent candidates filled most of the seats. As a result, the new parliament, which convened in September 1994, contained more independent members than members representing political parties (Holdar, 1995).

46 The project law, for instance, left out the clause giving citizens the right to choose the language of instruction, instituted penalties for employees failing to meet language requirements, and obliged private TV and radio stations to broadcast no less than 70% of their time in Ukrainian. The law, called “Law of Ukraine about the Development and Use of Languages in Ukraine”, can be found in one of the issues of Visnyk FSMM. (Unfortunately, I was unable to trace the exact issue of this magazine.)
question. Arel (1994), for instance, holds that it was the fear of extinction of the Ukrainian nation that prompted the Ukrainian nationalist elite, who took over the state apparatus in the late 1980s, to start the ukrainianization policy. Considering the Ukrainian language as the foundation on which the Ukrainian national identity rests, this elite was alarmed by the russification of the post-war period, which had pushed the Ukrainian language back into the private domain of family and friends, and had thus, according to this elite, significantly marginalized Ukrainian nationhood itself. Only a vigorous ukrainianization campaign could, in their view, restore a strong and proud Ukrainian national consciousness.

However, while 'fear of extinction' may have indeed impelled the ruling nationalist elite to take up ukrainianization during the Kravchuk years, one can hardly imagine that to be the main concern of the entirely different elite from Dnipropetrivs'k, which started dominating the central state apparatus under Kuchma. What motive could this Russian-speaking 'clan' have to continue the ukrainianization policy of their Ukrainian-minded predecessors? Kolsto (forthcoming) gives a meaningful explanation:

The members of this elite [the ruling elite from Dnipropetrivs'k] have already made up their minds: Ukraine is to remain independent of Russia. They nurture no illusions that this can be possible unless the country has a cultural identity distinct from that of Russia. And the clearest, most obvious cultural marker at their disposal? - language, of course.

Thus, it is Kolsto's contention that the ruling elite is convinced that, by propagating the idea that Ukraine is inhabited by a separate nation speaking a separate language distinct from Russian, the existence of Ukraine itself as an independent state is justified and safeguarded. If true, it carries an interesting implication: the central rulers, whatever their origin and wherever they come from, are likely to back ukrainianization as long as they want Ukraine to remain an independent state (which, once in office, they are almost sure to want). This, in turn, would lead one to believe that ukrainianization is most probably a permanent feature of central state policy.

### 3.4 Changes in the Structure of Education

Ukraine inherited an over-centralized unified school regime from the Soviet era. Introduced in 1934 throughout the USSR, this regime informed teachers in detail of the subject matter, by means of programs, and the textbooks to be used (Stepanenko, 1999). For a totalitarian state like the Soviet Union the principal function of education was to inculcate pupils with Marxist-Leninist ideology. Teachers were not allowed to express their opinion freely, parents were denied a say in school matters, and founding a private school on ideological or religious grounds was out of the question.

After independence the authorities pledged to introduce sweeping reforms. Thus, the state national program entitled *Education: Ukraine of the 21st Century* mentions as

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47 A program provides the teacher with a brief description of the subject matter. It also offers a timetable specifying when what subject matter has to be taught.
one of the policy objectives: “an elimination of uniformity in education and the sweeping away of the prevailing practices of authoritarian pedagogy” (cited in Stepanenko, 1999, p. 99). Another official publication puts it more strongly: “The state monopoly in the branch of education is ruined, its multistructurality is guaranteed, (...) the forms of administering become more democratic and perfect, the rights of educational institutions broaden, wide autonomy is given to them” (The Development of Education in Ukraine, 1994, p. 71). In practice, however, the centralized system of the Soviet era basically continued with school education remaining almost totally in state hands. As I observed during my periods of fieldwork, schools were and are obliged to work according to the programs developed by the Ministry of Education and use its “recommended” schoolbooks. There was a brief interlude at the beginning of the 1990s when parents, teachers and regional school authorities were granted more freedom to determine their own subject matter (by developing their own programs and being given a free choice of textbooks) (Kliuchkovs’kyi, 1997, interview). But this temporary relaxation of the regime may have sprouted more from Kyiv’s inability to quickly restore central control than from a genuine desire to give schools more freedom of movement. The Ministry of Education provides proof of this: it quickly resumed control over schools and regional authorities once it had prepared new programs and procured sufficient new textbooks in the mid-1990s. According to Stepanenko (1999), the authorities still regard education as the prime instrument for ideological indoctrination, despite promises of political neutrality.

It would be misleading, however, to argue that nothing has changed. The number of hours, for instance, that schools and individual pupils or parents can decide upon has increased dramatically. Teachers can express their opinions freely now, and they have complete liberty to choose whatever additional materials they deem necessary in lessons, alongside the prescribed textbooks. Thus, schools, teachers, parents and pupils do have more autonomy now than in Soviet times.

3.4.1 Curriculum changes in Ukrainian schools

Given that the structure of school education has remained virtually the same, one can make a comparison between the old and new curricula to appreciate the changes in school subjects since independence. As we can see in Table 3.1, Russian language and literature have disappeared from the 1997-98 curriculum for state-sponsored Ukrainian schools, while still being prominent subjects in the 1985-86 curriculum (see total number of hours). As already pointed out, Russian literature is included in the new course of world literature in the 1997-98 curriculum. However, this does not mean that the Russian language is now banned from Ukrainian schools. The 1997-98 curriculum shows that Ukrainian schools have three possibilities for continuing with Russian language teaching; either as the compulsory foreign language of the state component, or as an optional subject chosen by the school or the individual pupil (for an explanation of state and school component, see the note under Table 3.1). In practice, few schools will choose the first option because of heavy pressure from parents and society in general to utilize the

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48 This official document was put into force by a cabinet of ministers’ resolution of November 1993 (Verkhovna Rada website, Post. Kab. Min. No. 896, 1993).
compulsory foreign language hours for teaching a western language like English or German. But many Ukrainian schools, especially in the south and east, have indeed included the Russian language (and additional Russian literature hours) in the school timetable, teaching it either as a compulsory subject chosen by the school or as an optional subject available for individual pupils.

Table 3.1 Curriculum of state-sponsored schools with the Ukrainian language of instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Total no. of hours a week in all grades*</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Total no. of hours a week in all grades*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985-1986 school year</td>
<td></td>
<td>1997-1998 school year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian language</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>State component</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian literature</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ukrainian language and literature</td>
<td>56-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian language</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Foreign language</td>
<td>12-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian literature</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>World literature</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>History, history of Ukraine</td>
<td>15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet law and state</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Music and fine arts</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine arts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other subjects</td>
<td>113-121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other subjects</td>
<td>149.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects or extra hours chosen by pupil</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Subjects or extra hours chosen by school</td>
<td>21-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>Subjects or extra hours chosen by pupil</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- In Soviet times, schools included both elementary and secondary education, and had grades going from one to ten. All pupils followed one and the same curriculum from the first to the eighth grade. After that, those who could not keep up with the pace of education or had good manual or technical skills were taken out of schools and sent to a technikum or uchilishche (vocational schools). The others continued school education in the ninth and tenth grades. After graduating from the tenth grade pupils could enter an institution of higher education. In independent Ukraine this system has been largely left untouched. The authorities did introduce an eleven-grade system but because of a shortage of money this was only partially implemented. As a result, schools now have grades going from one to eleven, but many miss the fourth grade. In practice, therefore, the ten-grade Soviet system has basically continued, with pupils starting school at age seven and finishing at age seventeen. Only a few schools have a fourth grade, which means that they admit children to the first grade at age six. Grades two, three and four in these schools equal grades one, two and three, respectively, of schools that skip the fourth grade.

- A comparison is made between the 1985-86 six-day regime and the 1997-98 five-day regime. In the late 1980s, most schools switched from a six-day regime to a five-day working week. Only schools with special status (lyceum or gymnasium) or with specialized teaching in foreign languages or mathematics/physics continued operating on a six-day schedule.

- The subjects of the state component are compulsory for all schools and pupils. The subjects and extra hours of the school component fall into two categories: those chosen by the school and those chosen by the pupil. The former are optional for the school and - once chosen by the school - compulsory for all pupils at the school. The latter are optional for the individual pupil.
It is these optional hours that constitute a clear break with the past; whereas the 1985-86 curriculum lists only 12 such hours, the 1997-98 curriculum gives schools and pupils a total of 62-64 optional hours. Moreover, as educational officials and school personnel were quick to point out, schools and pupils have total freedom in deciding how to use these hours (Director of School 49; Rachkovs’ka; Tchaikovs’ka, 1998, interviews). Most of the schools use the optional hours to teach Russian or another Western language, or as additional hours of mathematics or English, but some also include an optional subject like Ridnyi Krai (Home Region) in the school curriculum. In this course, pupils are taught about the folklore and history of their own region by means of programs and educational materials developed by the teacher himself (Demura, 1997, interview).

Naturally, with the subject matter being determined by the teacher, Ridnyi Krai may present historical facts or offer interpretations of history that are at odds with the version of history prescribed by Kyiv in the history of Ukraine course. Other schools may use some of the optional hours to teach subjects like the folklore and ethnography of Ukraine and Ukrainoznavstvo (knowledge of Ukraine), which were created after independence to acquaint pupils with Ukrainian habits, costume, and song and dance. Although clearly helpful in the nation-building process - in all four cities the author attended folklorist theater in schools, and noticed how much the performing pupils enjoyed singing and dancing in traditional Ukrainian costume in specially prepared classrooms - these subjects, like Ridnyi Krai, have never been compulsory subjects in the state component. As optional subjects, they remain relatively unimportant and vulnerable to being cut from the curriculum in exchange for more hours of teaching in subjects like English, law or mathematics.

The status of the history of Ukraine and Ukrainian literature courses contrasts strongly with that of the above-mentioned subjects. Not only are these two subjects included in the state component, they are also two of the four subjects in which pupils of the 11th grade have to do a central state exam - the other two being Ukrainian language and mathematics - before graduating from school. Clearly, therefore, history of Ukraine and Ukrainian literature have been made the backbone of nation-building activities in school education. As can be seen from Table 3.1, Ukrainian literature was mentioned as a separate subject even in the Soviet curriculum. Although this curriculum said nothing about history of Ukraine as a distinct subject, specific sections of the Soviet program on history were devoted to the “History of the Ukrainian SSR”, for which pupils used separate textbooks. Because of the significance of the history of Ukraine and Ukrainian literature for the current curriculum and the fact that both were part of the Soviet curriculum as well, it is interesting to look at these subjects in further detail, and analyze

49 These so-called teacher or author programs have to be approved by the oblast administration.
50 For a comment bemoaning the sorry state of these subjects, see Osvita (16-23 April 1997) (Osvita is a weekly opinion magazine of the Ministry of Education). The aforementioned subjects could also partly be included in the compulsory Music and Fine Arts course.
51 Minovity Ukrainy nakaz, No. 24 of 29-1-1996 lists Ukrainian Language and Literature, Mathematics and History of Ukraine as compulsory central exams for the 11th grade. In addition, 11th grade pupils had to take two optional exams.
52 See the Soviet history program (Prohramy dlia seredinik navchal’nykh zakladiv: istoriia, 5-11 klas. 1989).
exactly what subject matter is being taught at present and how it compares to that presented in Soviet times. This is covered in the next chapter. Chapter Four will also briefly examine how geography, another subject central to nation-building, is taught in contemporary Ukraine.

3.4.2 Curriculum changes in Russian schools

Table 3.2 Curriculum of state-sponsored schools with Russian/non-Ukrainian language of instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1985-1986 school year</th>
<th>1997-1998 school year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total no. of hours a</td>
<td>Total no. of hours a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>week in all classes</td>
<td>week in all classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian language</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>State component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian literature</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Mother language and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian language</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ukrainian language and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian literature</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>History, History of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet law and state</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Music and fine arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine arts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>100-120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other subjects</td>
<td>150.5</td>
<td>School component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects or extra hours</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Subjects or extra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chosen by pupil</td>
<td></td>
<td>hours chosen by school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Subjects or extra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hours chosen by pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: see Table 3.1

The 1997-98 curriculum for schools with Russian (or another) language of instruction does not differ much from that of Ukrainian schools (see Table 3.2). As we can see, pupils in Russian schools are also taught the nation-building subjects that are part of the state component, i.e. Ukrainian language and literature, history of Ukraine, geography and law. Moreover, Russian and other schools are obliged to work with the same programs and books as Ukrainian schools, the only difference being that for the former a Russian translation is available of the course books for history of Ukraine and geography.53

53 As the author found out on his many visits to schools throughout Ukraine.
Clearly, this shows the central authorities’ determination to achieve a maximum degree of uniformity in the teaching of these sensitive subjects. At the same time it may reflect strong feelings of insecurity, as educational authorities might suspect that Russian schools, if left totally free, would start teaching an ‘unpatriotic’ version of Ukrainian history and geography.

Another equally remarkable feature of the 1997-98 curriculum for Russian schools is that it no longer bears the title of ‘curriculum for schools with the Russian language of instruction’, as the 1985-86 curriculum still did, but is now called ‘curriculum for schools with a non-Ukrainian language of instruction’ (see Table 3.2). Likewise, pupils in Russian schools are no longer taught Russian language and literature but native language and literature. This subtle change in wording is once again a reflection of the decline in status that Russian has suffered since Ukraine’s independence. From the ministry’s point of view, Russian schools were merely one type of minority school, equal in standing to Bulgarian, Romanian or Hungarian schools. Moreover, the number of hours reserved for Russian (native) language and literature teaching has been reduced by at least 14 percent when the two curricula are compared (46-55 hours in 1997-98 as opposed to 64 hours in 1985-86). At the same time, the amount of Ukrainian language and literature instruction - from which many pupils were excused in Soviet times (!) – has remained almost unchanged. Given that in the 1997-98 curriculum Russian schools are obliged to teach at least three languages (Russian, Ukrainian and a foreign language), instead of the minimum of two languages that Ukrainian schools teach, there is less room on their curriculum for the free hours of the school component than in Ukrainian schools. In other words, Russian schools do not have as much freedom to choose optional subjects and extra hours as Ukrainian schools.

3.4.3 Curriculum changes in higher education

Higher education was subject to changes as well. Unlike institutions of higher education in many Western countries, the vuzy in Ukraine, irrespective of their profile, were required to give a number of humanitarian courses in the Soviet era. It was precisely this block of compulsory disciplines that was thoroughly revised after independence (Table 3.3).

Subjects like the history of Ukraine, Ukrainian business language, Ukrainian and foreign culture and various social sciences were put in place of disciplines that could typically be associated with the communist regime, such as the history of the communist party, Marxist-Leninist philosophy, scientific communism and scientific atheism. After independence vuzy were thus, like schools, obliged to teach several specific nation-building subjects. However, unlike schools, they were guaranteed complete autonomy in determining the subject matter of these disciplines (see Article 46 of the new Education Law, VYRU, 1996, No. 21), and they indeed appeared to use this discretion by elaborating their own programs and syllabi and by making their own selection from available textbooks.54 Naturally, freedom like this could very well lead to widely diverging

54 Interviews with university lecturers in the history of Ukraine departments of the polytechnical universities of Donets’k, Odesa and Lviv in October and November 1998, and personal observations by the author.
practices in the instruction of, for instance, the history of Ukraine, which would probably displease the educational authorities in Kyiv.

Table 3.3 Compulsory humanitarian disciplines in Ukrainian vuzy before and after Ukraine’s independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before independence</th>
<th>After independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of the Communist Party of the USSR</td>
<td>History of Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political economy</td>
<td>Ukrainian business language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marxist-Leninist philosophy</td>
<td>Ukrainian and foreign culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific communism</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific atheism</td>
<td>Principles of psychology and pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic principles of Soviet law</td>
<td>Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language (usually German)</td>
<td>Political science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principles of law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principles of constitutional law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
To find the subjects taught in Soviet times, I examined the diploma of Michail Khraban, who graduated from the Kyiv Institute of Architectural Engineering in 1982. Michail Khraban is the father of the host family the author stayed with many times during his visits to Kyiv. For the subjects taught after independence, see, for instance, the 1998 Navchal’nyi plan (curriculum) of the Kyiv Institute of Economics, Public Administration and Company Law.

3.5 Possibilities for Private Education

With state-financed schools being proscribed to teach alternative versions of history, literature and geography, private education may be an attractive option for those Russian (or other) parents who do not agree with the uniform, predetermined education of state schools. Yet, although the authorities permitted the foundation of private schools as early as 1988, private education has remained a marginal phenomenon since independence: in the 1997-98 school year only 0.2 percent of all pupils studied at private schools (Statystichni zbirnyk ...Ukrainy, 1998). This poor attendance may partly be explained by the high fees that these schools ask parents to pay: at the private schools visited by the author fees could go up to US$500 a month (Spivakovs’kyi; Ovchinikova; Matveeva, 1998, interviews). Naturally, in a poverty-stricken country like Ukraine only a happy few can afford these prices. However, another reason why parents show so little enthusiasm for private education may very well be that private schools, as a matter of fact, have to teach the subjects of the state component of the curricula for state schools, and are obliged to use the programs and textbooks prescribed by the Ministry of Education for

55 Interview with Volodymyr Spivakovs’kyi, Director of the private Lyceum Grand, in Kyiv in September 1998. The lyceum was founded as a private school in 1988.
these subjects. Naturally, private schools could always include alternative history or literature courses in their large school component, the hours of which they can dedicate to the teaching of any kind of subject, but the three private schools visited by the author used all these hours for sport, music, chess and additional foreign-language teaching. The schools probably do not want to risk confrontation with the authorities, being dependent on them for a license and official acknowledgment of their diplomas. Private schools, therefore, appear to have as little freedom of movement as state schools. Taken as a whole, this means that Russians and members of other national minorities have almost no opportunity, either in state or in private schools, to have their children become acquainted with historical and cultural domains that differ from the ones presented by the state, unless they send their children to illegal, underground schools. However, to the knowledge of the author, no such schools exist in present-day Ukraine.

In contrast to the insignificance of private schools, private vuzy have blossomed in post-independent Ukraine: as many as 94 out of a total of 348 vuzy were privately owned in 1997-98 (Dovidnyk dla ...rik, 1999). Like state-sponsored institutions of higher education, private vuzy had to teach the compulsory humanitarian disciplines (see Table 3.3) but were free to develop their own programs and educational materials for these courses (Finikov; Zhorina, 1998, interviews). However, given the profile of these vuzy, most of which specialized in training their students in commercial skills (Donets'k, 1997), it appears that many students opted for a private vuzy primarily for instrumental reasons, and not out of concerns for cultural preservation or national identity reinforcement.

3.6 An Explanation of the Nation-Building Project

As this chapter also examined nation-building policies in spheres other than education, it is now possible to evaluate the state's nation-building policies of the post-glasnost era in their entirety, and formulate an answer to the question posed in Chapter Two: to what extent independent Ukraine has pursued a strategy of accommodation or domination in its dealings with Russians and Russian-speaking Ukrainians. The specific character of Ukraine's overall nation-building scheme (i.e. accommodating or dominating) can then be compared to that of other Soviet successor states to arrive at an appreciation of some of the factors that predispose states to opt for a certain strategy. The following paragraphs are devoted to this exercise.

As mentioned above, Russians and other national minorities resident in Ukraine were immediately granted state citizenship after independence; they have not been purged...
from state institutions and companies (although western Ukraine to some extent is an exception); they are free to establish national-cultural societies and stand as candidates of political parties, and they can exercise the right to have their children instructed in their native language. These features of national policy indicate that Ukraine has opted for an accommodating approach to tackle the nationality question.

Yet, examples have also been found of central (and local) regulations that restrict the cultural and political freedom of movement of national minorities. Thus, the 1989 Law on Languages limited the use of minority languages, especially Russian, in the public domain and made the titular language, Ukrainian, the dominant language instead. The 1996 Constitution confirmed this unequal standing of languages by instituting Ukrainian as the sole state language. Moreover, in the sphere of education, the parental right to choose the language of instruction for their children was severely curtailed by national and local ukrainianization measures that to a large extent predetermined the network of Ukrainian- and Russian-language schools. It was found that not only state sponsored, but also private minority language schools were required to use the central programs and textbooks recommended by the Ministry of Education, leaving national minorities with little opportunity to determine the content of their children’s education. Lastly, clauses in the legislation forbidding national cultural societies to put forward candidates for parliamentary elections and outlawing political parties whose activities ‘undermine state security’ or ‘stir up national and religious tensions’ have impeded the foundation of ethnically-based political parties. Naturally, these elements of central policy do not match the fourth characteristic of Lijphart’s consociational democracy - a high degree of (non)-territorial autonomy for each segment to run its own internal affairs. Still, these restrictions on the cultural and political freedom of national minorities cannot remove the impression that Ukraine’s handling of its national minorities can indeed be labeled fairly accommodating and inclusive. After all, the granting of state citizenship and the absence of job discrimination on an ethnic or language basis has effectively given national minorities the same rights and opportunities as ethnic Ukrainians. The aforementioned restrictions cannot change this basic state of affairs.

Kyiv’s inclination to opt for an accommodating strategy is perhaps surprising given that the previous chapter did not anticipate a clear choice for either an inclusive approach or a strategy based on domination. The next step, therefore, is to explain the outcome. A factor that clearly contributed to the establishment of an inclusive minority policy was the lack of depth of national sentiment among large segments of the Ukrainian masses. As we have seen, this underdeveloped national consciousness left its mark on politics when the nationalist candidates failed to muster as much support as the (more) left-wing, pro-Russian contestants in three consecutive parliamentary elections. Consequently, the legislature repeatedly torpedoed nationalist-inspired project laws that would have made Ukraine’s minority policy more exclusionary.

To assess the influence of the other factors introduced in the previous chapter, (i.e., the factors of the explanatory models of Lijphart and Hennayake), we could check them one by one and see if they predicted the result. However, an analysis of the explanatory value of certain variables based on a single case, namely Ukraine, is not very convincing. To make a sound judgment about the impact of a factor, the minority policies of at least several states have to be determined. As Chinn and Kaiser (1996) have done
exactly this for the post-Soviet context, there is no sense in repeating their research. A summary of their conclusions suffices. In brief, they found that only in Estonia, Latvia and Georgia did titular nationalists succeed in implementing and holding on to a strategy of dominance. In the other post-Soviet states nationalists have either never entered the ranks of power at all (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), held power just briefly (Azerbaijan and Tajikistan), have had to seek compromises (Ukraine), have been in power since the late 1980s but have moderated their stance since independence (Lithuania and Moldova), or have only recently made their influence felt on minority policy (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan).

Chinn and Kaiser note that this pattern of post-Soviet minority policies does not correspond with the predictions of the internal colonialism/uneven development model. This theory proposes that the more underdeveloped a republic is and the more subordinate a nation was in relation to the former center, the more exclusionary and nationalistic its policies will be towards the former “oppressor” nation. But for the post-Soviet context the reverse applies: the most advanced republics and the most assertive titular nations (Estonians and Latvians) have proven to be the most dominating and exclusionary, and the least advanced republics/nations, the least exclusionary (the Central Asian republics).

Intriguingly, the failure of the internal colonialism model to predict the nature of minority policy in post-Soviet states indicates that Lijphart’s *structure of cleavages* condition and Hennayake’s *economic resources* condition may not have much explanatory value in this context. According to Lijphart, the more cleavages coincide (i.e., the more skewed the representation of ethnic groups in the strata of society is), the fewer chances there are for consociational democracy as an accommodating strategy. Hennayake argues in much the same way: the more uneven the distribution of economic resources over ethnic groups, the more likely the formerly ‘oppressed’ majority nation is to develop a strategy of exclusion when it captures state power. Coinciding cleavages, or unevenly divided economic resources, can, of course, typically be found in underdeveloped regions such as the Central Asian republics, where the majority nation was in a subordinate position in Soviet days. Given that it has just been demonstrated that these republics have actually refrained from adopting an exclusionary political program after independence, one may conclude that Lijphart’s structure of cleavages and Hennayake’s economic resources cannot explain the pattern of minority policies.

Chinn and Kaiser deem three factors to be particularly relevant for explaining the variation in minority policy among the former union republics: mass-based national consciousness; a history of independence; demographic trends.

The extent to which national consciousness penetrated the masses well before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Chinn and Kaiser hold to be of primary importance. It is asserted that, in republics where the national idea had become well entrenched among the titular population by the beginning of the 20th century, nationalist elites managed to get the support of the titular masses to implement exclusionary policies in the early 1990s. In republics where this was not the case, elites have been unable to push through a radically nationalist program.

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58 Michael Hechter, the architect of the internal colonialism theory, would label coinciding cleavages as a “cultural division of labor” (Hechter, 1975).
This conclusion is in line with our finding that the shallow national sentiment of ethnic Ukrainians prevented nationalists from dominating the political agenda in the 1990s. As was argued in the introduction, nineteenth-century Austrian rule enabled western Ukrainians to develop a strong national awareness, but their nationally conscious descendants are too small in numbers to leave their mark on the politics of contemporary Ukraine.59

A history of recent independent statehood is considered to be another salient factor as it provided titular nationalists with a historical justification for their movement towards national independence in the late 1980s. Thus, nationalists were highly successful in mobilizing the titular population in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, independent states in the inter-war period, but faced difficulties in mustering the support of the titular peoples of the Central Asian republics, which had not experienced a period of recent state independence. The perceived illegality of the Soviet incorporation of the Baltic states in 1939 only added to the nationalist fervor of the titular nations and was used by the Estonian and Latvian elites to legitimize a policy of exclusion directed at post-war Russian immigrants. In western Ukraine and Moldova, the other incorporated territories of 1939, indignation at the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact also significantly strengthened the nationalist movement.

The independent statehood factor has indeed explanatory value for Ukraine as this post-Soviet state combines a lack of recent state independence with an accommodating strategy towards national minorities. Ukrainian historians could claim that the three years following the October 1917 Revolution constituted a period of recent independence, but it is unlikely that Ukrainians remember this short and chaotic period as one of stable Ukrainian statehood. Other historical periods embracing regimes that allegedly represent the forerunners of the modern Ukrainian state all precede the nationalization wave of the 19th century. According to Chinn and Kaiser, this makes it difficult for Ukrainian nationalists to use these periods to mobilize the indigenous masses.

Hennayake’s ‘lost pride’ is obviously related to the independent statehood factor. Chinn and Kaiser use it to account for the restorative nationalism among Russians both in and outside Russia, but it could equally well apply to the Baltic nations. These nations are likely to interpret the loss of independence in 1939 as a degradation in status that hurt their national self-esteem. Ukrainians, on the other hand, do not suffer from the lost pride syndrome, as the previous chapter already indicated. Given that the Baltic nations have indeed adopted exclusionary policies (except for the Lithuanians) and the nations who were not tormented by feelings of wounded pride have not (except for the Georgians), lost pride has clear relevance for the post-Soviet context.

The demographic trends variable and Hennayake’s threat to the survival of the majority nation can be held to be one and the same. Chinn and Kaiser demonstrate that this variable is crucial for explaining why Lithuania opted for an accommodative approach and Estonia and Latvia did not. In the post-war period, Estonians and Latvians

59 In his suppressed majority ethnonationalism condition (see Chapter Two), Hennayake (1992) appears to concede the importance of mass-based national consciousness as an explanatory variable, but as he does not clarify what he means by the condition, it is not clear whether he truly foresaw the impact of mass-based national consciousness.
saw their numbers decline steadily in relation to the Russian population whose numbers were augmented by a constant inflow of migrants. Consequently, after independence titular nationalists saw no other way than to exclude Russians from public life as a means of attaining titular hegemony and ensuring cultural survival. Lithuanians, on the other hand, never felt a serious demographic threat as Russian in-migration was compensated for by high titular birth rates. They did not feel the need to deny Russians a role in society. The authors suggest that the case of Kyrgyzstan can be explained in much the same way. Although the Kyrgyz were as meagerly represented in the total population of their republic as the Latvians were in theirs (52 percent), their high natural increase, which more than compensated for Russian in-migration, gave them no grounds to opt for a strategy of dominance. Chinn and Kaiser therefore conclude that “indigenous demographic dominance, or a trend in that direction, reduces the degree to which members of the titular nation perceive the nontitular population as a threat, and makes inter-national accommodation more likely (ibid, p. 275).”

Though generally valid in the post-Soviet context, demographic trends have no explanatory value for Ukraine. Despite the ‘threat’ to the Ukrainian nation that the Russian in-migration and significant russification of Ukrainians constituted after World War II, Ukraine has not embarked on a policy of exclusion.

Lijphart’s state size and segmental isolation factors appear to have no explanatory value at all for the post-Soviet world. Lijphart postulated that small states are more likely to opt for consociationalism than larger states. Ironically, the reverse is true for the Soviet successor states: in Estonia, Latvia and Georgia, three small states, minority policy has been the most exclusionary, and in Ukraine and Kazakhstan, the two largest states except for Russia, fairly accommodative. The same conclusion applies to segmental isolation. Instead of isolated groups developing consociational arrangements, the diaspora Russians in (near to) homogeneously Russian areas have actually pressed for greater autonomy (the Narva region in Estonia) or outright secession (The Crimea). In the Slav-inhabited region of Transdniestria, conflict between the titular Moldovans and the Russian minority even escalated into a short-lived war. Segmental isolation thus seems to work more in the direction proposed by Coackley (see previous chapter): the more isolated an ethnic group, the stronger its territorial claims and therefore the greater the chance of an interactive nationalism developing between the titulars and the minority group, with all the exclusionary strategies that this entails.

None of the former Soviet republics can be said to meet any of the other conditions Lijphart holds to be conducive to consociational democracy. No successor state has traditions of elite accommodation, in no successor state do all interest groups have overarching loyalties towards the state, and in no successor state do we find a triangular configuration of ethnic groups balancing each other out. (Kazakhstan is to some extent the exception with Kazakhs numbering 43.2% of the total population, Russians 36.4% and other nationalities 20.4%). As minority policies have been found to differ substantially between these republics, the last three conditions cannot account for the pattern of outcomes either. Taken together, the six conditions of Lijphart’s model may thus only have explanatory value for consociational democracy as a specific type of accommodative policy, and not for accommodative strategies in general.
This leaves the first three factors proposed by Hennayake: (1) majority nation previously subordinated by colonialism and/or imperialism; (2) suppressed majority ethnonationalism; (3) external or internal threat to the majority nation. Chinn and Kaiser argue that the first condition is met by all titular nations of the former USSR. As such, it cannot explain the differences in minority policies between the successor states. The second condition can roughly be equated with the aforementioned mass-based national consciousness factor, assuming that titular nations that developed an early national awareness experienced the Soviet Union as an oppressive regime crushing their national aspirations. Consequently, suppressed majority ethnonationalism is likely to produce the same effect as mass-based national consciousness. This effect has already been discussed. The third condition, an external or internal threat to the majority nation, is an element in many of the titular nationalist ideologies. According to Chinn and Kaiser, titular nationalists in Estonia, Latvia, Moldova, Kazakhstan and Ukraine feel threatened both externally by Russia and internally by the Russian minority as a potential fifth column. Yet, policies towards the Russian minorities vary strongly within these five countries. The third condition, therefore, does not have much interpretative power either.

To summarize, of all the factors put forward by Lijphart and Hennayake, only Hennayake’s conditions of suppressed majority ethnonationalism (mass-based national consciousness), lost pride (history of independence), and, leaving out Ukraine, threat to the survival of the majority nation (demographic trends) can shed light on the overall pattern of minority policies in the Soviet successor states. Naturally, to arrive at a complete appreciation of the explanatory value of the aforementioned factors, the analysis of state-minority relations should not be restricted to the post-Soviet orbit. However, a global analysis falls outside the scope of this research.

3.7 Conclusion

In Czarist times Ukrainians were regarded as an offshoot of the Russian nation and the Ukrainian language as a peasant dialect of Russian. The use of Ukrainian in the public domain was outlawed. The Bolshevik policy of Korenizatsiia interrupted the russification of the imperial era. The new communist rulers promoted the use of Ukrainian in education, the media and the republic administration in order to combat illiteracy and ensure the compliance of ethnic Ukrainians with the new regime. Stalin quickly abandoned Korenizatsiia, however, when he assumed power at the beginning of the 1930s. In education this led to a renewed emphasis on Russian, both as a language of instruction (mainly in institutions of higher education) and as a compulsory subject for which the number of hours were continually expanded. After World War II a combination of specific circumstances and policy measures further russified the school network in Ukraine. Russian-language higher education encouraged many Ukrainian parents to send their children to Russian schools once Khrushchev granted parents the right to choose the language of instruction in the late 1950s. The institution of Russian language and literature as a compulsory vuz entrance exam only reinforced this tendency. The status difference between Russian and Ukrainian was further underlined by Moscow’s endeavor to make Ukrainian language and literature an optional subject in Russian schools whilst
retaining the compulsory status of Russian language and literature in Ukrainian schools, and by the practice of paying Russian-language teachers a fifteen percent higher wage than Ukrainian-language teachers.

After the onset of Glasnost, the newly empowered titular elite made use of the same strategies to turn the tables and accord primacy to the Ukrainian language. It was declared that vuzy would have to switch to Ukrainian as the medium of instruction within ten years, that students would have to do a Ukrainian language and literature exam for vuzy entrance, and that Russian language would no longer be a compulsory subject in Ukrainian schools. Moreover, the right to choose the language of instruction was curtailed by a decree that ordered local authorities to establish a network of first graders (i.e., a distribution of Ukrainian- and Russian-instructed pupils) that would optimally correspond to the national composition of the local population. If implemented, this measure would truly result in a massive ukrainianization of the school network. The Ministry of Education further announced that only Ukrainian schools should be granted the prestigious titles of lyceum, gymnasium or college, a measure which was clearly intended to encourage Russian schools to switch to Ukrainian before applying for a raise in status. The ministry also sought to urge Russophone parents of the east and south to send their children to Ukrainian-language education by making the threshold for the opening of Ukrainian classes in Russian schools as low as possible (eight to ten parental requests sufficed).

The new Ukraine followed the Soviet model not only in language regulations but also, to a large extent, in the *structure* of the educational system. School education remained as centralized as ever, with schools being obliged to follow the national curriculum set out for each type of school, work according to the programs developed by the ministry, and use the ministry's "recommended" textbooks. Interestingly, the few of private schools (which educated just 0.2% of the student population) were subject to the same strict regulations as the state-sponsored schools. Nonetheless, the substantial increase in the number of optional hours, of which schools and pupils could freely dispose, did mark a clear break with the past. Thus, schools and pupils have more freedom of movement in contemporary Ukraine than in Soviet times. Compared to schools, vuzy have decidedly more autonomy. Although the ministry obliged them to teach a block of humanitarian disciplines, which replaced a number of disciplines imbued with communist ideology, the vuzy are free to determine the subject matter of these disciplines (i.e., by developing their own programs and teaching materials). As this was unthinkable in the Soviet past, independence has constituted a major change for institutes of higher education.

The restrictions in the sphere of language and education notwithstanding, Ukraine's general treatment of its minorities can be described as quite accommodating after independence, as Russians and other minorities were granted equal civil rights, were not systematically excluded from the state and private sector, and were guaranteed a number of collective rights by the Law on National Minorities. The amorphous national identity of many Ukrainians was clearly instrumental in the establishment of this liberal minority policy. Because of the shallowness of national sentiment, nationalist forces could not find the backing they needed to dominate the political agenda and introduce more restrictive legislation. Of the many factors put forward by Lijphart and Hennayake,
only Hennayake’s ‘lost pride’ appeared to be relevant for the Ukrainian context. The fact that Ukraine had never had a period of sustained independence “cruelly” interrupted by Russian/Soviet “occupation” meant that no justification could be found for an exclusionary policy (i.e. there was no “historical injustice” to be resolved). This makes the choice for an inclusive approach understandable.