



# A Battle for Public Space

Claims to a Ukrainian national identity through  
public art in post-Soviet Ukraine.

*Julia Muller, 4069358*

*j.s.muller@students.uu.nl*

*Van Diemenstraat 45, 3531 GG, Utrecht*

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## Introduction

*'We are suffering from a post-Soviet syndrome. Not only the country needs to transform, our people need to change as well.'*<sup>1</sup>

- Petro Poroshenko

While the revolution in Ukraine no longer dominates worldwide media, it is far from over. What started off as generally peaceful mass protests against the pro-Russian regime of president Viktor Yanukovich, turned into a violent revolution in February 2014. A new, pro-European, interim government was formed soon after Yanukovich fled to Russia, followed by the emerge of a large separatist movement in especially the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, with the supposed support of the Kremlin. Ever since, daily eruptions of violence have taken place between separatists and nationalists, who are led by a group called Right Sector, affecting the whole of Ukraine. Crimea has been annexed to Russia, MH17 was taken down and many people continue to live in conflict-torn regions, fearing new violence every day.

In the fall of 2015, Petro Poroshenko, Ukraine's current president, was interviewed by Dutch newspaper NRC Next. According to Poroshenko, Ukraine and its people have to get rid of the post-Soviet syndrome they are suffering from. However, what if a notable part of Ukraine's inhabitants does not want to get rid of that syndrome, but cherishes it? The revolution has demonstrated that the country, 15 years after its independence, is utterly divided, both politically and culturally. These divisions can be traced back easily; Ukraine's history shows numerous occupations by different empires and many redistributions of territory. It is no coincidence that 'Ukraine' literally translates into 'borderland'.<sup>2</sup> Symbolically, Ukraine has been 'caught' between western Europe and Russia for centuries. As a result, Ukrainians have always, but especially since the fall of the Iron Curtain, struggled to find an identity of their own. An identity that incorporates all of its history, as well as the variety of ethnic origins and differences in religion and language.

By means of a survey, Stephen Shulman, scholar in ethnic politics and the consequences of nationalism, specialised in Ukraine, has identified two different 'identities' that prevail in Ukraine. After examining different identity markers, such as language and

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<sup>1</sup> Hubert Smeets, 'Interview Petro Poroshenko. Oekraïne verdedigt ook Europa's vrijheid', *NRC Next*, 26 November 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Roman Solchanyk, *Ukraine and Russia. The Post Soviet Transition* (Lanham 2001) 1.

religion, Shulman distinguishes between an ethnic Ukrainian nationalist identity and an eastern Slavic identity.<sup>3</sup> Not all identity markers are equally important to both identities. The survey hereby gives an interesting insight in what elements are unifying and which have no considerable impact on the construction of national identity.<sup>4</sup> However, is a dichotomous division of Ukrainians into two different categories possible? And if so, is it constructive in understanding the 2014 revolution? Can there ever be a Ukrainian national identity that includes everyone, from Kiev to Crimea, from Lviv to Donetsk, or should the concept of Ukraine be redefined? The aim of this thesis is to move beyond generalizations regarding the clear division between the ‘two Ukraines’ and deconstruct notions of identity formation.

Since the 2014 Revolution there has been a noticeable increase in the creation of public art in various parts of Ukraine. Public art proves to be a great source of public contestation of a dominant power or idea. Because of its anonymity, a statement can be made, without connecting this statement directly to an artist. In addition, once identified, the artist can simply claim that his work is non-political and that interpretation is up to the viewer and thus subjective.<sup>5</sup> However, regardless of the author’s identity or intentions, public art might be able to reveal underlying assumptions regarding a possible national identity when promoting either side of the conflict. This thesis is innovative in that it argues that public art can indeed be the key to unravelling the complexities of a uniform identity in Ukraine. Does Ukraine exist? If so, what does it mean to be Ukrainian? What different models of Ukrainian identity can be distinguished and how are they constructed? To what extent do public artworks challenge and promote models of national identity in post-Soviet Ukraine? What assumptions are made in the use of certain imagery in public art regarding the construction of different national identities? In fact, what does it mean when public artworks promote a model of national identity, making use of a certain imagery?

In order to coherently develop the argument, a theoretical framework will be set out, in which the historiographical debate regarding different models on the construction of national identity will be sketched. The two prevailing notions of Ukrainian identity suggested by Shulman will be elaborated on. In addition, the definition and workings of public art will be examined. Subsequently, different images of public art displayed throughout Ukraine will form the empirical input of the research. They have been selected on the basis of their

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Shulman, ‘National Identity and Public Support for Political and Economic Reform in Ukraine’, *Slavic Review* 64 (2005) 1, 76.

<sup>4</sup> Shulman, ‘National Identity and Public Support for Political and Economic Reform’, 73.

<sup>5</sup> Alexis Zimberg, *The spray-can is mightier than the sword. Street art as a medium for political discourse in the post-Soviet region* (Thesis Russian and East European Studies, Washington 2012) 55.

subject. The first category revolves around images of Putin, either positively or negatively displayed, in different pieces of graffiti. The corresponding chapter examines the notions of a politicized Ukrainian identity as used by both separatists and nationalists. Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko will be the subject of the second chapter. He, among other Ukrainian literary heroes, has become a symbol of nationalist party Right Sector, that has attributed nationalist meaning to his image. The analytical framework is applied to decompose models of national identity construction presented in the graffiti and to reveal any assumptions that exist within the usage of imagery, rather than to merely place the pieces of graffiti in a historical and cultural context. Although some of the theories presented in the literature are quite dated, they each address the problematic nature of post-Soviet Ukraine and are therefore relevant to the recent outbreak of violent conflict.

The images have been collected electronically, since a physical fieldtrip to Ukraine unfortunately was not possible. Therefore, the exact origins, time settings and author's intentions of the majority of the graffiti are unknown. The graffiti in larger cities, especially Kiev, have been documented to a much larger extent and therefore dominate the research. However, an attempt has been made to present a collection of public art as diverse as possible, enabling a research as objective as can be. Many of the collected images contain texts in Ukrainian or Russian, which often carry symbolic meaning. To identify these meanings and discover possible hidden messages that are conceivable only to an informed audience, a native Ukrainian has assisted in conducting this research. All information she has provided will be referred to in terms of a personal interview, hereby acknowledging the subjectivity of the information.

## 1. Historical Background and Theoretical Framework

### A nationalist or separatist revolution?

The direct provocation for the protests on the Maidan (square) in Kiev was caused by the in 2010 elected pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovich, who failed to sign a major trade agreement with the European Union on 21 November 2013.<sup>6</sup> To counter the protests, also referred to as Euromaidan, the Yanukovich government quickly installed several laws, limiting, if not abandoning, freedom of speech and assembly. This would make the protesters in Kiev into criminals and as a result, the protests turned violent near the end of January 2014.<sup>7</sup> One day after Yanukovich signed a compromising deal with his opposition on 21 February, he ‘disappeared’ and protesters took over governmental buildings in Kiev. To counter the installation of a pro-European interim government in Kiev and the attempt to ban Russian as a second language, pro-Russian gunmen occupied key buildings in Crimea. International parties got involved, but could not prevent Russian president Putin from annexing Crimea on 18 March 2014. Pro-Russian protests spread throughout the southern and eastern part of Ukraine. On 11 May separatists in Luhansk and Donetsk declared their independence, though not being recognized as such by the Kiev government. That same month Petro Poroshenko was elected president.

Timothy Snyder suggests that the original protests were carried out by parties representing the entire Ukrainian society, stating the revolution was fuelled by the hope that Ukraine would one day join the European Union, which would set Ukrainians free from the autocratic oppression associated with Yanukovich’ pro-Russian regime.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the accounts in the following chapters inspire to think otherwise. While Snyder considers the revolution to have started as a united Ukrainian claim to Western (at least economic) tendencies, it revealed internal divisions that had been suppressed in post-Soviet Ukraine up to November 2013. Altogether, the revolution might have been the only possible outcome in an attempt to set the record straight after centuries of ambiguity.

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<sup>6</sup> BBC News, ‘Ukraine crisis. Timeline’, (version 13 November 2014) <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275> (5 September 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Timothy Snyder, ‘Fascism, Russia and Ukraine’, *The New York Review of Books* (version 20 March 2014) ) <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/03/20/fascism-russia-and-ukraine/> (13 December 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Snyder, ‘Fascism, Russia and Ukraine’, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/03/20/fascism-russia-and-ukraine/> (13 December 2015).

### **The politics of (national) identity formation**

National identity is a phenomenon that is largely disputed and often serves as a legitimisation for (violent) conflict. Anthony Smith conceptualizes nationalism as an ideology that seeks to promote the autonomy, unity and identity of the nation.<sup>9</sup> Frantz Fanon, in his influential work on nationalism, argues that to avoid being taken over or co-opted by the imperialist culture, the nation can use the recuperation of a golden era as a defence mechanism. However, he states, the recreating of a glorious past does not alter the material conditions of life among citizens, nor does it protect them from any internal or external threat.<sup>10</sup> Michael Ignatieff elaborates on these 'threats' and introduces the claim of nationalists as follows; 'when national belonging is the overridingly important form of all belonging, it means there is no other form of belonging- to family, works, or friends- that is secure if you do not have a nation to protect you.'<sup>11</sup> Ignatieff argues that being understood is the key to a sense of belonging and feeling secure. He claims that language, over history and land, is the ultimate source of being understood and is therefore the essential form of belonging.<sup>12</sup> Whereas in civic nationalism a community is held together through rule of law and therefore assumes that national belonging is a form of rational attachment, ethnic nationalism claims that a person's deepest attachments are inherited. It is this form of nationalism that emerged in eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. It provided the answer to 'who is going to protect me now?'.<sup>13</sup>

In agreement with Ignatieff, Rogers Brubaker has recently attempted to develop 'fresh perspectives on the social organization and political expression of cultural difference'.<sup>14</sup> Language, according to Brubaker, just as religion and ethnicity, is a way of identifying oneself and others, of construing sameness and difference.<sup>15</sup> Religion and language correspond to a great extent in their functioning as components of cultural difference, however, both domains are entirely different when it comes to their politicization and institutionalization. Because language is chronically and pervasively politicized in the modern world, it has been widely understood as the chief criterion and main cultural substrate of nationhood.<sup>16</sup> Brubaker claims that specifically where linguistic minorities are territorially

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<sup>9</sup> Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno 1991) 73.

<sup>10</sup> John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester 2010) 135.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging. Journeys into the new nationalism* (London 1994) 7.

<sup>12</sup> Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*, 7.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 4-5.

<sup>14</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference* (Harvard 2015) 2.

<sup>15</sup> Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, 86.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 98, 101.

concentrated, language remains a terrain of struggle, since linguistic pluralism can be seen as a threat to national identity and the territorial integrity of the state.<sup>17</sup> Claims out of ethnolinguistic identifications are a general phenomenon of a politicized ethnicity.<sup>18</sup> This politicized ethnicity can be the result of the lack of congruencies linking state territory, national territory, national culture, and citizenry, since the frontiers of the state as an existing territorial organization should match the frontiers of the nation as an imagined community.<sup>19</sup> All authors mentioned above acknowledge the problematic consequences of conveyed nationalism by a nation that does not live in a corresponding state of its own. Ukraine embodies these consequences all to perfectly.

### **Does Ukraine have a history of its own?**

Andrew Wilson, historian and political scientist specialized in eastern Europe, has written multiple works on Ukraine as a nation and the role of its history therein. He states that an independent Ukraine has only existed in the late seventeenth century and in the three years following the Russian Revolution of 1917.<sup>20</sup> The country has been deeply marked by the empires that have reigned over (parts of) it in previous centuries.<sup>21</sup> According to Wilson, it was in the seventeenth century that a Ukrainian cultural identity was first detectable. Whereas before Ukrainians were seen as the ‘Southern Rus’, the emerge of a Cossack culture and a local Orthodox church led to the first use of the term ‘Ukraine’. Wilson even suggests that the idea of a Ukrainian national identity might actually be inspired on Cossack liberty as opposed to tsarist (Russian) autocracy, in addition to notions of ethnicity, language and religion.<sup>22</sup>

Roman Solchanyk, scholar in Eastern European studies, states it was in the late eighteenth century that the majority of ethnically Ukrainian territories (on the right side of the Dnieper river) was brought under Russian imperial rule. At that time Russia solidified its control over the current Kharkiv and Donbas regions, while overtaking what is now southern Ukraine, including Crimea, from the Ottoman empire. Western Ukraine remained part of Poland until World War II, after which it was annexed to the Soviet Union as well.<sup>23</sup> What is important to note, is that Ukrainians and Russians may very possibly have the same origins, namely the ‘Rus’-people, who have been appropriated by either nation to claim the Ukrainian

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 105

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 132.

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990's. A minority faith* (Cambridge 1996) 1.

<sup>21</sup> Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990's*, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians. Unexpected Nation* (Yale 2000) 70.

<sup>23</sup> Solchanyk, *Ukraine and Russia*, 6.



territory.<sup>24</sup> Wilson states that ‘it is perfectly possible that the Rus were a single people and that minor differences that already existed in the thirteenth century, became larger as a result of the fall of the Rus, after which a uniquely Ukrainian identity developed’.<sup>25</sup> Russian rule lasted around two centuries from the eighteenth century onward and many Ukrainians accommodated to this, being culturally close to the Russians. However, it was assumed that Ukrainians were practically Russian and that they therefore did not need any additional ‘Russification’. This allowed the slumbering Ukrainian identity to discretely remain present.<sup>26</sup> In the meantime, current west-Ukraine was part of Galicia, a border-kingdom that straddled the region between present Ukraine and Poland, while counter-identities, such as the ‘Rusyn-identity’, prevailed.<sup>27</sup> Altogether, the twentieth century started off with a dichotomous Ukraine; two regions that, according to Ukrainian historian Ihor Shevchenko, were ‘seemingly convergent, but nevertheless represented very different models of national identity’.<sup>28</sup>

The Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union after World War II, further strengthened its control over Ukrainian territory. Within this context, different nationalizing projects emerged within Ukraine, all trying to redefine what it meant to be Ukrainian, but all from different perspectives.<sup>29</sup> The Soviet federalism allowed for a semi-independent Ukrainian governmental system, which consolidated a Ukrainian national identity. This identity was further nurtured by the move of the capital from the eastern city Kharkiv to centrally located Kiev.<sup>30</sup> Wilson states that even though the emerge of a Ukrainian nation was undeniable, the Ukrainian independence of 1991 was a matter of circumstance, rather than a nationalist project.<sup>31</sup> The elections of 1990, in which a national-democratic opposition existed for the first time in Ukrainian Soviet history, showed the regional divisions more than anything else.<sup>32</sup> Independence was not solely reached by the national-democratic party. The widespread support to the communist party and the collapse of the Soviet authority in Moscow were key factors to the 346 votes in parliament for national independence on 24 August 1991. However, a referendum pointed out that the wish for independence enjoyed

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<sup>24</sup> Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 19.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 79-80.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 111.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 118.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 119, 140-2.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 147.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 151.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 160-1.

popular support, with 90.3% of the Ukrainians confirming the political vote.<sup>33</sup> Solchanyk concludes that what has remained after independence is a Russian majority in Crimea, a linguistically Russian majority in the Donbas, a Western Ukraine that is drawn to Eastern European places other than Russia, and a central Ukraine that remains hard to define even in terms of affiliations.<sup>34</sup>

Solchanyk writes how Russia's ever prevailing possessive attitude towards Ukraine, an attitude that is not equally strong towards any other non-Russian member of the 'Soviet family of nations', can be historically accounted for. Ukrainians were, and are, viewed as an integral component of the greater Russian nation, to which they are 'Little Russians'. Ukraine, as well as Belarus, is supposed to be the missing link to making Russia complete.<sup>35</sup> Brubaker elaborates on how the reorganization of political space in the aftermath of the Soviet empire 'caused many populations to be stranded on the wrong side of the new nation-state frontiers'. In post-Cold War configurations, large Russian or Russophone minorities participate in internal politics of belonging in Ukraine and in external politics of belonging vis-à-vis Russia.<sup>36</sup> This is to a large extent the reason for the problematic nature of current Ukraine as a state, since the 'language of nationalism' is used by Russia to legitimize the maintaining or re-establishing of ties with populations of the nation living in Ukraine, while Ukrainians use the same language of nationalism to claim 'their motherland'. Paul Pirie argues that in order to establish a national identity on ethnic terms, as Brubaker does, the following nuances need to be considered; inter-ethnic marriage, language usage and urbanisation are all factors that contribute to a mixed self-identification in regions where affiliations with different ethnicities might alternate, of which the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine form a perfect exemplary.<sup>37</sup>

Instead of considering 'the indigenization of the polity along ethnic lines presumed by Roger Brubaker', Kataryna Wolczuk emphasizes that Ukrainian nationbuilding finds its foundations in historicizing and modernizing themes, developed and communicated by the Ukrainian ruling elite, based on rational attachment, rather than inherited forms of belonging.<sup>38</sup> Historical consciousness was crafted through myths of the national-liberation

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 161-5.

<sup>34</sup> Solchanyk, *Ukraine and Russia*, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Solchanyk, *Ukraine and Russia*, 14-15.

<sup>36</sup> Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, 137.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Pirie, 'National identity and politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine', *Europe-Asia Studies* 48 (1996) 7, 1079.

<sup>38</sup> Kataryna Wolczuk, 'History, Europe and the "national idea". The "official" narrative of national identity in Ukraine, *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (2000) 4, 673'; Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*, 4-5.

struggle and the aspiration of Ukraine to join European civilization was nurtured. According to Wolczuk, the latter contributed to overcoming internal divisions and replace the Soviet supra-national community with the European Union, which is associated with universalist virtues such as peace, progress and prosperity.<sup>39</sup> Thus, Wolczuk reformulated the idea of national identity as an imperative for socioeconomic and technological modernization, rather than for a cultural and linguistic revival.<sup>40</sup> She argues that the glorification of the Ukrainian struggle for independence and statehood historicizes Ukrainian identity and effaces Russian cultural, demographic and linguistic legacies.<sup>41</sup>

As said, Stephen Shulman has conducted a survey measuring different components of national identity. He has identified two prevailing identities, namely a strong eastern Slavic national identity and an ethnic Ukrainian national identity.<sup>42</sup> Among the ‘basic unifying features’ that underlie the distinction between the two identities are historical experiences, varying cultures, traditions and views, and the ability to speak Ukrainian.<sup>43</sup> What Shulman names as the most important outcome of his research is the general correlation between national identity and economic and political liberalism. The stronger people identify with the eastern Slavic national identity, the more they show pro-communist attitudes and correspondingly, a weaker the support for liberal economic and political values is considered to be western.<sup>44</sup> It seems as though the Slavic identity impedes the consolidation of democracy and capitalism in Ukraine, while the ethnic Ukrainian identity assists it. This could explain why ‘the establishment of a democratic state has failed to cement Ukrainians’ already weak sense of national identity’ and new conflict has erupted.<sup>45</sup>

### **Language as a marker of national identity**

As illustrated by Shulman’s research, a divide is detectable between ethnic Ukrainians and eastern Slavics.<sup>46</sup> However, not only the Slavic minority, but a large part of Ukrainians speaks Russian as their first or second language, which can be traced to the suppression of

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<sup>39</sup> Wolczuk, ‘History, Europe and the “national idea”’, 674.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 688.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 689.

<sup>42</sup> Shulman, ‘National Identity and Public Support for Political and Economic Reform’, 76.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 77, 79; Here, the relative differences in results regarding age, language, education and other factors are not included.

<sup>45</sup> Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 207.

<sup>46</sup> Shulman, ‘National Identity and Public Support for Political and Economic Reform’, 76.

Ukrainian during Soviet rule (Figure 1.1, 1.2).<sup>47</sup> Russian and Ukrainian share the Cyrillic script, but the Ukrainian language differs significantly from Russian. Following independence, the Ukrainian language was institutionalized, although many families continued speaking Russian at home, ethnic Ukrainians included.<sup>48</sup> Wilson shows how Ukrainophone nationalist thinking is reflected in the most important clause adopted on language in the 1996 constitution:

*'The state language in Ukraine is the Ukrainian language. The state guarantees the all-round development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of social life on all the territory of Ukraine. In Ukraine, the free development, use and protection of Russian, other languages of national minorities of Ukraine is guaranteed. The state promotes the study of languages of international communication.'*<sup>49</sup>

Volodymyr Kulyk states that 'people's linguistic and cultural attitudes are influenced not only by their communicative practice, or the everyday use of a language, but also by their identification with a particular language or languages, which, in a multilingual society such as Ukraine, does not always correspond to communication.'<sup>50</sup> He hereby counters treating language and ethnicity as two independent variables in their socio-political impact and states how language proficiency should not be confused with language identity.<sup>51</sup> Kulyk concludes that when language diversity hinders national unity and governmental effectiveness, it is not only because of differences in the language people speak, but also, even primarily, in the language 'they care about'.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Volodymyr Kulyk, 'Language identity, linguistic diversity and political cleavages. Evidence from Ukraine', *Nations and Nationalism* 17 (2011) 3, 634; First language should not be confused with native language, since many Ukrainians consider Ukrainian their native language, while Russian is the language they use on a daily basis.

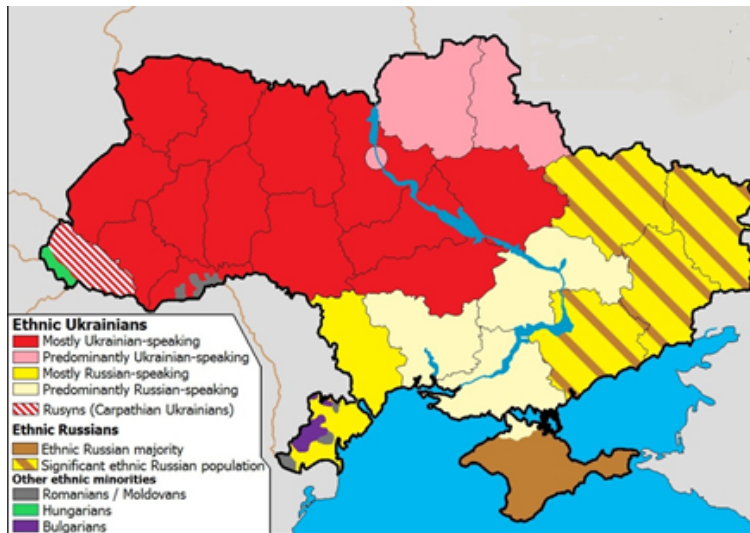
<sup>48</sup> Laada Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues. Language politics and cultural correction in Ukraine* (Cornell 2005) 66-67.

<sup>49</sup> Wilson, *The Ukrainians* [adapted from the English-language version of the constitution in *The Ukrainian Review*, 43, 4 (1996) 4-5] 208.

<sup>50</sup> Kulyk, 'Language identity, linguistic diversity and political cleavages', 628.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 630.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 644.

Figure 1.1: Ethnolinguistic map of Ukraine.<sup>53</sup>Figure 1.2: Map of native Russian speakers in Ukraine.<sup>54</sup>

Anna Fournier continues this argument, stating that ‘the Russians protesting against Ukrainisation resist a perceived exclusion by the state not as ethnic Russians, but as a linguistically extended group, the Russian-speakers’, which includes ethnic Ukrainians.<sup>55</sup> She also argues that the linguistic division entails a hierarchy, in which Ukrainian is an inferior

<sup>53</sup> Wikimedia, ‘Ethnolinguistic map of Ukraine’, (version 22 March 2012) [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnolinguistic\\_map\\_of\\_ukraine.png#filehistory](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnolinguistic_map_of_ukraine.png#filehistory) (8 December 2015).

<sup>54</sup> Karel Platje, ‘Twaalf regio’s hebben het Russisch aanvaard’, (version 24 August 2012) <http://nieuwsuitoekraine.blogspot.nl/2012/08/twaalf-regios-hebben-het-russisch.html> (8 December 2015).

<sup>55</sup> Anna Fournier, ‘Mapping Identities. Russian Resistance to Linguistic Ukrainisation in Eastern and Central Ukraine’, *Europe-Asia Studies* 54 (2002) 3, 430.

variant of Russian. The claim to a 'Russian-speaking' identity can therefore be viewed as an imperial relic, aimed at emphasizing divisions between Russians and Ukrainians. David Laitin concludes his widely praised work *Identity in Formation: The Russian-speaking populations in the near abroad* saying that the development of a new conglomerate identity of 'Russian-speakers' has implications for the success of national projects and interethnic peace in post-Soviet states.<sup>56</sup> The reclaiming of Ukrainian identity by institutionalizing Ukrainian language counteracts the centuries long domination of the Soviet Empire and the Russian language. Ethnic Russians in the southern and eastern part of the country are threatened by the establishment of a Ukraine of linguistic terms, but also have appropriated the term Russian-speakers to advocate their superiority.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> David Laitin, *Identity in formation. The Russian-speaking populations in the near abroad* (Cambridge 1998) 363.

<sup>57</sup> Fournier, 'Mapping Identities' 431.

## 2. Public art as a political instrument or social tool?

### Graffiti in the third space

According to anthropologists Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, not only nations, but also states are seen as ‘imagined’. ‘Both are constructed entities that are conceptualized and made socially effective through particular imaginative and symbolic devices.’<sup>58</sup> The spatial dimension of public art can be regarded as the embodiment of the state. The struggle over the meaning of this space is what ignites (violent) conflict. To transform space into place, meaning and value, through naming, identification and representation, are attributed to a geographical location. Sociologist Thomas Gieryn states that when a piece of graffiti is painted on a particular building in a particular city, the building is invested with a certain meaning. The people’s new experiences and understandings of that building make it remarkable as a place.<sup>59</sup>

According to Alexis Zimberg, scholar in Russian and East-European Studies, public space is ‘third space’. Third spaces are places that are accessible to any public and thereby deconstruct social hierarchies. The primary activity performed in third space is conversation.<sup>60</sup> Conversation offers the opportunity to question, protest and form an opinion about the presented information, which is the principle objective of street art. Zimberg argues that public art is not just an inevitable, but also a necessarily tool in the search for social truth. It transforms social sentiment from private to public and from verbal to tangible.<sup>61</sup> He further states that images consist of two components; the signifier and the signified. Whereas the former is the literal image, the latter is the concept expressed by means of the specific combination of images. Graffiti and street art are therefore constructed signs that function as meaningful symbols.<sup>62</sup> When the audience interprets signs according to their own contextual understanding, they thereby legitimate the constructed reality of the artwork. The associated message of the image dominates over the truth and thus holds a significant power, although it might differ for different audiences.<sup>63</sup>

During the Yanukovych regime, countless graffiti, murals and other pieces of public art have occurred in Kiev and other cities in Ukraine. Topics that were pertinent in the

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<sup>58</sup> James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta, ‘Spatializing States. Toward an ethnography of neoliberal governmentality’, *American Ethnologist* 29 (2002) 4, 981.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Gieryn, ‘A Space for Place in Sociology’, *Annual Review Sociology* 26 (2000) 471-2.

<sup>60</sup> Zimberg, *The spray-can is mightier than the sword*, 49.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 52.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 43-45.

artwork documented in recent local fieldwork include Putin as a villain aggressor, the celebration of national heroes and general desire for a change of regime.<sup>64</sup> According to French public artist Roti, who has ‘decorated’ Kiev with his work ‘New Ukraine’, public artworks becomes a barometer for social consciousness in times of political crisis, protest or conflict, reflecting changing attitudes towards the ruling authority. Pieces of graffiti may achieve impact through imagery that reaches a diverse audience through pairing graphics with emotionally engaging political statements.<sup>65</sup> Dmytro Zaiets confirms this, stating how works of public art ‘challenge conventional codes and stereotypes, familiar relationships and social attitudes’.<sup>66</sup> He claims that public art is therefore a tangible representation of the processes of social memory. He argues that despite the high level of subjectivity that comes with interpreting public art, these artworks function as ‘reminders’ of social memory.<sup>67</sup> Interactions between the physical city, the subject of the piece and relationships between people and objects ignite the construction of information flows. If the piece is placed where it can be viewed freely and it contains some element of conflict, then it is public (art).

Thus, urban space is constantly produced and modified through public artworks.<sup>68</sup> In order to induce a response from the audience, a piece of public art needs to be accessible, but not oversimplified. The piece should not straightforwardly provoke conflict, but it should encourage the audience to think critically in a subtle way.<sup>69</sup> Zimberg states however, that many artists, when asked, deny any political intentions. Zimberg rejects this and suggests how, regardless of the artists’ intentions, the contextual interpretation of the viewer and a politicized environment result from anonymously placing an artwork into public space.<sup>70</sup> The artist gains power over the reception of political figures when depicting them on the city walls. Depending on the visibility of the piece and its reception, the artist may gain more or less control.<sup>71</sup> As Gupta and Ferguson already stated; whoever controls public space, also holds power over the provided information and thus the opinions of the people.

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<sup>64</sup> Post Soviet Graffiti, ‘Street Art of the Ukrainian Revolution’, (version 6 June 2014) <http://postsovietgraffiti.com/street-art-of-the-ukrainian-revolution/> (10 October 2015).

<sup>65</sup> Morgan Meaker, ‘The art of protest in Euromaidan’, (version 7 March 2014) <https://www.indexonensorship.org/2014/03/artists-take-barricades-support-euromaidan/> (10 October 2015).

<sup>66</sup> Dmytro Zaiets, ‘Contemporary public art in the city space of Kharkiv’, *Anthropology of East Europe review* 28 (2010) 2, 279.

<sup>67</sup> Zaiets, ‘Contemporary public art in the city space of Kharkiv’, 280.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 294.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 297-8.

<sup>70</sup> Zimberg, The spray-can is mightier than the sword, 67.

<sup>71</sup> Zimberg, The spray-can is mightier than the sword, 55.



The images of public art, categorised into three groups, will be analysed according to the theory as presented by Zimberg; static images that have transformed into powerful indicators of public opinion. Firstly, the signifiers, images independent of their meaning, will be described, as of which any colours, figures, symbols and texts will be identified and translated when necessary. The signifier will then be placed in its contextual environment. The interaction between image, signs and context will result into the exposure of the signified.

### 3. Local evidence of claims to a (national) identity

#### A new Tsar is born

*'Putin is unmistakably Russian, with chiseled facial features and those penetrating eyes.'*<sup>72</sup>

This is one of the first observations of Adi Ignatius, who interviewed the Russian president in 2007 for TIME Magazine (figure 2.2).<sup>73</sup> Since he succeeded Boris Yeltsin in 1999, Vladimir Putin has restored Russians' sense of the greatness of their nation, be it through an authoritarian rule that has largely abolished freedoms of speech and press, among other things.<sup>74</sup> Although Putin does not claim to desire the restoration of the old Soviet empire, his attitude towards Ukraine is well illustrated by the following statement of his ambassador in France: 'Russians and Ukrainians are one nation. It's like the Bretons and the Normans in France. You can't separate them.' Subsequently Putin considers the Russian intervention in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea as matters of internal affairs.<sup>75</sup> A large part of the ethnic Russian population in Ukraine celebrates their Russian heritage and supports Putin's attempt to unify the Russian nation. However, many Ukrainians oppose cultural and political Russian interference or intervention.

Russia's, and thereby Putin's, relationship with Ukraine remains ambiguous. A large amount of the generated graffiti depicts Putin, both as hero and villain. To the European Union and the United States, Putin is an evil dictator who stands in the way of Ukraine's struggle for liberal democracy. However, what is the other side to this story, in which Putin is not only impersonated as Hitler, but also as God? What model of identity is reflected in the promotion of either side of the story through the image of Putin?

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<sup>72</sup> Adi Ignatius, 'Person of the Year 2007. A Tsar Is Born', *TIME Magazine* (version 19 December 2007)

[http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753\\_1690757\\_1690766-2,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753_1690757_1690766-2,00.html) (7 December 2015).

<sup>73</sup> Ignatius, 'A Tsar Is Born',

[http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753\\_1690757\\_1690766-2,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753_1690757_1690766-2,00.html) (7 December 2015).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid,

[http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753\\_1690757\\_1690766-2,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753_1690757_1690766-2,00.html) (7 December 2015).

<sup>75</sup> Timothy Snyder, 'Ukraine, Putin's denial', *New York Review of Books* (version 13 December 2013) <http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2013/12/13/ukraine-putins-denial/> (version 13 December 2015).

Figure 2.1: Graffiti Odessa.<sup>76</sup>Figure 2.2: Vladimir Putin.<sup>77</sup>

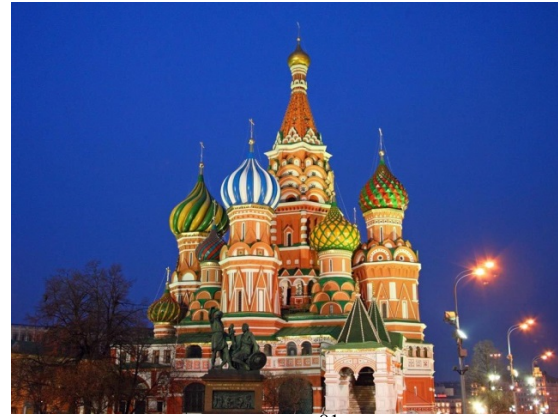
In figure 2.1, painted in the southern city Odessa, a person resembling Putin takes a bite of a piece of land in the shape and colors of Ukraine. In the upper left corner of the right half, a traditionally Russian building, looking like the Kremlin, is drawn (figure 2.4). Putin holds Ukraine upside down, which causes Crimea to be his first bite (figure 2.3). The left side of the piece shows a soldier with an automatic rifle surrounded by blood with a map of Ukraine in the background. On the right and left, the piece is framed by red letters covered in barbed wire, reading ‘No War’, in Russian, while blue letters at the bottom in blue and yellow say ‘Yes to peace!!!’.<sup>78</sup> Odessa is located in a dominantly Russian speaking region of Ukraine, yet this graffiti expresses an aversion to Putin and his regime. While Putin eats his way through Ukraine, safely up in the Kremlin, the Ukrainian people suffer from the consequences, whether Ukrainian, Russian or a mixture of the two. The piece demonstrates how, as Kulyk argues, language usage does not necessarily reflect cultural or political affiliations.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Yevgeny Volokin (Reuters), ‘Graffiti Odessa’ (version 8 April 2014) <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/photo-of-putin-taking-a-bite-out-of-ukraine-2014-4> (10 October 2015).

<sup>77</sup> Reuters, ‘Vladimir Putin, President of Russia’ (version 6 November 2014) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/oilandgas/11215063/Vladimir-Putin-oil-price-decline-has-been-engineered-by-political-forces.html> (20 November 2015).

<sup>78</sup> Anastasia Kharitonova, ‘Appendix A- Interview’ (8 December 2015).

<sup>79</sup> Kulyk, ‘Language identity, linguistic diversity and political cleavages’, 628.

Figure 2.3: Map of Ukraine.<sup>80</sup>Figure 2.4: The Kremlin.<sup>81</sup>

Whereas figure 2.1 does not necessarily depict Putin as a villain, figure 2.5 does, depicting Putin as Adolf Hitler (figure 2.6). Hitler's characteristic moustache and hair partition are added to the image of the Russian president. A bullet hole has been painted on Putin's forehead and two swastikas have been printed on the collar of his shirt. At the bottom of the image it reads 'Putler Kaput'.<sup>82</sup> The names 'Putin' and 'Hitler' have been mixed, implying that Putin has not only adopted Hitler's appearance, but that his politics are comparable to those of Hitler as well, which is emphasized by the swastikas.<sup>83</sup> 'Kaput' is the German word for 'broken' and in this case means 'to destroy'. The bullet hole and 'kaput' signify the author's wish to eliminate Putin, his political practices included.

<sup>80</sup> BBC News, 'Ukraine crisis in Maps', (version 18 February 2015) <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27308526> (5 September 2015).

<sup>81</sup> Francesco Bandarin (UNESCO), 'Kremlin and Red Square, Moscow' (version 12 January 2016) <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/545> (12 January 2015).

<sup>82</sup> Kharitonova, 'Appendix A', (8 December 2015).

<sup>83</sup> A swastika is the symbol of Nazism.

Figure 2.5: Graffiti Lviv.<sup>84</sup>Figure 2.6: Adolf Hitler.<sup>85</sup>

Lviv, the western city where figure 2.5 is photographed, is located in the Ukrainian region that has only been incorporated in the Soviet Union after World War II and thus has enjoyed other European influences much longer. In the Lviv region, where nationalism thrives, Russia's claim to Ukraine is regarded just as illegitimate as the separatists consider Ukraine's claim to Crimea. To the nationalists, both Hitler and Putin signify a regime that has threatened to overtake Ukraine. The comparison to Hitler, instead of any other dictator, is not a coincident. In World War II, the battle between the Nazi's and the Red Army largely took place on Ukrainian territory.<sup>86</sup> Right Sector, the nationalist group that has played an important role in the violent escalation of the revolution, is associated with fascism, because of their glorification of the Ukrainian soldier Stephan Bandera, who sided with the Nazis in World War II in order to reach an independent Ukraine. Like Bandera, Right Sector opposes both Russian and 'Western' imperialist ambitions. By drawing on Right Sector's supposed fascist connotations, the Yanukovich government, and subsequently the Kremlin, claims that the protesting Ukrainians are Nazis.<sup>87</sup> Doing this, Russia frames the protests as being the return of National-Socialism. However, in his politics Putin strives for what Snyder calls a Eurasian Union. Eurasianism, introduced by Russian political scientist Aleksandr Dugin, is an

<sup>84</sup> Reuters, 'Putler Kaput' (version 9 May 2014) <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/victory-day-parades-ukraine-russian-president-vladimir-putin-visits-crimea-1447909> (10 October 2015).

<sup>85</sup> AP, 'Adolf Hitler' (version 3 May 2012) <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/medical-reports-show-adolf-hitler-cocaine-suffered-extreme-flatulence-article-1.1072271> (20 November 2015).

<sup>86</sup> Snyder, 'Fascism, Russia and Ukraine', <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/03/20/fascism-russia-and-ukraine/> (13 December 2015).

<sup>87</sup> Snyder, 'Fascism, Russia and Ukraine', <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/03/20/fascism-russia-and-ukraine/> (13 December 2015).

ideology that combines useful aspects of both Stalinism and fascism, composing a totalitarian ideology that strives for the opposite of a liberal democracy, namely a nationalist dictatorship.<sup>88</sup> While Right Sector's glorification of Bandera can be seen as an attempt at promoting a historicized Ukrainian identity capable of effacing Russian influences, it is counterproductive, because it enables Russia to frame the party as fascist.<sup>89</sup>



Figure 2.7: Graffiti in Kiev.<sup>90</sup>

Figure 2.7 shows how in Kiev, cultural and political affiliations are much more disputed than they are in Lviv. Putin is again painted as Hitler, holding something that looks like scientifically drawn DNA tissue between his hands. What is immediately striking is that the piece has been modified and text is added to the original graffiti. The added text has been written casually, probably with haste, while the rest of the drawing has been done with care and attention. The right part of the DNA tissue is colored in Ukrainian colors, while the left part has been crossed out in the same blue the added text was written in. Small patches of the original colors, red and white, can be seen at the edges of the blue marking. It is safe to assume that the original colors of the left part were the colors of the Russian flag. The blue text written in Ukrainian in the very middle of the graffiti says ‘Ukraine above all’, which has

<sup>88</sup> Snyder, ‘Fascism, Russia and Ukraine’, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/03/20/fascism-russia-and-ukraine/> (13 December 2015).

<sup>89</sup> Wolczuk, ‘History, Europe and the “national idea”’, 674; Chapter 3 will elaborate on the model of national identity as presented by Right Sector.

<sup>90</sup> Magdalena Patalong, ‘Putin, as Hitler, Playing with Ukrainian and Russian DNA’ (version 6 June 2014) <http://postsovietgraffiti.com/street-art-of-the-ukrainian-revolution/> (10 October 2015).

been the nationalist motto during the revolution. The two larger words on each side of the motto mean something like ‘Fuck Putin’, which is really coarse Ukrainian. In the far right and left of the graffiti ‘Glory to the Nation’ and ‘Death to all Enemies’ is written.<sup>91</sup> Both are nationalistic statements provided by Right Sector. The original picture can be interpreted as Putin trying to enforce an ethnically intertwined Ukrainian and Russian identity upon Ukraine through fascist practices, referring to the origins Ukraine and Russia share.<sup>92</sup> However, the Russian part of the DNA tissue is crossed out. While the text adds emphasis to the nationalist claim, the crossing out of the Russian DNA refutes the suggested ethnic uniformity of Ukrainians and Russians. Figure 2.7 forms the perfect exemplary to what Zimberg calls the principle objective of street art; the opportunity to question and protest of presented information, a process by which eventually social truth is established.<sup>93</sup>



Figure 2.8: Graffiti Simferopol.<sup>94</sup>

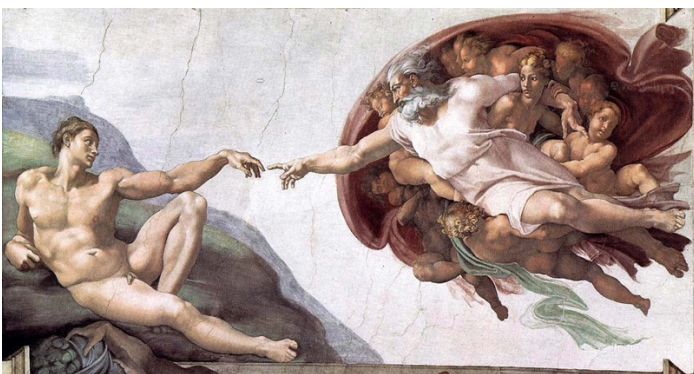


Figure 2.9: Michelangelo's 'Creation of Adam'.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Kharitonova, 'Appendix A', (8 December 2015).

<sup>92</sup> Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 19.

<sup>93</sup> Zimberg, *The spray-can is mightier than the sword*, 49.

<sup>94</sup> Reuters, 'What is Russia's vision on a federal Ukraine?' (version 1 April 2014) <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26828625> (10 October 2015).

As opposed to the previous images, figure 2.8 depicts an idealized picture of Putin. His appearance mirrors the image of God in Michelangelo's famous 'The Creation of Adam' (figure 2.9). Whereas God and Adam barely touch in the middle of Michelangelo's painting, Putin and the people on the left of figure 2.8 have firmly grasped each other's wrists. The piece expresses Russia's claim to Ukraine, presuming the two cannot be separated, because they belong together, as was said by the Russian ambassador in France.<sup>96</sup> As Solchanyk argues, Ukraine is essential to completion of the Russian nation.<sup>97</sup> Here, Russia is presented to be Ukraine's creator, in line with the idea of the Russian motherland to many ethnic Russians in Ukraine. While God leaves Adam to be an independent person, Ukraine is not supposed to acquire independence according to the author of the graffiti. As said, the reorganization of space after the fall of the Iron Curtain 'caused many populations to be stranded on the wrong side of the new nation-state frontiers'. In addition, Russian as a second language has been threatened on multiple occasions since Ukraine's independence. Russia legitimizes, for example, the annexation of Crimea, by providing Russian speakers with a security that the Ukrainian government fails to accommodate.<sup>98</sup> As Ignatieff argues, feeling secure is the key to a sense of belonging.<sup>99</sup> Consequently, the author of this piece does not regard Putin as oppressor, but as rescuer. Figure 2.8 promotes a pro-Russian separatist agenda, propagating a sense of belonging to Russia on a linguistic basis, thereby addressing ethnic Russians as well as ethnic Ukrainians.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Wikimedia, 'Michelangelo, Creation of Adam' (version 8 September 2010) [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo,\\_Creation\\_of\\_Adam\\_00.jpg#file](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo,_Creation_of_Adam_00.jpg#file) (20 November 2015).

<sup>96</sup> Snyder, 'Ukraine, Putin's denial', <http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2013/12/13/ukraine-putins-denial/> (version 13 December 2015).

<sup>97</sup> Solchanyk, *Ukraine and Russia*, 14-15.

<sup>98</sup> Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, 137.

<sup>99</sup> Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*, 7.

<sup>100</sup> Fournier, 'Mapping Identities', 430.





Figure 2.10: Graffiti Simferopol.<sup>101</sup>

Like figure 2.8, figure 2.10 anticipates on separatist affiliations among the Russian-speaking population. Putin has been drawn in front of a building in Simferopol, with ‘#ours’ written above the scene in Russian. First of all, a hashtag implies a certain symbolism, since it is meant to be a repeated message that can be understood instantly. ‘Ours’ on itself would be meaningless, but its form is propagated when added to an image, especially when frequently repeated.<sup>102</sup> ‘Ours’ has become a concept that stands on its own and can be applied to various contexts without needing any further explanation, as can be seen from Figures 2.11 (residential building, Simferopol, Crimea) and 2.12 (Children’s healthcare center, Yalta, Crimea).<sup>103</sup> The hashtag appropriates different Crimean buildings and institutions and claims them to be Russian through Putin’s picture. Yet, figure 2.13 illustrates the variety of views within Crimea. Like figure 2.12, the piece was painted in Yalta, but it has been altered from its original form. Hitler’s moustache has been hastily painted over the image of Putin, while texts by different authors - assuming by the two different handwritings and colors - have been added. The black text says ‘prices are rising’, following by ‘Многоходовочка’, which is not a real Russian word, but describes that, despite the fact that prices are rising, Putin ‘has a

<sup>101</sup> Pavel Rebrov (Reuters), ‘Vladimir Putin in Simferopol’ (version 17 August 2015) <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/multimedia/photogalleries/russian-officials-take-a-trip-to-crimea/5843.html> (10 October 2015).

<sup>102</sup> ‘Ours’ is also the translation of ‘Наши’, the name of a Russian patriotic youth movement that loudly and visible defends Putin; Ignatius, ‘A Tsar Is Born’, [http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753\\_1690757\\_1690766-2,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753_1690757_1690766-2,00.html) (7 December 2015).

<sup>103</sup> Zimberg, The spray-can is mightier than the sword, 43-45.

mysteriously genius plan to resolve all shortcomings and problems of life in Crimea'.<sup>104</sup> It is a sarcastic way to point at the malfunctioning politics of Putin, who therefore does not deserve glorification according to the author.<sup>105</sup> The red text says 'Crimea is not ours, it's mine' in Russian. Instead of accepting the Russian appropriation of Crimea, the author of this text suggests that Crimea has an identity of its own, although having assimilated to Russian rule for centuries.<sup>106</sup> As Kulyk argued, the language people speak, is not necessarily the language they care about.<sup>107</sup> Crimeans, including the author of the text, can be Russian speaking, while being ethnically Ukrainian, due to the simple fact that many have been raised in a Russian-speaking environment. Although '#ours' is addressed to Russian speakers, figure 2.13 demonstrates how identity preferences vary within Crimea, in contrast with the assumption that every Crimean supports separatism. Not only language usage, but also inter-ethnic marriage and urbanization cause these mixed identifications to increase.<sup>108</sup>



Figure 2.11: Graffiti in Simferopol.<sup>109</sup>



Figure 2.12: Graffiti in Yalta.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Kharitonova, 'Appendix A', (8 December 2015).

<sup>105</sup> Zaiets, 'Contemporary public art in the city space of Kharkiv', 294.

<sup>106</sup> Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 79-80.

<sup>107</sup> Kulyk, 'Language identity, linguistic diversity and political cleavages', 644; Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues*, 66-67.

<sup>108</sup> Pirie, 'National identity and politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine', 1079.

<sup>109</sup> Reuters, 'Putin on residential building in Simferopol' (version 28 September 2015)

<http://uk.businessinsider.com/putins-power-plays-are-all-about-the-appearance-of-influence-he-craves-2015-9?r=US&IR=T> (26 November 2015).

<sup>110</sup> Pavel Rebrov (Reuters), 'Putin as Judogi in Yalta', (version 28 August 2015)

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/higher-prices-dent-putins-sky-high-popularity---paper/529004.html> (26 November 2015).



Figure 2.13: Graffiti in Yalta.<sup>111</sup>

Figure 2.14 was painted on Euromaidan just before the Crimean referendum on Russian sovereignty in March 2014 took place. The image shows Putin in front of the Russian flag, wearing a uniform that shows great resemblance with the way the Russian tsars of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century used to dress (figure 2.15). Ignatius explains that many Russian compare Putin to Peter the Great, since he acts as an elected emperor.<sup>112</sup> Instead, the nationalists seem to associate Putin with tsar Nicholas II. Nicholas was the last Emperor of Russia, being executed in 1917 by the Bolsheviks, after which the Russian Empire collapsed and Ukraine enjoyed three years of independence.<sup>113</sup> If Putin is indeed depicted as Nicholas II in figure 2.15, this could signify the nationalist desire for Russian withdrawal and thus Ukrainian independence, which is emphasized by the text beneath the image that reads ‘Have a good journey, Putin’. Instead of an ethnolinguistic model of national identity, the depiction of Putin as tsar suggests a historical consciousness that refers to past victories of Ukraine over Russia.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> QHA, ‘Putin made to look like Hitler’, (version 11 September 2015) <http://qha.com.ua/en/politics/putin-made-to-look-like-hitler-in-yalta/133829/> (26 November 2015).

<sup>112</sup> Snyder, ‘Fascism, Russia and Ukraine’, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/03/20/fascism-russia-and-ukraine/> (13 December 2015).

<sup>113</sup> Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 1.

<sup>114</sup> Wolczuk, ‘History, Europe and the “national idea”’, 688.

Figure 2.14: Graffiti in Kiev.<sup>115</sup>Figure 2.15: Nicholas II.<sup>116</sup>

## Conclusions

Through the repeated depiction of his image in public art, Putin has gained a fictitious air that can be instrumentalized by both separatist and nationalist attitudes regarding Russian interference with Ukraine.<sup>117</sup> Authors of graffiti depicting Putin consciously promote different models of national identity, thereby controlling the opinions of their audience. While figure 2.8 expresses the supposed exclusion of Crimean inhabitants based on language, figure 2.13 shows how common language is not always illustrative of a common identity. The way figure 2.5 and 2.7 depict Putin as Hitler implies a historically based model of national identity, drawing from a supposed Nazi past. Likewise, figure 2.14 shows historical awareness, referring to the short period of Ukrainian independence at the beginning of the twentieth century. Lastly, ethnic and linguistic notions of national identity are represented in figure 2.7 and 2.8. The modified graffiti in this chapter address the stereotypes that exist regarding national identity and its relation to language, ethnicity and history. Apart from revealing these assumptions, the graffiti demonstrate a politicized national identity in large parts of Ukraine. Rather than emphasizing ethnic or linguistic bonds, the depiction of Putin implies a need for security in times of conflict. The ethnolinguistic identifications expressed

<sup>115</sup> Mari Shibata, 'Calm after the storm' (version 30 June 2014) <http://zeitheistzine.com/2014/06/30/euromaidans-in-kiiev-brace-for-pro-russian-vote-in-crimea-during-off-peak-hours-by-mari-shibata/> (11 October 2015).

<sup>116</sup> Wikimedia, 'Nicholas II of Russia' (version 1 February 2014) [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mikola\\_II.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mikola_II.jpg) (28 November 2015).

<sup>117</sup> Zimberg, *The spray-can is mightier than the sword*, 43.

in the graffiti, articulated through the image of Vladimir Putin, can be considered a phenomenon of the revolution, in which belonging has become a source of security.<sup>118</sup>

### **Literary heroes appropriated**

*'Shevchenko wrote in Ukrainian, where his very talent validated the use of the language and constructed its modern form.'*<sup>119</sup>

The literary legacy of Taras Shevchenko, born in 1814, is regarded of fundamental significance to the development of modern Ukrainian. Not only was he one of the first writers to use the language for a purpose other than daily communication, he also addressed the loss of Ukrainian freedom as a central theme in his poetry.<sup>120</sup> Throughout the whole of Ukraine, even in the Russian-speaking southern and eastern regions, Shevchenko's literary heritage is worshipped.<sup>121</sup>

Right Sector promotes an independent Ukraine that rejects European, as well Russian influences. In fact, the party was the driving force behind the refusal of Russian as a second national language, implying that Russian-speakers are not included in their version of Ukraine. Although he has become the face of the nationalist party, Shevchenko has never billed himself a Ukrainian nationalist, according to Rory Finnin, director of the center for Ukrainian Studies of Cambridge University. Finnin states Shevchenko was not as much concerned with matters of ethnicity, but rather with the struggle of the powerless against the powerful, a topic that consistently appears throughout his work and might still apply to the current relation between Ukraine and Russia.<sup>122</sup>

Graffiti artists have the liberty to play with collective identity through depicting writers, or other cultural figures.<sup>123</sup> This chapter will examine Right Sector's appropriation of Shevchenko, including the model of national identity they hereby promote. In addition, the

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<sup>118</sup> Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, 105.

<sup>119</sup> Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 90.

<sup>120</sup> Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 90.

<sup>121</sup> Sabra Ayres, 'In divided Ukraine, inspiration from a poet of the underdog' (version 9 March 2014) <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2014/0309/In-divided-Ukraine-inspiration-from-a-poet-of-the-underdog-video> (19 November 2015).

<sup>122</sup> Ayres, 'Poet of the underdog' <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2014/0309/In-divided-Ukraine-inspiration-from-a-poet-of-the-underdog-video> (19 November 2015).

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, 281.

possibility of Shevchenko as a unifying element to a possible Ukrainian identity that transcends differences in language and ethnicity will be raised.



Figure 3.1: Graffiti in Kiev.<sup>124</sup>

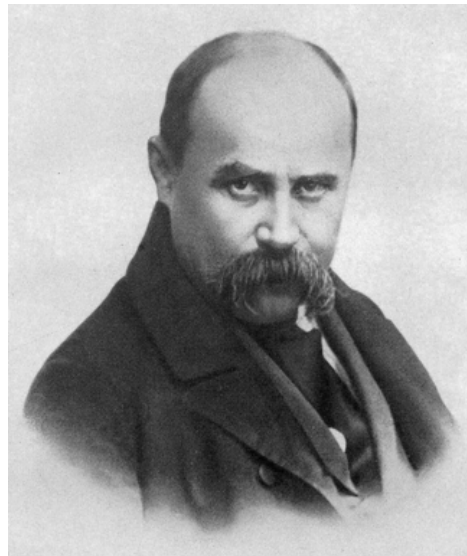


Figure 3.2: Taras Shevchenko.<sup>125</sup>

Figure 3.1 shows a stencil graffiti painted in Kiev. Shevchenko, recognizable by his deep-set eyes and thick moustache, which is here covered with a handkerchief, is depicted with a ‘Ushanka’, a traditional Russian fur hat (figure 3.2). On either side of the stencil two crossed fire distinguishers have been painted in black and red. The piece is part of a series of three. Ivan Franko and Lesya Ukrainka are featured in the other two graffiti, also flanked by fire distinguishers. (figures 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6). Franko wears a fireman’s helmet, while Ukrainka’s mouth is covered by a gasmask. For each of the three images, a famous picture has been used as a model, to which different accessories have been added.

Like Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko was a nineteenth century Ukrainian poet who largely influenced modern Ukrainian language and political thought. The cult of Franko has often been used by Soviet critics, by depicting him as an active champion of Ukrainian-Russian unity.<sup>126</sup> Lesya Ukrainka, a pseudonym for Larysa Kosach-Kvitka, was raised and educated in Ukrainian language only. Shevchenko and Franko were the main inspiration of some of her early poetry, which features the poet’s loneliness, social isolation and adoration

<sup>124</sup> Yaryna Vynnytska, ‘Ukrainian Banksy’ (version 17 June 2014) <http://www.metaphorimages.com/wordpress/?m=201406&paged=2> (28 November 2015).

<sup>125</sup> M. Antokhii, D. Darewych, M. R. Stech, D. H. Struk, ‘Shevchenko, Taras’ (version 2004) <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5C%5CH%5CShevchenkoTaras.htm> (28 November 2015).

<sup>126</sup> Marko Robert Stech and Arkadii Zhukovsky, ‘Franko, Ivan’ (version 2007) <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CF%5CR%5CFrankoIvan.htm> (28 November 2015).

for the Ukrainian nation. Her poems and writings are generally associated with her belief in her country's freedom and independence.<sup>127</sup>

Beneath Shevchenko's image 'Those who experienced difficulties in life, won't be scared by fire' has been written. Franko's image reads 'Our whole life is war' and Ukrainka's says 'Those who could disembarass will be free'. All three are statements used by Right Sector, which is confirmed by the Right Sector sign that is printed on the accessories of Ukrainka and Shevchenko (figure 3.7). According to Wilson, the idea of a national Ukraine was probably inspired on Cossack liberty as opposed to tsarist autocracy, which is exactly the struggle Shevchenko, Franko and Ukrainka address in their poetry.<sup>128</sup> Right Sector's appropriation of their legacies and poems thus seems logical, because it articulates an oppressed Ukraine resisting Russian imperialism, drawing on a supposed repetition of history that is communicated through the works of all three writers.



Figure 3.3: Graffiti in Kiev.<sup>129</sup>



Figure 3.4: Graffiti in Kiev.<sup>130</sup>

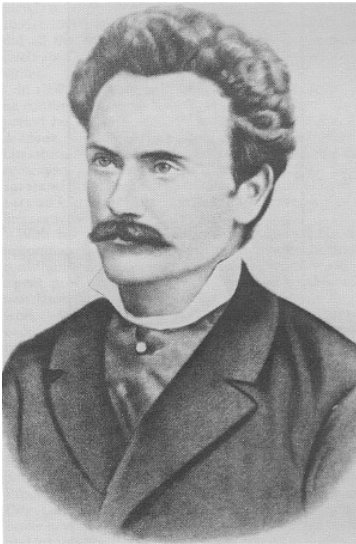
<sup>127</sup> Petro Odarchenko, 'Ukrainka, Lesia' (version 1993) <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CU%5CK%5CUkrainkaLesia.htm> (28 November 2015).

<sup>128</sup> Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 70.

<sup>129</sup> Vynnytska, 'Ukrainian Banksy'

<http://www.metaphorimages.com/wordpress/?m=201406&paged=2> (28 November 2015).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, <http://www.metaphorimages.com/wordpress/?m=201406&paged=2> (28 November 2015).

Figure 3.5: Ivan Franko.<sup>131</sup>Figure 3.6: Lesya Ukrainka.<sup>132</sup>Figure 3.7: Right Sector.<sup>133</sup>

The three writers are not only painted directly linked to Right Sector, as the huge mural in figure 3.8, along the Dnipro river in Kiev, shows. The same three well-known images have been used, this time without any revolutionary accessories. The Ukrainian flag backs the intense looks of the three figures. It seems as if Franko, Shevchenko and Ukrainka are watching over the Ukrainian people, as a matter of protecting them, while simultaneously functioning as a social consciousness, reminding the people of Ukraine's history.<sup>134</sup> The myth of the national-liberational struggle is supposed to reformulate the Ukrainian identity, effacing Russian cultural, demographic and linguistic legacies.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Stech and Zhukovsky, 'Franko, Ivan'

<http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CF%5CR%5CFrankoIvan.htm> (28 November 2015).

<sup>132</sup> Odarchenko, 'Ukrainka, Lesia'

<http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CU%5CK%5CUkrainkaLesia.htm> (28 November 2015).

<sup>133</sup> Wikimedia, 'Flag of Right Sector' (version 1 June 2014)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag\\_of\\_Right\\_Sector.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_Right_Sector.svg) (5 December 2015).

<sup>134</sup> Zaiets, 'Contemporary public art in the city space of Kharkiv', 280.

<sup>135</sup> Wolczuk, 'History, Europe and the "national idea"', 689.





Figure 3.8: Graffiti in Kiev.<sup>136</sup>

Both figure 3.9 and 3.10 seem to quote from Shevchenko's extensive work. Painted in Kiev, figure 3.9 features Shevchenko's piercing eyes on a mural, accompanied by the Ukrainian text 'In this house, there's a truth, and the power, and the will' and the Right Sector sign.<sup>137</sup> The text in figure 3.10, painted in the central Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk, originates from the poem 'Kavkaz' (The Caucasus) and translates into 'Fight, and you'll overcome'.<sup>138</sup> The outlines of people throwing car tires and waving the Ukrainian flag are drawn in the background. The graffiti directly connects Shevchenko's words to the revolution, as if Shevchenko himself gave the nationalists his blessing to violently oppose their enemies. The idea the two graffiti transmit is very much in line with that of the nationalist party. According to the graffiti, the independence Shevchenko already fought for in the nineteenth century, literally by giving Ukrainians a voice of their own, is to be continued now, because Ukraine's national identity is at stake. The idolization of Shevchenko has everything to do with his use of the Ukrainian language as a 'poetic device of immense power and deep subtlety'. As Fournier suggests, the division of Ukrainians into Russian speakers and Ukrainian speakers, implies a hierarchy, in which Ukrainian is still viewed a

<sup>136</sup> Lastnews, 'Российский журналист сравнил Киев и путинскую Москву' (version 6 September 2015) <http://lastnews.com.ua/politics/96316-rossiyskiy-zhurnalist-sravnil-kiev-i-putinskuyu-moskvu.html> (19 November 2015).

<sup>137</sup> The poem this quote was extracted from is not concretized.

<sup>138</sup> Taras Shevchenko, 'Kavkaz' (Translated by John Weir, 'The Caucasus') (version unknown) <http://www.oocities.org/ukrartlitclub/literature.html> (28 November 2015); Kharitonova, 'Appendix A' (12 December 2015).

southern dialect, while Russian can be considered an imperial relic.<sup>139</sup> The celebration of Shevchenko, and thereby the recognition of Ukrainian as a uniquely sophisticated language, challenges the idea of Russian superiority and emphasizes a Ukrainian national identity that is remotely distinct from the Russian one. At the same time, the use of Ukrainian causes a sense of recognition, or belonging in Ignatieff's words, among all Ukrainian speakers, excluding Russian-speakers from being Ukrainian.



Figure 3.9: Graffiti in Kiev.<sup>140</sup>



Figure 3.10: Graffiti in Kremenchuk.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Fournier, 'Mapping Identities' 430.

<sup>140</sup> Tochka.net, 'Українське граффіті', (version 26 March 2015) <http://oboi.tochka.net/20679-ukrainskoe-grafiti/> (19 November 2015).

<sup>141</sup> E-News, 'поборєтє' (version 23 April 2014) <http://www.e-news.su/in-ukraine/8454-bortesyapoborete.html> (19 November 2015).

Similarly, figure 3.11 promotes a sense of Ukrainian belonging in Kharkiv, a city in the east of Ukraine. Shevchenko is depicted in a much more stylized way, but nonetheless immediately recognizable. His chains mark the poet's conviction for writing his poems in Ukrainian and promoting Ukrainian independence, for which he was arrested in 1847. The official claim included that Shevchenko ridiculed the Russian imperial rule, by glorifying the Hetman Cossack reign and writing in 'Little-Russian' language. He was exiled to Russia, in which period he was not allowed to write, or paint for that matter.<sup>142</sup> The figure with the football next to Taras is a much more contemporary Ukrainian, namely football player Andriy Shevchenko. He has played for Dynamo Kiev and the Ukrainian national team, but also for international teams such as AC Milan and Chelsea, which causes him to be the most successful soccer player Ukraine has ever seen. The words at the top of the graffiti say 'The Shevchenko Brothers'. Together, the Shevchenko's symbolize Ukrainian national pride; both have shown determination, discipline and talent, uniting the Ukrainians in being proud of their country, and inspiring them to have to same courage and willpower in their current struggle.



Figure 3.11: Graffiti in Kharkiv.<sup>143</sup>



Figure 3.12: Andriy Shevchenko.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>142</sup> Antokhii, 'Shevchenko, Taras'

<http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CS%5CH%5CShevchenkoTaras.htm> (28 November 2015).

<sup>143</sup> V. Vizu, 'The Shevchenko Brothers' (version 10 September 2010)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Taras\\_Shevchenko\\_and\\_Andrey\\_Shevchenko\\_on\\_graffiti.jpg&redirect=no](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Taras_Shevchenko_and_Andrey_Shevchenko_on_graffiti.jpg&redirect=no) (10 October 2015).

<sup>144</sup> BBC Sports, 'Andriy Shevchenko needs to decide his future within the next two weeks' (version 26 June 2012) <http://www.bbc.com/sport/0/football/18587824> (8 December 2015).

Finally, figure 3.13 was also painted in Kharkiv. Shevchenko has been depicted in the middle of forest like surroundings; a tree, red flowers and birds that seem to have flown right out of a fairytale. The flowers look similar to poppies, marigolds and mallows (figures 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16). Ukrainian folklore tradition is permeated with these kinds of flowers, each kind carrying a specific meaning. The mallow symbolizes the love for one's native land. 'It reminds of one's spiritual and national roots and of their ancestors.'<sup>145</sup> Marigolds are supposed to be the floral symbol of Ukraine. They are ubiquitous in the country; they began to grow in the nineteenth century, but are now everywhere to be found in large numbers. The poppy signifies the infinity of the universe and its seeds are a key ingredient of a traditional dish. All three flowers feature in national songs, poetry, art, and in the Ukrainian national costume (figure 3.17). In these cultural traditions Ukraine distinguishes itself from other eastern European Slavic countries. Figure 3.13 connects poet Taras Shevchenko to Ukrainian peasant symbolism, the former being a product of the nineteenth century, while the latter represents centuries of Slavic traditions. The piece offers a cultural approach to identity that glorifies Ukraine's peasant history and accepts a common Russian descent, combining the eastern Slavic identity and ethnic Ukrainian identity that Shulman distinguished.<sup>146</sup>

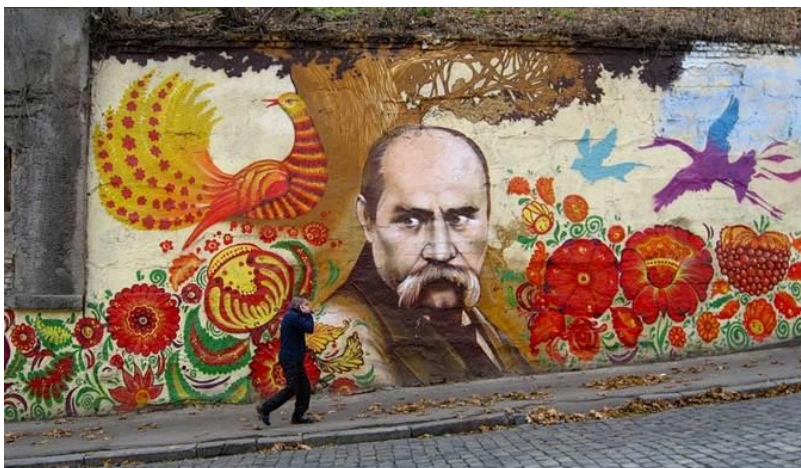


Figure 3.13: Graffiti in Kharkiv.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Welcome to Ukraine, 'Symbolism of Flowers' (version 2014)

<http://www.wumag.kiev.ua/index2.php?param=pgs20111/130> (8 December 2015).

<sup>146</sup> Shulman, 'National Identity and Public Support for Political and Economic Reform', 76.

<sup>147</sup> Ukrainian Dance World, 'Shevchenko. A Poet. An Artist. A Prophet. A Dancer?' (version 12 March 2015) <http://www.ukrainiandanceworld.com/#!/SHEVCHENKO-A-POET-AN-ARTIST-A-PROPHET-A-DANCER/c1dzf/55028cc00cf27b8ab27a45c5> (15 October 2015).

Figure 3.14: Mallow.<sup>148</sup>Figure 3.15: Poppy.<sup>149</sup>Figure 3.16: Marigold.<sup>150</sup>Figure 3.17: Ukrainian national costume.<sup>151</sup>

#### 4.4 Conclusions

According to Wilson, Shevchenko defined what was ‘one’s own’ and what was ‘other’ in explicitly ethnic terms. In addition, his use of language and reference to a Cossack history demarcate his understanding of who is Russian and who is Ukrainian.<sup>152</sup>

Shevchenko’s writings on the struggle for power, quoted in figure 3.1, 3.9 and 3.10, are cleverly appropriated by Right Sector to legitimize their use of force in the name of an

<sup>148</sup> Welcome to Ukraine, ‘Symbolism of Flowers’ (version 2014)  
<http://www.wumag.kiev.ua/index2.php?param=pgs20111/130> (8 December 2015).

<sup>149</sup> Welcome to Ukraine, ‘Symbolism of Flowers’ (version 2014)  
<http://www.wumag.kiev.ua/index2.php?param=pgs20111/130> (8 December 2015).

<sup>150</sup> Welcome to Ukraine, ‘Symbolism of Flowers’ (version 2014)  
<http://www.wumag.kiev.ua/index2.php?param=pgs20111/130> (8 December 2015).

<sup>151</sup> Traditional clothing of the world, ‘Ukrainian traditional clothes’(version 29 July 2012)  
<http://traditionalclothingoftheworld.blogspot.nl/2012/07/ukrainian-traditional-clothes.html> (15 January 2016).

<sup>152</sup> Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 91-2.

independent Ukraine. The nationalists have very consciously chosen Shevchenko as their representative, implying language and ethnicity are the main constitutive factors of a Ukrainian national identity. This model emphasizes difference and neglects the unifying elements Shevchenko's legacy is composed of. In their construction of a Ukrainian identity as such, Right Sector excludes ethnic Russians and native Russian-speakers from being Ukrainian. As Gupta and Ferguson argued, whoever controls public space, for example through spreading nationalist graffiti, holds power over what people think is the truth.<sup>153</sup> While Shevchenko did indeed contribute to the development of Ukrainian into literary language and has drawn on ethnic distinctions between Russians and Ukrainians, his idea of national struggle was designed as a unifying factor, rather than a distinctive measure. The ethnolinguistic aspects of Shevchenko's writings are highlighted, leaving his actual words meaningless.

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<sup>153</sup> Ferguson and Gupta, 'Spatializing States', 981.

## Conclusion

### **Does Ukraine exist? A national identity redefined.**

This thesis aims to give an insight in the construction of different models of national identity, defined by identity markers such as language, ethnicity and history. The different models are compared to notions of national identity presented in public art depicting Vladimir Putin and Taras Shevchenko. The selection of graffiti demonstrates how authors of public artworks control the audience's attitude towards models of national identity. The graffiti depicting Putin represent a national identity based on politicized ethnicity and the institutionalization of language. On the contrary, the picturing of Shevchenko offers a cultural version of identity, that nevertheless promotes ethnic and linguistic differences. It is significant that in depicting these graffiti, a public conversation that allows stereotypes and social attitudes to be challenged, is initiated. The modified artworks discussed in the previous chapters explicitly show the contestation of offered information. Yet even if not adapted, pieces of graffiti encourage public participation in the construction of a social truth. The answer to 'What does it mean to be Ukrainian?' is exposed in public art. The imagery that is used by either nationalists, separatists or both, reveals aspects of national identity that Ukrainians are assumed to consider important. When these assumptions are released into third space, they are either protested or confirmed, constructing a model of national identity that is not only approved of by the Ukrainian population, but also adjustable to the political context.

Ignatieff argues a sense of belonging is based on security. In addition, I argue that people resort to ethnic and linguistic identifications when threatened by a political situation. Brubaker has already examined the consequences of the institutionalizing of language and Shulman has explored the correlation between different national identifications and possible affiliations to liberal politics. Whereas regarding Ukrainians as an ethno-linguistic population spurs 'grounds for difference', conceptualizing the country as a civic national community could ignite new possibilities for a transcending national identity. The relation between national identity and political culture needs to be further explored, elaborating on Shulman's work. Future research on the construction of national identity should indicate whether a safe political environment can transcend ethno-linguistic differentiations, provide an overriding source of security and apply to any country suffering from internal divisions.

Does Ukraine exist? Not yet. Poroshenko is right in that the Ukraine needs to transform. However, not the people, but the political system needs to change. Ukrainians should be the designers, rather than products, of this new Ukraine. Transforming a 'borderland' into a country that embraces its multi ethnic, linguistic and historical heritage is a difficult task. Even if the Ukrainians indeed manage to overcome internal problems, the involvement of Russia remains problematic. Not only Ukraine itself, but also Russia, the European Union and the United States need to come to terms with the idea of an independent Ukraine.



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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview with Anastasia Kharitonova

08-12-2015

J: Hey Anastasia!

A: Hi!

J: I got you contact details from your Dutch co-year, Goya, who told me you'd be willing to help me with my bachelor's thesis? I won't need much of your time, the only thing that would be really helpful is whether you could help me translating some sentences! I can just send the pictures in through Facebook chat if that's alright with you!

A: Yeah sure, I'd like to help.

J: Great! Thank you so much! I found this text on a piece of graffiti 'хутин україна пуй Понад'. I'll send you the picture two. (Figure 2.9) I tried to use google translate, but I'm not sure about my findings; 'Putin takes away Ukraine's hope'.

A: So, in the center there's a phrase 'Україна понад усе' which means 'Ukraine is above all', that's some kind of motto that has been used a lot during the conflict by nationalists to represent their support to Ukraine

J: Ah, I see! And the first part? That says 'хутин'?

A: 'Хутин' and 'пуй' - actually they replaced first letters of each word so that it supposed to be 'Путин' and 'хуй' which actually means 'Putin' and 'fuck', but this word is really really strong in Ukrainian. I mean it's really bad one. Also Putin's haircut - they made him seem similar to Hitler.

J: Yeah, I noticed the Hitler resemblance for sure. But great, this helps a lot! Is it alright if I quote you in my research?

A: Also in the left and right parts you could see 'слава нації' and 'смерть ворогам'. The first one means 'Glory to the nation' and the second one says 'Death to enemies' - both phrases are very nationalistic provided by the Right Sector Party, and, in fact, are not good as not everyone is supporting such radical views. And of course you may quote me, I hope it helps you! What exactly are you doing your research on?

J: Great, many thanks! More images are coming up. I'm majoring in Conflict Studies and I chose the Ukrainian revolution of 2014 to write about. I'm looking at how nationalist identity

is expressed through graffiti and how this challenges/is in line with dominant narratives of identity formation in different parts of Ukraine.

A: It sounds really interesting! Just write me whenever you need me, good luck!

J: Thanks! Okay, another one. (Figure 2.1) What is written in red and blue-yellow on the left part of this piece?

A: The red letters say 'No war' and the blue letters say 'Yes to Peace!'.

J: Logically! What about this one? (Figure 2.5)

A: That one's really straightforward. It has combined 'Hitler' and 'Putin' into one name!

J: Aha! Do you know whether the building in this image is of any specific significance? (Figure 2.10)

A: I think it represents Crimea, but I'm not sure though.

J: Yeah, I thought so too. It was painted in Simferopol and it says 'Ours', right?

A: Yes, I think it represents society's attitude. Like some people in Crimea are willing to be in Russia, so it represents their attitude.

J: Alright, I have two more images with the same hashtag, so I think it indeed represents the Russian descent in Crimea.

A: Yeah.

J: Nice. One more. (Figure 2.13) Can you read what it says in the black and red letters?

A: The red letters say 'Crimea is not ours, it's mine'. The black ones say: 'Prices are rising, 'многоходовочка' - there is no such a word in Russian, but it's sarcastic, meaning that Putin 'has' really tricky and clever plan how to make life better despite the fact that prices are rising. So it's sarcastic

J: Ah, now I understand why google did not recognize that word.

A: Yeah, I don't think that google knows what it means.

J: Okay, last one with Putin. (Figure 2.14) It's not entirely visible, but I suppose the first word is the most important and the last one probably says 'HAW' again.

A: It is said 'Happy Puti' and then 'na'. It refers to Putin, but on the other hand 'Пути' is similar to a Russian word which means 'way', so it also means 'Lucky way, Putin' or something like that.

J: I'll assume that it says 'our happy Putin'. I'm not sure what it means though.

A: It actually means that people would like Putin to get out of the country. ‘Счастливого пути’ means ‘Have a good journey’. They also add ‘на’, so that this means ‘Happy journey, Putin’. Again, I’m referring to the irony.

J: Ah, nice! And I've interpreted the uniform as a traditionally Russian tsar uniform.

A: Oh yeah, that's true!!

J: Okay, cool! Alright, my next chapter revolves around Shevchenko, the poet, not the soccer player. (Figure 3.1)

A: So, the first one was about Putin, right?

J: Yes.

A: Yeah, I got it.

J: What I got of this image so far is that it shows two different Shevchenko's, who are both famous Ukrainians and have united the nation in making the Ukrainian people proud. As it says on top of the image; ‘the brothers Shevchenko’.

A: Yeah that's correct.

J: However, I don't really understand what, for example, the goat is supposed to depict.

A: Do you have a full picture?

J: Also, what about Taras's chains? Nope, that's the downside, it is nowhere to be found.

A: About the chains: Taras was in prison for a long period of time, (he wasn't able to write, as the government didn't even allow him to have paper in jail) so it represents that, despite the fact that he was in jail, he wasn't broken mentally, showing how strong his soul is. Sorry for my grammar structure, my mind doesn't work properly now. I'm not sure about the goat, but I think it represents folklore or something like that.

J: Aha! Do not in the least worry about your grammar; first of all, it's perfectly fine. Second; I am very content with about everything you're telling me, so I don't care about your grammar.

9-12-2015

A: Ok, if you need something else, just write me.

10-12-2015 9:56

J: Hi there, back again! More Shevchenko. (Figure 3.9) Can you tell me what it says underneath? And do you know what the symbol on his scarf means? These two of Lesya Ukraine and Ivan Franko have been painted on the same wall, could you also translate these? (Figure 3.10 and 3.11)

A: Is it ok if I reply today, but in the evening? I mean in 2-3 hours?

J: Sure! No problem at all! I going to be working in the library for the next two hours, so if you have a little time during that time, that would be awesome!

12-12-2015

A: Sorry for taking so long to reply. The Shevchenko one says that fire couldn't reach fierce people. I'm not sure about the translation, it actually means that those who experienced some life difficulties won't be scared by fire metaphorically saying. The scarf, again, refers to the nationalistic movement, Right Sector. The Franco picture says 'Our whole life is war' and the Lesya Ukrainka picture reads 'Those who could disembarass will be free'. All these pictures refer to the nationalistic movement.

15-12-2015

J: No worries, I was working on something else too. However, today (and tomorrow morning) is the last day before I need to hand in my first draft, so hopefully you'll be able to help me out a little more.

A: Good luck with it! I'm actually on my way to my home-town, so I'm not sure whether I will be available today, but I'll try to help you as soon as possible.

J: No worries! I just realized I don't even know where in Ukraine you live; where is that? Also, tomorrow would be fine too!

16-12-2015

A: I live in the Eastern part of Ukraine (where the conflict is going on), so I'm the right person to help!

J: Wow, that must be rough! Can I ask you a couple of questions about that too, later on?

A: Sure, anytime!

05-01-2016

J: I have to hand in my thesis Friday next week, so if you could help me out with some more images this week, that would be amazing!

A: Sure, I'll be glad to help you!

J: Okay, I have two Shevchenko images left. (Figure 3.17 and 3.18) Can you tell me what they say?

08-01-2016

A: Hey Julia! Sorry for not answering. It's late here now, so I'm going to help you with this tomorrow, is this alright?

J: No problem!!



09-01-2016

A: Ok, so the first Shevchenko picture says 'In your house, ('xara' is really a Ukrainian version of 'house') there's your truth, and power, and will'. The second one has an extract from Shevchenko's poem 'Kavkaz' and it says something like 'Fight and you'll overcome'.

J: Thank you! These were the last ones. Sorry for being chaotic, my deadline is Friday, so I'm working from morning to evening to get everything done in time. I'm actually transcribing our conversation, treating it as a personal interview in order to add it to my research as an appendix. Also, what I wanted to ask you; Do you speak Russian or Ukrainian at home? What do you think of the recent happenings? Would you call yourself a Ukrainian nationalist (in a good way)? Do you feel (culturally) close to Russia?

11-01-2016

A: I understand, so good luck! Speaking about languages, I consider myself bilingual. My family is Russian speaking, but I was taught Ukrainian as well from an early age and I have no troubles using both of them in my life. I can't say anything proper about recent happenings, the only thing I could say is that I don't want people, Ukrainians nor Russians, to suffer from politics and hate each other. It's just not right. I mean for me it's more about politics rather than people's will. I can't consider myself a Ukrainian nationalist, simply because I'm a culturally opened person and I don't think that one nation should be superior. I love Ukraine and Ukrainian people so much, but I just cannot be a nationalist. Speaking about Russia, I could say that there are plenty of similarities as well as with Belarus and maybe even some Baltic countries too. There are also some differences. I mean I feel that Ukrainian and Russian cultures are very similar in various aspects including mentality, but they are not the same. I hope I helped you at least a little bit.

J: You helped me much more than a little! I will send you the results of my research if you like?

A: That would be nice, I'd love to see what I inspired!

## Appendix B: Verklaring kennisneming regels m.b.t. plagiaat



Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen

Versie september 2014

### VERKLARING KENNISNEMING REGELS M.B.T. PLAGIAAT

#### Fraude en plagiaat

Wetenschappelijke integriteit vormt de basis van het academisch bedrijf. De Universiteit Utrecht vat iedere vorm van wetenschappelijke misleiding daarom op als een zeer ernstig vergrijp. De Universiteit Utrecht verwacht dat elke student de normen en waarden inzake wetenschappelijke integriteit kent en in acht neemt.

De belangrijkste vormen van misleiding die deze integriteit aantasten zijn fraude en plagiaat. Plagiaat is het overnemen van andermans werk zonder behoorlijke verwijzing en is een vorm van fraude. Hieronder volgt nadere uitleg wat er onder fraude en plagiaat wordt verstaan en een aantal concrete voorbeelden daarvan. Let wel: dit is geen uitputtende lijst!

Bij constatering van fraude of plagiaat kan de examencommissie van de opleiding sancties opleggen. De sterkste sanctie die de examencommissie kan opleggen is het indienen van een verzoek aan het College van Bestuur om een student van de opleiding te laten verwijderen.

#### Plagiaat

Plagiaat is het overnemen van stukken, gedachten, redeneringen van anderen en deze laten doorgaan voor eigen werk. Je moet altijd nauwkeurig aangeven aan wie ideeën en inzichten zijn ontleend, en voortdurend bedacht zijn op het verschil tussen citeren, parafraseren en plagiëren. Niet alleen bij het gebruik van gedrukte bronnen, maar zeker ook bij het gebruik van informatie die van het internet wordt gehaald, dien je zorgvuldig te werk te gaan bij het vermelden van de informatiebronnen.

De volgende zaken worden in elk geval als plagiaat aangemerkt:

- het knippen en plakken van tekst van digitale bronnen zoals encyclopedieën of digitale tijdschriften zonder aanhalingstekens en verwijzing;
- het knippen en plakken van teksten van het internet zonder aanhalingstekens en verwijzing;
- het overnemen van gedrukt materiaal zoals boeken, tijdschriften of encyclopedieën zonder aanhalingstekens en verwijzing;

- het opnemen van een vertaling van bovengenoemde teksten zonder aanhalingstekens en verwijzing;
- het parafraseren van bovengenoemde teksten zonder (deugdelijke) verwijzing: parafrazen moeten als zodanig gemarkeerd zijn (door de tekst uitdrukkelijk te verbinden met de oorspronkelijke auteur in tekst of noot), zodat niet de indruk wordt gewekt dat het gaat om eigen gedachtengoed van de student;
- het overnemen van beeld-, geluids- of testmateriaal van anderen zonder verwijzing en zodoende laten doorgaan voor eigen werk;
- het zonder bronvermelding opnieuw inleveren van eerder door de student gemaakt eigen werk en dit laten doorgaan voor in het kader van de cursus vervaardigd oorspronkelijk werk, tenzij dit in de cursus of door de docent uitdrukkelijk is toegestaan;
- het overnemen van werk van andere studenten en dit laten doorgaan voor eigen werk. Indien dit gebeurt met toestemming van de andere student is de laatste medeplichtig aan plagiaat;
- ook wanneer in een gezamenlijk werkstuk door een van de auteurs plagiaat wordt gepleegd, zijn de andere auteurs medeplichtig aan plagiaat, indien zij hadden kunnen of moeten weten dat de ander plagiaat pleegde;
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Universiteit Utrecht

In de Onderwijs- en Examenregeling (artikel 5.15) is vastgelegd wat de formele gang van zaken is als er een vermoeden van fraude/plagiaat is, en welke sancties er opgelegd kunnen worden.

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Hierbij verklaar ik bovenstaande tekst gelezen en begrepen te hebben.	
Naam:	Studentnummer:
Datum en handtekening:	

Dit formulier lever je bij je begeleider in als je start met je bacheloreindwerkstuk of je master scriptie.

Het niet indienen of ondertekenen van het formulier betekent overigens niet dat er geen sancties kunnen worden genomen als blijkt dat er sprake is van plagiaat in het werkstuk.

