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Identity and political preferences in Ukraine – before and after the Euromaidan

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ABSTRACT
Taking advantage of a panel survey in Ukraine before and after the Euromaidan, we analyze the relationship between ethnicity, language practice, and civic identities on the one hand and political attitudes on the other. We find that while ethnic identities and language practices change little on the aggregate level over the period, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of people thinking of Ukraine as their homeland. There has also been a large fall in support for a close political and economic relationship with Russia and some increase in support for joining the European Union. Nevertheless, we find that identities in general, and language practice in particular, remain powerful predictors of political attitudes and that people are more likely to shift attitudes to reflect their identities rather than modify their identities to match their politics.

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Ukraine; identity; political attitudes; Euromaidan

Ukraine won its independence from the USSR in 1992 on the back of a referendum in which 90% of voters supported independence. Moreover, support for independence was above 80% in all but two regions – Crimea and the Crimean city of Sevastopol – and even there more than 50% of voters (though less than 40% of the electorate) supported separation. This extraordinary moment of national unity did not last, however. Already by the 1994 presidential elections, Ukraine was sharply divided between an ethnically Ukrainian, and largely Ukrainian-speaking, west and center and a south and east that had large ethnic Russian minorities, was largely Russophone, and supported candidates promising closer relations with Russia.

These deep differences have been a staple of Ukrainian politics in the democratic era, as the divide extended from support for particular candidates to views of domestic political upheaval (such as the Orange Revolution) and preferences over foreign policies such as European integration and relations with Moscow. Nevertheless, during the 2014 "Euromaidan Revolution" that overthrew then President Viktor Yanukovych, a key claim of the revolutionaries was that what they called the "Revolution of Dignity" was not about sectional interests but rather represented people from all across Ukraine. Moreover, the aftermath of the revolution, which involved war and the annexation of Crimea by Russia, led some scholars to argue that what we are seeing now is the emergence of a new and much stronger sense of identity in Ukraine and a greater sense of political unity (Alexseev 2015; Kulyk 2016). The extent to which this is indeed the case and the details of this new identity and its political implications are crucial questions for Ukraine in the post-Maidan era.

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From the perspective of social scientists, the Ukrainian case also raises important issues of broad comparative interest. Identities are, after all, crucial to the understanding of politics in multi-ethnic societies. There is an extensive literature on the importance of ethnic identities for outcomes ranging from economics (Easterly and Levine 1997; Habyarimana et al. 2007) to voting (Philpot and Walton 2007; Barreto 2010) to civil conflict (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2010). However, we also know that ethnic and other identities do not always translate directly into political outcomes (Fisher et al. 2015; Nathan 2016). Indeed, we know that identities themselves can be endogenous to politics, with politics often shaping identity change rather than the other way round (Singh and Hau 2016; Wimmer 2016).

In this paper, we use data gathered before and after the Euromaidan Revolution to untangle some of these relationships. Specifically, we look at the relationship between ethnonational identifications, linguistic practices, and civic identities on the one hand, and political preferences on the other. We investigate the extent to which these different elements of identity are salient in shaping different sorts of political preferences and ask how the experience of revolution and a subsequent loss of territory has affected the extent to which identities and political preferences are related in Ukraine. We also take advantage of the panel nature of our data to examine what is the more dominant causal force in the relationship between identity and preferences. Is the relationship entirely unidirectional with identity driving preferences or is there evidence that people also tend to switch elements of their identities in order to make them correspond better to their political preferences?

Our analysis is based on a panel survey we conducted in Ukraine in 2012 and 2015. By returning to ask the same individuals questions both before and after the Euromaidan, we address the problem of thinking about identity change using different random samples of the population at different times, in which it is hard to distinguish whether change is due to actual trends in identities and attitudes or is simply due to changing survey samples. Taking advantage of this design we can see how the salience of identity in opinion formation has changed and we can address the question of what drives changes in the relationship between identity and opinion.

Identity and political preferences in Ukraine

Ever since independence, a scholarly, and sometimes highly political, debate has raged around the question of identities and politics in Ukraine. This debate centers around what kind of identities are possible or necessary in a state that brought together the borderlands of the Polish, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman empires (Szporluk 1997, 86). This debate has had a number of different aspects. One key issue is the extent to which the Ukrainian state will be able to build a sense of Ukrainian nationalism that would bind the country together for the long run (Kuzio 1998), or whether indeed such a sense of nationalism is necessary at all (Zimmerman 1998). Another element, driven in large part by the sharply divided electoral map of Ukraine, which has repeatedly seen the eastern and western parts of the country supporting different candidates and parties, is about the source of this divide. In thinking about the underlying sources of the political divide, scholars and analysts have put forward two broad categories of theories – regional cultural effects and individual-level traits. In this paper, we focus on the effects of individual-level traits.[1]

Different scholars have emphasized different traits, with some seeing the key trait as being language, others ethnicity, and still others some combination of the two (Ryabchouk 1999; Kulyk 2011; Arel 2014). Unpacking ethnicity and language in Ukraine is complicated. Language is clearly a major divide, with Ukrainian being dominant in the west and Russian in the east (Arel 2014), and language use or practice has been shown to be a strong predictor of policy attitudes. Indeed, legislation on language use has been one of the hot-button wedge issues of post-Soviet Ukrainian politics. Similarly, ethnicity is a major issue that is related to language use, though ethnicity is not necessarily closely tied to language practice, with many Russian-speakers self-identifying as ethnically Ukrainian.

Indeed, some scholars have critiqued the notion that politics and identities in Ukraine are best understood either through the prism of language or ethnicity (Kulyk 2011). After all, language and ethnicity intersect in ways that are not straightforward. Some Russian-speakers identify as Ukrainian,

and, as our data suggest, even some Ukrainian-speakers identify as Russian. Consequently, as Pirie put it "Language usage is an important factor which informs national self-identification, and political attitudes, but it should not be regarded as the Alpha and Omega of national identity in Ukraine" (1996, 1081). In fact, some have argued that the real difference is not ethnicity or language but policy preferences that derive from some other source (Birch 2000; Frye 2015).

Theory: identities and preferences

There is little dispute that there should be a strong relationship between identity and political preferences in Ukraine. The question, as we noted above, is which aspect(s) of identity are likely to be most important for shaping preferences. Nevertheless, even put in this form, the question is too simple. Research on identities has shown that identity is not absolute and permanent, but situational, changing as the social context changes (Hale 2004, 466). On the micro-level, of course, social contexts are constantly in flux and the contours of identity are too. For example, Nagata (1974) in a study of ethnic identification in Malaysia argues that in plural societies reference to ethnicity varies from one social situation to another, with individuals "oscillating" between identities quite freely and in ways that facilitate successful social interaction. This is also the case on the political level, where changes in policies can lead to rapid and large-scale reassignment of the same individuals to different categories depending on shifting expectations (Gorenburg 1999).

The situational nature of identity is perhaps most clearly illustrated by scholars working on Brubaker's (1996) "eventful perspective," in which transformative events disrupt existing equilibria and lead to radical and quite unexpected reshaping of identities. Key contributions to this literature include Beissinger (2002) on the mobilization of ethnicity as a political force around the collapse of the Soviet Union, Lohr's (2003) analysis of the Russian campaign against minorities in WWI, and Zubrzycki (2006) on the controversy over crosses at Auschwitz.

Drawing on the situational nature of identity, we can develop some expectations about the issues of salience, change, and direction that we address empirically in the rest of the paper. First, it seems clear based on the situational perspective that the elements of identity that are likely to be most salient to political preferences are likely to vary across issues. Ethnic or ethnonational identities are not always politically salient (Posner 2004). Instead, as Hale (2004) argues, ethnicity acts as a rule of thumb that people can, but do not always, apply when thinking about politics. Moreover, depending on the political preference at stake, individuals may well draw on different aspects of their identity. In this context, identities that are substantively closest to the issue in question may matter more than less directly related elements of identity. For example, we would expect linguistic practices, which may be costly to change, to be an important factor in shaping preferences over state language policies, while civic and ethnic elements of identity might matter less.

Second, given the situational nature of identity, it seems plausible to expect that identities will be more important after the Euromaidan than before. Like all protests, the Euromaidan involved many different people in different places participating for different reasons. Moreover, because the protests took place over an extended period of time and were the stage on which some truly searing political events took place, we would expect those reasons to have changed substantially over time (Onuch 2015). Nevertheless, it seems plausible given the prominence of Ukrainian ethnic and political symbology in the Euromaidan, and given the reaction in Ukraine to the Russian annexation of Crimea and the war in the east, that we should see identities becoming more salient on average after the revolution.

Third, a situational perspective on identities should alert us also to the possibility that while identity and opinions might be closely aligned, a priori it is not obvious whether identities cause opinions or vice versa. In fact, as noted above, there is some research that suggests that in Ukraine in particular, sometimes it is political preferences and not identity that matter (Birch 2000; Frye 2015). Following our previous arguments too, we expect to observe variation in the relationship between identities and preferences – on some issues, preferences will come first, whereas on other issues, identity is likely to be more important.

Data and measures

The data we present in this paper come from a two-wave public opinion panel survey of Ukrainian residents. The first wave consisted of just over 1800 face-to-face interviews carried out by the well-known Ukrainian survey research firm, Razumkov Centre, in December 2012. The sample for the first wave included respondents from all of Ukraine's 24 oblasts, plus the Republic of Crimea and the capital, Kyiv, and was nationally representative of the Ukrainian population at the time. The second wave of the survey was fielded from 17 to 30 June 2015 and, therefore, did not include any respondents from the areas not then controlled by the Ukrainian Government: Crimea and the rebel-held areas in Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts. We were able to re-interview 924 of the remaining 1475 first-round respondents, which corresponds to a 62.4% response rate and is quite high considering that the two survey waves were separated by two and a half years of significant domestic and international conflict and upheaval.

The issue of what ethnonational identity is and how to measure it is a thorny one, perhaps especially in Ukraine (Onuch and Hale 2018). Ukraine is a country whose regions straddle four previous empires (Russian, Polish, Habsburg, and Ottoman) and whose citizens speak multiple languages and profess different religions. Therefore, in order to understand identity patterns in Ukraine, we look at three different elements that tap into distinctive dimensions of national identity and linguistic practice in Ukraine.

The first dimension of identity is based on a question that simply asked respondents what their ethnonational identity was, with options including Ukrainian, Russian, and a number of smaller ethnic minority options. In using the term "nationality" (in Russian *natsional'nost,'* and in Ukrainian *natsional'nist'*), we adopted a standard term derived from Soviet nationalities policy that refers to national minorities – essentially officially recognized ethnic minorities. This term allows us to tap into ethnonational identification. In both rounds of the survey, about 90% of those who answered in both rounds said that their nationality was Ukrainian.[2]

Our second measure does not address identity directly, but rather focuses on linguistic practice. Language politics have been a key cleavage in Ukraine since independence (Arel and Khmelko 1996) and language practices in Ukraine (particularly outside of the west of the country) are famously flexible. A key claim in the post-Euromaidan literature has been that the Ukrainian language is now held in higher regard and is increasingly seen not just as "the language of the state apparatus, but also in symbolic terms, as the national language" (Kulyk 2016, 600). There are a number of different ways to address the language question empirically that have theoretical implications (Kulyk 2011) and produce different results (Onuch and Hale 2018). In this paper, we focus on the concrete question of what language respondents use at home with options including primarily Ukrainian, primarily Russian, both Ukrainian and Russian, as well as a number of minority languages (Tatar, Hungarian, Romanian, etc.). As expected, home language practice is correlated with ethnonational identity, but far from completely. In the first round, slightly more than 30% of the respondents who identified as being of Ukrainian nationality reported speaking primarily Russian at home, with another 21% speaking a mix or Russian and Ukrainian.

We prefer this measure of language practice to alternatives such as "native language" that tap into a language identity rather than languages actually used (Dave 1996; Kulyk 2011) for several reasons. Substantively, there is a broader comparative literature that demonstrates the importance of language practice for important political items such as ethnic self-identification (Geerlings, Verkuyten, and Thijs 2015). Also, we might expect that actual language practice to be of importance for key political attitudes that we care about here, most notably language policy. There are also methodological reasons to focus on a measure of language practice rather than language identity. Specifically, language identity is more likely to be more correlated with ethnonational identity, which we are measuring separately in our analysis, than language practice.

Our third dimension of identity is civic rather than ethnic and seeks to probe more directly the political nature of identity. We asked respondents to identify their homeland (*rodina/Bat'kivshchinaya*) with the main choices being Ukraine, chosen by slightly over three quarters of respondents in the first wave, followed by USSR (15%) and Russia (2%). While we interpret this question as capturing a civic identification with Ukraine as a country, we also considered two alternative interpretations. First, respondents

could have interpreted homeland literally as the country in which the respondent was born, in which case answering USSR could be a factual rather than identity-based answer. However, the age distribution of respondents suggests that this was not the primary interpretation: almost 84% of those who were over 21 in 2012, and were therefore technically born in the USSR, picked "Ukraine" as their homeland, while 8% of those born in Ukraine after independence did not consider Ukraine to be their homeland in 2012. Alternatively, it is conceivable that respondents could have understood homeland in ethnic or linguistic terms. While ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers were indeed somewhat less likely to identify Ukraine as their homeland, more than half of the former and almost two-thirds of the latter group considered Ukraine as their homeland in 2012 and the proportions were even higher in 2015 (74 and 83%, respectively). Conversely, 19% of ethnic Ukrainians and 15% of those speaking only Ukrainian at home did not consider Ukraine to be their homeland in 2012. Overall, then, civic identification with Ukraine as a homeland appears to be correlated with, but conceptually and empirically distinct from, ethnic identity and language practice.

With respect to political attitudes, we focus on four survey questions that capture two crucial policy dimensions with clear links to identity politics in Ukraine: language policy and foreign policy.[3] To capture individual attitudes toward language policies, which were highly politicized both before and immediately after the 2013–2014 revolution, we used two questions: the first asked respondents whether public officials should have to speak only Ukrainian or also Russian and (where applicable) another minority language and we created a dichotomous indicator of whether respondents chose the "Ukrainian-only" option. The second question asked whether Russian should be declared a state language in addition to Ukrainian, and was again coded dichotomously. On foreign policy, which was the proximate trigger of the Euromaidan protests and also has an important identity component, we asked respondents about their attitudes toward greater integration with either the EU or the Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan Customs Union, with each question allowing three options: support, oppose and "hard to say."[4]

In addition to the main variables of interest discussed above, our statistical tests included a battery of standard individual-level control variables: age, gender, education level, state employment, locality size, an affordability index to proxy income and – crucially in the Ukrainian context – religious denomination. We do not, however, include controls for other political attitudes (such as evaluations of political institutions, attitudes toward democracy, etc.) because including such attitudes complicates the interpretation of the effects of the main variables of interest.

To ensure the comparability of our descriptive statistics and regression analyses across the two survey waves, all of the analyses presented in the remainder of this paper are restricted to the sample of respondents whom we were able to interview in both survey waves. However, to correct for the possibility that uneven attrition between the two survey waves would reduce the representativeness of the sample, we use a set of weights that weigh respondents by the inverse of their probability of having been successfully re-interviewed in the second wave.

Patterns of change 2012–2015

The panel data we have gathered show that substantial and meaningful changes in identities and political orientations have taken place in Ukraine from the period before the Euromaidan Revolution. In Figure 1, we provide an overview of the aggregate changes in identities and political attitudes during the two and a half years of revolution and conflict that separated the two survey waves. With respect to identity, Figure 1 suggests that to the extent that the Euromaidan and the conflict with Russia led to a substantial awakening of Ukrainian identities, these changes were of a civic rather than ethnic nature.

Between 2012 and 2015, the proportion of respondents identifying Ukraine as their homeland increased by over 11 percent, largely at the expense of a significant drop in the proportion choosing the USSR or Russia. By contrast, the figure reveals virtually no change in the aggregate proportion of respondents describing themselves as being of Ukrainian nationality or in the share of people speaking Ukrainian at home. Thus, while the dramatic events of 2013–2015 resulted in a rallying-around-the-flag effect among Ukrainian citizens, it did not trigger a dramatic shift in the country's overall ethnolinguistic

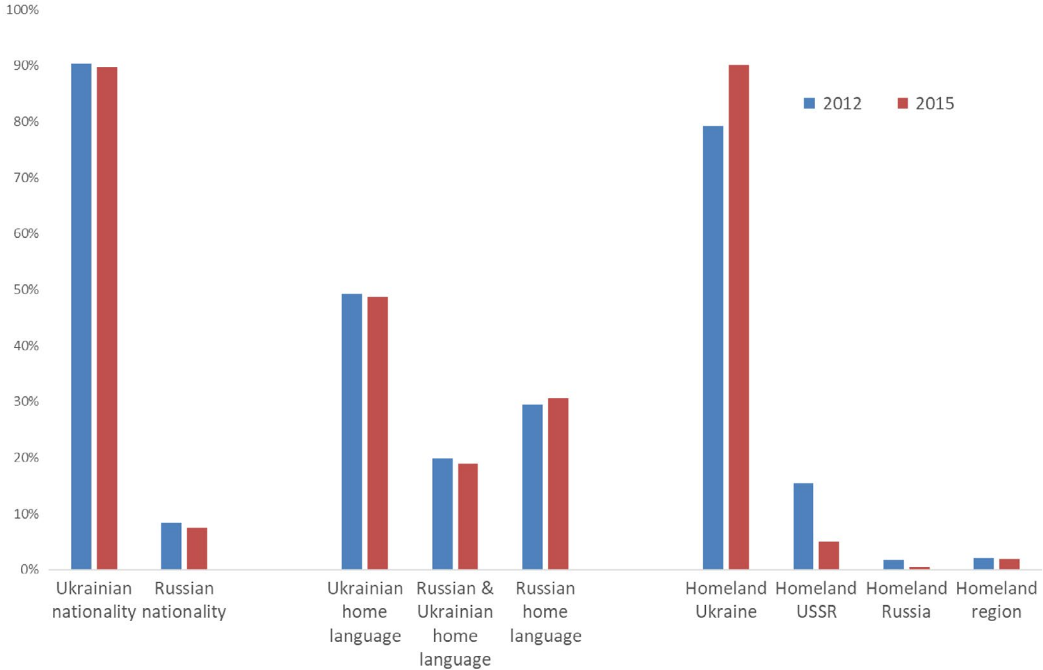

Figure 1. Identity and political attitudes – aggregate shares (2012–2015).

balance. This does not mean, however, that ethnic identification or language usage were static during this time period: in fact, between late 2012 and mid-2015 over 30% of respondents reported a change in home language practice and about 10% reported a different ethnic identity. However, these individual-level changes occurred both toward and away from Ukrainian language use and (on a somewhat smaller scale) Ukrainian ethnic identity, and, therefore, these similarly sized changes in opposite directions largely offset each other at the national level.[5]

Along with the fluidity in identities have come substantial changes in respondents' views on some of the key political issues that have divided Ukrainian citizens in the last decade or more. These changes are also illustrated in Figure 1. As expected, the experience of the Maidan and the conflict with Russia has led to a collapse in support for close relations with Russia in the form of a Customs Union and to a comparable rise in the support for closer EU integration. In 2012, the proportion of supporters of the EU and the Russian Customs Union were evenly matched, but by 2015 the former outnumbered the latter by a ratio of three to one.

Perhaps related to the political shift away from Russia, there has also been a moderate decline in the already fairly low support for Russian as a state language, which by 2015 was supported by less than a quarter of the population. On the other hand, the rejection of Russian as a state language was balanced by a significant increase in support for the use of Russian by public officials at the local level. While these two trends vis-à-vis language policies may seem contradictory, they actually reinforce the patterns of identity change: both the decline of Russian as a state language and the more widespread identification with Ukraine as a homeland suggest a growing consensus about the legitimacy of a Ukrainian state. Meanwhile, the absence of a clear trend toward greater Ukrainian ethnolinguistic dominance, combined with greater tolerance for the administrative use of Russian and other minority languages, indicates some level of mass acceptance for a Ukrainian state that is multiethnic and multilingual.

The changing political salience of identities

To address the question of how the revolution and the war have shaped the political salience of identity in Ukraine, we regressed political attitudes in 2012 and 2015 on contemporaneous indicators of the three types of identity (plus the demographic controls mentioned earlier). Rather than trying to measure the salience of different identities through a series of direct survey questions, we instead focus on how closely aligned these identities are with attitudes on language policies and foreign policy orientation. The more identity-based cleavages overlap with attitudinal cleavages, the greater we consider the salience of a given identity to be.

Figure 2 shows the predicted attitudinal difference between respondents with different identities along the three types of identity (homeland, ethnicity, and language) in the 2012 and 2015 surveys.[6]

The most striking results in Figure 2 relate to the importance of identifying with Ukraine as a homeland. Thinking of Ukraine as one's homeland was much more closely aligned with language policy (especially state language in panel B) and with foreign policy preferences in 2015 than before the Euromaidan. Given that the 90% of respondents who identify Ukraine as a homeland still have significant disagreements on language and foreign policy issues, this growing politicization of the homeland identity probably reflects the greater homogeneity of (pro-Russian) opinions among the shrinking proportion of respondents who still did not embrace Ukraine as a homeland by 2015.

The relationship between ethnicity and political preferences changed less in this time period. Although there is some evidence of a growing link between ethnicity and foreign policy preferences, the effects were both substantively and statistically weaker than for homeland, and there was no comparable shift on language policy preferences.

Among the different notions of identity, however, it is the linguistic cleavage that continues to be most closely associated with political preferences in post-Euromaidan Ukraine. Although the predictive

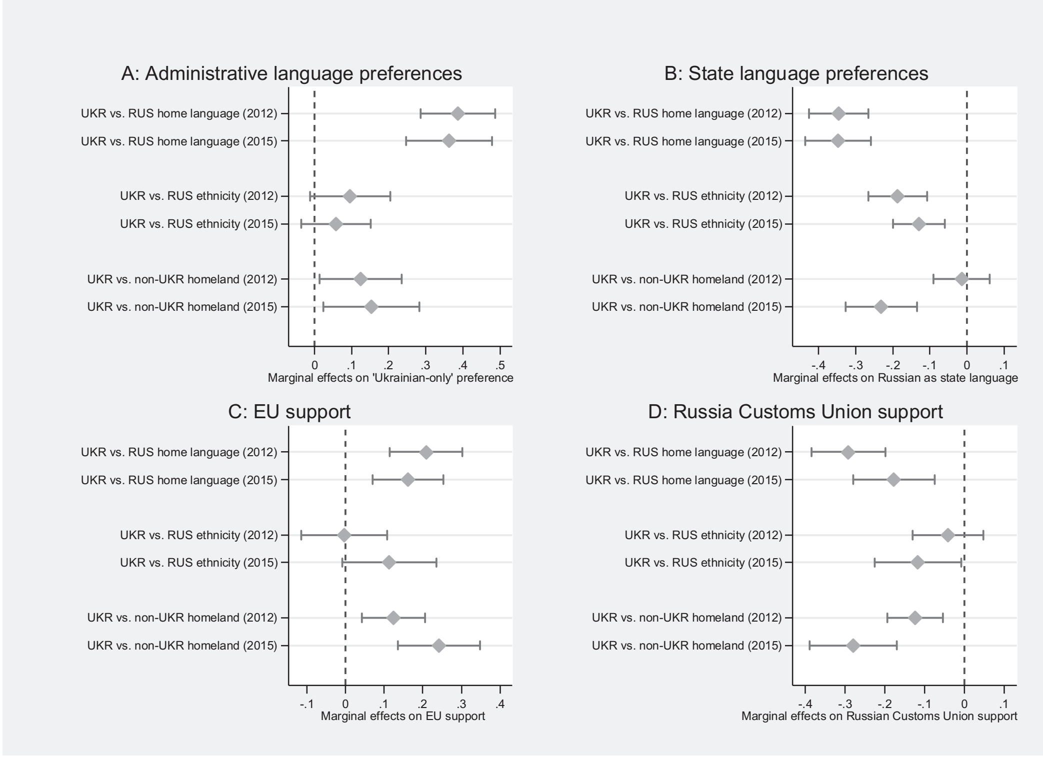

Figure 2. Political salience of identities (2012–2015).

power of home language practice declined somewhat between 2012 and 2015 with respect to foreign policy attitudes, the linguistic cleavage continues to play an important role. Panels A and B of Figure 2 show that, in line with our theoretical expectations, by far the most important predictor of language policies in both 2012 and 2015 was whether respondents reported speaking Russian or Ukrainian at home. For political issues less proximate to language, the associations are weaker but still important. For foreign policy attitudes (in panels C and D) the effects of home language declined somewhat from 2012 to 2015, but even in 2015 language use was a statistically significant and substantively large predictor of support for integration with the EU vs. Russia.

The evidence presented in this section suggests nuanced patterns. It is clear that there has been substantial change in politics and identities in Ukraine between 2012 and 2015. While overall levels of ethnicity and language use remain stable, there have been substantial movements among the population in both directions. There has also been significant, and in this case relatively uniform, movement in the direction of accepting Ukraine rather than the USSR or some other place as the "homeland" of our respondents. At the same time, there have been real changes in attitudes. Opposition to joining a Customs Union with Russia and Belarus has grown considerably and support for joining the European Union has increased somewhat. Meanwhile, attitudes on language policy in Ukraine appear to have become less polarized.

Nevertheless, as we have shown, politics and identities remain very closely intertwined in Ukraine. In particular, language use was and remains a very strong predictor of political attitudes, while embrace or rejection of Ukraine as a homeland has become increasingly associated with political positions. In the post-Euromaidan era, those who did not call Ukraine their homeland were even more likely than before to hold different political attitudes than those who did. In the next section, we unpack this relationship further, to understand whether identity change drives politics or politics drives identity.

Processes of change

One clear advantage of the panel data we have collected is that by asking the same individuals questions over time, we are able to track not just aggregate patterns of identity and political change, but the processes as well. In this section, we investigate the relationship between our three measures of identity (home language practice, ethno-national identity, and homeland) and our four political attitudes (whether officials should speak Ukrainian only, whether Russian should be a state language, support for the EU, and support for the Customs Union with Russia and Belarus). Using data from 2012 to predict responses in 2015, we present evidence that suggests that language plays a large part in driving changes in political attitudes as people adjust their view on policy to align them with their linguistic identity. There is weaker evidence for the effect of ethnicity and homeland on attitude change. Moreover, there is only limited evidence to suggest that political attitudes lead to identity change.

Figure 3 presents the results of regressing political attitudes in 2015 on the identity variables in 2012, and using the same demographic control variables as in the previous section.[7] This represents a fairly conservative approach to establishing the causal effect of identity on political attitudes, since it estimates the effect of lagged identity on subsequent attitude change, while ignoring the effects of contemporaneous identity. The figure shows consistently strong and statistically significant effects of home language practice in 2012 on changes in language policy and foreign policy preferences. Respondents who spoke Ukrainian at home in 2012 were significantly more likely to reject public officials speaking Russian (panel A),[8] were less likely to increase their support for accepting Russian as a state language (panel D), were more likely to increase their support for the EU (panel E), and were more likely to lower their support for the Customs Union in 2015 compared to 2012 (panel G).[9]

By contrast, the effects of ethnicity and homeland answers in 2012 on changes in political attitudes from 2012 to 2015 were mostly statistically indistinguishable from zero. However, there is some evidence that ethnic Ukrainians were more likely to reduce their support for allowing Russian to be a state language and were less likely to reduce their support for the EU than ethnic Russians. Meanwhile, as

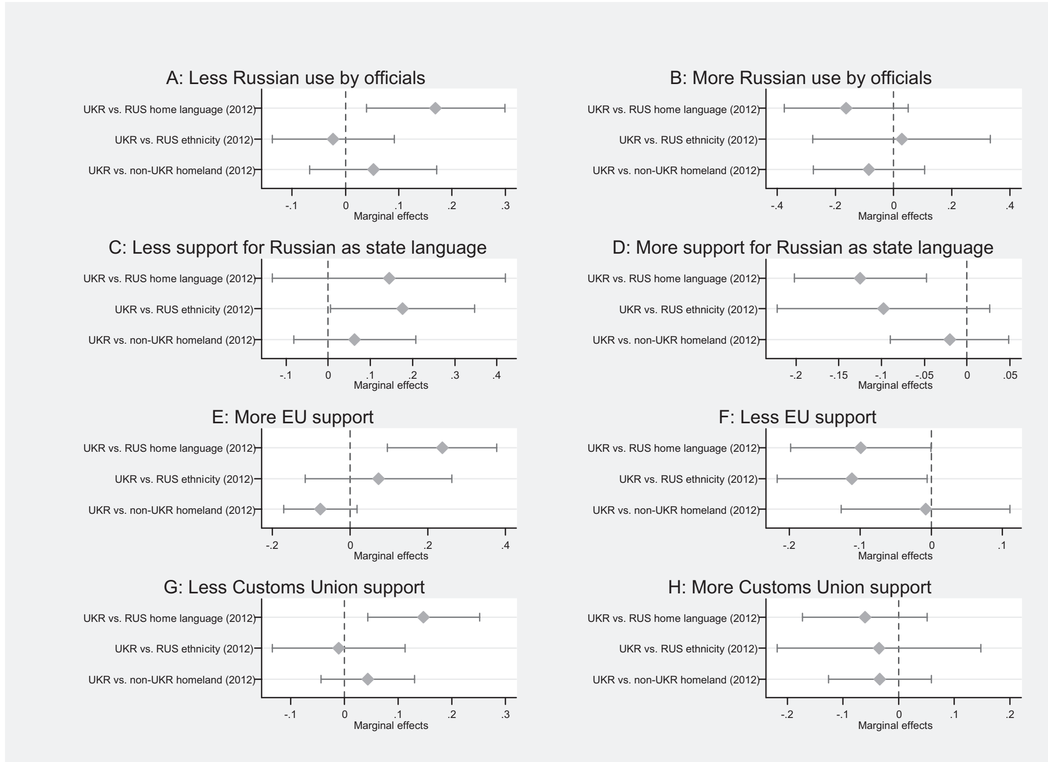

Figure 3. The effects of identity on changes in political attitudes.

Figure 3 shows, none of the regressions suggest a significant relationship between homeland choice in 2012 and changes in language policy and foreign policy preferences from 2012 to 2015.

While the discussion so far has suggested that prior ethnolinguistic identities may shape political attitude change in the context of conflict, it is also conceivable that respondents may adjust their identities to conform to strongly held political beliefs if the costs of dissonance are sufficiently high. Therefore, in Figure 3 we reverse the analysis and look at the effects of our four political attitudes in 2012 on identity change from 2012 to 15.[10]

Judging by the results in Figure 4, we find only partial support for the hypothesis that Ukrainians adjusted their identities to conform to their prior political attitudes. The only reasonably consistent effect is that individuals who wanted public officials to speak only Ukrainian in 2012 were significantly more likely to identify as Ukrainian rather than Russian in 2015 compared to 2012 (panels C and D), and were more likely to report speaking more Ukrainian at home (panel A). However, there were no comparable effects on the "homeland" question in panels E and F of Figure 4.

The identity impact of prior political attitudes was even weaker for other policies: the views about Russian as state language had no significant effects on any type of identity change, and while closer EU ties were associated with significant increases in Ukrainian home language practice (panel A) and identification with Ukraine (panel E), prior attitudes toward the Customs Union with Russia actually pointed in the wrong direction in both panels A and E of Figure 4.

Taken together, we find a growing tendency for people to align their attitudes and identities after the revolution, with the largest and most consistent effects associated with home language. Respondents showed a fairly consistent tendency to move their political views in a "pro-Ukrainian" direction if they initially spoke more Ukrainian at home and in a more "pro-Russian" direction if they originally spoke Russian at home. While the efforts to reduce the cognitive dissonance triggered changes in both identities and

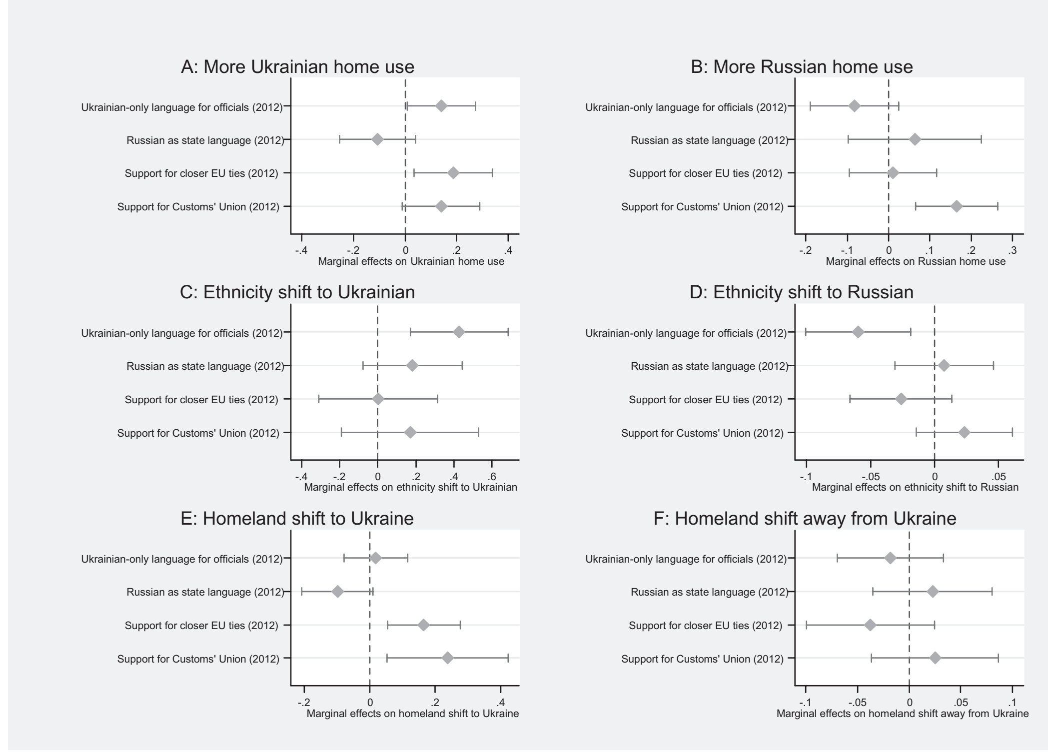

Figure 4. The effect of political attitudes on changes in identity.

political views, comparison of Figures 3 and 4 suggests that on balance Ukrainians were more likely to adjust their politics to match their identity than vice versa.

Discussion and conclusion

In analyzing patterns of change in ethnonational identities, language practice, civic identities, and political attitudes in Ukraine, we have found considerable flux. Given the tumultuous nature of the changes in Ukrainian politics between the two rounds of our survey, this is perhaps not surprising. However, the nature of the changes we observe is more complex than a simple narrative of national unification in the face of Russian aggression would suggest. Instead, we have a complex mix of phenomena that suggests both a more widely shared acceptance of Ukraine as a state and a distinct turn away from policy positions favored by Russia and a continuing – perhaps even deepening – role for ethnolinguistic divisions in shaping political attitudes and dynamics.

One key finding is that at the aggregate level there has been a significant broadening in the propensity of respondents to call Ukraine their homeland. In fact, with the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donetsk and Lugansk, nearly nine out of ten of our remaining respondents now share this sense. While aggregate numbers of people describing themselves as ethnic Russians or speaking Russian at home have not changed much in our sample, these changes on homeland identity do seem to be potentially important. If we are correct in interpreting this indicator as a sign of civic identity, then the spread of a civic conception of Ukraine even among self-described ethnic Russians in our sample is an important finding. There has also been a collapse in support for a Customs Union with Russia and some increase in support for joining the EU. Moreover, on the formerly highly divisive issue of language, we found a fall in support for Russian as a state language even as there is growing support for allowing local

officials to speak Russian when appropriate. Taken together, these findings seem to suggest a country in which more and more citizens are at ease with the notion of Ukraine as a state and one that speaks mostly but not solely Ukrainian.

Looking beneath the aggregate numbers, however, suggests some potentially worrying dynamics. For one thing, we do not see much evidence of a diminution of the connection between identity markers and political opinions. It is clear that sympathy for policies associated with Russia has dropped across the board, but important cleavages persist on the basis of different ethnic identities and language practices. There is also more evidence of identity driving changes in political attitudes than the opposite. These findings represent a cautionary note for those who seek to find the impetus for identity change in political rebirth. Politics and identities are intermingled but, at least on the evidence present here, it seems like it is identity, and particularly language, that is in charge.

Notes

1. Important work on the effect of regional-level variables includes Katchanovski (2006), Peisakhin (2013), and Darden (2014). Other studies, more in the tradition of political or economic geography, emphasized the structures of economies and trade as being crucial in shaping regional political identities, relegating ethnicity and language to a less important role (Barrington 2002). While we do not deny the potential importance of regional-level variables as a distal cause of the division, the effects of these regional-level variables should be visible at the individual level.
2. In the 2012 survey that included Crimea and all of the Donbas, 85% of respondents gave their nationality as Ukrainian.
3. Of course, this does not preclude the possibility that other political preferences, such as about economic policy, could be intertwined with identity politics. However, given the space constraints in this paper, we decided to focus on political issues with clear links to ethnolinguistic identity.
4. For the purpose of our statistical analysis we coded "hard to say" as an intermediate category, but our results are not sensitive to alternative coding (e.g. as two sets of dummy variables).
5. We address the processes driving these changes in a separate paper.
6. The marginal effects were calculated using the margins command in Stata 13.1 on the basis of separate regressions for each survey wave. In addition to the three sets of identity variables (nationality, home language practice, and homeland), the regressions included a set of standard demographic controls (see Table A1 of the online appendix for full results).
7. Note that for each attitude we coded separately whether a respondent became more or less likely to embrace a particular attitude (e.g. Russian as a state language.) We did so in order to avoid the implicit assumption that effects are completely symmetric. See Table A2 of the online appendix for full regression results).
8. However, it should be noted that the overall increase in support for having public officials speak Russian in addition to Ukrainian (see Figure 1) was not just driven by a hardening of attitudes among Russian-speakers. In fact, of the respondents who changed toward allowing for greater use of Russian, 70% reported speaking only Ukrainian at home in 2012. In other words, while Ukrainian speakers may have been somewhat more reluctant to embrace the national trend toward greater support for bilingualism among public officials, many of them nevertheless did so. This is in line with our argument about the growth in civic rather than ethnic nationalism.
9. The remaining language effects on attitude change in Figure 3 were also consistently in the predicted direction, but were somewhat less statistically conclusive.
10. The statistical approach is identical to the analyses of identity effects on attitude change discussed above. See Table A3 of the online appendix for full regression results.

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