National and Geopolitical Identities and Attitudes to Decommunisation in Dnipro and Kharkiv

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The collapse of USSR and emergence from Communist ideology in Ukraine provoked the process of getting rid of Soviet symbols. This process had a different pace and results in different regions. The Euromaidan Revolution and Russian-Ukrainian war gave new actuality to this process because it came to mean the gap in values associated with the aggressor and its supporters in Ukraine. This new wave of decommunisation also provoked different responses in different regions of Ukraine. In general, there are more supporters in the West and fewer in the East.

Dnipro and Kharkiv are cities that have much in common, but also some notable differences. In the Ukrainian media and public discourse, Dnipro, unlike Kharkiv, is frequently described as a bastion of civic nationalism. However, with very few exceptions (Buckholz 2019 Gentile 2020, Nitsova 2021), they have not been subject to explicit comparison in the scholarly literature. Decommunisation in both cities did not have mass support. It can be assumed that inhabitants of the cities whose peak of development is perceived to be in Soviet time should assess the Soviet era positively and should have pro-Soviet/pro-Russian and anti-Western geopolitical orientations, and this should be a predictor for their attitudes towards decommunisation. This chapter tests this notion empirically.

We start with brief explanation of what decommunisation is and how to explain the difference in attitudes towards decommunisation via identity and geopolitical preferences in Ukraine. Then we will compare Dnipro and Kharkiv and will show and explain similarities and differences in assessment of decommunisation by inhabitants of these cities based on a survey undertaken in 2018.

What is Decommunisation?

Decommunisation is the process of removing Soviet symbols from public spaces. This process began after the disintegration of the USSR but accelerated significantly with the implementation of the decommunisation laws adopted in April 2015.[1] According to one of the laws, the utilization and propaganda of symbols of communist and national-socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes is prohibited. Thus, communist monuments should be removed, and public places named after communist-related themes should be renamed. In 1991 Ukraine inherited more than 8,200 items of Soviet monumental art (Oleksandra Hayday 2018, 47) and approximately 5,500 monuments to Lenin (Serhii Hromenko 2019), at least about 3,750 of which had been dismantled before the 'laws of decommunisation' were adopted (Hayday 2018, 164).[2] According to Anton Drobovych, the Head of Ukrainian institute of National Remembrance (UINP), more than 51,000 toponyms have been renamed, including about 2,500 monuments in the last five years.[3]

From the very beginning 'decommunisation laws' became a target of criticism. The main argument against the laws was that they politicise history, which leads to the prevention of academic study and debates by imposing certain assessments of historical persons and events as well as discrimination of people's political views, deepening social

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divisions and even prompting violence (Shevel 2016; Zhurzhenko 2017; Portnov 2015; Yavorskyy 2015).

Despite the political will which was embodied in the laws, attitudes to the decommunisation vary significantly across different social groups and regions in Ukraine. Predictably, public opinion pays more attention to renaming of toponyms and removal of monuments than academic freedom.

According to the Rating Sociological Group in November 2016, 35 per cent of Ukrainians supported toponyms' renaming and 57 per cent were against.[4] The latest research at the time of writing (April 2020) by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF) shows that 32 per cent approve the ban on symbols and 30 per cent approve renaming toponyms while those opposed are 34 per cent and 44 per cent, respectively. Approval is higher in Ukraine's Western and Central regions (up to 44 per cent) and is lower in Southern and Eastern regions (down to 22 per cent) and is higher among younger people and lower for older.[5]

How Do We Explain Attitudes Towards Decommunisation?

The main logic of the explanation is that people support historical, political, and geopolitical discourses due to successful attempts to impose them. 'Soviet' discourse has been imposed for many years, which is why older and Russian speaking people (which are the majority in Ukraine's East and South) support Soviet names and symbols more than younger and Ukrainian speaking people.

Using sociological language, this means symbolic struggle for making a certain worldview dominant — the one according to which the position of a certain group is privileged (Bourdieu 1990). Psychologically it means that this position must provide positive self-esteem, and that any attempts to question such an interpretation meet at least disapproval (Musiyezdov 2016b). That is why attitudes towards decommunisation cannot be reduced to political preferences only but affects *identities*.

The main problem is the question of what identity is and how to measure it? Despite some differences in disciplinary interpretations, in general we use this category to mark something that is at the core of people's self-understanding. Identity is a perception of 'who am I' and identity is something that can explain people's behaviour. But we must remember that identity is our instrument, which can be substituted by concepts such as 'values', 'interests', and 'needs' (Musiyezdov 2016a).

What Is Identity?

The concept of identity is used in different disciplines where it generally means that an object is the same as some other object or the same as this object. In the first case it is referring to a classification and in the second case to the 'inner essence' of the object. Many philosophers have attempted to interpret identity using both meanings. As an academic concept, identity has arisen due to S. Freud and has been developing in psychology where it means the subject's (psychological) result of (usually subconscious) identification with another subject, a group, or a pattern.

Sociology emphasises that identity is socially determined; society offers and imposes positions to identify with and makes people conform. Modern theories (see Baumeister 1986; Giddens 1991, Castells 1997; Baumann 2001) explore the development of identity through the development of society and usually agree that, nowadays, identity is the result of personal choice in changing social circumstances.

For example, according to Anthony Giddens (1984) identity and self-identity are cultural phenomena in modern society which arise and perform in the daily life of a particular individual. Common identity is often an unconscious confidence of individuals belonging to a particular team, common feelings and ideas reflected in consciousness. Utilisation of the concept of identity means that researchers assume that people behave based on their perception about who they are. Researchers seek to explore these perceptions to be able to make predictions about future behaviour or at least interpret social dependencies.

In sociology, the measurement of identity is the answer to the question, 'who am I' given in terms of social groups.

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This means that societies offer people sets of social groups, and people must feel strong connections with one or some of them.[6]

An important note should be made about groups with which people are asked to identify. In sociology one of the main questions is about what groups really exist and what does it mean for the group to exist? This question is highly debatable, and the answer can be given by taking specific circumstances into account. The existence of a group is highly dependent on its visibility in collective actions as well as in a prevalent worldview (Kachanov and Shmatko 1996) which is why symbolic struggle is so important and why sets and structures of groups are highly changeable. This means that talking about identities appealing to groups are not reliable enough indicators. When asking about self-description, researchers offer different *types* of people; and they are aware that these types could or could not be groups. This approach enables clarification about different dimensions of solidarity.

Geopolitical Orientations and Identities in Ukraine

In contemporary Ukraine one of the important dimensions is 'geopolitical'. By using the concept of 'geopolitical identity' we do not confine certain groups in the sense of 'groupism' (Brubaker, 2002). We emphasise that being a supporter of certain geopolitical preferences means that 1) this is important for people and is connected to other important things like values, visions of social justice, and interests and 2) it can predict their attitudes and behaviour towards other processes and events, towards decommunisation. Geopolitical preferences are demonstrated in Figure 7.1.

As we can see, the main changes in geopolitical attitudes took place in 2012–2014 during the Euromaidan Revolution and Russian-Ukrainian war: people began to assess the idea of Ukraine's accession to the union of Russia and Belarus more negatively and the idea of Ukraine's accession to NATO more positively (in both cases parts of supporters and opponents have changed approximately two times). Also, we can see corresponding changes in identities in Figure 7.1 (Vorona and Shulha 2018, 465) where the biggest changes are local (regional), 'Soviet' and especially civic identities. These changes are a product of stepping back from 'Soviet' (as an embodiment of dignity neglect and Russian politics towards Ukraine) and unity of Ukrainians in the face of a common threat.

Another predictable result is that geopolitical attitudes remain different in Ukrainian regions. In June 2019, joining to the European Union is supported by 85 per cent of Ukrainians in the West and 34 per cent in the East of Ukraine, joining NATO – 80 per cent and 29 per cent respectively (Table 7.1).[7]

Obviously, it means that the place of the city on the map of Ukraine reflects these regional differences. Inhabitants of the Central Ukrainian region of Dnipro should have been more in favour of decommunisation than the Eastern Ukrainian region of Kharkiv. As we will see, most of the people in these two cities do not support decommunisation but the level of opposition is higher in Kharkiv than in Dnipro. What can explain these differences? Is this a regional factor only? Answering this question will bring deeper understanding of decommnunisation processes in Ukraine in general. This is the main aim of this paper.

Dnipro and Kharkiv: Similarities and Differences

Scholarly literature has rarely compared Dnipropetrovsk and Dnipro and Kharkiv. Quentin Buckholz (2019) argues that the success or failure of separatist movements across Eastern Ukraine (especially in Kharkiv and Dnipro) is best understood with reference to the preferences and actions of local political and economic elites. Michael Gentile (2020) compares these cities in the dimensions of disinformation and nationalism but not the attitudes towards decommunisation. Silviya Nitsova (2021) analyses differences between these cities on the one hand and Donetsk and Luhansk on the other hand from the point of view of explanation of differences in their fate in 2014 and since. This chapter contributes to the discussion of decommunisation by comparing these two cities using a survey undertaken in 2018.

What do these cities have in common and what are the important differences between them? Both are large, Russian-

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speaking, highly industrialised with a developed high-technology sector in Soviet times. Moreover, both became important centres of resistance during the Russo-Ukrainian war.

The city of Dnipro is the fourth largest city in Ukraine. It is situated in the south-east of Ukraine on the Dnipro River. The city was officially established in 1776 as Yekaterinoslav and became the industrial centre in the beginning of 20th century (Portnova 2012). From the 1950s the city Dnipropetrovsk became a large centre of science and technology after the opening of the *Pivdenmash (Yuzhmash)* Machine-Building Plant and Experimental Design Bureau OKB-586 and OKB Yuzhnoye which designed and produced space and military production (in particular – rockets). In 2019 the population of the city was about 998,000[8] people with an ethnic composition (2001 census) of 72.55 per cent Ukrainians, 23.51 per cent Russians, and 0.98 per cent Jews.[9]

The city of Kharkiv is the second largest city in Ukraine situated in the Eastern part of the country. The city was officially established in 1654. Like Dnipro it transformed into an industrial centre at the beginning of 20th century (Chornyy 2007). Since the 1930s, many research and development institutions were opened, and after the 1950s Kharkiv became one of the largest academic centres in the USSR. Plants such as the Kharkiv Tractor Plant, 'Turboatom' (turbines), Malyshev Factory (military machinery), Kharkiv Aircraft Manufacturing Company, Experimental Design Bureau's (OKB-692, KB *Electropryladobuduvannya*, NVO *Electroprylad* (space and rocket technology)) and other high technology industry plants were situated in the city. In 2020 the population of the city was about 1,443,000[10] with an ethnic composition (2001 census) of 60.99 per cent Ukrainians, 34.25 per cent Russians, and 0.77 per cent Jews. [11]

Rivalry between Kharkiv and Dnipro of course existed. For both cities the peak of development was perceived to be between the 1960s and 1980s. Memory of Kharkiv as 'The First Capital' not only referred to 1918–1934, when Kharkiv was the capital of Soviet Ukraine, but also emphasised its economic, industrial, and academic development and potential (Musiyezdov 2016b). In 1959–1987, Dnipropetrovsk was a closed city for foreign citizens and had additional restrictions due to the existence of space and military industry and research; the positive side to this was it gave the inhabitants higher standards of living that was perceived as an elite privilege status (Portnova 2017; Zhuk 2010). These circumstances led to the situation when residents of both Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk looked down at other cities, especially working-class Donetsk.**[12]**

Historically Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk elites played noticeable role in Ukrainian politics. Thus Petro Shelest (from Kharkiv) who was the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine in 1963–1972 was replaced by Volodymyr Shcherbytskyy (from Dnipropetrovsk) who occupied this post until 1989. The Head of USSR Leonid Brezhnev (1964–1982) was from Dnipropetrovsk as well as the second President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma (1994–2004).

Andriy Portnov tells the Soviet Dnipropetrovsk joke about three periods of Russian history: 'pre-Petrine, Petrine, and Dnipro-petrine (dopetrovski – petrovski – dnipropetrovski, with the first two names relating to the first Russian emperor, Peter the Great)' (Portnov 2015b, 63). Dnipropetrovsk inhabitants and elites saw their city as 'neither the first nor the second' and did not see Kyiv as their capital. A quite similar situation was in Kharkiv, which used to compare itself with Moscow and Leningrad and not with Kyiv (Musiyezdov 2016b).

There were few leaders from Kharkiv who had some impact on Ukrainian politics (Vladimir Grynyov, Yevgenii Kushnaryov, Boris Lozhkin). But names of those from Dnipropetrovsk are much better known: Pavlo Lazarenko, Yulia Tymoshenko, Valery Pustovoytenko, Viktor Pinchuk, Ihor Kolomoyskyy (Denis Kazanskyy 2015). Both Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk elites were defeated in the struggle for Ukrainian power by the Donetsk elite in the end of 2000s.

In 2014, Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk played important roles during the so-called 'Russian spring'. Andrii Portnov (2016), for example, expresses the popular idea that similar cities in the East of Ukraine experienced different fates due to accidental circumstances. Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv are relatively large, Russian-speaking, oblasts. In his opinion the 'Russian spring' failed in the latter two cities because of a specific constellation of local elites' interests and different impacts of policies by the central authorities. It is difficult to disagree with this, but additional arguments could be added. Cities in the Donbas are characterised by the predominance of mining and metallurgy and, consequently, a homogeneous composition of the population. This contrasts with a varied range of

industries, including high-tech which are in Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk leading to a more diverse population which reduces mobilization towards for univocal support of any political force or opinion. Only in the Donbas was a monolithic party of power (Party of Regions) created; in Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk local elites never united. From the point of view of countering attempts to make the city a pro-Russian 'people's republic' the diversity found in Kharkiv, and Dnipropetrovsk was a positive inhibiting factor (Musiyezdov 2015). During the Russian-Ukrainian war both cities became important logistical, medicine and military centres, both accepted large numbers of IDPs from the Donbas and Kharkiv (for Luhansk) and Dnipropetrovsk (for Donetsk) military hospitals for wounded soldiers.

General Attitudes Towards Decommunisation

How do inhabitants of Kharkiv and Dnipro assess decommunisation? To answer this question, we use the results of surveys carried out in these two cities in 2018.[13]

As we can see from table 7.4, most of the people in these two cities do not support decommunisation but the level of opposition is higher in Kharkiv than in Dnipro. What can explain these differences?

The question about identities has already been discussed earlier in our chapter. We can compare not only total samples from Dnipro and Kharkiv but also groups of people who support decommunisation in both cities[14] (see Table 7.6). Let us notice though that feeling affinity or even belonging to a certain group does not mean an impossibility of feeling affinity or belonging to other groups. That is why some researchers ask to what extent people consider themselves as representative of several groups (see Musiyezdov 2007). The same technique has been used in analysing research.

This data provides several interesting observations:

1. Self-identification as European is the only identity that correlates with a positive assessment of decommunisation; in other words, the more people feel they are European, the more they support decommunisation (Spearman coefficient is 0.567 in Kharkiv and 0.370 in Dnipro for the question about streets renaming).
2. While self-identification as Russian could reflect the ethnic specifics of these cities, self-identification as European (which is more popular in Dnipro) is very divisive: 29 per cent answered 'yes' or 'rather yes' on this question in Dnipro while 22 per cent gave the same answer in Kharkiv.[15]
3. Feeling European does not correlate (positively or negatively) with other identities.
4. Supporters of decommunisation in Dnipro are a little bit more Ukrainian than the inhabitants of Dnipro in general (96 per cent vs. 90 per cent respectively).
5. Supporters of decommunisation in Kharkiv are a little bit more Soviet than supporters of decommunisation in Dnipro (34 per cent vs. 19 per cent respectively).

Did European identity exist before the 2014 crisis and was it at the same level as now? Table 7.8 shows that in both cities the majority of those who felt European now felt European before (69 per cent in Dnipro and 78 per cent in Kharkiv). But compared to them a significant part of the people who support decommunisation now did not feel European before (52 per cent in Dnipro and 61 per cent in Kharkiv). This means that support for decommunisation is a reaction to socio-political events rather than a result of previous identification with Europeans.

'Belonging' as well as feeling affinity to a certain group could have different meanings. For example, identification with a country can be based on different ideas of what a country is. Is it a state (political and legal unity), a 'Motherland' (historical unity with some ethnic connotation) or a unity of people who now have something in common (no matter why) (Musiyezdov, 2012)? Citizenship and nationality are often confused in Western democracies (for example, on customs declarations). Therefore, the clarification of the impact of feeling European on other attitudes must be studied in further research.

Let us now move on to geopolitical preferences (see Tables 7.8 and 7.9). Here we can see the following results:

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1. Supporters of decommunisation are pro-Western.
2. Supporters of decommunisation in Kharkiv are less radical in their opinions than in Dnipro. While the general agreement or disagreement is the same in these groups in both cities, inhabitants of Kharkiv more often chose 'rather agree' than 'absolutely agree' than inhabitants of Dnipro.
3. People in Kharkiv are less pro-European than in Dnipro. 26 per cent in Kharkiv compared to 44 per cent in Dnipro agree that Ukraine must defend European values and 32 per cent in Kharkiv compared to 42 per cent in Dnipro agree that the influence of Western Europe on the Ukrainian way of life is positive. 55.7 per cent in Kharkiv compared to 36.6 per cent in Dnipro do not see benefits for Ukraine from becoming a member of NATO and the European Union while 28.2 per cent in Dnipro compared to 11.7 per cent in Kharkiv see such benefits.
4. Even pro-decommunisation groups generally do not deny their closeness to Slavic peoples in both cities with 74 per cent in Kharkiv and 76 per cent in Dnipro agreeing that Ukraine must defend Slavic values.
5. 81 per cent in Kharkiv compared to 69 per cent in Dnipro agree that Russians and Ukrainians are one people. On the one hand this statement can be treated as an example of nowadays Russian propaganda that refers to the idea that Ukrainians are artificial construction produced by outer forces to weaken Russia. But on the other hand, it seems to reflect the Soviet narrative about *druzhba narodiv* (people's friendship) where cultural and ethnic differences should not play any significant role.

Differences in attitudes towards Slavic values and Russians between the inhabitants of Kharkiv and Dnipro are interesting, but we do not have good explanations for this. It can be assumed that appeals to 'Slavic values' and 'Slavianism' in any forms reflects the idea and Russian narrative that Russians and Ukrainians are very close nations (if not as Russian President Vladimir Putin always says, 'one people'). Perhaps it reflects the ethnic composition in these cities and/or the existence of long-term border cooperation with Russia in Kharkiv, but this assumption does not seem comprehensive enough. Again, it would be necessary to explore what people mean by NATO, European Union, Slavic values, Russians, and Ukrainians in future research.

We would assume that decommunisation would be supported by those who consider the Soviet period negatively. In Table 7.10 we can see that this assumption is correct with those in favour of decommunisation in both cities viewing the Soviet period more negatively than inhabitants in the two cities more generally. Inhabitants of Dnipro estimate the Soviet period more negatively than the inhabitants of Kharkiv among the population in general and those in favour of decommunisation groups.

Explanations of the differences between Dnipro and Kharkiv

As we can see, general opinions about decommunisation, geopolitical orientations, identities, and assessment of Soviet history have quite similar trends in Dnipro and Kharkiv. But despite this closeness there are crucial differences between two cities: Dnipro appears to be much more pro-Western/pro-European and pro-Ukrainian as well as less pro-Soviet than Kharkiv. This is not a new phenomenon: the research 'The views and opinions of South-Eastern regions residents of Ukraine: April 2014' conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology have discovered these differences.[16] They decisively impact attitudes towards decommunisation.

People in both cities are aware of their differences (Table 7.11) with 38 per cent in Dnipro agreeing that their city is more pro-Ukrainian than Kharkiv (28 per cent disagree) and 40 per cent in Kharkiv agreeing with this statement (12 per cent disagree). How do we explain the gap in pro-Ukrainian 'self-confidence' among Dniprovians versus Kharkovians? There could be at least three assumptions.

First, it can be assumed that these differences are partly based on geography because Kharkiv is a border city and has a greater number of ties with Russia than Dnipro from which it is difficult to escape. It refers to economic connections (Buckholz 2019), identities (Zhurzhenko 2015) and susceptibility to Russian propaganda (Stebelsky 2018; Tomazs Piechal 2015). Since 1991, Kharkiv was forced to compare itself with Kyiv, not with Moscow and Leningrad as it used to do before (Musiyezdov 2016b). Comparison with Kyiv was perceived as new and quite unfair (Kravchenko 2019). And it led to the enforcement of Soviet nostalgia – the reference to the Soviet period as to something like 'Golden age' – that has embodied into the myth of 'The First capital,' which was the reference to late

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Soviet era not the 1920–1930s. Also, Kharkiv lost its status as the 'capital of the East of Ukraine' with the rise of Donetsk clan in the 2000s which may have increased frustration and prevented a decline in Soviet nostalgia in the city.

Second, the local history and heritage of the Jewish community in Dnipro might matter. According to the last (2001) census the proportion of Jews is 0.98 per cent (10,503) and 0.77 per cent (11,176) in Dnipro and Kharkiv respectively.[17] In both cities the amount and proportion of Jews decreased during the Soviet era.

According to some resources, the Jewish populations of both cities were almost equal and reduced from about 8 per cent in 1959 to about 3 per cent in 1989.[18] It can be added that there was a trend to not showing Jewish origins in the USSR, especially when only one parent is a Jew. This makes researchers question Soviet census figures about the number of Jews. Some of them say that the proportion of Jews should be about 10 per cent (Bystriakov 2015). It is difficult to prove this statement, but we could agree that the real figures are larger than official ones.

We can see the proportions of Jews in Dnipro and Kharkiv were very similar since 1939. But in 1926 the difference was noticeable; in the 1897 census, there were 34.77 per cent of Jews in Dnipro[19] and 5.66 per cent in Kharkiv[20] showing a big difference between them.

This can be explained by the fact that until 1914–1917 Dnipro (then Yekaterinoslav) was a part of the Pale of Settlement – the Western territory of Russia Empire where Jews were allowed to settle, but Kharkiv was not (Yannay Spitzer 2012). This means that Jews in Dnipro could live and maintain their traditional culture. Jews in Kharkiv were so called 'useful Jews' – those who have higher education (usually doctors or engineers) or were successful entrepreneurs (have certain amount of capital). So, they should feel lesser connection to Jewish traditional culture living apart from traditional Jewish community. After 1914, many Jews fled to Kharkiv. Usually, they were refugees from First World War or quite poor people who sought prosperity outside traditional communities. This process increased in the beginning of Soviet era when many Jews who supported Soviet power came to Kharkiv as the capital of Soviet Ukraine. This raised the number and proportion of Jews in Kharkiv to levels comparable to those of Dnipropetrovsk. But the connection to Jewish tradition was different in these cities: quite strong in Dnipropetrovsk[21] and quite weak in Kharkiv. That is why the Holocaust and Soviet anti-Semitism had greater impact on Jews in Dnipropetrovsk than in Kharkiv and formed the situation where Jews in Dnipro 'hold no nostalgia for the USSR' (see the chapter by Ishchenko) while Jews in Kharkiv should have such a nostalgia.

Third, the role of local elites should be taken into consideration. The number of leaders from Dnipropetrovsk who rose to prominence nationally (Leolid Kuchma, Pavlo Lazarenko, Yulia Tymoshenko, Valery Pustovoytenko) could give the impression that Ukraine 'belongs to them,' meaning that they have their political and economic interests tied with Ukraine and inside Ukraine. The Kharkiv authorities, on the other hand, were less involved in Ukrainian politics and more connected with Russia, at least economically. Dnipro elites saw the events of 2013–2014 and the Russo-Ukrainian war as an opportunity to regain their control of Ukraine after years of 'Donetsk clan' dominance (Buckholz 2019; Kuzio 2019, Portnov 2015b).

Also, the Jewish oligarchs from Dnipro (Viktor Pinchuk, Ihor Kolomoyskyy) are much closer tied to Jewish traditions and to the anti-Soviet attitude of Jews in Dnipro than are Kharkiv's elites of Jewish ancestry (Gennadii Kernes, Mykhaylo Dobkin).[22] This also should condition corresponding policy choices in these cities, including on decommunisation.

Some General Assumptions

A 'Soviet' person would not be against the Soviet legacy but in conditions when most people with a Soviet identity also have a Ukrainian identity, one must ask what exactly it means to be/to feel Soviet? Answers on this question could be a true predictor of the attitude towards decommunisation. We don't have proper instruments to get this answer so far, but we try to make a few preliminary suggestions.

First, we can assume there are five different 'dimensions' of perceiving Soviet identity:

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1. Political: correspondence to certain political views (communist, socialist, left).
2. Economic: correspondence to certain economic views ('fair' distribution system and the level of its embodiment in the USSR reality, in particular).
3. Cultural: correspondence to the Russian or Russian-speaking literature.
4. Historical: correspondence to the certain interpretation(s) of history,
5. Biographical: correspondence to the fact of the one's birth in the USSR or acknowledgement of habits and attitudes as Soviet.

Perhaps it is possible to add some other dimensions; each of them could have different interpretations. But all of them are 'doctrinal', 'cognitive', 'discursive' ones which means they relate to some rational and conscious statements while in many cases the emotional element is much more important. In this context, the concept of nostalgia seems productive because it covers attitudes towards the past through the prism of collective memory and personal experience, and is connected to identities, values and interpretations of the present, which all include an emotional component.

In the case of Soviet nostalgia, it would be useful to use the distinction on 'soft' and 'hard' nostalgia. 'Hard nostalgia' is espoused by Russian President Vladimir Putin: 'The collapse of the USSR was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century'. 'Soft nostalgia' is revealed in the agreement with then Socialist Party of Ukraine leader Oleksandr Moroz's statement: 'You have no heart if you don't regret for the loss the USSR, but you have no head if you want the USSR revived.'[23] This statement stems from the late 1990s and was made to mark the difference between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. Nowadays 'soft nostalgia' might be present among those with Ukrainian and European identities, but 'hard nostalgia' (probably) is not. 'Soft nostalgia' could explain some of the rather passive opposition to decommunisation (which we can observe) while 'hard nostalgia' likely motivates anti-decommunisation activists.

This distinction echoes Svetlana Boym's (2002) distinction between 'restorative' and 'reflective' nostalgia. For her, 'restorative' nostalgia involves the idealisation of the object of nostalgia, whereas 'reflective' nostalgia enables some interpretation of and feelings for the past and its relation to the present – without the expectation or desire to going back.

Conclusions

Identities and geopolitical orientations do explain attitudes towards decommunisation. Decommunisation is aimed at removing visual Soviet legacies which are interpreted as something that prevents the development of Ukraine, which is why it could be argued that the most connected identities would be Ukrainian and Soviet. But European identity has the closest collection to attitudes towards decommunisation. Also, geopolitical orientations play a significant role here because higher support for pro-Western attitudes translates into higher support for decommunisation. We therefore argue that the concept of values can be as useful as the concept of identity (perhaps even more so). Feeling European does not correlate positively or negatively with other identities, and the pro-European mindset is most likely distinct, possibly being an outgrowth of the Euromaidan Revolution.

Despite holding pro-Western/pro-European positions and a negative view of Soviet history, supporters of decommunisation do not deny their Soviet past completely; indeed, many of them continue to feel Soviet, consider Russians and Ukrainians to be one people and tend to support Slavic values. On the other hand, disapproval of decommunisation could be explained by pragmatic reasons than by ideological factors.

Differences between Dnipro and Kharkiv are sometimes quite significant. In general, inhabitants of Dnipro support decommunisation more, are more pro-Western/pro-European and more pro-Ukrainian and are less pro-Soviet. These differences do not deny similar opinions in both cities, but they do nevertheless matter. It can be assumed that these differences are based on geography and whether the city is a border city, which impacts economic ties, identities and susceptibilities to Russian disinformation. Two other factors are the role and local history of the Jewish community in Dnipro (see above) and the role of local elites in Ukrainian politics and economy.

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Since identification is extremely sensitive to the meanings which are involved in the processes[24] a thorough study of these meanings should be part of any research into identity. This chapter contributes to the study of decommunisation and identities by providing new ground in comparing Kharkiv and Dnipro and by pointing to the need for further research.

Notes

[1] See Law no. 2558 (April 2015)'On Condemning the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes and Prohibiting the Propagation of their Symbols', https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317-19#Text

[2] We thank Anna Olinyk and Taras Kuzio for this information.

[3] 'Za roky decommunizatsii v Ukrayini demontuvaly bilsh yak 1300 pamyatnykiv Leninu' *Ukrinform*, 16 July 2020. https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3064494-za-roki-dekomunizacii-v-ukraini-demontuvali-bils-ak-1300-pamatnikiv-leninu.html

[4] 'Attitude toward certain historical figures and decommunisation process in Ukraine,' Sociological Group 'Rating', 17 November 2016. http://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/otnoshenie_k_otdelnym_istoricheskim_lichnostyam_i_processu_dekommunizacii_v_ukraine.html

[5] 'The sixth year of decommunisation: the attitude of Ukrainians toward prohibition of symbols of the totalitarian past,' Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 24 July 2020. https://dif.org.ua/en/article/the-sixth-year-of-decommunisation-the-attitude-of-ukrainians-toward-prohibition-of-symbols-of-the-totalitarian-past

[6] In the annual 'Ukrainian society' monitoring of public opinion since 1992 by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the question is formulated as 'Who do you consider yourself in the first place?' with the following options for answers (Vorona and Shulha 2018, 465).

[7] 'Social and political moods of Ukrainians: IRI poll,' Sociological group 'Rating', 10 July 2019. http://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/opros_iri_dinamika_obschestvenno-politicheskih_vzglyadov_v_ukraine_iyun_2019.html

[8] 'Chyselnist naiavnoho naselennia m.Dnipra na 1 serpnia 2020 roku,' Holovne upravlinnya statystyky Dnipropetrovskoi oblasti. http://www.dneprstat.gov.ua/expres/2020/09/21_09_2020/chis-nas-mDnipra.pdf

[9] 'Chyselnist naiavnoho naselennya m.Dnipra na 1 serpnya 2020 roku,' Databank of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. http://database.ukrcensus.gov.ua/MULT/Database/Census/databasetree_uk.asp

[10] 'Chyselnist naselennya (za otsinkoyu) po mistakh oblasnoho znachennya ta rayonakh,' (shchomisyachna informatsiya). http://kh.ukrstat.gov.ua/chyselnist-naselennia-shchomisiachna-informatsiia

[11] Databank of State Statistics Service of Ukraine. http://database.ukrcensus.gov.ua/MULT/Database/Census/databasetree_uk.asp

[12] This viewpoint is based on our personal observations living in Kharkiv and attending meetings of people from Kharkiv and Donetsk.

[13] This study is based on two sample surveys conducted among the adult (18+) population in Dnipro (n = 1258) and Kharkiv (n =1254) in early and mid-2018, respectively. The surveys were designed by Michael Gentile and the fieldwork and sampling were conducted on a contractual basis by the Centre for Social Indicators (CSI), whose field resources and expertise are shared with the reputed Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) polling agency. Funding from the Norwegian Research Council (NORRUSS project 287267, 'Ukrainian Geopolitical Fault-line Cities: Urban Identity, Geopolitics and Urban Policy') supported this work. The data collection effort was funded by the Department of Sociology and Human Geography at the University of Oslo via a Småforsk grant given to Michael

Gentile.

[14] People who 'absolutely support' or 'rather support' the renaming of streets. The question about the removal of Lenin monuments has a vague option ('they should be moved to another place') which could be interpreted for or against 'decommunisation' depending on the context.

[15] Here and other emphasised differences are 0tatistically significant at the 1%-level.

[16] 'The views and opinions of south-eastern regions residents of Ukraine: April 2014,' Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, April 2014. http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=302&y=2014&m=4&page=1

[17] Databank of State Statistics Service of Ukraine. http://database.ukrcensus.gov.ua/MULT/Database/Census/databasetree_uk.asp

[18] 'Elektronnaya yevreyskaya enciklopediya,' Dnipro. https://eleven.co.il/diaspora/communities/11444/; Kharkiv. *Elektronnaya yevreyskaya enciklopediya*. https://eleven.co.il/diaspora/communities/14456/. See also *Demoscope Weekly*. http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/pril.php

[19] 'The First General Census of the Russian Empire of 1897. Breakdown of population by mother tongue and districts in 50 Gubernia of European Russia. Yekaterinislav district – the city of Yekaterinislav,' *Demoscope Weekly*. http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_lan_97_uezd_eng.php?reg=426

[20] 'The First General Census of the Russian Empire of 1897. Breakdown of population by mother tongue and districts in 50 Gubernia of European Russia. Kharkov district – the city of Kharkov,' *Demoscope Weekly*. http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_lan_97_uezd_eng.php?reg=1604

[21] In particular, the Seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994), grew up in Dnipropetrovsk which is why the city was especially important for the Hasidic tradition. See the chapter by Ishchenko.

[22] For example, Gennadii Kernes considered himself an Orthodox Christian and his funeral service took place in an Orthodox Church. See 'U Kharkovi poproschalysya z Kernesom: usi podrobytsi,' *Obozrevatel*. https://news.obozrevatel.com/ukr/politics/u-harkovi-proschayutsya-z-kernesom-vsi-podrobitsi-onlajn.htm). Mykhailo Dobkin is a founder of the Party of Christian Socialists. See 'Dobkin Mykhaylo Markovych. *Vidkrytyi reyiestr natsionalnyh publichnyh diyiachiv Ukrayiny*.' https://pep.org.ua/uk/person/388.

[23] 'Politychna biografiya Oleksandra Moroza,' *Radio Svoboda*. https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/947905.html

[24] What groups or other patterns are? Why they are what they are? How are they interpreted and by whom? What are the similarities and differences between their positions?

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