

Université de Montréal

Contested Boundaries: The Nature of Russian Minority Resistance in Post-Independence
Ukraine

par

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Mémoire présenté à la Faculté des études supérieures
en vue de l'obtention du grade de
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présenté par:

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Résumé

Ce mémoire a pour but d'explorer le discours nationaliste d'un État et la résistance d'une minorité nationale à ce discours. J'examine la façon dont cette minorité perçoit et articule ses frontières symboliques et l'impact de ce construit sur la nature de la résistance. Mon étude de cas est l'Ukraine, une ex-république soviétique indépendante depuis 1991. Je me penche sur la résistance de la minorité russe - qui constitue 22% de la population totale de l'Ukraine - au processus d'ukrainisation linguistique. La nature de l'identité russe et son influence sur cette résistance font également l'objet d'une étude approfondie.

La littérature sur la population russe en Ukraine tend à reconnaître qu'il n'y a pas d'exclusion civique flagrante de cette population *en tant que minorité ethnique* (Arel 1995; Jaworsky 1998). Toutefois, même en l'absence de discrimination, la population russe résiste à son traitement par l'État ukrainien. En fait, le statut de minorité ethnique est lui-même contesté (Chinn et Kaiser 1996). Certains auteurs affirment que les Russes d'Ukraine ont une très faible identification *ethnique* en vertu du fait d'avoir développé une identité impériale plutôt que nationale (Kuzio 1998). Le concept d'"une nation slave" composée des Russes, des Ukrainiens et des Biélorusses, sous le leadership russe, est un des mythes identitaires impériaux (Garnett 1997).

Mon hypothèse en ce qui a trait à la résistance russe à l'ukrainisation linguistique est la suivante: au lieu de résister en tant que minorité ethnique russe, cette population résiste en tant que groupe élargi appelé "Russophones". Cette identité hybride comprend les Russes et les Ukrainiens russophones et est basée sur le concept russe impérial d'unité linguistique et culturelle des Russes et des Ukrainiens. Par conséquent, les Russes

résistent non pas à une exclusion ethnique par l'État ukrainien, mais plutôt à une exclusion *linguistique et culturelle* en tant que groupe élargi.

Afin de déterminer si mon hypothèse est valide, j'ai choisi d'utiliser des sources académiques - anthropologiques, historiques et politiques - traitant de la nature de l'identité russe. Je me sers également d'articles de journaux et de lettres de protestation contre l'ukrainisation écrites par des Russes. Mes prédictions sont les suivantes: je m'attends à ce qu'une hybridité impériale (c'est-à-dire la juxtaposition ou la fusion d'éléments impériaux et indigènes), plutôt qu'une identification ethnique, soit à la base de l'identité russe. Dans mon analyse discursive de la résistance russe, je m'attends à trouver des références à un "même peuple russe" partageant une "même culture" et une "même langue", ainsi que la perception d'une exclusion en tant que "Russophones" plutôt qu'en tant que "Russes".

Le premier chapitre traite de la nature du contact historique entre la Russie et l'Ukraine ainsi que de la formation de frontières symboliques entre ces deux entités. Durant l'époque tsariste, l'Empire définit les Ukrainiens comme faisant partie d'un "même peuple russe". Toutefois, la domination des "Petits Russes" (ou Ukrainiens) par les Russes est sous-jacente à ce concept de "même peuple". Pour leur part, les Ukrainiens oscillent entre une identification russe et une identification exclusivement ukrainienne. Durant l'époque soviétique, le concept de fusion et de hiérarchie tout à la fois dans la relation entre Ukrainiens et Russes persiste dans le discours officiel. Certains Ukrainiens adoptent une identité "slave-soviétique" alors que d'autres s'identifient à une nation ukrainienne.

Le deuxième chapitre constitue une analyse plus approfondie de l'identité dans l'Ukraine d'aujourd'hui. Deux groupes sont analysés: les Russes et les Ukrainiens russophones. Une analyse de l'héritage impérial de la Russie - par exemple, l'absence d'un territoire "purement russe" -, démontre que cet héritage a empêché le développement d'une identité *nationale* russe. À la place, l'identité russe est basée, surtout dans les ex-républiques soviétiques, sur la mixité avec les habitants non-russes. En Ukraine, cette mixité (c'est-à-dire un très faible niveau de différenciation avec les Ukrainiens) est en effet plus fréquente chez les Russes qu'une identification ethnique. Quant aux Ukrainiens russophones - définis comme ceux qui utilisent le russe en privé aussi bien qu'en public -, ils forment un groupe très hétérogène en termes d'identification. En effet, bien que certains Ukrainiens russophones s'identifient à une culture hybride russo-ukrainienne basée sur le contact historique et la notion d'une "nation slave", d'autres ont une conscience nationale ukrainienne développée. Par conséquent, bien que les Russes et les Ukrainiens russophones partagent l'usage d'une même langue, ils ne partagent pas nécessairement une même identité. Pourtant, en Russie comme en Ukraine, les Russes ont tendance à prendre pour acquis l'homogénéité de ce groupe - c'est-à-dire les "Russophones" d'Ukraine - ainsi que sa loyauté envers la Russie ou du moins envers l'idée d'une "même nation slave".

Le troisième chapitre est consacré à une analyse de la résistance russe à l'ukrainisation linguistique. Tout d'abord, je me penche sur l'ukrainisation en examinant des politiques linguistiques ukrainiennes et leur conception ethnisante des groupes. J'aborde ensuite la résistance de la part des Russes. Quelques thèmes ressortent de l'étude des articles et des lettres de protestation, par exemple, une résistance à la division

"artificielle" par l'État ukrainien d'un "même peuple" ainsi qu'à la perception par l'État du russe comme étant une "langue étrangère" ou encore une "langue minoritaire". On retrouve également une indignation contre une définition *ethnique* (et non linguistique) par l'État des groupes et de leurs droits.

Comme prédit dans mon plan d'analyse, j'ai trouvé dans ces textes un accent sur l'hybridité impériale, c'est-à-dire l'usage du concept d'"une nation slave sous le leadership russe". Une identification en tant que "Russophones" (catégorie conçue par les Russes comme étant homogène et majoritaire en Ukraine) est également très fréquente, tout comme l'intérêt particulier pour les Ukrainiens russophones qui en découle. Enfin, j'ai retrouvé des objections à une définition ethnique des groupes par l'État. Ces résultats confirment mon hypothèse initiale selon laquelle les Russes d'Ukraine résistent non pas à une exclusion en tant que minorité ethnique russe, mais à une exclusion en tant que groupe élargi uni par une "même langue" et une "même culture", c'est-à-dire en tant que "Russophones".

Tel que suggéré initialement, la perception d'une exclusion dépend de la façon dont les frontières sont définies. Alors que l'État ukrainien définit ses frontières en termes ethniques, les Russes tendent à les définir en termes linguistiques et culturels. Il est fort probable que la résistance à l'ukrainisation linguistique ne soit qu'un symptôme de ce malentendu identitaire plus profond. Par conséquent, il est essentiel d'analyser d'autres manifestations possibles de ce malentendu.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of purpose

This thesis will address issues of national discourse and national minority resistance. My goal is to explore the way in which a national minority's identity and boundary formation may shape its resistance to national discourse.

My research will deal with the question of the Russian populations in the post-Soviet states. My case study is Ukraine, a former Soviet republic independent since 1991 and whose Russian minority constitutes 22% of the total population. I will be concerned with the nature of the Russian population's resistance to linguistic Ukrainization.

I will argue that Russians in Ukraine tend to resist not as an ethnic minority, but as an extended group that includes Russophone Ukrainians and is referred to as the 'Russophones' or 'Russian-speakers'. This group, based on the Russian imperial idea of 'cultural unity' between Russians and Ukrainians, is assumed by Russians to share not only a 'same' language, but also a 'same' culture and a 'same' loyalty.

I will begin by exploring the nature of historical contact between Russians and Ukrainians and the resulting boundary formation between those groups. The impact of the imperial legacy on Russian identity will then be explored. Finally, I will analyze Russian protest against linguistic Ukrainization and attempt to determine its link to the nature of Russian identity.

I will base my research on academic sources in anthropology, history and political science, as well as on articles and letters of protest against Ukrainization. My analysis will revolve around the notion of symbolic boundaries and the concepts of hybridity and 'overextension' in identity. The nature of the link between language and ethnic or national identity will also be explored.

National boundaries and exclusion

According to Seton-Watson, "A *state* is a legal and political organisation, with the power to require obedience from its citizens. A *nation* is a community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a national

consciousness" (1977: 1; emphasis added). Once statehood is achieved, the task is "to build a nation within an independent state, by extending down to the population as a whole *the belief in the existence of the nation*, which, before independence was won, was held only by a minority" (Seton-Watson 1977: 3). Indeed, a generalized *belief in the nation* (or national consciousness) is what gives a nation its legitimacy. Anderson emphasizes this point by defining the nation as "an *imagined* political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (1991: 6; emphasis added). The "image of communion" is in fact essential to unify members of a nation who may never meet each other (ibid.). National identity thus involves a mental construction of the nation. Gellner goes further and treats the nation as an artefact: "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist" (1964: 169). Similarly, Hobsbawm states about national history that "If there is no suitable past, it can always be invented" (quoted in Hall 1996: 69).

As Anderson points out, imagining a nation involves imagining its limits or external boundaries (1991: 6). Nationalism indeed "nationalizes" a people by separating them from others" (Szporluk 1997: 89). In other words, the development of national consciousness is based on the awareness of Other (Greenfeld 1992). Once statehood is achieved, the usual lack^{of} confluence of symbolic and politico-jural boundaries between nations and states" (Wilson and Donnan 1997: 2) leads to the drawing of internal boundaries (i.e. *symbolic* boundaries vs. national borders). Those symbolic boundaries are thought to be necessary to the consolidation of national identity. Indeed, "The self-identity of nations has been secured partly through the construction of *internal Others*, whose markedness assures the existence of a national identity that, remaining invisible or unmarked, is successfully inscribed as the norm" (Alonso 1994: 390; emphasis added).

The boundary's role consists in marking difference between groups. Barth claims that "cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence" (1969: 10) because "it is the ethnic *boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (ibid. 15). In states with multiple and/or overlapping identities, the boundary can become an instrument of persuasion about the essence of a nation, as well as a powerful symbol in nation formation and dissolution. Where identity categories

bleed into each another, the nation-state engages in "the *production* of difference" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 14).

In post-colonial nations, a clear definition of Self and Other may be used to reframe past imperial penetration and the ensuing *hybridity*, or what Wanner refers to as "the blending of cultural influences, coerced and otherwise" (forthcoming). This mixture of imperial and indigenous elements is also referred to as the "creole continuum" (Drummond 1980). In this thesis, I will use hybridity as a "process of inter-reference between two or more cultural traditions" (Fischer about American ethnic identities 1986: 201). As for *ethnicity*, it will be used in its primordialist sense (i.e. as an identity based on shared territory, culture, religion, etc.) for the sole purpose of contrasting it with a hybrid identity.

In the Western European model of nation-states, the Self/Other distinction is often articulated in terms of 'titular nation'/'national minority'. A state may exclude the national minority from political participation and decision-making or include it civically by protecting its rights as a minority. However, minority resistance can arise even in the absence of civic exclusion. This resistance is a more fundamental protest against the way in which the boundary between 'titular nation' and 'national minority' has been drawn. According to Cohen, boundaries suggest *contestability* as "...subjects of claims based on a perception by at least one of the parties of certain features which distinguish it from others" (1994: 122). Indeed, while one party may draw what it considers a 'natural' boundary, the other party may deny the very existence of the boundary (in this case, the mere fact of delineating a boundary constitutes an *exclusion* of sorts).

For example, members of a 'national minority' may feel that they should be included in the 'titular nation' (and its associations with indigeneness and majority status). In certain cases, a given population may feel that the 'minority' label reduces its space of self-identification in that it ignores hybridity (the latter is likely to be expressed in terms of 'cultural closeness' or other 'commonalities' with the titular nation). Resistance to the exclusively defined 'imagined community' can then arise. In fact, the national discourse on identity is often "challenged by alternative and oppositional traditions that dispute dominant articulations of space, time, and substance and can even question the identity between nation and state" (Alonso 1994: 389). I will argue in this thesis that the

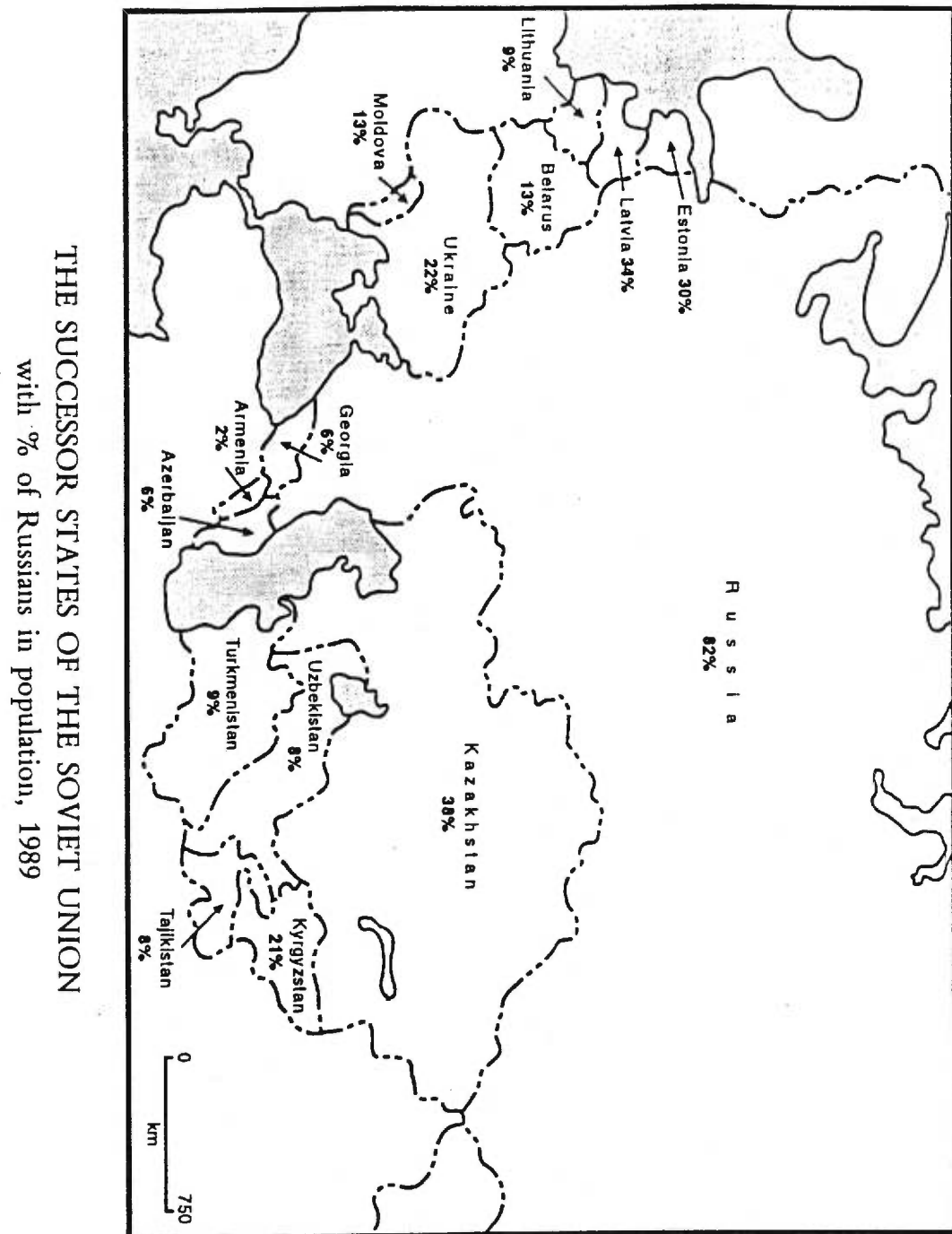
way in which a given population reacts to its categorization as a minority depends on the nature of its self-identification. If a population's self-identification is hybrid, it is probable that it will claim an exclusion *as an extended group*. It is when this extended group encompasses members of the so-called 'titular nation' that the boundaries are most fiercely debated.

Finally, what happens when a post-colonial state draws ethnic boundaries between the titular nation and the national minority while the latter draws boundaries in *linguistic* terms? Language use may indeed play an important role in self-identification even though (or precisely because) it does not necessarily correspond to national or ethnic identity. To the state's rhetoric about the 'essential link' between national language use and national identity, the minority can oppose the existing *disjunction* between language and identity (Tabouret-Keller 1997: 323) within the state. The convergence (or lack thereof) between language and ethnic/national identity will be explored in this thesis.

Identity and resistance in Ukraine

The literature dealing with the Russian populations in the former Soviet republics addresses the issue primarily from a political science perspective. Paul Kolstoe's¹ 1995 book *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics* presents a historical and political analysis of the question. In his book *Identity in Formation: the Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*, David D. Laitin offers a political science analysis based on surveys and fieldwork in the post-Soviet states. Finally, anthropologist Hilary Pilkington's study of returnees to Russia from the former Soviet republics is also based on fieldwork and ethnographic interviews.

As for the Russian population in Ukraine, it is dealt with in the above-mentioned comprehensive studies, as well as in works on identity and nation-building in Ukraine. One can observe two ways in which scholars describe groups in terms of identity in Ukraine. One tendency is to perceive boundaries in *ethnic* terms, i.e. to assume (as in traditional Western European nations) that Ukraine is a state of ethnic Ukrainians that includes an ethnic Russian minority. In that case, Russophone Ukrainians are still considered primarily ethnic Ukrainians (e.g. John Jaworsky 1998 and presentation at Conference on Ukraine, Toronto, November 1999). In his book *Ukraine: State and*



SOURCE: Paul Kolstoe. *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Nation Building (1998), Taras Kuzio argues that the Russophone Ukrainians' identity and loyalty are not determined by their use of Russian. Similarly, in her forthcoming article "Crafting identity, Making Time: An Anthropological Perspective on Nation Building in Ukraine", anthropologist Catherine Wanner states that many Russophone Ukrainians support Ukraine's independence.

Another tendency is to perceive boundaries in *linguistic or 'cultural'* terms, i.e. to see Ukraine as a bilingual and bicultural state of Ukrainophones and Russophones. Included in the Russophone category are the Russian-speaking Ukrainians. In his article on Ukraine as a 'nationalizing state', Dominique Arel states that "the main groups in the Ukrainian landscape have linguistic [rather than ethnic] boundaries", i.e. they are the Ukrainophones and the Russophones (1995: 166). In his book on Ukrainian nationalism as a minority faith (1997), Andrew Wilson perceives Ukraine as internally divided between the Ukrainian 'nationalists' and the Russian and Ukrainian Russophones. According to him, Ukrainian Russophones, rather than being primarily ethnic Ukrainians, very often share a Russophone culture. Finally, Laitin, in his above-mentioned study of Russian populations (1998), proposes that the 'Russian-speaking' identity is becoming a new category of belonging in the former Soviet republics. In Ukraine, he perceives the Russian and Ukrainian Russophones as sharing a same loyalty.

In this thesis, the term 'Russophones' (or 'Russian-speaking') will have two meanings. In my theoretical analysis, I will use it in its exclusively linguistic definition, i.e. as a category that shares Russian language use in the private sphere and regards that language as a mother tongue (Kolstoe 1999: 23). The second use will be that by Russia and Russians in Ukraine. It refers to a category of belonging united not only by shared language use, but also by shared culture and loyalty (see Kuzio 1998: 92).

To my knowledge, no attempt has yet been made to explore the Russian identity's configuration (both in Russia and in Ukraine) and its impact on the nature of Russian resistance. On what basis do Russians resist in Ukraine? The following arguments put in doubt the assumption that Russians resist *as an ethnic group* (i.e. on the basis of the above-defined ethnic identity). Most authors, even those less sympathetic to the fact of Ukrainian independence, agree that there is no blatant civic discrimination against Russians as an ethnic minority (in fact, the latter is protected by the Ukrainian

Constitution) (e.g. Arel 1995; Kuzio 1998; Jaworsky 1998). However, Russian resistance persists even in the general absence of *ethnic* exclusion. In their book *Russians as the New Minority: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States* (1996), Jeff Chinn and Robert Kaiser point to the dramatic decline in status faced by the Russian populations outside of Russia. According to those authors, those populations' protest revolves around their *dominant* minority status being 'downgraded' to a simple minority status in the post-Soviet states.

However, it seems that Russian resistance is also based on a particular understanding of identity. Scholar of nationalism Roman Szporluk argues that Russia's traditional empire-building has undermined its nation-building process (1997). Likewise, Russians in Ukraine have a weak *ethnic* identity because of a traditional identification with an Empire rather than with a Russian *nation* (Taras Kuzio, e-mail, October 1999). According to Garnett (1997), Russian 'national psychology' is expressed through the (imperial) concept of 'Slavic brotherhood', i.e. 'one nation' of Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. This construct influences the Russians' perception of their relation to the Ukrainians:

Russians tend to view Ukrainians as a part of an Orthodox Slavic civilization created in large measure by the union of three East Slavic nations under Russian leadership; Ukrainians harbor a strong sense of themselves as a separate nation, with Russia playing only the role of the Other (1997: 336; emphasis added).

While Ukrainian nation-builders feel the necessity of drawing a clear boundary between Ukrainians and Russians, the Russians' perception of Ukrainians as a 'same (Russian) people' points to a lack of ethnic or even cultural boundary between them. I would argue that this lack of boundary, or what I would call 'imperial hybridity' (i.e. the mixture of Russian and non-Russian elements brought about by the imperial legacy) is a major trait of Russian identity in Ukraine.

I will argue that the way in which boundaries are imagined is closely related to the way in which exclusion is perceived. The perception of boundaries therefore has an impact on resistance.

Hypothesis

My hypothesis regarding Russian resistance to linguistic Ukrainization is the following: rather than resisting as an ethnic Russian minority, Russians resist as an *extended* category which they refer to as the 'Russian-speakers'. This extended (or hybrid) identity includes Russophone Ukrainians and is based on the Russian imperial notion of 'Slavic brotherhood' and the corresponding assumption of cultural and linguistic unity between Russians and Ukrainians. Russians can therefore be said to protest not against an *ethnic* exclusion by the Ukrainian state, but against a perceived *linguistic/cultural* exclusion as an extended group.

Methodology

In my analysis of Russian resistance in Ukraine, I will use the above-mentioned academic sources dealing with the nature of Russian identity. I will also examine Russian resistance to linguistic Ukrainization using letters of protest to Ukrainian government officials (made available by a contact in the Ukrainian government), and newspaper articles (gathered from newspapers published in Ukraine). I found it essential to analyze a sample of direct resistance, that is, letters from citizens of Ukraine to members of the Ukrainian government. As for the newspaper articles (some from Russian language newspapers, others from Ukrainian language newspapers), they provide the opportunity for another kind of dialogue, this time a discussion between Ukrainians and Russians. Only the documents in which issues of identity and self-representation were central to protest were selected. The documents are from the regions of Central and Eastern Ukraine (Western Ukraine and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea are not represented in my analysis because I felt that Russian identity might have a different configuration there). As for the time frame, the protest dates from 1997 to 2000. The documents were translated from Russian to English with the help of an interpreter.

Although this particular paper is not based on ethnographic fieldwork, a two-month trip to Ukraine in the summer of 1998 allowed me to evaluate the collected material more critically. During my stay in the capital, Kyiv, I met with representatives of the Ukrainian government (State Committee of Ukraine for Nationalities and Migration), as well as with the director of the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme).

Those organizations put me in contact with local Ukrainians and Russians with whom I discussed identity issues. I also visited the village of Kozin (Kyiv region), and traveled to Transcarpathia, where I stayed in the town of Mukacheve and the city of Uzhgorod. In 1997, I conducted ethnographic interviews in Montreal with recent Ukrainian immigrants in order to gain a better understanding of the negotiation of Ukrainian identity in multiethnic settings.

Analysis

In order to test my hypothesis, I will explore the historical sources of Russian identity in Russia and in Ukraine. Russia's contact and relation with Ukraine will be examined, as well as the resulting symbolic boundary formation. I will examine both Tsarist and Soviet periods and attempt to identify the role of elements such as imperial consciousness and language in shaping Russian identity. If my hypothesis is correct, I should find that imperial hybridity (rather than ethnicity) plays a crucial role in Russian self-identification in Ukraine.

Second of all, I will examine the way in which the Ukrainian state draws boundaries between Ukrainians and Russians. This will be done through an analysis of legal documents such as the Ukrainian Constitution and language laws. The 'titular nation'/'national minority' classification will be examined.

Lastly, I will look at Russian resistance through articles and letters of protest against the Ukrainization process. Through a discourse analysis, I will identify patterns in Russian self-perception and the perception of exclusion by the Ukrainian state. Based on my hypothesis, I would predict the use of references to a shared history, language and culture, i.e. references to a 'same (Russian) people' of Ukrainians and Russians. I would also expect to find references to a discrimination against '*Russian-speakers*' and '*Russophones*' rather than the use of terms such as '*ethnic* discrimination', or the violation of Russian '*minority* rights'. The emphasis on 'Russian-speakers' (i.e. an amalgam of Russians and Ukrainians) would mean an emphasis on language and culture as major markers of identity. It would also imply protest in the name of the Russophone Ukrainians 'victimized' by Ukrainization.

CHAPTER 1

THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN ENCOUNTER

Since exclusion is about drawing boundaries, we must first examine the nature of historical contact between Russians and Ukrainians, as well as the resulting identity formation.

A Brief history of Ukraine

The external borders of many different powers criss-crossed what now constitutes Ukraine's national territory. In fact, what is now Ukraine was at the crossroads of political entities such as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and later the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Ethnic Ukrainian lands were also at various times united under a single entity, including under the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Russian Empire after the partitions of Poland, and the Soviet Union after 1939. However, this unification alternated with the fragmentation, often along the east-west axis, of Ukraine's territory. For example, shortly after a so-called "protection agreement" between the Cossack State and the Muscovite Tsar was signed at Pereyaslav (1654), Ukraine was split between Russia and Poland into Right and Left banks along the Dnieper river (Treaty of Andrusovo, 1667) (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1998: 986). The Right Bank remained a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, where Cossack leaders fought to gain equal status within the Commonwealth as the 'Grand Duchy of Ruthenia'. The Left Bank was under Russian imperial rule, where it retained a considerable degree of autonomy (i.e. Cossack self-government) for nearly a century, after which the Sich, bastion of the Cossacks, was destroyed by Russian troops (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1998: 987). At the end of the 18th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth disintegrated as a result of the partitions of Poland and Russia occupied the Right Bank of Ukraine (ibid. 987). As for the rest of Ukraine (i.e. the Western regions of Galicia and Bukovyna), it was annexed to the Habsburg Empire (Subtelny 1994: 213). For close to 150 years, until WWI, the Ukrainians lived in two empires, Russian and Austrian (ibid. 201). Ukrainian lands under both empires experienced an important cultural (national) revival in the 19th century.

In 1917, after the Bolshevik coup in Russia, the Central Rada (a Ukrainian representative body) proclaimed the creation of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR), constituted by Ukrainian territory under Russian rule. While still under Austria-Hungary, Western Ukraine (Galicia, Bukovyna and Transcarpathia) declared in 1918 the formation of the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) (Szporluk 1997: 88). At the beginning of 1919, an act of union of the two Ukrainian states was proclaimed (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1998: 990). That same year however, Poland occupied the western region of Ukraine (ibid.). At the end of 1919, the Bolsheviks made of eastern Ukraine the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic. In 1921, the Treaty of Riga was signed which divided Ukraine between Russia and Poland, allowing the latter to keep the occupied Western Ukrainian lands (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1998: 990). It was only in 1939 that the Soviet Union annexed parts of the Western Ukrainian regions of Galicia, Volhynia and Bukovyna (Subtelny 1994: 487), thereby reuniting virtually all ethnic Ukrainian lands under its rule. During World War II, the Germans led the Ukrainians to believe that Germany would liberate Ukraine from Soviet rule. However, in 1944 the Soviet Union regained control over what had been created as the 'Reichskommissariat Ukraine' (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1998: 993). In 1991, Ukraine became independent, preserving the borders of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Ukraine's exposure to different empires and often radically different political systems has had a profound impact on identity and on the level of national consciousness among its population. In fact, "the Ukrainian nation as such has functioned as an organized entity, through a network of diverse social, economic, cultural, and political organizations within those states that allowed such activities, but it has tended to virtually disappear where the state did not tolerate any voluntary associations, whether cultural, political or religious" (Szporluk in Ryabchuk 1991: 103). This accounts for the high level of ethnic consciousness in Western Ukraine (under more liberal European rule, e.g. under Austria in the 19th c.), and the somewhat weaker ethnic consciousness in the East (where the Ukrainian language and culture were forbidden for long periods under Russian and Soviet rule). Some have argued that this disjunction in legacies between a Ukrainian West and a Russified East constitutes Ukraine's internal, "bleeding boundary" (term borrowed from Malkki 1992: 26).



Central and Eastern Europe

SOURCE: Vladimir Tismaneanu, ed. *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995.

Ukraine under the Russian Empire

The symbiotic character of the relation between Russia and Ukraine has had a profound impact on both countries. Indeed, "Ukraine cannot be understood in isolation from Russia, but, by the same token, Russia cannot be understood in isolation from Ukraine. The two countries define each other in a way that few others do" (Motyl 1993: 3).

As Russia expanded into its new 'borderland', imperialism became a major feature of the contact with Ukraine, starting with the Muscovite invasion of 1654-67 (Davies 1996: 556). It seems that the border brought "...the temptation to open up the ultimate depths of being and the desire to conquer all reticent beings" (Bachelard 1994: 222). This transgression onto Other through colonization, Leroy-Beaulieu equates with self-reproduction, or "enlargement and multiplication through space" (quoted in Said 1978: 219). As the imperial power (as Fischer points out about ethnographers) "seek[s] in the other clarification for processes in the self" (1986: 199), it creates an extended self that serves at the same time as "a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said 1978: 3). Russia constructed the 'Little Russians' (or Ukrainians) as an *extension of self* but also, interestingly, as an *alter ego* (i.e. a Slavic, underdeveloped 'junior brother'). Those two complementary features of extended self and *alter ego* are present in Russian imperial historiography. In fact, the idea of 'conquest' itself has been largely obscured (for both Russians and Ukrainians) by the notion of the historical 'brotherhood of nations', a brotherhood between what are in fact the Conqueror ('Great Russians') and the Conquered ('Little Russians')². Supposed cultural similarity began serving as a justification for both cultural and political (imperial) penetration³. Indeed, the conquest of 'Little Russia' was reshaped by Tsarist historiography into a 'desire for reunion with Great Russia'. We will further discuss this theme in the section on Soviet historiography.

It is important to note that the first construction of Russia's history was put forth during the period of Russian nation-and-state-building, when a major concern of Russians was to bring about a full integration of 'Little Russian' subjects (Szporluk 1997b: 94). Nation-building required a national history. After Eastern Ukraine became attached to Russia in 1654 (Treaty of Pereyaslav), Russia (then the Muscovy Principality)

experienced a 'Ukrainization' of sorts (Szporluk 1997a: 68), as Russified 'Little Russians' became part of its intellectual elite. In fact, Ukrainians may have constituted "as much as 50 per cent of [the] first mass of Russian nationalists" (Greenfeld 1992: 238)⁴. It was through Ukrainian intellectuals that Muscovy learned of its historical connection to the ancient state of Kievan Rus', a multinational entity in which various Slavic tribes (including the ancestors of present-day Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians) lived under Scandinavian rule. Muscovy decided to incorporate Kievan Rus' into its new historical construct (Szporluk 1997b: 95), proclaiming itself "the sole, legitimate, and direct successor of Kiev ..., [and] denying any legitimacy as Kiev's heirs to other polities that functioned in the post-Kiev space" (ibid.). This claim served not only to counter Polish claims on Ukrainian territory, but also "to deny Ukrainian demands for recognition as a nation distinct from the Russians", a denial which would have consequences for Ukraine's future claims to statehood (ibid.). In fact, Muscovy's appropriation of Kievan Rus' put into question not only the existence of Ukrainians as a distinct people, but also their indigenesness to the territory where they lived.

The Muscovites became the 'real Russians' or 'Great Russians', and the Ukrainians and Belarusians were seen as "...either as a junior branch of the Russian family or as Russians corrupted by foreign influences" (Szporluk 1997b: 96). The Tsarist, Russocentric version of history therefore became a combination of Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian historical cores (Velychenko 1993: 207) fused into a 'pan-Russian' history and identity (Szporluk 1997b: 96). In imperial historiography, "...there is born the power to represent the world, yet that same power is a power to falsify, mask, and pose. The two powers are inseparable" (Taussig 1993: 43). Under tsarist rule, the cultural boundary between Russians and Ukrainians was purposefully blurred through the concept of a 'same (Russian) people'. At the same time, the relationship between the two was defined not in terms of equality but through a hierarchy (i.e. Great Russians vs. Little Russians). As the *vertical* (cultural) boundary faded, the *horizontal* (hierarchical) boundary was reinforced. While the idea of a 'same people' denied a distinct Ukrainian identity, the hierarchy emphasized Ukrainians' lack of potential for a separate existence.

An example of this denial of distinctiveness are the language restrictions formulated under the Russian Empire and brought about by a fear of separatism and

disloyalty from the part of the 'Little Russians'. In the *Valuev ukaz* or law of 1863, Minister of internal affairs Petr Valuev banned "the publication in Ukrainian of all scholarly, religious and especially pedagogical publications" (Subtelny 1994: 282), declaring that the Ukrainian language "never existed, does not exist and shall never exist" (ibid.). As for the *Ems ukaz* of 1867, it prescribed a "total ban on the import and publication of Ukrainian books" (ibid. 283). Among other things, the use of Ukrainian on stage was prohibited, newspapers were closed, and the teaching of subjects in Ukrainian in elementary school was forbidden (ibid.).

However, if Russia manipulated the boundary between itself and 'Little Russia', the Ukrainians also played an active role in defining the nature of that boundary. Indeed, as Subtelny suggests, they were the "variable factor in the relationship", their attitude to Russia oscillating between a desire for closeness and a desire for distance (Subtelny 1995: 190).

Bhabha states that:

One way of re-thinking the Empire in a post-colonial framework might be to focus on the inter-connections between the histories of 'metropolis' and 'peripheries' and refuse the simple binary of coloniser and colonised. As post-colonial theorists have argued, the projection of 'the other' is also always about repressed aspects of the self. Relations between coloniser and colonised are characterised by a deep ambivalence, 'the other' is both an object of desire and derision, of envy and contempt, with the coloniser simultaneously projecting and disavowing difference in an essentially contradictory way, asserting mastery but constantly finding it slipping away (1983, 1994 in Hall 1996: 70).

Indeed, the imperial power's temptation to conquer meets with a temptation to be conquered and to merge with that seductive new power. Ukraine's contact with Russia was no 'ordinary' conquest. As Levko Lukyanenko points out, "Ukrainians had to pay a high price for being occupied by the Mongols, the Poles and the Lithuanians. *But only the Russians invaded our souls.*" (1989; quoted in Stale 1995: 213; emphasis added). Some degree of consent indeed had to exist. In the Russified Ukrainian elite of the Tsarist period we have a perfect example of *imitation* blending with *contact* (Taussig 1993: 21). Taussig defines the mimetic faculty as "The ability to mime, and mime well, [i.e.] the capacity to Other" (1993: 19). If Russia had "slipp[ed] into Otherness" (ibid. 33) when conquering Ukraine, then some Ukrainians experienced the same with Russia, as shown by their acceptance of a 'junior brother' status, their exclusive use of Russian, their commitment to the Russian nation-building project, etc. Both peoples indeed became

culturally dependent to a point, loosing some of their boundedness. We are dealing here not with a clear dichotomy and sharply defined alterity, but with 'contagion' and mimesis.

However, we must also keep in mind the fact that throughout the relationship between Russia and Ukraine, there emerged signs of distinctiveness from the part of the Ukrainian elite. While the boundary may not have been very sharp, it was nonetheless persistently articulated, as becomes obvious when looking at Ukrainian intellectual writings under the Russian Empire. An example of this distinctiveness is the 1762 dialogue by Semen Divovych, "A Talk Between Great Russia and Little Russia", where 'Little Russia' refers to the Pereyaslav protection agreement of 1654 as a partnership of equals rather than a subordination to 'Great Russia':

Do not think that you yourself are my ruler,
But your lord and my lord in command of both of us.
And the difference between us is only in adjectives,
You the Great and I the Little live in bordering countries.
(...) we are equal and form one whole,
We swear allegiance to one, not two lords -
Thus I consider myself equal to you,
Do not say that I am subject to you as a community!
(...) you do not order me as if I were a republic.
I am in no way ranked lower by the emperor in comparison with you,
I am also left with all my ranks,
I am ensured that they will henceforth remain in force for me.
(in Lindheim and Luckyj 1996: 69-70).

The theme of Ukrainian distinctiveness is also present in an essay entitled "Two Russian nationalities" (1860), where Mykola Kostomarov, a prominent historian and writer, attempts to distinguish the 'South Russians' (Ukrainians) from the 'Great Russians' (in Lindheim and Luckyj 1996: 122). While essential differences are based on stereotypes (i.e. South Russian 'personal liberty' vs. Great Russian 'commonality'), the sharp boundaries drawn present a classifying act. The idea of a distinct Ukrainian 'mentality' or culture would gradually develop into the concept of *national* distinctiveness in the 19th century, with the development of Ukrainian literature and the impact of Herder's ideas. Distinctiveness has indeed tended to arise from the Ukrainian side rather than the Russian side. Even now, it seems as though it is the Ukrainians who are Other-oriented. In a survey of attitudes conducted in 1992, Bremmer found that "The differences between Ukrainian self- and other-stereotyping (...) tended to be much more marked in general

than that of Russians, who were more inclined to attribute similar characteristics to both themselves and Ukrainians" (1992: 5).

What then best characterizes the relationship between Ukraine and Russia? Is it *colonization* (a popular interpretation in some parts of Ukraine) or *rapprochement* (a popular theme in Russia)? In fact, both happened simultaneously, making the boundary between the two entities highly contestable. Let us now examine boundary formation in the Soviet era.

The Soviet identity legacy

Ethnicity in the Soviet Union:

In the Soviet Union, boundaries between nations were simultaneously blurred and emphasized. Marxism-Leninism "despises nationalism as an ideology which conceals class structure and mystifies the exploitation of the working class. In the future communist society both nations and states are supposed to disappear" (Mach 1993: 130). In accordance with that view, nationality in the Soviet Union was treated as "a strictly temporary phenomenon" (Zaslavsky 1993: 32), one that would disappear following the merging of all Soviet nationalities (ibid.). Two processes were associated with the official goal of fusion of the different nationalities. *Sblizhenie* means "coming closer" and was used to describe "the concept of nationalities living closer together, losing some of their distinctiveness and sense of separateness" (Henze 1985: 6). *Sliianie*, which means literally "flowing together", goes a step further and suggests the merging of the nationalities (ibid.). In fact, it was thought that the nationalities would "gradually and voluntarily shed their distinctive identities, abandon their respective languages for Russian ... and merge into a common body from which all ethnic differences will disappear -- a Russian-speaking cosmopolis" (Golhagen in Zinam 1985: 162). This 'rapprochement' (or erosion of boundaries) was to be accomplished not only through ideological measures, but also through an increased Russian presence in the periphery of the Union. Mixed marriages were also encouraged: "Soviet ethnographers used to claim that an increasing number of mixed marriages in the Soviet Union facilitated rapprochement among the ethnic groups, creating greater contact and understanding in

the most intimate social arena, the family" (Kolstoe 1999: 34). And in fact, mixed marriages gradually "rais[ed] the level of cultural homogeneity" (ibid.).

As Wanner points out, "The structure of the Soviet system constantly underline[d] nationality as it constantly undermined it" (1998: 49). While supranational homogeneity was praised, Soviet citizens also had to have an ethnic identity that was official and tied to territory (Goble 1995: 124). Stalin had indeed wanted borders and other means to be used to institutionalize ethnicity and canalize ethnic hostility (ibid.). Ethnicity or 'nationality' was therefore treated as a characteristic determined by birth (Zaslavsky 1993: 33) and was institutionalized through a system of internal passports that registered every citizen's ethnic origin (Goble 1995: 124). Ethnic identity could only exist with the permission of the state (ibid.), and the primordialist view of ethnicity and ethnic boundaries excluded multiple or transitory belongings. As Alonso states, "Ethnicity is constructed; hence, it follows that ethnicity is fluid, but this fluidity is limited by hegemonic processes of inscription and by the relations of force in society" (1994: 392).

The Soviet understanding of ethnicity fostered the emergence of stereotyped representations of ethnic and national cultures. In fact, "Ethnic identity...tended to manifest itself in the Soviet view in terms of overt cultural forms - language, dances, folklore, and such like (Bromley in Banks 1996: 21). The perpetuation of those 'frozen' cultural representations aimed at obscuring other manifestations of identity that could have promoted nationalist feelings and mobilization. For example, the officials responsible for Soviet propaganda condemned expressions of Ukrainian nationalism as essentially negative, except in its purely folkloric manifestations (Jaworsky 1998: 110). According to Kulichenko, a Soviet scholar writing on the beneficial effects of the Soviet regime on the republics: "Considerable change has occurred in customs and traditions. Those leading to national isolation, fostering national identity... Have gradually withered away. (...) In bourgeois Latvia for example, the *Ligo* festival used to have a nationalist flavor, which it no longer has" (1978: 424). Russification was added to this gradual decontextualization of nationality (Goble 1995: 125).

Under Brezhnev's leadership (1964-1982), there occurred an ideological shift toward the 'New Soviet Man'. According to Alexiev and Wimbush, the essential characteristics of this identity were the following:

This new *Homo sovieticus* will have his nationality defenses stripped away, and will come to see himself as part of an integrated multinational community of like-thinking, like-feeling peoples whose underlying motivations are not national narrow-mindedness, but 'Soviet patriotism', a higher plane of human awareness at which the commonality of interest of all peoples of the Soviet Union is taken for granted (1980: 47).

Szporluk adds, with a touch of irony, the Russification dimension of this identity construct: "The Soviet people is (...) a new historical community embracing the Russians and the non-Russians in an entity *that is not ethnic per se*, through it has certain ethnic features, for example, the Russian language as a medium of 'internationality communication' [i.e. communication between the nationalities of the Soviet Union]" (quoted in Laitin 1998: 88; emphasis added). In fact, although the Soviet Union claimed a 'supranational identity', the Russian cultural element dominated many dimensions of that identity. Anthropologist Valery Tishkov defends Soviet identity, stating that it was just another 'one people doctrine', "formulated and imposed by a multi-ethnic state" (i.e. the same kind of doctrine as could be found in Canada in the late 1960s) (1997: 86). He adds: "The problem with the 'Soviet man' doctrine was not so much the absence of socio-cultural commonality as it was the presence of the totalitarian framework and strongly ideological context for implementing this basically legitimate idea" (Tishkov 1997: 86). Ironically, this totalitarian context and the "virtual absence of civil society [in the Soviet Union] implied that the cooperation was most likely to be achieved by means of ethnic solidarity" (Khazanov in Szporluk 1997a: 83). Indeed, "...despite (and maybe because of) three-quarters of a century of 'internationalism', the instincts of knowing others' real nationalities has not eroded at all" (Laitin 1998: 192).

However, the 'Soviet Man' was not a total failure, as some have wanted to believe. The Soviet schools and armed forces succeeded to a point in their integrative mission. A popular song of the 1970s reflects the particular appeal of a denationalized 'Soviet Man': "My address isn't a house or a street. My address is the Soviet Union.... Today the individual is not important, but the result of the working day" (quoted in Wanner 1998: 49). The continued existence of a 'Soviet identity' among citizens of Russia and of other post-Soviet states after almost 10 years of independence attests to its quality as a *habitus* or "set of predispositions", to use Bourdieu's terms (1977). According to anthropologist Catherine Wanner,

...many Soviet citizens, more so than any sense of nationality, acknowledge that they have been gelded by the Soviet system. Their patterns of thinking and behavior have been shaped by the structural constraints of Soviet society (shortages, repression, and lack of dignity) and the values that the system bred in Soviet citizens (feeling of inferiority, the 'two personalities' syndrome, and sharply honed manipulative abilities)" (1998: 72).

How was Soviet identity experienced in Ukraine? Let us look at the Soviet ideology's impact on that former republic.

Ukraine in the Soviet Union

1) Soviet identity in Ukraine:

Soviet identity in Ukraine could be experienced at various levels. For some, a Soviet identification superseded ethnonational belonging, rendering it trivial. In fact, one could feel 'deeply' Soviet (or 'Soviet Slavic') and superficially Ukrainian. For example, an informant of mine⁵ (an ethnic Ukrainian born in Ukraine and now living in Montreal) recounts that while serving in the Soviet Army, he had felt "Soviet, not Ukrainian". 'Ukrainian' was simply the identity on his passport and he stated that he had no sense of Ukrainian patriotism: "You can be Soviet but born in Ukraine". The latter is an example of the partial success of Soviet ideology in de-nationalizing belonging. In fact, Wanner refers to the "pervasiveness and persistence of a Russian-based sovietized culture" in today's Ukraine (1998: 50), as well as the "continued identification with the 'imagined community' of the Soviet Union", evident both in everyday practices and in patterns of discourse (ibid.).

However, for some Ukrainians, Soviet identity was primarily an artificial construct thought to be incompatible with a national identification. As another ethnic Ukrainian informant of mine put it: "To say that I am a Soviet Man but I love Ukraine is a contradiction. To be Soviet, you had to give up your Ukrainian identity, die out of your own culture". Indeed, Ukrainian national consciousness was thought to be irreconcilable with the Soviet perception of Ukraine as 'folkloric' and 'primitive'. The Russification process was also strongly resented. For nationally conscious Ukrainians, Soviet identity could at best constitute a thin (instrumental) veneer over a deeper ethnonational identification.

2) The Role of Ukraine in the Soviet Narrative:

Since 1934, historiography in the Soviet Union was used as a 'tool of political integration' (Velychenko 1993: 207). The constructed history of this multinational state was indeed a persuasive account that justified the existing order and that was imposed through silencing resisting scholars (ibid. 208). Ukraine's and other republics' histories and distinct heritage were denied or dismissed, probably on the premise that "There can be no identity without memory" (Candau 1995: 119). This 'debasement of historiography' by Soviet historians "...involved treating non-Russian territories as integral parts of the larger Russian whole and minimizing, if not ignoring, diversity, plurality, and Russian-non-Russian conflicts in the past" (Velychenko 1993: 208).

The supposed 'historical desire for unity with Russia' of the two junior Slavic brothers (i.e. Ukraine and Belarus) became a *leitmotiv* in Soviet historiography. Since this unity had been brought about by Russia, the Russians thought of themselves as the 'leading nation' of the triumvirate. The 'desire for reunion' with Russia was presented as "...a major historical force in Ukraine's past" (Velychenko 1993: 209). This reading of history justified the assimilation of Ukrainians into the Russian nation. Indeed, it was thought that Ukrainians (or 'Little Russians') had been 'the same people' as Russians since Kievan Rus'; that Ukraine had been separated from Russia for a while because of 'foreign oppression' (e.g. Polish rule), and that Ukraine had then voluntarily been reunited with Russia (Treaty of Pereyaslav of 1654), the two becoming 'one nation' again (ibid. 213). The major differences in the historical development of Ukraine and Russia were downplayed or simply ignored. Whatever was not associated favorably with Russia (such as colonialism, Ukraine's federalist-populist political tradition, or nationalism in 1917) were dismissed as divisive anomalies (ibid. 210), largely the result of unnatural (foreign) influences (Jaworsky 1998: 109). Consequently, Russia always refused to acknowledge the tremendous Western influences (Polish, Lithuanian, Austrian, etc.) on Ukraine's history.

Most ethnic Russians and many Russified Ukrainians shared the Soviet historical narrative. In sharp contrast to this version of history stood the (underground) Ukrainian national narrative, characterized by a belief in the inherent distinctiveness of Ukraine, the latter's own politico-historical heritage (e.g. Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; Cossack

State), its desire to define itself against all imperial forces (including an important Other, Russia), and finally a wish to be part of Europe and of the World (Szporluk 1997b).

Of course, the Ukrainian narrative is as much a construction as the Soviet narrative. We are faced with two diametrically opposed (and oversimplified) national myths. While the Soviet narrative disregards cultural difference, the Ukrainian narrative disregards cultural closeness. The Ukrainian narrative draws sharp boundaries where the Soviet narrative merges and confuses. The conflicting versions of the past and the future (or destiny) are based on two opposite forces: a centripetal one (i.e. a desire to merge with Russia), and a centrifugal one (i.e. a desire to separate from Russia). It is important to keep this tension in mind when examining identity formation and resistance in Ukraine.

3) The Ukrainian Language

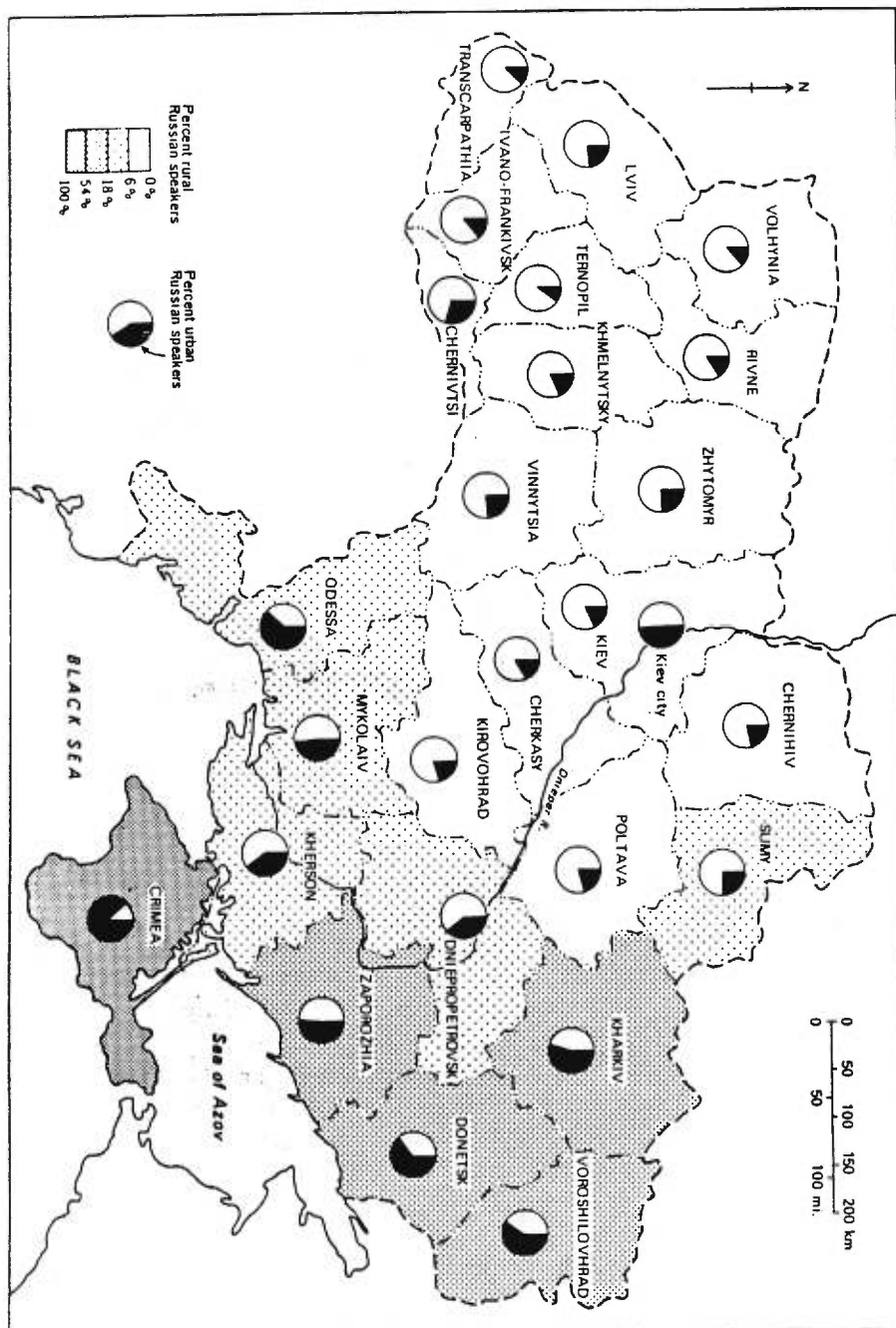
The Soviet perception of the Ukrainian language corresponded to its perception of the Ukrainian people. Indeed, Ukrainian was the 'same language' as Russian⁶, albeit an 'inferior variety', or 'dialect' corrupt by foreign influences (especially Polish). Soviet authorities treated Ukrainian as a second-class, backward, 'peasant' language (Kuzio 1998: 155). Russian was also considered to be older than Ukrainian, even though the first Ukrainian grammar appeared only 17 years after the official Russian one, in 1819 (Anderson 1991: 74).

Russian and Ukrainian were not seen as two separate languages with each their own development. Rather, Soviet authorities perceived language use in Ukraine as 'diglossic', with Ukrainian as a lower variety of the Russian language. Diglossia is when "two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play" (Ferguson 1959: 232). There is a High variety (used for high functions such as trade, high culture and contacts with state authorities) and a Low variety (used for intimacy and celebrations of folk culture) (Laitin 1998: 26). "Sometimes the feeling is so strong [of the superior status and prestige of the High variety] that H alone is regarded as real and L [the Low variety] is reported 'not to exist'" (Ferguson 1959: 237). In addition, "there is usually a belief that H [high variety] is somehow more beautiful, more logical, better able to express important thoughts, and the like" (ibid.).

Linguists have discredited the evaluation of language as more or less logical and developed: "...on purely linguistic grounds, it is quite clear that no language can be described as better or worse than another" (Edwards 1985: 18). Rather, language evaluation seems to be a question of status. Indeed, "languages have the standing that their speakers have. If the people who speak a language have power and prestige, the language they speak will enjoy high prestige as well" (Grenoble and Whaley 1998: 3). Indeed, Russian, as a "hegemonic Slavic language" (Laitin 1998: 65), enjoyed the highest prestige. Consequently, Russification was considered a noble task. Soviet ideologists claimed that in addition to fostering international friendship, cooperation and progress, "Knowledge of the Russian language enable[d] the peoples of the USSR to acquire the highest cultural values" (Subtelny 1994: 422). However, this 'enlightenment' seemingly necessitated open discrimination against national languages.

In the 1930s, under Stalin, there was systematic discrimination against the Ukrainian language and culture, considered threatening to Soviet unity. The number of Ukrainian schools diminished, literary classics in Ukrainian were taken from library shelves, Ukrainian plays were banned and theatres and museums were closed, in an effort to eradicate the "nationalist theory of the specificity of Ukraine" (in Subtelny 1994: 422). The study of Russian became obligatory in Ukrainian schools and grammar, vocabulary and even the Ukrainian alphabet were artificially drawn closer to their Russian counterparts (ibid. 423).

During the Brezhnev era, the use of Ukrainian was discouraged through more indirect pressures. Both academic and professional success depended on knowledge of Russian. Those who did not speak it were excluded from Soviet privileges, causing internal divisions within Ukraine. Indeed, Russian, the professed 'language of international communication', became a powerful tool for inclusion and exclusion. The Soviet policy of "bilingualism" was perceived by its opponents as a forced assimilation and was abolished in the eighties (Rudensky 1994: 62).



Russian-speakers in Soviet Ukraine, 1970

SOURCE: Orest Subtelny. *Ukraine: A History* (2nd edition). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.

Summary

As we have seen in this first chapter, during the Tsarist period, the Russian Empire defined symbolic boundaries with Ukraine both in terms of fusion and hierarchy. As for Ukrainians, they oscillated between compliance with imperial boundaries and a sense of inherent distinctiveness. During the Soviet period, the boundaries between nations were thought to be fleeting while subject to extremely tight control. The Soviet perception of Ukraine (reminiscent of the Tsarist one) was one in which Ukrainians were both 'the same' as Russians and yet inferior. As for Ukrainians, while some identified with a (Russian-infused) Soviet identity, others felt exclusively Ukrainian. Let us now turn to a more in-depth analysis of identity formation in present-day Ukraine.

CHAPTER 2

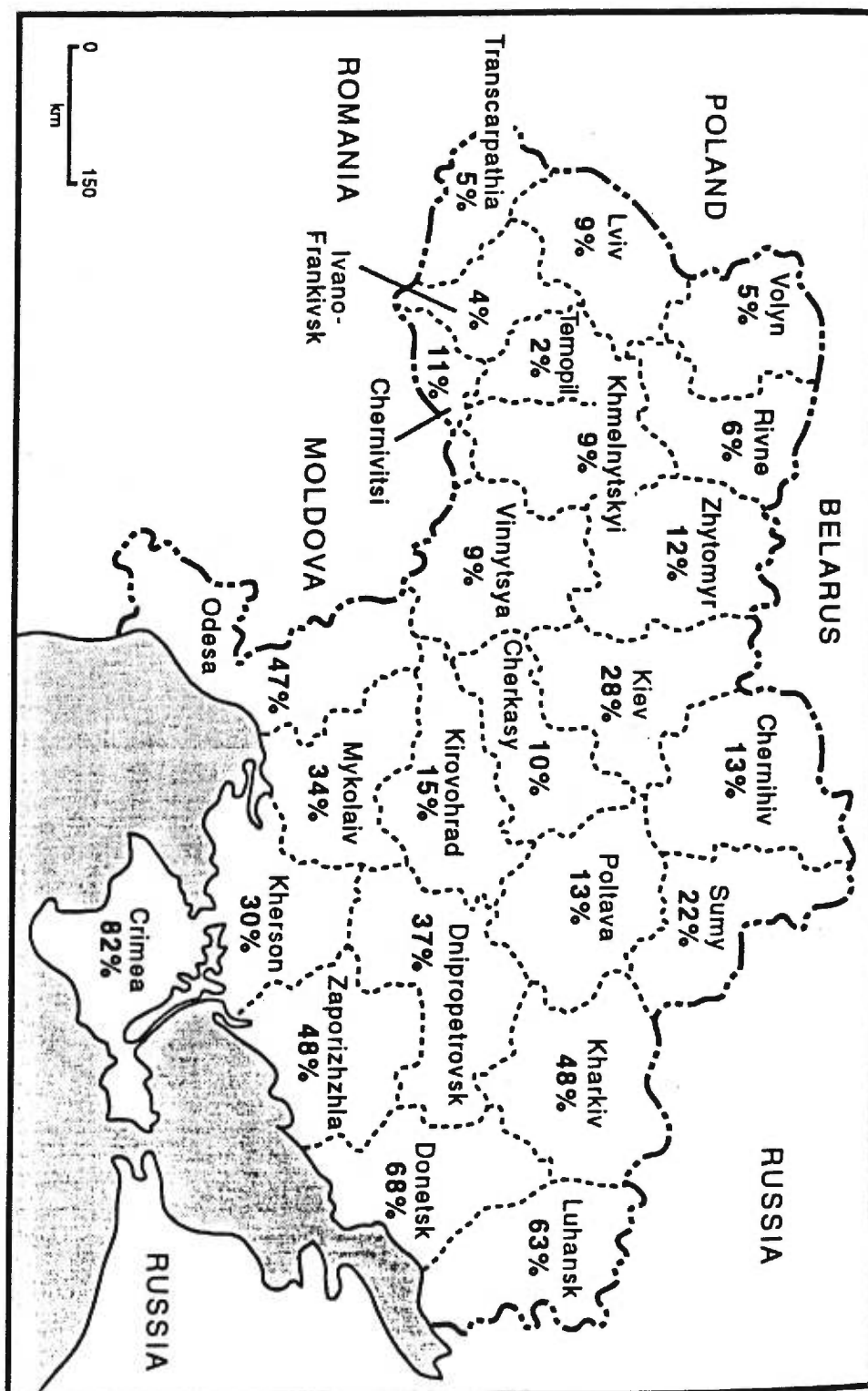
IDENTITIES IN TRANSITION

Language and identity in Ukraine

Today, Ukraine is perceived as having "varying degrees of national consciousness" because "the Ukrainian national psyche has been marked by a mixture of loyalties traditionally found among subject peoples in multinational empires" (Kuzio 1995: 14). In fact, according to Kuzio, while some two-thirds of the population of Ukraine can be said to be 'nationally conscious', both regional and supranational identities are widespread among the remainder of the population (1998: 152). For example, in the regions with a long history of Tsarist and Soviet rule, self-identification as 'Slavic' or 'Soviet' (i.e. supranational identities) is commonplace, both among the ethnic Ukrainian population, the ethnic Russian population, and the ethnically mixed population. As well, in Ukrainian-Russian border regions, a "Russian-Ukrainian cultural identity" is not uncommon (Kuzio 1995: 14).

In addition, language use cuts across the various identities found in Ukraine. The variety of patterns in language use (i.e. unilinguism, bilingualism, mixed use, etc.), as well as the politically charged question of the correspondence or lack thereof between language use and ethnonational belonging complicate the assessment of who speaks which language. However, it is fair to say that Ukraine's rural areas (largely unaffected by Russification), tend to be Ukrainian-speaking, and that Russian is used mostly in the urban centers of eastern and southern Ukraine, where a majority of the population is bilingual. While most Ukrainian citizens (60% according^{to} the 1989 Soviet census and 83% according to a 1996 survey) have Ukrainian as a *native language* (Kuzio 1998: 171), it is thought that more than half (56.1%) of all adults in Ukraine use Russian for *day-to-day communication* (Khmelko and Wilson 1998: 74).

Who qualifies as a 'Russophone'? This term requires a narrower definition. "The term 'Russophones' covers all those members of society who *regard Russian as their mother tongue* or who use Russian as their daily language of communication, *privately* and professionally" (Kolstoe 1999: 23; emphasis added). According to that definition,



UKRAINE with % of Russian-speakers by oblast, 1989

SOURCE: Paul Kolstoe. *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.

those individuals who consider Ukrainian to be their mother tongue (or native language) or who use Ukrainian at home would not qualify as 'Russophones'.

I will explore two identity categories that fall under the umbrella of 'Russophones' in Ukraine. The first group is the ethnic Russians, and the second group is the Russophone ethnic Ukrainians. Both groups present some shared linguistic patterns, as well as some degree of hybridity. In fact, the categories of Russian and Russophone Ukrainian often bleed into each other. However, those two groups can also differ in important ways, for example in terms of loyalty. For the sake of this analysis, I will examine them separately. My goal is to understand how the configuration of those identities affects the language debate in Ukraine.

Ethnic Russians

The Russian population in Ukraine

According to the Soviet census of 1989, ethnic Russians constitute 22% of the total population of Ukraine. The Russians are concentrated mainly in Eastern and Southern Ukraine.

The presence of a great number of Russians on Ukrainian territory is due not only to the overlap of nations around border areas, but also to planned waves of immigration that were aimed at consolidating Russian imperial power over its newly acquired, ethnically distinct territories. In fact, the "close interrelationship between state expansion and migration [is] an outstanding feature [in Russian history]" (Kliuchevskii in Kolstoe 1995: 19). The Partitions of Poland of the late 18th century brought most of the West Bank of the Dniepr (now the Western part of Ukraine) under Russian rule (the East Bank had been acquired through the Treaty of Pereyaslav of 1654) (Kolstoe 1995: 21). However, Russian authorities, fearing disloyalty from the restive ethnic periphery, decided that the borderland should be russified (ibid. 25). Indeed, Empress of Russia Catherine II wrote in 1764 that Ukraine, the Baltic provinces and Smolensk should russify "and cease to look like wolves in the forest" (in Laitin 1998: 39). The term 'Russification' refers to "the degree to which Russian language and culture replaced and dissolved the indigenous *language* or *culture*, with or without official encouragement" (Ponton 1994: 163).

Ukraine: Areas of Russian Concentration

SOURCE: Adapted from Jeff Chinn and Robert Kaiser. *Russians as the New Minority: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996.

As for the Soviet period, it was characterized by much more intensive colonization, especially in the 1930s to the 50s, when Russians were encouraged to emigrate massively to potential industrial centers in the periphery (Rudensky 1994: 62). The increased Russian presence in Ukraine brought upon by this movement succeeded in assimilating and homogenizing Ukraine's eastern periphery, thereby 'stretching' the Russian border within Ukraine.

Do Russians in Ukraine constitute a 'diaspora'?

The use of the term 'diaspora' to describe the Russian population outside of Russia⁷ is widespread in the political science literature. Some authors have questioned the relevance of that term to describe Russians in the post-Soviet republics. Kolstoe admits that the concept of a 'Russian diaspora' seems somewhat paradoxical and suggest that the Russians outside of Russia could be better described as "an outpost of a dominant group" (1995: 3). The expression 'new Russian diaspora' (see Aasland 1994, Kolstoe 1995) is an attempt to qualify the term by emphasizing the fact that the Russian population found itself outside of extended Russian boundaries only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the same vein, Laitin (1998) uses the term 'beached diaspora' to describe that population. To my knowledge, the issue of Russian populations as 'diasporas' has not made the object of an anthropological analysis. I will explore the relevance of this label for the Russian population in Ukraine. Let us first have a look at some of the features of diasporas.

In his article "Diasporas", anthropologist James Clifford states that although some diasporic practices are found in borderlands (i.e. what Ukraine and other post-Soviet states are in relation to Russia), "diasporas usually presuppose longer distances and a separation more like exile: a constitutive taboo on return, or its postponement to a remote future" (1994: 304). Exile to a remote location, according to Clifford, is therefore a major characteristic of diasporas. Exile also presupposes the awareness of crossing a boundary of some sort, of being uprooted from a particularly meaningful space. In fact, a diaspora is characterized by a "shared, ongoing history of displacement" (Clifford 1994: 306).

The Russians moving towards the periphery of the Russian Empire (e.g. to the province of 'Little Russia') did not experience a sense of radical discontinuity. Similarly,

this sort of movement during the Soviet period was considered, at most, internal migration. What was imagined was a territorial (imperial) continuity. Indeed, as a Russian who now lives in Latvia states: "I did not move [from Russia] to Latvia, I went to the Soviet Union" (Dunlop in Laitin 1998: 316). Accordingly, Russian settlers felt 'at home' in places like Ukraine: "As for the Russians in Ukraine, they did not perceive themselves as 'outsiders' or 'foreigners' on most of this territory [...] since the Russian language and culture dominated most of Ukraine" (Jaworsky 1998: 114).

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought with it a radical reconfiguration of space. Ukraine's independence meant that "... what used to be internal borders were elevated to the status of international borders" (Kolstoe 1995: 301). It was indeed the borders that moved, not the people. Russians suddenly became "a diaspora ... without any feeling of ever having emigrated" (Aasland 1996: 477). Laitin also refers to Russians as a diaspora, "although, since they acquired that status because the borders of the Soviet Union receded, rather than because they dispersed from their homeland, it is perhaps better to think of them as a *beached diaspora*" (Laitin 1998: 29; emphasis added). What Russians in Ukraine must deal with is the overlap of the historical space of the Former Soviet Union with a newly bounded Ukraine. The Soviet space contains the memory of vastness and of transgressed, eroded boundaries. Now, the appearance of national borders has shrunk the space of self-identification dramatically. (It is therefore not surprising that some people still cling to a former entity of belonging through self-identification as 'Soviet').

Would Russians outside of Russia qualify as a diaspora *after* the Collapse? Let us examine other main features of diaspora as defined by Safran. These include: "'expatriate minority communities' ... that maintain a memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland ... that see the ancestral home as a place of eventual return ...[and whose] consciousness and solidarity are 'importantly defined' by this continuing relationship with the homeland" (in Clifford 1994: 305). Does this kind of relationship now exist between the Russians abroad and Russia? According to Kuzio, most Russians, at least in the eastern part of Ukraine, do not consider Russia to be their homeland (1998: 80). There is therefore an absence of nostalgia toward Russia *within its present borders*. In fact, most Russians in Ukraine have Ukrainian citizenship and many consider themselves Russians

of *Ukraine*. This hybridity in identification redefines the Russians' relationship with Russia in more ambiguous terms. As well, only a small percentage of the Russian population of Ukraine has returned to Russia after the Collapse of the Soviet Union (Pilkington 1998: 9), which is indicative of some attachment to Ukrainian territory.

Another feature of diaspora populations is that they "believe that they are not - and perhaps cannot - be fully accepted by their host country" (Safran in Clifford 1994: 304). The other side of the coin is that those populations then tend to resist assimilation, that is, they may want to exclude themselves from the host country in order to preserve certain valued particularities. Diaspora communities, as populations with "historical roots and destinies outside the time/space of the host nation", are in a sense "not here' to stay" (Clifford 1994: 311). Rather than attempting to integrate into the host country, members of a diaspora focus on preserving their culture in view of an eventual return.

Are the Russians in Ukraine holding on to an 'uncontaminated' Russian culture? Many Russians have integrated culturally (and some linguistically) to the Ukrainian context. In fact, as mentioned above, a hybrid identity (Russian of Ukraine) is common. A reason for that hybridity is perhaps that within the Soviet republics, there was no keenly felt need to preserve Russian culture since it was dominant. This reliance on the privileged status of Russian culture may actually have brought a certain complacency, which in turn resulted in a high degree of cultural intermixture. In regions such as Eastern Ukraine, the symbolic boundaries between Russians and Ukrainians indeed tend to be blurry, and ethnic awareness among both groups is generally quite low (Kuzio 1998: 74). This ethnic ambiguity, or hybridity, contradicts the notion of Russians as a diaspora wishing to remain uncontaminated by the local culture.

However, there are also those Russians who resist integration into post-independence Ukraine. That resistance may be due in part to a sudden loss of status (i.e. from 'leading nation' to 'national minority') among Russians in the post-Soviet space. This is complemented by a belief (cultivated by Soviet authorities) in the inferior status of Ukrainian culture and its detrimental effect on Russian culture. However, the attempt to cultivate a purely ethnic, 'undiluted' Russian culture (Kolstoe 1999: 25) is not usually combined with a desire to return to Russia. In fact, those advocates of an ethnic Russian culture want the latter to have special status (as it used to) *in Ukraine*. They tend to

believe that Ukraine is a 'bicultural state' and are in favor of having Russian as a second official language in Ukraine. In fact, their culture's 'special status' would exempt them from assimilation into Ukrainian society.

That brings us to the following question: do Russians *want* to be a diaspora? The diaspora label, with its connotation of 'neither here nor there' (i.e. the feeling of being 'cut loose' from Russia while not belonging to Ukraine either) may not be what Russians wish to be identified with (Kolstoe 1995: 4). In fact, some Russians whose ancestors have lived on Ukrainian territory for centuries often consider themselves *indigenous* to Ukraine, a complete contradiction to a *diasporic* identification. This self-proclaimed indigenesness (based on the perception that Ukraine was in fact Russia)⁸ is, in turn, often used to support claims for a 'special status' for Russians in Ukraine, including the use of Russian as an official language.

We have seen that Russians in Ukraine lack some of the main features of diasporic communities such as displacement, strong orientation to the homeland, preservation of own culture, and even self-labeling as a 'diaspora'⁹. Conceptualizing Russians in Ukraine as a 'diaspora' not only overlooks the complexity of self-identification, but also leads to mistaken expectations regarding that population's behavior. For example, features of diaspora such as strong cultural retention and sharp boundaries with the host population would suggest the possibility of ethnic mobilization and perhaps even conflict. However, the nature of Russian identity must be explored in depth before such assumptions can be made. This is what I propose to do in the next section.

The Nature of Russian identity

Before examining the Russian population in Ukraine, it is important to look at the sources of Russian identity.

According to Szporluk, Russians did not have a real opportunity to develop a *national* identity because the imperial project constantly undermined a national project (1997a: 66). Indeed, while serving "the great cause' of the Empire, Russians found it difficult to establish for themselves a political identity distinct from and independent of empire" (ibid.). Hosking states that while "Britain *had* an empire, (...) Russia *was* an

empire - and perhaps still is (in Szporluk 1997a: 70). Russia's territorial "overextension" (ibid. 78) not only weakened it but obscured its definition in such a way that "No one knew where Russia proper ended and where 'Empire' began" (ibid. 71). According to Szporluk, the Collapse of the Soviet Union (a result of the "conflict between imperial state and emergent Russian nation") occurred before a modern Russian national identity could be formed (ibid. 65).

The Soviet era's "overextension" in terms of identity took the form of 'internationalism' (Szporluk 1997a: 78). The Soviet attempt to build a *supranational* identity without having built a national one further obscured the location of Russian identity (ibid.). In fact, Russian identity has developed into an amalgam where elements borrowed or appropriated from others are absorbed in such a way as to mystify what does and does not belong to Russians. In that respect, the 'secession' of Russia from the Soviet Union was revealing. An emergent Russian nation was indeed trying to free itself of the parasitical impact of empire. According to Tishkov, Russians had indeed experienced a 'loss of roots' because Soviet culture had alienated them from their traditional folk culture (1997: 87). He adds: "What was considered Russification by the non-Russian intellectuals meant 'Sovietization' for Russian nationalists" (ibid.).

How can the Russian and Soviet identities be untangled? How can Russia transcend its imperial legacy? For some, this step appears impossible. According to Russian opposition leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (a perfect example of what Szporluk would call an "empire-saver"), without an empire, "the Russians will become, everywhere, a national minority being slowly annihilated... It will be a slow assassination of the Russian nation, *because there is no purely Russian territory*" (1992, in Simonsen 1996: 187; emphasis added).

The Russian Federation itself is ethnically mixed, with 82% of ethnic Russians. Indeed, Tishkov states that "Russia is not a 'national state' of ethnic Russians" (1997: 260). He claims that there is a difference between two terms both translated as "Russian" in English: *russkie* and *rossiyanе*. Tishkov states that *russkie* has ethnic connotations, and proposes the use of *rossiyanе* as a more inclusive political identity based on territory (ibid.). However, he admits that: "it is not difficult to interpret [the idea of an inclusive

identity] as a cover for Russian chauvinism or for the discredited slogan of 'merging Soviet nations'" (Tishkov 1997: 266).

There is disagreement over how to define the terms *russkie* and *rossianye*. Former Russian opposition leader Barkashov, in his program of 1996, "define[d] *russkie* as representatives of 'the three Russian peoples' - Great Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians. *Rossiyan*, on the other hand, are the 'non-Slav core peoples of Russia, for whom protection and acknowledgement of Russia had become a historical tradition and Russia is the only Fatherland'" (in Simonsen 1996: 35). So according to some, the *russkie* category itself has a multinational composition, drawn from the concept of the three Slavic brothers as forming 'one people'. As former Russian opposition leader Aleksandr Lebed stated: "What are they, the Belorussians, Ukrainians, Russians? - Slavs, people of one root, as well as one language. We understand each other without an interpreter. We are all part of the same fate and the same faith" (1994, in Simonsen 1996: 70). It would seem that Russian identity finds itself vulnerable without the Ukrainian and Belarusian components, or *alter egos*, as we have defined them in the section on Russian imperialism. This insecurity is very often expressed in territorial terms: Amangel'dy Tuleev, now Russian opposition leader, justified his desire for the restoration of the Soviet Union thus:

Through my own life experience I have come to the conclusion that I cannot live like it is now. There is no place for me to live until I can reintegrate Russia, Kazakhstan [about half of its population is ethnic Russian], Ukraine, Belorussia. For me, as an individual, today's situation is the end of everything. And there are millions, about thirty millions, of people such as myself. Who have mixed blood, mixed marriages and mixed children (1994, in Tishkov 1997: 252).

This particular statement brings not merely an imperial (expansionist) motif, but also the question of *hybridity* as an essential concept for self-understanding and self-identification. This is what I wish to explore in the next section.

Russians in the 'Near Abroad'

According to Laitin, "we should be able to observe trends in Russian nationalism in Russia that are distinct from the trends of nationalism in the near abroad [i.e. in the non-Russian post-Soviet republics]" (1998: 301). As a more 'ethnic' nationalism is thought to be characteristic of Russians in Russia, an 'international' (or 'empire-

conscious') nationalism is thought to be characteristic of Russians in the former Soviet republics (ibid. 308).

Indeed, 'Russian-ness' in Russia (although it may also possess 'international' characteristics) is certainly distinct from Russian-ness abroad. This may be merely the result of a different tie to the land, i.e. what anthropologist Hilary Pilkington calls the 'blood and soil' disjunction experienced by Russian outside of Russia (1998: 194). This difference between Russians in Russia and Russians abroad is often overlooked by both Russian politicians in Russia, (who seem ^{to} take for granted the 'sameness' of Russians in the 'Near Abroad'), and by some Russians outside of Russia, who may think that they share a same culture, language and worldview with their 'motherland'.

Pilkington has studied Russians living in the former Soviet republics who have returned to Russia after the Collapse. The returnees immediately realized that they were different from the Russians in Russia: "Although we are Russians [*russkie*], we are not *the same kind of Russians* that live here" (in Pilkington 1998: 191; emphasis added). The Russian language itself was found to be different: "...we don't even understand the Russians. When we arrived the first time, we could not understand the Russians, how they speak, the language... They don't understand us, and we don't understand them" (ibid. 193). More telling was the following statement about belonging: "Here we are not Russians [*russkie*], we are Kyrgyz. In Kirgiziia [*sic*] we were Russians but in Russia we are not Russians" (ibid. 197). While labelled 'Russians' in Kyrgyzstan, the returnees were labelled 'Kyrgyz' (i.e. not *real* Russians) in Russia.

This brings us to the above-mentioned notion of hybridity. "In recent years a number of researchers have concluded that the high degree of *cultural cross-fertilization between the Russians and the local peoples* on the outskirts of the Russian state over the centuries has led to the creation of separate Russian communities on the periphery that are clearly distinguishable from the core group" (Kolstoe 1999: 40; emphasis added). Although some degree of hybridity had already developed under the Russian Empire, Soviet internationalism (i.e. the goal of 'fusion of all peoples') confirmed and promoted it. In fact, "for Russians in the former republics [the 'Soviet people'] was not an empty ideological shell but a lived reality, and an *ethnically exclusive sense of Russianness* is uncommon among forced migrants [returnees to Russia from the newly independent

states]" (Pilkington 1998: 193; emphasis added). For example, Russians who had settled in Azerbaijan often claimed that they were 'something in between Azerbaijanis and Russians' (Lebedeva in Pilkington 1998: 192). In accordance with Soviet internationalism, hybridity was even thought to be beneficial to national identity: "A nation can't live on its own. You need some kind of mix ... Each nation takes something from another ... and the result is something better, because each takes the best from the other nation ... But alone, for example, the Russian nation, what can they get from one another?" (ibid. 193). It is no wonder that an all-encompassing 'Soviet' identity continues to be meaningful to returnees (ibid. 194).

Pilkington points to evidence for "viewing the essence of collective identity [among returnees] as being rooted in 'cultural hybridity', *rather than* imperial consciousness" (1998: 191; emphasis added). However, I believe that in this case, *hybridity and imperial consciousness cannot be dissociated as sources of collective identity*. Indeed, we are dealing with a special kind of hybridity (or 'internationalism') in which the Russian element is dominant. The Russians in the 'Near Abroad' tended to perceive their mission as being the dissemination of higher culture and civilization to the 'less developed' nations. This 'elder brother'/'colonizer' complex is apparent in statements by Russians who lived in the non-Russian republics: "The Russians taught them [the Tajiks] to make jam, to preserve fruit for the winter, they couldn't do anything. They were very backward, savage, a savage people" (quoted in Pilkington 1998: 187). Or "The Kazhaks are not all bad, among them there are good people who understand that the Russians leaving ...[means] the brains are leaving ...there will be nobody to teach the students" (ibid.). Similarly, I heard recent Russian immigrants to Canada from Latvia state: "We Russians built everything there [in Latvia] and now they don't want us anymore." Amidst the hybridity and 'Friendship of peoples of the Union' lay a clear hierarchy. The Collapse of the Soviet Union brought a reversal of the colonizer/colonized hierarchy as well as a reframing of hybridity. Indeed, the Russian hybrid identity found that some of its constituting 'international' elements were being quickly reappropriated by the emerging national elites. Russian identity risked being left only with what those others *were not*.

Russians in Ukraine

Many scholars see Ukraine as a 'bi-ethnic' or 'bi-national' state of Russians and Ukrainians. However, this clear-cut perception overlooks the fluidity of self-identification in Ukraine (Wanner, forthcoming). According to Kuzio, two thirds of the citizens of Ukraine are 'nationally-conscious' while a third has no clear ethnic identity, either Russian or Ukrainian (1998: 152). The latter segment of the population is found mostly in eastern and southern Ukraine, where identities are "a mixture of local, east Slavic and Soviet" (Kuzio 1998: 73). Russians in Eastern Ukraine tend to have a *cultural* rather than an ethnic or national identification as 'Russians'. This lack of national identification affects their relationship with Russia. In fact, "only a small minority of Russians in Eastern Ukraine regard Russia as their 'homeland'" (Kuzio 1998: 80). A poll conducted in Ukraine in 1990-91 showed that "75 per cent of Russians in Ukraine no longer identified with the Russian nation" (ibid. 92). This is not surprising since "...there has never been a Russian nation-state, and a notion of 'Russianness' as a nationality never had a state apparatus that consistently promoted it" (Laitin 1998: 191). What was promoted was a territorial/imperial identity (based on the idea of 'Russia' in its Tsarist and then Soviet borders) rather than an ethnic or national identity. Attachment to the former empire as an entity of belonging is therefore commonplace.

As we have seen, Russians in the former periphery of the Empire have evolved through 'cross-fertilization'. Similarly, the Russians in Ukraine are 'Russians of Ukraine', their identity a mixture of Russian cultural elements (e.g. the Russian language) and Ukrainian territorial affiliation. For example, Kuzio states that the majority of Russians living in the Donbas [the easternmost part of Ukraine] are 'locals' "who have gone native and intermarried" (1998: 83). In border regions, identity categories often blend into one another. "Linguistic, religious or cultural markers of separate identity between Ukrainians or Russians in eastern-southern Ukraine do not therefore really exist" (ibid. 74). And indeed, neither Russians nor Ukrainians can develop a distinct *ethnic* identity if they have no Other to define themselves against. The notion of a 'same (Russian) people' is a lived reality in some regions of Ukraine.

What is the role of *language* in Russian identity? Language is often understood as "an emblem of groupness, as a symbol, and as a rallying point" (Edwards 1985: 17). It

can also be a marker of cultural uniqueness in general, and of ethnic or national identity in particular. Indeed, according to Kedourie (1961), the linguistic criterion is essential in distinguishing one nation from another (in Edwards 1985: 11). However, in regions such as Eastern Ukraine, Russian is widely used by both Ukrainians and Russians, and cannot therefore become the exclusive marker of a Russian ethnic identity. Rather, it is a marker of an extended Slavic, or even Soviet identity. As a 'language of inter-republican communication', Russian could be used throughout the USSR, giving its speakers a sense of imperial 'mastery' over space (Laitin 1998: 165). Indeed, there was a Soviet saying that "With Russian one can travel through 1/6th of the earth's dry land". In Ukraine, and especially in the regions where identity is defined primarily in cultural and linguistic terms, the Russian language is often thought to delineate an overextended Russian identity (i.e. the 'Russian-speakers') comprised of the 'Great Russians' and 'Little Russians'. To define the Russian language as that of the 'ethnic Russian minority' is therefore to undermine both its prestige and its role as a marker of imperial hybridity.

The Russian population and the State

As we have seen, the nation-building process in a post-colonial setting requires the construction of an essential Other. For a nation to emerge from a colonial context, it needs, in addition to a physical separation from the Empire, a *psychological* dissociation from the latter. This process is especially important where boundaries are blurry due to extensive cultural contamination. In Ukraine, there seems to be a need to *disentangle* Russian and Ukrainian identities (Kuzio 1998: 154). While this may not be good, it is felt to be essential. Indeed, "Self-appointed boundary-keepers arise to redefine [identity] categories so that rules of inclusion and exclusion, as well as the behavioral implications of belonging to this or that category, can be clarified" (Laitin 1998: 16).

In the post-Soviet states, there is a widespread perception of the Russian population as inherently disloyal, i.e. a 'fifth column'. While the Russians' links with Russian are often emphasized as a proof of disloyalty, one should be careful about "essentializing of the connection between Russians in the near abroad and their 'historical homeland' [and] the (nationalist) political projects which might be seen to accompany it" (Pilkington 1998: 195). Another (reductive) label apposed to Russian populations is that

of 'ethnonational minority'. This label is especially confusing when applied to populations that have no experience of either the 'ethnic' or the 'minority' status. Let us examine those labels separately:

1) Russians as an '*ethnic group*':

According to Kolstoe, rather than downplaying the importance of ethnicity and moving to a more political conception of nation, some authorities in the post-Soviet states attempt to "resuscitate half-forgotten ethnic identities and trigger ethnic revivals among both the titulars and the nontitulars", a course called "multiple re-ethnification", to borrow Holmes-Hansen's term (in Kolstoe 1999: 304). Could Ukrainian state authorities also be engaged in the course of ethnicizing major groups in Ukraine, i.e. wanting to fit Russians into a concentrated, bounded minority while also hoping for an ethnic revival among (Russified) ethnic Ukrainians? I would argue about Ukraine (it may apply to other contexts too) that the more advanced the nation-building process, the more groups are imagined in clear-cut terms, their identities congealed and brought to a 'stable' form. The specific identity configurations (involving language, hybrid imperial elements, etc.) are overlooked.

Russians in Ukraine are "unaccustomed to defining themselves in ethnic terms" (Kuzio 1998: 92). For them, a lack of 'national' or even ethnic belonging was always the case, as we have seen. Now, confronted to state-imposed *ethnic* identification, can the Russians relinquish their culture-and-language-based identity? That is undoubtedly very challenging since it requires them to give up their overextended identity (i.e. a 'Slavic' identity that includes Ukrainians) for an exclusive Russian ethnic identity.

By constraining the choices of collective identity, the Ukrainian national discourse can also provoke resistance among the Russian population, thereby sharpening the boundaries between groups and leading that population to an ethnic reidentification. Indeed, ethnicity can emerge as a form of solidarity against the nationalism of the majority, including its discriminatory expressions. As Laitin states, "...strategies of exclusion and inclusion by dominant cultural groups in a society tend to foster *reactive identities*" (1998: 13; emphasis added). In an effort to 'fight fire with fire', the Russian population may develop an *ethnonational* reactive identity.

2) Russians as a 'minority':

While Russians are a numerical minority in many post-Soviet states, their experience is more that of a 'psychological majority' within those former republics since tsarist and Soviet policies guaranteed the satisfaction of their cultural and educational needs (Jaworsky 1998: 108). The Russian population that lives mostly in eastern and southern Ukraine has never perceived itself as a minority, considering "Ukraine's normal condition to be that it is part of Russia" (Szporluk 1997b: 87). Indeed, Russians in Ukraine "did not, prior to Ukraine's independence, consider themselves to be a minority with a clear corporate identity" (Jaworsky 1998: 114). If Russians were a *numerical* minority, they were a *dominant* one. Indeed, "A demographic minority may be economically, politically and culturally dominant" (Chinn and Kaiser 1996: 15).

It is difficult to perceive one's group as a 'minority' when this label is associated with a radical decline in prestige. Zhirinovskiy put it into more existential terms, declaring that without an empire "the Russians will become, everywhere, a national minority being slowly annihilated... It will be a slow assassination of the Russian nation" (1992, in Simonsen 1996: 187). Must we conclude from this statement that the only possible form for Russian identity is 'overextension'? This 'inclusive', 'Russian-speaking' identity is not acknowledged by the Ukrainian state. In fact, while the majority of Ukrainian nation-builders do not want to exclude an ethnic Russian minority from their *state* (that is, the Russians' civic rights *as a minority* are guaranteed by the Ukrainian Constitution), they do want to exclude Russians from their *nation*, that is, they do not subscribe to the 'same (Russian) people' doctrine (the latter often expressed in terms of a 'Russophone' culture and loyalty that comprises both ethnic Russians and ethnic Ukrainians). If the Russian population refuses to accept a minority status, then it cannot voice its demands as such. The result is self-exclusion from the democratic process.

Russophone ethnic Ukrainians

Conceptualizing hybridity

Anthropologist Catherine Wanner defines the so-called 'Russified Ukrainians' thus:

The blending of cultural influences, coerced and otherwise, have bred this category, which is believed to include at least one third of the Ukrainian population [...] The term

[Russified Ukrainians] loosely refers to someone who is ethnically Ukrainian but who speaks Russian. Yet, some Russified Ukrainians have a cultural repertoire that is entirely binational. It also refers to someone who is Ukrainian in political terms, i.e. supports Ukrainian independence, and Russian in cultural terms, i.e. uses Russian as a primary language. Survey data shows that a majority of Russified Ukrainians support independence and advocate a 'pro-Russian' political orientation in foreign affairs and formal recognition of Russian as a state language (Wanner, forthcoming).

What we have here is an identity that is *ethnically* Ukrainian but comprises a Russian *linguistic* (and in some cases cultural) component as well. Some 'Russified Ukrainians' (especially those born of mixed marriages) may have a Russian-Ukrainian identity and be 'fluent' in both cultural repertoires. In terms of loyalty, there is variation, as a Russified Ukrainian may be pro-Ukraine in certain aspects, and pro-Russian in others.

The existence of that group mainly in (urban) southern and eastern Ukraine is the result of contact with and imitation of the Russian element. The vagueness of the category is due in part to the fact that there are types and degrees of Russification. Russification, as I mentioned earlier, could be the result of contact and/or the result of assimilating state policies. The variation in those factors allowed individuals to combine them and integrate them into a coherent identity. Fischer suggests that American identities are the result of the conscious and unconscious juxtaposition of two or more cultural traditions (1986: 201). One could also claim that for Russophone Ukrainians, identity "...is a process of inter-reference between two (...) cultural traditions" (ibid.).

In fact, "Some have portrayed Russified Ukrainian culture as a 'Creole culture', harnessing the associations of indigenous cultures merging with imposed Imperial cultures" (Wanner, forthcoming). Drummond, in his article "The Cultural Continuum: A Theory of Intersystems", suggests that in a polyethnic and post-colonial context such as Guyana, identity is negotiated along a *continuum* between the stereotyped poles of 'colonizer' and 'colonized'. The creole group has a range of acceptable behavior (i.e. a choice of symbols along the continuum) by which it may represent both itself *and* the former colonial power (Drummond 1980: 356). Different elements of different cultures are stressed at different times. The overlap in distinct cultural codes blurs the boundary between cultures (i.e. the boundary is not a line, but a continuum) (Drummond 1980: 354).

In Ukraine, many Russophone Ukrainians believe that they are part of a *Slavic* continuum. Indeed, the relation between Russians and Ukrainians is imagined not as a dichotomy but as the (at least partial) overlap of two cultural pools of meaning. Accordingly, the synthesis of elements (either conscious or unconscious) is not felt as being paradoxical.

'Little Russianism'

As we have seen, there is tremendous variation in national awareness and loyalty among Russophone Ukrainians. However, Ukrainian nation-builders tend to perceive the latter, rather unfairly, as 'Little Russians'. The 'Little Russian complex' is "a Ukrainian inferiority complex *vis-à-vis* Russian, its language and culture" (Kuzio 1998: 155). Typical of colonial societies, it is an internalization of imperial narratives promoting the colonized's inadequacy. Indeed, "Little Russians have accepted and internalised the view held by a majority of Russians that Ukrainians and Belarusians are not separate ethnic groups who can create independent states based on a historical past different to Russia's" (Kuzio 1998: 156). (It is this lack of national awareness that makes nation-builders fear for Ukraine's independence.) In fact, 'Little Russians' accept not only the 'same people' doctrine, but also the clear hierarchical boundary that separates them from Russians, even though they may be assimilated to the Russian language and culture.

The role of language in identity

Although many Ukrainians are bilingual, a major trait of Russophone Ukrainians is their exclusive use of Russian in both the public and private spheres. The abandonment of Ukrainian was often the result of an accommodation to Russification policies. For example, the switch to Russian in the Soviet period could bring social mobility and privileges. As well, the use of Russian brought participation into the more encompassing (and prestigious) 'Slavic' identity.

Through their language use, Russophone Ukrainians have blurred the boundary between Russians and Ukrainians. They are now considered by some Ukrainian nationalists to be 'traitors' to their own nation because they gave up an 'essential' marker of national identity, i.e. their language. They may also be perceived, in a more

paternalistic fashion, as being somehow incomplete or in need of redressing: "The notion that for a Ukrainian, Ukrainian is 'his' language suggests that he is not fulfilled as a person until he recognises his 'real' identity and is doomed as an individual unless he develops the language skills to become his real self" (Laitin 1998: 10).

Those perceptions are based on old assumptions about the link between nationalism and language, or rather the "almost mystical connection between nation and language" found in German Romanticism (Edwards 1985: 13). Benedict Anderson speaks of the nation as "a community imagined through language" (1991: 146), and indeed, historically, Ukraine's national borders have been imagined according to the territory where Ukrainian dialects were spoken. In addition, "Language establishes most effectively the 'natural' limits of a nationality. It distinguishes between native and alien" (Subtelny 1994: 229). The language draws 'audible' boundaries that are maintained through intimacy, as the language functions "as a vehicle for concealment, secrecy and fiction" (Edwards 1985: 16), "maintain[ing] inviolate the group's own grasp of the world" (ibid. 17). (My guess is that for many Russophone Ukrainians, Russian has become a language of intimacy, a structure for feeling. This role would account for the political pressure exerted for its maintenance.) Language is considered to be closely tied to national consciousness, as expressed in the preamble to the 1992 Latvian language law: "One of the prerequisites for the existence of the Latvian nation and for the preservation of its culture is the Latvian language" (in Kolstoe 1999: 297).

However, it is not necessarily true that "the same identity prevails where and as long as the same language is spoken" (Tabouret-Keller 1997: 319). In fact, there may be a fusion *or a disjunction* between language and identity (ibid. 323; emphasis added). Edwards states about ethnic and national contexts that "although we can say that language can be an extremely important feature of identity, we cannot endorse the view that a given language is essential for identity maintenance" (1985: 22). In Ireland for example, speaking Gaelic is not a necessary condition for having an Irish national identity (ibid. 18). Similarly, in Ukraine it is common to encounter ethnic Ukrainians who, while they do not speak Ukrainian, consider themselves proud Ukrainians. The language that was left aside may even remain present in some Russophone Ukrainians' self-identification. Indeed, in surveys, some Russophone Ukrainians identify Ukrainian as

their 'native language' even though they do not speak it. While the language may no longer be used as a communication tool, it may retain an important *emblematic* function (Edwards 1985: 17) and therefore "may yet contribute to the maintenance of boundaries" (ibid. 7). Use of the 'national language' is therefore not a necessary condition for the existence of national consciousness.

The Russophone Ukrainians and the State

Nations in formation tend to reject ambiguity and multiple belongings. For example, Kapferer states that in Australia, a country where immigration has meant increasing cultural heterogeneity, some pressure has been exerted by the state to establish a kind of standard or cultural orthodoxy (in Cohen 1994: 162). Indeed, "Nations must multiply likeness, not difference, otherwise national identity is weakened" (Kapferer in Cohen 1994: 162). I believe that this pressure to conform to what Cohen refers to as a "matrix of ideology and practice" (ibid.) is also true of societies where imperialism and colonization have played a role in blurring ethnic and cultural boundaries. Indeed, multiple identities "can coexist within a person *only insofar as choice is not necessary*" (1998: 23). In its efforts to 'untangle the tangled', the nation in formation often forces individuals to choose between loyalties. In fact, "nationalism is a fiction of identity, because it contradicts the multiple reality of belonging. It insists on the primacy of one of these belongings over all the others" (Ignatieff in Laitin 1998: 17). Even so-called 'civic' nationalism attempts to subsume various loyalties under the umbrella of a state identity.

What is the impact of this symbolic 'ordering process' on hybrid identities such as the 'Russophone Ukrainian' category? I would argue that in Ukraine, hybridity is thought to be particularly dangerous to the unity of the state because it is perceived as a legacy of Empire (i.e. a hybridity in which the 'national self' was somehow denied). Nationally-minded Ukrainians indeed tend to blame the imperial legacy for the 'distortion' of the Ukrainian ethnonational context, for example through Russification. Likewise, it seems as though the Ukrainian state perceives Russophone Ukrainians as "betwixt and between", "neither here nor there" (Turner 1964: 338). This 'liminal' state between two identities threatens the nation's "ritualized avoidance of ambiguity" (Douglas 1968: 196).

What the Ukrainian state proposes to do with the members of this 'ambiguous category' is to have them re-enter the community, this time on the side of the 'ethnic Ukrainians'. Because the Russophone Ukrainians are thought to belong to the ethnic Ukrainian category (as opposed to belonging to an 'artificial' Russophone Ukrainian culture), it is also assumed that "re-Ukrainization' policies will automatically be welcomed by the 'denationalised', those ethnic Ukrainians who have supposedly been severed forcibly from their mother tongue, but who remain in essence Ukrainian" (Wilson 1997: 154).

However, the process of dissecting hybridity in order to bring back a Ukrainian national consciousness (where it is lacking) while attempting to remove the (Russian) 'imperial element' seems, at best, extremely challenging.

Russia's role

It is important to examine the role of Russia as a definer of identity in Ukraine. Indeed, when examining Russophone identity in Ukraine, we are dealing with a relation between Ukraine, Ukrainians, Russians, Russophone Ukrainians and Russia. Just as those identity categories are manipulated by the Ukrainian state, they can also be manipulated by Russia.

Defining Russians in the 'Near Abroad'

Russian authorities have used many different labels to define Russians in the so-called 'Near Abroad'. They have been referred to as 'ethnic Russians' or simply 'Russians' (*russkie*), which "defines them in cultural terms - through their relationship to the Russian ethnos at large, not through their relationship to the Russian state" (Edemsky and Kolstoe in Kolstoe 1995: 260). They have also been referred to as 'citizens' (i.e. individuals holding a Russian passport) (ibid. 261). The term *rossiiane* (i.e. 'people of Russia', a political, territorial identification rather than an ethnic one) has also been used (ibid. 262). Another popular label has been 'Russian-speaking' or 'Russophones', based on linguistic rather than ethnic criteria. Russians abroad are rarely referred to as 'national minorities' (ibid.). The above terms, either too exclusive or too inclusive, make the nature of those populations' link with Russia ambiguous.

The relationship between Ukraine and Russia is particular in that it is seen as historically intertwined. This aspect affects the way in which Russia labels Russians in Ukraine.

Ukraine as Russia's spiritual center

As discussed earlier, imperial overextension undermines national belonging by stretching and 'dissolving' identity. An empire can be thought of as a monster with many limbs and heads. It becomes unclear which limbs (or territories) do or do not belong to the body, because imperial absorption and hybridity have obscured the essence of the people. The imperial instinct is to hang on to every limb in order to prevent the loss of a part that may be essential to the self. A complete loss of self becomes imminent when conquered territories start defining themselves in their own terms and against the Empire. For example, when former Russian dissident and writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn suggested Russia's withdrawal from the Caucasus, former opposition leader Sergey Baburin, "arguing that North Caucasus was the *border of self-awareness of 'our people'*...", said that he was not in favor of Russia withdrawing from 'any place'" (1994, in Simonsen 1996; emphasis added).

Russia's connection to Ukrainian territory is symbolically charged. As I mentioned when dealing with Russian imperial historiography, since the 18th c., Russians consider Kievan Rus' to be their spiritual center and cultural cradle. Accordingly, Kyiv, the center of that entity (and later capital of Ukraine), was considered the 'mother of Russian cities'. In 1990, British journalist Norman Stone predicted that Russia was going to 'finish where she began' (i.e. in Kyiv) (*Sunday Times*, Sept. 1990). Ukrainian independence has indeed dissociated Russia from its perceived point of origin. This fragmentation is very hard for Russia in terms of identity, especially since Ukraine has now incorporated Kievan Rus' into its own national narrative. In fact, while "Ukrainians consider Russian claims to Kievan Rus' an assault on their sense of national authenticity, (...) Russians believe Ukrainian claims to the Kievan heritage are tantamount to a violation of their very soul" (Motyl 1993: 101).

In his theoretical work on language and territory (1984), Laponce introduces the notion of 'vital center', superimposing the individual body to the social body. Laponce

states that no culture situates the self or the soul at the extremities of the body or on the tip of the fingers (1984: 131). However, Russia's 'vital center' was located in its Western borderland, and that borderland has now seceded. Russia's loss of Ukraine is not a case of 'missing limb' (as with the loss of other Soviet republics), but of *missing roots*. Indeed, Russians resent the forced discontinuity with what they believe to be the 'cradle of Russian civilization'.

There are different ways of dealing with the loss of a vital center. The most difficult (although often wisest) way of dealing with the loss of a vital center is to attempt to establish a new vital center. A more radical solution is the re-annexation of lost territory. Alternately, one can also make the border separating oneself from the vital center seem artificial. This can be done by claiming that the former vital center's independence is temporary and by intervening in its domestic affairs, as well as by claiming a lack of correspondence between the former center's national and state borders. Tied into those strategies is a definition of identity based on former imperial boundaries.

These strategies can be found in Russia's discourse towards Ukraine. For example, many Russian opposition leaders have suggested the re-annexation, or at least the recreation of the Soviet imperial space, with Ukraine included as part of the core. Those expansionist statements have often been tied to concerns about the Russian populations in the 'Near Abroad':

We are in favor of the protection of the rights of the Russian population, the Russian-speaking population. And we are in favor of the re-creation of the unity of the state. ... Possibly, the borders will be the same as they were in the Soviet Union. ... The former Soviet republics should be unified into this state; above all Belarus, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan (Sergey Baburin 1995, in Simonsen 1996: 26).

In addition, the Russian parliament, the minister of foreign affairs, and other prominent politicians have all directly challenged the territorial and political integrity of Ukraine (Lakiza-Sachuk 1996: 115). Many Russian politicians do not consider Ukraine's borders as legitimate (Aasland 1996: 490). In fact, "Influential Russian politicians still talk about what they call the 'inherent' unity of the two countries [i.e. Russia and Ukraine] within the Russia-dominated Slavic nationhood" (de Weydenthal, *RFE* Sept. 98). Those feelings are fuelled by constant declarations about the restoration of the Union by Russian politicians, for whom Ukraine's independence is a 'temporary phenomenon' (Kuzio 1995: 17). A

member of the presidential council in Moscow declared in 1997 that: "Ukraine is a fragile, artificial, heterogeneous ethnopolitical formation lacking any real chance of the formation of its own statehood" (Migranian in Garnett 1997: 337). Many Russian politicians' statements suggest that they are experiencing only a *temporary* loss of Empire.

Russian interference in Ukraine's domestic affairs is not uncommon. What interests us here is the way in which Russia defines identity in Ukraine. As we will see when exploring Russia's resistance to Ukrainization, the language criterion is crucial in defining identity. Indeed, it is the basis for the 'Russian-speaking' category, which expands the 'ethnic Russian' category since it also includes some ethnic Ukrainians. As discussed in the Introduction, the terms 'Russian-speakers' and 'Russophones' are not used here as relating exclusively to language use (i.e. to define individuals who use Russian in both the public and the private spheres). In fact, those terms are used by Russian officials (and Russians in Ukraine) to refer to an identity based on both shared language and on the notion of a 'same (Russian) people' (i.e. imperial hybridity) that shares a same *loyalty*. Indeed, "Russian political leaders ... look not to Russians *per se* - but to Russian speakers as a whole as one alleged cultural community which seeks to maintain close ties with Russia" (Kuzio 1998: 93). Russia feels that it must intervene on behalf of that 'Russian-speaking' population. According to Russian opposition leader Genadii Zyuganov, "Russia has, 'the right and the duty' to take care of the interests of ethnic Russians *and Russian speakers* residing outside Russia's borders: 'Our point of departure is the understanding that any discrimination of this population - political, juridical, economic or other - may not be allowed and must lead to adequate reactions from the Russian authorities and the international community'" (1994, in Simonsen 1996; emphasis added). This appropriation of the 'Russian-speakers' represents the extension of Russian identity into Ukraine, an extension which makes the Ukrainian border with Russia seem arbitrary.

Both Ukrainian and Russian authorities attempt to impose their particular definition of identity in Ukraine, especially through the appropriation of the Russophone Ukrainian group. However, "National and ethnic identification in Ukraine are influenced by many factors and cannot be reduced to a single element (for example, language) because identity is 'fundamentally multidimensional'" (Smith in Kuzio 1998: 149).

Therefore, both Ukraine's definition (based on the ethnic criterion) and Russia's definition (based on the linguistic and cultural criterion) are oversimplified formulations.

Summary

As we have seen in this chapter, both the 'ethnic Russian' population and the 'Russophone Ukrainian' population present a high degree of hybridity. While those two groups may share some patterns of language use, they do not necessarily share a same loyalty. For many Russians, the Russian language acts as the marker of an extended Russian identity. However, the configuration of the 'Russophone Ukrainian identity' is highly variable and loyalties cut across language use. Indeed, some Russophone Ukrainians feel 'Ukrainian', while others feel part of a hybrid culture of Ukrainians and Russians based on contact and on the idea of 'Slavic brotherhood'. In the next chapter, I propose to examine the Ukrainian state discourse on language and the reaction to it by both Russia and Russians in Ukraine.

CHAPTER 3

RESISTANCE TO UKRAINIZATION

Linguistic Ukrainization

We have seen that Russia assumes a correspondence between language and identity in that it takes for granted the Russophone Ukrainians' loyalty to Russia. How does the Ukrainian state tie language and identity? I now want to turn to the Ukrainization process and examine how issues of identity and belonging are articulated in official documents.

Linguistic Ukrainization is not a post-independence concept. It was first used in the 1920s by the Communists, who wanted to win over the Ukrainian masses to their cause. As Laitin points out, "...at the time of the [Russian] Revolution, despite successful language rationalization among peripheral elites, the Russian language was not a core part of the language repertoires of many social strata in the periphery" (1998: 43). In Ukraine, the peasantry (who constituted the bulk of the population) was Ukrainian-speaking and therefore could not be reached in any other language. Ukrainization was a specific application of the Communist Party's generalized policy of indigenization (*korenizatsia*), which "called for a concerted effort to recruit non-Russians into the party and state apparatus, for Soviet officials to learn and use local languages, and for state support of cultural and social development among the nationalities" (Subtelny 1994: 387). If the use of Ukrainian in the Party and government increased dramatically, the Ukrainization of the educational sphere was particularly successful (ibid.). Conducted in Ukrainian, education into the new 'Soviet values' exposed illiterate Ukrainian youth (especially in the countryside) to reading and writing in its own language (ibid. 388). The Ukrainian peasants immigrating to highly Russified Ukrainian cities no longer had to give up their language for Russian. Indeed, Ukrainian was becoming "the primary means of communication and expression of a modernizing, industrializing society" (ibid. 390). However, this success was short lived. The 1930s saw the destruction of Ukrainian institutions and the intensification of Stalinist purges. Driven by a fear of Ukrainian 'nationalist counter-revolutionaries' or even *national* communism, the Soviet authorities

turned to Russification. This process was back on track with the help of an influx into Ukraine of thousands of Russian functionaries (ibid. 418).

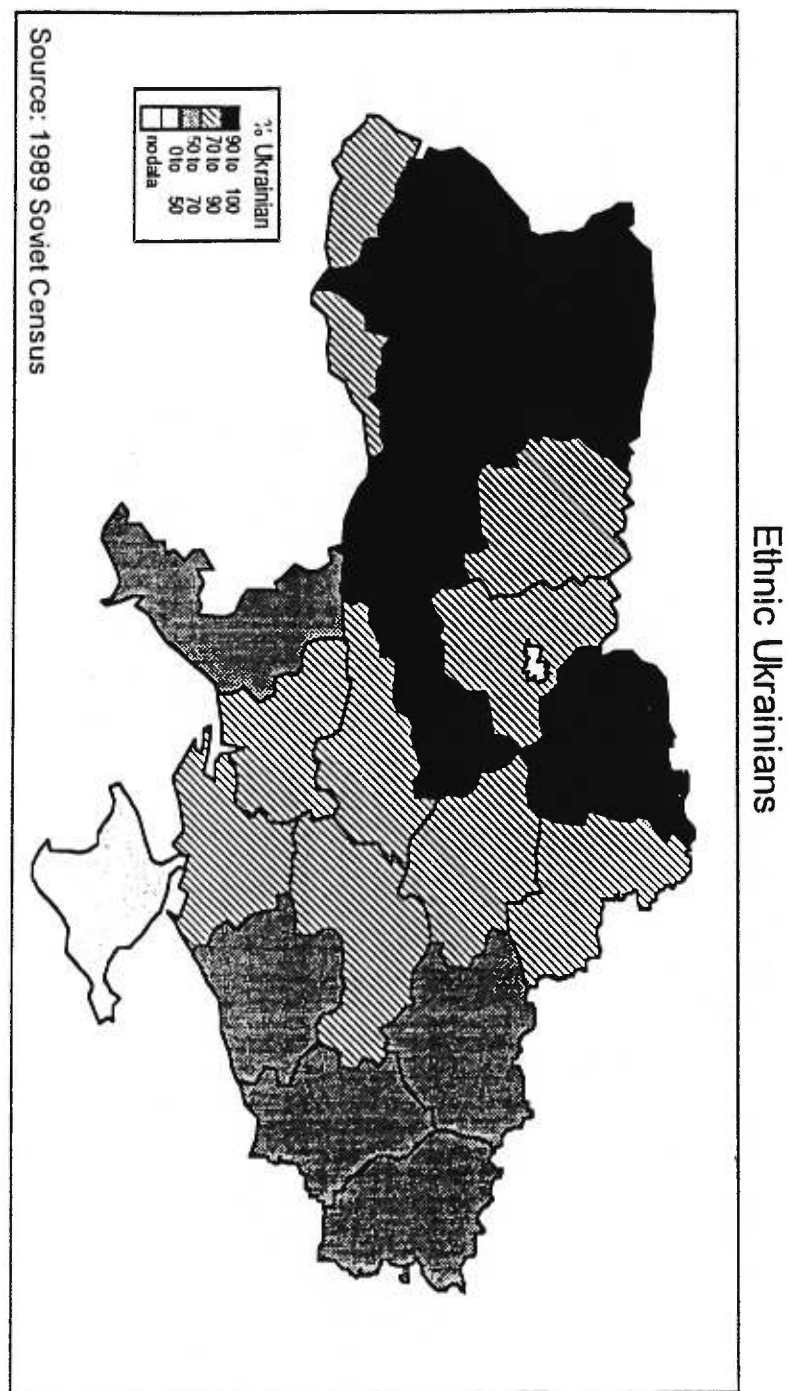
Only in the late 1980s did Ukraine succeed in implementing Ukrainization measures. Ukrainization became "a form of 'affirmative action' - to help compensate for the negative impact of [...] past discrimination" (Jaworsky 1998: 108). Indeed, Ukrainization's aim was to put a halt to Russification and reverse it through a reappropriation of the indigenous Ukrainian language. The Language Law of 1989, passed in Soviet Ukraine, made Ukrainian the state language. That Law stated, among other things, that republican laws and acts had to be adopted and published in Ukrainian and could also be published in another language in case of necessity (Art.10 cited in Laitin 1998: 89); that both the state language and Russian were required for most jobs (Art.6 in ibid.); and that signs had to be in Ukrainian but could also be "in the national language of the majority of the population of the locality" (Art.38 in ibid.). In 1989, Russian was still considered the language of inter-republican communication. Consequently, the new Law acknowledged the need "to create the necessary conditions for the development and use of the Russian language" (Article 2, cited in Laitin 1998: 89). For example, although the language of instruction in schools was Ukrainian, there was a "Guarantee for the study of Russian, but only where Russians or citizens of other nationalities constitute a majority of the population" (ibid. 90). It is important to note that the Language Law assumes a correspondence between language and nationality. For example, although it allows for the study of Russian by the Russian 'nationality' in Ukraine, it does not have provisions for its study by Russophone Ukrainians.

The new (post-independence) Ukrainian Constitution adopted in June 1996 confirms the status of Ukrainian as the state language and "guarantees the all-round development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of social life throughout the territory of Ukraine" (cited in Jaworsky 1998: 117). The 1996 Constitution also guarantees "the free development, use, and protection of the Russian and *other languages of the national minorities* of Ukraine" (Article 10, in ibid.; emphasis added). Once again, a language/identity correspondence is assumed. Moreover, the state "assists in the consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, its historical consciousness, traditions, and culture, and also assists in the development of the ethnic,

cultural, linguistic, and religious identity of all *indigenous* peoples and *national minorities* of Ukraine (Art.11, in *ibid.*; emphasis added). This portion of the Constitution differentiates between 'indigenous peoples' (suggesting that there is more than one) and 'national minorities' but does not explicitly state which groups belong to each category.

In February 2000, the Ukrainian President's Council for Language Policy Issues approved a draft resolution entitled "On Additional Measures To Expand the Use of Ukrainian as the State Language". This resolution is based on the December 1999 ruling of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine which interpreted the Language Law as "conferring on the Ukrainian language the status of mandatory means of communication for state bodies and local administrations as well as in the spheres of public life on the entire territory of Ukraine" (cited in the *Jamestown Monitor*, Feb.11/00). Among other things, the new Draft proposes "checking knowledge of Ukrainian among all state officials and re-assigning them to posts depending on their ability to use the state language" (*RFE* Feb.15/00). The document also suggests "bringing the system of educational institutions into line with the *ethnic* composition of the population" (cited in *RFE* Feb.15/00). This idea (i.e. education in Ukrainian for all *ethnic* Ukrainians) implies that the Russophone Ukrainians should study in Ukrainian rather than in Russian. (There was a rather unsuccessful attempt at bringing this correspondence through administrative measures during Kravchuk's presidency.) Other measures aiming at the de-russification of public life in Ukraine include "working out programs of de-Russification for the sports and tourism sphere, bringing the repertoire of theaters into conformity with their language status, [and] using taxation levers for regulating the import of publications [e.g. from Russia]" (cited in *RFE* Feb.15/00).

The government Draft was elaborated in response to a presidential panel finding according to which the lack of observance of language legislation had led to an uneven and spotty Ukrainization and a reduction of the spheres of Ukrainian language use (*Jamestown Monitor*, Feb.11/00). Quoting dismal statistics on the scarcity and/or underdevelopment of Ukrainian-language newspapers, books and television programs, Volodymyr Yavorivsky, member of the Language Policy Council under the President of Ukraine states that "in terms of language, Ukraine still remains a sort of subsidiary of Russia" (Commentary in *The Day*, Feb. 19/00).



SOURCE: Taras Kuzio, ed. *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*. Armonk, New York, London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 1998.

Ukraine's emphasis on a special status for the Ukrainian language has provoked criticism from various scholars who consider it a 'nationalizing state' (see e.g. Arel 1995, Wilson 1997). 'Nationalizing' states are states that "are ethnically heterogeneous, 'yet conceived as nation-states, whose dominant elites promote (to varying degrees) the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing, or political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation'" (Brubaker in Kolstoe 1999: 59). Although Ukrainian authorities like to speak of a Ukrainian *political* nation, it is clear that the ethnic Ukrainian element has priority in the nation-building process. When Ivan Drach (chairman of the newly-formed State Committee for Information Policies, Television, and Radio) was asked what he thought of the fact that there is a Ukrainian ethnic nation and a Ukrainian political nation, and that the latter's population is not monolingual, he replied:

...now is the moment when we have to go on the offensive, not the defensive, as a nation. One of the major causes of our economic and all other kinds of decline is the fact that we have distorted and defiled our basic ethnic nation. If Ukrainians do not become conscious that this is a state affair of their own and that they live and exist for themselves, we won't be able to do anything. We will only build ourselves something amorphous, the so-called open society. This idea is excellent, the slogans are very precious, for me too, but we are thus oppressing the basic thing we have; we are oppressing the Ukrainian nation (*The Day*, March 21, 2000).

It is true that 'state-ifying nation' is probably no better than 'nationalizing state'. In fact, a purely 'civic' set of symbols may reduce the majority's nationalism to folkloric representations (as in the Soviet period), weakening a 'healthy' nationalism that could become the basis of a civil society (see Kuzio 1998: 119). However, there is a definite danger in conceiving of the ethnic nation as 'distorted and defiled'. A restoration of the 'purity' of ethnic Ukrainians can only mean a denial of the hybridity in identity that exists in Ukraine today. Sharp categorizations are apparent in Ukrainian language laws. The more encompassing *Russophone identity* (considered 'artificial') is not represented in language laws, i.e. there exists no category for it and no basis for defending rights based on it. The state forces the *Russians* into a 'national minority' identity that the latter have never developed. As for the *Russophone Ukrainians*, they are considered ethnic Ukrainians, which means that according to the Ukrainian state, spoken language (in this case Russian) does not determine ethnic loyalty. One has to wonder then why Russophone Ukrainians have to be Ukrainianized at all. Clearly, the state *wishes* for a

correspondence between language and ethnic identity. As we will see in the analysis of resistance, it is the state's *ethnic* categorization that comes under fire.

Russian resistance to the Ukrainian state discourse on language

Since independence, different kinds of pressures have been exerted for raising the status of Russian in Ukraine. For example, in answer to requests from some Russian and non-Russian Russophones, President Kuchma's electoral promises in 1994 included making Russian the second official language in Ukraine. It remained unclear whether this would grant Russian equal status to that of the state language, or whether it would simply make Russian a privileged language relative to other minority languages in Ukraine. However, opposition from the Ukrainian Parliament prevented this promise from materializing.

Now as before, there is a degree of indifference among the population concerning language laws. A minority resists, however. This minority includes above all ethnic Russian or ethnic Ukrainian Russophones. My goal is to analyze how those *ethnic Russians* who resist do so, i.e. in what terms that resistance is articulated. As we will see, there are common themes in resistance that cut across regional belonging. Before moving on to the documents however, I wish to examine Russia's official protest against Ukrainization. It will provide a context for the analysis of Russian (popular) resistance within Ukraine.

Resistance from Russia

The approval of the above-mentioned draft "On Additional Measures to Expand to Use of Ukrainian as the State Language" provoked a swift reaction from Russia's Foreign Ministry. The latter denounced the "de-Russification" of Ukraine and stated that such policies, "directed against the preservation and development of the Russians language and culture" in Ukraine, went against the Ukrainian Constitution's guarantee of the "free development, use, and protection of the Russian language" (*RFE* Feb.15/00).

Oleg Mironov, Russian human rights commissioner, stated that linguistic de-Russification was incompatible with relations among "fraternal peoples" (*Jamestown Monitor*, Feb. 23/00) and denounced the new Draft as "a gross and blatant violation of

civilized relations between people and an infringement on the basic rights and freedoms of citizens" (*The Day*, Feb. 19/00)¹⁰.

The Foreign Ministry condemned Ukraine's "administrative *deformation* of its original cultural and linguistic environment" (*The Day*, Feb. 19/00; emphasis added). (To which one must ask, did the Soviet linguistic *status quo* not necessitate the initial deformation of the Ukrainian cultural and linguistic context?) The Ministry added that it would "lodge complaints against Ukraine with European bodies" (*Jamestown Monitor*, Feb.11/00). According to Mironov, this "massive and unprecedented discrimination" against the Russians language affects more than half of Ukraine's population who considers Russian its 'native tongue'" (*RFE* Feb 15/00). I will further explore this use of 'native language' in the next section. However, Mironov's statement is basically mistaken since "most Ukrainian citizens still regard Ukrainian as their mother tongue in the sense that it is the language of their indigenous cultural and ethnic heritage, which is essentially non-Russian" (*RFE* Feb. 15/00). What is more accurate is that many Ukrainian citizens (as many as 53%, depending on the source) are thought to prefer interacting in Russian in the public sphere, whether or not they are bilingual. This must in turn be understood in light of Russian's former status as a 'language of inter-republican communication'.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also claimed an infringement on "the right of *national minority citizens* to receive their education in Russian" (*RFE* Feb. 15/00; emphasis added). However, as we saw above, the Russians (as a *national/ethnic minority*) are protected by the Constitution of Ukraine. It is *not* the case for the non-Russian Russophones. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also argues that the new Draft violates the rights of the '*Russian-speaking* population' and that its approval "seek[s] to ostracize the language that the *majority* considers its own native language, to confine it to a marginal role, perhaps even to eliminate the Russian language and to eliminate the legal basis for its use" (cited in *Jamestown Monitor*, Feb.11/00; emphasis added).

In addition to defining groups according to language use, Russia 'appropriates' the 'Russian-speakers' (including its non-Russian component). Indeed, Russia tends to perceive the 'Russian-speakers' as a group united in its orientation to the motherland (Kuzio 1998: 92). However, as we have seen, there exists no necessary link between spoken language and national loyalty. The Russophones are a highly differentiated group

and their loyalty to Russia is certainly questionable. In my opinion, there is an attempt by Russian authorities to superimpose a Russophone, *Soviet-based* identity category to the Ukrainian state's ethnically defined loyalties. The (very instrumental) 'Russian-speaking' identity, a remnant of the Soviet period, is made into a 'legal' entity. Indeed, Russia's protest transforms this formerly dominant Russian (and linguistically Russified) population into a 'newly oppressed majority'. One could even argue that Ukrainization contradicts not so much minority rights as Soviet-era linguistic rights and privileges. Ironically, this perception leads Russia to resist the supposed 'exclusion' of (Russophone) *ethnic Ukrainians* in Ukraine.

Russia seems to have chosen to direct Russians in Ukraine away from an *ethnic minority* identity (one that is, if not a purer reflection of reality, at least well protected by Ukrainian Law). Instead, Russia claims the supremacy of linguistic identity through the preservation and perpetuation of the 'Russian-speaking' identity. It thereby 'extends' Russian identity into Ukraine, symbolically pushing back the border and pointing to an alleged lack of correspondence between Ukraine's state borders and national boundaries.

Resistance from Russians in Ukraine

Let us now examine the nature of Russian resistance within Ukraine. As a sample of protest, I have used four newspaper articles on the subject, as well as one letter of protest to the Ukrainian President, and one letter of protest to the Ukrainian Prime Minister. All documents are in Russian. It is unfortunately rather difficult to determine the ethnic belonging of the authors. Although the family names of the following authors have typically Russian endings in *-ov* and *-ev*, they do not allow an identification of mixed marriages or multiple belongings.

DOCUMENT #1: A 7-page letter from Donetsk (Eastern Ukraine) addressed to President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma and signed "An Eastern Ukrainian". Dated September 20, 1997.

The letter deals with the inadequacy of Ukrainian as a state language.

DOCUMENT #2: An 8-page letter to Prime Minister Victor Yushchenko from a lawyer from Kharkiv (Eastern Ukraine), E.A. Shchegol. Dated February 4, 2000.

The letter is in reaction to the above-mentioned government Draft of February 2000 and its impact on Eastern Ukrainian Russophones.

DOCUMENT #3: Article: "The Russian Language Should Not Feel Foreign in Ukraine": the language policy in the country is determined by bureaucrats". By Pavel Smirnov. In *Fakty* (Kyiv), September 18, 1999, p.4.

The article underlines the paradox of discriminating against Russian, a 'majority language' in Ukraine.

DOCUMENT #4: Article: "Wicked Lawlessness: about the fulfilment of constitutional guarantees in the language sphere". By Vladimir Alexiev, Ukrainian MP. In *Sodruzhestvo* (Ukrainian edition of a Russian-language newspaper published for members of the CIS), May 26, 1999, p.5.

This article deals with Ukraine's 'liquidation' of Russian as a 'native language' vs. its legal obligation to protect language groups.

DOCUMENT #5: Article: "Do We Need a 'Velvet Ukrainization' in the Country?" By N.A. Parchenkov. In *Den'* (Kyiv), N. 230, November 1999, p.7).

The article denounces Ukrainization's aim of 'eliminating' Russian ethnic and cultural presence in Ukraine.

DOCUMENT #6: Article: "It is Only Possible to Fight Russophonism After a Victory over Poverty" By D. Martinov. *Den'* (Kyiv), N.63, April 8, 2000).

This is in response to an article that lamented the use of Russian by athletes in televised sports.

I have grouped the authors' arguments under various headings or recurrent themes that are relevant to our discussion of language and identity.

Resistance to the division of 'one people':

In my sample, many arguments about language are based on the 'historical fraternity and unity' between Ukrainians and Russians. The resistance to Ukrainization is, at least partially, resistance to a new, 'artificial' division between Ukrainians and Russians: "The Ukrainian people (...) does not support the provocations of those [i.e. Ukrainian government bureaucrats] who persist in dividing *one people* into titular nation and national minority" (Doc.3, emphasis added). Another author claims that "Russians and Ukrainians, each speaking their own language, freely [*svobodno*] understand each other without an interpreter. A mutual understanding between our people, *who came from one root and intertwined branches*, has made [a violent development of events in Ukraine] impossible" (Doc.4; emphasis added). One must note that the notion of 'same people' is unilateral, i.e. it is the Ukrainians who are the 'same' as Russians, not the

opposite. Traditionally, the Ukrainians have been the 'Little Russians' who spoke a 'dialect of Russian'. As such, they are thought to share a unity and a loyalty with the Russians.

One author feels the need to affirm that unlike the present 'Ukrainizers', Russians never drew a cultural boundary between themselves and Ukrainians: "Yes, Ukrainian theological books in Ukrainian were destroyed, there was the *Ems Ukaz* [Tsarist edict restricting the use of Ukrainian], and so on; however, with all of this Russians never considered Ukrainians as *strangers*" (Doc.2; emphasis added).

Another author goes further and states that one should not complain about the use of *surzhik* (mixed use of Russian and Ukrainian) in Ukraine. In fact, Ukraine is indebted to Russia for preserving its culture and language, which would have otherwise been corrupted by Western influences.

Thinking about Ukrainian Russophonism one automatically thinks of the great trinity - of Russia itself, Little Russia and White Russia - the roots of which go deep down to Kievan Rus'. Historically, it happened that Russia took the lead of such a Slavic triumvirate, thereby preventing the conquest of Ukraine by its Western, more powerful neighbours. We can absolutely state that without unity with Russia, Ukraine would have lost its statehood with all its institutions - political, religious, cultural, and that this would undoubtedly have left its imprint on the language of communication. In other words - our contemporary *surzhik* [i.e. mixed use of Ukrainian and Russian] would not have Russian, but Polish or Austro-Hungarian roots" (Doc. 6).

All the above excerpts reproduce the boundaries between Ukrainians and Russians imagined since the Tsarist period, i.e. a blurry cultural boundary ('one people') combined with a rather sharp hierarchy ('under Russian leadership'). In independent Ukraine, the fact of drawing an ethnic boundary between Russians and Ukrainians constitutes, for those who subscribe to Russian historiography, a direct attack on imperial hybridity (the latter articulated in terms of a 'same people'). It seems unbelievable to the authors that Ukrainians (a 'junior branch' of the Great Russians) would want to substract themselves from that hybridity (i.e. from a Russian definition of Ukrainian identity). To them, the Ukrainization process draws boundaries where they have never existed. In addition to 'splitting a same people', the Ukrainian state also redefines the Russians' traditional status as a 'leading nation' into a 'minority' status. This comes as Ukrainians are defined as a 'majority', a 'titular nation', and an 'indigenous population'. Here we have

a complete reversal of previously imagined boundaries, where the ethnic boundary becomes clear-cut, and the hierarchy is turned on its head.

Resistance to Ukrainian as state language:

In the documents collected, there is resistance to Ukrainian's status as a state language. This is articulated very strongly in Document 1, a letter to the President of Ukraine in which the author attempts to prove the inherent inadequacy of Ukrainian as a state language.

First come the historical arguments about Ukrainian being the Russian language modified by conquerers: "It is natural that those languages of the conquerers [i.e. Polish, Lithuanian, Tatar] had a significant impact on the development of the old Russian language that changed it significantly and transformed it into so-called Ukrainian" (Doc.1). The author goes on:

Ukraine was within the structure of Russia for more than 300 years, and 70 years within the structure of the USSR, which is why Russian became the 'native' language of the majority of the population in Ukraine. Against that population's will, [the state] is putting Ukrainian at the same level as Russian and making it a state language. Unfortunately, in all aspects Ukrainian loses to Russian and therefore its use as the state language is unwise (Doc. 1).

The author's arguments against the use of Ukrainian as a State language are the following:

- 1) The Russian language is 'richer': "First of all, the linguistic capacity of the Ukrainian language is approximately 1/3 less than Russian and cannot cover all aspects of modern life"(Doc.1). Indeed, "the Ukrainian language is a medieval popular (slang) language of village inhabitants and this is why terminology related to city life is absent" (Doc.1). This type of argument and value judgement of language is reminiscent of the Soviet perception of the Ukrainian language, as seen above. The author's refusal to think of the Ukrainian language as "an accurate symbolisation of the world" (Le Page et Tabouret-Keller in Tabouret-Keller 1997: 323) is reminiscent of Russian resistance to Ukrainization in the 1920s, when Russian intellectuals in Ukraine were unwilling to "use the 'peasant' language for purposes of higher education" (Subtelny 1994: 389).
- 2) "The Ukrainian language was never the state language, and nobody imposed it. For a long time (in Tsarist time), it was even forbidden" (Doc.1).

3) Ukrainian appeared in the context of occupation and colonization, "and reflects the condition of Ukrainian society under a situation of slavery and exploitation" (Doc.1).

4) "All scientific knowledge came to Ukraine through Russia, with the use of Russian terminology. This is why a few generations of Ukrainian intelligentsia became Russophonic" (Doc. 1). (One must keep in mind that during the Soviet period, translations of Western scientific texts were first made in Russian, and much later or sometimes not at all in Ukrainian). To which the author adds:

Is it possible for a civilized state to refuse the perfect Russian language and to switch to a primitive and not nice-sounding (*neblagozvychnyi*) village language as the state language? To switch from Russian to Ukrainian is like switching from a color TV back to a black and white TV. To make the Ukrainian language the state language means to make Ukraine the state of peasants (Doc.1).

The author believes that some modern Ukrainian words should be replaced with Russian words because the latter are more 'meaningful'. Since Russian is 'universal' while Ukrainian is 'backward', the author's conclusion is that Ukraine needs *Russian only* as a state language. Here we see how the author claims that Ukrainian is a branch of Russian that is lower in value and in prestige. The author seems to think that by excluding Russian as a state language in Ukraine, Ukrainians are excluding themselves from the richness of the "great, truthful and free" Russian language (Doc.1).

This negative perception of Ukrainian is complemented by the belief that Ukrainian is a 'bad influence' on Russian. The author of the letter to the Ukrainian Prime Minister states that Valuev (author of the 1863 *Valuev ukaz* against the use of Ukrainian) is "just a boy" in comparison with present Ukrainian statesmen (Doc.2). Indeed, Valuev "russified Ukraine for almost 300 years (....) But Mr. Zhulynskyj, Mr. Zajats, Mrs. Stetsko [Ukrainian state officials and MPs in favor of Ukrainization] and others want to Ukrainianize the Russophonic population in two weeks. For what reason? It seems that they want to *put us 'down' to their intellectual level*" (Doc.2; emphasis added). Similarly, another author uses examples of texts by schoolchildren written in Russian with Ukrainian influences to claim that the use of Ukrainian 'brings Russian down'. He blames Ukrainization for the widespread use of *surzhik* (the mixed use of Ukrainian and Russian) (Doc.4). (There is no mention of the effect of Russification on the Ukrainian language.) It seems that the authors are concerned with the possibility that the use of Ukrainian as a

state language might undermine Russian's superior *status*, and consequently the status of its speakers.

Other authors support the return to a 'traditional bilingual state': "I am calling on the state authorities to revive traditional bilingualism as a spiritual treasure which we have to preserve and enrich" (Doc.5). As we have seen, Soviet 'bilingualism' in Ukraine was denounced as a 'cover up' for Russification. Reinstating Russian as an official language in Ukraine would most likely mean recreating the Soviet linguistic context, where Russian dominates and there is no need to acquire fluency in Ukrainian. This would in turn influence identity formation. It would favor neither the development of Ukrainian ethnic identity nor the development of Russian ethnic identity (both desired by the Ukrainian state). Instead, a 'Russian-speaking' identity would be perpetuated.

It may be that those championing state bilingualism are in fact attempting to secure a right to remain unilingual. Because of the closeness between the two languages (a closeness which accelerated Russification) there is a fear of a reverse assimilation. Indeed, once all Russian-speakers are *bilingual*, then there is a much greater possibility of assimilation, of tipping over toward exclusive use of Ukrainian. However, if most Russians *and Russophone Ukrainians* remain unilingual, then the 'Russian-speaking' population remains intact as an identity category.

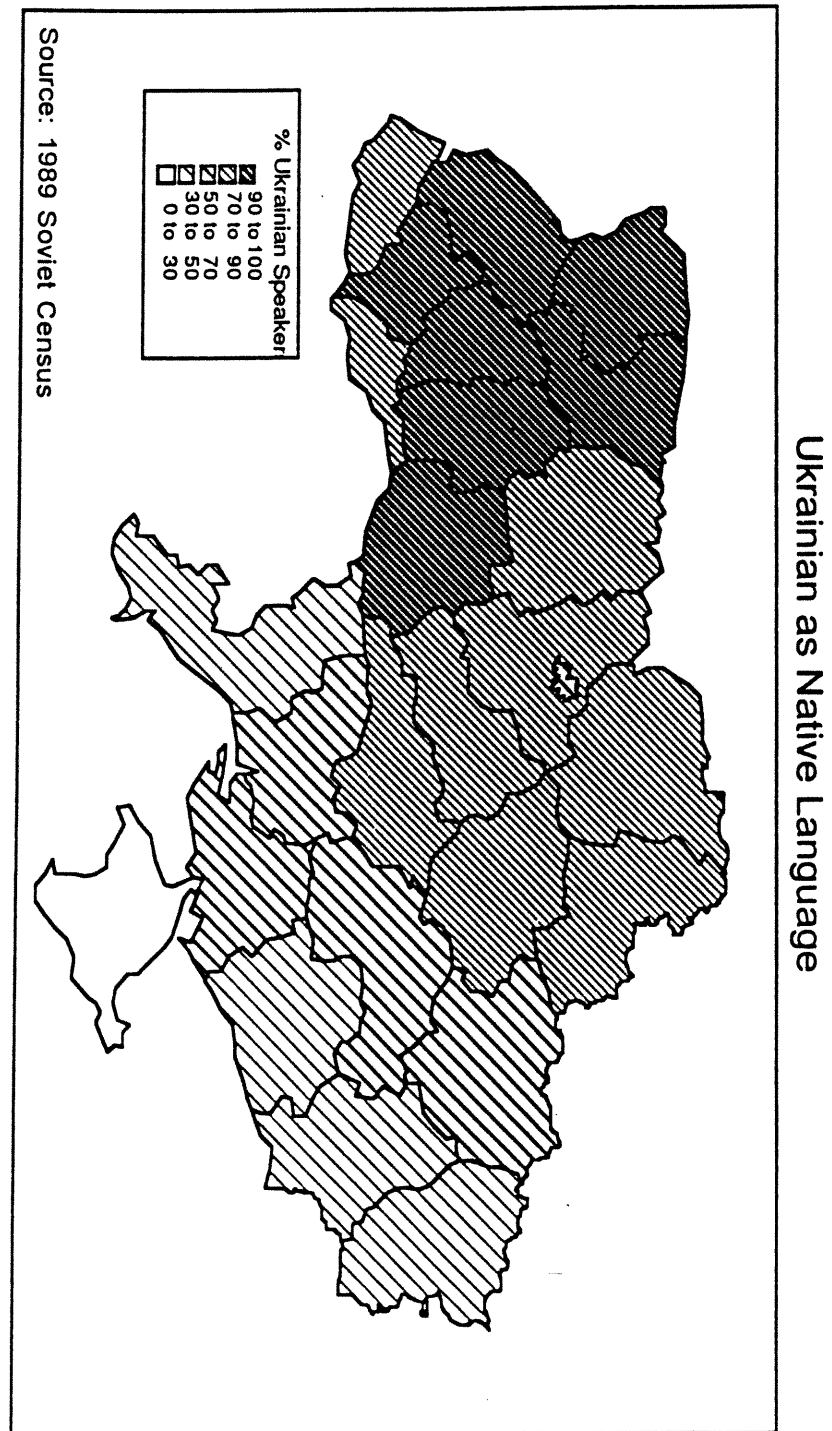
Resistance to the labelling of Russian as a *foreign* language in Ukraine:

Many authors resist the 'exclusion' of the Russian element in Ukraine: "Practically, it looks like Ukraine considers us not as sons but as step-sons, and makes everything to humiliate us, to make us into second-class citizens" (Doc.2). There is also resistance to the labelling of the Russian language as 'foreign': "When you hear from [Ukrainian] nationalists statements such as 'the Russian language is a foreign language', which contradicts the historical truth, you recall the joke: Name me a country where 2/3 of the citizens communicate in a foreign language" (Doc.4). The supposed 'sameness' of Ukrainian and Russian is also emphasized: "We can state, that it is absolutely a fact, that *there is no essential difference between our languages*" (Doc.6; emphasis added). According to one author, present language standardization in Ukraine is based on the Galician 'language' [the Ukrainian spoken in Galicia, Western Ukraine], which "is further

from the Ukrainian language than Russian is from the Ukrainian language" (Doc.4).¹¹ The author seems to believe that Ukrainian nationalists in the government are purposefully making Ukrainian and Russian as different as possible.

Similarly, another author states that even an extremely gifted individual cannot be a minister in Ukraine unless he speaks Ukrainian: "Such demands can be explained in Georgia or Latvia, but Russians and Ukrainians, each speaking their own language, freely understand each other without an interpreter" (Doc.4). As I have stated above, it is Ukrainian that is perceived to be the 'same' as or a variety of Russian, *not the opposite*. In fact, if Russians and Ukrainians understand each other perfectly (i.e. Russians understand Ukrainian perfectly), one might ask, why should Russian become the second state language? Whether the only language is Ukrainian or Russian should not matter if everyone is bilingual. However, would anyone among those authors complain if *Russian* was the *only* state language? Would they fight for the 'bicultural' and 'bilingual' nature of Ukraine, or the recognition of cultural hybridity? It appears as though the pressures are aimed at the restoration of the Russian language's dominant status, not its equality to Ukrainian.

The logical continuation of the authors' argument is that Russian is a 'native language' in Ukraine. For example, "In many Kharkiv schools [Eastern Ukraine] (...), education in Ukrainian was introduced and Russian is taught as a foreign language (!!!) - at the same time, for a majority of children there, [Russian] is a native language." (Doc.2). What is also claimed is that Russian is a 'native language' for *Ukrainians*: "It is hard [for Western observers] to believe that millions of Ukrainians consider Russian their native language" (Doc.4). Here, one has to look at language patterns more closely, that is, the nature of use (mixed or otherwise) and the contexts in which Russian is spoken by non-Russians. In particular, a distinction needs to be made between 'unassimilated bilingualism' (i.e. those ethnic Ukrainians who speak Russian in the public sphere but have Ukrainian as a native language) and 'assimilated bilingualism' (i.e. those ethnic Ukrainians who no longer use Ukrainian and for whom Russian fulfils the role of native language - unless they claim Ukrainian as their emblematic native language) (Laitin 1998: 46). In fact, the number of Ukrainian citizens who consider Ukrainian their 'native language' (83% according to a 1996 survey) does not correspond to the number of



SOURCE: Taras Kuzio, ed. *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*. Armonk, New York, London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 1998.

citizens who use Ukrainian regularly (53% according to the same survey) (in Kuzio 1998: 171). While it is incorrect to state that Russian is the native language of most Ukrainians, it is true that many Ukrainians use Russian as a language of convenience.

Since the authors claim that Russian is the native language of a large proportion of both ethnic Russians and ethnic Ukrainians in Ukraine, the state's identification of this language as 'foreign' constitutes a linguistic exclusion of both Ukrainians and Russians, i.e. the 'Russian-speaking' group. I will further explore this issue in the next section.

Resistance to the labelling of Russian as a *minority* language in Ukraine:

According to the Ukrainian Constitution, Ukrainian is the only state language. While there are provisions for the maintenance and development of Russian, the latter is considered the language of the ethnic Russian minority. However, as we have seen, language use and ethnic origin often do not overlap in Ukraine. When protesting against a *de jure* minority status of Russian, the authors often claim that Russian is in fact the language of a *majority* of Ukrainian citizens (i.e. that the 'Russian-speakers' are a legal majority). According to one author, "The paradox is that in Ukraine, besides the 10 million ethnic Russians, about 20 million ethnic Ukrainians speak Russian. Where do you put them? Isn't this an absurd position for our state? Isn't [the state] oppressing not only the Russian language in Ukraine, but the Ukrainian people itself?" (Doc.3). Here, the author clearly states that the Ukrainian language policy oppresses not only the Russians, but the (Russophone) Ukrainians themselves. Why this concern for Ukrainians' rights? Because Russophone Ukrainians are an essential part of the 'Russian-speaking' self-proclaimed 'majority'. Consequently, the Ukrainization process is perceived as *alienating Russians from the Ukrainian component of their extended identity*.

The same author draws on some statistics from the Center of Political Research and Conflictology in Kyiv and the International Institute of Sociology according to which most (43.4%) Ukrainian citizens (the participants were Ukrainians, Russians and of 'mixed nationalities') prefer to speak Russian, while 41.6% prefer to speak Ukrainian (Doc.3). The preference for Russian must be understood in the context of its previous status as a language of 'international communication' and of convenience. In fact, if we consider the Russophones to be those who have Russian as a *native* language (rather than

those who use Russian as a *language of convenience*), then the Russophones are *not* a majority in Ukraine.

In addition, according to the author a majority of participants in the survey opposed the Russian language's 'minority status': "82.2% [of participants] supported *bringing up the status of Russian*; more than half supported Russian as an official or second state language" (Doc.3; emphasis added). That is to say, even though Russian is, at least according to the author's statistics, spoken by a majority of people (i.e. it is *dominant* in Ukraine), there is still overwhelming support for an even higher status for Russian.

Why does the Russian population not accept the status of Russian as a (protected) minority language in Ukraine? Because a minority status *excludes* those Russophone non-Russians who form an essential part of the hybrid 'Russian-speaking' identity. The fact that Russians resist a minority status means that they do not resist as *ethnic* Russians. The above authors want Russian to gain the status of state language so that its dominance may be *institutionalized* (as it was during the Tsarist and Soviet periods). This would in turn support the maintenance of a 'Russian-speaking' identity.

Resistance to the 'liquidation' of the Russian language and culture in Ukraine:

There is a belief among most authors that the goal of Ukrainization is to liquidate the Russian language and culture. One author states that even though President Kuchma said that forced Ukrainization would not take place, bureaucrats are engaged in a "merciless fight with all that is Russian" (Doc.3). Another author claims that

The problems are artificial, linked first of all to the desire of certain political forces for a *maximal elimination of Russian ethnic and cultural presence in Ukraine*. [Those forces] started such an experiment in the spiritual castration (*dukhovnomy ockopleniio*) of a different people [Russians], forcefully pushing them into the 'procrustean bed' of discriminating languages policy" (Doc.5; emphasis added).

He adds: "Considering today's amount and fast tempo of Ukrainization, the Russian language does not have any future in Ukraine" (Doc.5). However, according to the same author, "*Uprooting* Russian culture in Ukraine will not be good for the next generation. It is not a secret that the former Union republics are doomed to eternal neighborhood and economic partnership, whatever 'unknown force' seeks to attract them into Western

structures" (Doc.5; emphasis added). There is a perception by the authors that Ukrainization poses a real threat to Russian culture. Why the use of such strong words as 'liquidation', when (according to the authors' own statistics) the Russian language is still dominant? It appears that what is in peril is not an 'ethnic' Russian culture but an *extended* Russian culture (i.e. an ethnically hybrid 'Russian-speaking' culture). What is feared is that if linguistic (and cultural) Ukrainization succeeds in bringing Russophone Ukrainians back to the 'ethnic Ukrainian' side, this would make Russian a *de facto* minority language. Likewise, Russian culture might become a minority culture in Ukraine.

Indeed, while some authors describe the exclusion of a 'Russian' element, others emphasize the destruction of a *Russophone* culture: "Since 1995, Ukraine has become a member of the Council of Europe and has signed an agreement on regional/minority languages. ...Unfortunately, the European Union is not paying attention to the *liquidation of a huge stratum of culture* [i.e. Russophone culture in Ukraine]" (Doc.4; emphasis added). Here we are dealing with the perceived exclusion of a *language* group, not an *ethnic* group.

Resistance to an *ethnic* vs. a *linguistic* definition in the law:

When addressing questions of law, the authors tackle the issue of 'ethnic' and 'linguistic' definitions directly:

It would be interesting to see how the defenders of human rights perceive [the Ukrainian law that states that education before schools, in schools and tutoring should be conducted in Ukrainian]. Where are they? Why are they quiet? It is true that there is also a law of Ukraine about national minorities that guarantees to citizens, regardless of their nationality, equal political, social, economical and cultural rights and freedoms, including the right to use and be educated in their native language or learn their native language in public (state) institutions. As we can see, the two laws contradict each other and the second law remains a joke. By the way, there is still the question of how *Russophones* are related to this matter ... are they a *national minority* in Ukraine? The answer can be found in Article 10 of the Constitution, which guarantees the 'free development, use and protection of Russian and other languages of national minorities'. Apparently in the end [the Russophones] are a national minority" (Doc.3; emphasis added).

In this case, the author expresses the ambiguity of a linguistic identity forced into an ethnic category. In fact, the Russophones are *not* a national minority (as we have seen, that group is composed in part of indigenous Ukrainians), but rather a language group.

There are no specific provisions in the Ukrainian Constitution for the protection of language groups, as the latter are assumed to correspond to ethnic groups. However, Ukraine has signed the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. This Charter "provides for the use of what it calls regional or minority languages in education and the media, as well as in judicial and administrative settings" (RFE Dec. 28/98). According to some, the Charter is not being respected in Ukraine: "In addition to a violation of international regulative acts [i.e. the European Charter of 1992], the notion of 'language groups' is being replaced with the notion of 'national groups', which does not correspond to the norms of the international community which Ukraine so eagerly wishes to respect" (Doc.4). This author strongly disagrees with a reductive, 'ethnic' definition of Russophones as *Russians only*. This argument for the primacy of the linguistic over the ethnic criterion seems to confirm that Russians resist an exclusion as an (extended) culturally and linguistically-based group, not as ethnic Russians.

Another author claims that "The recent appearance in Ukraine of Russian associations and societies, in addition to a clearly determined tendency of *Russian-speaking citizens* for the defence of their own *cultural* and civil rights - here you have a counter-reaction to the 'velvet Ukrainization'" (Doc.5; emphasis added). Although the author distinguishes between Russian and Russian-speaking, he does merge the two groups' resistance.

Here we clearly see conflicting ways of drawing boundaries, based on a different understanding of the role of language in identity. The Ukrainian state wants a Russian ethnic minority, not a linguistically dominant Russian identity that extends into its ethnic Ukrainian population. As for the Russians, they want to perpetuate the hybrid category of 'Russian-speakers', where Ukrainians, as the 'same people' as Russians, enjoy no special ethnic rights.

Summary

As we have seen in this chapter, Ukraine's language policy is predicated on an ethnic understanding of groups. Likewise, there are no provisions in the law for the protection of 'Russophones' as an identity based on language and culture. As for Russia, it seems to be encouraging exactly the latter kind of hybrid identity rather than an ethnic

Russian identity in Ukraine. The Russians in Ukraine seem to resist as an extended group (and a numerical 'majority') whose characteristics are a 'shared language', a 'shared culture', and a 'shared loyalty' to the idea of 'one Slavic nation'. We are therefore faced with two (simultaneous) symbolic appropriations of the Russophone Ukrainian population: one by the Ukrainian state on the basis of *ethnicity* and the other by Russia and Russians on the basis of *language*.

CONCLUSION

The hypothesis formulated at the beginning of this paper goes as follows: Russians in Ukraine resist a perceived exclusion by the state as an *extended group* based on language and culture (i.e. the 'Russian-speakers') rather than exclusion as *ethnic Russians*.

We have seen that the identity formation resulting from historical contact between Russians and Ukrainians led to the Russian perception of blurry boundaries with Ukrainians. However, the imperial idea of a 'same people' did not imply a real identity between the two people but rather a hierarchy. This perception persisted in Soviet times. As for Ukrainians, they had a tendency to define themselves against a Russian Other. As well, we have seen that Russia's imperial legacy (e.g. the lack of a 'purely Russian' territory) has prevented it from developing a Russian national identity. Instead, Russian identity has evolved, especially outside of Russia, into an imperial hybridity. We have seen that in Ukraine, this sense of hybridity (i.e. a low sense of differentiation with Ukrainians) is more characteristic to the Russian population than a sense of ethnicity. We have also examined Russia's attempts to define the 'Russian-speakers' as a united community, both in terms of language and in terms of loyalty.

Finally, in the letters of protest against linguistic Ukrainization, I found what I had expected to find, i.e. an emphasis on imperial hybridity in resistance (that is, the idea of 'Slavic brotherhood', or the notion of a 'same people' under Russian dominance). The terms 'Russophones' and 'Russian-speaking population' were also common. As well, there seemed to be a sharp interest in the Russophone Ukrainian population and its linguistic rights. And finally, I found a clear objection to an ethnic definition (as opposed to a linguistic definition) of rights. Although I also found some references to *ethnic* Russian culture and elements, their combination with other arguments (e.g. resistance to minority status) allows me to think that the authors were in fact referring to an *extended* Russian culture.

As I suggested in the beginning, the perception of exclusion depends on the type of boundaries drawn. In this case, Ukrainians and Russians draw the boundaries very differently, the former in ethnic terms and the latter in linguistic/cultural terms. If we

were to draw those two boundaries of ethnic and linguistic/cultural self-awareness on a map of Ukraine, we would see considerable overlap in the corresponding spaces of identification.

1) In the Russian (Soviet-style) identity map, the sharpest division is the internal boundary between Eastern and Western Ukraine (considered more significant than that between Ukraine and Russia). Following that division, Ukraine is a state of two cultures and two languages (Russophones in the East, south and center, i.e. 'one people', and Ukrainophones in the West, a 'nationalist' region).

2) In the Ukrainian map based on national consciousness, ethnicity has primacy as a defining element. Ukraine is a state of ethnic Ukrainians, ethnic Russians and other ethnic minorities. By including Russophone Ukrainians in the 'ethnic Ukrainian' category, the Ukrainian state makes the boundary of Russian hybrid self-consciousness recede into that of a minority. The Ukrainian definition of categories is now dominant at the state level, which is why there is resistance.

I believe that Russians do resist as a hybrid group. For Russians, this extended identity has language (and not ethnicity) both as a 'glue' and as an emblem. In fact, "Members of a group who feel their cultural and political identity threatened are likely to make particularly assertive claims about the social importance of maintaining or resurrecting their *language*" (Tabouret-Keller 1997: 319; emphasis added). This (formerly prestigious) extended identity is threatened by the Ukrainian state's ethnic classification of groups. In fact, drawing a line between ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Russians is already taking away an integral part of the 'Russian-speaking' identity, i.e. the Russophone Ukrainians. If the state succeeds in 'de-russifying' the Russophone Ukrainians, then the Russians will no longer exist as an *extended* group in Ukraine. Can the Russian population exist without hybridity? Since it has virtually no experience as an ethnic group or as a minority, it would have to reinvent itself in a radical way.

It is clear that both understandings of identity in Ukraine (exclusively ethnic or exclusively linguistic) are limited. I believe that Ukrainian nation-builders need to pay more attention to a *lived* hybridity in their state, while the Russians need a better understanding of the role of Ukrainian national consciousness in shaping today's Ukraine. Both groups are experiencing a legacy of imperialism and totalitarianism and the

resulting anxieties about their own identities (Motyl 1993:104). Although it may appear paradoxical, I believe that each group can strengthen its own identity and self-confidence only through openness and compassion toward the other group. Indeed, a true acceptance of the Self may only be reached through the acknowledgement of Self in the Other.

Finally, a more in-depth analysis of resistance to linguistic Ukrainization is needed in order to examine variation in the nature of Russian self-awareness in Ukraine. For example, a sample of Russian resistance in Western Ukraine or Crimea might lead to a better understanding of hybridity (or lack thereof) in Ukraine. As well, it may be that the language debate in Ukraine is only symptomatic of a deeper misunderstanding in terms of identity. As the nation-building process in Ukraine continues, scholars should pay attention to other manifestations of this misunderstanding, i.e. tensions in the realm of religion, national wealth redistribution, etc. In any event, a study of the link between identity and resistance seems essential, as "war and peace cannot be understood if the powerful role of identities is ignored" (Tabouret-Keller 1997: 325).

NOTES

¹ For further information on the scholars mentioned in my literature review, please refer to Annex 1.

² For a discussion of this topic, please refer to Edward L. Keenan's article "Muscovite Perceptions of Other East Slavs before 1654 - An Agenda for Historians". In P.J. Potichnyj, M. Raeff, J. Pelenski, G. N. Zekulin, *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*. Edmonton: CIUS, 1992.

³ In metaphorical terms, one could say that supposed cultural similarity between Russians and Ukrainians, as a kind of 'fiction of closeness', became "the stitch masking the wound, [masking] the gap between two shores" (Leila Shebbar quoted in Lidia Curti's article "Between Two Shores". In Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti, eds. *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*. London, New York: Routledge, p.123).

⁴ Kuzio points out that "The Scots, like the Ukrainians, helped in the building of the British and Russian/Soviet empires as the 'younger brothers' of the English and Russians respectively" (1998: 20).

⁵ See Anna Fournier, "The Negotiation of Ukrainian Ethnic Identity in Two Multiethnic Settings: The Former Soviet Union (Armed Forces) and Canada". Honours thesis, McGill University, 1997.

⁶ Russian and Ukrainian are both East Slavic languages. However, Politics aside, it would be quite difficult, if not impossible, to take Ukrainian of the early twentieth century and compare it with contemporary Russian and not see them as obviously different languages. But once the grand imperial design of Russian culture is involved in the assessment, however, differences in phonemic inventories, morphology, semantics, and lexicon could be conveniently ignored (Michael S. Flier, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, e-mail, June 1st, 2000).

Harvard Professor of History Edward L. Keenan points to the comparable historical cases of Castilian/Catalan and French/Provençal (e-mail, June 1st, 2000).

⁷ It has been suggested that *Russian-speakers* are a diaspora. The problem with this idea is that the 'Russian-speaking' label includes non-Russian indigenous populations, and the latter cannot possibly qualify as a diaspora. However, there is no doubt that 'Russian-speakers' as a category of hybrid, imperial identity has been deconstructed by the Ukrainian national discourse. Therefore, those who claim to belong to that category have been dissociated (in the same fashion as a diaspora) from an entity (the USSR) that legitimated and promoted a hybrid identity.

⁸ As we have seen, the presence of Russians on Ukrainian territory is due in large part to immigration. However, Russians may consider themselves 'indigenous' to Ukraine in that they have always *perceived* the latter as being Russia (or at least an extension of Russia). That type of Russian indigenism therefore tends to deny Ukraine's distinct cultural and national character.

⁹ Some Russian populations in Western Ukraine, where the level of ethnic differentiation is more pronounced, may possess more characteristics of diaspora (e.g. cultural retention, mobilization, etc.).

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that Mironov "recently praised the human-rights record of Belarus (see the *Monitor*, Nov.12, 1999; Feb.3), whose re-Sovietization includes a state-enforced policy of linguistic Russification" (*Jamestown Monitor*, Feb.23/00).

¹¹ In the Eastern Ukrainian context, where a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian, as well as a Russified form of Ukrainian are used, the differences between Russian and Ukrainian may well appear insignificant. This mixed use also leads to the perception of Galician Ukrainian as being a 'foreign language' while in fact it is Ukrainian with some regionalisms. In any case, language standardization in Ukraine is based not on Galician Ukrainian but on the Ukrainian spoken in the region of Poltava (Central Ukraine).

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ANNEX 1

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