

**Nation Building in Ukraine:
National Democratic Narratives in Presidential Rhetoric**

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Abstract

This study focuses on nation building in Ukraine, especially on its representation in the presidential rhetoric, which can serve as an indicator for the prospective elites' policies direction. Since the declaration of Independence, Ukrainian elites have been pursuing the course of state and nation building in accordance with general democratic principles.

At the same time, forging a new national identity within the boundaries of the newly independent state entails addressing an inevitable issue of nationalism. How the national democratic agenda is reflected in the presidential rhetoric of the three presidents of Ukraine is discussed in this study.

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INTRODUCTION

After the declaration of Independence in 1991, Ukraine embarked on the course of state and nation building simultaneously with democratization. In outlined by Taras Kuzio four main aspects of Ukraine's transition to democracy, besides important transformations of economic and political systems, Ukraine had to undergo two other transitions in which nationalism was to play a crucial role: development of a unified national identity and a "transition from a subject of empire to an independent state."¹ Similarly to other countries of the region, Ukraine faced the challenges of this transitional process: the political state-building and nation-building choices, forging of national identity, and the dilemmas of nationalism and democracy.

The broad theoretical issue this research is dealing with is the nation-building agenda in the Ukrainian political and media discourse. The presidential rhetoric can serve as the main indicator of the nation-building direction of the state. In this research, I plan to analyze if the nationalist sentiment has been influencing the political discourse related to the process of nation building and democratization in Ukraine from its early days of Independence, through the semi-authoritarian presidency of Leonid Kuchma, which led to the rise of the Ukrainian civil society and the Orange Revolution, till the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko. In the thesis I will examine the presence of the national democratic ideals in the nation-building elites' discourse in Ukraine, assessing three main periods of 1991-1994, 1994-2004 and the post-Orange Revolution years of 2005-2009.

"The goal of nationalism is that the nation and state should as far as possible coincide: each nation should possess a political voice and exercise the right of self-determination," Heywood argues.² In 1991 Ukraine gained its Independence and the long time dream of

¹ Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine: A Four-Pronged Transition," in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 165.

² Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 142.

Ukrainian nationalism came to its fulfillment. As Kubicek notes “in 1991, nationalists were ascendant, as they proved they could mobilize the population and put pressure on political elites, thereby helping to achieve their long-sought goal of Independence.”³ Since then, though, nationalism seemed to retreat to the marginal positions of the political spectrum, remaining only in a form of ideas in the popular rhetoric or the elites’ discourse. The 2004 popular uprising, the Orange Revolution, in Ukraine resulted not only in the democratic election of the third President of Ukraine Mr. Victor Yushchenko and the widely acclaimed establishment of the civil society in the country, but also allegedly led to the consolidation of national consciousness and resulted in the shift in people’s perceptions toward their national identity.

In regards to the presidential rhetoric, it is commonly assumed that the third president of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko favored more nationalistically prone narratives and soon was popularly dubbed as the “first ‘Ukrainian’ president” unlike his Russophone predecessor Kuchma and moderate old-*nomenklatura* representative Kravchuk. In this paper by comparing how Yushchenko’s rhetoric differed from the rhetoric of his predecessors in the presidential office Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma, I will test the assumption that by using nationalistically charged rhetoric only the third President of Ukraine has been introducing national-patriotic ideas in his speeches and promoting the resurrection of national memory and strengthening of national identity as the decisive constituent part of the nation-building process.

While the issue of state and nation building in Ukraine was addressed by many scholars – notably Kuzio, Motyl, Harasymiw and others – the question of the national democratic agenda influence on the state- and nation-building presidential rhetoric has been underrepresented in the scholarly discourse. This question, I would argue, is an important

³ Paul Kubicek, “What Happened to the Nationalists in Ukraine,” *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics* 5, no. 1 (1999): 29.

one, since as Kulyk points out, the analysis of both explicit and implicit messages sent by the elites' words could ensure understanding of the subsequent state's policies on nation building.⁴ According to Wolczuk, the Ukrainian moderate right wing – the national democrats, who were ascendant at the very beginning of the Ukrainian Independence, viewed the essence of the nationhood concept as the right for the self-determination of the Ukrainian ethnic nation (*natsiia*) within the boundaries of the nation state.⁵ Consequently, these national democrats' views on the national question in Ukraine were to a certain extent reflected in the first president Kravchuk's rhetoric on nation building, whereas almost omitted in his successor Kuchma's stance, who prioritized the idea of strong statehood over the idea of national self-determination of the ethnic majority.⁶ Whether the national democrats' ideals have returned in the nation-building stance of the third president of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko will be analyzed in this thesis. Within the context of elites' rhetoric, the progress of the nation-building process and its representation in the local media will be examined.

The first chapter of the thesis provides the general theoretical framework of democratization simultaneously with national self-determination within which the analysis of the presidential rhetoric can be regarded. The second chapter discusses the nation-building process in Ukraine, outlines its main attributes, established mythology, historical narratives accepted on the state level as guidance for the nation-building effort of the elites. The third chapter gives an outline of the methodology used, research questions and sub-questions and defines primary sources used for the analysis. The fourth part of the thesis analyzes the official narratives on nation building, national idea and national identity as articulated by the

⁴ Volodymyr Kulyk, "Constructing Common Sense: Language and ethnicity in Ukrainian Public Discourse," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29, no. 2 (2006): 282.

⁵ Kataryna Wolczuk, "History, Europe and the "National Idea": the "Official" Narrative of National Identity in Ukraine," *Nationalities Papers* 28, no. 4 (2006): 678.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 677, 678.

three presidents of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, Leonid Kuchma and Viktor Yushchenko and evaluates the presence of nationalist agenda and national democrats' ideals in the presidential rhetoric. The final part, which concentrates on media response and reflection of the nation-building directions pointed by the presidential rhetoric, is followed by the concluding remarks.

In this thesis, Ukraine represents the broader case of the nation-building process that might be characteristic for a number of the Soviet successor states, which after gaining its formal independence embarked on the course of forging the distinctive national identity. The cases of three presidential periods in this paper represent the level of the presence and influence of the national democratic ideals of nationhood on the executive elites' nation-building discourse and, consequently, policies within the framework of their proclaimed course toward democratization and creation of the inclusive political nation.

CHAPTER 1. DEMOCRATIZATION AND NATIONALISM

In this chapter the theoretical perspective to the process of democratization and nation building is provided. Analyzing the relationship between nationalism and democracy, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan claim that states in their transition to democracy face not only the challenge of transformation of a nondemocratic regime into the new democratic system but also the challenge of state and nation building simultaneously with democracy establishment.⁷ According to Harris, “nearly all Eastern European transitions were at the same time movements for national liberation – either from an oppressive regime, or from Soviet tutelage, and mostly from both. In this sense the inauguration of democracy in the region amounts to the creation of new sovereign states, a fact that has many implications for democracy and its consolidation.”⁸

The presence of nationalism in the democratization process is inevitable, since as Harris points out “democracy presupposes a political unit (state), whilst the unit is usually a nation-state which came into existence as a result of national self-determination of one dominant culturally defined nation.”⁹ According to Kuzio nationalism is an “ideology common to all civic liberal democracies. In other words, all political parties that uphold the continued independence of the nation state are state (civic) nationalists.”¹⁰

According to Heywood, nationalism was born in the mid nineteen century during the French Revolution¹¹ as a political doctrine “that a nation, or all nations, should be self-governing.”¹² Starting as an idea, which was entertained mostly by the educated middle class, “by the end of the nineteenth century nationalism had become a truly popular movement with

⁷ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 16.

⁸ Erika Harris, *Nationalism and Democratisation: Politics of Slovakia and Slovenia* (Ashgate Publishing, 2002), 13.

⁹ Harris, 45.

¹⁰ Taras Kuzio, “Nationalism in Ukraine: Towards a New Framework,” *Politics* 20, no. 2 (2000): 78.

¹¹ Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 137.

¹² *Ibid.*, 136.

the spread of flags, national anthems, patriotic poetry and literature, public ceremonies and national holidays.”¹³ Heywood argues that in order to understand the nationalist doctrine one should clearly define and distinguish between the concepts of ‘nation’ and ‘state’: “a ‘nation’ is a cultural entity, a collection of people bound together by shared values and traditions, for example by common language, religion and history, and usually occupying the same geographical area.”¹⁴ Whereas “a state is a political association, which enjoys sovereignty, supreme or unrestricted power, within defined borders.”¹⁵

Ernest Gellner defines nationalism as a political principle in essence: “Nations as a natural, God given way of classifying men, as an inherent though long-delayed political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures; that is a reality, for better or worse, and in general an inescapable one.”¹⁶ Miroslav Hroch argues that Gellner’s idea of a nationalism creating the nations is fundamentally misleading, since the national sentiment does not disappear after the nation is established.¹⁷

While some see democracy as incompatible with nationalism, both concepts share important similarities: as Erika Harris points out “both are associated with popular sovereignty and participation from below meaning rights, beliefs, expectations and interests, in short both are rooted in the idea that all political authority stems from the people.”¹⁸ At the same time both concepts might differ at what sense – political or ethno-cultural – is invested in the definition of ‘the people’. In this regard Harris introduces the notion of “post-independence” nationalism, which affects the transition to democracy, stressing that most

¹³ Ibid., 138.

¹⁴ Ibid., 141.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Blackwell 1983), 49.

¹⁷ Miroslav Hroch, “An Unwelcome national identity, or what to do about ‘nationalism’ in the post-communist countries?” in *Comparative studies in Modern European History. Nation, Nationalism, Social change* (Ashgate Variorum 2007), 267

¹⁸ Harris, 46.

importantly an aspiring democratizing state needs “a unified nation in a political, not a cultural sense.”¹⁹

1.1 Ukrainian Nationalist Tradition

In regards to Ukrainian nationalism, John Armstrong argues that “it is not to the criteria of religion, folkways or language that the adherents of Ukrainian nationalism have appealed; more basic has been the evocation of a common historical tradition, the claim that the Ukrainian people, once great and independent, had lost their heritage.”²⁰ According to Armstrong, in the 19th century the Ukrainian nation belonged to the class of European nations that did not have a memory of statehood, consequently they had to find the grounds for their claim for their own state, research history, establish and disseminate the national myths among masses.²¹ Referring to Anderson’s terminology, Ukrainians had to create their imagined community and as Armstrong points out “since it was vital to the emerging nation that its language and its history be embodied in works, which could inspire loyalty, it was only natural that the leaders of the nationalist movement should have been writers.”²²

The pattern of the establishment of Ukrainian nationalism can be regarded within the framework of nationalism emergence in Eastern Europe offered by Miroslav Hroch. He defines the fundamental phases of the national awakening and revival: the period of scholarly interest in everything national “a passionate concern on the part of a group of individuals, usually intellectuals, for the study of the language, the culture, the history of the oppressed nationality.”²³ Then comes the period of patriotic agitation, when the group of nationally conscious elites spread the national ideas among the population. Finally, the third stage of

¹⁹ Ibid., 60.

²⁰ John Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism* (Ukrainian Academic Press, 1990), 4.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Miroslav Hroch, *Social preconditions of national revival in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 22.

Hroch's classification, the actual rise of the mass national movement that immediately follows the mass dissemination of the patriotic sentiments and ideas.²⁴ Serhy Yekelchuk argues that the different geopolitical factors, which had been influencing the emergence of Ukrainian nationalism and national movement make all simple models and schemes inapplicable in a way that it is difficult to draw the clear line between the first academic interest stage and the establishment of the political nationalist organizations, responsible for national agitation in Ukraine.²⁵

Andrew Wilson argues that "if nations are 'imagined communities' constructed out of a plausible pre-modern past, the modern Ukraine state has a relative paucity of material with which to work. The various regions that make up modern Ukraine have moved in and out of Ukrainian history at different times, but never really interacted together as an ensemble."²⁶ Consequently, the author perceived certain difficulties in creating such an imagined community based on common history, because the Ukrainian historical legacy "expressed in the ethnic, linguistic and religious differences between the regions, seriously limits the natural support base for the nationalist cause."²⁷

Yekelchuk points out that the issue of constructing Ukrainian history has been a crucial one for Ukrainian statesmen and scholars, especially in light of the fact that traditional political history and the trends of state building are being inapplicable toward one of the world's youngest states.²⁸ According to Yekelchuk "contemporary Ukraine can be presented as a direct descendant of medieval Kyivan Rus, the seventeenth-century Cossack polity, and the 1918-1920 Ukrainian People's Republic, but these episodes of statehood do not link to a

²⁴ Ibid., 23.

²⁵ Serhy Yekelchuk, *Ukraine. Birth of a Modern Nation* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 8.

²⁶ Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s. A Minority Faith* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 25.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Yekelchuk, 5.

coherent story.”²⁹ Also, Yekelchuk argues against the widespread scholarly perception on what constitutes a basis for national identity; in his view it is not common religion and language but “nationalist mobilization – the political and cultural work of intellectuals – that transform a population into a modern nation.”³⁰

1.2 Nationalist Agenda and the Independent State

According to Motyl nationalism in Ukraine holds minimal responsibility for the country’s Independence, although playing an important role in its history; it is rather the mixture of external and internal developments in the respective former mother countries of the Ukrainian lands – be it Austria-Hungary, Tsarist Russia or the Soviet empire – which actually propelled Ukraine to its sovereign statehood.³¹ Eventually, in the 20th century, “Nationalists pushed the process along [...] but without the decay of totalitarianism and the collapse of the Soviet empire their efforts could not have transformed Ukraine from the colonial territory into an independent polity.”³² As Motyl notes, out of the three nationalists’ attempts to build the independent Ukrainian state – the initial attempt, which coincided with the collapse of the tsarist Russia, and the second one with World War II and its redrawing of borders – in the twentieth century only the third attempt coinciding with the decay of the Soviet Union in 1991 was successful, solely due to the most favorable external circumstances.³³ The course for *perestroika* and *glasnost* declared by Gorbachev, which resulted in the demise of the Soviet empire, also contributed to the emergence of many local nationalisms, including Ukrainian.³⁴

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 7.

³¹ Alexander Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence. Ukraine After Totalitarianism*. (Council on Foreign Relations Press, NY, 1993), 23.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 17.

The particular feature of the Ukrainian nationalism, which is defined by the constant presence of the “Other” represented by Russia in the nationalist discourse, has been widely discussed by the scholars. Paul D’Anieri argues that Ukraine’s contemporary fixation on sovereignty and important role of nationalism stems from the national identity disputes with Russia.³⁵ Along the same lines Wilson points out that “in Ukrainian nationalist mythology Ukraine and Russia are diametrical opposites and their cultures and histories are essentially antagonistic.”³⁶ Alexander Motyl points out another distinctive feature of Ukrainian nationalism ideology: the nation above the state, rather than the state above the nation, the nation creating the state rather than the state reinforcing and creating the nation.³⁷ While working on this research paper, I will attempt to examine if the early philosophy of Ukrainian nationalists continue to be reflected in the present day political discourse on the examples of the presidential rhetoric.

Furtado points out that “Ukrainian elites both in government and opposition, have adopted an approach of social nationalism that has studiously sought to avoid exclusive ethnic criteria as a condition of citizenship or of economic and social advancement.”³⁸ Along the same lines, Yekelchuk argues that Ukraine has embraced the model of civic nationhood rather than ethnic exclusive model that welcomes only ethnic Ukrainians: “The ideal of Independent Ukraine as a state for ethnic Ukrainians where their language and culture should finally become dominant, is common currency in the country’s media and political discourse, but it usually reflects a protest against the persistent influence of “imperial” Russia rather than exclusive ethnic nationalism.”³⁹ Moreover, “given the strong ethnic connotation of the

³⁵ Paul D’Anieri, “Nationalism and international politics: Identity and sovereignty in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 3, no. 2 (1997): 1.

³⁶ Wilson, 1.

³⁷ Alexander Motyl, *The Turn to the right: The ideological origins and development of Ukrainian nationalism 1919-1929* (East European Monographs, 1980), 164.

³⁸ Charles F. Furtado, “Nationalism and Foreign Policy in Ukraine,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 109 (1994), 92.

³⁹ Yekelchuk, 194.

Ukrainian word *natsiia* (nation understood as ethnocultural entity), the foundational documents of Ukrainian statehood speak instead of the “people of Ukraine” or a multinational “Ukrainian people.”⁴⁰

Motyl argues that Ukrainian nationalism, even the inclusive type of it, still “views the ethnically Ukrainian nation as the cornerstone of state-building,”⁴¹ which creates ideological problems in accommodating large minorities, notably Russians, within the new national identity. At the same time, Motyl points out that the inclusionary Ukrainian nationalism had to be reinforced as a necessary prerequisite for state building: “the people of Ukraine must first possess a Ukrainian identity before they can help build a distinctly Ukrainian state.”⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence*, 80.

⁴² Ibid., 74.

CHAPTER 2. NATION BUILDING IN UKRAINE

This chapter investigates the issues and challenges of nation building in independent Ukraine. The first nation-consolidating symbols introduced in the political discourse and more or less reflecting the self-perceptions of the major part of the Ukrainian population are also discussed.

Before the three modern attempts to create the sovereign independent state, Ukraine had periods of statehood or successful claims for such, which are now comprise the main nation-building narratives of the modern Ukraine, and also are frequently mentioned in elites rhetoric. First of all, the medieval kingdom Kyivan Rus, which power raised in the period from tenth to thirteen century, when its capital Kyiv “was a major center of trade, Orthodox Christianity and old Slavic Culture.”⁴³ After the eventual collapse of the kingdom, Ukraine became “a frontier zone that for several centuries remained at the intersection of the continually shifting borders of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Ottoman Empire, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Crimean Tatar Khanate, and Muskovy,”⁴⁴ Motyl notes.

The second important pre-modern history period, when Ukraine was not a sovereign state but very close to obtaining its political independence, is the mid-seventeenth century Cossack Hetmanate and the anti-Polish Cossack uprising led by hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky, which now constitute the second important pillar of the Ukrainian national identity.⁴⁵ The Khmelnytsky’s 1654 treaty with the Moscow’s tsar, according to many historians led to the eventual dissolution of the Cossack polity and yet again the assimilation of the Ukrainian political proto-elites within the Russian ranks and within centuries to

⁴³ Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence*, 24.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 27.

“integration into the Russian polity and economy.”⁴⁶ As it logically follows from Motyl’s argument and historical account of Ukraine, the seeds of the future political cleavages, cultural and political peculiarities of the modern Ukraine had been planted as back in ages as Kyivan Rus with its propensity to both stable rule and the internecine feuds; or Hetmanate, which had had features of proto-democratic state but also was marred with the frequent lack of unity within the high rank leaders.

The twentieth century collapse of the Russian Empire brought yet another challenge for the Ukrainian, as well as for other non-Russian peoples of the empire. The necessity of independence as the shield against the Bolshevik takeover was complicated by unpreparedness to establish the state, lack of the formal statehood attributes and military power; the Ukrainian leaders were helpless, as Motyl points out “they reacted to events in Russia, they squabbled over utopian schemes, they shifted positions and changed alliances, they fought on several fronts – and in the end they lost.”⁴⁷

The Soviet rule, as Motyl notes, devastated Ukraine on all accounts from huge population losses – including those in the artificially created Great Famine and in years of the Soviet terror – to cultural losses when Ukraine “not only became a cultural backwater with almost no ties to the rest of the world but also lost most of its historical memory.”⁴⁸ Anticipating things, it is worth mentioning that it is exactly the revival of the historical memory has proved to be one of the most painful and difficult tasks for the future nation builders of the independent state. At the same time, Motyl points out that it is during the Soviet rule, unlike all previous subordinate statuses within the Russian or Habsburg empire, Ukraine “acquired all the prerequisites of statehood,”⁴⁹ more or less established borders where all ethnic Ukrainians were unified, its own industry,

⁴⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 35.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 36.

educational system, bureaucracy, and some sort of local administration that eventually constituted the core of the newly independent state.

2.1 National Identity Issue

Motyl argues that Ukraine's 1991 Independence was not so much won, but more given to the Ukrainian nationalists as well as to its population, which although voted overwhelmingly for Independence on the referendum in 1991 was far from nationally consolidated in such decision.⁵⁰ National identity issue since the 1991 has been subordinate to the state-building attempts. In the beginning years of the Ukrainian independence, the state building was the highest priority for the elites, since it had been seen as "the *sine qua non* of Ukrainian independence and the guarantee of Ukraine's survival in a post-Soviet order dominated by a seemingly threatening Russia."⁵¹

Evaluating the public opinion polls of the 1990s, Bohdan Harasymiw draws a conclusion that the issue of a strong sovereign state' creation dominated in the public agenda of the first decade of Independence over the issues of national interests and national identity.⁵² Had the statesmen paid more attention to the forging of common national identity, the state building process could have benefited as well, since as Motyl argues, "national identity provides for consensus, for a shared set of values and word views, and these in turn encourage the emergence of social institutions and democratic [...] rules of the game."⁵³

In Monroe Price's view, national identity is nothing else than "the set of political views and cultural attitudes that help maintain the existing power structure."⁵⁴ According to

⁵⁰ Ibid., 43.

⁵¹ Ibid., 70.

⁵² Bohdan Harasymiw, *Post-Communist Ukraine*, (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2002), 229-230.

⁵³ Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence*, 72.

⁵⁴ Monroe E. Price, *Media and Sovereignty: The Global Information Revolution and Its Challenge to State Power* (The MIT Press, 2002), 32.

the author, the country's power structures – governments, interest groups – construct the concept of national identity by skillfully using myths and history and through domestic media reinforce that imagery over the country's citizens in order to gain their loyalty.⁵⁵ Therefore, in Price's view, the concept of national identity is constructed and further solidified by the country's various power structures by skilful invocation of national myths and history.⁵⁶ In Heywood words, "Nations usually share a common history and traditions. National identity is often preserved by recalling the glories of past history, national independence, birthday of national leaders or important military victories."⁵⁷

Motyl points out that solely ethnic values cannot represent the nationwide discourse or all-national worldview and argues that the new Ukrainian elites in the 1990s and further had to "not only refashion neglected ethnic identities, but also forge thoroughly new national ones involving popular allegiance to myths and symbols that are neither narrowly ethnic nor conceptually vapid."⁵⁸ According to George Schopflin, myth is a set of beliefs that nation holds about itself; the way the nations "establish and determine the foundations of their own being, their own system of morality and values."⁵⁹ Schopflin argues that myth constitutes the nation and the skillful invocation of the national myths can establish a strong sense of kinship and solidarity among people.⁶⁰

Several myths identified by Schopflin in *Myths and Nationhood*⁶¹ can be applicable to Ukrainian history discourse. It is a myth of territory that belongs to the nation and the myth of military valor⁶² with the Western Ukrainian glorification of the anti-Soviet resistance and recreation in the public memory of the more historically distant examples of the free-spirited

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Heywood, 144.

⁵⁸ Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence*, 79.

⁵⁹ George Schopflin, "The function of myth and a taxonomy of myths" in *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. by George Schopflin and Geoffrey Hosking, (Routledge, 1997), 19.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 29-35.

⁶² Ibid.

Cossacks with their unprecedented victories over the stronger Polish armies in the 17th century. The myth of kinship and shared descent and, especially, the myth of ethnogenesis and antiquity⁶³ also play an important role in Ukrainian contemporary mythopoeia. Since the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv, was the center of the medieval Kyivan Rus this myth is among those, which are readily accepted by all Ukrainians despite their personal ideological views or ethnic origin.

According to Motyl, the new Ukrainian national identity had “to be crafted on the basis of myths and symbols that also incorporate the millions of Russians and Russified Ukrainians.”⁶⁴ Taras Kuzio points out that the myths, symbols and history are important components of a nation-building program, since they can form, develop and sustain the national consciousness and national identity.⁶⁵ In the aftermath of the declaration of the Ukrainian independence, the old communist elites painted in the new national colors and officially debunking and banning the old communist symbols and myths, embarked on their own course of national identity forging. This new course had to be balanced in order to fit the interests and beliefs of not only different ethnicities residing in the state but also the post-colonial mentality of many Ukrainians formed by the decades of the Soviet domination and the influence of its propaganda machine. As Wolczuk notes, “the elite embarked on the project of historicizing Ukraine's identity by highlighting only selected historical themes, periods and figures in pre-Soviet history.”⁶⁶

In regards to national constitutive myths of the distant past, Motyl defines two main themes of Ukrainian national identity, love for the land and love for freedom: “Love of land, this land, presumably translates into patriotism, and putative peasant virtues, such as honesty

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence*, 72.

⁶⁵ Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building*, (Routledge, 1998), 198.

⁶⁶ Wolczuk, 682.

and hard work, are just what a new nation and a new state need.”⁶⁷ The cultural self-perception of Ukrainians as “a freedom loving peasant nation”⁶⁸ found its symbolical embodiment in the figure of 19th century nation poet Taras Shevchenko, whose poetry main and most powerful topic was Ukraine, its liberation and prospective thrive.

The important Ukrainian constitutive myth that relates not to poetic expression of freedom and liberation but to actual warfare is the Cossack polity – the Hetmanate. As Motyl argues, besides the embodiment of “a kind of raucous democratic order,”⁶⁹ and the glorification of individualism and free spirit, “the Cossacks represent just what the contemporary Ukraine presumably wants and needs to create: a community of individuals ostensibly committed to freedom and the well-being of the multiethnic entity they represent.”⁷⁰

Kyivan Rus represents the historic continuity of the state and the nation in the contemporary historiography of Ukraine. As Motyl points out: “Claiming lineage from a large and powerful medieval state enhances national pride and prestige even today.”⁷¹ It is notable that the initial myths that were introduced by the nation-builders in the Independent Ukraine were largely non-controversial, readily accepted by the majority of the population and not fuelling ethnical, cultural or political divisions. In addition to myths from the past, the Independent Ukraine had to present the myths promising and defining the future. Motyl distinguishes three such myths revolving around the prospective potential of Ukraine, its peaceful aspirations and the role of the linchpin of stability in the region and, most

⁶⁷ Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence*, 85.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 86.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 87.

⁷¹ Ibid., 88.

importantly, its aspiration to be an integral part of Europe, since “from the Ukrainian point of view, while Ukrainians supposedly represent Europe, Russians allegedly incarnate Asia.”⁷²

Besides the distant past symbols and myths, which constitute the Ukrainian mythology, the new symbols were evoked in the popular and political discourse. One of such powerful tragic symbols is the Great Famine of 1932-33, (in Ukrainian – Holodomor, literally “death inflicted by hunger”). As Motyl argues, “for Ukrainians the famine has assumed mythic proportions. [...] The famine symbolizes the horror of the Soviet experience, the curse of Russian domination, and the necessity of Ukrainian liberation.”⁷³ According to Motyl Ukrainians “perceive the famine as the culmination of centuries of Russian oppression.”⁷⁴ Banned from mentioning and erased from history books in Soviet time, Holodomor “became one of the nationalist movement’s major rallying cries in 1988-1991,”⁷⁵ and after the declaration of Independence was placed among the tragic symbols, which forever shaped and irrevocably traumatized the nation; as Motyl points out during the famine “Ukrainian peasantry, which at that time was the core of the Ukrainian nation, was crushed.”⁷⁶

It should be noted that with the exception of the Great Famine, not all the blank spots from the past history has been brought to the political discourse. As Wolczuk argues, “contentious issues in the twentieth century, such as the activities of the Organization of the Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and its military arm, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which waged a struggle against the Soviet Union in Western Ukraine in the 1940s and early 1950s, have been largely avoided”⁷⁷ in the elites’ public speeches.

⁷² Ibid., 89.

⁷³ Ibid., 14.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Wolczuk, 682.

2.2 Nation Building in Ukraine

Nation building theory, according to Kolsto, provides that the national consolidation and integration lead to the establishment of a nation state.⁷⁸ As Harasymiw sums up, nation building as the process of country's citizens unification and integration as belonging to one nation – either in civic sense or in ethnic sense – requires the establishment of unified national institutions, which in turn are responsible for producing the symbols of “national” unity.⁷⁹ Nationalism, therefore, can become an integral part of nation-building process.

Nation building, as Kuzio points out, is the continuous process, which aims “to integrate and harmonize the regional, social, political and institutional divisions of peoples within one community” and to create “a consciousness that binds together the population.”⁸⁰ Harasymiw defines the nation-building policies in Ukraine as those “pursuing the development of a political rather than ethnic nationality”⁸¹ with additional encouragement of the European identity; while at the same time notes the historical inclination to support ethnic-related ingredients of the nation-building process. Kuzio points out the scholarly view that the nation can be considered as established when “a group of people accept a set of beliefs regarding their past, present and future.”⁸²

According to Harasymiw, the nation-building process of creation and integration of a Ukrainian political nation, in the post-Soviet Ukraine was challenged by its “incomplete sense of community,” which inhibited even the Constitutional adoption of the main state symbols.⁸³ The necessary for nation building inculcation of the feeling of loyalty to the state and the nation, and, especially, the process of distinguishing the Ukrainian nation as separate

⁷⁸ Pal Kolsto, *Political Construction Sites. Nation-Building in Russia and the Post-Soviet States*, (Westview Press, 2000), 16.

⁷⁹ Harasymiw, 204.

⁸⁰ Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building*, (Routledge, 1998), 119.

⁸¹ Harasymiw, 242.

⁸² Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building*, 121.

⁸³ Harasymiw, 206.

from the Russian, constituted another set of challenging tasks for the Ukrainian elites of the 1990s and beyond. Harasymiw argues that the whole nation-building project in Ukraine was complicated by the significant Russian and other ethnic minorities presence and the language division, especially when “the political salience of language has been, and may continue to be, much greater than that of ethnicity” in Ukraine.⁸⁴ Certain historical legacies that created political, cultural and linguistic difference among ethnic Ukrainians – in Kuzio’s words Ukrainian case is a case of “titular population divided by Russification”⁸⁵ more than really multiethnic population – had to also be taken into account in the process of state and nation building.

The next important nation-building obstacle was the religious division in Ukraine. One Greek Catholic Church and three Orthodox Churches including one of Moscow Patriarchate dominate the religious sphere in the country, while none of them can claim to be representative of the unified Ukrainian national identity.⁸⁶ It should be noted, however, that religion issue has not been decisive in nation-building policies and practices,⁸⁷ since unlike language, religious question has never been the same politicized. Harasymiw notes that Kuchma offered a unification of three Orthodox Churches in Ukraine only in 2000, and it has not yet become the part of nation-building agenda for the elites.⁸⁸

In addition to such important political factor responsible for country’s cleavages as language, there is country’s regional divide between East and West, which occurred due to many historical and political circumstances.⁸⁹ While Eastern Ukraine both culturally and politically was for hundredth of years a subordinate to Russian Empire and for 70 years to the

⁸⁴ Harasymiw, 208.

⁸⁵ Taras Kuzio, “Belarus and Ukraine: Democracy Building in a Grey Security Zone,” in *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe*, ed. Jan Zielonka (Oxford University Press, 2001), 483.

⁸⁶ Harasymiw, 212.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 212.

Soviet rule, the incorporation of Western Ukraine – parts which were under the continuous influence of Poland and Austria-Hungary in different periods of time – into the Soviet Union started in 1939 and in the post-World War II geopolitical redraw of the map of the world, Transcarpathia and northern Bukovyna were also added to the territory of the Ukrainian Socialist Republic.⁹⁰ The historical legacies of Western rule and Russian-Soviet rule continue to exhibit in the political and cultural characteristics of each region as well as define the ethnic composition of more pro-Ukrainian West and pro-Russian East. Kuzio argues that “the transition from ethnies to nation was only allowed to happen by the external ruling powers in Austria-ruled Western Ukraine. In eastern Ukraine, except for the brief interlude during the struggle for Ukrainian independence in 1917-1920 and the Ukrainization campaign of the 1920s, the Ukrainian ethnies was not permitted to evolve into a modern nation.”⁹¹

In Kuzio’s view the theory of Brubaker on nationalizing states is not applicable to Ukraine, since there are no social, cultural or political restrictions for non-ethnic Ukrainians’ needs or obstacles for their political or social advancements.⁹² Upon the declaration of Independence, “citizenship and civil rights were granted automatically to everybody resident of Ukraine”⁹³ unlike for example post-Soviet Latvia and Estonia. In addition, Crimea, where the majority of the population was non-ethnic Ukrainians was given the status of autonomy. Consequently, according to Kuzio, “the choice facing Ukraine was never one of an ethnic versus a civic state promoted by Kravchuk and Kuchma respectively. Instead, the choice was between a civic/ethnic state based upon Ukrainians as the sole titular nation or Ukrainians/Russians both recognized as titular nations.”⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Ibid., 213.

⁹¹ Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building*, 230.

⁹² Ibid., 125.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Outlined in works of Smith and Anderson attributes of a nation – established territory, common history and culture, media, single economy etc. – are given different level of priority by different Ukrainian nation builders and decision makers.⁹⁵ According to Kuzio, Leonid Kuchma prioritized economy in his nation-building policies.⁹⁶ Harasymiw argues that the political decision makers' policies aimed at nation building in the 1990s "have had little effect on creating that shared sense of belonging, loyalty and distinctness from Russia."⁹⁷ At the same time, according to Kuzio's observations, the first president of Ukraine Leonid Kravchuk "supported the national revival, a return of national traditions and the recovering of the historical memory of Ukrainians. [...] Ukraine's government and leadership during the Kravchuk era worked towards creating a new set of values to fill the spiritual void that had appeared after the collapse of communism and the former USSR. This new values included national culture, language and identities [...]."⁹⁸ Even though Kuzio points out the mostly declamatory character of such "Ukrainization" not always reflected in the relevant policies, the process of reviving the status and "the prestige of the Ukrainian language and culture"⁹⁹ had started.

Kuzio points out that for Ukrainians "it is not a question of choosing either a political or an ethnic nation – but both simultaneously."¹⁰⁰ As for the national idea upon the essence of which the elites were mostly unclear, lacking consensus and hesitant, with time of the Independent existence it started to acquire shape of the one "based upon ethnic and civic elements where Ukrainians were defined as the titular or core nation."¹⁰¹ The adopted in June

⁹⁵ Ibid., 121.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁹⁷ Harasymiw, 242.

⁹⁸ Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building*, 127.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 129.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 126.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 143.

of 1996 Constitution, finally “legally confirmed that Ukrainians are the titular nation and the core of the political nation in the making.”¹⁰²

Drawing on the above it can be concluded that for the Ukrainian elites the nation building process had to be started with promoting appropriate language policies (i.e. establishing Ukrainian as the only official state language while guaranteeing the free national languages use of other state minorities¹⁰³), the creation of a unified national Church and finding the national idea unifying the culturally and ethnically different regions of the country. The issue of how these and other nation-building directions had been exhibited in the elites rhetoric will constitute the essence of the Chapter 4 of this paper.

¹⁰² Ibid., 119.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 222.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter outlines the research questions, the hypothesis, the scope of the primary sources to examine, methodology and the general analysis strategy developed to address the research questions.

3.1 Research Questions

By conducting this research I plan to answer the following questions:

- *What nation-building direction is exhibited in the presidential rhetoric in Ukraine?*
- *Does the nationalist sentiment and national democratic agenda influence the political discourse on nation building?*

The following sub-questions will also be addressed:

- *What kind of national identity has been constructed by the presidential rhetoric of the three presidents of Ukraine?*
- *What issues and why were given greater prominence in the political discourse?*
- *How/whether this national identity image and nation-building stance were retranslated in the local print media?*

In order to answer the research questions, I plan to construct three cases each representing a particular period in national discourse: the period of new Independence of 1991 with the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk as the example of old *nomenklatura* victory over the national democratic forces represented by People's Movement of Ukraine leader Vyacheslav Chornovil (this first elections in Independent Ukraine showed the first signs of political cleavage that continues to divide the country till now); the period of Leonid Kuchma presidency of 1994-2004; and the period of Viktor Yushchenko's presidency after the Orange Revolution, which allegedly raised sense of national identity among Ukrainians.

Was there a particular pattern of the nation-building narrative through the major historical periods of Independent Ukraine such as the 1991 – the time of Declaration of Independence and the establishment of main political institutions and 2004 – the period of Orange Revolution and the rise of the civil society in Ukraine? My *hypothesis* is that while in 1991 and immediately after, the main national idea revolved around the formal establishment of Independence and sovereignty of Ukraine, in 2004 the focus shifted toward the emphasized national memory issues and the creation of “the other”, and more straightforward introduction of national myths and symbols in the political discourse.

3.2 Methodology

In this research both textual content analysis and discourse analysis will be conducted. According to Richardson, “discourse analysis involves an analysis of texts as they are embedded within and relate to, social conditions of production and consumption,”¹⁰⁴ which importantly differs from the textual analysis as the “looking at the linguistic form and content of the texts.”¹⁰⁵ Discourse – “the flow of text and speech through time”¹⁰⁶ always has “historical roots”¹⁰⁷, as Wodak argues. Crawford points out that “discourse analysis assumes that discourse – the content and construction of meaning and the organization of knowledge in a particular realm – is central to social and political life. Discourse set the terms of intelligibility of thought, speech and action.”¹⁰⁸

According to Wodak, “discourses about nations and national identities rely on at least four types of discursive macro-strategies: constructive strategies (aiming at the construction

¹⁰⁴ John E. Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 39.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰⁶ Ruth Wodak, “What CDA is about – a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments,” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (SAGE Publications, 2001), 9.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Neta C. Crawford “Understanding discourse: a method of ethical argument analysis,” *Qualitative Methods*, Spring (2004), 22.

of national identities), preservative or justificatory strategies (aiming at the conservation and reproduction of national identities or narratives of identity), transformative strategies (aiming at the change of national identities), and destructive strategies (aiming at the dismantling of national identities).¹⁰⁹ The presidential rhetoric, therefore can be expected to exhibit all above outlined macro-strategies, since its aim is to dismantle the previously inculcated Soviet national identity, change it into the new national identity common for the citizens of the country and work on its establishment and reproduction.

According to Richardson, in conducting textual and discourse analysis attention should be paid to words, since “words convey the imprint of society and of value judgments in particular – they convey connoted as well as denoted meanings. All types of words, but particularly nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs carry connoted in addition to denoted meanings.”¹¹⁰ Other necessary stages in analyzing the discourse include the study of narrative used, the metaphorical frameworks and the hyperboles employed, etc.¹¹¹ According to Wodak, critical discourse analysis includes three main concepts: “the concept of power, the concept of history and the concept of ideology.”¹¹² As Wodak points out, critical discourse analysis and critical linguistics are “fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language.”¹¹³

According to Jager, the first step in conducting discourse analysis is selection of the investigation object and determining the location where the investigation object can be

¹⁰⁹ Ruth Wodak, “The discourse-historical approach” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (SAGE Publications, 2001), 72.

¹¹⁰ Richardson, 47.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 67-71.

¹¹² Ruth Wodak, “What CDA is about – a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments,” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (SAGE Publications, 2001), 3.

¹¹³ Ibid., 2.

expressed.¹¹⁴ In case of this research, the presidential rhetoric can serve as an indicator of the nation-building aspirations and the political course of the ruling elites, and the periodicals provide the important medium of this information dissemination in the society. The Independence Day media and elites' discourse provide the necessary "location" of the nation-building and possibly nationalistic rhetoric. Therefore, the material for the research includes speeches and the possible reaction to them in the media (here, selected print media) and the media discourse related to Independence Day in general. The linguistic exhibitions and manifestations of nationalist motifs in the presidential rhetoric will be searched for, i.e. metaphors, comparisons, allusions to history and nationally defining historical moments. The main nation-related attributes of the historical discourse are discussed in the chapter 3 dedicated to nation building in the Independent Ukraine.

In order to assess if the presidential rhetoric has changed in regards to the main nation-building directions, I plan to conduct a textual and discourse analysis of the selected sample of Presidents of Ukraine speeches given throughout 1991-2009. I will particularly concentrate on the speeches given on special nationally important occasion such as Independence Day. When conducting a textual analysis of the Independence Day addresses to the nation, I will look for:

- The repetition of particular themes;
- The recurring narratives in the presidential speeches (who is included/excluded from the narrative?);
- The historical references (what historical events are given greater prominence?).

These possibly recurring themes, narratives and references will provide the evidence of the possible shifts and directions in nation-building policies of the state. I expect that the

¹¹⁴ Siegfried Jäger, "Discourse and knowledge: theoretical and methodological aspects of a critical discourse and dispositive analysis," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (SAGE Publications, 2001), 52.

following themes might occur in the data analyzed: national identity, national idea, national memory, sovereignty of the state, uniqueness of history, national liberation, exclusiveness of the establishment of the nation, strength of the nation. The primary sources for the research are the Ukrainian parliamentary periodicals, notably *Holos Ukrainy* and *Uriadovyi Kurier*, where the presidential addresses were published and the website of the Academy of Sciences' National Library of Ukraine. The primary sources cited in this research are the Ukrainian language sources.

Next, I plan to assess how the accents in political discourse regarding the national identity issues has shifted or evolved throughout the Independence years with special attention on the 1990's and the years of Viktor Yushchenko's presidency as represented in Ukrainian press. To analyze media framing of the main issues concerning national identity and nation building, I plan to conduct textual analysis of the articles discussing the main political actors of the country, which were published in three oldest Ukrainian dailies that has been in circulation uninterrupted since 1991.

First one, published in Kyiv *Ukraina Moloda*, will provide an idea of the national identity as perceived by the central regions of Ukraine. Second one is *Vysokiy Zamok* the newspaper published in Lviv, the stronghold of Ukrainian nationalist ideas. The third newspaper *Slobidsky Kray* published in Kharkiv represents the eastern regions of Ukraine with the media response of the allegedly pro-Russian region toward the national identity constructed by the presidential rhetoric. I plan to evaluate if the presidential rhetoric and policy-making strategies influenced the overall perception by Ukrainians of their national identity as reflected in the media and if they raised national awareness and sense of patriotism.

CHAPTER 4. PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC ANALYSIS

Overall fifteen speeches given by the President of Ukraine on the occasion of Independence Day has been textually analyzed in this chapter: from the speech given by Leonid Kravchuk in 1992 that marked the first anniversary of Independence till the address for the 18th anniversary of Ukraine's Independence in August 2009 given by Viktor Yushchenko. The Ukrainian language transcripts of the presidential addresses cited in this chapter are available in the parliamentary newspapers and in the Academy of Sciences' National Library of Ukraine in the section dedicated to the presidents' institution.¹¹⁵ The selected speeches by Viktor Yushchenko were retrieved from the official website of the President of Ukraine where the Ukrainian language transcripts were posted during his presidency.

Speeches of the first decade of Independence were printed in the central and occasionally in the regional newspapers devoted to parliamentary issues. The general interest newspapers analyzed did not cover the elites' rhetoric and rarely provided any analysis of it. It has to be noted that the tradition of the address to the citizens was in a way started and established by the third president of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko. However, the tradition of analyzing the presidential speeches is yet to be established in the Ukrainian media.

The Soviet-style gatherings dedicated to the first anniversaries of Independence continued throughout the presidency of Kravchuk and Kuchma and were characterized by very formal, impersonal addresses, which lacked universal appeal due to the fact that they were reaching a rather limited audience of those present in the gathering and reading the specialized newspapers. For many citizens these official events were not unlike yet another session of parliament, which had the "behind closed doors" flair unfriendly to the very notion of such all-national holiday as Independence Day.

¹¹⁵ <http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/fpu/>

While conducting the textual analysis of the presidential addresses, I have paid special attention whether the speaker used the ethnically hued Ukrainian word *natsiia* (for English “nation”) or more neutral and not nationalistically charged “Ukrainian people” or “fellow compatriots,” which can also be rendered into English as “nation.” According to Yekelchuk “the Ukrainian word for nation “*natsiia*” has a different meaning from the English word “nation,” usually understood as synonymous with “state.” In Ukrainian, *natsiia* is an ethnic community of people who have a common origin, language and culture – but do not necessarily possess a state of their own.”¹¹⁶ The analysis expectation is that the more powerful national feeling evoking motives would be employed in Viktor Yushchenko’s discourse and much less in the speeches of his predecessors in the office.

4.1 Kravchuk’s Rhetoric

During the short-lasting presidency, which ended after the ahead of schedule elections of 1994 when then prime-minister Kuchma won the presidential office, Leonid Kravchuk gave the official Independence Day speech only once – in 1992. The short address of Kravchuk on the occasion of the second anniversary of Independence, which was printed in the parliamentary newspaper was also examined, however it did not contain any specific national identity or nation-building related narratives and frames, therefore it was omitted in the final analysis.

The first transcript analyzed is Leonid Kravchuk’s speech, which marks the first anniversary of Independent Ukraine, “the year of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine; the year of spiritual resurrection of the people united by the great ideal of freedom.”¹¹⁷ Therefore, this speech is filled with allusions to national constitutive myths and collective memories. Kravchuk starts with recollecting the tragic pages of Ukrainian history and

¹¹⁶ Yekelchuk., 5.

¹¹⁷ Kravchuk L. M. Golden line in the history of our state: From the address of the President of Ukraine in the meeting marking Independence Day of Ukraine. *Holos Ukrainy*. 26.08.1992.<http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/fpu/1992/gu19920826.htm> (accessed 30.04.2010).

together with old wounds such as ruination of Zaporozhian Sich by a Russian monarch, he introduces such landmarks banned during the Soviet time as “the Kruty battle” with its “heroic defenders of the Ukrainian People’s Republic,” “heroes and martyrs of Ukrainian Insurgent Army,” “Holodomor of 1933,” “operation Visla”¹¹⁸ etc. At the same time, among the bright pages of Ukrainian history he mostly mentions the very distant past: “mighty Kyiv’s kingdom of Vladymyr the Great and Yaroslav the Wise,” “first Christian republic in Europe – Zaporozhian Sich,” “freedom fighting movements of 17th century.”¹¹⁹ The only two events recalled from modern history are “establishment of own sovereignty in Ukrainian People’s Republic” and the “immortal feat of the soldiers and partisans of Ukraine in the Great Patriotic War.”¹²⁰

The pantheon of Ukrainian national heroes, symbolic figures and great minds is much bigger in Kravchuk’s rhetoric and include Cossack Hetmans of the 17th century, heroes of the popular uprisings, founders of the Ukrainian academy of the 16th century, poets, writers and, of course, the main symbol of the Ukrainian nation “saint martyr and prophet” who brought “new and righteous law, which solidified the foundations of Ukrainian spirituality,”¹²¹ the 19th century poet and writer Taras Shevchenko. Kravchuk often underlines the inclusive nature of the new Ukrainian state by counting all minorities living in the country: those who “said their word on the all-Ukrainian referendum” in support of sovereignty and who “create free, democratic and sovereign state,” and who are “equal among equals, free citizens of Ukraine” in the process of “building a just, democratic state.”¹²² He never uses the word *natsiia* as “nation” in this speech, substituting it with “community,” “compatriots,” or “people of Ukraine.”

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

4.2 Kuchma's Rhetoric

In general, Kuchma presidential speeches on the occasion of Independence Day of Ukraine represent more of a kind of lengthy account of the country's achievements and future plans than addresses to the Ukrainian nation. Since most of Kuchma's speeches were given during the official celebratory events, elites official gatherings with further publishing of the transcript in the parliamentary newspapers, its reach to the population was rather limited. Given the report- or lecture type of the addresses, Kuchma's speeches are taking many wordy historical detours, at times using statistical accounts, citing historians' words etc.

The main motifs of the 4th year of Independence presidential address revolves around the problems of the economy, state building and establishment of state authority – Kuchma in 1995 attempts to justify the course toward the presidentially-parliamentary system in Ukraine – drafting and adoption of the state Constitution, solving the Crimean issue. The priority outlined in the speech as the most important one is “keeping the civil peace and interethnic harmony in Ukraine.”¹²³ At the same time, the theme of national idea and nation building was not omitted in the first Independence address Kuchma made as the president of Ukraine. The Ukrainian national idea in Kuchma's interpretation has not brought the desired unity, because it was based not on “state, political or economic ideals but on national-ethnic ideals.”¹²⁴ In his opinion, the Ukrainian national idea is supposed to be the “humane idea of fight for the happiness, well-being and freedom of the Ukrainian people.”¹²⁵ Further Kuchma refers to the historical myths supporting such an idea as “grounded on the deep historical traditions” of the Kyivan Rus, the Galicia-Volhynia Principality, the Cossack state.¹²⁶ In Kuchma's rhetoric,

¹²³ Address of the President of Ukraine at the celebratory meeting dedicated to Independence Day of Ukraine. 28.08.1995. *Holos Ukrainy*. <http://www.nbu.gov.ua/fpu/1995/gu19950828.htm> (accessed 30.04.2010).

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

the right national policy of the state – in essence “Ukraine is a common home, the motherland for all its citizens” – is proven by the existing interethnic peace in the country.¹²⁷ At the same time, “the preservation of its own national identity, spiritual and cultural rebirth of the people” is proclaimed as the most important task for the country.¹²⁸

Kuchma attempts to bring together the concepts, which in his view are crucial for the development of modern Ukraine: “creation of national statehood” and the transformation of the country into a genuine civilized democracy.¹²⁹ The word *natsiia* (ethnic nation) used several times in this speech in the context of “the well-being of the nation,” or the “spiritual wealth of the nation.”¹³⁰ Among the personifications of the Ukrainian nation, “great names, which constitute the pride of the people and embody Ukraine,” Kuchma mentions Cossack leader Bohdan Khmelnytsky.¹³¹ Notably, Kuchma underlines the necessity to respect the “ideals and values of the past period,” meaning the Soviet period including in the pantheon of contemporary Ukrainian nation-building mythology the “liberation of Ukraine from the fascist invaders and the jubilee of the victory in the Great Patriotic War.”¹³² He further appeals to the necessity to keep these past ideals of “collectivism, capacity for self-sacrifice and readiness to selflessly defend the Motherland” to promote these traditions and qualities “as all-national achievements.”¹³³ “Deep respect for own roots, the deeds of grandparents and parents, [...] love for the own land” are to constitute the essence of patriotism in Kuchma’s early rhetoric.¹³⁴

The main point of the 1996 Independence Day speech is undoubtedly the adoption of the Constitution of Ukraine the important symbol of statehood, which “transforms a

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

population into the people and a territory into the state,” constitutes the “guaranty of Independence and the tool for reformatory state-building,” and creates the necessary conditions for “establishment of stability, moral unity” of the people.¹³⁵ Notably, Kuchma castigates the often-voiced popular desire for the “new state ideology” claiming that the only ideology possible in the new Ukraine is the “ideology of state building.”¹³⁶ At the same time, the second president of Ukraine defines this state-building ideology as a “national idea,” which has to be based on “national and human values.”¹³⁷ Such rhetorical and ideological confusion in a way characterizes the early speeches of the Ukrainian elites. Almost quoting word to word the relevant passage from the 1995 address, Kuchma again refers to the national idea as to one “based on deep historical traditions,” of the medieval Kyivan Rus, the Galician Principality and the Cossack polity.¹³⁸ The national idea, therefore, is “the idea of powerful and thriving Ukraine; idea of statehood, patriotism and solidarity; idea of spirituality and Constitutional order, civil peace and harmony; idea of justice and well-being; idea of openness to the world.”¹³⁹

In Kuchma’s rhetoric, the national idea is the “form of state self-perception, the indicator of how the people understand themselves and their place in the world,”¹⁴⁰ for which the acceptance of previous history is indispensable. On the one hand, this kind of narratives might have been introduced to please the fluctuating public opinions, which during the first decade of Independence, due to the economic hardships exhibited certain nostalgia for the “stable” Soviet past. On the other hand, it can be characteristic for the post-colonial country where the leaders, though painted in national colors but Soviet to the core, were simply

¹³⁵ From the address of the President of Ukraine at the celebratory meeting on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of Independence of Ukraine August 23, 1996. <http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/fpu/1996/pc199609.htm> (accessed 05.05.2010).

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

unable or unwilling to change the ideological course of the state and, thus, were traditionally looking for the “good” in the previous regime. The common narrative of the Soviet good deeds for Ukraine is dominated by the fact that from the Soviet Ukraine the state “inherited the united Ukrainian people within the currently existing state borders.”¹⁴¹

It has to be noted, however, that the crimes of the Soviet regime against Ukraine are not omitted in the presidential rhetoric. Holodomor, crashing of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, disastrous “apocalyptic” Chornobyl nuclear plant built by Soviet regime “near its Ukrainian heart,” the capital Kyiv, are mentioned as the “most dreadful trace” left by the Soviet totalitarian dominance.¹⁴² This struggle to cope with the controversial legacies of the Soviet time constitutes one of the main political and ideological challenges of contemporary Ukraine and the presidential rhetoric does not provide clear direction in handling those and many other controversial issues from the past history. At the same time Kuchma declares “the right for national memory and national feelings” and proclaims “the formation of national self-consciousness” as the priority for the country that is overcoming “the legacies of state cosmopolitanism as the ideology of stifling of everything national and practice of destroying of the historical and cultural memory.”¹⁴³

In 1997 Kuchma’s speech, the image of Ukraine is represented as the image of “a sovereign, democratic and peaceful state,” and the national idea is determined by the understanding of the nation’s “historical roots.”¹⁴⁴ In regards to nation building the speech calls for the necessity to “grow the sense of national pride and national self-respect, to unite disconnected periods of the Ukrainian history, to find all-national reconciliation in regards to

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Address of the President of Ukraine in 2nd Universal Forum of Ukrainians. *Uriadovyi Kurier*. 23.08.1997. <http://www.nbu.gov.ua/fpu/1997/uk19970823.htm> (accessed 05.05.2010).

our mutual past.”¹⁴⁵ At the same time besides these general ideas, there is no indicator of the direction for the possible nation-building strategies.

The common motif of the addresses of the first decade of Independence is the motif of “aspiration of people to become the master of the own home” and the obvious priority of state-building related rhetoric. The statement that “we are asserting as a nation (*natsiia*)” is given within the context of sovereignty establishment and state-building achievements.¹⁴⁶ The uncertainty on how to proceed with nation-building practices is exhibited in elites’ attempts to cling on to the Soviet past myths and symbols. For example, in the 1999 speech on the occasion of the 8th anniversary of Independence of Ukraine, Kuchma compares Victory Day with Independence Day in their significance for the Ukrainian people, by which mixing two rather incompatible events in modern history of the state.¹⁴⁷ As historical landmarks of the state, he recalls the periods of Kyivan Rus, Cossack wars, the Ukrainian People’s Republic and its act of unification with the Western-Ukrainian People’s Republic. Such pre-Soviet history nation symbols as poet Shevchenko and the Cossack leader Khmelnytsky are traditionally mentioned.

The political and nation-building task outlined by the president is “the unification of the society, [...] consolidation of political structure,” establishing the “ideology of creation, harmony and mutual understanding.”¹⁴⁸ The European course and choice of Ukraine is mentioned as the necessary vector of foreign policy developments, however Kuchma warns against understanding European choice as solely “movement to the West,” underlying the importance of cooperation with Russia.¹⁴⁹ The official nation-building position, at least

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Address of the President of Ukraine on the celebratory meeting dedicated to the 8th anniversary of Independence of Ukraine. *Ukraine and World Today*. 27.08.1999.
<http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/fpu/1999/us19990827.htm> (accessed 05.05.2010).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

presented in the speech, is the following: “Spiritual rebirth is an integral part of the state rebirth,” therefore the state has to promote “preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the national cultural inheritance.”¹⁵⁰

Of the two speeches given by Kuchma on the occasion of the 10th year jubilee of Independence – the address on the celebratory gathering and the address on the 3rd Universal Forum of Ukrainians – the latter included more allusions to national-patriotic issues. In the first speech Kuchma mentions Vyacheslav Chornovil as the new era’s symbolic figure among those who in different times “embodied the aspiration of our people to statehood.”¹⁵¹ Unlike previous addresses, asserting that there is a unifying national idea in the country, this one in a way abandons wishful thinking and states that there is only a process of “search for national idea.”¹⁵² According to presidential rhetoric, the integration to Europe is tied to the national interests and the issue of national security. In the second speech on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Independence, then president Leonid Kuchma appeals to historical processes of “establishment of Ukrainians as a nation” addressing both “high vitality” of the Ukrainian peoples who were able under all unfavorable historical conditions to “develop its potential and take the right place among the European nations.”¹⁵³ He evokes “heroic and self-sacrificing impulses toward the national and social justice” of Ukrainian people throughout the years of statelessness together with all the “lost chances to build its own statehood,” and proclaims the values of “society consolidation, mutual forgiveness and unity” for everybody “who loves Ukraine and want to build it is with us.”¹⁵⁴ According to Kuchma’s rhetoric: “The national ideal of Ukraine is oriented toward the building of a free democratic state, which

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Address of the President of Ukraine in the meeting dedicated to 10th anniversary of Independence of Ukraine. *Uriadovyi Kurier*. 28.08.2001. <http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/fpu/2001/uk20010828.htm> (accessed 14.05.2010).

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Kuchma L. Ukrainian State is our great uniting power: Address of the President of Ukraine in 3rd Universal Forum of Ukrainians. *Uriadovyi Kurier* 21.08.2001. <http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/fpu/2001/uk20010821.htm> (accessed 30.04.2010).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

clearly understands and can defend its national interests and guarantee all freedoms and liberties to its citizens.”¹⁵⁵

The 2002 speech differs from the previous speeches since it represents more of an address to the Ukrainian people rather than the official report on the celebratory gathering. The main reason for such a change in the genre was Kuchma’s appeal to the public and to the parliament on the necessity for the political reform and the system of government change from presidential-parliamentary to parliamentary-presidential.¹⁵⁶ This new phase of the state building was proclaimed as the logical result of all previous years of state development in Ukraine. The national ingredient is barely mentioned in this address, narrowed down only to the traditional mentioning of such symbolic for the Ukrainian nation figures as Shevchenko and Hrushevsky, the father of the contemporary Ukrainian historiography; although he, as the president of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, is rather the embodiment of statehood.

In the next speech marking the 12th anniversary of Independence, Kuchma evokes the traditional narrative of the long way toward state sovereignty, stressing that the “national essence” was reached by “ages of fight for freedom.”¹⁵⁷ He also mentions certain constitutive myths of Ukrainian national identity such as “declaration of sovereignty of the Ukrainian People’s Republic,” and the artificial famine, Holodomor, when “millions of proprietors of the richest black soil in the world paid with their lives for their natural aspiration for freedom and the right to be masters of their own land.”¹⁵⁸ While addressing again the necessity of the introduction of the parliamentary-presidential form of government, Kuchma invokes one of the Ukrainian myths of statehood, the era of the Cossack polity, by underlying that the

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Address of the President of Ukraine on the occasion of 11th anniversary of Independence of Ukraine, *Holos Ukrainy*, 28.08.2002. <http://www.nbu.gov.ua/fpu/2002/gu20020828.htm> (accessed 14.05.10).

¹⁵⁷ Address of the President of Ukraine in the meeting dedicated to 12th anniversary of Independence of Ukraine. 23.08.2003 <http://www.nbu.gov.ua/fpu/2003/ov20030902.htm> (accessed 14.05.2010).

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

democratic history of the country stems from “the time of Hetmanate” and stating that “Ukrainians do not like to grant too much power to the President or to the Hetman.”¹⁵⁹

The important challenge still facing the country, in Kuchma’s words, is “sovereignty of Ukraine” its “territorial unity and civil consolidation” within the framework of contrasting legacies that the different regions received from different rulers throughout history.¹⁶⁰ Here Kuchma’s rhetoric clearly follows the lines of the civic nationalism agenda with appeal to “the consolidating power of a state-unifying national idea,” and the “national consensus and continuous social dialogue.”¹⁶¹ “National pride” in Kuchma’s rhetoric is something that has to be fostered in the country that is burdened with the legacy of “ages of wandering the desert of statelessness.”¹⁶² National unity as the main national interest of Ukraine is a leitmotiv of this speech.

Finally, in the last Independence Day speech in the position of the president of Ukraine in 2004, Kuchma points out the main “historical challenge” facing the elites: to guide “the province of a collapsed empire toward the status of the sovereign state” and the “fragment of the so-called ‘Soviet people’” to the level of a “political nation.”¹⁶³ The appeal to the nation (*natsiia*) appears eleven times in the speech, with the emphasis to the concept of “political nation” as the main nation-building aim of the state elites. There is no clearly defined image of the contemporary nation, – let alone the many times mentioned self-sufficient political nation – which seems to be a mixture of the mythologized previous freedom-fighting nation or tragic post-genocidal nation that survived Holodomor, referred in the speech as the tragedy, “which crashed the spine of the Ukrainian nation.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Address of the President of Ukraine on the celebratory meeting on the occasion of the 13th anniversary of Independence of Ukraine. *Presidentsky Visnyk*. 25.08.2004. <http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/fpu/2004/pv20040825.htm> (accessed 05.05.2010).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

In Kuchma's rhetoric the Ukrainian state of 1917-1919 was a real "embodiment of the Ukrainian national idea."¹⁶⁵ As for the national mythology, the national lineage myths of the country "that since old times has been the part of the European world"¹⁶⁶ were evoked. Again the European course mentioned as the part of the modern national idea. For the first time, in the presidential rhetoric, nation building is mentioned as main political task and "foundation for the state existence."¹⁶⁷ Consequently, the course for future development of the country is outlined as the "forming of political force responsible for nation building" with the foundational values of "national unity and civic patriotism."¹⁶⁸ Kuchma refers to the nation in this speech as to "collectivity of people, which want to be a state," stressing that "the state-nation idea turned out more powerful than the ethnic-nation idea with its [...] inclination to separate the parts of Ukrainian territory."¹⁶⁹

4.3 Yushchenko's Rhetoric

The speeches by Viktor Yushchenko marking the 14th and 15th anniversary of the Ukrainian Independence respectively tend to exhibit more national patriotic feelings than the addresses of his immediate predecessor, and are based on the same set of myths established with the rhetoric's of the first president Leonid Kravchuk.

In the President Yushchenko address to Ukrainian people on the occasion of the 14th Independence Day celebration, the ethnocentric *natsiia* was evoked six times: "Ukrainian nation," "I am proud of the nation I am honored to belong to," "nation that has unique mission," "strong nation," "nation has awakened," and "Independence is the symbol of our

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

nation.”¹⁷⁰ Along the same lines as Kravchuk in the first year of Independence anniversary speech, Yushchenko lists the glorious and tragic landmarks of the Ukrainian existence. He traditionally starts from Kyivan Rus, the Ukrainian Cossack state of the 17th century and proceeds to culture and political figures. The third president underlines the strength of the ancient proto-Ukrainian state Kyivan Rus, since when contemporary Ukrainians “had developed confidence that we can chose our destiny and to be equal among other peoples.”¹⁷¹ The Cossack polity with its early 18th century constitution, allegedly the first in Europe, was also mentioned as “the immortal glory of the Ukrainian thought and Ukrainian freedoms,” as the legacy of Ukrainian desire for “honor, pride, equality and democracy.”¹⁷² The third president states the values of Ukrainian nation such as “respect to human dignity, freedom, democracy and justice.”¹⁷³ Yushchenko acknowledges the legacies of historical divisions but states that these divisions can be conquered as “freedom and unity of Ukraine” have proved.¹⁷⁴ At the same time he emphasizes the importance of national unity: “Divided we cannot manage. United we can do everything.”¹⁷⁵

In his speech marking the 15th anniversary of Independence of Ukraine Yushchenko appeals to the victories of the nation claiming the Ukrainian history is “the history of great European nation,” because of the arduous past, since the “great history creates great people.”¹⁷⁶ The third president of Ukraine uses the Ukrainian word *natsiia* for “nation” five times in this speech. In certain expressions the difference of connotations such as “nation” as “the people” and “nation” as the *natsiia* is emphasized. For example: “In fifteen years of

¹⁷⁰ Address of the president of Ukraine in the Independence Square. *Uriadovyi Kurier*. 26.08.2005. <http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/fpu/2005/uk20050826.htm> (accessed 30.04.2010).

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Speech of the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko on the occasion of 15th Independence Anniversary of Ukraine. *Uriadovyi Kurier*. 29.08.2006. <http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/fpu/2006/uk20060829.htm> (accessed 30.04.2010).

Independence we learned how to be ‘the people’, ‘the state’ and now we are getting knowledge to become ‘the nation’.”¹⁷⁷ Another part of the narrative refers to the state and nation building in the following way: “we have to build the state in the desert, we have to create victory from defeat, we have to create the nation from destroyed people.”¹⁷⁸ Yushchenko, like Kravchuk, mentions the Great Famine – one of the most tragic parts of the Ukrainian history – however he stresses the necessity to acknowledge “Holodomor in Ukraine as act of genocide against our nation.”¹⁷⁹ The same staunch is his position on language: “In Ukraine there will be no alternative to the Ukrainian language [...]. It is the language of our freedom.”¹⁸⁰ At the same time, the national idea of Ukraine is once again proclaimed as a democratic one: “I guarantee the country’s inalterability of democratic, liberal national choice.”¹⁸¹

In Yushchenko’s rhetoric of the 2007 Independence Day speech, the Ukrainian idea is inseparably linked to the country’s history and its ancient lineage: “We are the heirs of Kyivan Rus. We are the builders of the Galicia-Volhynia state. We are the people, who established the Cossack state on the ruin.”¹⁸² The Cossack state, which “reflected the deep democratic nature of Ukraine,”¹⁸³ represents the nation’s inherited aspiration for democracy and understanding of democratic values in both the Ukrainian mythology and in the rhetoric of the president. In addition to Khmelnytsky, as the established in the national narrative figure representing Cossack periods and all associated connotations, another Hetman figure was introduced in the elites’ national narrative: Ivan Mazepa, the hetman who turned against

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² President of Ukraine. Official website. President Victor Yushchenko’s address on the occasion of the Independence Day of Ukraine. 24.08.2007. <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/7263.html> (accessed 07.02.2010).

¹⁸³ Ibid.

the Russian tsar in attempt to gain Sweden king protectorate for Ukraine with the hope of its prospective independence.

In addition to the inherited democratic values narrative, Yushchenko's rhetoric is filled with implicit nationalism ideology allusions: "Only the sovereign, powerful and democratic state can be a guarantor of the Ukrainian nation."¹⁸⁴ The past history is represented as the proof of "invincibility of the nation and its high spirit," and cultural revival as the integral part of national idea and unification: "We are the great modern world's nation. We need a modern strategy of the cultural revival and cultural unity of the country. Its sense is pro-Ukrainian, pro-European and respectful toward the needs of every national minority representative."¹⁸⁵ Nine times mentioned in the speech word *natsiia* more prominently represented in the context of "united nation," "political nation," "great spirit" of the nation. Interestingly, while asserting the inclusive nature of the nation-building policies of the state Yushchenko states: "I believe in Ukraine where dominates the Ukrainian spirit, expressive national character, and the one state language."¹⁸⁶

The main nation-building direction of Yushchenko's presidency as manifested in his 2008 Independence Day speech, is the renewing of the united political nation, which is inclusive for everyone "despite the views, origins and faith."¹⁸⁷ The "national idea" concept advanced in the speeches of previous president Kuchma finds new dimension of the rebirth of national memory and the reestablishing "the historical and national justice": "We are reviving the main feature of the nation – its memory."¹⁸⁸ The third president of Ukraine names Holodomor and its prospective 75th commemoration as "the manifesto of our invincibility, as the manifesto of the truth of the Ukrainian people. The answer to all the Ukrainophobes, to

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ President Victor Yushchenko's address on the occasion of the 17th Anniversary of Ukraine's Independence. http://www.nbu.gov.ua/fpu/2008/ou20080829_1.htm (accessed 05.05.2010).

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

the hatred to our spirit.”¹⁸⁹ The revival of national memory is presented as the indispensable ingredient of national identity.

National interests of the country, as outlined by Yushchenko, include “the security of the nation,” with the necessity to join the Euro-Atlantic security system, “the well being of people,” and “economic renewal.”¹⁹⁰ In his speech the image of Ukraine is drafted as “open and free country” and its people as representatives of the powerful, strong and mature nation, nation that can “create and defend its own life.”¹⁹¹ The inherited democratic values narrative is also present: “Democracy and belonging to Europe is the nature of our people.”¹⁹² Consequently, the “return to the European house”¹⁹³ is outlined as the necessary goal and at the same time as the achievable perspective. The issue of church as the building block of national identity and “spiritual unity of people” is also acknowledged with the appeal to necessity of the unified Ukrainian Church establishment.¹⁹⁴

In Yushchenko’s address on the occasion of the 18th Anniversary of Ukraine’s Independence the word “nation” in a sense of Ukrainian *natsiia* was used five times, mainly in the context of “prosperous life for my nation,” “the creation of a single Ukrainian nation,” “the intellect of the nation.”¹⁹⁵ Throughout the speech there is a strong recurring theme of the particular Ukrainian national identity and the unique sovereign state it belongs to: “I believe that I am a Ukrainian,” “I believe in my belonging to great Ukrainian people,” “our sovereign ability to achieve great goals,” “national idea,” “national state,” “Ukrainian state,” “our native

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ President of Ukraine. Official website. President Victor Yushchenko’s address on the occasion of the 18th Anniversary of Ukraine’s Independence. 24.08.2009. <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/14759.html> (accessed 07.02.2010).

land,” “national solidarity,” “national achievement,” “true national revival of Ukraine,” “new prospects for Ukraine,” and “the strong national state.”¹⁹⁶

A considerable part of this observed invocation of national identity is rooted in reminding of the past, either glorious or tragic. The idea of continuity of the nation of its direct descentance from the medieval kingdom Kyivan Rus with the center in Kyiv is also often called forth either by stressing Ukraine’s “thousands years culture, history, fate” or directly pointing that “we have our millennial history of our state of Ukraine-Rus behind us”¹⁹⁷ (the phrase was repeated twice in this speech). The confidence in the state and nation’s longevity is also present: “Ukraine was, Ukraine is, Ukraine will always be.”¹⁹⁸ In regards to the future prospects of Ukraine in a presidential rhetoric there is also a clear leaning toward the Western values with denunciation of those who are still “impotent, tied up to the former metropolitan country” clearly implying Russia, and assertion that “we are joining the European space,” “in line with European standards,” “we are free and democratic country,”¹⁹⁹ again stressing its distance from Russia, which policies are allegedly non-democratic.

One of the main appeals of this speech is that “we should celebrate and value with dignity our every national achievement,” “promote Ukrainian national ideas,” and “continue the course of true national revival of Ukraine” together with the state that has already “started an extensive work to restore the historical truth and memory.”²⁰⁰ The President ended his address with assertive “I am proud that I am Ukrainian. I am proud of our state. I am proud of our people.”²⁰¹ Yushchenko’s traditional concluding words “Glory to thee the Ukrainian state” and “Glory to Ukraine” beside their natural appeal to the national pride might have even deeper nationally charged influence on people, which draws its roots from the times of

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

the 20th century Ukrainian liberation movements, since the salutation “Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the heroes!” is known in the popular discourse as the motto of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the military wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. Therefore, this exclamation or its part can have deeper influence on the collective memory of Ukrainians evoking the stronger feelings of the national identity and national pride. It is noteworthy, therefore, that the third president of Ukraine, unlike his predecessors in the office, ends all his Independence Day speeches with “Glory to Ukraine!” exclamation.

CHAPTER 5. MEDIA RESPONSE

This part of the research outlines the limited media response toward the presidential rhetoric and also the media representation of the Ukrainian national identity during the main national holiday of the country. Three newspapers were examined to see if there was any analysis of the elites' rhetoric dedicated to the date. The all-national newspaper printed in Kyiv was researched as both an example of a newspaper representative of the central regions of Ukraine and as an example of the media outlet that covers the important social and political events in the country in general. To see if the presidential rhetoric was of any interest for the main regional newspapers, two newspapers representative of Western and Eastern region of Ukraine were examined.

In both Lviv's printed newspaper *Visokiy Zamok* and in Kharkiv's printed *Slobidsky Kray* the coverage of Independence Day was either limited to short news reports on the local festivities or the congratulations' notes by the local government representatives. Notably, throughout the first decade of Independence marked with deep economic hardships, inflation, social insecurities and foreign policy blunders the regional newspapers' headlines and articles dedicated to Independence Day date were more uplifting than those printed in the central newspaper. The image of Ukraine and Ukrainians throughout the first decade of Independence was fluctuating from those of "euphoric" nation that finally fulfilled its eternal dream of the independent state's creation to the disillusioned people, who nevertheless the time of hardships understand the benefits of independent existence. Although the image has something in common with the image created by the presidential rhetoric, it is unlikely to establish the direct causal link between elites' discourse and media reflection of the country's first decade struggle with state and nation building in crisis time.

5.1 Central Newspaper's Coverage

The leitmotif of the 1990s Independence Day related coverage is “people’s euphoria has subdued in comparison with 1991.”²⁰² Overall, economic hardships of the first years of Independence had greatly influenced the tone and mood of the coverage of the first anniversaries. While Independence is frequently framed as “the fulfillment of the dream of Ukrainian people,”²⁰³ the people of Ukraine are framed as those, who are transforming from euphoric romantics to pragmatists devoid of illusions of the first Independence years: “even the part of ethnic Ukrainians show their disillusionment in our statehood,”²⁰⁴ and disappointed because Independence “has not yet bore the unifying [national] idea.”²⁰⁵ However, the media were still attempting to be reassuring with the frames like “peak of the national consciousness,” “great future,” people “who gained “the sense of pride.”²⁰⁶ As for the national symbols the most frequently mentioned is the 19th century national poet Taras Shevchenko. The national identity frame “the heirs of Cossacks” is also used in the Independence Day coverage: “By the end of the 20th century the heirs of Cossacks became masters in their own state.”²⁰⁷

In general, the rather uncertain tone balancing in-between disappointment and reassurance is typical for the coverage of the first decade of Independence as well as the early 2000s. Calls for the “national idea” necessity, which firstly appeared by the end of 1990s – become more prominent. The popular socio-political newspaper has rarely printed the speeches of the elites, however in 1999, *Ukraina Moloda* published Kuchma’s address on the occasion of the 8th anniversary of Independence. In 2002 the newspaper provides the reaction toward the speech of then president Leonid Kuchma, mostly emphasizing the unexpected

²⁰² *Ukraina Moloda*, August 21, 1999.

²⁰³ *Ukraina Moloda*, August 23, 1997.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ *Ukraina Moloda*, August 21, 1997.

²⁰⁶ *Ukraina Moloda*, August 23, 2002.

²⁰⁷ *Ukraina Moloda*, August 23, 2000.

twist of Kuchma's state-building practices and offer of the institutional change: "Kuchma who has been only increasing the power [...] on the day of the 11th anniversary of Independence of Ukraine started talking about cutting of the presidential powers. [...] The president straightforwardly spoke of the political and institutional change from presidential-parliamentary to parliamentary-presidential republic."²⁰⁸

It can be noted that the hint of reaction toward the presidential rhetoric appears only when the political or economic situation in the country becomes especially acute. Such legacy of the Soviet era as the lack of belief in what elites proclaim from their platforms continued in the Independent Ukraine and consequently led to the result when the media alike the "disillusioned" citizens ignored the speeches, addresses and appeals of the president. It had to take extreme circumstances to pay attention to elites' words as well as deeds. In the article "The crossroads of 12 years in length"²⁰⁹ the assumption of popular passivity is further supported: "Ukraine meets Independence Day of 2003 with the indifferent society, even more indifferent authorities and hope for the better."²¹⁰ By 2004 the degree of optimism dropped to the lowest mark, the coverage of Independence Day was nearly absent with only the brief note on the Kuchma's last speech in the role of the president, where the emphasis again was placed on the mentioned in the speech political reform.²¹¹ Nation building was not high on the agenda in the 2004 chaos of the Ukrainian politics.

After the election of Viktor Yushchenko, the newspaper starts turning toward the representation of the nation-building issues by printing relevant articles, interviews and editorials dedicated to Independence Day. In the 2006 article "Pluses and minuses of the sovereign 15th anniversary" Mykola Riabchuk notes that "it is not only about the Ukrainian identity but also about civic identity. [...] Political nations are based on the strong civic

²⁰⁸ *Ukraina Moloda*, August 28, 2002.

²⁰⁹ *Ukraina Moloda*, August 23, 2003.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ukraina Moloda*, August 26, 2004.

society [...] At the same time every nation has to have the language-cultural core and it has to be a Ukrainian one, otherwise there is no sense to live in such a state.”²¹²

Also notably that with the presidency of Yushchenko, the central newspaper pays more attention to the freedom-fighting symbols of Ukraine, previously widely covered by the western region’s newspapers but rather scarcely by the all-national newspapers. Within several days around the anniversary, the newspaper covers the opening of the monument dedicated to Ukrainian students perished in the Kruty battle with Bolshevik forces in 1918, memorial plaque honoring the head of the Ukrainian People’s Republic Symon Petliura and the monument honoring the prominent Ukrainian dissident and politician Vyacheslav Chornovil. Still, the presidential Independence Day rhetoric was not analyzed in the newspaper with the exception of the presidential speech of 2008, which was covered emphasizing its state-security appeal: “The head of the state remembered the Khmelnytsky victory [...] and as hetman said “Stand up for your honorable truth,”” as well as citing Yushchenko's confident “we are Ukrainian people, and are masters of our home. Nobody will decide for us what language to speak and in which church to pray.”²¹³

5.2 Regional Newspapers’ Coverage

Both regional newspapers examined – *Vysokiy Zamok* and *Slobidsky Kray* – in the Independence Day coverage were concentrating on the local celebrations and prominently featured the congratulatory speeches by the local authorities, mostly assertive of Independence and focusing on the national (more prominent in the western region newspaper) and on local peoples needs. The national symbol frequently mentioned in both newspapers – Taras Shevchenko.

²¹² Mykola Riabchuk, “Pluses and minuses of the sovereign 15th anniversary,” *Ukraina Moloda*, 23.08.2006.

²¹³ Sydir Zlaz, “Our Strength – Broadcasted Live,” *Ukraina Moloda*, 27.08.2008.
<http://www.umoloda.kiev.ua/number/1233/213/43684/>

In Lviv's *Vysokiy Zamok*, the first years of Independence coverage is euphoric without the characteristic for the central region press' reservation: "We are free, we have a state, we are masters of our land,"²¹⁴ "we are forever sovereign."²¹⁵ Among the important characteristics of the Lviv's newspaper are the frequent allusions to God, which run through the articles. Lviv's newspaper also broadly covers the stories of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army fighters placing the relevant items, features and interviews almost in every issue examined for this research.

In 1993, the newspaper placed a short item on Kravchuk's address to the local journalists with the focus on the statehood of Ukraine, by citing his main points "I am convinced that Ukrainian people will build its independent state," and "the majority of people in Ukraine understood that they have state."²¹⁶ At the same time in 1994 when Kuchma became the president and took the oath on July 19, the newspaper printed a harsh critique of his inaugural speech mainly focusing on the announced plan on drafting the law giving Russian language the status of the official.²¹⁷ The local authorities' Independence Day addresses printed in Lviv's newspaper focused on the arduous path of people to Independence, on national consciousness, national spirit, sovereign state-building, and freedom as the greatest value given by Independence. Western Ukraine's authorities addresses are emotional, blaming the empire for stifling the national identity.

By the end of the first decade of independence the number of news items dedicated to the holiday decreases in number, became shorter and less pompous. At the same time, the first attempts to analyze the transitional and development path and the ideology of Ukrainian state appear: "Ukrainians start to build the democratic society of western type [...] where

²¹⁴ *Vysokiy Zamok*, August 22, 1993.

²¹⁵ *Vysokiy Zamok*, August 26, 1993.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

every citizen, irrespective of ethnicity would perceive him/herself as Ukrainian.”²¹⁸ The same as the central newspaper, Lviv’s and Kharkiv’s newspapers report on Kuchma’s speech where the political reform appeal was emphasized.

The mood of the first decade of independence in Kharkiv’s newspaper *Slobidsky Kray* is rather positive with appeal to unity and support of the Ukrainian state-building cause even in the time of hardship for the sake of the future. In 1993, newspaper prints short item on Kravchuk’s address on television, quoting his general statements like “we will build our independent Ukrainian state.”²¹⁹ In Kuchma’s speech of 2001 covered by the newspaper, his quote “Independent Ukraine has been established, [...]; today we cannot speak of Europe without Ukraine”²²⁰ was chosen as representative of the whole address.

In general in Kharkiv’s newspaper Independence Day coverage is in a way subordinate to the coverage of liberation of the region from the fascist invaders (August 23, 1943). The greater number of articles on historical figures related to the Ukrainian independence struggles characterizes the post-Orange revolution coverage. At the same time there is no reaction to the independence speeches of the president. In 2006 the front page editorial in the Eastern Ukrainian newspaper is advancing about the national consciousness, the national feelings and the necessity to overcome the stereotypes of the Soviet past still frequently used by politicians to manipulate electorate.²²¹

The analysis of newspapers showed that the nation-building rhetoric of the presidents has not received the in depth reaction from the media. On the occasions when presidential rhetoric was addressed in the Independence Day related coverage, the priority was given toward citing the state-building or national security related issues prominent in the speeches.

²¹⁸ *Vysokiy Zamok*, August 20-26, 1999.

²¹⁹ *Slobidsky Kray*, August 21, 1993.

²²⁰ *Slobidsky Kray*, August 28, 2001.

²²¹ *Slobidsky Kray*, August 22, 2006.

CONCLUSIONS

Since its independence in 1991, Ukraine has been politically pursuing the creation of the state-nation or inclusive political nation in the nation-building practices. This research has examined if this pursuit was also reflected in the presidential rhetoric and in the media.

Although scarce, the media response to the speeches with its only emphasis on the statehood related features of the presidential rhetoric reflects the general executive elites' agenda in regards to the state and nation building processes. Kuchma throughout his ten years of presidency had established the trend of accentuating the priority of the state over the nation in his narratives on Ukrainian history and national identity. This elites' attitude contrasted to the ideals of national democrats for whom, as Wolczuk points out, the ethnic nation (*natsiia*) constituted the core concept of nation building and the national history narrative.²²²

The nationalist idea of the nation above the state defined by Motyl and the national democrats' agenda outlined by Wolczuk is powerfully exhibited in the presidential speeches of Viktor Yushchenko. The state in his rhetoric is something that just complements the nation or rather is being subordinate to the nation. In comparison to his predecessors in the presidential office, Viktor Yushchenko more freely operates ethnically charged Ukrainian word *natsiia* (English "nation").

However, solely this fact cannot lead to the conclusion that the third presidents' rhetoric is nationalistically inclined. The second president of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma also invoked the concept of *natsiia* in his speeches, therefore, I can assume that it is the natural evolution of the nation building process and national consolidation that influences the leaders' rhetoric, which is also evolving from the cautious and moderate rhetoric of the immediate post-Soviet time, when the sovereignty of the country was still in question, to the

²²² Wolczuk, 686.

more assured rhetoric of the third president supported as well by the events of 2004, when according to the popular assumption, the Ukrainian population started to perceive itself exactly as the nation.

The concept of the sovereignty of Ukraine was given greater emphasis in Kravchuk's speech, mentioned in Kuchma's speeches (his rhetoric mostly devoted to the state-building practices) and almost omitted in Yushchenko's speeches, while the attention given to the concept of the "nation" and nation building is increasing gradually throughout the speeches. This phenomenon once more can be explained by the fact that while early statesmen of Ukraine had to define statehood and protect sovereignty, the next generation of leaders who had the sovereignty of the country more or less secured and established, proceeded to address the issues of state building and then nation building and nation consciousness more closely. Overall, all three presidents of Ukraine underlined the civic, inclusive and democratic nature of the Ukrainian state. This goes along with Kuzio's argument that the real majority faith in Ukraine is not ethnic nationalism, but state or civic nationalism, which according to Kuzio is the value relevant to elites of any country since "they prioritize sovereignty and seek to defend by all means state and national interests."²²³

None of the presidents specifically allude to any nationalist symbols in their speeches, although Kravchuk mentions the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. Kravchuk and Kuchma refer also to the short-lived Ukrainian People's Republic. There are certain recurring narratives in the presidential rhetoric; the most prominent of them are the narrative of the inherited democratic values (allusions to the Cossack state), the narrative of ancient lineage and the unity of the country (allusions to Kyivan Rus and the Galicia-Volhynia Principality), and the narrative of being the masters of the own land.

²²³ Kuzio, 84.

Although the assumption that Yushchenko's speeches contain more allusions to the nationalist ideas is not fully supported, his rhetoric differs from that of his predecessors. All three presidents do invoke the tragic page of Ukrainian modern history, the Great Famine of 1932-33, however Yushchenko's rhetoric is clearly more heated, since he openly labels the tragedy as the attempt to destroy the Ukrainian nation. Such an important and highly politicized marker of national identity as the Ukrainian language is given additional prominence in Yushchenko's speech. In Kuchma's rhetoric the national idea is the idea of statehood and the idea of the well being of people, while in Yushchenko's rhetoric the national idea is embodied in the national memory, the national language and the national spirit. Therefore, as follows from Yushchenko's rhetoric, his nation-building directions are to be revolving around issues of national memory and national cultural revival, which proves the research hypothesis.

Not all the national identity evocations are connected to images of the past; a significant part of the presidential speeches is devoted to the future prospects of Ukraine as an essential part of Europe and the holder of the deeply ingrained European values and traditions. It has to be noted, that whereas Kravchuk's rhetoric has not exhibited interest in Russia or Europe as a building block for national identity for Ukrainians and Kuchma's rhetoric has in a way balanced in between, Yushchenko's clearly pro-European rhetoric was combined with rather assertive national "the masters of the own home" elements. Notably, Russia is never mentioned directly in Yushchenko's speeches, but implied in a far from positive sense, so it can be concluded that the third Ukrainian president is distancing Ukraine from Russia in his rhetoric thus, following the early defining nationalist stance that Ukraine and Russia have no common past.²²⁴

²²⁴ Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s*, 1.

The propensity of Ukrainian elites toward the emphasizing of ethnic motifs in the process of nation building historically draws its roots from the centuries of cultural and linguistic oppression and in a way is necessary to support the previously neglected interests of ethnic Ukrainians. At the same time, the new democratic course the state elites has embarked on requires the creation of a unified civic nation and, consequently, the elaboration of the relevant nation-building policies. This seemingly incomparable duality of a nation-building task is also exhibited in the presidential rhetoric when the lip service is paid to the political nation simultaneously with exclusively ethnic Ukrainian symbols evocation.

According to Kuzio, national identity and national consciousness are necessary preconditions for successful democratization: “the strength of ethnicity and national identity at the start of the transition process can have a direct impact upon the choice of strategy, speed and domestic policies adopted by the ruling elites.”²²⁵ The lack of consensus among elites on the process of nation building and the lack of a unifying national idea, not only has reflected in the presidential rhetoric, but also has proven to be a stumbling block for the effective democratic transition and for enacting of the effective state-building policies. If the elites’ rhetoric serves as an indicator for the prospective state policies, then only Kravchuk’s and Yushchenko’s speeches were representative of national democrats’ political stance, which could serve as the basis for the consolidating national idea.

²²⁵ Kuzio, *Belarus and Ukraine*, 456.

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