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This research concludes that Social-Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory alone are not sufficient to explain the development and existence of Russophone identity in Kharkov.

Finally, this research shows that there is a direct link between identity and understanding of the Ukraine Crisis, perceived threat, and future directions in Kharkov. This research further postulates that Russophone identity will increasingly be threatened within Ukraine, that could lead to further problems and division, and will likely lead to push-back.

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Identity in Crisis: Russophone Identity in post-Maidan Kharkov

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Abstract

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Contents

Introduction

The Ukraine Crisis has been a key event of recent years, perhaps only second to that of Syria with regards to population movements, international division, sanction and counter-sanction, as well as its sheer divisiveness. Few events in recent history have divided the international community, scholars, and journalists like the Ukrainian Crisis has managed to do. The crisis has triggered shockwaves throughout Europe, and led to claims of a 'new cold war' (Cohen, 2018). Even after five years the crisis persists with on-going conflict in Donbas, political turmoil within Ukraine and the surrounding areas of Europe, as well as social and economic problems within Ukraine itself.

Far from trying to answer such questions as whether this indeed is a 'new cold war', this research is principally aimed at the local/regional scale, with Kharkov and its' people being the main object of study. The aim is to understand the crisis as seen in Kharkov, an eastern Ukrainian region and the second largest city of Ukraine. How do people in Kharkov relate to the crisis, what do they believe and why? Why did separatism fail to take hold? All these questions will be answered in relation to themes of identity, particularly ethnicity, language, and historical understanding and memory.

Background

In order to understand the situation fully, some background on Kharkov, and the Ukrainian Crisis is necessary.

Figure 1Map of Ukraine, Kharkov in the north east near the border with Russia.

Kharkov is the second largest city in Ukraine, after Kyiv, and was the first capital of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic. It is located near to the Russian border, and the city of Belgorod (figure 1). It is therefore no

surprise that Russian is the predominant language of everyday communication, though outside of the city itself this changes to Ukrainian. Furthermore, according to the first and so far only census, conducted in 1991, of 2.8 million inhabitants in Kharkov Region, 70.7% consider themselves to be ethnically Ukrainian, whilst 25.6% consider themselves to be ethnically Russian, with smaller groups of Jews, Belarussians and Armenians being the biggest ethnicities amongst the 'other' ethnic groups.
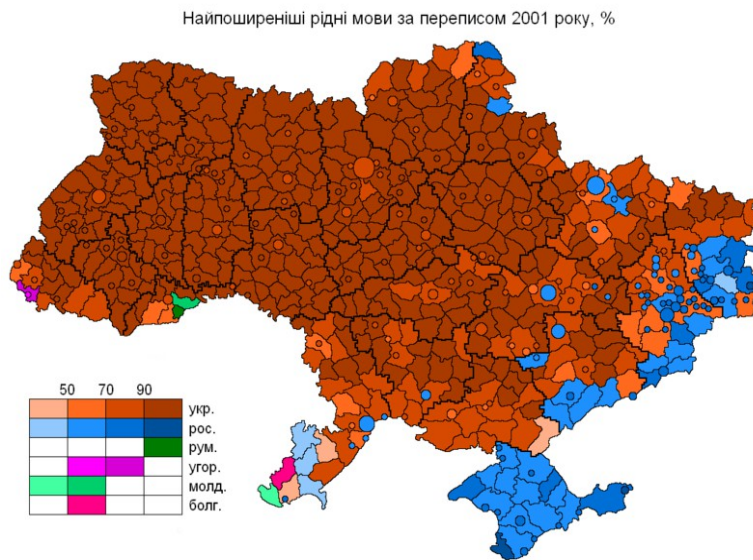

Найпоширеніші рідні мови за переписом 2001 року, %

Figure 2. left. Map of language usage in Ukraine. Blue shows majority Russian language.

Figure 3. Below. Language use in Kharkov region.
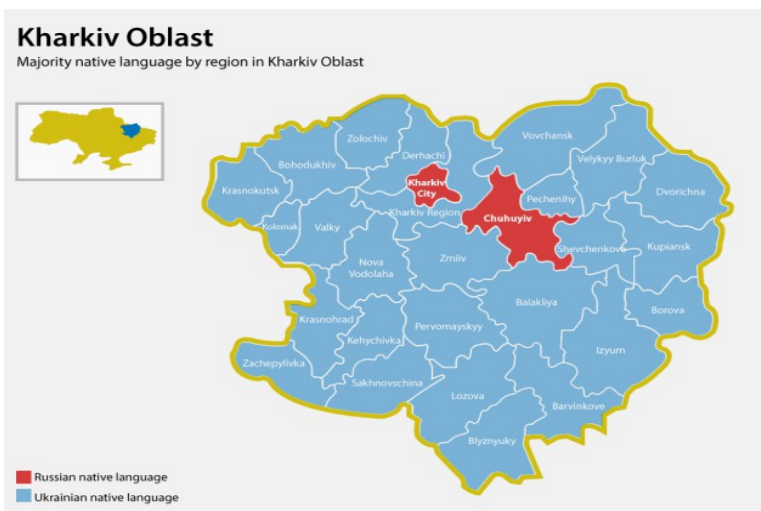
Figure 2 clearly shows that Kharkiv is a majority Russian speaking city, however this does not tell the whole picture as the surrounding Kharkov Region is predominantly Ukrainian speaking, as figure 3 helps to show. In fact only two districts in the Kharkov region are majority Russian speaking, Kharkov City and Chuhuyiv. Kharkov is therefore quite a complex city in terms of identity with mixed ethnicities and languages. Its proximity to Russia and history within the Soviet Union means it maintains a strong connection to Russia, and there is a strong affinity for the USSR within Kharkov as there is throughout Left Bank Ukraine (Petro, 2014). This all combines to make

Kharkiv Oblast
Majority native language by region in Kharkiv Oblast

■ Russian native language
■ Ukrainian native language

Kharkov an intriguing object of study, whereas other Ukrainian cities such as Donetsk or Lviv for example are much more polarised and unanimous in their views, feelings, and indeed identities.

The Ukrainian Crisis as a whole is far too complex and detailed to be discussed and outlined in full. Therefore, only a brief overview will be presented. In particular events and developments that effect Kharkov will be presented, along with events that are important for understanding the whole situation.

Overview of Maidan and The Ukrainian Crisis

The origins of the Ukrainian crisis are said to lie in the decision of the Yanukovych government to reject the Association Agreement with the European Union in November 2013. This decision led to immediate protests on the night of the 21st November 2013, which in turn grew into a larger demonstration against the Yanukovych government. This is where the name Euromaidan grew from. A protest against the government's decision to not proceed with the association agreement, and seemingly to reject the 'European Choice'. However it must be said that these protests were not uniform, and soon it became less clear as to what the protests were about. The term 'revolution of dignity' became common as a label for the demonstrations alongside that of Euromaidan. Therefore the protests became not only about the European Choice of Ukraine, but about anti-corruption.

The key period for these demonstrations was January and February 2014. This period was marked by the increase in violence and the subsequent death of approximately 100 protestors, who became known as the heavenly hundred. The responsibility for these deaths remains a contested issue to this day, particularly over the sniper killings that killed dozens of protestors and policemen. This period also marked the end of Yanukovych who fled Kyiv sometime on the 21st February, and was formally replaced by a new president, Turchynov, in an interim capacity, before Petro Poroshenko was elected as the new president. Following this Maidan continued to exist but to a lesser extent, with protestors leaving the square.

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Fig.4 Protest in Kharkov 2014, 'russian is our language'

Source: own personal collection

Fig.5 Protest in Kharkov 2014

Source: own personal collection

Fig 6. 'Yanukovcyh is our Preisdent', Protest in Kharkov 2014.

Source: own personal collection

However, whilst this was happening in Kyiv and the majority of Western and Central Ukraine supported such protests and events, in the South and East anti-maidan protests erupted. These protests were against the removal of Yanukovych, and generally against the movement towards Europe. The anti-maidan movement was particularly strong in Odessa, Kharkov, Donetsk and Lugansk. This division in support for maidan and anti-maidan essentially mirrors a decades old division line of Ukraine, that the West and Centre are split on most matters, whether it be political, linguistic, or cultural, from the East and South (Wilson,2000).

Post-Maidan events triggered responses in East Ukraine as well as Crimea. Particularly incendiary was a bill aimed at removing the regional language law that Yanukovych had implemented. This law stated that Russian or any other language spoken by more than 10% of a regions population can be considered an official regional language. The aim to remove such a law united large portions of the South and East who value their language and ability to use Russian when they desire as being one of their key concerns. This law passed through the Verkhovna Rada, but was at the last minute rejected by the acting president, Turchynov. However, the damage had already been done. The process of attempting to remove the law also coincided with a period, a continuing period, of anti-soviet activity, and anti-russian activity. It was within this context that Crimea decided to begin the process of reunification with Russia, or occupation led by Russia depending on which narrative you choose to read.

The reunification of Crimea with Russia on the 21st of March 2014, was seen by many as a trigger for war in Donbas. It is difficult to ascertain the exact causes of the beginning of the War in Donbas. Kyiv blames Russia and Russian forces for starting the conflict, whilst Russia and locals tend to blame Kyiv, and the post-maidan government for leaving them no choice but to fight. Certainly there is no single simple explanation for the war, with no doubt both accounts having elements of truth. It is clear however from the Donetsk and Lugansk leaderships that they view their actions as being necessary in order to defend their lands, culture and history from those they view as 'fascists' and 'banderites'. In this sense they view their actions as simply self-defence, and their declarations of independence as a necessary means for protecting themselves. They cite the attempted removal of the

language law and subsequent laws banning soviet symbols and soviet history as being examples of a real and actual threat to their culture.

This essentially brings us to the current situation where Minsk II accords have been to some extent implemented, although not always respected, particularly with regard to demilitarising and removal of heavy weaponry, as well as the organisation and acceptance of elections on the territory of Donetsk and Lugansk. In general, the violence has receded, but not entirely ceased. With the current situation the Donetsk and Lugansk Peoples' Republics have a de facto independence as they are not formally under the control of Kyiv, and despite rumoured Russian control, they remain outside of Russia. Therefore, it seems their situation mirrors that of other unrecognised territories, such as Transnitira, Abkhazia, and Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh).

Since the outbreak of war othering in Ukraine has reached unprecedented heights, with politicians such as Lyashko stating that they need to "hang muscovite invaders and their accomplices". Furthermore, language has become more extreme with both Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk referring to separatists as 'sub-human', 'scum' that ought to be destroyed ((Lb.ua 2014; President of Ukraine 2014). Whilst primarily aimed at Russia this othering has antagonised Russophones in Ukraine's east and pushed some to rebel (Molcahnov, 2015).

Maidan and Kharkov

The support for Euromaidan in Kharkov was never strong, in fact there was more support for 'anti-maidan' and pro-Yanukovych, pro-russia movements. Daily protests in support of Maidan were said to attract a maximum of 200 people, whereas anti-maidan, pro-russian demonstrations were observed with more than 4000 estimated participants (Carrol, 2014). It is important to note that protests were diverse, there were elements of Anti-Westernism, anti-maidan, anti-NATO, pro-russian (both the state and the language), and pro-Yanukovych. So whilst some elements might seem similar for example, anti-westernism and anti-maidan, they are not one and the same. (figures 4, 5 and 6 show the variety of signs and symbols on display during one protest in March 2014).

Violence was also rarely part of the demonstrations in Kharkov, although the storming and occupation of the regional government building, and the replacing of the Ukrainian flag with

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the Russian flag, was violent at times, although short lived, (the building was retaken shortly after). Small clashes were recorded, but nothing on the scale of what was witnessed in Kiev. However, since Yanukovych fled the country, and the Maidan authorities were legitimised in government, Kharkov has seen several 'terrorist' attacks and killings. Notably, On March 14th, two pro-russian supporters were killed after an attack attributed to the Right Sektor group, an extreme Ukrainian nationalist organisation. Furthermore, the SBU claim to have prevented 35 of 39 terrorist acts, however they failed to prevent two explosions, one in November 2014, and the other in February 2015, that killed pro-maidan marchers, and Ukrainian Army volunteers. Violence has died down since 2015, with most acts against the authorities being sabotage in nature, for example a large explosion in March 2017 at a munitions depot in Balaklia, just south of Kharkov, resulted in the evacuation of 36,000 people, and destruction of millions of dollars of weaponry, and was attributed to sabotage.

Unlike in Donetsk and Lugansk the declaration of independence of Kharkov was not well received and found little support. Furthermore, during 2014 anti-government sentiment seemingly decreased, or at least was no longer overtly expressed. Demonstrations ceased to take place, and even the statue of Lenin was toppled, though this appears to not have been a popular event. Kharkov therefore despite still overwhelmingly voting against the Maidan associated parties, has not united with Donbas as some suggested it would. There is little tolerance of extremist groups that came to the fore in Maidan, such as Praviy Sektor or Svoboda in Kharkov, but there is also no overt support for people such as the Kharkov Partisans who aim to attack and disrupt the new government and particularly the military formations in and around Kharkov, and have carried out several such bombings.

Whilst protests no longer occur it seems that anti-government sentiment remains. Kharkov is therefore a complicated city to understand in the Ukrainian Crisis context, and seemingly does not know what or where it future lies.

Literature Review

There is a great deal of literature on Ukraine, indeed, one can find extensive overviews of Ukraine's history and statehood both before and after its independence in 1991. Seminal

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works such as Andrew Wilson's *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation (2000)*, and Wilson and Taras Kuzio's (2000) *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence* offer incredibly detailed overview and analysis of events in Ukraine's history. Further works such as Paul D'Anieri's (2006) *Understanding Ukrainian Politics: Power, Politics and Institutional Design*, and Sven Holdar's (1995)*Torn Between East and West: The Regional Factor in Ukrainian Politics* give a detailed evaluation of the political system in Ukraine and the divisions within post-independence society that are already visible in elections from 1994. These works all give great background information and cover virtually all aspects of Ukraine, its development, statehood, political movements and divisions, and problems, but they offer little in terms of specific research on identity. Certainly, the updated edition of Wilson's The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation, offers some new insight as it brings the former edition up to the point of Euromaidan and the war, whereas the previous edition concluded with the Orange Revolution, but although he writes throughout about Ukrainian identity and nation building, he actually offers very little analysis and discussion of the variations in identity that exist from west to east.

Likewise, Holdar's work brings the regional variation to the fore, but from a political context with little reading into identity other than a rather superficial and simplistic linkage between the East and Russia, and the West with Europe. Such a linkage is indeed an important factor, but there are others that he does not discuss, and it is not his intention to do so. Ivan Katchanowski (2015) again offers little about identity, but he offers a different perspective on events in Ukraine in the past years. In particular he looks at how separatism or dissatisfaction with the government has increased and decreased throughout Ukraine's independence based on events within Ukraine. For example he highlights how Crimean separatism decreased once Yanukovych was elected in 2010. Katchanowski offers a very different perspective to the majority of researchers on Ukraine, and whilst his work is not based in culture or identity his analysis of Maidan events, and separatism is useful as it can be linked to aspects of identity.

In terms of identity and Ukraine there have been several important articles alongside elements of the aforementioned books. White, McAllister and Feklyunina's (2010) *Belarus, Ukraine and Russia: East or West?* Offers a detailed description and analysis of one of the

pre-eminent identity problems not only of Ukraine, but other post-soviet states, that of its international vectoring and identity. This problem is key to Euromaidan and the overt divisions in Ukrainian society that have occurred since Euromaidan. Shulman's (1999)*The cultural foundations of Ukrainian national identity* offers an interesting if not limited view of divisions in Ukraine and the differing identities between Lviv and Donetsk. This paper serves as a good starting point for understanding the almost polar differences between the two regions, but its limit to just two cities reduces the impact of the work. The paper looks primarily at ethnicity and the pull towards Russia and Europe as being two of the key features that cause problems for Ukrainian national identity and differences within Ukraine. This paper therefore, despite limited in its scope, does offer some interesting ideas and explores the problem that is a Ukrainian national identity. This problem is one of, if not the single biggest problem Ukraine faces aside from political and economic concerns, as to this day no Ukrainian government has been able to offer a vision of a Ukrainian national identity that is inclusive and accepting of all.

Perhaps the most important article for this research paper is one by Anna Fournier (2002) *Mapping Identities: Russian Resistance to Linguistic Ukrainisation in Central and Eastern Ukraine.* In this paper Fournier explicitly writes about identity and its formation in central and eastern Ukraine. She outright refutes the idea that this is all an ethnic question, a point overlooked by many researchers and journalists who are more than content to put it all down to ethnicity. Rather Fournier postulates the notion of the existence of a hybrid identity of Ukrainian and Russian, but based on the Russian language. This russophone identity is based on language and culture, not on ethnicity, as there are some 5 million members of such a russophone community who are ethnic Ukrainians. Furthermore, Fournier states that much discontent in Eastern Ukraine is based on the fact that the state tries to force the Russophone group into accepting an ethnicity based identity, a national minority identity. There is therefore no acknowledgement by the state of a russophone based identity, and the state therefore prefers to call it an ethnic based identity. It is with this in mind that the state does not and will not accept Russian as anything more than an ethnic minority language. Fournier further explains that the culture of this group is not necessarily based on Russian culture, but rather that of Soviet culture and eastern Slavic. As

they have never been part of Russia in modern times, she states their homeland is the USSR, rather than Ukraine or Russia. Fournier therefore brings up key elements of identity in the East and hypothesises new ideas that differ from the mainstream view of ethnic divisions.

The majority of these works are a few years old now, and the situation in Ukraine is ever-changing. This research therefore aims to bring Ukrainian Cultural studies to the present day. Furthermore, it aims to specifically focus on one city, which has not been offered before. That city, Kharkov, offers one of the most intriguing research opportunities in modern Ukraine, precisely because it demonstrates the ambiguity and indecisiveness that is Ukraine. This research aims to utilise the work done by Fournier in particular, and study the existence of such an identity in Kharkov and how this relates to the current conflict and how the conflict has potentially changed such an identity, and postulate what it means for the future. This research therefore aims to utilise the different literature and to import it to one specific context, Post-Maidan Kharkov.

Research Questions

This research project is not intended to generalise the Ukrainian crisis, rather it seeks to look at one specific city/region and the impact of events upon the local, rather than the national and international scale. Certainly some questions will have wider consequences, but the intention is purely to study Kharkov. Comparisons of Kharkov and other Eastern Ukrainian regions can of course be made, but they are not the focus of this research, but this is perhaps a course for future research, as many eastern regions have quite strong similarities.

This research is grounded within two theories of identity formation and existence, namely Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory. Therefore part of this research will analyse these theories in relation to Kharkov, and vice-versa.

Pre-existing research, not specifically on Kharkov, but on Eastern regions has given some sense of the pre-existing identity of people in Kharkov. One key aim and question of this research is therefore to assess if a Russophone community as theorised by Fournier exists in Kharkov. If yes what does this suggest for the future of Kharkov if the prevailing identity is odds with that promoted by Kyiv?

In discussing identity it is imperative to understand the ways in which people understand themselves and identify themselves, furthermore, one of the main intentions of this thesis is to assess what aspects of identity are linked and correlated to a disdain for Maidan and the current course of Ukraine, and vice versa. This question will particularly look at aspects of ethnicity, language, historical understanding, and relationship to the Former Soviet Union.

Finally, some attempt to ascertain why Kharkov failed to join the separatist movement, despite some strong movements towards such an end existed. This question will again link with identity, and perhaps need to offer some sort of comparison with Lugansk and Donetsk regional identities and grievances, as well as actual specific events that occurred.

The questions can more simply be listed as such:

- Can we show that a Russophone identity exists in Kharkov? What about a Kharkov identity?

- How do people in Kharkov understand the crisis? Can differences in understanding be related to their different identities?

- Why did Kharkov fail to join the separatist cause? Is this based in identity or something else? What does the future hold for Kharkov and the Russophone community?

- Can Social Identity Theory or Self-Categorisation theory adequately explain the formation and existence of a Russophone identity in Kharkov?

Methodology

As my research project developed and evolved, there was an increasing debate as to whether the research data should be qualitative or quantitative in nature. Initially I had wanted my research to provide a more comprehensive, in terms of scale, overview of the situation in Kharkov. However, over time it became apparent that I was not capable and my research project wasn't sufficient to carry out research of such a scope and scale. Therefore it became obvious that qualitative research would form the basis of my personal data collection, and third party quantitative research would be used where available.

Interview Methodology

Interviewing was the primary method of data collection and inquiry for my research. Interviewing itself is the primary method of research in the social sciences. Whilst quantitative data has its purpose, it lacks depth and detailed insight into character. Interviews allow both the interviewer and the interviewee to explore, and express murky concepts of identity, political positions, as well as more general feelings of (dis)satisfaction. Considering this research project looks at the ideas and concepts of identity in Kharkov and their relation to post-maidan Ukraine, only interviews could be used to suitably tackle the issue.

The research to-date on Ukraine post-Maidan has been predominantly journalistic. Whilst interviews have been conducted looking at issues of identity and future hopes and directions for the country, they have mostly been superficial with little in the way of depth or detail. Furthermore, the participants in such interviews have generally been rather

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homogeneous in their views and expressions of identity. As became evidently clear when looking for potential participants and during the interviews themselves, only certain mainstream views are tolerated in post-maidan Ukraine, hence those seen on western media would follow similar patterns and themes. Certainly Russian media has done many interviews, but these tend to be the polar opposite of western media interviews. It became clear therefore that participants in broadcast and published interviews seemed very similar with little diversity, this in itself isn't a problem, but it did leave the question of whether differing views were being silenced or whether people were scared to speak out. Interviews would therefore allow for a much greater level of depth and a more meaningful discussion on identity in post-maidan Kharkov. The topic inherently requires interviewees to assess themselves, recant lived experiences and stories, none of which could be done in any meaningful manner except through interviews. Quantitative data is woefully lacking in Ukraine, particularly post-maidan, a census hasn't even been conducted since 2001. It would therefore have been wonderful to carry out some quantitative research, unfortunately as previously stated this was beyond the scope of this research.

Conducting interview research can be a painstakingly laborious process. Many things need to be considered, most importantly, finding willing participants, as well as location, method of recording, the questions themselves, building a rapport, and travelling to Kharkov itself.

To overcome the issues with location and travel, it had been suggested that online interviews either via skype or typing through social networks such as vkontakte could be feasible, a method championed by Lee and Lee (2012). This idea was quickly dismissed,

whilst some participants were willing to give short snippets of information online, it became

clear that they were unwilling to go into great detail, there were several reasons for this,

firstly, it isn't comfortable to write at length about details of identity and politics, secondly,

the interviewee has no real knowledge of who I am or how to verify my intentions, which

makes the building of a rapport and the flow of information to be rather tricky, and finally,

the biggest obstacle, was that potential participants stated that the Ukrainian state actively

monitors online activity. Initial research into the viability of online interviews showed that

people were weary of writing information that could be construed as being anti-ukrainian

under new laws, and could face the very real possibility of arrest. I was initially sceptical of

the extent of online surveillance, but it matters little whether I believe it or not, the comfort

of the participants far outweighs my scepticism. As Fowler (1984) states, the interviewer has

a moral and ethical responsibility to the interviewees and their well-being. With that in

mind, on-site interviews were conducted with 12 participants. In reporting information and

quoting interviewees real names were not used so as to give added anonymity and

protection.

Interviews were conducted in English where possible and Russian when not. However, when

certain themes were being addressed such as nationalist versus citizenship translations of

words were used to make sure that both interviewer and interviewee were in agreement on

definitions, as these words can be confusing in other languages. Throughout the interview

process Russian was used for clarification or when the interviewee felt they couldn't express

themselves in English. All translations were done by myself and checked with a native

speaker.

Furthermore, all interviews were recorded using a dictaphone. This enabled me to re-listen to parts several times to make sure answers were fully understood and clear. It is important to note that due to the nature of the interviews and the often public location, this dictaphone was normally hidden either in my breast pocket or under a napkin on a table. This was so that we wouldn't bring any unwanted attention upon ourselves, and allow the interviewee to feel more comfortable. Notes were also written in a notepad during interviews. The primary reason for this was to highlight anything I found to be particularly interesting or to record points of emphasis that might be missed on the recording.

Interview Design

The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for the interviewee to venture away from a strict set of questions, and allowing me, the interviewer to respond to their answers with questions about what they just said, rather than sticking to a single script. There were however a core set of questions that were asked in every interview in order to get the minimum required answer to satisfy my research. In order to assess what specific questions were needed several tests interviews were done with Ukrainian friends over the phone. Whilst this process wasn't strictly necessary it was a useful exercise to see which questions worked well and led to responses and which didn't, particularly with regard to very personal information and information that could be deemed to fall foul of the law regarding anti-state activities in Ukraine. This process helped me to analyse with which questions would I have to be specifically careful and sensitive when asking.

From these initial practice interviews categories of questions were created, personal information, language, identity, regions of Ukraine, response/view of political movements and events including Maidan, war, independence, and the future.

When asking these questions I tried to leave them as open as possible or as open as appropriate, as this can be advantageous as interviewees have more flexibility to answer however the wish, using their own words (Fowler, 1984). Unlike online interviews in the form of questionnaires, on-site interviews allow the interviewer to ask open questions and then be more succinct when following up.

Interview Analysis

In order to effectively analyse the interviews they were written up from notes and recordings on a computer. They were then colour categorised depending on the theme of the question and answer. This allowed for quick location of information when comparing different interviews and over 12 hours of interview data. This data was then compiled into different Word documents depending on the theme of the question. For example one document was about language use, and another about identity. This enabled quick analysis of the data and was very efficient for comparing and contrasting views and responses for the following chapters.

Identity Theory

The concept of identity on the surface appears to be relatively easy and understandable. It has often been thought of as simply being the response to the question 'who are you?'.

However, this simple understanding, whilst correct in its basic understanding of the concept, does not allow for any meaningful research on identity. Who are you? Could lead to a myriad of different answers, I'm a 29 year-old British citizen living in Europe. Such an answer whilst correctly answering the question of who I am, doesn't offer much for a tangible study of identity.

Many researchers have offered different definitions of identity. Hogg and Abrams (1998) postulate that identity is

> "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others"

This develops the simple idea of identity as who we are by introducing the idea and the concept of others, and identity being related to not just ourselves, but those around us.

Deng (1995) takes the issue further to describe identity as the way

"individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture"

Here Deng has brought in key markers of identity, whilst sticking to the idea of individuals and groups self-defining themselves, but also introducing the idea of others also defining people and placing them into categories. By introducing the different forms of racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural identity, Deng's definition enables more comprehensive and detailed research of identity to be undertaken. Of course Deng's definition is not all encompassing, and surely no such single definition exists. The more the subject is examined, the more aspects, variations, and intricacies of identity we observe. Deng's definition however, does incorporate elements that are of key concern for this research. Namely,

language, ethnicity, and culture. Therefore, it is a suitable reference point.

Fearon (1999) argues that identity is a two-pronged concept. There is personal identity, and social identity. Therefore our identity has different levels and layers. Fearon refers to personal identity as 'distinguishing characteristics that a person takes a particular pride in or views as socially consequential', and are relatively unchangeable., whilst social identity is a 'social category' in which people are marked by a label and 'distinguished by rules deciding membership and characteristic features or attributes'. This idea of both a personal and a social identity seems to be inline with the idea of what Deng previously stated about individuals and groups defining themselves. But Fearon takes it further by stating the idea of pride and social consequence of one's distinguishing characteristics. Furthermore, Fearon doesn't give a list of features that might be cause for identity, either because such lists have already been well established, or because it represents a new shift in recent years for identity to become far more vague and flexible, with new features of identity becoming more visible, whilst in some cases old markers of identity, such as ethnicity, have lost some of their impact.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Social Categorization Theory (SCT)

Identity formation and prevalence is a key part of this research. Therefore, understanding and analysing different theories of group identity and individual identity formation are of utmost importance. Furthermore, such theories that also postulate group behaviour and reaction to events and outside groups are also very important in determining and analysing identity, behaviour, hope and belief in Kharkov. It is therefore necessary to look at two key theories, namely, Social Identity theory, and Self-Categorisation theory. These theories

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enable the formation, composition, and salience of group identities to be analysed whilst also hypothesising group behaviour. This is key to research on identity in Kharkov with regard to recent events.

In the early 1970's Tajfel began working on the concept of social identity, its formation and its consequences. He argued that social identity was 'a persons sense of who they are by group membership'. Groups were an important source of pride, and self-esteem that gave people belonging in the social world.

Tajfel (1971) argued that social identity is created in three processes or stages. The first process is Social Categorization. In this stage people are categorized by others in order to better to understand who they are. The second process is Social identification. In this process people begin to adopt the identity of the group with which they have been categorized. The final process is Social Comparison. In this stage people within groups and the group as a whole compares itself with others, the so called in-group, out-group idea. Tajfel et al (1971) developed the concept of the 'minimal group paradigm' to suggest what is needed for groups to form and comparison with other groups to begin. The Minimal Group Paradigm suggests that very small differences or trivial criteria such as painting preference or tv show taste, are enough to begin the processes of social comparison and in-group discrimination or comparison with an out-group. The idea of the minimal group paradigm was quite simply to find at what point discrimination would occur.

Whilst the minimal group paradigm held up under scrutiny in lab tests, it wasn't felt to be particularly useful and so Tajfel developed the idea further as part of Social Identity Theory. Tajfel argued that there was a motivational factor in identity. He postulated that groups

seek to enhance the status of their group by discriminating and holding prejudice views against out-groups. This idea was part of a desire to increase self-image. The hypothesis that the in-group would discriminate against the out-group is central to Tajfel's hypothesis. He argued that this was based on normal cognitive processes and that people had a natural tendency to stereotype others and group things together, whilst also exaggerating differences between groups and similarities within groups. The need for positive distinctiveness drives social identity, therefore high status groups are more likely to create group identities, whereas low status groups are less likely to develop such group identities or will need to find an alternative positive group attribute or fight to change the negative image. He also argued that social mobility was important for groups. They would always seek to raise their status further and further.

This theory is therefore used to explain the basic formation of groups, the motivation for forming such groups and identities, and the behaviour of such groups once formed. There has however been much criticism of Social Identity Theory.

Huddy (2001) has been very critical of Social identity Theory particularly with regard to what he sees as its limitations in the real world, and for explaining political phenomena. Huddy argues that identity is much more fluid that SIT suggests and that people can hold multiple identities. Identity he argues is complicated by real world situations such as history and culture. He specifically looks at the idea of national identity to question SIT. Sears and Citrin (1994) discuss American identity. In their research members of diverse ethnic groups primarily identified as American and only secondarily as members of an ethnic group. This is at odds with SIT which suggests that membership of a minority group should be extremely

salient and even seek to overwhelm national identity. This critique of SIT goes further as they suggest that identity formation cant be explained by the salience of a group designation alone as the very meaning of identity itself is subjective, for example American identity doesn't mean the same to everybody. This refers back to Huddy's criticism of SIT and the idea of American identity. Her research shows that for some American identity means believing in core American values such as liberty and freedom, whilst for others religion is a key component of American identity. Therefore the categorization as belonging to a group with American identity is not so useful as the group itself is not unanimous in thought and understanding of identity. This is what Huddy contends as being her key critique of SIT in the political realm. She argues that SIT cannot be adequately adopted for political research without understanding two key points: that identity is a choice and that gradations in the strength of a group identity exist. She therefore views the idea that 'designation of group boundaries leads to social identity' as being too simple and inappropriate in the real world. She states that the Minimal Group Paradigm itself assigns people to groups rather than allowing individuals to identify themselves as part of group and assumes uniform development of group identity. Rather she postulates that it is salience that shapes identity and group salience that promotes in-group bias. Furthermore, she argues that individuals shift between an individual and social identity, and that categories can change across different social settings as individuals are likely to associate themselves with groups when a situation arises in which 'the use of a group a label maximises the similarities between oneself and other group members and heightens one's differences with outsiders'. This could occur with sports fans who in stadiums and around

other fans might associate and identify themselves within the group of fans, but outside of such a situation the group identity might be relatively unimportant or non-prevalent.

Flippen et al (1996) , argue that in-bias and as such out-group discrimination only really emerges under conditions of intergroup competition. They found that it is threat, and not group salience that causes in-group bias, which is contrary to the idea of SIT. Though it could also be argued that group salience increases when threatened.

Brewer (1993), argues that group identity is dependent on the need to belong and the need for uniqueness, what she calls 'optimal distinctiveness theory'. This theory suggests that groups need to have a mix of distinctive and common attributes hence why she suggests that members of majority groups appear to have weaker in-group identities than those of minority groups. This again is contrary to the base notion of SIT.

Returning to the political realm, Huddy postulates the key failure of SIT as being unable to answer the question as to

> *"why, despite salient group distinctions, do individuals vary in the degree to which*
>
> *they identify with a group?"*

This she argues leads us to question the idea that strong identities lead to group-related actions, which SIT postulates.

Finally, Taylor (1989), argues that there has been a key change in the idea of identity that SIT fails to account for, namely the idea that identity is no longer simply ascribed by others, but rather acquired by oneself. The Minimal Group Paradigm doesn't allow for self-identification and self-association. Taylor argues that group-identity is generally stronger

when it is acquired rather than assigned, although he also suggests that in some cases people might prefer being ascribed a group and therefore an identity due to the overwhelming choice and difficulty in understanding who one really is in the modern world. This argument once again refers back to the key critique of SIT, individual choice. When group membership is obvious, such as racial or ethnic groups, it is more difficult to avoid being labelled and categorized as a member of that group and thus being assigned an identity that fits that group, irrespective of whether one associates oneself with such a group.

Finally, Huddy (2001) critiques the idea of group identity formation being based on out-groups and 'othering'. She argues that clear out-groups may not exist, therefore group identity may be less intense, and not form according to the process that SIT suggests.

Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT) shares many of the fundamental ideas of SIT, which is to be expected when it was developed by Turner (1978), one of Tajfel's key colleagues. Like SIT, SCT still postulates that groups will try to improve their status and standing and discriminate against other groups to do it. Furthermore, SCT also postulated that intra-group and intergroup similarities and differences would be exaggerated to increase the group's identification.

There are however key fundamental differences between SCT and SIT. SCT proposes that personal and social identity are not 'poles in a continuum', as SIT would suggest, but rather they are at work simultaneously, guiding and shaping behaviour and thought. SCT theorises that membership of different groups is not simply a case of being assigned and categorised as such by others, but rather a personal definition of the self as part of a social category,

which directly challenges SIT. It is the definition of oneself that is the basis of any group, not interpersonal relations.

> *"Self-categorization is an active, interpretative, judgemental process, reflecting a*
>
> *complex and creative interaction between motives, expectations, knowledge and*
>
> *reality"*

Here, Turner (1999) states that SCT involves an active process, which contradicts SIT. Furthermore, this implies that self-categorisation could change over time or in different situations. As individuals become more knowledgeable, or a situation changes, then so too could their own understanding of themselves, and therefore their personal and social identity could change.

Trepte and Loy (2017), suggest that group salience is also different between SCT and SIT. They suggest that salience, in terms of SCT, can be triggered by cues, reminding one of their specific group membership. Salience however is relative in how it effects behaviour and response to cues, as it is motivated by both personal and social identity, again something which SIT doesn't allow for. This idea could be very useful for assessing group reactions and responses to stimuli, such as threats to linguistic or ethnic groups, as well as positive personal and group perception.

Finally, SCT includes the idea of depersonalisation and individuality. Depersonalisation is the idea that when a group becomes salient, individuals will perceive themselves as members of groups, and thus exaggerate their similarities, hence they depersonalise themselves. Individuals redefine their idea of their self and correlate it along according to the in-group. Therefore the individual moves from I to We, individual reaction and behaviour into

collective reaction and behaviour. The level of depersonalisation and on the contrary, personalisation, will effect the behaviour of the collective group. However, as there are gradations in the level of depersonalisation and in-group identity, then reactions to different cues might be perceived differently, and not result in large-scale group action. This idea is particularly interesting with regard to studies of different groups in Ukraine and their response to different events and cues.

Like SIT, SCT has faced criticism. Principally the criticism revolves around the continued present of low-status groups, that according to SIT and SCT would seek to improve their position, the so-called 'motivational' theory. Yet groups not only continue to exist despite having poor status, but many became more cohesive and unified precisely because of derogation and deprivation.

The concepts of SIT and SCT despite the criticism are still useful in this research as they postulates the idea of assigned groups and identities such as ethnic and racial groups in Ukraine, but the criticism of SIT/SCT is also equally valuable as Ukraine doesn't always offer clearly defined groups and group boundaries such as ethno-linguistic groups, and often the group one is ascribed is not necessarily the group one associates with or seeks to acquire.

Identity Types

This research looks at different identities within Kharkov, therefore it is prudent to briefly outline and discuss several key identity types and markers, namely, national identity, racial and ethnic identity, cultural identity, and (ethno)linguistic identity.

National Identity

National Identity is stated to mean;

> *"National identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols – have internalised the symbols of the nation ..."* (Bloom 1990, 52).

Here Bloom has made the point that it is a mass of people, a group, mutually and personally identifying with some national symbols, whether they be perceived or real, and internalising them into oneself, therefore making them part of one's identity. These symbols could be various different things, moral values, flags, or even a hymn for example.

Furthermore, this idea of a national identity could involve other markers, such as one's language, ethnicity (if for example the country is quite ethnically homogeneous   , such as Armenia), shared history and consciousness, and specific cultural artefacts.

Emerson (1960) described national identity as 'a body of people who feel that they are a nation'. Benedict Anderson (1983), perhaps the pre-eminent academic in this field, argued that this is socially constructed via the aforementioned markers of identity that people are exposed to on a daily basis, and that people self-categorise themselves, as well as being categorised by others, as belonging to.

In short, National Identity is that feeling of belonging to a nation, and is linked to the pride one feels within themselves as being part of the nation, which in turn can being expressed in form of patriotism. That isn't to say that one can't identity as belonging to a nation and being displeased with aspects of the nation. As previously discussed, there can be

gradations in identity, and some markers of identity might be more internalised as sources of pride than others. Germany for example has various markers of national identity, but history might be a somewhat uncomfortable marker.

Finally, it is prudent to discuss nation vs state in terms of national identity. The idea of national identity becomes less clear when a country is made up of multiple different ethnic groups. By using the term national identity do we mean the nation as a state, or nations within a state, thus closer to the meaning of the word ethnic. This debate is prevalent in Catalunya for example, where many proponents of independence consider Catalunya to be a nation, but it isn't a state. Therefore the phrase Spanish National Identity, might not mean much to them. What about those who identify as being members of an ethnic group but also identify with the wider state as a whole?

Therefore, when discussing the idea of national identity it is important to be careful using the terms and making sure they are understood, as in some countries nation has a distinct ethnic connotation (Guibernau, 2004) *(in Russian the words Natsia and Natsianalnost refer to nation and nationality but in an ethnic sense whereas the word гражданство refers to citizenship without ethnic connotations, therefore depending on the word used the answer could be russkiy, ethnic Russian, or rossiyskiy meaning Russian citizen without ethnic implication. For example I could personally be rossiyskiy, but I could never be russkiy).*

(Ethno)-linguistic identity

For this research the idea of linguistic or ethno-lingustic identity is key. The idea of linguistic identity is that language alone is a salient marker of group identity (Giles and Johnson,

1981). If we refer to ethno-linguistic identity then this is the idea that language is often tied to ethnicity, and therefore together they are a salient marker of group identity. This is particularly true in countries with large minority groups who are likely bi-lingual. As Hansen and Liu (1997) state, language is a symbol of ethnic identity and the choice of language is a symbol of ethnic relations. Therefore not only is language tied to ethnicity in many cases, but an individual's choice of language in an interaction with another is itself a marker of ethnic relations and identity. For example, a bi-lingual individual refusing to speak a common language with another gives indications of that individual's identity.

It is argued that language is a sufficiently salient marker of identity because language has an important role in our daily life, as well as our culture and up-bringing. Again if we use Catalaunya as an example, language is viewed as an incredibly important part if not the key foundation of Catalan identity, which is then combined with economic and political ideas to form the basis of the independence idea. Language does not exist in isolation, and even those learning languages later in life will no doubt experience some changes in their own personal identity. Language is inherently linked to culture, cultural heritage, and collective memory.

Russophone Identity

A key theory, if not the key theory, is that there exists a russophone identity within Kharkov. One of the key questions during the interview process was to try and establish whether such an identity does indeed exist.

Much work on russophone communities has already been done, particularly with regards to the Baltic states. As the name would suggest the identity is based on the Russian language.

Furthermore, it relates to Russian culture itself (Arel, 1995), moving beyond simply language to a greater identity marker. Whilst many individuals within the russophone community are 'ethnic' Russians, ethnicity itself is not a fundamental part of the russophone identity. As Forunier (2002) states, due to the USSR, Russian ethnic/national identity isn't prevalent in Ukraine, despite the presence of millions of 'ethnic' russians. In fact, she goes on to state that there is an ambiguous homeland for russians in Ukraine, with the USSR being considered as more of a homeland than Russia itself. She postulates that Soviet and Slavic identity is more prevalent than ethnic Russian identity.

Fournier argues that in Ukraine, particularly in the south and east, there prevails a hybridity of identity, one that is both Russian and Ukrainian in nature. The basis of this identity is the Russian language, both as an individual's native language and as a language used privately. According to statistics, though in Ukraine these should be taken with a pinch of salt, 55% of people use Russian at home, whilst only 40% use Ukrainian, whilst ethnically 77.5% are Ukrainian and just 17% Russian (data taken from ukrcensus.gov.ua). There are therefore millions of ethnic Russophone Ukrainians. If language is essential to distinguishing nations as Kedouri (1961) suggests, then these linguistic and ethnicity statistics would seem contradictory. Therefore, as Fournier says, it is clear that this identity goes beyond simply ethnicity. In fact the Russophone identity outright rejects ethnic classification and division. It is the Russian language and the associated culture that form the basis of Russophone identity.

The Russophone identity due to history is a young one. Fournier argues that it has only really formed recently due to post-1991 Ukrainianisation by the state. Various language laws

were introduced to protect and expand the use of Ukrainian, and the constitution itself states that there is only one official state language. Fournier suggests that state policies have undermined Russian cultural prestige and the hybrid identity by reducing Russian language to that of an ethnic minority. Furthermore, in-doing so the state has pushed the idea of Russians being non-indigenous to Ukraine. The Ukrainian state does not recognise a Russophone identity, and Ukrainian law has no guarantees or protections for language groups. Instead the state has reductively pushed the idea of it being an ethnic group only, and actively encouraged people to adopt an ethnic identity. This has also failed to recognise that millions of ethnic Ukrainians are Russophone.

Fournier argues that it is the policies and actions of the state that have made the russophone identity salient. The identity has become salient due to perceived and actual state opposition to the idea of a russophone identity, and the state policies that have been deemed to be 'liquidating' Russian language and culture in Ukraine. Fournier also postulates that much of the resistance to the states policies and classification as an ethnic group is due to the idea that people in the Russophone community consider Ukrainian to be inferior to Russian as it is 'non-scientific' and 'crude' and the roles are being reversed as during the USSR there was a prestige associated with the Russian language. There is also resistance due to the idea that the Ukrainian state is dividing Ukraine along ethnic boundaries, which many in the russophone community deem to be artificial due to their ideas of Slavic brotherhood and being 'one people'.

Identity in Kharkov

This chapter aims to outline and explore in some depth what identities exist within Kharkov. The interviews allowed in-depth discussion on various aspects of identity, particularly with regards to language, culture, and ethnicity. However, this research has not been conducted with the aim of proclaiming that such identities are widely pervasive throughout Kharkov, as 12 interviews is far too few to do that, rather it is the complex and detailed understanding of how these individuals viewed themselves, their state, and events as being key. Statistical data where appropriate has been used in conjunction with interview data.

Key to this chapter will be establishing what identities can be observed, how this correlates to the state's view of identity in Kharkov, and how salient are such identities. The results will be split into: Russophone Identity, Ethnic/National Identity, Regional Identity, and Others.

Establishing Russophone Identity in Kharkov

The russophone identity was a key part of the interview process and questioning. If we synthesise the russophone identity to entail Russian language, hybridity of Ukrainian and Russian cultures and identities, and perhaps some affinity or identification with the soviet past and the idea of Slavic brotherhood, then the interviews clearly showed that such an identity certainly does exist in Kharkov, but not without its own nuances.

All 12 interviewees stated that Russian was their primary language of communication, however, when asked what their mother tongue was, 2 interviewees stated that Ukrainian was their mother tongue. Furthermore, 2 interviewees professed to being unable to speak

Ukrainian at all. What is perhaps more important in assessing the existence of a russophone identity in Kharkov is not necessarily language knowledge or ability, but willingness and desire to use languages, comfort when using Russian and Ukrainian, relative importance of Russian to the individual, and the role of Russian in their culture.

In order to establish the role of Russian language and its importance, it is necessary to analyse what the interviewees said in regards to Russian, but also in regard to Ukrainian as well, if we assume Ukrainian-Speakers to be the contrary out-group to Russian-Speakers in Ukraine.

> *"I love speaking Russian more than Ukrainian, because Ukrainian is not my mother tongue. Its much more difficult for me to speak Ukrainian." - Yana*

> *"I speak only Russian. I almost never use Ukrainian. Only use it for documents. Now you can only use Ukrainian for this. I can read, write and understand Ukrainian, but I don't feel it when I speak it." - Tanya*

Yana and Tanya express a clear preference for Russian over Ukrainian. Furthermore they talk about ideas of comfort and feeling attached to the language, with Tanya in particular expressing some emotional connection to Russian that she doesn't feel when she speaks Ukrainian. Both are bilingual, but profess a clear preference for Russian over Ukrainian.

> *"Something like what language you speak in your private life is very internal and personal, and for me that language is Russian." - Elena*

Here Elena makes a similar connection between language and personal emotion. Whilst all three of these interviewees are bilingual, they use Russian in their personal life, and majority of daily life, which is normal for Kharkov, but importantly they have an emotional

connection to the language which they don't feel with Ukrainian. This itself could be argued as being a key element of Russophone identity.

> **What is your mother tongue?**
>
> *"Ukrainian."*
>
> **What language do you speak most?**
>
> *"Russian, but I want to start speaking Ukrainian more. All my school was in Ukrainian. Many things I can't think about in Russian. You know, my inspiration, when it comes to me, its in Ukrainian. I dream in Ukrainian, I think in Ukrainian. I like it really." - Nastya*

Nastya however displays the converse. She feels her emotional connection and sub-conscious with Ukrainian, despite being bi-lingual and predominantly using Russian. This is therefore perhaps the essence of the Russophone identity, the desire to use Russian, and have an emotional and personal connection with it, whilst also showing some degree of reluctance to use Ukrainian except when necessary. Nastya doesn't display such attributes, and therefore whilst she might be categorized as being part of the russophone community by others due to predominantly using Russian and her geographic location, she personally doesn't appear to identify as part of such an identity-group.

Another way to analyse the importance of the Russian language and to therefore assess russophone identity could be to look at whether interviewees believe that Russian should have official status in Ukraine. Certainly this linkage is debatable as people who do not identify with a language based group-identity could also support Russian having an official status, but if we take into account the interviewees' reasoning for being for or against this motion, then we can remove such doubt.

What about Russian language in Ukraine? Should it be an official language?

"Yes of course. It would be really good. All my life I speak in Russian. It would be easy to do exams in Russian, or documents with words I don't know. It would all be easier in Russian. In Europe some countries have more than one official language, so why not here?" - Anton

"I don't think it would be a problem to have two official languages. Old people don't know Ukrainian. For them its very difficult when everything is in Ukrainian. I don't think its fair for them. But now we have this situation. Some people are against anything Russian. They don't buy even Russian products. So it cant happen now." - Natasha

Anton and Natasha express common viewpoints regarding the status of Russian language in Ukraine. Of the 12 participants 9 stated that they believe Russian should be either an official national language or at least an official regional language. The reason for supporting official language status however varied, some such as Natasha expressed the idea that It was need primarily for older generations who speak Ukrainian poorly, or don't speak it at all, whilst Anton expressed a personal desire for official status as it would be easier for him. In this instance we could suggest that Anton's position reflects that of the russophone identity idea and the personal connection to the language, whereas Natasha perhaps represents a different identity but still acknowledging that there is a need for official status.

Other participants however expressed doubt about Russian as an official language in Ukraine.

Do you believe Russian should be an official language in Ukraine?
"No"

not at all? Not even in regions?

"No. I've always thought like this. I think its not a problem. When you go to
England you need to know English, so what's the problem? " - Nastya

Nastya expresses a view that is more akin to the government's position on the issue which is

that Ukrainian is the only official language of the state and other official language's are not

necessary as there isn't a language problem in the country. Nastya therefore expresses a

view that is contrary to what we would assume the Russophone 'community' would

propagate as it denies the necessity of official status, denies that there is an issue, and

denies that Russian language is itself native to Ukraine.

Do you think Russian should be an official language?

"Well it doesn't need to be. Documents would need to be in Russian as well, it will
be complicated and time-consuming. But I guess we need a referendum on this
question. I'm not against it, just not sure its needed."

What about if just in some regions?

"For sure we don't need to share Ukraine with languages. no. its not right. If
Russian is a second language then for the whole country, but not divided into
parts." - Anna

Anna however expresses a view that is more nuanced. She doesn't reject official language

status because of some belief that Russian is a foreign language or because there isn't a

problem with Russian in Ukraine, rather she expresses the view that it would be laborious

and complex to enact such a law. Furthermore she rejects regional language status as she

believes it would further divide Ukraine which she views as wrong. Anna however also self-

identifies as belonging to a Russian-language identity group, therefore, the issue of official

status for Russian is perhaps not universally salient to the Russophone community as

gradations would appear to exist.

It would therefore appear that language alone is not sufficient for all to self-categorise oneself as being part of the Russophone group. Therefore other markers of the russophone group identity need to be analysed in Kharkov.

As previously stated, Fournier argues that a key factor in russophone identity in Ukraine is the hybridity of Russian and Ukrainian culture and identity. It is this hybridity and not simply language that shows the group to be different to Ukrainians and Russians, and therefore sit somewhere between.

When asked who they were during the interviews three primary categorisations came up, Russian, Ukrainian, or a mixture of both. There were also some who identified as having ethnic Jewish, Greek, and Belarusian roots. Of those interviewed, 3 identified as being 100% ethnically Russian, 3 as being 100% ethnically Ukrainian, 4 as being a mix of Russian and Ukrainian, and 2 described themselves as being Ukrainian but also considered themselves as Russian as they don't see any ethnic differences between Russians and Ukrainians. The latter two represent the "Slavic brotherhood" concept which will be touched upon later. These self-identifications were based on ethnicity and culture, not citizenship, as all interviewees were Ukrainian citizens.

For the Russophone identity, I will focus on those who identified themselves as being a mixture of ethnicities and cultures.

> *"I think if we look at documents, I'm Ukrainian. But I feel like a Russian person. I enjoy Russian culture. As for me I don't feel Russian-Russian culture. I feel a mix. I can speak Russian, I can have some parts of Russian culture, but I cant for example say that their artists or poets are mine. Mine are people from Ukrainian culture. I can't really separate them, but I cant say that Russian culture is my culture." - Tanya*

Tanya here states that although her passport says she is Ukrainian, she feels that she is Russian. However in terms of culture she doesn't feel that 'Russian-Russian' culture is hers, by which she means Russian culture from Russia, rather she feels a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian culture more associated with Eastern Ukraine than the Russian State. From prior research by Fournier and Cheskin (2015) on Russophone communities in the post-Soviet space, it could be argued that what Tanya states here is the key foundation of Russophone identity besides language, the idea that they have aspects of Russian culture, but without necessarily connecting it to the Russian state. This has been called the 'ambiguous homeland' by Fournier.

> *"Kharkov is between Russians and Ukrainians. Our culture is between Russian and Ukrainian."* - Sasha

> *"To me I'm Ukrainian of course, I was born here and raised here, although my mother is Russian, but my mentality is like Slavic Russian people. My culture, and most of my traditions are closer to Russian. "* - Elena.

Sasha describes his culture as being between Russian and Ukrainian, thus I think we can infer that to mean it is a mixture of both. Elena doesn't identify as being ethnic Russian, despite having a Russian mother, rather she calls herself Ukrainian because of where she was born and raised, displaying a citizenship over nationality view of her identity. She does however state that most of her traditions are closer to Russian, although not all of them are, thus suggesting she has elements of Ukrainian traditions within her family and culture. This again points to the hybridity of identity and culture. Elena further states that her mentality is more akin to that of Slavic Russian, thus suggesting that others in Ukraine have a different mentality to her.

From the interviews it was clear to see that such a hybridity of identity between and compromising both Russian and Ukrainian exists in Kharkov. This hybridity however is not universal and has different gradations. Certainly there will be those who consider themselves to have both Russian and Ukrainian identities and culture but more on the Russian side, while there will be others who lean towards the Ukrainian side. Analysing the extent of these gradations is far beyond the scope of this research and would perhaps not even be possible to truly measure.

Finally, history and with it the idea of slavic brotherhood offer some indication of the Russophone identity. Fournier argues that Soviet history and the soviet state were key to the Russophone community and indeed many people identify themselves with a Soviet homeland rather than the Russian or Ukrainian state. This ties into the idea of Slavic unity, as although the USSR wasn't homogeneously Slavic, Slavs did contribute the overwhelming majority and were united in one state, as they were under the Russian empire before that.

Whilst the majority of interviewees never lived during the USSR or were born in the final years of the USSR, it was very interesting to hear their responses to the theme of Soviet history in Kharkov and Ukraine and recent state actions against Soviet History, traditions, and symbols.

When asked whether the ban on soviet symbols in Ukraine was necessary or good, 10 out of 12 interviewees said no. Furthermore, when asked how they felt about the statue of Lenin being torn down by a group of radicals was a good idea, 9 from 12 said no, with only 1 interviewee responding overwhelmingly in support of the action.

What do you think about the government's new law, banning soviet symbols and history?

"Our parents were born in the USSR, its wrong to ban it, there is nothing bad with this history. We must remember what was before."

Are you offended by what they did?

"Yes. And i'm offended by what they did to Lenin (statue)."

Why do you think they decided to make this law?

"Because its Russia, near Russia. They're afraid that people will choose the side of Russia."

—   *Yulia*

The new ban on soviet symbols, what do you think about it?

"I think its wrong because its part of culture. I see no reason to forget our past, its our history. It doesn't make sense to do it."

—   *Yana*

" don't like it, because I think its part of history. These buildings for example were made in USSR. Its part of history, part of our history. Its part of the city and its impossible to destroy it."

What about what happened to Lenin?

"No, it shouldn't have been destroyed. Well maybe destroyed but not like this. Mostly I didn't like the way they did it. For me its nothing, it doesn't make some problems for me (the monument). It felt like they destroyed part of Kharkov culture for me."

- Tanya

The Ukrainian state has made a clear push to try and distance itself from the USSR and to try and remove aspects of Soviet legacy and culture that remain in Ukraine. Kharkov however is a very Soviet city with many monuments, street names, and institutes that were either built in the USSR or named after Soviet leaders or personalities. As Fournier previously stated the USSR is often considered more of a homeland for the russophone community in Ukraine, and there is a sense that much of their identity is soviet, though this is assigned as much as self-categorised. Therefore opposition to attacks on Soviet legacy could be an indicator of russophone identity when combined with other markers. Some interviewees responded

negatively to the destruction of the Lenin monument not because it was a Soviet symbol, but because it was a central feature of Kharkov as it stood in the centre of the main square. As Tanya states, it was part of Kharkov culture, not necessarily a wider Russophone culture. Others rejected the de-sovietisation due to cost as renaming roads of parks is an expensive process and they felt the money is needed elsewhere. So whilst it can certainly be suggested that opposition to new laws on Soviet legacy and history do indicate Russophone identity, it is not mutually exclusive.

There are however connections between elements of soviet identity that exist within the russophone community, and the idea of Slavic brotherhood. Whilst certainly the USSR was not unanimously Slavic, there remained the idea that Belarus, Ukraine and Russia were the core of the Union and had a close bond and feeling of sameness. As previously stated, some interviewees felt that their culture and identity was between Russian and Ukrainian, there were however other views that didn't state they were between Russian and Ukrainian, but felt that ethnically and culturally, Russian and Ukrainian were the same, with perhaps only some minor differences. This is what could be argued to be Slavic brotherhood, where the differences between the groups are minimised, if not entirely eliminated, and rather the similarity is highlighted or indeed classified as being one and the same.

> *"I can't say there is any real difference between Ukrainians and Russians, certainly not Ukrainians in the East." - Alexey*

> *"Since childhood I used to say we are Russian people. Like I put a plus sign between Russian and Ukrainian, because we are Slavic people, Slavic mentality. I always thought we are Russian people." - Elena*

> *"My father and mother are Ukrainian. But I think we are Russian. We like Russia. We think Ukraine and Russia are the same, the same people, but different countries." - Yulia*

Alexey, Elena and Yulia believe that Russians and Ukrainians are essentially the same. Elena goes further and directly talks about the idea of being one Slavic people, which is about ethnicity and mentality. Whilst Yulia doesn't see any difference whatsoever apart from being different states.

The interviews, whilst not wide-ranging, show that certainly Russophone identity exists as we understand it from previous research. The key markers of such an identity, as postulated by Fournier among others, are present in Kharkov. The salience and strength of such an identity is however varied, some interviewees seemed to show and express strong connections and feelings with a Russophone identity, whilst others either outright rejected such an identity, or showed only some aspects of Russophone identity. Certainly the connection to the Soviet Union was the weakest of the proposed markers of Russophone identity, but this is to be expected considering the majority of interviewees were under 35 and therefore had no experience of the USSR. The strongest marker of identity was the Russian language and feeling of being a mixture of cultures.

Ethnic identities in Kharkov

Whilst the Russophone identity has been shown to exist, various other identities also exist, primary amongst these are ethnic identities. Of the different ethnic identities the most prevalent are Ukrainian and Russian ethnic identities, however there are many other ethnicities in Kharkov that retain their own culture and identity, particularly Armenians and other former Soviet ethnic groups. Ethnic identities have been increasing in Ukraine primarily as a result of government policies, but also due to migration and recent events. As

Fournier states that Ukrainian government has been pushing the idea of Russian ethnic identity instead of Russophone identity therefore it would be of little surprise that some elements of a Russian-ethnic identity exist in Ukraine, particularly in the east. At the same time Ukrainian ethnic identity has been increasing, especially since Maidan and subsequent events.

> *"Everybody born in Kharkov has Russian as a native language. If his native language is Russian, then his culture is Russian." - Sergey*

In his statement, Sergey exemplifies the role of language in culture. However, he would also appear to refute the idea of a hybridity of culture and identity and in-doing so express a view that is more akin to Russian identity, and Russian-ethnic identity.

> *"Well, there is no such things as a Ukrainian nation. And in my personal opinion there is no such thing as a Ukrainian language. The so called Ukrainian language sounds either ridiculous or repellent to any sensitive Russian ear, to any cultured Russian it sounds ridiculous. Its a collection of countless Russian grammar mistakes and Polish words." - Sergey*

These statements reflect the views of Russian nationalists. Whilst Sergey himself states he has no issue with the existence of Ukrainian or people speaking it, or with the Ukrainian state as a whole, he finds it to be a corruption of the Russian language. He further states that:

> *"having no history and no culture of their own they just appropriate the Russian history and culture. Its a well known fact. Every Russian writer, painter, architect etc who was born in Ukraine, is automatically Ukrainian. We even met near the underground station named after Beketov, the famous architect who built up half of the old city centre. An absolutely brilliant architect. A pure blood Russian, and uncle to the great Russian poet, Alexander Blok. Beketov spent most of his life in great Russia, then returned to lesser Russia, and then spent the rest of his life in Kharkov. Now they say he was Ukrainian. Now the parallel, the great Indian*

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> *writer, Rudyard Kipling, why not, he was born in India, he lived in India and wrote*
> *about India. He was a great Indian writer, please don't tell me he was British. Its*
> *exactly the same here. Its absurd. Its ridiculous and appalling."*

Here Sergey refutes the very idea of Ukrainian culture being authentic, rather he views it as appropriated Russian culture with revisionism of history and historical figures as being Ukrainians.

> *"I don't feel Ukrainian, I don't like Ukraine, I don't like Ukrainian culture, I don't like*
> *Ukrainian people. But I can't change it." -Yulia*

Yulia self-identifies as being Russian and states clearly her dislike of Ukrainian culture and Ukrainians in general. Therefore this could be interpreted as some form of Russian-ethnic identity if not outright Russian nationalist sentiment.

> *"I love Ukrainian, I love culture, this country, not always its government though. I*
> *am Ukrainian, my blood is Ukrainian, and Ukrainian culture is mine, traditions,*
> *village life, its mine, nothing Russian." - Nastya*

Nastya however is very much opposed to the views of Sergey and Yulia. She identifies as being ethnically Ukrainian and strongly supporting Ukrainian culture, traditions, and the state. Therefore, whilst in the minority of those interviewed, Ethnic identities certainly do exist in Kharkov, however some hybridity of identity connected to the Russian language would appear to be dominant.

Others and Othering in Ukraine – Regionalism

One further key aspect of identity in Kharkov and indeed in all of Ukraine is regionalism. Ukraine is well-known for having strong regional identities primarily due to history. Different regions of Ukraine existed under different rulers and states and were only unified as one

coherent whole under the USSR, with Crimea being the last part incorporated into the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic in 1954 (although it has now joined Russia). The different regions also have very different histories of the populations and groups living upon the land from Cossacks, to Tartars, to Hungarians, Austrians, Poles and Lithuanians. Religion is also not universal in Ukraine with the Greek Church, Moscow Patriarch Orthodox Church, Kyiv Patriarch Orthodox Church, Uniate Church, as well as Islam and old-believers. These different histories, ethnicities, religions, and languages have led to significant regional differences and identities.

This chapter therefore aims to explore regionalism in Kharkov, a so-called Kharkov identity, as well as looking at comparisons with other regions of Ukraine and how interviewees feel with regards to other regions and if this can be further developed as part of a Russophone identity. Prior research suggests that the South and East of Ukraine are closer and similar to each other, whilst West Ukraine is significantly different.

The majority of interviewees when asked what regions of Ukraine they felt closest to said that the South and East (Donetsk, Odessa etc) were the closest regions, but they also acknowledged some differences.

> *"What about Kharkov and Donetsk, are they different?*
> *I see no difference between Kharkov and Donetsk."* - Yana

> *Is Donbas different to Kharkov?*
> *"No, no big differences."*
> *None at all?*
> *"No. I understand them. They are part of Left Bank Ukraine like us in Kharkov."* -
> *Anton*

Anton and Yana don't see any real differences between Kharkov and Donbas. Anton furthers this by referring to Left Bank Ukraine. By saying this Anton suggests that there is cultural unity or closeness throughout East/South Ukraine and infers that differences exist between the Centre/West of Ukraine and the East. Left Bank Ukraine is roughly synonymous to the Russian speaking regions of Ukraine, thus by suggesting Left Bank Ukraine is different to the rest of Ukraine Anton has identified an in and out-group. The in-group being the russophone regions of Ukraine with cultural, linguistic and historical similarities, and the out-group being the rest of Ukraine, predominantly the Centre and West, that have far higher usage of Ukrainian language, as well as different histories and experiences, as well as religious differences.

> *"There is a difference, history etc, but its not just culture. For example culturally, it could be similar to Donetsk and Lugansk. These regions close between Ukrainian and Russian culture. But Kharkov I think is different, the infrastructure is different. This is like a business city, and Donetsk and Lugansk aren't like this. Kharkov is similar in culture, but generally I think its a little bit higher (than Donetsk and Lugansk). So for me its different." - Tanya*

Tanya highlights some differences between Donbas and Kharkov. Whilst acknowledging they are similar in terms of culture she believes Kharkov to have a higher level of culture, and a somewhat higher status than Donbas. Therefore we can see that there are gradations in identifying with neighboring regions and the wider Russophone 'community'. This could however be associated with multiple competing identities. Whilst on some level she identifies with Donbas as being culturally similar, she also identifies Kharkov as being different in some aspects, which suggests that perhaps a Kharkov regional identity exists that is part of Left Bank Ukraine and the Russophone community, but with its own nuances.

> ***Is Kharkov similar to donetsk?***
> *"Yes, but maybe a little different."*

How?

"They are militaristic. In Kharkov we don't like this." - Yulia

Like Tanya, Yulia also believes Kharkov and Donetsk are similar, but acknowledges a difference in mentality, namely being militaristic. Therefore if we take Donbas and East Ukraine in general as having a Russophone Identity as Fournier has suggested, we can see that the interviewees don't perceive them to be precisely the same. Thus we can suggest that the Russophone Identity is not uniform, rather it appears to be a broad identity, with regional variations and gradations, something which contradicts SIT.

With regard to West Ukraine the majority of interviewees responded that there were large differences between Kharkov, and East Ukraine, and Western Ukraine.

What about west Ukraine? What are the differences between Kharkov and west Ukraine?

"Lvov?"

Yes

"they are closer to Poland and Austria. They aren't real Ukrainians. They have young children who shout 'death to Muscovites'. They're very stupid people." - Yulia

"To be honest I've never been to west Ukraine. Partly because I don't like their mentality and how they identify themselves as true Ukrainians." - Elena

Yulia and Elena both recognize West Ukraine as being significantly different to Kharkov. Yulia emphasizes the different histories of the two regions and recent events. Elena emphasizes a difference in mentality. Both Yulia and Elena highlight elements of antagonism from Western Ukraine around the notion of being 'real Ukrainians' with Yulia also calling them stupid for using anti-Russian phrases. It is clear that both show resistance to the Western Ukrainians proclaiming themselves to be real Ukrainians and in-doing-so trying to

raise themselves about Eastern Ukrainians. This refers back to SIT and SCT theories of

identity groups seeking to raise their position at the expense of others.

> ***What about you personally? If we take western Ukraine for example, do you feel connected to them? Do you understand them, how they speak, think etc?***
>
> *"No, they have some different traditions, and they are closer to Europe. There language isn't clear Ukrainian, its a mix of Ukrainian and Polish, and some German. But we live in one country, and every country has different districts I guess. And its normal that they are different." - Natasha*
>
> ***How do you feel about other regions of Ukraine. For example if I asked you about west Ukraine?***
>
> *"We are really different. Different cultures here and there. Its OK, its not bad or good, just a fact."*
>
> ***How is it different?***
>
> *"Language, we speak different languages. We used to be different states."*
>
> – *Alexey*

> *"There's a big difference. Firstly language. Secondly, culture."*
>
> ***What cultural differences?***
>
> *"The west of Ukraine was grown by Polish, and European powers, the east was grown by Russia. But also people from west Ukraine don't like us from the east. People here are friendlier than the west." - Anton*

> ***What about Lvov?***
>
> *They are more Polish.*
>
> ***Do you have differences?***
>
> *Just differences in language.*
>
> ***What about identity, culture?***
>
> *They have a different religion. They have UNIATE church. It was very strange for me. - Anna*

All respondents who said that West Ukraine and the East/Kharkov were difference

suggested it was because of two primary things, history and language. Primarily the

connection and history with Poland is emphasized above all else. Anna however also notes

that there is a difference in religion, as West Ukraine is unique in Ukraine for being

predominantly UNIATE, a Byzantine-linked Eastern Catholic Church, whilst the rest of

Ukraine is dominated by orthodoxy. Anton also notes that people in West Ukraine don't like

those in East Ukraine also stating that he believes those in the East to be friendlier.

Finally, what about Kyiv which sits between the East and the West? The interviews showed

that people felt there were significant differences between Kharkov and Kyiv, but that they

were generally smaller than West Ukraine.

> **What about Kyiv?**
>
> *"I don't know."*
>
> **Closer than west?**
>
> *"Yes, because of language, but also different culture, but certainly closer than west Ukraine." - Yana*

Once again language appears to be the primary difference. Whilst Russian is still widely

spoken in Kyiv, Ukrainian is becoming more and more dominant particularly since Maidan.

However, Yana states that despite linguistic differences she feels Kyiv is closer to Kharkov

than West Ukraine.

> *"For me there is a big difference between Kyiv and Kharkov. In culture. In Kyiv they are more Ukrainian. They speak more Ukrainian there. In culture it looks like Ukrainian. Here it looks more Russian. As for me I don't like Kyiv a lot. I felt the people are not the same. They aren't so kind, so polite. They are selfish there. Here people are calmer and kinder. I don't like Kyiv, I can't stay there for a long time. I don't feel it. I don't feel comfortable there or with the people." - Tanya*

> *"Even in Kyiv. We visited a museum there and a woman heard we were speaking Russian and she said to us 'oh that's in your part of Ukraine, not here'. It wasn't very pleasant, it felt like she wanted to show we weren't welcome." - Elena*

Tanya and Elena however find Kyiv to have significant differences with Kharkov. They both

speak from experience about feeling uncomfortable and perhaps even unwelcome in Kyiv.

Elena in particular highlights an experience of being told her language didn't have a place in Kyiv. Tanya suggests there is a difference in mentality with people in Kharkov being calmer and kinder than those in Kyiv. There is also a difference with those in Kyiv being more 'Ukrainian' and those in the East being more 'Russian'.

Despite these differences and perceived differences, the majority of respondents didn't think it was a particularly large problem having such large regional differences. Rather it is the mentality that appears to be the bigger issue with several respondents claiming that they felt as though people in other regions were trying to raise their identity and image above those in the East. It needs to be pointed out that those interviewees who identified with a Russophone identity were more likely to see and state big differences between West and East Ukraine, whilst those who didn't identify with a Russophone identity, and showed more of a Ukrainian national identity felt the differences were much smaller. As Nastya says;

> *"I've visited many regions, I cant say I felt they were alien or something. Kyiv maybe is too many people for me, that's all I can say."*
>
> **What about Galicia?**
>
> *"I like this region. I've been to all regions of Ukraine. But I cant be sure they are different. I love people from Lvov."*

Vika takes it even further by saying that she believes West Ukrainian mentality and character is better than in Kharkov, and that people in Kharkov could learn from Western Ukraine.

> *"They can teach us some characteristics. They are more open and helpful, people in Kharkov are very closed, more inside."*

Many of the comments about different regions and groups were offensive in nature with those categorizing themselves as Russophone calling Ethnic Ukrainians and West Ukrainians 'stupid', whilst those who identified with a Ukrainian National identity mocking members of

the Russophone community for their inability to speak adequate Ukrainian, and for also being uneducated. One interviewee even went so far as to call Russian speaking Ukrianians with poor Ukrainian 'degenerates'. There is therefore clear 'othering' of each other and discrimination of the different out-groups and clear in-bias.

What we can witness therefore is that those who identify more with a Russophone community and the East in general are likely to see bigger differences and more negatives between different regions of Ukraine, whilst those who don't identify with a Russophone identity are likely to see smaller differences or have more of an affinity for Western Ukraine and other regions. Those who identify with the Russophone identity actively conclude that Western Ukrainians are different to them, that they are their 'other' whilst also acknowledging that Western and Central Ukrainians feel the same way towards them. Thus suggesting that both groups Other and are Othered by each other and build their identities in opposition to each other.

Kharkov Identity

Kharkov has a unique history within Ukraine, it was the first capital of Ukraine, and also part of Sloboda Ukraina, a province that included Kharkov region, parts of Sumy, Donetsk and Lugansk, as well as the Russian regions of Belogord and parts of Kursk and Voronezh regions (Petro, 2015). This region was originally populated by Russians, and then Ukrainians, hence there has been a mixture of peoples and cultures in this region for several centuries. It is therefore no surprise that to this day people from Kharkov have a close connection to their city and region and clearly state that Kharkov has its own unique culture and identity.

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"Kharkov has a unique history, sure we are close to other regions in the East, but still Kharkov and Kharkovchanye are different to others." - Alexey

"Kharkov and all the east, this territory, how was it made?"

Cossakiya? Novorossiya?

"No no before. Slobodnaya Ukraina."

Yes of course.

"We have our own culture. Its a mix. Ukrainian and Russian. A mixture. Some events and traditions are different. We are like a special part of Ukraine. There were originally something like 4 or 5 parts of Ukraine, and Kharkov was one of the most important." - Anton

Alexey highlights history as one of the principle reasons for this difference, whilst also stating that Kharkov and other regions are close, but not precisely the same. He also uses the diminutive word Kharkovchanye, which simply means a person from Kharkov. Anton highlights the history of Kharkov as a distinct region and part of Sloboda Ukraina, whilst also highlighting the mix of Ukrainian and Russian identity in Kharkov.

"in Kharkov we are very passive in terms of politics and expressing our voice. Don't touch us and we will live our lives, go to work, just don't touch us. If there isn't something huge and we can live our life everyday, then we wont do anything. Its also part of our mentality, whatever goes on, people get used to it."

- Elena

Elena suggests that Kharkov has a rather apathetic mentality with regards to politics and negative events. This point is particularly resonant when looking at Kharkov's history of political opposition, yet lack of political protest and support for opposition movements. Kharkov voted overwhelmingly against Poroshenko in the 2014 elections, and showed strong opposition to Maidan, yet after some months protests died down and people got back to everyday life. It is perhaps this political apathy and desire to just live that saw

Kharkov fail to join other separatist regions. As long as they aren't overly pushed or affected, then Kharkov residents will just carry on living as they were. This although perhaps not entirely unique in Ukraine is a far cry from how residents react in other areas of Ukraine, for example Crimea and Donbas, where desire for independence fluctuates with every political decision in Kyiv, and as recent events have shown people there are more likely to react in a decisive manner.

> *"People just live, make money and have a family. People like me, older people, and young people who haven't been ukrainianised, we are not so fanatical for Ukraine or for Russia. We just want to live in Kharkov, find a job, make our lives. Its all." - Anton*

Anton's statement perhaps agrees with what Elena said. It appears that stability and the desire to be able to carry on living despite adverse conditions and events is key to a Kharkov identity, without any allusions to something grander. He also states that people from Kharkov are generally not so fanatical towards Russia or Ukraine, thus alluding to the fact they have some differences with other regions such as Donbas, Crimea and West Ukraine. He does however, also point out that perhaps this Kharkov identity is changing or being diminished as people become more 'Ukrainianised'.

> ***do you identify with a regional Kharkov identity?***
> *"Yes, a lot."*
> ***What is important for this identity? Key features.***
> *"I live in Saltovka. Its a unique place. Kharkov has the biggest of such kinds of districts. All my life i've been here." - Vika*

Vika however takes a different view of Kharkov identity. Rather she focuses on an even smaller scale identity, that of an individual area of Kharkov, Saltovka. Saltovka is a famous, or perhaps infamous, district of Kharkov that is characterized by huge residential apartment

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blocks that are generally not in very good condition. Furthermore the area has no industry as it was built as a Soviet 'sleeper district'. Vika therefore identifies with this district and feels that it is quintessential Kharkov.

Identity Salience and SIT/SCT in Kharkov

This chapter will analyse the salience of the aforementioned identities in Kharkov, principally the Russophone identity, as well as looking at SIT/SCT with regard to Kharkov.

As previously states SIT postulates that social identity is created via three process/stages, firstly Social Categorization, then Social identification, and finally Social Comparison. During the first stage people categorize others as being different to themselves and group them together based on some real or perceived differences.. In Kharkov we can certainly witness this as being the case as they categorize other regions and Ukrainian speakers as being a different group, and categorize other Eastern regions as being the same or similar. However as this research has shown even those who identify with an Eastern Ukrainian or Russophone identity show different levels of difference between groups in Ukraine, therefore this Social Categorization is far from uniform. Furthermore, some interviewees felt uncomfortable being categorized as ethnic Russians, which government policy does, and others felt they were being incorrectly labeled as Russophone Ukrainians and having the associated identity pushed upon them, when they in fact didn't feel part of this group. Therefore Social Categorization fails to take into account individual choice and identification, and this proves to be the case in Kharkov. Social Identification is the process by which people being to identify with the Social Category/identity that they have been

labeled as. However, if Social Categorization fails to adequately explain identity in Kharkov, then Social Identification will also fail. In fact some interviewees stated that they tried to show themselves as being more Ukrainian, by which they mean national identity, and distance themselves from simply being included in the Russophone group. This would go against SIT. Finally, Social Comparison. This is when groups being to compare and contrast themselves from others. Certainly Social Comparison exists in Kharkov and Ukraine. The extracts from interviews clearly show that people actively compare themselves and their own identity to others and exaggerate differences and similarities.

SIT fails to adequately explain identity formation in Kharkov. As Huddy stated SIT is limited in real world situations, particularly with regard to political and national identity. As previously stated, Huddy argues that SIT fails because identity is much more fluid than SIT states, and that people can hold mulitple identities. Certainly such criticism is true in the case of Kharkov, where people have elements of Russophone identity, alongside Kharkov identity, as-well as Ukrainian National Identity mixed with elements of Kharkov identity or Eastern Ukrainian identity. Furthermore, Huddy states that gradations in group identity strength exist which refutes SIT. Such gradations have certainly been witnessed in these interviews. Huddy's criticism of SIT with regards to national identity also rings true in Kharkov. Of 12 interviewees, only 2 felt that their identity was completely different to something associated with Ukraine. Rather they identified with elements of a Ukrainian national identity, particularly some traditions, whilst rejecting the notion of Ukrainian language as being key to Ukrainian identity, something which the Ukrainian constitution itself states. Therefore the idea of being Ukrainian, and the notion of Ukraine as a state and its composition is not uniform or universal. There exist significant variations of what exactly

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it means to be Ukrainian. Even those who stated that they had ethnic Russian origins identified in some way with the Ukrainian state.

Finally there is criticism over the role and presence of out-groups. SIT suggests that out-groups are crucial to identity formation, but in Ukraine these groups aren't always so clearly defined, particularly along the lines of language. There is a general East-West gradation of language use in Ukraine from Russian to Ukrainian, but there isn't a solid point at which the language being used suddenly stops. Rather the linguistic out-groups exist at the extremes of the country, between East and West, rather than central. Therefore the two groups rarely actually come into contact with each other.

SCT focuses on individual choice in identity formation and states that identity formation is an active process. This idea seems particularly true in Kharkov, where according to interviewees people's identities appear to have been shifting and changing due to recent events, with more and more people categorizing themselves and associating themselves with more of a Ukrainian national identity, rather than the hybrid identity described by Fournier.

> *what changes have you noticed here in the last year or two?*
>
> *"many changes, more Ukrainian, flags, many more people started speaking Ukrainian, more people started being pro-Ukrainian. Its strange, people all their life spoke Russian and now some speak Ukrainian." - Yana*

Furthermore, SCT allows for more fluidity in identity with identity often only becoming salient due to cues or triggers, whereas in SIT it is assumed to always be salient and universally so. Such cues or triggers in Kharkov could be new laws, recent events, threats to language or even something such as what Elena said when visiting Kyiv,

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"Even in Kyiv. We visited a museum there and a woman heard we were speaking Russian and she said to us 'oh that's in your part of Ukraine, not here'. It wasn't very pleasant, it felt like she wanted to show we weren't welcome." - Elena

Here Elena has been categorised by language as being not from Kyiv, and being different. She further stated that it made her realise that "we aren't the same", thus differences in identity became more salient due to this trigger.

Both SIT and SCT can be criticised and used in the context of identity in Kharkov, However one big criticism is 'motivational theory', that groups will seek to discriminate against others in order to raise their own status and identity. Whilst certainly we can see Ukrainian national identity doing this, we can't say the same for Russophone identity in Kharkov. Perhaps with regard to Donbas it could be argued that they are trying to protect and raise their status and that the conflict is part of that. However in Kharkov open demonstrations of Russophone identity such as opposition to language laws have ceased, rather the aim appears now to be simply to maintain what status they have, whilst continuing to live peacefully, rather than trying to raise their status and identity above others. This is no doubt in part due to Kharkov identity of passivity.

To further assess SCT and SIT in Kharkov group salience needs to be examined. Polls have shown that salience in identity in Ukraine is often triggered by events, particularly political events. This has been particularly evident in Crimea and Donbas where independence and separatism support has fluctuated as the government has changed. For example the desire for independence peaked when Kuchma was elected, waned when Yanukovych came to power, and peaked once again when Yanukovych was deposed during Maidan and subsequent events. Whilst independence desire itself isn't an identity, it is certainly a

marker of some identity that is in opposition to the state in general. This trigger therefore is threat, or perceived lack of representation in government.

Flippen et al (1995), argue that in-group bias, and therefore stronger identity, only occurs under conditions of intergroup competition, this primarily occurs when a group is under threat. Threat therefore creates identity salience, this furthers Huddy's (2001) suggestion that salience is situational rather than constant. Certainly such an idea can be ascribed to Ukraine and Kharkov. Generally speaking since 1991 tensions between different identities and groups have only occurred due to political events or social problems. People existed and lived together relatively peacefully with little identification of others as being significantly different, however between the extreme East and West strong differences existed.

The Russophone identity itself was not particularly salient as people felt comfortable in their language and being able to use it wherever and whenever they wanted. The group wasn't particularly cohesive as Ukraine as a whole was dominated by Russian language use. Furthermore they felt comfortable with their own culture and ability to present themselves as they were. However, what many perceive to be Ukrainianisation, this will be discussed later, has promoted Ukrainian national identity with language at its core. This movement has however not been uniform, rather it has occurred in waves, and each time it has been met with resistance. This research was focused on recent events, and shows that Russophone group salience has been primarily caused by Maidan, linguistic laws, and post-Maidan perceived and actual Ukrainianisation.

> *"The government said 'Now, you wont speak Russian. From now on you will speak Ukrainian. You will support only for example Ukrainian art, Ukrainian culture. You have to do it how we want.' Of course those people in Donbas don't feel Ukrainian*

*culture. They wanted to keep their own traditions, language, and rules and of
course here in Kharkov also." - Tanya*

*"You know we have been living here and we didn't even know who is Ukrainian and
who is Russian. It didn't matter at all, really. But then Maidan and the language
law..... there was a sort of explosion. Everybody who cared about Russian
language, Russian culture just teared up. That split the society." - Irina*

Tanya and Irina highlight the response of people to recent events. The implication is that

people lived relatively calmly and happily side-by-side until Maidan and the subsequent

enacted new policies of Ukrainianisation and a linguistic-law against the Russian language.

There was a response by people in defence of their culture and language, but also a split as

Irina states, by those for and against the new state directives and policies. It is therefore

apparent that small differences and identities suddenly became much more salient and rifts

that have long existed in Ukrainian society became immediately more apparent. Figures 4-6

from the beginning of this article highlight the nature of demonstrations, with language

being a key focal point, as well as the legitimacy of Yanukovych. Salience of identity in

Kharkov therefore would appear to be directly related to threat and be situational as

Flipstein et al, and Huddy suggested.

*"Prior to that coup known as Maidan, I was strongly opposed to Mr Putin for purely
cultural reasons. In my opinion he was destroying the Russian culture. After
Maidan I became pro-Putin as I realized that Mr Putin was the only figure,
everything, that stood between us , the ethnic Russians living here in Ukraine, and
those fiends, those Nazis. Only thanks to Mr Putin's effort they didn't squash us
and suppress us completely. I felt very friendly towards the peaceful, amiable
regular Ukrainians. Always. After that f*cking Maidan I can't even hear the word
Ukrainian. They managed to antagonize me overnight. 'the Muscovites will start
packing their bags' they shouted." - Sergey*

Sergey clearly shows that his personal relationships and views have changed significantly

since Maidan and what he views as attacks upon Russian culture in Ukraine. His views have

changed because of threat. Whilst before he didn't see any particularly big differences between people or have any issues with Ukrainians, the new developments and threats have made his identity, and its situation much more salient for him.

> *"Really there wasn't a big difference before this situation. Only now we started to separate these are Russians, these are Ukrainians. It was really OK, we could speak Russian, Ukrainian, we had friends from Russia, Russians had friends from Ukraine. It all was good, everything was good. But now, its a very stupid situations. We are the same people, we really are the same, and all this separating is really stupid." - Natasha*

Natasha however focuses the biggest identity based changes as being between Russians and Ukrainians, rather than the russophone community. She argues that recent events have driven them apart despite terming them the 'same people'. Therefore this difference and othering is due in large part to recent events and reactions by both sides.

Whilst the Russophone identity hasn't always been particularly salient, the opposite could be said of Ethnic Ukrainian identity. During the USSR such an identity was prevented from growing and developing, but since 1991 it has been increasing and actively trying to raise it's status, much like SIT and SCT theorise. This somewhat repressed identity has been very prevalent and salient in West Ukraine and is now being used in the Ukrainian identity building project at the expense of Russophone and Russian ethnic identity. This would therefore be in-line with SIT/SCT theories of raising the profile of identities and actively discriminating against others. Furthermore, as interviewees states, West Ukrainians perceive themselves as having a higher culture than those in the East so as Tajfel theorised such groups would likely form stronger, more salient identities and ridicule the weaker 'less cultured' identity in the East.

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The Russophone identity in Ukraine does not appear to conform to SIT proposed by Tajfel, primarily due to it being personal identification as much as categorisation by others, as well as issues with salience that SIT suggests would result from categorisation, but in reality appears far more situational and reactionary. Identity in Kharkov appears to be far closer to SCT which proposes that salience shapes identity and in-bias. However, both theories fail to suggest why the Russophone community in Kharkov has been rather passive in response to threats and the reduction of its status. This is primarily due to the existence of multiple identities within individuals, which itself is also a criticism of SIT.

Understanding the Crisis

This chapter aims to explore the crisis and people's individual views of the crisis and its origins and relate it to the differences in identities previously shown in preceding chapters.

Maidan

Of those who identify themselves as part of the Russophone community all stated that they believed Maidan was a coup, rather than a revolution. Whilst some felt that in the beginning Maidan was revolutionary and even supported it, they all suggest that at its end Maidan represented a coup. Only two interviewees felt that Maidan was a revolution throughout and held positive overall views of it. The view of Maidan is however nuanced. As already stated some members of the Russophone community originally supported Maidan because they felt that there was a genuine desire to change Ukraine.

What about Maidan, did you support it?

"Partially, maybe it was a great idea in some way to change something. To make people think about other cultures and democracy. A lot of people who went there had really good thoughts and ideas. But I think one part of the power made people go there and they used the people. The people were used." -Tanya

Tanya states that initially she felt that Maidan was a good idea, and that it seemed that people genuinely wanted to change the country and its democracy. She is however sceptical of how it started.

"Well at first I supported them because some people were hurt by government. Maybe it was our last chance to make the government hear us. But after one year, its been something very strange, it wasn't something clear minded, it wasn't a clear idea, it turned into something very messy. I was at Maidan in the beginning, it was clear minded, everybody knew what they wanted. But after one year I went to Kyiv again, I went to Maidan, there was nothing from the beginning, there was just garbage and drunks. There was nobody with clear ideas. It began to be very annoying. Yes annoying, I found the right word. Those people who still believe in Maidan, they really have no idea. You watch them and you don't really have any idea why they are still there. In hindsight I think it was a mistake." - Natasha

Natasha like Tanya supported Maidan in the beginning, but became disillusioned when she saw that there wasn't a clear idea or purpose for continuing to protest. She even goes so far as to state that it began to annoy her.

"When it just began, I didn't connect it with the orange revolution, I thought it was something new. Wiser people took part in this, so people believed it was something new. I thought it was genuine. I asked my mother if I should go there and she said no it could be dangerous. Now I'm glad I didn't go."

- Elena

Elena's comments echo those of Tanya and Natasha. She also felt that in the beginning it represented some hope, some new idea and that those leading Maidan were wiser. She too changed her view of Maidan. Others expressed support up until right-wing groups such as Svoboda and Praviy Sektor became involved.

> *"Maybe in the beginning it was the thought that it was a revolution, but then people like praviy sektor understood that they should be with these people and then they were controlling them, and people began to believe them. Then in this way the revolution started to become a coup." - Alexey*

Others however professed to being against it throughout.

> **Did you support Maidan?**
>
> *"No, it was bullshit. I don't support the coup" - Anton*
>
> **Would you say you support Maidan?**
>
> *"no."*
>
> **not at all?**
>
> *"Not at all."*
>
> **Why not?**
>
> *"I don't think its what Ukraine needs, not what will make life here better."*
>
> – *Yana*

A further point related to Maidan is the idea of Ukraine moving to Europe. Maidan was originally known as Euromaidan and started when Yanukovcyh rejected an association agreement with the EU in favour of a deal with Russia. Therefore whilst people favoured Maidan for promoting democracy and showing the voice of the people, others rejected it due to the geopolitical manouvering it entailed.

> **What do you want for the future of kharkov and ukraine? EU, EEA, middle ground?**
>
> *I think our geographical situation isn't so easy. We are between two big parts. As for me I don't feel like being with Europe. I think Europe has had its day there is no future with Europe. They have lots of problems, why do we want to go there? Many people say in Europe it is so good, but I think they only see one small part, they don't see it all. They see that some people have good life or a good salary but they don't see what people have to do for this. I think Europe isn't our culture. If you changed all the people then maybe, but as for me in Asia (Eurasia) there is more future.I think Kuchma, he could maintain middle, with two parts. Yanukovych was more with Russia. But now we completely want to move to Europe. This is impossible. We have all our history with Russia. Our people are suitable for the Russian system, not the European system. They wont live with European rules, our people cant. - Tanya*

Tanya states that Ukraine has a difficult geographical situation between Russia and Europe. She rejects the EU for two different reasons. Firstly she believes the EU has had its day and there is no longer a bright future to be had with the EU. Secondly she believes that Ukrainians, certainly Eastern Ukrainians are not suitable for European rules and the European system. She believes they are better suited to the Russian system. She also identifies the fact that all of Ukraine's history is with Russia, therefore she believes it wouldn't be possible to be without them.

What about for Ukraine? EU or EEA integration or something different.

"I don't know its a difficult question for me. I support neither of them. Middle ground. I don't think Ukraine can choose, whatever we choose a large group of us will be angry." - Yana

—

Yana favours a middle option for Ukraine, neither choosing Europe or the EEA/Russia. She believes that this is because of the unique composition of Ukraine and the divisions within society. It would antagonize a large part of society if Ukraine made a move in either direction.

What do you want for the future of Ukraine? EU?

"Maybe no, I wanted before. But now, some former soviet countries now in EU with the euro, these countries are still poor, nothing has changed, no improvements. So I don't see why? It would be better if people from Kharkov became better, more moral, began to think about what they are doing? Being polite with each other. Being more cultural, throwing garbage away." - Natasha

Natasha shows that she doesn't want Ukraine to join the EU primarily because of economics. She views the EU has not having any particularly benefits. Which reflects what Tanya said with regards to Europe having had its day. But she doesn't believe this rejection of Europe is associated with cultural differences or closeness to Russia.

Of those interviewed only 1 claimed a desire to strongly move towards the EU. This was due to feeling their culture was better, their democracy better, and that Ukraine could learn from them. Of those who identified as part of the Russophone community, all rejected the notion of EU membership for Ukraine. However reasons varied from those similar to Tanya who suggested that culturally Ukraine is closer to Russia and that people would be better suited to an associated with the EEA, as well as the history of connection to Russia. Whilst others recognized that maintaining a middle ground was key and rejected the EU purely for economic reasons. It is therefore apparent that those who identify as Russophone reject the EU but vary on whether they should be closer to Russia or take a middle ground for the geopolitical future of their country.

Nature of The Crisis and War

The very nature of the Ukrainian crisis is a hotly contested topic with four key arguments. Firstly, there is the argument that it is predominantly about economics, as well as oligarch conflict. Secondly, there is the argument that it is a crisis about national identity and the nature of the state. Thirdly, there is the argument that it is about Ukraine's position with regards to the EU, Russia and the EEA (Eurasian Economic Union). Finally, there is the argument that the crisis is part of a bigger conflict between the West and Russia. Generally people believe that elements of all four are the cause of the problem, but the weight they give to different aspects is telling when compared to the analysis of their identity and their self-identification.

> *"Its like revenge. In time of USSR those politicians they were against Ukraine, they destroyed churches and Ukrainian buildings etc but now its not only for cleaning, they want to show it like 'you made it for us, now we make it for you'. At that time*

it was like west Ukraine was a second part and now they feel more power and they want to make us feel like they felt. This war I think began with these monuments of Lenin, when somebody tried to put their rules into their territory. I think in the beginning it was Ukraine went there. 'Now, you wont speak Russian. From now on you will speak Ukrainian. You will support only for example Ukrainian art, Ukrainian culture. You have to do it how we want.' Of course those people in Donbas don't feel Ukrainian culture. They wanted to keep their own traditions, language, and rules." - Tanya

Tanya views the crisis, in particular the war, as being the result of Ukrainian identity building and the forcing of it upon those who don't identify with it. In particular she speaks of language as being a key element. However she also speaks of it being revenge for the soviet period. This perhaps suggests that the Ukrainian government views East Ukraine as being somewhat Soviet, and that they want to do to East Ukrainians, what the Soviets did to them. Thus the crisis would appear to be about history and identity.

"The biggest mistake was that after Maidan the government wanted to ban Russian language in east Ukraine."

Yes it was a strange idea.

"Yes its crazy, I agree with you."

Do you believe that the ban on Russian language, in Donbas they say its the reason they started fighting...

"I agree, it was one of the most important reasons." - Sasha

Sasha views the origin of the crisis and war as lying in the post-Maidan decision by the government to try and ban Russian language in Ukraine.

"If after the coup, if they had only done one thing, if they had said we are a country of two languages, two cultures, two nationalities, and we respect each other and we live together. We would have had a very strong society. Putin would never have done what he did. And we even would have sided with them. We would live in a good country now. But they didn't. If they had nationalized the Russian language they would have no opponents." - Sergey

Sergey like Sasha views the origin of the crisis as being related to Russian language. He argues that the attack on Russian language fueled opposition to the new government and enabled Putin to intervene (in Crimea). The government had the opportunity to unite Ukraine by nationalizing Russian language, rather they decided to try and do the opposite.

> *"I think its because of Ukrainianisation. I guess if it began in 1991 we wouldn't have these problems now. Mentally we would already be Ukrainian." - Anna*

Anna argues that Ukrainianisation, by which we mean the pushing of Ukrainian language and a Ukrainian national identity upon people, is the key reason for the crisis. In many ways this echoes what Sasha and Sergey said with regards to language. The banning of Russian and imposition of Ukrainian language upon people in the east is a fundamental part of Ukrainiainsation. Ukraine's failure to create a national identity or at least being the process is the cause of the crisis.

> *"The people from Donetsk weren't very satisfied not because they are Russian or speak Russian, but just because they were working in mining. Their work was very hard, lots of money was stolen. If the money wasn't stolen and went to the right people then there wouldn't be a problem now. But at some point they weren't satisfied, maybe they weren't treated well. Lots of oligarchs, not in Kyiv but in Donetsk itself, stole money and didn't care about people at all." - Vika*

Vika however views the crisis as being centred on economics. She feels that Donbas' biggest grievance is over money and categorically rejects the idea that it is because of language or culture. This view however fails to explain why the crisis happened when it did, directly following an attempt by the government to limit the use of Russian, and following the ousting of a President who was himself from Donetsk. This point is made by Petro (2015)

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who argues that the removal of Yanukovych 'violated the delicate balance of interests between Galicia and Donbas'.

> **What do you think are the main causes?**
>
> *"Miners....the government didnt pay them enough money. But also they don't like Ukrainian culture, they don't want it."*
>
> **Which cause do you think is stronger?**
>
> *"Money. They want government to respect them." - Yana*

Yana echoes Vika's views on this being primarily an economic problem, however she also states they are also opposed to Ukrainian culture, and that the crisis is because of a combination of both.

> *"I think this crisis isn't between Ukraine and Russia. I think its about somebody who has interest in this territory, interest in money."*
>
> **Sometimes this war looks like a conflict between oligarchs, Akhmetov, Kolomoyskiy.**
>
> *"Yes yes. I think that if some day these people who have these interests if they find a solution or resolve their problems, then the conflict will stop. There are people who have interest that's what I see." - Alexey*

Alexey also supports the idea that the crisis has origins in economic and financial issues. However, he proposes the idea that it is not the miners themselves or the residents of Donetsk who push this, rather it is a conflict between Oligarchs. Many of the oligarchs in Ukraine are tied to and based in particularly regions. Donetsk used to be, before the conflict, a base for several oligarchs that had a lot of political influence, the so-called Donetsk clan. Alexey's argument therefore ties into the idea that this crisis is a battle between oligarchs for economic, political, and resource control in Ukraine.

> *"I believe Russia started a war with Ukraine and we are just protecting ourselves. They used the idea of Russians in Ukraine having problems to try and take our territory." - Natasha*

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> *"I think this idea of feeding all Ukraine and that Kyiv doesn't listen to them was put in their head by Putin. But I think people from these regions are not so bad, and people in Donetsk lived better than most in central Ukraine." - Nastya*

Nastya and Natasha view the origins of the crisis lying with the Russian state. They suggest that Russia either utilized the perceived problems for Russians in Ukraine or actively manipulated people from Donbas into thinking that Kyiv was against them.

Views on the origin of the crisis generally vary according to identities. Those who categorized themselves as Russophone or Ethnic Russian tend to view the crisis as being related to Ukrainianisation and Russian language. Those who identify more with a Ukrainian national identity tend to view it as an economic issue, or a Russian issue e.g Russia started the crisis and advanced it towards war.

Threat, Fear and The Future of Russophone Identity in Kharkov

As previously mentioned, threat is a big part of the salience of the Russophone identity in Kharkov. But what does this threat mean for the future of Russophone identity? The biggest threat is that posed by ukrainiainsation. Whilst not all the interviewees believed ukrainianisation was taking place, a majority who identified with the Russophone identity group believed it.

> *"Ukrainianisation means suppressing everything Russian. The language, the culture, the history etc. Now I don't know what we hope for. We want this government to step down. But we are very much afraid that the next government will be much worse." - Sergey*

Sergey highlights what the essence of Ukrainiainsation is. He argues that it is directly opposed to Russian culture. As Sergey previously stated everyone in Kharkov has Russian as

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their native language and their culture is Russian, therefore he views Ukrainiainsation as a

direct threat to his culture, and that of Kharkov.

> *"People now try to get rid of Russian. I think its possible in some generations to get rid of Russian. But not now. For me, my parents etc, I was brought up with Russian, I can't change my language. As for me, I will never change." - Tanya*

Tanya also similarly expresses the believe that Russian language to be under threat.

However she believes it will take some time, and that she personally would never change.

> **What will the future be like here?**
>
> *"I'm afraid to think about it. There is a lot of ukrainianisation here now, it will only become more. But I can't do anything" - Yulia*

Yulia expresses fear when talking about the future. This fear is because of Ukrainianisation

and its increase and the negative effects she believes it will have on her and her culture, as

well as what might happen if she voices her opinion on Ukrainiainsation. When further

questioned on what her actual fear is, Yulia states;

> *"Ukrainianisation, banderites, hooligans, these radical football fans. I fear them and what they could do to me and my family."*

Elena speaks of being unable to speak her mind around friends and colleagues because of

fears that she could have some problems.

> *"So I can tell you that right now I can't raise this topic to all my friends. One of my friends she has moved to Israel, but she sticks to the same opinion as I do. But all my other friends, I can't even raise this topic, because I understand that they are very patriotic and I'm going to have serious problems and lose my friends. So I don't talk about politics."*
>
> **Is that because you fear something bad could happen to you if you spoke your mind?**
>
> *"Yes of course. Now we have all these banners about separatism. Even online they have these banners. We're bombarded with it. My father is very Russian, he*

> *doesn't like Ukrainian, he likes Ukraine, but all these things he hates it. He talks*
> *about these things on the phone. 6 months ago my mother and I told him lets stop*
> *this, don't mention this topic over the phone because it might be dangerous. We*
> *are living in not very safe times now." - Elena*

This fear she states is mostly due to new laws on anti-state activities that are rather vague but include a prison term of up to 12 years if proven. Sergey shares this fear,

> *"Its fear, you know it, its fear. 12 years of imprisonment for anti-Ukrainian activity.*
> *You said one guy was afraid to speak to you, we are afraid too, so I can understand*
> *this guy. But we aren't so much afraid now, we are afraid for the future."*

Fear therefore appears to be one of the primary reasons why protests died down since 2014, and why outward expressions of dissatisfaction with the Ukrainian state are kept to a minimum or non-existent. These movements in defense of Russophone and Russian culture against Ukrainianisation only ceased outwardly because of fear of repercussions whether it be from the law, or as Yulia stated, hooligans and 'banderites'. As these interviews show the views of the people remain very much intact.

Yana expresses concerns about ukrainianisation. Whilst not explicitly stating she fears anybody or ukrainiainsation, she states that the process of ukrainiainsation shows a lack of respect for different cultures and identities in Ukraine, particularly in the East. She further raises concerns about elements of history that the government is promoting as part of Ukrainian national identity. She states that this shows their lack of respect, as the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Partisan Army (UPA) are two organizations widely disliked in Eastern Ukraine. She feels that the history of her region, and its culture and traditions are being ignored and the desire of people in Kharkov to live differently to those in Western Ukraine is not being taken into consideration. This is part of

the wider idea that Ukraine is building a national identity devoid of views from the East and

promoting Western Ukrainian identity as a state identity, despite it being alien to those in

the East.

> *"Really we are very different. We don't want to live like they do, we have different culture. This ukrainianisation just shows that they don't respect us, our cultures, our language and our past. Well everything that i thought was important for our culture, is changing. They're promoting what they want, The OUN, UPA, Bandera even. Saying what they want to say. No respect for our traditions." - Yana*

> *"If they tell you that Russian language and culture isn't suppressed now, it isn't true. In schools they started, not to ban Russian, but encourage Ukrainian and cajole children to participate in all their festivals and so on. They even invented so called Ukrainian speaking days. First its one day, then its two days. They don't punish those who speak Russian, but they dont approve of them. If I remember correctly, children used to have 2-3 lessons of Russian weekly, then they changed it to only one lesson. Now Russian is just removed from the curriculum. They do it only as a sort of optional studies. These optional studies are normally before their regular studies. I can tell you two topics for the students for 11 year exams at school. The first was 'I'm proud to be called Ukrainian', and those who didn't want to write it because they were Russian, had to write 'I'm ashamed to be Russian'. how could a young man write such a thing?!" - Irina*

Irina talks about the influence of schools on children in Ukraine. Schooling used to be in

Russian or Ukrainian, now she states its predominantly in Ukrainian and Russian classes are

not even part of the curriculum, rather they are an early-morning optional class before

school starts. She highlights how they try to create patriotism in the class room with various

essay titles, and how they try to raise the use of Ukrainian and Ukrainian culture.

> *"My brother is at school, they have day of national Ukrainian traditions etc, he grows up with some identification that he is Ukrainian."*
>
> ***The schools are trying to make children more Ukrainian?***
>
> *"Yes yes. And now he tells me he will go to Moscow and kill Putin. He is 8 years old. He's mostly influenced by it at school. But when my grandmother visits, she watches the news, and when my brothers sees the news he cries. I don't know why." - Anna*

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Anna also talks about schooling in Ukraine. She suggests that his behavior and views are a direct result of his school. This coincides with what Irina stated about forms of patriotic education and vilification or denigration of Russians and Russian culture. This also ties in with what Tanya said about Russian possibly being removed entirely in the future. It would seem that it is a generational process and those in school now will grow up with more identification as Ukrainian and use the Ukrainian language more. There is the possibility that Russian might be consigned to homes rather than the public sphere.

> **Do you think your culture, your language, identity, has a future in Ukraine?**
>
> *"I think if things continue as they are then it will be harder and harder. It won't disappear but the influence of Ukrainian culture and the pressing upon our culture will be more and more. At some point this structure wont work, because someday people who don't like the way it is going will start doing things against it. I think it will never be equal. There was a time when Russian was up high and Ukrainian was low, now its the opposite, and they think it will always change like this. (fluctuate). Now the government doesn't do it in the right way. They do it with some pressing, and of course some people don't like it. So they will resist it and be against it. I think if they try to improve Ukrainian culture but without stress or pressing then people will understand it." - Tanya*

Tanya argues that her culture and identity are certainly under threat and that eventually if people are pressed too far and for too long then there will be a reaction, even in a very passive city like Kharkov. However, she isn't opposed to Ukrainian culture increasing its presence and influence, but she believes it needs to be done in the right way.

> *"I would want just equality and cultural justice. Let Ukrainian exist, let if flourish even, but please live and let live. If you trample upon my language, my culture, then I'm not going to tolerate yours. We want them to respect our culture. Its not an alien culture. They've existed together. I think Russian culture would lose a lot if it just ejected all its Ukrainian heritage. For example Nikolai Gogol wrote much about Ukraine. My distant relative, Grigor wrote poems about Ukraine with great love, he was in love with Ukraine, so was I, until recently. Grigor remained Russian despite living here, I also want to stay Russian. I want to use my mother tongue and I want to have my cultural heritage. That's all. I don't want anything else. I'm indifferent to politics. I don't mind if Kharkov stays within Ukraine."*

Do you think they'll allow that? Live and let live....?

"the atmosphere has changed so much. Kharkov has changed. Its very quiet, calm before the storm. Give us linguistic and cultural equality and we'll be quite happy. That's the sum total."

Do you seen any hope of getting those things?

"No, that's the catch 22. they'll never agree to it." - Sergey

Sergey states that he too is fine with the existence and presence of Ukrainian language and culture, he doesn't mind if it flourishes. He does however have a problem if the process by which they do this denigrates and ridicules his language and culture. However he feels that the Ukrainian state has no desire to live and let live with regards to culture and identity in Ukraine. He doesn't argue for separatism or autonomy, rather he simply wants his culture to be respected and not trodden upon. He also states that Ukrainian and Russian culture are interlinked and that they would both lose a lot by rejecting and excluding one another.

What the interviews made abundantly clear was that for those who identify with a Russophone identity there is a clear threat coming from the state and what they view as a new nation building project. The biggest threat is via ukrainianisation which seeks to raise Ukrainian language and culture above all others and push this upon people. Whilst the immediate future of the Russophone identity and culture seems safe, it is the future generations that hold the key to its continued existence. The school system seems to be the primary way that the state can influence and change identity and culture in Eastern Ukraine, so perhaps its simply a matter of time. It would appear however that if the state continues to push and press upon those with different identities, views of history and public figures, and Russophone Ukrainians, then they might invoke a response. Whilst Kharkov has shown

itself to have an identity that rejects violence and prefers passive responses to threats, there may come a time when even Kharkov might have to consider its future.

Russophone Identity and Seperatism/Independence in Kharkov

As the previous chapter explored the threat to Russophone identity and culture in Kharkov, it is perhaps prudent to discuss the idea of independence or separatism for Kharkov. As previously stated when exploring the question of why Kharkov failed to join the Donbas/Novorossiya separatist movement, the primary reason given was that Kharkov had a different identity, which was more passive, rather they prefer to make-do and try to continue living as normally as possible. Further comments suggested that people in Kharkov were less reactionary than those from Donbas and Crimea who have more of an ethnic Russian composition than Kharkov as well as a tendency towards separatism when adverse events or processes occur. That being said whilst 11 of 12 interviewees stated that they wish Kharkov to remain in Ukraine, some did envisage a possibility that Kharkov could secede. Only Yulia stated that she wished Kharkov to leave Ukraine;

> *"I love Kharkov, I don't want to go to Russia, I want Kharkov to be Russia."*

Yana doesn't state any desire for Kharkov to join Russia and secede from Ukraine, but she can envisage a future in which that happens if Ukraine doesn't alter its approach to ukrainiansation in Kharkov.

> **Could you see any future in which Kharkov did leave Ukraine?**
>
> *It could happen yes. I think its possible but not 100%. It depends how the government will treat us. If we are included politically and culturally then it won't happen. If they try to press us with ukrainianisation too much, then maybe" - Yana*

Anton mirrors Yana's comments that there is the possibility that people might choose a Russian future for Kharkov;

> *"Well maybe. But personally I think we have to stay in Ukraine. But in Ukraine without war, with better politics. That makes normal decisions based on economics. But if they don't do that, then I'd vote to join Russia. If they don't reform and change, then we have to be with Russia. Because Russia would make our city better. "* - Anton

Anton's view however is based more on economics and politics rather than cultural. What is clear however is that independence or separatism is not a popular idea in Kharkov. The desire is to remain in Ukraine. However if nothing changes regarding the economic, political, and cultural situation then perhaps this question might have a very different answer in the future.

Alexey however stated that only reason Kharkov didn't join the Novorossiya independence movement was because of geographical and tactical concerns.

> *"many people in Kharkov wanted to join Novorossiya, you could see in the protests, but I think tactically it wasn't possible, too many kilometres too defend."*

It would therefore appear that Russophone identity and desire to join the Donbas independence movement are not necessarily linked. Rather the opposite is true and people would prefer to stay in Ukraine so long as it respected them and their culture, language, and identity. The idea of independence is not particularly salient to the Russophone identity group as a whole, rather it is the view of a few individuals. This general rejection of the independence movement could also be attributed to the Kharkov identity that rejects violence in favour of passivity.

Conclusion

This research has explored identity and the Russophone identity in Kharkov, and how such an identity has impacted upon behaviour, beliefs and hopes for the future. It also looked at Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorisation theory and their applicability to Russophone identity in Kharkov.

This research has shown that a Russophone identity certainly does exist in Kharkov, but it is one of many competing identities. Furthermore the research has shown that people hold multiple different identities based principally on geographic scale, from national, to regional, and even citywide. The Russophone identity was shown to be the predominant identity within the participant group, however the exact meaning and strength of this identity varied from individual to individual as not all members identified with all aspects of it, particularly with regard to the Soviet past.

This research has also shown that identity plays a major role in how individuals perceive and understand recent events in Ukraine, particularly Maidan and the subsequent crisis. Those who identify with a Ukrainian national identity are far more likely to view Maidan as a positive movement, and hold Russia to be responsible for the outbreak of war. Whilst those identifying as Russophone are far more likely to be against Maidan, and believe that other factors such as identity, economics, and the Ukrainian State are the primary causes for war. Maidan however was not shown to be universally negative by those identifying as Russophone, indeed the majority showed support for Maidan initially. Rather it was the outcome of Maidan, the prolonged nature of it, and the presence of nationalist groups that people were most against.

Furthermore the role of a Kharkov citywide or regional identity was shown to be one of the primary reasons why Kharkov didn't join with Donbas despite seemingly having many identical and similar markers of identity and views.

Ukrainiainsation was shown to be one of the key points of concern to members of the Russophone community, as well as ethnic Russians. Ukrainiainsation was also stated by multiple interviewees to prove that the Ukrainian state disrespected them, and had no intention of including them in the nation building process.

Finally this research showed that Social Identity Theory proves inadequate in explaining the formation of identities in Kharkov as they are a complex mixture of personal self-categorization, as well as being ascribed by others. People generally appeared to have multiple identities. Identities in Kharkov appeared to far better fit Self-Categorization Theory due to their gradations, personal choice, and salience. However, both SIT and SCT were found to not be fully applicable to Kharkov, particularly with regard to elevation of group status and response to out-groups.

Future Research

Due to on-going processes the Russophone community will continue to be an interesting research topic. As this research has shown, the future of the Russophone community in Ukraine is unclear, it is therefore worthy of future research to see what developments and changes occur.

This research was very limited in scope, with just 12 participants. A far more wide-ranging research project could shed even more light on the Russophone community in Ukraine. Certainly some statistical data from questionnaires would be a useful addition to any new research. It would also be interesting to look at the Russophone community in different regions of Ukraine to see what differences could be perceived and analysed.

Furthermore, I think identity in Ukraine has many possibilities for future study in different fields. Whilst this project only looked at 12 individuals there did appear to be a pattern that young university-educated women were more likely to identify with a Ukrainian National Identity, whilst men and older generations were more likely to oppose this identity. This could certainly be an interesting research point. Age would also be an interesting project, as this research and prior research showed that much of the identity problem in Ukraine appears to be generational, with older generations being far more resistant to Ukrainian national identity, perhaps this is no surprise considering they lived under the USSR.

Finally, it could perhaps be time to reassess the idea of the Russophone community. Whilst the markers proposed by Fournier and others certainly do ring true, there are other new markers that could perhaps be concluded as being part of Russophone identity. Opposition to Maidan could perhaps be one such marker, as well as opposition to any geopolitical

maneuvering of Ukraine, with a middle-ground seemingly being the preferred choice of the

Russophone community. Therefore perhaps recent events have enabled more markers to be

defined.

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