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Identity Politics in Ukraine, 1991-2006

With a foreword by Vera Tolz

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Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

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ISBN 978-3-89821-J0HÍ .

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ISSN: 1614-3515

ISBN-13: 978-3-8382-5J0HF

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To my parents, Barbara and Peter

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List of Abbreviations

BYUT	<i>Blok: Yulia Tymoshenko</i> (Block of Yulia Tymoshenko)
KGB	<i>Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti</i> (The Committee of State Security)
KPU	<i>Kommunistychna partiya Ukrayiny</i> (The Communist Party of Ukraine)
NKVD	<i>Narodnyi kommissariat vnutrennikh del</i> (The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs)
OUN	<i>Orhanizatsiya Ukrayins'kykh Natsionalistiv</i> (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists)
SDPU-o	<i>Sotsial-demokratychna partiya Ukrayiny (ob'yednana)</i> (The Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine—united)
SPU	<i>Sotsialistychna partiya Ukrayiny</i> (The Socialist Party of Ukraine)
UNA	<i>Ukrayins'ka Narodna Respublika</i> (The Ukrainian People's Republic)
UPA	<i>Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiya</i> (Ukrainian Insurgent Army)
ZUNR	<i>Zakhidna Ukrains'ka Narodna Respublika</i> (West Ukrainian People's Republic)
ZYU	<i>Za Yedynu Ukrayinu</i> (For One Ukraine)

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my PhD supervisor Dr. Kasia Wolczuk for her support and encouragement. My thanks also go to firstly the ESRC for the research studentship (R42200134405) as well as subsequently the Leverhulme Trust (SAS/2005/0055), both of whose generous financial support enabled this book to be realised. I am also indebted to the staff at CREES for their continued help, valuable ideas and suggestions. I am grateful to Marea and Tricia in the CREES office for their patient assistance.

This study would not have been possible without the assistance and support of many people in Ukraine. I thank you all; in particular, in Kiev, Andriy, Mykola, Masha, Larisa, Nikolaiy, Natasha, Yura and Maksim. Special thanks in Luhans'k to Sergei, Raisa, Olga and Sasha, Nina and Galina. In Kharkiv, many thanks to Volodymyr Kravchenko, Olga Fillipova, Sergei Viktorovich and Lena Vladimirovna. Thank you also to the many individuals who gave their time and thoughts during interviews and discussions.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their endless patience and support. In particular, thanks must go to John, Monty, Valya, Paul, Anton and Ariadna, Darroch, Jamie and Dave, Francois and Luda, John and Jo. Many thanks to my parents, Peter and Barbara for always being there.

Finally, I would like to thank the publishers of the journals below, who kindly gave me permission to print material, which has previously been published in the following articles:

“Understanding regionalism and the politics of identity in Ukraine’s eastern borderlands”, *Nationalities Papers*, 34, 2, May 2006: 157-174.

“Contestation and negotiation: Regionalism and the politics of school textbooks in Ukraine’s eastern borderlands”, *Nations and Nationalism*, 12, 4, October 2006: 681-697.

“(Re)inventing the Past: The Politics of ‘National’ History in the Ukrainian Classroom”, *Studies in Ethnicity of Nationalism, Special Edition*, 6, 2, October 2006: 40-55.

“Compliance or contradiction? Teaching ‘History’ in the ‘New’ Ukraine. A View from Ukraine’s Eastern Borderlands”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 59, 3, May 2007: 501-517.

Foreword

This book addresses a highly topical issue regarding the relationship of regional identities and an overarching national identity in contemporary Ukraine. This complex relationship is analysed in the book through the study of the teaching of Ukrainian history in Ukraine after the demise of the USSR and of the perception of the new historical narrative among teachers and schoolchildren in three *oblasts* of Eastern Ukraine.

The book argues for the importance of taking regional identities in Ukraine seriously. Demonstrating analytical skills and originality, it suggests that the focus on state-led nation-building often leads scholars underestimating the multiplicity of people's identities, particularly the significance of their regional identities. The author argues that many studies of the post-communist transition have overlooked the contribution to nation-building projects of 'ordinary people', who accept, reject or 'renegotiate' state-supported narratives. This book redresses this imbalance, providing a wealth of empirical evidence about varying responses from teachers and schoolchildren to new interpretations of Ukraine's history to be found in state-approved textbooks published in the last decade.

The author draws original conclusions about the formation of identities in Eastern Ukraine and convincingly shows that the wide-spread view that the people of Eastern Ukraine lack a sense of Ukrainian national identity is, in effect, erroneous. The author argues for Ukraine's unique form of regionalism, to be understood not in terms of divisions, but rather differences and diversity. Overall, this piece of research represents an original addition to our understanding of the complex and much discussed issue of identity change in contemporary Ukraine and provides an essential contribution to Ukrainian studies and more generally, post-Soviet studies.

Vera Tolz
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