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NATIONAL IDENTITY AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN POST-SOVIET UKRAINE AND BELARUS: A THEORETICAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

(Part 1)

By Taras Kuzio

When the communist bloc disintegrated between 1989 and 1991, Western experience with transition had been largely influenced by authoritarian transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe since the 1960s. The classic four-volume survey of transitions from authoritarian rule includes no mention of stateness or the national question (see O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, 1986). Valerie Bunce's call to her fellow scholars to make state, nation, and identity central to the process of democratic change in postcommunist Europe has largely fallen on deaf ears (see Bunce, 1995). Few scholars of postcommunist transition have sought to develop a theoretical framework that encapsulates all four aspects of the quadruple transition: political and economic reform, state and nation building (see Kuzio, 2001a).

When discussing the incompatibility of "simultaneous transition," scholars often only address the problem of creating a market economy at a time of democratization (see Armijo, Biersteker, and Lowenthal, 1994). Rarely do scholars discuss the incompatibility of state institution and civic nation building with democratization and marketization. One reason why this is the case is that, as Claus Offe points out, "This upheaval is a revolution without a historical model and a revolution without a revolutionary theory." The different aspects of the transition process "occasion not only gigantic decision-making burdens, but also mutual effects of obstruction" (Offe, 1991, p. 872).

The unwillingness of transitology to discuss stateness and nationality was -- and remains -- a fundamental error because of two factors:

- POST-AUTHORITARIAN TRANSITION in Latin America and Southern Europe largely focused only on democratization and -- to a lesser extent -- marketization. State institution and civic nation building played no role in these transitions. In the former outer Soviet empire of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, transition is largely postauthoritarian democratization, as it was in Latin America and Southern Europe. Some elements of a market economy existed in a few of these states (e.g., the service sector and private agriculture in Poland). Some of the states on the outskirts of the former Soviet empire that had been part of federations (e.g., Slovakia and Macedonia) are also undertaking state-institution and civic nation building. Nevertheless, they have a head start over the former Soviet states in that they were part of federations (Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) -- not a totalitarian empire that had attempted to erase their national identities.

- POST-COLONIAL TRANSITION best fits the quadruple nature of transition in the former USSR and, to a lesser extent, in some Central and Eastern European countries. This quadruple transition includes democratization, marketization, and state institution and civic nation building (see Kuzio, 2001a).

When comparing Latin America/Southern Europe with postcommunist Europe, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (Linz and Stepan, 1996, p. 250) see additional obstacles to the transition process in the latter that did not exist in the former:

- limited sovereignty: an external hegemon prevented democratic transition;

- the simultaneity of, and contradiction between, democratization and marketization;

- the impact of totalitarianism (Linz and Stepan believe that only Poland escaped totalitarianism);

- civil society was flattened and/or penetrated and tied to the state (e.g., the Writer's Union);

- Orthodoxy did not become a vehicle for opposition activity because it historically depended upon the state (unlike Catholicism and Protestantism);

- political parties are viewed negatively and find it difficult therefore to forge alternative visions;

- lack of a tradition of the rule of law and constitutional culture;

- lack of a usable state;

- serviceability of the old bureaucracy to the new state and the lack of elite turnover (Arnijo, Biersteker and Lowenthal , p. 172);

- lack of a clear distinction between the state and the Communist Party;

- the former totalitarian-imperial legacy which has created social disunity and mistrust;

- lack of a regulatory framework (Linz and Stepan, 1996, pp. 235-254).

Western scholars of transition in the former communist bloc have largely ignored state institution and civic nation building, assuming -- wrongly -- that these should not be factored into studies of the transition process. When scholars, such as Offe or Linz and Stepan, have discussed the "triple transition" they invariably included under their heading of "state-building" both stateness and national factors. John Hall (1996, p. 22) talks of a "double transition" by focusing upon democratization/marketization, on the one hand, and nation building on the other.

Nevertheless, Linz and Stepan admit that even stateness is undertheorized in transitology and believe that henceforth it should become central to all discussions of postcommunist transformation. Although it is welcome that scholars are now bringing stateness into transitology, this cannot be undertaken without also bringing in the "nation." Such a fourfold transition is therefore best described as a "quadruple transition" (as opposed to a "double" or "triple" transition).

The triadic relationship between the modern state, nation, and democracy remains undertheorized for long-established Western states, and therefore there has been a gap in the theoretical literature when scholars have investigated postcommunist states (see Kuzio, 1999a). The introduction of a market economy at the same time as democratization is difficult enough; the historical record in Latin America and Southern Europe suggests that the creation of a market economy should precede democratization (as in Poland and Hungary under communism). In these postauthoritarian transitions, a market economy of sorts was already in place and the democratization of public space could build on the legacies of a middle class, a robust civil society, private business sectors, independent trade unions, and youth groups. Many of these elements provided by an emerging market economy had been introduced in the outer Soviet empire from the 1960s (e.g., "goulash communism" in Hungary) but not in the former USSR. In Ukraine and Belarus, socio-cultural pluralism, civil society, and independent economic actors were absent when they became independent states. Civil society therefore has to be "reinvented" -- not simply resurrected (see Munck, 1994).

Few scholars have grappled with the added complication of newly independent states, such as Ukraine and Belarus, not only introducing political and economic reform simultaneously but also building institutions and a state while forging a unified nation-state. Can a market economy and a democracy be established in the absence of a state? Robert Dahl has pointed out that "the democratic process presupposes a unit" (Dahl, 1986, p. 122). Such a unit encapsulates both a bounded state AND a civic nation because all states are composed of both civic and ethno-cultural factors.

Dankwart Rustow (1970) suggested three decades ago that agreed boundaries and national unity are a "background condition" that must precede political and economic reform. Philippe Schmitter and Terry Karl also point to the need for "prior consensus on overarching national identity and boundaries" before transition can be consolidated (see Schmitter and Karl, 1994, p. 184). If we were to follow Dahl, Rustow's, Schmitter's, and Karl's advice, then the proper sequencing for postcommunist transition should be first state and nation building, secondly establishing a market economy, and only finally a democracy. Instead, we have all four processes occurring simultaneously in the former USSR (see Roeder, 1999).

The absence of an overarching national identity and uncontested boundaries make post-Soviet transition very different from that undertaken earlier in Latin America. Ukraine's borders were not finally recognized until as late as February 1999, seven years after the USSR disintegrated, when the upper house of the Russian parliament followed the lower house's example of two months earlier in ratifying the Russian-Ukrainian treaty:

* Many postcommunist states suffer the additional, and enormous, problem that not even their geographic boundaries are beyond dispute and that various ethnic and religious cleavages prevent minimal degrees of allegiance to the respective states. In this sense, while several Latin American countries are undergoing processes of acute erosion of an already existing nation-

> state, several postcommunist ones are facing the even more vexing problem of beginning to build, under very uncongenial economic and social circumstances, a nation-state (O'Donnell, 1993, p. 1368).

National unity and consolidation were proclaimed as state goals by both former President Leonid Kravchuk (December 1991-July 1994) and by President Leonid Kuchma (July 1994-October 2004). Ukraine inherited a disunited polity which had only acted as a single territorial unit within the USSR. Regional and linguistic divisions remain pronounced. Attitudes toward the past -- which play a decisive role in formulating one's attitude to the future -- are regionally divided. On coming to power, Kuchma devolved greater power to the regions to decide linguistic, national, and historiographical questions. However, this seemingly more liberal policy has squarely contradicted his desire for national consolidation and thwarted attempts to make policy implementation by the center in the periphery more efficient and effective.

Gertrude Schroeder believes that "a populace strongly supportive of independence and willing to tolerate the initial hardships of adjusting to the state's new status is vital to sustaining the process of achieving economic progress" (Schroeder, 1992, p. 551; see also Motyl, 1995, p. 114). This is particularly relevant to states that have regions with low levels of national identity. In these regions, such as Eastern Ukraine and Belarus, the tolerance threshold for the poor socioeconomic situation is low. This leads to support for the Communists in Ukraine and Sovietophile regimes such as Alyaksandr Lukashenka's in Belarus, opposition to the quadruple transition, and nostalgia for a return to the past.

Nostalgic support for a return to the past can be seen in Belarus under President Lukashenka, who has promoted a pan-Eastern Slavic and Sovietophile ideology since first being elected in 1994. As Belarusian national identity is weak, its small national democratic opposition has been unable to resist the establishment of an authoritarian regime. In Ukraine, such nostalgic feelings also exist in Eastern Ukraine, where Russification was greatest and national identity is weaker. Unlike Belarus though, the remainder of Ukraine has a well-developed national identity that blocks the rise of political movements that aim to take Ukraine along the Belarusian path.

In addition to opposing authoritarianism and returning to the past, Western-Central Ukrainian national identity and nationalism is also a positive force in support of promoting political and economic reforms in order to "return to Europe." This was clearly seen in the widespread support that Western and Central Ukraine gave to former Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko's Our Ukraine election bloc in the March 2002 Ukrainian parliamentary elections.

Although all of Ukraine experienced totalitarianism and imperial rule, this impact has been most profound in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. In the March elections, state pressure on voters through "administrative pressure" and other forms of policies was severe. Nevertheless, it was only successful in intimidating voters in Eastern and Southern Ukraine into supporting pro-presidential parties. Donetsk Oblast was the only region where For a United Ukraine came first in the half of seats elected proportionately.

In Belarus, an ethno-cultural identity never developed prior to its incorporation into the USSR. Under Soviet rule, the last remaining traces of Belarusian identity were destroyed. This has left a legacy whereby identity in Belarus is largely Soviet in the manner in which it is articulated. By its very nature, Soviet Belarusian identity, as exemplified by Lukashenka, cannot sustain political and economic reform, as it is built on nostalgia for the past.

Postcommunist countries with the greatest totalitarian and imperial legacies developed personalized dictatorships, such as Lukashenka in Belarus and Saparmurat Niyazov in Turkmenistan. Ukraine joined the second group of postcommunist states that have bureaucratic authoritarian regimes, where there was a veneer of formal democracy and elites engaged in rent seeking and high levels of corruption (Motyl, 2001, p. 39). Belarus joined the group of despotic regimes of Central Asia ruled by patronage, popular demobilization, and repression. Such authoritarian tendencies were evident in Ukraine among its Eastern Ukrainian elites, who have run the country since 1994. President Kuchma repeatedly talked of parliament implementing the flawed April 2000 referendum, which would move Ukraine in the direction of authoritarian Belarusian or Central Asian regimes. The only political forces blocking this movement toward oligarchic authoritarianism are political forces elected by Western and Central Ukraine, where national identity is stronger (Our Ukraine, the Yulia Tymoshenko bloc and the Socialists).

Nationalism And Modernization

In bringing the state and nation back into our discussion of post-Soviet transition, our next step is to establish if there is a link between modernization and nationalism. The conundrum facing post-Soviet states such as Ukraine and Belarus is that only the state is relatively strong, while civil society and national identity are weak throughout the country (Belarus) or in some regions (Ukraine). Inevitably, this negatively influences the speed and success of democratization and marketization.

Popular mobilization proved crucial in forcing through political-economic transformations in Latin America and Southern Europe (O'Donnell, Schmitter, Whitehead, 1986, p. 56). Such mobilization in postcommunist countries only occurs where national identity is strong (e.g., Poland, the Czech Republic, and the three Baltic states). Only Western-Central Ukraine is similar to the Baltic states, where a robust national identity assists mobilization in support of reform.

Where territorial identities are stronger than ethnic ones (e.g., Eastern and Southern Ukraine and Belarus), mobilization for political and economic reform is weaker because their identities "are not expected to form nearly as potent a base for the social movement emerging in the late Soviet period as national and ethnic identity" (Dawson, 1996, p. 24). Our Ukraine, obtained upwards of 60-70 percent in Western Ukraine, compared to less than 5 percent in Eastern and Southern Ukraine in the March elections.

Until the advent of Nazism and fascism in the 1930s, nationalism was linked to democracy and the two were not seen as contradictory. This liberation-seeking nationalism set in motion by such 19th-century nationalists as Italy's Giuseppe Mazzini was regarded as progressive and a positive influence upon modernization. Similarly, nationalism in postcolonial Africa and Asia has "characteristically represented a drive towards modernization, constituting a breach with the past than its preservation or restoration." Nationalism in such settings was "forward-looking and not a reactionary force, a spur to revolution and not a bulwark of the status quo" (Emerson, 1967, pp. 203, 206). Nationalism was equated with the transition to the modern world. Similarly, nationalism in Ukraine "is an instrumental force pushing for change and reform rather than for maintaining a traditional orientation" (Miller, Hesli, Resinger, 1995, p. 29). Nationalism in Belarus also has similar aims and seeks to oppose the Sovietophile and antireform policies of the Lukashenka regime.

The close link between nationalism and democracy has existed over four centuries. Ever since the Thirty Years War, the American war of independence, through third-world revolutions in the 19th and 20th centuries to the overthrow of the Soviet empire. Modernization and nation building through the consolidation of a political community within a bounded territory inevitably went hand in hand (Huntington, 1968, pp. 37-38, Kymlicka, 1997, p. 57). Nation building will therefore increase the potential for societal mobilization because of the link discussed later in this paper between nationality and civil society (Canovan, 1996, p. 74). Any discussion of democratization in post-Soviet countries should not therefore divorce itself from questions of nationality, which define the size, strength, activism, and mobilization potential of civil society and therefore support for reform.

Why was former Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko's popularity not transformed into a nationwide mass movement in the March 2002 elections? In other words, why did Yushchenko's Our Ukraine bloc not become a Ukrainian equivalent of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) headed by Vojislav Kostunica, which was able to mobilize both democratic and nationalist anticommunist mass opposition to former President Slobodan Milosevic in October 2000?

In Ukraine, the creation of a similar all-encompassing national and reformist movement is made more difficult because of a weak national identity that prevented the Our Ukraine bloc from capturing the same levels of high support in Eastern and Southern Ukraine that it obtained in its western and central regions.

In the late Soviet era, the national democrats in Ukraine were strong enough to propel the country to independence but not to take power. In the late 1990s, they were nonetheless able to prevent Ukraine from either sliding back into communism or evolving into authoritarianism. The opposition movement that grew up during the "Kuchmagate" scandal in winter 2000-spring 2001 was based in the same regions as the anti-Soviet, nationalist movement of the late Soviet era, namely Western and Central Ukraine. This opposition movement is directed against the executive, its oligarchic allies, and the Communists.

If the Ukraine Without Kuchma movement had been able to mobilize countrywide support, as Kostunica did in Serbia, it is doubtful that President Kuchma would be still in power. But, as in the late Soviet era, Eastern and Southern Ukraine remained passive. Similarly, if a stronger national identity existed in Belarus, it is highly unlikely that Lukashenka would have been elected in 1994 and remained so popular ever since.

The weakness of national identity in Belarus and Eastern-Southern Ukraine contributes to the continued popularity of Lukashenka in Belarus, on the one hand, and reduces support for reformist forces such as Our Ukraine on the other. The weakness of Belarusian national identity proved unable to prevent the country from sliding backward whereas Ukraine's identity is not strong enough to fully move it forward in the same manner as in the Baltic states. Ukraine therefore muddles along, partially retrenched between the totalitarian past and the democratic future (Arel, 2001, Kuzio, 2001c).

Russophile activists Mykhailo Pogrebynsky and Vladimir Malynkowitch bemoaned in a roundtable convened at the Russian newspaper "Nezavisimaya gazeta" (27 April 2001) that civil society is closely linked to national identity in Ukraine. An active civil society, they believe, only exists in Western and Central Ukraine, while the East and South are passive and only become involved in politics in elections. Ukraine is therefore only partially a delegative democracy, where citizens are only active during elections but remain passive in between them, as this term only applies to Eastern and Southern Ukraine (Kubicek, 2001).

Because the national democrats were not able to take power in Ukraine after it became an independent state, they were therefore also unable to ensure that Ukraine undertook the radical reform and "return-to-Europe" strategy adopted by the three Baltic states and post-Milosevic Serbia. At the same time, they were strong enough to prevent Ukraine from following the Belarusian path of "returning to the USSR." Because nationalism and identity are only strong in its Western-Central regions, Ukraine has adopted neither the Baltic nor the Belarusian paths but instead muddled along with "third-way" and "multivector" policies that lie between the Baltic and Belarusian possibilities.

National identity, reform, and civil society are therefore closely linked in Ukraine and Belarus, as they are in other postcommunist states. Ukraine's regional and linguistic divisions inhibit national integration and a civil society encompassing the entire country. Meanwhile, the more pervasive Soviet legacy in Eastern and Southern Ukraine has led to a passive population and a weak civil society (see Kuzio, 1998b). This, in turn, prevented Yushchenko's Our Ukraine in the March elections from becoming a mass movement throughout Ukraine in the same manner as Kostunica's DOS did in Serbia. The popularity of Yushchenko's Our Ukraine in Western and Central Ukraine reflects the region's role as Ukraine's main engine for reforms and a bastion of opposition to the Communist Party and oligarchs.

Amorphous Centrism, 'Third Wayism,' And 'Multivectorism'

a) An Ambivalent Identity Leads To Muddled Policies The amorphousness of Ukraine's large centrist body, which has dominated the political elites since 1994, is reflected in the lack of any clear direction of what the elites are building. A "Third Way" option defers any decision from being made as to the crucial questions of whether to move toward Europe or Eurasia in the foreign domain, or build capitalism or a mixture of capitalism/socialism in the domestic field. The proponents of a "Third Way" want the best of both worlds.

Only the Communists, Socialists, center-right Rukh, and extreme nationalists have clear-cut ideologies while centrist parties possess amorphous programs. Alexis de Tocqueville's division of parties into "ideological" and "interest" types gives us an "ideological" spectrum (the left, Rukh, and nationalists) and "interest" (non-ideological, centrist) parties in Ukraine. These centrist parties (Regions of Ukraine, Social Democratic Party Ukraine-united [SDPU-o], People's Democratic Party [NDP], and Labor Ukraine) have close ties to the executive, and business groups and have been therefore defined as "oligarchic" parties of power who are the main supporters of a corporatist-authoritarian state in Ukraine.

Centrist factions tend to favor Ukraine maintaining itself in a state of "partial retrenchment" because this "Third Wayism" suits their personal interests. Like the executive, oligarchic centrist factions also distrust civil society and any independent media (see Kubicek, 2000), preferring instead a controlled and managed society.

The choice in favor of a Ukrainian "Third Way" is perhaps understandable as it tries to reconcile what pain can be applied economically without causing widespread social instability. As a socially unstructured and nationally unconsolidated society, Ukrainians tend to support centrism more than other ideologies. Proponents of the "Third Way" lie within this centrist group that encompasses the social democratic and liberal political spectrums, which have been completely taken over by the oligarchs and the executive.

b) Cosmopolitan State-Building? A body of Ukrainian scholars and political activists refutes the thesis that national identity or ethno-cultural factors have any role to play in civil society. They believe that is sufficient to constitute civil society on the basis of cosmopolitan, liberal-democratic values. Malynkowitch (1999), at one time a leading activist in the Inter-Regional Bloc of Reforms party and the Social-Liberal (SLON) electoral bloc in the March 1998 parliamentary elections, supports the creation of a single political nation in Ukraine in the "Western European sense of that term."

Unfortunately, Malynkowitch remains confused as to what the Western European political (civic) nation comprises and seems to believe that it is a purely cosmopolitan object devoid of ethno-cultural factors. If indeed that were the case, there would be no nation-states but one large body of people united by universalistic values. He contrasts Western Europe, where citizens and the civic nation are one and the same thing, and Ukraine, where nationality is the basis for civil society.

This confusion is common among politicians and scholars within the centrist camp in Ukraine (see Kuzio, 1999b). They assume that a pure "civic state" is something that can be created in practice and that such a state would not include any ethno-cultural defining factors, either in the state or civil society.

On other occasions, Ukraine's cosmopolitans define a "civic state" in Ukraine as one which would be based upon two state languages and two titular nations (i.e., Ukrainian-Russian). It is never made clear why a state and civil society becomes more "civic" if defined by two, instead of one, ethno-cultural criteria. In BOTH cases the civic state is defined by ethno-cultural attributes (i.e., Ukrainian or Ukrainian-Russian).

Ukrainian cosmopolitans, such as Malynkowitch, see no contradiction in supporting a territorial, "constitutional patriotism" in Ukraine along the lines of Habermas (1996) and, on the other hand, having an Eastern Slavic, Russian-language cultural definition of Ukrainian statehood as well. But they cannot have it both ways. They can be either cosmopolitans, such as Habermas, or proponents of an alternative ethno-cultural definition of Ukraine (i.e., Russian-Ukrainian [Eastern Slavic]).

An inclusive civic state is one in which anybody can become a citizen and have civic rights (such as the right to vote) regardless of their ethnic, gender, or other allegiances. States are NOT judged civic or not based on their support for the provision of polyethnic rights. The New York-based Freedom House defined as civic all European countries apart from Belarus and Slobodan Milosevic's Yugoslavia, even though these states are at different levels of democratic development. Indeed, Ukraine's record in civic-state-building is actually better than many of the Western countries to which Malynkowitch and many of his colleagues point as examples to be copied by Ukraine. France and Greece reject the very concept of national minorities and promote assimilationist policies (see Kuzio, 2001b and 2002a).

These cosmopolitan views find fertile ground within the centrist camp, where there remains confusion as to what concepts such as a political community, civic nation, and civil society mean. This division over how to undertake state and nation building, and over whether national integration is even required, divides the reformist camp. This, in turn, undermines support for the reformist camp in Ukraine, as we saw in the March 2002 elections when the Our Ukraine bloc fared poorly in Eastern and Southern Ukraine.

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Good And Bad Nationalisms In Post-Soviet Transitions: Ukraine And Belarus

Mobilization by civil society in multiethnic societies -- or those where the titular nation is divided, as in Ukraine, or weak, as in Belarus -- is made more difficult. Democracies can be created in multiethnic societies, but these may require the construction of consocial arrangements that lead to "centrist" consensus politics, as has happened in Ukraine. This negatively affects the political and economic transition by reducing the possibility for societal mobilization in support of post-Soviet change (Meadwell, 1989, p.149). Consensus politics has led to muddled "third way" domestic and "multivector" foreign policies in Ukraine.

Popular opposition in the late Soviet era was "national-liberationary" in that it combined elements of nationalism and democracy. Nationalist mobilization was greatest in the non-Russian republics, especially in Ukraine and the Baltic states. As Bohdan Krawchenko has pointed out, "In the Baltics, in Byelorussia, and in Ukraine, there is no reform current outside the national movement." This has remained the case in the post-Soviet era. The nationalist movement in the Baltic states and Ukraine "incorporated and hegemonized the democratic discourse in the widest sense of the word" (Krawchenko, 1991, pp. 187-188; Nahaylo, 1998, p. 188, 194). The largest reformist movement in Ukraine is Viktor Yushchenko's Our Ukraine, whose kernel are national democrats.

Societal mobilization only took place in Western-Central Ukraine in the late Soviet era, a feature of Ukrainian politics that has continued throughout the 1990s (Kuzio, 2002c). In Eastern-Southern Ukraine and Belarus, societal mobilization has been hampered because of a weak national identity. In Ukraine, the Popular Movement (Rukh) was buttressed by a large group of former political prisoners and cultural intelligentsia who have continued to remain active in domestic politics. In the March 2002 elections, they were mainly members of the Our Ukraine and the Yuliya Tymoshenko opposition blocs. In Belarus, the absence of a dissident movement, smaller cultural intelligentsia, and the lack of a national communist movement created problems for launching a nation- and state-building project after 1992, leading to the election of the Sovietophile Alyaksandr Lukashenka.

Nationalism and identity play a pivotal role in promoting reform while blocking the re-emergence of Sovietophile regimes. The drive to modernity through creating a democracy, market economy, state institutions, and united civic nation is forward-looking and seeks to emulate Western liberal democracies (e.g., Ukraine's desire to "return to Europe"). The quadruple transition can be either implemented (Baltic states), muddled through (Ukraine), or rejected altogether (Belarus). All four aspects of the quadruple transition are therefore closely bound together ("Uriadoviy Kurier," 10 March 1999). This close correlation between all four aspects of the quadruple transition has also remained consistent in the Ukrainian and Belarusian cases.

Of those who hold "liberal" views in Kyiv, 90 percent backed Ukraine's state independence. Those who do not regret the disintegration of the USSR are the strongest supporters of reform and Ukraine's integration into the European Union (see White et al, 2002). One hundred, 91, and 43 percent, respectively, of the extreme right, center right, and socialists/communists backed independence ("Uriadoviy Kurier," 18 February 1996). President Leonid Kuchma believes that: "At issue is the assertion of the main principle of nation building, which states that our sovereignty can only exist on the basis of the transition to a market economy" (Ukrainian Television Channel 1, 17 March 1998).

On a different occasion, Kuchma argued that on no account will Ukraine "leave the road of democratization in public life, deep economic transformation, [or] give up the aims declared with the proclamation of independence" (Interfax, 25 May 1998).

Ukraine's elites have long recognized the link between civic nationalism and modernization, believing that reform will be faster and easier in countries with stronger national identities. The "scale of the problems" facing Ukraine and Poland "are fundamentally different," and elites in both countries find it problematic to understand each other ("Zerkalo nedeli/Dzerkalo tyzhnya," 31 October 1998). Volodymyr Polokhalo, editor of the journal "Politychna Dumka," is therefore critically disposed toward those commentators who feel that Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary undertook their transitions "with greater skills." The reason, he believes, is simpler: After the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, they possessed "better starting conditions than Ukraine" ("Ukraina moloda," 6 November 1998). In comparison to the non-Russian states of the former USSR, these three Central European countries were able to better preserve their "national, cultural, and spiritual elites" who "were always oriented toward the development of national culture." Meanwhile, because private enterprise was to some extent allowed, the "class of small producers" was never completely destroyed in these countries. Ukraine, meanwhile, endured two famines and political purges "that led to the physical elimination of the nation" ("Ukraina moloda," 6 November 1998). Belarus suffered even greater bouts of Russification and Sovietization.

Looking to Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the Baltic states, President Kuchma also recognized the link between national unity and modernization: "The states where society consolidated and accepted a common viewpoint on where their prospects lay were able to launch reforms earlier and to conduct them actively and dynamically. As a result, they made a powerful spurt, went through the phase of inevitable problems sooner, and now have tangible, vivid results" ("Uriadoviy Kurier," 15 July 1999).

On a different occasion, Kuchma added, "We have not achieved success because of an absence of understanding between the branches of power. For economic growth we need political consolidation and political stability" ("Ukrainian Weekly," 15 February 1998, "Uriadoviy Kurier," 18 March 1998).

It is, of course, a moot point whether Kuchma's policies have increased Ukraine's national consolidation and whether he has indeed supported political and economic reform. It may be in the interests of the authorities to not promote national integration as a continued ambivalent identity in Eastern and Southern Ukraine blocks the advance of reformist forces, such as Our Ukraine, and gives non-ideological, centrist, pro-presidential forces an electoral base (Ryabchuk, 2000, p.190).

The weakness of civic nationalism exerts a negative influence on the post-Soviet transition process in Belarus and Ukraine. In the absence of a legitimizing ideology for political and economic reform, the transition process lacks mobilizational potential and can be attacked and derailed by ethnic nationalists and communists on both extremes of the political spectrum (Brudny, 1998, pp. 261-262). Civic nation building is therefore central to the political-economic transition process. A territorial loyalty to only the state PER SE similar to Jurgen Habermas's (1996, pp. 281-294) "Constitutional Patriotism" will be less successful in uniting and winning the allegiance of a population than an ideology which combines both territorial-civic AND ethnic-cultural factors (Kuzio, 1998a, pp. 45-70).

This was clearly seen in the close correlation between high national consciousness and support for the Yushchenko Our Ukraine reformist bloc in the March Ukrainian parliamentary elections. In Belarus, opposition to the Lukashenka regime spans reformist forces across the center and center-right who support the implementation of policies that would support a quadruple transition in that country.

National Identity And Civil Society In Ukraine And Belarus

NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND THE FORGING OF A COMMUNITY OF VALUES. Without state capacity and national integration, Ukraine is unlikely to be able to build a robust civil society (Czarnota, 1997, p. 99). Government programs to form a civil society on the basis of a "single spiritual space" remain weak, ill defined, and confused ("Uriadoviy Kurier," 31 July 1997). Political culture, identity, a community of values, civil society, and democratization are interrelated (Rudych et al, 1998, p. 212). Weak national integration and a decline in the political community will lead to a weakening of the democracy and civil society. Democratization, at a time of weak state capacity and national integration, hampers political-economic transition. The origins of a "sultanistic," authoritarian regime in neighboring Belarus, for example, has been traced by Eke and Kuzio (2000) to a weak national identity and its impact upon civil society.

Upon being elected in July 1994, President Kuchma's leading advisers recognized that Ukraine lacked a civil society that they themselves defined as a polity "where the majority of citizens hold one system of general values, moral basis, ideas, myths, values, social norms, etc." (Vydryn and Tabachnyk, 1995, p. 10). Civil and political society are contested by different regional, clan, and oligarchic groups who compete for the spoils of office with little concern for the public good. The Donetsk elites perceive greater cultural similarity between, and harbor positive feelings toward, themselves and Russians in Russia than between themselves and Western Ukrainians (see Shulman, 1999). Seventy-five percent of the public believe that Ukraine's leadership is indifferent to their fate (Rudych et al, 1998, p. 33). In such an environment, where there are competing visions and an absence of state policies, it is difficult for a political nation and civil society to be developed if there are no commonly agreed values that are promoted to unite the majority of the population.

Civil society is the arena where intellectuals can operate. They supply the legitimization and create the consensus on behalf of the ruling elites within the sphere of culture, manners, myths, and values. In Ukraine and in other postcommunist "transitions," the intelligentsia are often ignored (this was particularly true in the first two years of Kuchma's presidency). The intelligentsia in Ukraine is often Ukrainophone and national democratic in its outlook (e.g., the Congress of Ukrainian Intellectuals and the Writers Union). In contrast, a major debilitating factor for Russophones is a lack of an intelligentsia to formulate their demands and mobilize them into a civil society.

The intelligentsia is a source of values for Ukraine's civil society. But in Ukraine, there is little contact between it and the emerging middle class of "New Ukrainians," which is largely Russian-speaking and indifferent to Ukrainian culture and language. The creation of a community of values requires that the gulf between the cultural intelligentsia and "New Ukrainians" be therefore narrowed. Both are members of the emerging Ukrainian bourgeoisie, but one section ("New Ukrainians") is largely devoid of interest in Ukrainian culture, and its commitment to the creation of a liberal democratic state and market economy is questionable. Many of them made their capital through the shadow economy and/or shady business practices, a situation that they prefer to keep in place. Hence the support given by many "New Ukrainians" to centrist political parties and Ukraine's "Third Way."

STRONGER NATIONAL IDENTITY MEANS GREATER SUPPORT FOR REFORM. As civil society and national identity are closely interlinked in Ukraine and Belarus, nationalist mobilization against communism was greater in those regions where national identity was higher. These regions continue to be bastions of support for reformist forces and opposition to both oligarchic authoritarianism and communism. The highly urbanized and industrialized Eastern and Southern Ukraine, where identity is weak, played NO role (except for sporadic strikes by coal miners) in the drive to Ukrainian independence in the late Soviet era. Nationalist mobilization in Belarus was also low because of the absence of a counterelite of former dissidents and a weak national communist tradition. In the upheaval caused by the "Kuchmagate" scandal in winter 2000-spring 2001, Eastern Ukraine was again passive and only Western and Central Ukrainians took to the streets. During the March 2002 elections, Yushchenko's Our Ukraine received its least support in Eastern-Southern Ukraine.

Edward Shils believes that it is precisely the nation or nationality which "provides the cohesion which would otherwise have been lacking in those civil societies" in the 19th century (Shils, 1991, p. 7). In "inclusive" political communities, such as most Western liberal democracies, all inhabitants are citizens and therefore members of the civic nation. In such inclusive states, where civic nationalism predominates, the nation and civil society are "coterminous." The granting of citizenship assumes that the citizen will become a member of the civic nation (political community) and that a "particular nationality" (usually defined as the titular or core) will have "precedence" over all others within the bounded territory of the community.

In the Ukrainian case, this was not decided until June 1996, when the constitution was adopted that declared Ukrainians as the titular nation and Russians as one of many national minorities. In Belarus, the establishment of a Sovietophile regime since 1994 has led to the erosion of Belarusian national identity and the resumption of Soviet-era Russification. Russians are therefore joint titular nations with Belarusians. In Minsk, there is no longer a single Belarusian school --

unlike Kyiv, where 85 percent of schools use Ukrainian as their language of instruction.

How does the absence of a nation affect civil society? Shils (1995, p. 118) believes that "without a nation there can be no civil society." Nation building, if undertaken, develops both a civic nation AND civil society. If a country such as Belarus has given up on nation building, the development of civil society is threatened. The absence of national unity will directly affect civil society because national unity is "oriented by nationhood. Civil society is one of the institutional manifestations of the nation" (Shils, 1995, p. 111). Shils believes that, without nationality, the state does not possess the necessary preconditions to create a civil society, an effective constitution, laws, or citizenship. The core of civil society is the "dominant nation."

But how will civil society be affected if this "dominant nation" is divided, as in Ukraine, or weak and unclear about its identity, as in Belarus? Ukraine's regional, linguistic, and political divisions create obstacles to national integration, the creation of a unified civil society, and a single definition of the national interest. This is yet another obstacle faced by Ukraine in the creation of a united civil society. A divided titular nation in Ukraine impedes the formation of national integration and therefore by default the rise of civil society. A far weaker national identity in Belarus leads to the unique instance in the postcolonial world where a country that has achieved independence rejects its own statehood.

The link between civil society and national identity as a force promoting positive change against foreign and domestic despotic rule is a modern phenomenon. Modernity unleashes the logic of identity (Hall, 1996a, p. 341). Questions of nationalism, national identity, and civil society are therefore central to the drive for post-Soviet modernization and the "return to Europe" of states such as Ukraine and Belarus.

The disintegration of empires leads many sectors of society to fall back on local identities in the absence of an all-embracing national one. The Soviet legacy of a Ukrainian republican SSR has left a legacy of territorial attachment to Ukraine but with an unclear cultural-ethnic identity in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. Such a confused identity is not conducive to promoting civil society and national integration because trust is lacking across the country's regions (see Kuzio, 2002b, 2002c). Russophone Ukrainians and Russians may encompass a large segment of the Ukrainian population, but their ability to organize collective action is weak. Andrew Wilson admits that this is likely to persist because of a lack of "a clear-cut sense of identity" (Smith and Wilson, 1997, p. 855, Wilson, 1998, p. 135). The Russophones have a "softer" identity than their Ukrainophone counterparts, exhibit lower levels of civic activity, and do not translate their preferences into support for specific parties in elections. This is clearly seen in the abysmal failure of the two Russian nationalist blocs, which obtained support of just over 1 percent in the March 2002 Ukrainian parliamentary elections.

The Ukrainophones, Wilson believes, therefore have a clear advantage over the Russophones in organizing civil society, attesting to a close correlation between national identity, civil society, and mobilization. Civil society is consequently more active in Western-Central Ukraine. Even in the Crimea, the only region of Ukraine with a Russian majority, ethnic mobilization proved short-lived and weak (see Lievan, 1999). In the March 2002 elections to the Ukrainian parliament, the Russian nationalist groups fared worse than Our Ukraine in the Crimea.

Western civic states have always been composed of BOTH civic and ethnic-cultural factors (see Canovan, 1996, Kuzio, 2002a). Civic states are most commonly defined as "nation-states" because national identity is inseparable from political consciousness (Anderson, p. 135). The terms "nation" and "people" (in the Ukrainian language "narod" can be translated as either) are used interchangeably in legal and political terms (Habermas, 1996, p. 282). Political identity in the modern era is linked to national identity because political awareness implies a conscious national loyalty.

Gellner, (1996, p. 54) echoing John Stuart Mill, believed that civil society was therefore easier to establish in societies which were culturally homogenous and where a "modular man" exists who "is no longer tied to a social niche, but to a culturally defined pool." Civil society and nationalism came from the same source and were allies during opposition to despotic foreign or authoritarian domestic rule. Democracy is government by the people, and self-rule is only possible if the people are also a nation. Members should therefore share not only a sense of political allegiance to the territory (i.e., Habermas's "constitutional patriotism" and Kuchma's "ideology of state building") but also loyalty to common national-cultural factors (Kymlicka, 1996, p. 52).

The relationship between civil society and national identity lies at the heart of the transition process in post-Soviet states such as Ukraine and Belarus. Nationalism is an "occasional friend" and not an "eternal foe" of civil society. When nationalism and civil society are both opposed to a despotic regime or colonial rule, they are natural allies. If nationalism is ethnic, exclusive, and integral, it is more than likely to repress civil society (Hall, 1996b, p. 12).

Studies of transition in postcommunist countries therefore should neither ignore nor condemn nationalism PER SE; instead they should investigate how nationalism and identity can be mobilized along civic –- not ethnic –- lines in order for it to reinforce –- not suppress –- civil society. As I have argued elsewhere, the Ukrainian and Belarusian cases are examples of postcommunist states where the main problem negatively affecting their transition process has been too little –- not too much -- civic nationalism (see Kuzio, 2002d).

Transitologists have perhaps been unwilling to incorporate nationalism and identity within their studies -- unlike state and institution building -- because nationalism is often defined as an ally of ethnic exclusivity and xenophobia. But to deny the centrality of national questions to postcommunist transitions is to negate the close interrelationship between civil society and identity in all civic states. Without a "common identity" and "group solidarity," which "presupposes trust," societal mobilization for the goals of political-economic modernization are not possible (Shils, 1995, p.116). An atomized population, regionally divided, cynical, lacking efficacy and feelings of mutual trust with other citizens in the same country is unlikely to generate either a vibrant civil society or societal mobilization toward declared goals. The "collective self-consciousness" sustains civil society because "concern for one's nation reinforces the concern for the common good" (Shils, 1995, p. 93). National unity and integration therefore play a central role in sustaining civil society and generating mobilization: "Moreover, for the collective actor to be able to calculate the costs and benefits of collective action and act strategically, his identity has to be established. The process of the creation of identity occurs through collective interaction itself, within and between groups" (Cohen, 1985, p. 692).

Conclusion

Although bringing the state back into "transitology" is welcome, this paper has argued that studies of postcommunist -- and particularly post-Soviet -- transition cannot ignore the centrality of either nationalism or of identity. In contrast to a "triple" transition," we should therefore discuss transition in post-Soviet states as "quadruple" in nature. In Ukraine and Belarus, there is a close link between national identity, support for reform, and civil society. In both countries, weak identities have negatively affected the transition process toward the stated goals of democratization, marketization, and "returning to Europe."

Within the context of the quadruple transition, this paper has pointed to a variety of factors that exert a negative influence upon post-Soviet transition. The Soviet legacy of totalitarianism gave Ukraine and Belarus different starting points from those in Central-Eastern and Southern Europe or Latin America (see Kuzio, 2001a). A multiethnic society and weak (Belarus) or fractured (Ukraine) titular nation negatively influence democratic consolidation and the development of civil society. Ukraine and Belarus have either semiweak or weak civil societies, which can only be strengthened through the national integration of the titular nation.

The state, nationalism, and identity should be included within studies of transition, which should recognize that civic nationalism is central to the success of the quadruple transition. Nationality remains important to the vitality and efficient functioning of Western civic states, liberal democracies, and civil societies (see Canovan, 1996, Yack, 1999, Kuzio, 2002a). It is therefore incumbent upon those who study transition in postcommunist states, such as Ukraine and Belarus, to also place nationhood and identity at the center of their focus. By focusing on nationalism and identity, we shall be able to better understand why transition is muddled in Ukraine and why it has failed in Belarus.

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